



**BY 3-1, AMERICANS SAY ASTROS INVESTIGATION WAS A COVER UP
AND PLAYERS NEED TO BE PUNISHED**

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**17% less inclined to follow baseball because of handling of Astros scandal;
63% Have Less Respect for US Government
Following Impeachment Proceedings**

South Orange, NJ - February 27, 2020 -- By a sizeable margin, a majority of Americans feel that individual players should have been punished by MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred for their role in the sign stealing scandal surrounding the Houston Astros.

Fifty-four percent, responding to a national Seton Hall Sports Poll this week, said yes to punishing players in what was acknowledged as a player-driven scheme. Only 17 percent felt they should not be punished. Twenty-nine percent said they don't know or had no opinion.

This was consistent with public opinion in the first week of this month when 52 percent said the Astros world championship should have been taken away, and 35 percent said it should not.

The Poll was administered this week to 693 adults across the country on landlines and cellphones. It has a +/- 3.8 percent margin of error.

Manfred's explanation for not punishing the players was his need to grant immunity to get the players to testify. Only 14 percent felt the investigation was a serious effort, while 49 percent said it was a cover up. Thirty-six percent didn't know or had no opinion.

Pete Rose weighed in after MLB's findings to say the lack of punishment of players should clear the way for his being made eligible for Hall of Fame induction. Fifty-seven percent felt he should be made eligible, with 25 percent saying no. There was no change from when the same question was asked four years ago (56 percent said yes, 25 percent said no). However, when

asked if the Astros situation should have bearing on Rose's eligibility, 30 percent said yes and 58 percent said no.

"Rose's support has been stable over the four years, so at first glance it appears that the Astros situation has had no bearing, noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, which is sponsored by the Sharkey Institute within the Stillman School of Business. "However, with 30 percent saying that the Astros make his case stronger, this may be a good argument for Rose to keep making."

Former Boston Red Sox star David Ortiz stated that the pitcher who "blew the whistle" on the scandal (Mike Fiers) did so while with Oakland, after reaping the benefits of the 2017 world championship trophy, ring and winning share. Ortiz felt he should have said something while still with Houston. Fifty-five percent agreed with Big Papi, and 24 percent disagreed. Twenty-one percent had no opinion.

SPORTS LEAGUES FARE BETTER IN PUBLIC OPINION THAN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

The Poll asked a series of questions that took a measurement of how the public views league handling of recent sports issues compared with the government's handling of impeachment. For MLB's handling of the Astros scandal, 17 percent is less inclined to follow the game and only seven percent of the public more inclined. It has no effect on 70 percent of the public.

For the NFL's handling of the risk of permanent brain injury, 20 percent is less inclined to follow the league, 12 percent more inclined and it has no effect on 61 percent.

In the wake of the NBA's handling of events following the death of Kobe Bryant, seven percent is less inclined to follow the league and 15 percent is more inclined to follow the league. 75 percent say it has no effect.

But when it comes to the U.S. Government following the impeachment proceedings, 63 percent expressed less respect for the government, and only eight percent more respect. Only 22 percent said it had no effect.

"Our Poll indicated that the Astros situation has taken a toll on the public's respect for MLB and the NFL has been similarly challenged," said Gentile. "But this is a small loss of confidence compared to the results of the impeachment hearings."

ABOUT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

One of the country's leading Catholic universities, Seton Hall has been showing the world what great minds can do since 1856. Home to nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and offering more than 90 rigorous 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 embraces students of all religions and prepares them to be exemplary servant leaders and global citizens. In recent years, the University has achieved extraordinary success. Since 2009, it has seen record-breaking undergraduate enrollment growth and an impressive 110-point increase in the average SAT scores of incoming freshmen. In the past decade, Seton Hall students and alumni have received more than 30 Fulbright Scholarships as well as other prestigious academic honors, including Boren Awards, Pickering Fellowships, Udall Scholarships and a Rhodes Scholarship. The University is also proud to be the third most diverse national Catholic university in the nation.

