

Would you pay \$40 a month to watch your favorite sport?

2024-2025
oral sessions with C. Hamard

By [Shira Ovide](#) March 19, 2024 in *The Washington Post*.

5 My love for watching professional cycling is becoming an expensive pain. And if you're a fan of March Madness or any other sport, this angst is coming for you. Last year I paid at most \$10 a month to stream most of the cycling races I wanted. But to watch most of the significant cycling races this year, I need to subscribe to three streaming services at a cost that could reach \$40 a month or far more. No way. Welcome to the sports streaming age, where nearly every game, match or race is at your fingertips — but it's going to cost you.

10 Streaming companies and sports leagues want to squeeze every dollar from fans eager to watch at home. How watching sports became scattered and expensive? When nearly all Americans had cable TV, the dirty secret was that we all paid for sports — whether we watched games or not.

15 A big chunk of our monthly cable bills went to pay for such networks as ESPN, TNT and Fox that aired football, basketball and baseball. Your cable bill helped make sports available on TV, and it made sports owners and TV companies very rich.

20 What has changed is that fewer than half of American households now pay for cable. Companies that air or stream sports are chasing a smaller number of people who are willing to pay for cable or services like Google's YouTube TV that stream games. You'll probably need to hunt for your favorite sports across multiple TV and streaming services and pay higher bills than you're used to — whether it's for cable or streaming.

Naveen Sarma, a media specialist, said sports fans helped create this mess. We maybe didn't notice that cable made it relatively affordable to watch pricey programming like sports. "Consumers have historically not realized how expensive content is," Sarma said.

25 The tab could reach nearly \$40 a month or much more to watch most major cycling races. It wasn't this expensive even a year ago. You can watch cycling for nothing from foreign streaming sites or pirated websites. I won't do that.

30 Be realistic about how much you pay for sports. If you think it's cuckoo to pay \$40 a month to watch cycling, consider the cost of your own sports habits. To watch all National Football League games this past season, you might have needed CBS, Fox, NBC, ESPN, ABC, NFL Network, Amazon's Prime Video, Peacock and maybe YouTube's Sunday Ticket.

35 If you love sports — really, any sport — you probably need to juggle multiple TV or streaming services and pay up. I'm still better off than I was when American cycling fans could watch Tour de France highlights on TV and not much else. But I'm reluctantly cutting back. I'll miss some of my favorite races. I'm disappointed. And that's a feeling all of us sports fans will have to get used to. (480 words)