

WHAT TO EXPECT IN SUPER BOWL LX



THE MIRROR & THE MACHINE

At Havas, we've written about the Super Bowl for years through the lens of media buys and TV spots. This year doesn't feel much different.

Except for the fact that everything is extremely different.

A single football game has gained so much **momentum it is essentially the FOMO Olympics of U.S. cultural commentary**. But haven't you ever wondered why marketers, dog lovers, chefs, moms, musicians, and gamers are suddenly all in the same target audience? It's not because of the athleticism you're seeing on the field, although we can all agree Jaxon Smith-Njigba is going to be a sight to behold. And it's also, shockingly, not out of a puristic love for the game despite the NFL's record-breaking regular season viewership numbers.

It's because the Super Bowl is a reflection of all of us — good or bad. It operates more as a gentle cultural mimesis rather than overt critical commentary. This year, there's a lot to unpack when it comes to "good" or "bad." From political beliefs to opinions on AI to music tastes, how we engage with the Super Bowl is behaving as a proxy for how we behave with technology, media, and each other. Sometimes even unwillingly.

This shared cohesion makes introspection a little easier, especially when it's reflected by those we choose to represent us — the influencers, the artists, the teams and players we bet on. These brave souls spotlight us, remind us of what we look like, and why we chose them. In other instances, we don't choose who or what represents us at the Super Bowl. Sometimes the brands around the Super Bowl, or the tech reshaping the experience, can make something familiar feel suddenly unfamiliar. **This discomfort is just as important and says something about us, our culture, and the moment we're in.**

When we pay attention to what brands, artists, athletes, and tech companies, do or say, **we start to understand how these different perspectives are actualized in real time** both in tangible media experience and in cultural reflection.

So yeah, this year is no different. Except for the fact that everything is different. Which means the Super Bowl will certainly look different in all ways from watching, sharing, engaging, to participating. And how we do it will certainly reflect the climate we're in today.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MEDIA: The Super Bowl is no longer a single broadcast moment. It is a layered media system where reach, attention, and action happen across different time horizons and platforms simultaneously. The brands that win are not the loudest in the game window, but the ones that understand how audiences move between screens, creators, commerce, and culture before, during, and long after kickoff.



TACTICALS

WHERE IS IT?

Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara, CA
(by way of San Francisco)

Levi's second time hosting, both for milestone years (50th and now 60th). It will host somewhere close to **65,000 fans**, despite holding more that 71,000. The NFL is far less concerned with maximizing ticket sales given all the other revenue streams this event brings forth

WHAT'S THE BAR SET AT?

127.7MM viewers in 2025

NBC should give it a run for the money with new Nielsen methodology working in their favor. If they top 128 million, this will be the most watched show ever

WHAT ABOUT COST?

To start, the ad is around **\$8MM for :30 seconds**. Now double that to support other NBCU properties. Now hire a big producer, a few trending celebs, and license some hit music while you're at it.

