

Seton Hall Sports Poll on the BCS

OVER 60% OF AMERICANS AGREE WITH OBAMA THAT BCS SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A PLAYOFF SYSTEM

But Overwhelming Majority Say, "Stay Out of It"

BCS SYSTEM IS FOUND WANTING BY LARGE MAJORITY OF FANS, WITH LITTLE IMPROVEMENT OVER LAST TWO YEARS

S. Orange, NJ, December 8, 2008 – Sixty-two percent of Americans have told a Seton Hall Sports Poll that they agree with President-Elect Barack Obama's call that the current BCS system for a national collegiate football champion should be replaced by an 8-team playoff.

Only 16% disagreed with his call for a playoff system. 35% think that his call will make a difference to those in charge.

However, 76% of those who responded to the telephone poll said that the President-elect should "stay out of it," while only 10% said he should use his influence. Obama said in an interview last month that he "would throw his weight around a little bit."

Fans who follow college football remain solidly behind the idea of a playoff system. A Seton Hall Sports Poll in December 2006 found 78% of these fans calling for a tournament. Two years later, with this latest poll, the number is at 77%, a statistical dead-heat.

One improvement found in the poll is that today 44% of who call themselves college football fans are very, or somewhat familiar with the BCS system, a seven percent increase from two years ago.

A majority also said Obama should stay out of all sports issues, including performance-enhancing drug use, and off-field misconduct.

"The confusion over the BCS system and the want of a playoff remains clear, said Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by the Sharkey Institute. "What is also clear is that our incoming President is a passionate fan who is in the majority in his desire to see the system changed."

By 48%-23% (with 29% not voicing an opinion), the national sample agreed that Obama's plan for an 8-team playoff was the way to go. When broken down among those who said they followed college football very or somewhat closely, 63% agreed with Mr. Obama, but 82% said "stay out of it."

On the matter of the President-elect involving himself in other sports issues, 54% of all respondents said he should not involve himself, with only 23% supporting his involvement in the issue of performance-enhancing drugs.

Asked what sort of a playoff would be preferred if that system was adopted, those who follow college football found 38% favoring an 8-team playoff, with 33% citing 16 teams, and 12% voting for a 4-team playoff.

Even among those who follow the game, 27% said that college football did a poor job of selecting the national champion each year.

In response to other poll questions, 31% of all respondents felt that GM dropping Tiger Woods as a Buick spokesman was a sign of that corporations will be ending their sponsorships of sporting events and athletes, with 48% saying "no" to that inquiry. Only 38% were able to identify Buick as the car he endorsed, with 63% either not knowing or naming a different car.

74% of all respondents said they were concerned about a bailout for Citicorp while the financial institution was still going through with paying \$400 million for the naming rights to the new Mets' stadium in New York.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of 932 adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States between December 3-5, 2008, with 419 of them identifying themselves as college football fans. The poll was weighted to reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.3% percentage points 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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The results:

First column applies to all respondents. Second column applies to those who follow college football (very or somewhat), shown only in questions that require breakdown. Numbers are rounded off, causing some to add up to more than 100%.

1. To what extent do you follow college football: very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all?

1 - Very closely	18%
2 - Somewhat closely	28%
3 - Not very closely	19%

4 - Not at all 34%

2. Do you think college football does a good job, fair job, or poor job of selecting the national champion each year?

1 - Good job	24%	31%
2 - Fair job	25%	33%
3 - Poor job	18%	27%

3. Do you think there should be a tournament for college football teams along the lines of the basketball tournament in March?

1 - Yes	63%	77%
2 - No	16%	18%

4. (If yes to Question 3) How many teams do you think should be included in the championship tournament: 4, 8, 16, 32 or some other amount of teams?

Four	11%	12%
Eight	34%	38%
Sixteen	33%	33%
Thirty-two	8%	6%
Other	8%	8%

5. College football uses a complex ranking system called the BCS poll. How familiar are you with the various components that make up the BCS formula? Are you very familiar, somewhat familiar, not very familiar, or not at all familiar?

1 - Very familiar	6%	12%
2 - Somewhat familiar	19%	32%
3 - Not very familiar	19%	28%
4 - Not at all familiar	44%	26%

6. What do you believe would be the best system for ranking the college football teams: winning percentage, coaches' poll, media poll, or the BCS computer rankings?

1 - Winning percentage	39%	43%
2 - Coaches' poll	15%	23%
3 - Media poll	4%	5%
4 - BCS computer rankings	13%	17%
5 - Other	4%	5%

7. Do you think the BCS formula should be altered to give ALL Division IA football teams an equal opportunity to play for the National Championship?

1 - Yes	61%	71%
2 - No	12%	18%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	27%	11%

8. President-elect Obama has called for the replacement of the BCS with an 8-team playoff. Do you agree with him?

1 - Yes	48%	63%
2 - No	23%	23%

9. Do you think the president-elect should use his influence to change the way the college football championship is decided or should he stay out of it?

1 - Should use his influence	11%	13%
2 - Should stay out of it	76%	82%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	14%	5%

10. Do you think it will make a difference to those in charge of the BCS that the president-elect wants a playoff system?

1 - Yes	35%	36%
2 - No	42%	53%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	23%	12%

11. If president-elect Obama were to involve himself in only one of the following sports issues, which one should it be: college football championship, performance enhancing drug use by athletes, off-field misconduct by athletes, or should he not involve himself in any sports issues?

1 - College football championship	6%
2 - Performance enhancing drug use by athletes	23%
3 - Off-field misconduct by athletes	5%
4 - Should not involve himself	54%
5 - Don't know/refuse to answer	12%

12. By mutual agreement, General Motors and Tiger Woods ended their 9-year endorsement deal with one year remaining. Do you think that GM and Tiger Woods ending their endorsement deal is a sign that corporations will be ending their sponsorships of sporting events?

1 - Yes	31%
2 - No	48%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	21%

13. Which brand of General Motors car did Tiger Woods endorse?

1 - Buick	38%
2 - Other	9%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	54%

14. Does it concern you that the taxpayers are bailing out Citicorp with 326 billion dollars while it is still going through with paying 400 million dollars for the naming rights to the new Mets' stadium in New York?

1 - Yes	73%
2 - No	11%
3 - Don't know/refuse to answer	16%

