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## Evening news at pre-Couric rankings again

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By Paul J. Gough

NEW YORK (Hollywood Reporter) - After a month of hoopla and intense competition spurred by the arrival of Katie Couric, the evening news race has settled back into a familiar pattern: NBC first, ABC second and CBS in third place.

"NBC Nightly News With Brian Williams" won last week's derby with 8.5 million viewers -- its highest weekly average since late August, and its 114th victory in the past 118 weeks.

It was followed by ABC's "World News With Charles Gibson" (8 million) and "CBS Evening News With Katie Couric" (7 million). There was some good news for CBS, however. The network was up 520,000 viewers from a year ago, when Bob Schieffer was anchoring the news. Schieffer's numbers were themselves on the upswing compared with the year before that.

NBC won all five nights led by the October 2 newscast that reported on the Amish school shootings, with 9.9 million viewers compared with ABC's 8.5 million and CBS' 8.1 million; it was the highest viewership for "NBC Nightly News" since March 21.

In the news demographic of adults 25-54, NBC and ABC tied with 2.2 ratings, though NBC's 2.71 million viewers was slightly higher than ABC's 2.68 million. CBS trailed with a 1.9 rating, equaling 2.34 million viewers in the demo, the lowest of Couric's tenure. Couric's first week averaged a 2.8 rating and she had three weeks of either 2.2s or 2.1s until last week.

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