The answer: A LOT

HOT TAKES

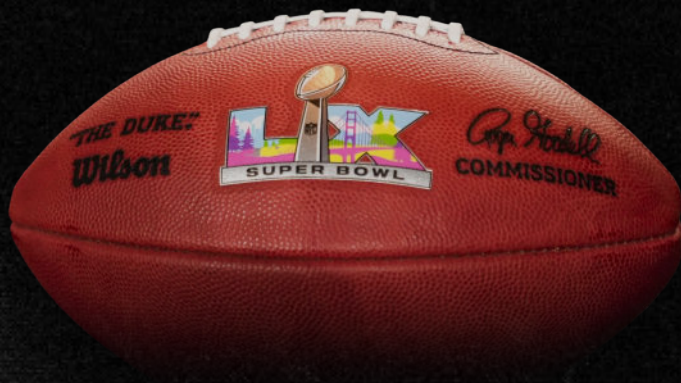
01 SHOPPING GAME

02 AI ARMS RACE

03 GAME(ING) IMMERSION

04 THE CREATOR BOWL

05 LET'S TALK BAD BUNNY



SHOPPING GAME

We move past the era of the single, humorous 30-second spot towards "agentic commerce." This is the first major live event where the goal is a seamless "see it, want it, buy it" journey. Expect QR-code ads with pre-filled carts, shoppable CTV overlays, and brands using real-time data and AI agents to anticipate needs before customers even articulate them.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1. The 2026 Super Bowl is going to kick off the era of agentic commerce. It is the first major live event since Google's recent launch of the Universal Commerce Protocol (UPC).
2. Early adoption of fully integrated media experiences that lead to seamless conversions will soon become a standard expectation for brands.

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

1. Smart brands will let AI agents engage directly with customers, creating a seamless handoff from first interaction through checkout.
2. Brands that are moving from reactive to predictive commerce, using real-time data and search prompts to anticipate needs and recommend products before customers articulate them.
3. From QR-code ads that load pre-filled carts to shoppable CTV overlays and one-click social shopping, innovative brands are capturing customer clicks (and dollars) at the moment of inspiration.

WHO YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

 **Base 44**

Wix

xfinity

Tech-first brands like Amazon Alexa, Base 44, Google, Wix, and Xfinity will likely be early adopters of fully integrated shopping across all media.



GrubHub makes their Super Bowl debut this year and is expected to use new activation formats to streamline experience and drive new user-adoption



Oikos and E.L.F. activating shoppable overlays in CTV placements.

THE HOT TAKE

SUPER BOWL ADS WILL NO LONGER BE JUDGED BY ENTERTAINMENT ALONE, BUT BY WHETHER THEY CONVERT IN THE MOMENT

AI ARMS RACE

Last year, AI brands used the Super Bowl to build trust and legitimacy. This year, the category moves into open competition, with brands positioning against one another and showcasing applied, real-world use cases. The story is no longer whether AI works, but whether brands & tech companies alike have found a way to leverage AI in a way we can trust and use.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1. Tech companies turn to the largest moment of shared attention to engage
2. AI goes from "tell" to "show" to "applied" as salience increases
3. AI's impact beyond the ads and in the experience

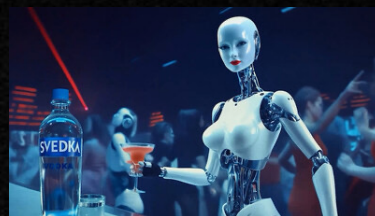
WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

1. Anthropic, an enterprise company, brings a consumer message to the biggest stage
2. Experiences that showcase concrete, everyday AI use cases, not abstract future vision.
3. Brands positioning human-made work as premium in an AI-saturated environment.
4. Real-time data layers fans can explore, not just passively view.
5. Game moments triggering instant bets, offers, or shoppable actions.

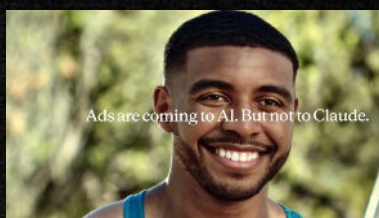
WHO YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR



**META/OAKLEY SPOTLIGHT
ATHLETIC INTELLIGENCE**



**FULLY AI GENERATED
CREATIVE FROM SVEDKA**



**ANTHROPIC'S CLAUDE
CALLS OUT ADS IN AI**

Self-learning AI generates 2026 Super Bowl picks, score prediction for Seahawks vs. Patriots

SportsLine AI evaluated the Super Bowl 60 odds and revealed its NFL score predictions and best NFL picks



By Daniel Kelly, 32 mins ago • 3 mins read

Join the Conversation

**AI'S ACCURACY &
IMPACT ON THE WIDER
EXPERIENCE**

THE HOT TAKE

Anthropic's CCO says "Technology can be a bicycle for the mind—something that extends what humans are capable of. Or it can be another surface competing for your attention".

