

Just 4% say it's their favorite sport

Americans to Rest of World: Soccer Not Really Our Thing

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A Social Trends Report

Americans to Rest of World: Soccer Not Really Our Thing

The rest of the planet may be in the grip of World Cup mania, but in the United States, soccer is very much an also-ran in fan popularity.

Just 4% of adults in this country rate soccer as their favorite sport to watch, compared with 34% who say this about football, 14% about basketball and 13% about baseball, according to a Pew Research Center telephone survey conducted from February 8 through March 7, 2006 among a randomly-selected representative national sample of 2,250 adults.

At 4%, soccer is roughly in the same league with auto racing and just ahead of ice hockey and ice skating.

What popularity soccer has in this country is anchored among

Hispanics – 24% of whom say it is their favorite sport, compared with just 1% of non-Hispanic whites and 2% of blacks. Among Hispanics, soccer and football are about equal in popularity, with baseball ranking a strong third.

Looking at fan interest across all sports, the Pew survey finds that just under half (46%) of the adults in the country say they follow sports, with men (57%) more likely to do so than women (35%). These figures have been stable for more than a decade, as has the primacy that football enjoys over all other sports as a fan favorite.

While football is equally popular among blacks and whites, there is a strong racial difference in fan support for basketball and baseball. Among blacks, 31% name basketball as their favorite sport and just 4% name baseball. Among whites, 12% name basketball and 14% name baseball.

Fan Favorites

Favorite sport to watch

	All Adults	Whites*	Blacks*	Hispanics*
	%	%	%	%
Football	34	37	35	21
Basketball	14	12	31	9
Baseball	13	14	4	15
Soccer	4	1	2	24
Auto racing	4	5	1	1
Ice skating	3	3	3	3
Ice hockey	3	4	0	*
Golf	2	3	1	1
Tennis	2	2	3	1
Boxing	2	1	3	3
Wrestling	1	1	*	1
Other	5	5	5	5
None	12	11	11	15
Don't know	1	1	1	1
	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	2,250	1,686	215	239

* Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

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Fantasy Sports Leagues

The survey also finds that 5% of all adults play fantasy sports – a game in which contestants pick real professional athletes to be on their virtual teams, then compete against other virtual teams based on statistics arising from the real-world performances of the players they have chosen.

Men are nine times more likely than women to play in a fantasy league. Younger men are much more likely to do so than older men.

Among the 91 respondents in the Pew survey who report playing fantasy sports, just under half report that they pay money to play and about three quarters say that their league is run on the internet.

Just as it is in the real world, football is the most popular game in the fantasy world, with two-thirds of fantasy players saying they play it, compared with 16% who play fantasy baseball and 13% who play fantasy basketball.

The survey also finds that fantasy only goes so far. Two-thirds of the fantasy players say they get a bigger kick out of a win by their favorite pro team than by their fantasy team.

Perhaps some of them will be following the action in Germany this month.

Are You a Fantasy Sports Player?				
	Yes	No	Don't know*	N
	%	%	%	
All adults	5	92	3=100	2,250
Gender				
Men	9	89	2=100	1,038
Women	1	94	5=100	1,212
Age				
18-29	8	89	3=100	332
30-49	6	92	2=100	799
50-64	2	93	5=100	580
65 and older	1	92	7=100	484
Men by Age				
Men 18-29	14	83	3=100	182
Men 30-49	10	89	1=100	365
Men 50-64	3	95	2=100	276
Men 65 and older	3	90	7=100	191
*Don't know includes those who volunteered that they have never heard of fantasy sports leagues.				
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Which Team Gives the Most Thrill?

Among fantasy sports players

	Among Players
	%
Which gives you more personal satisfaction...	
Win by favorite pro team	66
Win by fantasy team	29
Both/neither (vol.)	3
Don't know	2
	100
Number of respondents	91
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About the Pew Social Trends Reports

The Pew social trends reports explore the behaviors and attitudes of Americans in key realms of their lives – family, community, health, finance, work and leisure. Reports analyze changes over time in social behaviors and probe for differences and similarities between key sub-groups in the population.

The surveys are conducted by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

Survey reports are the result of the collaborative effort of the social trends staff, which consists of:

Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President
 Cary Funk, Senior Project Director
 Peyton Craighill, Project Director

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults, ages 18 years and older, living in continental U.S. telephone households.

- Interviews conducted February 8- March 7, 2006
- 2,250 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level. The margin of sampling error is higher for results based on subgroups of respondents.

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

In addition to sampling error, bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias in the findings of opinion polls.

PEW SOCIAL TRENDS
 FINAL TOPLINE
 FEBRUARY 8 - MARCH 7, 2006
 N=2,250

QUESTIONS 1 – 18 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Now thinking about sports...

Q.19 How closely do you follow sports news either in the newspaper, on television, or on radio? **(READ)**

- 18 Very closely
 - 28 Somewhat closely
 - 22 Not very closely
 - 32 Not at all closely
 - * Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**
- 100

Q.20 What is your favorite sport to watch? **(OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE ONLY, DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL RESPONSE)**

		----- Gallup -----								
		Dec	Dec	Dec	Mar	Mar	Nov	Apr	Sept	Aug
		<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1994</u>
34	Football	38	37	37	28	33	36	32	37	35
14	Basketball	13	14	13	16	16	12	15	13	11
13	Baseball	10	10	12	12	13	16	16	16	21
4	Soccer	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
4	Auto racing	5	5	5	6	5	3	2	2	2
3	Ice skating	4	6	4	4	4	2	2	3	3
3	Ice hockey	3	5	3	3	5	3	3	1	3
2	Golf	2	3	2	4	5	3	4	3	3
2	Tennis	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	2
2	Boxing	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
1	Wrestling	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	1
*	Gymnastics	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	*
5	Other (SPECIFY)	7	4	6	7	3	8	9	5	5
12	None (VOL.)	12	9	10	12	8	9	10	12	10
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Ref (VOL.)	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.21 Have you participated in a fantasy sports league in the past 12 months, or haven't you?