During the past five years, the University has invested more than \$165 million in new campus buildings and renovations. And in 2015, Seton Hall launched a School of Medicine as well as a College of Communication and the Arts. The University's beautiful main campus in suburban South Orange, N.J. is only 14 miles from New York City — offering students a wealth of employment, internship, cultural and entertainment opportunities. Seton Hall's nationally recognized School of Law is located prominently in downtown Newark. The University's Interprofessional Health Sciences (IHS) campus in Clifton and Nutley, N.J. opened in the summer of 2018. The IHS campus houses the University's College of Nursing, School of Health and Medical Sciences and the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine at Seton Hall University.

For more information, visit www.shu.edu.

About the poll:

This poll was conducted by telephone February 24-26 among adults in the United States. The Seton Hall Sports Poll is conducted by the Sharkey Institute within the Stillman School of Business. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard landline and cell phones. 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. Recently chosen for inclusion in iPoll by Cornell's Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, its findings have been published everywhere from USA Today, ESPN, The New York Times, Washington Post, AP, and Reuters to Fox News and most points in between.

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The results:

1. The controversy continues surrounding the punishment of the Houston Astros by MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred for illegal sign stealing during their 2017 season and World Series Championship. Do you think the Commissioner should have punished the players in what has been acknowledged as a player-driven scheme?

1 - Yes	54%
2 - No	17
3 - Don't know/No opinion	29

2. The commissioner's explanation for not penalizing the players is that they were granted immunity as an incentive to testifying in the investigation of the scheme. Do you think the investigation was a serious effort to punish wrongdoing or a cover up?

1 - Serious effort	14
2 - Cover up	49
3 - Don't know/No opinion	36

3. Former Red Sox great David Ortiz has said the pitcher who blew the whistle on the Astros scandal did not act honorably because he should have said something while still on the Astros instead of reaping the benefits of the World Series Championship and then exposing the scandal after he was traded. Do you agree with Ortiz or disagree?

1 - Agree	55
2 - Disagree	24
3 - Don't know/No opinion	21

4. Do you think Pete Rose should be made eligible to be inducted into the Hall of Fame?

1 - Yes	57
2 - No	25
3 - Don't know/No opinion	18

5. Pete Rose has suggested that the lack of punishment for Astros' players for cheating should clear the way for his being considered for induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame despite his having confessed to gambling on baseball games while an active Major League manager. Do you think the Astros situation should have any bearing on Rose's eligibility for induction?

1 - Yes	30
2 - No	58
3 - Don't know/No opinion	12

6. Has the way Major League Baseball handled the Astros cheating scandal made you more inclined to follow the game, less inclined to follow the game or has it had no effect on your interest in baseball?

1 - More inclined	7
2 - Less inclined	17
3 - No effect	70
4 - Don't know/No opinion	6

7. Has the way the National Football League handles the risk of permanent brain injury to its players made you more inclined to follow the NFL, less inclined, or has it had no effect on your interest in the NFL?

1 - More inclined	12
2 - Less inclined	20
3 - No effect	61
4 - Don't know/No opinion	7

8. Has the way the National Basketball Association dealt with the tragic death of Kobe Bryant made you more inclined to follow professional basketball, less inclined or has it had no effect on your interest in professional basketball?

1 - More inclined	15
2 - Less inclined	7
3 - No effect	75
4 - Don't know/No opinion	3

9. Has the way Congress handled the impeachment trial of President Trump given you more respect for the U.S. Government, less respect for the Government or has had no effect on your respect for the Government?

1 - More respect	8
2 - Less respect	63
3 - No effect	22
4 - Don't know/No opinion	7

10. The NFL has suggested making some dramatic changes to its regular season schedule. The season would be extended to 17 games, reducing the pre-season games to 3 for each team. Which of the following do you most agree with:

1 - I'm for it because it's more football	31
2 - I'm against it because things were fine the way they were	24
3 - I'm against it because an additional game means additional risk of injury for players	28
4- Don't Know/No Opinion	17

11. Have you watched any part of an XFL game during the first 3 weeks of the inaugural season?

1 - Yes	26
2 - No	72
3 - Don't know	3

IF YES TO ABOVE

12. Do you think the XFL broadcast presentation is more interesting than a typical NFL broadcast, less interesting or about the same?

1 - More interesting	27
2 - Less interesting	24
3 - About the same	48
4 - Don't know/No opinion	1