

## **SETON HALL SPORTS POLL FINDS 66% WITH LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN ALEX RODRIGUEZ STEROID STORIES**

***“Good News for Baseball; Fans May Have Had Their Fill,” Says Poll Director***

### **Public Weighs In on ‘Citi Field’ Naming Rights; Michael Phelps**

S. Orange, NJ, February 12, 2009 – Despite enormous media attention to the story of Alex Rodriguez’s use of steroids, 66% of the public finds little or no interest in the story, with only 31% saying they found it to be of high or some interest. Even among those identifying themselves as “sports fans,” 64% registered little or no interest.

This was the finding from the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute, which randomly called 1,053 people across the nation this week.

“This is probably good news for MLB,” said Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll. “The public seems to have moved on. The shock factor may be over. Give MLB credit – the public may feel this problem is fixed, the game has moved on, and they have had their fill of this.”

A-Rod had a 30% favorable rating from the public, with 38% coming in as unfavorable, well below the 53% “unfavorable” result for Barry Bonds. Asked about Bonds, the public was 22% favorable.

Even with unfavorable publicity, swimmer Michael Phelps retains a favorable view from the public, with 62% in his corner to 25% unfavorable. Sixty-nine percent felt Kellogg’s dropping him as a spokesman was justified, and 56% felt his three-month suspension by the US Swimming team was appropriate.

“Unlike the steroid issue, there was no question of cheating in his sport,” noted Gentile. “He misbehaved, paid appropriate penalties, but remains in the public favor.”

Meanwhile, on the matter of Citigroup receiving bailout funds and continuing to spend money for naming rights at Citi Field, the new home of the Mets, 64% of respondents felt that Citigroup should make an effort to get out of the deal, even if it had to pay a substantial penalty.

“Just what is involved in Citigroup getting out of the Mets deal is unknown right now, but the public is not satisfied with Citigroup continuing to conduct business as usual while taking in public funds.” says Gentile.

The public distain for corporate promotion by companies receiving bailouts also includes spending on sports.

Sixty-five percent of the public felt it was not acceptable to ask the public to pay for construction of arenas or stadiums for professional sports franchises even if it means keeping the franchise in their city.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States. The poll was weighted to reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.2

percentage points for most estimates. The margin is +/-4.0% for just sports fans. 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](http://www.shu.edu).

*Contact: Marty Appel Public Relations 212 245-1772  
Rick Gentile 917 881-9489*

### **SETON HALL SPORTS POLL – FEB 9-11**

Citigroup, one of the companies that has received government assistance, has agreed to a deal for naming rights to the new Mets' stadium in New York for a reported total of 400 million dollars over a period of 20 years. Do you think Citigroup should make an effort to get out of the deal even if it has to pay a substantial penalty?

1 – Yes	64%
2 – No	22%

Do you think it's acceptable for the public to be asked to pay for construction of arenas or stadiums for professional sports franchises if it means keeping the franchise in their city?

1 – Yes	29%
2 – No	65%

Please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these people – or if you have never heard of them. How about baseball player Barry Bonds?

1 – Favorable	22%
2 – Unfavorable	53%
3 - Never heard of	12%
4 - No opinion	13%

How about swimmer Michael Phelps?

1 – Favorable	62%
2 – Unfavorable	25%

3 - Never heard of	6%
4 - No opinion	7%

How about baseball player Manny Ramirez?

1 – Favorable	31%
2 – Unfavorable	38%
3 - Never heard of	19%
4 - No opinion	13%

How about baseball player Alex Rodriguez?

1 – Favorable	30%
2 – Unfavorable	38%
3 - Never heard of	19%
4 - No opinion	13%

How about Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig?

1 – Favorable	20%
2 – Unfavorable	22%
3 - Never heard of	39%
4 - No opinion	19%

Do you think that Kellogg's was justified in not renewing Olympic Gold Medalist Michael Phelps sponsorship contract, following a photo being released of him smoking marijuana?

1 – Yes	69%
2 – No	27%

Do you think the three month suspension of Michael Phelps by US Swimming was an appropriate penalty, too much of a penalty, or not enough of a penalty?

1 - Appropriate penalty	56%
2 - Too much of a penalty	20%
3 - Not enough of a penalty	19%

How would you rate your interest in stories about Alex Rodriguez's alleged use of performance enhancing drugs? Do you have a high interest, some interest, little interest or no interest at all?

1 - High interest	9%
-------------------	----

2 - Some interest	22%
3 - Little interest	32%
4 - No interest at all	34%

Of the over one hundred baseball players that allegedly tested positive for steroids in 2003, only the positive results for Barry Bonds and Alex Rodriguez were released to the public. Which of the following best represents your opinion: it's fair that only two names were released, all names should be released, or no names should have been released?

1 - Two names	3%
2 - All names	74%
3 - No names	20%