- 5 Yes
 - 92 No
 - 3 Never heard of fantasy sports leagues **(VOL—DO NOT READ)**
 - * Don't know/Refused
- 100

ASK IF FANTASY SPORTS PLAYER (Q21=1):

Q.22 What sport or sports have you done this for in the past 12 months? [OPEN END, PRE-CODED; ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES] [DO NOT READ]

BASED ON FANTASY SPORTS PLAYER [N=91]:

66 Football
 14 Basketball
 16 Baseball
 2 Hockey
 25 Other (**SPECIFY**)
 0 Don't know/Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Q.23 Have you paid any money in order to join this fantasy league? [IF MORE THAN ONE FANTASY LEAGUE PLAYED IN PAST 12 MONTHS ASK ABOUT MOST RECENT LEAGUE]

BASED ON FANTASY SPORTS PLAYER [N=91]:

46 Yes
 53 No
 1 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q.24 Is your fantasy league run on the Internet, or not? [IF MORE THAN ONE FANTASY LEAGUE PLAYED IN PAST 12 MONTHS ASK ABOUT MOST RECENT LEAGUE]

BASED ON FANTASY SPORTS PLAYER [N=91]:

77 Yes
 22 No
 1 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q.25 Which gives you more personal satisfaction, a win by your favorite professional team OR a win by your fantasy team?

BASED ON FANTASY SPORTS PLAYER [N=91]:

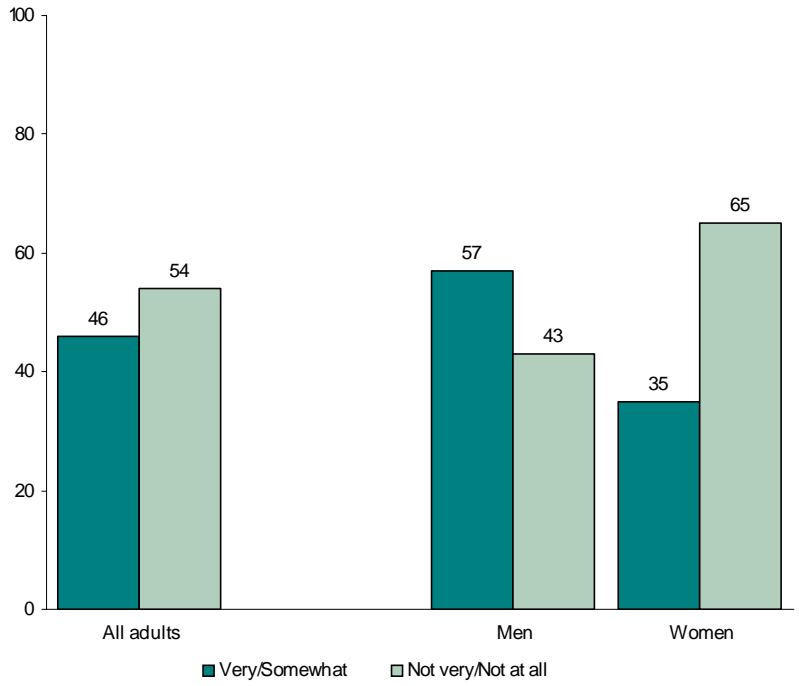
66 Win by your favorite professional team
 29 Win by your fantasy team
 3 Both (**VOL.**)
 0 Neither (**VOL.**)
 2 Don't know/Refused
 100

NO QUESTIONS 26 – 30

QUESTIONS 31 – END IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

Attention to Sports News: It's a Guy Thing

Percentage of Americans who follow sports news by gender



Question wording: How closely do you follow sports news either in the newspaper, on television, or on radio—very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, not at all closely?

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Who's a Sports Fan?

Percentage of Americans who follow sports news "very" or "somewhat" closely



Question wording: How closely do you follow sports news either in the newspaper, on television, or on radio—very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, not at all closely?

*Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

What's Your Favorite?

Favorite sport to watch by interest in sports news

	All Adults	----Follow Sports----	
		Very/ Some- what closely	Not very/ Not at all closely
	%	%	%
Football	34	45	26
Basketball	14	18	11
Baseball	13	14	12
Soccer	4	6	2
Auto racing	4	4	4
Ice skating	3	1	5
Ice hockey	3	3	3
Golf	2	2	3
Tennis	2	2	2
Boxing	2	1	2
Wrestling	1	1	1
Other	5	2	8
None	12	1	20
Don't know	<u>1</u>	*	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100
Number of respondents	2,250	1,029	1,216

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Fantasy Leagues in Detail

Among those who played in a fantasy sports league in the past year

	Fantasy Players
	%
Paid money to play	
Yes	46
No	53
Don't know	<u>1</u>
	100
Run on the internet	
Yes	77
No	22
Don't know	<u>1</u>
	100
Which sport?*	
Football	66
Baseball	16
Basketball	14
Hockey	2
Other	25
Number of respondents	91

*Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

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Are You a Fantasy Sports Player?

	Yes	No	Don't know	N
All adults	5	92	3=100	2,250
How closely do you follow sports news?				
Very/somewhat	9	89	2=100	1,029
Very	15	83	2=100	383
Somewhat	5	92	3=100	646
Not very/not at all	1	95	4=100	1,216

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