



STILLMAN SCHOOL
OF BUSINESS
The Sharkey Institute

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Seton Hall Sports Poll

INTEREST IN SUPER BOWL DOWN, REFLECTING SEASON-LONG VIEWING TRENDS;

Slow Migration to Devices Other Than TV Continues

22% Look Forward to Commercials More than the Game

S. Orange, NJ, February 1, 2018 -- Reflecting a season-long decline in viewership, a Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted this week shows 54% of Americans planning on watching Sunday's Super Bowl, down from 68% when the same question was asked two years ago.

Interestingly, of those who identified themselves as people who "closely follow" the NFL, 16% say they won't be watching.

"16% of people who identify themselves as NFL fans is a significant number and reflects the trend of declining ratings that we've seen all season," noted Rick Gentile, director of the poll, which is sponsored by the Sharkey Institute. "That this seems to be impacting Super Bowl viewership should be a concern to the league, the broadcasters and especially the advertisers."

The poll was conducted January 29-31 with random calls to 706 adults on landlines and cellphones across the country, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.8%.

Another factor might be the return of the New England Patriots, with 20% of the population feeling less inclined to root for them. 12% said they were more inclined, and 62% said there was no difference.

Another slow trend that the league and broadcasters are surely watching is the migration of viewers from traditional TV to alternate devices. In 2016, 98% said they would be watching the game on television - this year, the number is down to 90%, with 10% citing other devices or a combination of TV and other devices.

22% said they were most looking forward to the game's commercials, with 61% most looking forward to the game, and 14% the halftime show. Among men, 76% said they most looked forward to the game, and 11% the commercials. Among women, 47% cited "the game," and 32% "commercials." 60% of the population said they watched the commercials more closely than on other TV shows, and a third of African-American respondents said they most looked forward to the halftime show.

The national anthem (stand or kneel) remains a matter of interest to the public, with 27% approving a player protest during the playing of the anthem at the start of the Super Bowl and 44% disapproving, with 25% having no opinion. The question was also asked of regular season viewing to see if the higher profile of the Super Bowl mattered, and it was a similar breakdown. These numbers are consistent with previous polls dating back to September 2016.

Finally, wrestling mogul Vince McMahon's plans to bring back his football league in 2020 (the XFL), attracted interest in following by 27% of the public, and while 61% said they had no interest. 47% of people who identified as NFL fans said they were interested. "This seems like a respectable starting point for McMahon's plan," said Gentile.

The Official Seton Hall Sports Poll podcast discussing this topic with Seth Everett and Rick Gentile can be found at <https://itunes.apple.com/mt/podcast/seton-hall-sports-poll/id1053266467>.

ABOUT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

One of the country's leading Catholic universities, Seton Hall University has been a catalyst for leadership — developing students in mind, heart and spirit — since 1856. Home to nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and offering more than 90 academic programs, Seton Hall's academic excellence has been singled out for distinction by The Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report and Bloomberg Businessweek.

Seton Hall, which embraces students of all religions, prepares its graduates to be exemplary servant leaders and global citizens. Its attractive main campus is located in suburban South Orange, New Jersey, and is only 14 miles by train, bus or car from New York City, offering a wealth of employment, internship, cultural and entertainment opportunities. The university's nationally recognized School of Law is prominently located in downtown Newark.

For more information, visit www.shu.edu.

About the poll:

This poll was conducted by telephone January 29-31 among 706 adults in the United States. The Seton Hall Sports Poll is conducted by the Sharkey Institute.

Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard landline and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus 3.8 percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The Seton Hall Sports Poll has been conducted regularly since 2006.

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The results:

1. Will you be watching the upcoming Super Bowl between the New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles?

- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 54% |
| 2. No | 43 |
| 3. Don't know | 4 |

(IF NO SKIP TO QUESTION 5)

2. Will you be watching on TV, a mobile device such as phone or tablet, or both TV and a device?

- | | |
|---------------|----|
| 1. TV | 90 |
| 2. Device | 3 |
| 3. Both | 5 |
| 4. Don't know | 2 |

3. Which part of the Super Bowl broadcast do you look forward to the most, the game, the halftime or the commercials?

- | | |
|----------------|----|
| 1. Game | 61 |
| 2. Halftime | 14 |
| 3. Commercials | 22 |

4. Do you tend to watch commercials in the Super Bowl more closely, less closely or about the same as in other TV shows?

- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| 1. More closely | 60 |
| 2. Less closely | 7 |
| 3. About the same | 31 |
| 4. Don't know | 2 |

5. Does the recent success of the Patriots make you more inclined to root for them to win this year's game, less inclined or does it not make any difference in whom you will root for?

- | | |
|------------------|----|
| 1. More inclined | 12 |
| 2. Less inclined | 20 |
| 3. No difference | 62 |
| 4. Don't know | 6 |

6. Did you approve, disapprove or have no opinion about players protesting during the playing of the National Anthem throughout the season?

- | | |
|---------------|----|
| 1. Approve | 28 |
| 2. Disapprove | 46 |
| 3. No opinion | 25 |
| 4. Don't know | 1 |

7. Do you approve, disapprove or have no opinion about players protesting during the playing of the National Anthem prior to the Super Bowl, the most watched game of the year?

- | | |
|---------------|----|
| 1. Approve | 27 |
| 2. Disapprove | 44 |
| 3. No opinion | 25 |
| 4. Don't know | 4 |

8. Would you be more likely to buy a product advertised on the Super Bowl, less likely or does it make no difference?

1. More likely	6
2. Less likely	13
3. Makes no difference	78
4. Don't know	2

9. How closely do you follow the NFL, very closely, closely, not closely or not at all?

1. Very closely	16
2. Closely	26
3. Not closely	24
4. Not at all	33
5. Don't know	2

10. Wrestling mogul Vince McMahon announced last week that he was starting a new professional football league, the XFL in January of 2020. Will you be interested in following another pro football league?

1. Yes	27
2. No	61
3. Don't know/No opinion	13