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## 'Baywatch' launch wins top rating

**For the first time, it's the top  
syndicated show in America, as  
well as in the world**

By Tim Ryan  
Star-Bulletin



"Baywatch," already the No. 1 syndicated show in the world, has for the first time reached No. 1 in the United States with a Nielsen rating of 3.5.

"Aloha Baywatch," the premier show of the renamed "Baywatch Hawaii," debuted here Sept. 25 on Fox affiliate KHON-TV2. Nationally, it got the top score for "weekly first-run hour program in syndication."

No. 2 was "Hercules" with a 3.1 rating; and No. 3 "Xena," 2.9. One ratings point represents 1,008,000 households.

Ratings for the second "Baywatch Hawaii" episode, "Mahalo Hawaii," are not yet available.

"It's startling," said Greg Bonann, "Baywatch" creator and executive producer. "It is pretty amazing when you consider all the independent, syndicated, non-network shows "Baywatch Hawaii" is up against."

Al Masini, who with wife April was instrumental in getting the 10-year-old show to relocate from California to Hawaii instead of Australia, said the first week's ratings are "very good right now."

"That's a pretty good delivery just out of the gate, but I always thought Hawaii was going to give new life to the show," he said. "And I think that's what we're seeing."

Masini said there shouldn't be a celebration based on one rating, though "it is a positive sign."

The producer of the recent Hawaii-based "Destination Stardom" expects the ratings for "Baywatch Hawaii" to climb higher.

"More people watch television as winter sets in," Masini said. "The lightest viewing is in the summer months; January has the most viewing."

### **Needs advertising revenue**

But the "real test," he said, will be Nielsen's November ratings period, one of three primary annual measuring periods.

Bonann hasn't focused on what rating the show would receive but instead "the number we would have to do" to earn enough revenue from advertisers to "do the show the way we want to do it."

"If we can't do a certain rating then we can't afford to do a certain style of show with all the action and water work," Bonann said. "I don't want that money reduced on me because we're not doing good enough numbers."

Each episode of "Baywatch Hawaii" costs more than \$900,000.

Bonann said he would have been happy with a 3.2 or a 3.3 rating.

"This number we got is really, really great," he said.

### **Curiosity for relocated show**

Bonann and Masini both expected that the curiosity factor alone for the relocated "Baywatch Hawaii" would draw a large first-time audience.

"Hawaii absolutely helped. There's no question about that," Bonann said.

Many people assume that "Baywatch" is the No. 1 syndicated show in the United States because it's the No. 1 syndicated show in the world. That has never been the case until now.

Domestic ratings and international viewership are completely separate categories.

The just-released Nielsen rating is lower than the show had received before it moved to Hawaii, but with the addition of so many more networks, the 3.5 "is a significant number," Bonann said.

"The value of a rating point has gone way up over the last few years; even though our ratings have gone down, the amount of money the distributor makes has gone up," he said. "A 3.5 is worth more today than a 5.0 a few years ago."

The production will travel to the Big Island later this month and Maui next month to film the famous big wave surf spot Jaws.

The production completes its first season of filming in Hawaii in December.