



STILLMAN SCHOOL  
OF BUSINESS  
*The Sharkey Institute*

## SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

### *Seton Hall Sports Poll*

#### BALLS AND STRIKES VIA COMPUTER? BASEBALL FANS SHOUT 'KEEP THE UMPIRE'

##### *One Third Think Undetected Drugs Are Driving All Those Homers*

South Orange, NJ, October 26, 2017 — In a week in which a record number of home runs were hit in a single World Series game.....and post-season coverage provides continuous use of the strike zone boundaries for each pitch.....fans are clear that they want umpires - and not a computer - calling balls and strikes.....but also suspicious of the use of performing enhancing drugs driving all those homers.

These were among the findings in the latest Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted this week across the nation among 715 adults, on landlines and cellphones. The baseball data is based on the 62% of respondents that follow baseball and has a margin of error of 4.8%.

Perhaps driven by the umpire calls when the strike zone box is up, (or perhaps just by being traditionalists), a strong 75% preferred that the umpire make the ball-strike calls, with only 11% opting for computer calls. (14% had no opinion).

"Either fans are leaning toward the more traditional way of doing things or they simply don't want to give up their God-given right to bash the umpire for missing ball and strike calls," said Rick Gentle, director of the poll, which is sponsored by The Sharkey Institute as part of the university's Stillman School of Business."

On the matter of home runs, of which a record number were hit this season in the Major Leagues, respondents were asked to say "yes" or "no" to a variety of factors.

##### Reasons for Record Number of Home Runs:

	Yes	No
A more lively ball	29	40
Undetected use of PEDs	31	46

Improved batting techniques	62	20
Hitters more focused on HRs	55	24
Bad pitching	28	48

“While performance enhancing drugs are not among the top reasons, the fact that nearly 1 in 3 fans think it’s still part of the game should be alarming to the Commissioner’s Office,” noted Gentile.

“Obviously the balls are juiced,” Houston pitcher Dallas Keuchel told USA Today, today. “I think they’re juiced 100%.”

On pace-of-play, another much discussed issue among baseball people, fans were pretty evenly divided, favoring by 43%-40% a rule restricting in-inning mound meetings....but stayed traditional on limiting in-inning pitching changes, voting “no” by 57%-26%.

“The latter would be a major rule change which would need approval of the player’s union as well as the Commissioner’s Office, and clearly among fans, there is no desire to go there,” said Gentile.

The Poll also asked, “how often would you say you watch an entire live post-season baseball game,” with 45% saying “occasionally,” 26% saying “often” and 17% saying “never”.

The Official Seton Hall Sports Poll podcast discussing this topic with Seth Everett and Rick Gentile will be posted later today.

### ***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](http://www.shu.edu).

### ***About the poll:***

This poll was conducted by telephone October 23-25 among 715 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. How closely would you say you follow baseball, very closely, closely, not closely or not at all?
  1. Very closely 11
  2. Closely 23
  3. Not closely 30
  4. Not at all 37

**(IF “NOT AT ALL” SKIP TO DEMOGRAPHICS)**

2. This season, more home runs were hit in the major leagues than ever in history. Please tell me which of the following reasons you think could be responsible, a more lively ball?
  1. Yes 29
  2. No 40
  3. Don't know/No opinion 32
3. Undetected use of performance enhancing drugs by players
  1. Yes 31
  2. No 46
  3. Don't know/No opinion 23
4. Improved batting techniques
  1. Yes 62
  2. No 20
  3. Don't know/No opinion 19
5. Hitters more focused on home run hitting
  1. Yes 55
  2. No 24
  3. Don't know/No opinion 22
6. Bad pitching
  1. Yes 28
  2. No 48
  3. Don't know/No opinion 25

7. How often would you say you watch an entire live post-season baseball game, often, occasionally or never?
- |                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Often                 | 26 |
| 2. Occasionally          | 45 |
| 3. Never                 | 17 |
| 4. Don't know/No opinion | 12 |
8. Would you be in favor of a rule restricting the number of in-inning mound meetings in an attempt to speed up the game?
- |                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Yes                   | 43 |
| 2. No                    | 40 |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion | 17 |
9. Would you be in favor of a rule restricting the number in-inning pitching changes in an attempt to speed up the game?
- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| 1. Yes        | 26 |
| 2. No         | 57 |
| 3. Don't know | 17 |
10. Would you like to see balls and strikes called by a computer rather than an umpire behind home plate?
- |                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Computer              | 11 |
| 2. Umpire                | 75 |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion | 14 |