

GLOBAL REACH OF RUGBY 2019



**COUNTRY
TOOLKIT**

JAPAN



**WORLD
RUGBY**

JAPAN

World Rugby Chairman, Sir Bill Beaumont, said:

“Rugby World Cup 2019 was a momentous, game-changing breakthrough for rugby in Japan. With record-breaking levels of economic output and viewership, alongside the incredible performance of the Brave Blossoms, Japan 2019 was a huge success both on and off the pitch. Importantly, the Rugby World Cup has encouraged more boys, girls, men and women to play the sport in Japan than ever before.

“We look forward to working closely together with the JRFU and Asia Rugby to consolidate and further build on this growth, to ensure our sport continues to flourish in Japan. The Tokyo Olympic Games provide an excellent opportunity to build on the legacy of RWC 2019 and continue the growth of rugby in Japan as attention turns to the sevens version of the game.”

- After hosting Rugby World Cup 2019, interest in the sport is surging throughout the country. The number of rugby fans in Japan has grown by 138 per cent and avid fans have quadrupled in the country compared to 2018.
- Both men’s and women’s rugby has grown. Interest in the men’s game has risen to 59 per cent from 37 per cent, and in the female game to 47 per cent from 28 per cent.
- Rugby World Cup 2019 is leaving an enduring legacy in Japan, with 85 per cent of Japanese people aware of the tournament agreeing that rugby will become more popular as a result, helped by the 2.25 million people who took part in the Impact Beyond legacy programme, many experiencing rugby for the first time.
- Rugby World Cup 2019 generated £4.3 billion in economic output and over 857 million people watched the action globally, meaning the tournament became both the most economically successful of all time and the most viewed rugby event ever.

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, unions and the wider rugby family 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 country.

As part of its global Sports DNA 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.

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.

Nielsen's fan sizing methodology is derived from its global syndicated tracking study - SportsDNA. 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.

Propelled by hosting a ground-breaking Rugby World Cup, 2019 was a game-changing year for Japanese rugby, with interest in the sport soaring throughout the country. The tournament captivated the Japanese population and 68 per cent of those aware that the tournament took place in Japan agreed that it was the best sporting event they watched in 2019. Japanese people followed the tournament in huge numbers, as demonstrated by the broadcast figures, with a total cumulative domestic audience of 425 million.

The Rugby World Cup is leaving an enduring legacy, with more people watching and playing the game in the country than ever before. This legacy is already being realised through the Impact Beyond programme, with more than 2.25 million girls, boys, women and men across Asia having participated in the programme. Following the tournament, the number of rugby fans in Japan has increased by 138 per cent compared to 2018, and the number of avid fans has quadrupled since 2018.

Rugby is becoming increasingly popular in Japan:

- 16 per cent of people are avid fans of rugby, this is a 300 per cent growth since 2018.
- 38 per cent of people are fans of rugby, this is a 138 per cent growth since 2018.
- 60 per cent of people are followers of rugby, this is a 62 per cent growth since 2018.

Growth of the men's game in Japan:

- Rising interest in men's rugby. It has grown to 59 per cent, compared to 37 per cent in 2018.

Growth of women's rugby in Japan:

- Rising interest in women's rugby. Interest has grown from 28 per cent to 47 per cent in 2018.

Growth of sevens in Japan:

- Rising interest in sevens, from 36 per cent to 53 per cent in 2018.

Positive perceptions about rugby in Japan:

- Significant year-on-year increases from rugby followers thinking that men's rugby sets a positive example, growing to 61 per cent compared to 39 per cent in 2018.

Rugby World Cup 2019 captivated the Japanese population:

- Japan has seen an influx of new fans with almost half of men's rugby fans only being interested in the sport for less than a year. This is a direct consequence of Rugby World Cup 2019

- Almost a third of Japanese people aware of the tournament watched 6+ live games, and less than 1 in 10 did not watch a game/highlights or follow it in the news.

Significant impact of RWC 2019 in Japan.

- 87 per cent of Japanese people agreed that the Rugby World Cup 2019 captured the nation's imagination and 88 per cent agreed that it will improve the standard of rugby in the country.
- 85 per cent agreed that the nation got behind the Japanese team as they progressed through the tournament.
- 84 per cent of Japanese people aware that Japan hosted the tournament agreed that rugby World Cup was played in the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.
- 88 per cent of Japanese people aware that Japan hosted the tournament agreed that hosting Rugby World Cup in Asia for the first time ever was good for the sport.
- 85 per cent of Japanese people aware of the tournament agreed that rugby will become more popular because of the 2019 Rugby World Cup.
- 68 per cent of Japanese people aware of the tournament agreed that it was the best sporting event they watched in 2019.