



STILLMAN SCHOOL
OF BUSINESS
The Sharkey Institute

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Seton Hall Sports Poll

Seton Hall Sports Poll Examines LeBron James Popularity

**AMERICANS TO LeBRON:
'OK TO CHANGE TEAMS, BUT WHAT A MESS YOU MADE OF IT'**

"Favorable" Impression By Fans Ranks Below Kobe, Tiger, Other Sports Stars

S. Orange, NJ, October 20, 2010 – Americans accepted LeBron James's decision to change teams by nearly a 2-1 margin, but strongly rejected aspects of his process, according to a poll conducted this week by the Seton Hall Sports Poll in conjunction with ESPN.

James's move, from the Cleveland Cavaliers to the Miami Heat on July 9 in a televised announcement on ESPN, was viewed favorably by 41% of the 923 respondents to the national telephone survey, with only 22% thinking that his decision to switch teams was not a good one.

His handling of the free agent process however, seems to have cut into his popularity quite deeply, with only 2% saying they now view him more favorably, and 22% less favorably. 52% registered no difference.

Asked whether they are more likely or less likely to buy LeBron James merchandise this season, only 3% said more likely while 21% said less likely despite his new uniform. Asked about whether more or less likely to watch him on TV, 14% said more likely and 15% said less.

"LeBron seems to have had some missteps in a process that could have gone much more smoothly," noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. "It's a shame, because few begrudged him his chance to take advantage of his free agency."

Among those who viewed him less favorably, 64% said his decision to announce on a one-hour televised special had a large impact on their feelings and 73% felt not telling the Cavaliers about his decision before the announcement had a large impact.

In simply "favorable vs. unfavorable" impressions of current sports stars, the poll found 36% viewing James favorably, vs. 19% unfavorably. For Tiger Woods, the result was 40%-38%. For Kobe Bryant it was 48%-26%. For Derek Jeter, it was 45%-11%. For Brett Favre, it was 53%-13%. (The poll was conducted last week, prior to the report by Deadspin.com of Favre's flirtation with a female sideline reporter when he played for the New York Jets in 2008).

The poll has a margin of error due to sampling of 3% for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

About Seton Hall University

For more than 150 years, Seton Hall University has been a catalyst for leadership, developing the whole student, mind, heart and spirit. Seton Hall combines the resources of a large university with the personal attention of a small liberal arts college. Its attractive suburban campus is only 14 miles from New York City, with the wealth of employment, internship, cultural and entertainment opportunities the city offers. Seton Hall is a Catholic university that embraces students of all races and religions, challenging each to better the world through integrity, compassion and a commitment to serving others. For more information, visit www.shu.edu.

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QUESTIONNAIRE
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YOUR OPINION OF SEVERAL PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES: FAVORABLE, UNFAVORABLE OR YOU DON'T KNOW ENOUGH?

1. Tiger Woods?

1 – Favorable	40%
2 – Unfavorable	38

2. LeBron James?

1 – Favorable	36
2 – Unfavorable	19

3. Kobe Bryant?

1 – Favorable	48
2 – Unfavorable	26

4. Brett Favre?

1 – Favorable	53
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2 – Unfavorable 13

5. Derek Jeter?

1 – Favorable 45

2 – Unfavorable 11

6. Tiger Woods recently competed in the Ryder Cup international golf tournament. Given the recent controversy about him, do you think it was appropriate that he represented the United States in the competition?

1 – Yes 62

2 – No 19

7. How likely are you to buy LeBron James merchandise this season as compared to last season: more likely, less likely or about the same likelihood?

1 – More likely 3

2 – Less likely 21

3 – About the same 54

8. How likely are you to watch a televised game involving LeBron James this season as compared to last season: more likely, less likely or about the same likelihood?

1 – More likely 14

2 – Less likely 15

3 – About the same 52

9. Thinking back to last season, would you say LeBron James was your favorite player, one of your favorites, not one of your favorites, one of your least favorites or least favorite player?

1 – Favorite 2

2 – One of favorites 25

3 – Not one of favorites 28

4 – One of least favorites 7

5 – Least favorite 6

10. As an NBA free agent, LeBron James announced that he was leaving Cleveland to join Miami during this past off-season. Do you think his decision to switch teams was a good one?

1 – Yes	41
2 – No	22

11. After he made his announcement would you say he was your favorite player, one of your favorites, not one of your favorites, one of your least favorites or least favorite player?

1 – Favorite	1
2 – One of favorites	20
3 – Not one of favorites	25
4 – One of least favorites	10
5 – Least favorite	8

12. Did the way LeBron James handle the entire free agent process and eventual signing with Miami make you think of him more favorably, less favorably or did it make no difference?

1 – More favorably	2
2 – Less favorably	22
3 – No difference	52

(IF “LESS FAVORABLY” TO ABOVE)

To what degree did the following aspects of his decision making process impact your unfavorable feelings towards him:

13. His decision to make his announcement on a one-hour televised special.

1 – Large impact	64
2 – Some impact	21
3 – No impact	11

14. Him not telling his former team (the Cleveland Cavaliers) before making his announcement on television.

1 – Large impact	73
2 – Some impact	17
3 – No impact	8

15. His statement “I’m taking my talents to South Beach”.

1 – Large impact	41
2 – Some impact	16
3 – No impact	37

16. The decision to join Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh on a “super team”.

1 – Large impact	26
2 – Some impact	23
3 – No impact	44

17. The big spectacle reception in Miami.

1 – Large impact	39
2 – Some impact	20
3 – No impact	36

18. His statement that Miami would win “not one, not two, not three, not four” championships.

1 – Large impact	41
2 – Some impact	19
3 – No impact	28