

NBC AND THE LONDON OLYMPICS



The Summer Olympics in London was a huge deal, especially as it went on for a total of 17 nights, having become the most watched televised event in the history of television for the entire United States as a whole. NBC provided coverage of the televised event, which managed to draw in nearly 219.4 million viewers, far more viewers than the Beijing Games. It is believed that in the United States, a total of around 70 percent of individuals actually tuned in to watch some of the games that were being featured on air. At least 31.1 million individuals tuned in over the span of the 17 days in which the televised games aired. NBC can now proudly say that they have provided access to the most watched Summer Olympics to have ever taken place outside of the United States, as this year the Olympics took place in London. Alan Wurtzel, the president of the research and media development aspect of NBC Universal, was shocked by the data provided. Wurtzel ended up saying, "There was a certain aura surrounding Beijing that was really seductive, [and] there were a lot of events that were live in prime time." He also said, "I don't think anybody thought we would come close to Beijing." Prior to the beginning of the Summer Olympics in London, right before the 27th of July, Wurtzel had predicted that NBC would be able to reach nearly 200 million viewers. Prior to the beginning of the Olympic Games, NBC made sure it had plenty of advertisement inventory available, along with plenty of affiliate revenue and digital revenue as well. Because of this, NBC will actually have made a profit instead of having to deal with a net loss. The closing ceremony, which took place this past Sunday, ended up being the most watched finale for the Olympics over the past three decades. And, although NBC made the decision to delay music performance by various artists, including Avril Lavigne, to show previews of different television shows, things still seemed to work out well. Some viewers did complain about such practices but continued to tune in anyway, which made things better for NBC. During the finale of the Olympic Games, Bob Costas of NBC spoke of former NBC Sports chairman, Dick Ebersol, stating that it would be the last Olympic game for Ebersol. Costas had nothing but kind words to say. He said, "[Ebersol] is, along with Roone Arledge and Jim McKay, one of the three most important figures in the history of Olympics television."