

Professional Football Still America's Favorite Sport *Baseball and College Football are Next in Popularity*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – February 5, 2008 – Each of the major sports has had some image problems recently, but their popularity all remains relatively unchanged since last year. Three in ten Americans who follow one or more sport (30%) say that professional football is their favorite sport, almost unchanged from last year when 29 percent said it was their favorite. Coming in at second is baseball, as 15 percent say that is their favorite sport, again almost unchanged from last year when it was 14 percent. Not far behind baseball is college football (12%) and auto racing (10%). All other sports are in single digits.

These are the results of a nationwide Harris Interactive® survey conducted online between January 15 and 22, 2008 among 2,302 U.S. adults, of whom 1,562 follow one or more sport.

Since Harris Interactive began asking this question in 1985, professional football has always been on top and its popularity is now six points higher (from 24% to 30%). Compared to 1985's results, baseball has dropped eight percentage points (from 23% to 15%), and men's tennis has dropped four percentage points (from 5% to 1%). Professional football isn't the only sport to gain in popularity. Auto racing has also increased its popularity by five percentage points (from 5% to 10%) as has hockey (up 3 percentage points from 2% to 5%).

Demographic Variations

The survey also finds some sizable differences between different segments of the population:

- **Pro football** is most popular among those with household incomes of \$50,000 to under \$75,000 (39%), among those ages 25-29 (37%) and 65 and older (35%) and Easterners (34%). Hispanics (20%) and those with a post graduate education (23%) are least likely to call football their favorite sport;
- **Baseball** is most popular among Easterners (21%), those aged 30-39 (21%) and Democrats (20%). Southerners (8%) and those aged 65 and older (9%) are least likely to say baseball is their favorite sport;
- **College football** is particularly popular among those with a college degree (22%) and Southerners (20%). Just three percent of those who live in the East cite college football as their favorite sport;
- **Auto racing** (which includes NASCAR) is most popular among those aged 30-39 (14%), Southerners (13%) and Conservatives (13%), while it fares worst among Hispanics (1%), and those waged 18-24 (4%).

**TABLE 1
FAVORITE SPORTS**

"If you had to choose, which ONE of these sports would you say is your favorite?"

Base: All adults who follow one or more sport

	1985	1989	1992	1993	1994	1997	1998
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pro football	24	26	28	24	24	28	26
Baseball	23	19	21	18	17	17	18
College football	10	6	7	8	7	10	9
Auto racing	5	4	5	6	5	5	7
Hockey	2	3	3	3	5	4	3
Men's pro basketball	6	7	8	12	11	13	13
Men's college basketball	6	10	8	8	8	6	4
Men's golf	3	4	4	6	5	6	4
Men's soccer	3	2	2	1	3	3	4
Horse racing	4	3	3	2	2	2	2
Men's tennis	5	4	4	4	3	3	4
Bowling	3	5	2	2	1	1	2
Track & field	2	2	1	1	2	2	3
Boxing	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Women's college basketball	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1
Women's tennis	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Women's golf	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Women's pro basketball	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	*
Women's soccer	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Not sure	*	1	4	1	2	2	1
Pro football's lead over baseball	1	7	7	6	7	11	8

Note 1: NA = Not asked in that year. Men and women's sports were not always distinguished

Note 2: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Note 3: "*" indicates less than 0.5%. "-" indicates no response.

TABLE 1 (continued)
FAVORITE SPORTS

"If you had to choose, which ONE of these sports would you say is your favorite?"

Base: All adults who follow one or more sport

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2008	CHANGE 1985-2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pro football	27	29	30	33	29	30	+6
Baseball	14	13	15	14	14	15	-8
College football	9	9	11	13	13	12	+2
Auto racing	10	9	7	11	9	10	+5
Hockey	3	3	4	5	4	5	+3
Men's pro basketball	11	10	7	4	7	4	-2
Men's college basketball	4	6	6	5	5	4	-2
Men's golf	4	5	4	4	4	4	+1
Men's soccer	3	3	3	2	2	2	-1
Horse racing	1	2	1	2	1	2	-2
Bowling	2	1	1	1	1	2	-1
Men's tennis	1	2	1	1	2	1	-4
Track & field	1	3	1	*	2	1	-1
Boxing	NA	NA	2	2	1	1	NA
Women's college basketball	1	*	1	*	1	1	NA
Women's tennis	3	2	2	1	1	*	NA
Women's golf	NA	1	*	*	1	*	NA
Women's pro basketball	1	1	*	*	*	*	NA
Women's soccer	NA	NA	1	*	*	*	NA
Not sure	3	1	2	2	3	2	-
Pro football's lead over baseball	13	16	15	19	15	15	+14

Note 1: NA = Not asked in that year. Men and women's sports were not always distinguished

Note 2: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Note 3: "*" indicates less than 0.5%. "-" indicates no response.

TABLE 2
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS IN FAVORITE SPORTS

"If you had to choose, which ONE of these sports would you say is your favorite?"

Base: All adults who follow more than one sport

Sport	All Adults %	Highest		Lowest	
			%		%
Pro football	30	\$50,000-\$74,999	39	Hispanics	20
		Those aged 25-29	37	Post graduate	23
		Those 65 and older	35	Liberals	24
		Easterners	34	College graduates	25
Baseball	15	Easterners	21	South	8
		Those 30-39	21	Those 65 and older	9
		Democrats	20	Republicans	13
College Football	12	College graduates	22	Easterners	3
		Southerners	20	African Americans	5
		Republicans	19	\$35,000 - \$49,999	7
Auto Racing	10	Those aged 30-39	14	Hispanics	1
		Southerners	13	Those aged 18-24	4
		Conservatives	13	College graduates	5

Methodology

This Harris Poll® was conducted online within the United States January 15 and 22, among 2,302 adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 1,562 follow one or more sport. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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About Harris Interactive

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To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at www.harrispollonline.com.

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