

Viewers tune in to World Cup

The 2002 World Cup's TV viewing figures underscore soccer's worldwide appeal.

What do 1.1 billion people have in common?

They watched the 2002 World Cup final between Brazil and Germany, making it the most viewed World Cup match in history.

The match attracted ratings (the percentage of each country's population) of 37.8 and 35.8 in Germany and Brazil, respectively — not bad considering the game kicked off at noon in Germany and 8 a.m. in Brazil.

The highest national audience was in Japan, host of the World Cup final. Japanese network NHK recorded a rating of 44.5, representing 54.1 million viewers, or 10 times the audience for the 1998 World Cup final.

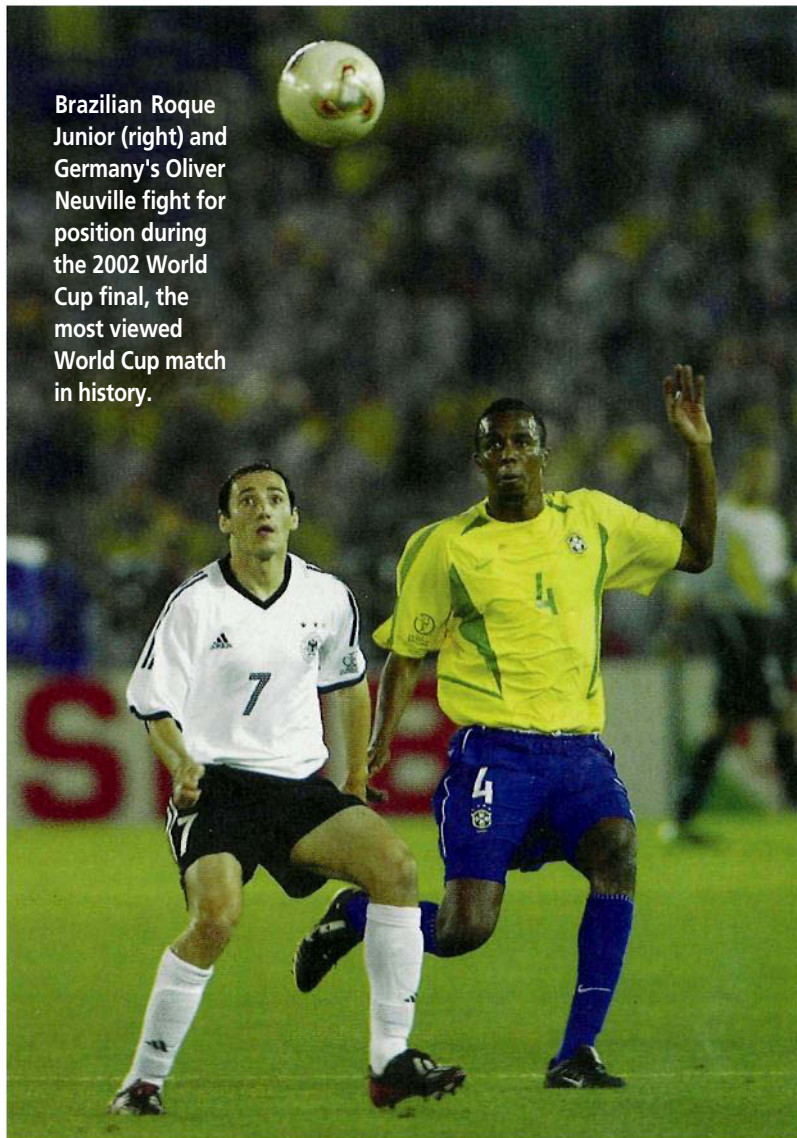
Those are some of the key figures to emerge from an independent study commissioned by FIFA's World Cup television partner, KirchSport.

The cumulative audience for the 64 games attracted 28.8 billion viewers. That's 5 billion fewer viewers than in 1998, when figures were inflated by unaudited viewing numbers for China. Excluding China, viewing figures increased by 2 percent in 2002.

Probably the most telling statistic of the World Cup's hook is that the 20 most viewed matches achieved an average market share of 84.8 — i.e. 84.8 percent of people watching television were tuned into the World Cup.

One trend is the increasing interest of female viewers, particularly in Asia. The Korean network MBC's coverage of the decisive first-round match between South Korea and Portugal drew a female rating of 21 and a male rating of 16.4.

— Paul Kennedy



Brazilian Roque Junior (right) and Germany's Oliver Neuville fight for position during the 2002 World Cup final, the most viewed World Cup match in history.

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