

Scott D. Pierce: FOX 13 is No. 1. So is KUTV. It all depends on what you're counting.



By [Scott D. Pierce](#)

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The results of the February sweeps are in, and FOX 13 is No. 1! And KUTV-Ch. 2 is No. 1! Both stations are making that claim. And both have evidence to back it up.

At the [risk of repeating myself](#) — it all depends on what you're looking at and how you're counting.

FOX 13, or KSTU-Ch. 13, had a great ratings book. No doubt about it. In younger demographics — viewers ages 18-49 and 25-54 — the station finished first Monday-Friday (among local news viewers) from 4:30 a.m.-9 a.m.; from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (tied with KUTV at noon); and most of 4 p.m.-6 p.m. (FOX 13 finished second in the 18-49 age group at 5 p.m.)

It's worth pointing out that some of these time periods were extremely close, with differences of tenths — even hundredths — of rating points.

The big news is that FOX 13 finished an unprecedented first with viewers in both 18-49 and 25-54 age groups in late news. I don't remember that ever happening before, and I've been tracking local news ratings since before FOX 13 launched its first newscast on Dec. 31, 1991.

(Courtesy KUTV) KUTV-Channel 2's logo.

Does this mean that more people are watching Fox 13's late newscast than any of its competitors? No. Not even close.

According to Nielsen, Fox 13 is third in total viewers, defined as persons ages 2+. When you add viewers older and younger than the 18-49 and 25-54 age brackets, FOX 13 trails second-place KSL-Channel 5 by 13 percent and first-place KUTV-Channel 2 by a whopping 39 percent. Here's a look at how local late newscasts (9 p.m. on Channels 13, 14 and 30; 10 p.m. on Channels 2, 4 and 5) ranked in various measurements during the February 2019 sweeps:

Households

1. KUTV-Ch. 2 • 64,788
2. KSL-Ch. 5 • 45,016
3. KSTU-Ch. 13 • 36,573
4. KTVX-Ch. 4 • 21,788
5. KJZZ-Ch. 14 • 4,453
6. KUCW-Ch. 30 • 1,856

Viewers age 25-54

1. KSTU-Ch. 13 • 18,990
2. KSL-Ch. 5 • 16,547

3. KUTV-Ch. 2 • 15,973
4. KTVX-Ch. 4 • 5,092
5. KJZZ-Ch. 14 • 1,827
6. KUCW-Ch. 30 • 1,244

Viewers age 2+

1. KUTV-Ch. 2 • 81,450
2. KSL-Ch. 5 • 56,577
3. KSTU-Ch. 13 • 49,429
4. KTVX-Ch. 4 • 24,167
5. KJZZ-Ch. 14 • 4,944
6. KUCW-Ch. 30 • 2,260

Viewers ages 18+

1. KUTV-Ch. 2 • 79,355
2. KSL-Ch. 5 • 54,363
3. KSTU-Ch. 13 • 46,268
4. KTVX-Ch. 4 • 23,351
5. KJZZ-Ch. 14 • 4,907
6. KUCW-Ch. 30 • 2,206

That's just a sampling. These numbers can be dissected umpteen ways.

FOX 13 would argue that households and total viewer numbers don't mean anything, because that's not what advertisers look at when they're buying ad time. Advertisers look at demographics.

KUTV would argue that older viewers are more valuable when it comes to news ratings — that it sells advertising based on the 35-64 demographic, and it beats KSTU in that measurement.

I would argue that if you're interested in local news ratings and you aren't an advertiser, you probably want to know which station has the most viewers. Although I'm not trying to understate the importance of demographics in any way.

There's one more thing to keep in mind. Nielsen has a competitor, ComScore, and that ratings service won't release its February sweeps results for another couple of weeks. But its numbers, after the first two of the four weeks, are vastly different from what Nielsen reported.

Stay tuned ...

Editor's note: FOX 13 and The Salt Lake Tribune are content-sharing partners.