**WE ASK, WHY NOT
BOTH?**

GAME(ING) IMMERSION

03

Gaming isn't a side quest, it's the operating system underneath how younger fans watch, predict, participate, and co-create the Super Bowl. From Madden simulations setting early narratives, to Roblox worlds hosting cross-game quests, to creator-driven livestream commerce happening parallel to kickoff, gaming platforms aren't just reflecting Super Bowl culture. They're making culture playable.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1. Gaming now shapes pre-game narratives, drives fan rituals, and influences how audiences interpret the game at large.
2. Gaming platforms are where the next gen experiences the NFL.
3. Fans expect to predict, play, shape, and co-create around the Super Bowl, not just consume it.

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

1. Prediction engines driving storylines. Simulations don't just forecast results they create memes, betting chatter, and narrative arcs that bleed into sports broadcasts and social timelines.
2. Look for Super Bowl LX-themed quests, limited-edition avatar items, and Roblox NFL Universe Football event moments all built for Gen Z/Alpha engagement.
3. Gaming creators will run watch-alongs, recreate plays in Madden, launch challenge content, and host commerce moments that rival brand viewership on traditional channels.

WHO YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR



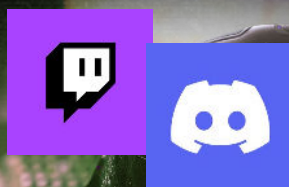
EA SPORTS MADDEN X
NFL 26 SIMULATION



VIRAL
MRBEAST IS DROPPING
\$1M IN GIVEAWAYS
DURING AN HOUR-LONG
WHATNOT LIVESTREAM



ROBLOX NFL UNIVERSE
FOOTBALL SUPER BOWL
EVENT



WATCH-ALONG
CULTURES WITH LIVE
CHAT AND REAL-TIME
REACTIONS

THE HOT TAKE

IF THE SUPER BOWL IS THE STAGE, GAMING IS THE STADIUM. THE MOMENT NOW LIVES IN WORLDS, STREAMS, AND ENGINES. NOT JUST SANTA CLARA

THE CREATOR BOWL

Creators won't just show up. They've transformed into strategic partners who understand and translate the internet, build culture, and make moments travel. They're producing ads behind the scenes, hosting broadcasts, and shaping how the game is experienced both on air and across platforms.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1. Creators are becoming premium media, not just distribution.
2. Authority-driven creators reshape where brand invest creative control.
3. Creator-led environments deliver higher trust and attention.

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

1. Creators as broadcasters: Social-first co-streams and live commentary rivaling traditional coverage.
2. Creators as creative leads: Influencers shaping the concept, tone, and narrative of Super Bowl ads.
3. Creators as production partners: Creator studios embedded in ad development, not just talent on screen.
4. Creators extending the moment: Super Bowl ideas designed to live beyond game day across feeds and fandoms.

WHO YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR



MRBEAST X SALESFORCE



KYLAN DARNELL X INSIDE EDITION



BOWEN YANG X RITZ



PAIGE DESORBO X KINDER BUENO



ABERCROMBIE'S PRE-SUPER BOWL FASHION SHOW WILL FEATURE CREATORS LIKE OLIVIA CULPO, KATIE FEENEY, AND ALLISON KUCH.

THE HOT TAKE

IF CREATORS ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO HOST THE SUPER BOWL CONVERSATION, THEY'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO LEAD THE CAMPAIGN, NOT JUST APPEAR IN IT.

LET'S TALK BAD BUNNY

Bad Bunny isn't a niche audience interest. He is one of the most globally dominant artists of this generation. Where Latin artists like Shakira, J.Lo, and Enrique Iglesias were once expected to perform in English to "meet" American audiences during the Super Bowl, Bad Bunny is flipping the script. This moment is crossover, it's cultural power shifting and it's intentional on the NFL's part to reach diverse US audience and global audiences alike.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

1. Bad Bunny's gravity (music, film, fashion) & ingenuity shows talent can rival the Super Bowl itself as the primary cultural draw.
2. Apple Music and Duolingo prove pre-game ecosystems can shape fandom and learning before halftime even starts.
3. U.S. Hispanic audiences not only move culture, they have substantial buying power, but demand in-language, intentional engagement.

