

Tuesday, 17 March 2020

Grand Prix cancellation deals a blow to Rolex & Mercedes

The Formula 1 season was supposed to begin in Melbourne over the weekend, however a positive test for the COVID-19 coronavirus amongst a team member of McLaren, and concerns about disease transmission potential among large gatherings, led to a last-minute cancellation of the race on Friday, the first time in its history such a step has been taken.

The cancellation is a huge disappointment to the millions of Australians who watch motorsports on TV. (The motorsports category covers V8 Supercars, the Bathurst 1000, Drag racing and Rally car racing as well as Formula 1, with locally based V8 Supercars drawing the biggest viewership: 2.8 million compared to nearly 2.5 million for F1).

The necessity to cancel is also a blow to the race's prominent sponsors. Among Australian fans of Formula 1, and motor racing in general, the two brands that stand out the most when they are asked to name those associated with the Formula 1 Grand Prix are Rolex and Mercedes.

Rolex is the naming rights sponsor of the Australian Grand Prix and 4% of Australians associate the Swiss watch company with the Grand Prix in Melbourne. This brand association rises to 11% of those who occasionally watch Formula 1 on TV, 17% for those who participate in Motor racing, 23% for those who attend motor sport and 25% those who almost always watch Formula 1 on TV.

Mercedes is naming rights sponsor for the most successful team, which has now won six Formula 1 World Championships in a row (2014-2019). It is associated with the Australian Grand Prix by 3% of Australians, but this rises to 10% of those who occasionally watch Formula 1 on TV or participate in Motor racing, 13% of those who attend motor sport and 14% of those who almost always watch Formula 1 on TV.

Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer, Roy Morgan, says the decision to call off the Grand Prix is one of a number of cancellations, delays or crowd-exclusions across different sports, including cricket and football, with organisers of similar events under pressure to follow suit:

"The Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix at Melbourne's Albert Park was set to celebrate its 25th Anniversary this year, however the last-minute cancellation on Friday means the celebrations will have to wait as Australia, and the world, deal with the outbreak of COVID-19.

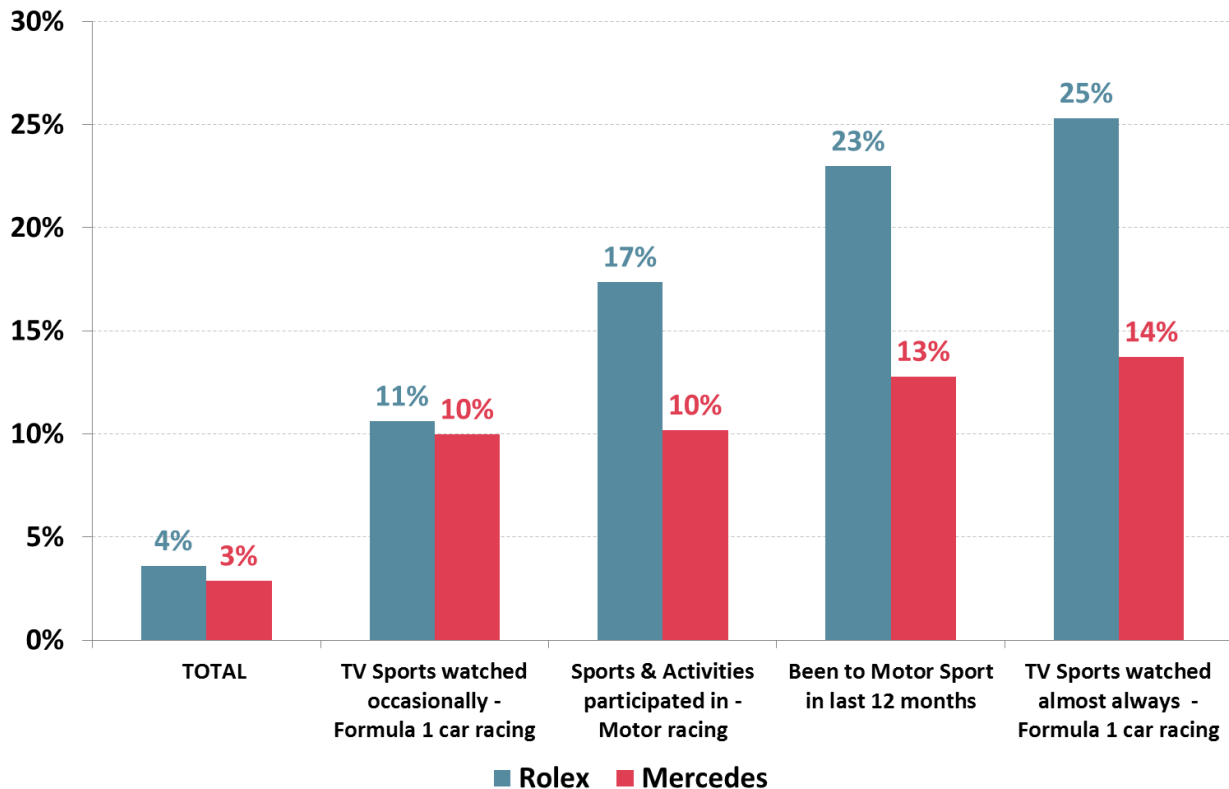
"The full implications of the viral outbreak are impossible to quantify at this early stage. However, this cancellation clearly deals a blow to Grand Prix major sponsors such as Rolex and Mercedes, both of which have increased their public name-association with the race compared to a year ago.

"Three-quarters of a million Australians now associate Rolex with the Grand Prix, up from 610,000 a year ago and nearly 600,000 associate Mercedes, up from 380,000. Among people who participate in motor sports, attend motor sports or watch Formula 1 on TV the recognition of both brands is substantially higher.

"The challenge for sponsors and sporting events during 2020 will be determining how best to deal with massive revenue shortfalls accompanying the mass cancellation of events. In order to do this it's vital for them to have a deep, granular understanding of exactly who is following the relevant sport and who is paying attention to their brand, in order to ensure precious advertising dollars aren't wasted when activity resumes."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Formula 1 brand association for motorsport attendees, players and viewers



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, January – December 2019. **Base:** Australians 14+. n=13,539.

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan's sports data, please contact:

Roy Morgan Enquiries
Office: +61 (3) 9224 5309
enquiries@roymorgan.com

Related research findings

View our comprehensive range of [Sport profiles](#), including [Sport viewers](#), and in particular [Formula 1 viewers](#), and [Sport participants](#).

Compiled with data from Roy Morgan's Single Source survey (the largest of its kind in the world, with 50,000 respondents p.a.), these ready-made profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE