

GLOBAL REACH OF RUGBY 2019



**REGION
TOOLKIT**

ASIA



ASIA

World Rugby Chairman, Sir Bill Beaumont said:

“Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan was spectacular both on and off the pitch. The tournament not only captivated the eyes of 857 million people globally, many of whom in Asia following the sport for the first time, but it also generated £4.3 billion in economic output.

“Added to the 2.25 million participants across Asia who played rugby as part of our Impact Beyond legacy programme, we have very excellent reasons to be excited about what the future holds for the region.”

- With the Rugby World Cup held in Asia for the first time, interest in the sport is growing throughout the continent. Japan and India showed the most impressive levels of growth.
- Rugby World Cup 2019 introduced many new Asian fans to the sport. In Japan almost half of fans have only been interested in the sport for less than a year, and in China 61 per cent of Rugby World Cup followers were doing so for the first time.
- Rugby World Cup 2019 attracted impressive broadcast figures in Asia with a total cumulative audience of 425 million people in Japan tuning in. There was also huge interest in the tournament in south-east Asia where Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam all featured in the top 20 for TV figures globally.
- The tournament is also leaving a lasting legacy with 2.25 million girls, boys, women and men across Asia participating in the Impact Beyond legacy programme and more than 25,000 children and youth from disadvantaged communities in Asia benefitting from a rugby and life skills programme through the ChildFund Pass it Back initiative.
- In India, 14 per cent of people are rugby fans, which is a 75 per cent growth since 2018.

In 2019, World Rugby tasked Nielsen with collecting data from 17 nations to obtain an understanding of the current state of global rugby and the progress that World Rugby has made in growing the game over the past year.

To compile the data, Nielsen undertook in-depth 30-minute interviews with participants in November 2019. The interviews were conducted in 11 established Rugby nations and six emerging Rugby nations, with 500 nationally representative respondents and 500 rugby followers interviewed per market.

As part of its global SportsDNA study Nielsen also asked the following question in 36 countries: How interested are you in rugby union? From this data the number of people falling into the categories of rugby follower (little to very interested), rugby fan (interested and very interested) and avid rugby fan (very interested) were calculated. SportsDNA surveys at least 1000 nationally representative respondents aged 16-69 in each country. The population figures used for extrapolations are therefore based on the total population for each country aged 16-69 as this is the population represented by the survey sample.

Nielsen then used advanced statistical techniques involving regression analysis to forecast the number of rugby fans in a further 49 countries, painting a global picture of 85 countries.

From the research, several themes became evident about Asian rugby. With the Rugby World Cup held in the continent for the first time, interest in rugby grew significantly across Asia. As hosts, there was major Japanese Rugby World Cup interest, with fans following the tournament in huge numbers in stadiums and on television. Interest was not limited to just Japan though, and several emerging nations saw impressive growth, with the most notable being India. Women's rugby has been a key driver behind this growth, with interest in the female game up to 31 per cent in India and 47 per cent in Japan.

Boosted by hosting the successful Rugby World Cup 2019, which saw unprecedented global interest, interest in all formats of rugby have grown in Japan.

- In Japan, there were over 49 million rugby followers in 2019, which represents 60 per cent of the surveyed population. There has been a growth of 138 per cent in the number of rugby fans in the country since 2018.
- Interest in men's rugby in Japan has risen from 37 per cent to 59 per cent in 2019.
- Interest in women's rugby has also grown, from 28 per cent to 47 per cent.
- Japan also experienced a rise in interest in sevens from 36 per cent to 53 per cent.

Rugby World Cup 2019 captivated the Japanese population.

- Driven by Rugby World Cup 2019, the Japanese population increasingly got behind the national team with 42 per cent of rugby followers in 2019 supporting the Brave Blossoms rather than club rugby. This figure has almost tripled since 2018, demonstrating the success of the World Cup in engaging the Japanese nation.
- Almost a third of Japanese people aware of RWC watched 6 or more live games, and less than 1 in 10 did not watch a game or highlights or follow it in the news.
- 68 per cent of those aware that the tournament took place in Japan agreed that it was the best sporting event they had watched in 2019.
- Japanese people followed the tournament in huge numbers, as demonstrated by the broadcast figures, with a total cumulative audience of 425 million people in Japan tuning in.
- The overall interest in Rugby World Cup increased in Japan from 52 per cent to 62 per cent in 2019.
- 87 per cent of Japanese people who were aware of the tournament agreed that it captured the nation's imagination.

Aided by Rugby World Cup, there has been a rise of new rugby fans in Asia.

- Japan has seen an influx of new fans with almost half of men's rugby fans only being interested in rugby for less than a year. This is clear evidence of the success of Rugby World Cup 2019 in its objective of bringing the sport to new audiences.
- 61 per cent of Rugby World Cup followers in China were doing so for the first time.
- In India, interest in men's rugby has risen from 24 per cent to 30 per cent.
- In India, 14 per cent of people are rugby fans, which is a 75 per cent growth since 2018.

- Rugby World Cup 2019 is expected to leave an important legacy and 85 per cent of Japanese people aware of the tournament agreed that rugby will become more popular as a result.
- There has been impressive growth in south-east Asia, where Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam featured in the top 20 for Rugby World Cup 2019 TV figures globally.

Rugby is becoming more influential in Asia

- 59 per cent of Chinese men's rugby followers agree 'I have a favourite rugby union club team that I support'.
- 14 per cent of Japanese men's rugby followers agreed that the sport is an important part of their life.
- In India, 54 per cent of men's rugby followers agree that they 'keep up to date with the latest rugby union news'.
- In India, 49 per cent of men's rugby followers agree 'Rugby union is an important part of my life'.
- In India, 46 per cent of men's rugby followers agree 'In the community where I live, rugby union is very important'.

Women's rugby is growing in Asia.

- In India, interest in women's rugby has grown to 31 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in 2018.
- In Japan, interest in women's rugby has grown to 47 per cent, up from 28 per cent in 2018.
- In India, 79 per cent of women's rugby followers agreed that knowledge of women's rugby is increasing every year.
- In India, 79 per cent of women's rugby followers agreed that the standard of women's rugby is increasing every year.