WHO YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR



Fan rumors point to halftime cameos from **Cardi B** (who is dating Sefan Diggs on the Patriots), **J Balvin**, **Daddy Yankee** or **Arcángel**

Bad Bunny Means a Breakthrough for Puerto Rican Athletes, Too

Puerto Rican football players are thrilled that Spanish will resound at the Super Bowl. "The stage is bigger than the N.F.L. itself," one lineman said.

Support from multicultural athletes reflecting global cultural relevance

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

1. A total absence of English in the setlist. Apple Music's real-time "Lyrics Translation" and Duolingo's "Bad Bunny 101" fan onboarding.
2. The launch of the "Súper Tazón" Collection the moment the performance ends. This second drop, following the pre-game "Concho" capsule, marks the first time official NFL gear is branded in Spanish, turning the 12-minute show into a global streetwear product launch.
3. Apple Vision Pro/spatial audio as a primary viewing layer. Apple Music's "Road to Halftime" immersive content and the 2026 Megamix by Tainy are designed to place global fans "inside" the Caribbean-inspired stage environment, moving beyond the 2D television frame.
4. Political Adjacency & "ICE Out" Rhetoric. Keep an eye on the visual symbolism (e.g., his Statue of Liberty teaser) and potential for a direct political rebuke.

THE HOT TAKE

BE LIKE BAD BUNNY. PRE-GAME DROPS, PLAYLISTS, IN-LANGUAGE ENGAGEMENT, AND "BEING REAL" SHOW HOW TO BUILD FANDOM, NOT JUST BUY ATTENTION.

OH YEAH, AND THE SUPER BOWL

Let's not forget there's also a football game. After all, this whole panoply of cultural intersections never happens without the unmatched draw that is live sports.

COMMON GROUND

Whether you're there for guacamole, Green Day, or because you took the money line on the Patriots, the common ground is the game itself which will undoubtedly draw historically significant audience numbers.



KICKOFF TO A SPORTS-PACKED YEAR

It's not another crescendo to a massively successful NFL season. This year it's a cannon blast kicking off the next chapter of sports for months to come. The Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics start the same weekend and run for 17 days, the NBA All Star Game, Daytona 500, March Madness, and The Masters are just a few highlights in the weeks that follow, which is only a tease considering The World Cup is right around the corner.



GOING BEYOND THE GAME

Each major sports moment now brings its own creator ecosystems, foodways, music, and IRL fan experiences, giving brands far more to activate than the game itself. 2026 isn't just another big year for sports. It builds on a streak of record-setting moments, raising the bar yet again for what cultural relevance and brand participation look like in live sports.



LIVE IN THE "AND"

At Havas PLAY, we specialize in the intersection of Gaming, Culture, and Sports. We don't just see the Super Bowl as a game to watch, we see a cultural nexus where the Puppy Bowl, a Twitch stream, a Bad Bunny concert, and Ann Michael Maye's sourdough bread are all part of the same experience. Oh, and a touchdown or two.

The goal is to architect environments where fans don't just "watch," they play, purchase, and participate.

But in a modern media environment, trying to force a consumer to "engage" is a futile exercise in vanity metrics. Today's audience has built-in filters for anything that feels like a "brand monologue" or worse, an ad. Even when we're all tuning in for the commercials.

Havas PLAY doesn't ask fans to stop what they're doing to look at your brand. We understand the behaviors that already exist and we capitalize on them by adding value to the spaces they already inhabit. We build more "AND" moments.



WANT TO PLAY WITH US? REACH OUT

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