

Seton Hall Sports Poll's Pre-Super Bowl Findings

EVEN FOR SPORTS FANS; IT'S THE ECONOMY, NOT THE SUPER BOWL

An Even Split on Whether Obama Should Relax and Watch the Game

A February Tie Between Valentine's Day and the Super Bowl

S. Orange, NJ, January 29, 2009 – With the nation's economic crisis having dominated the news for five months, even the Super Bowl, the nation's premier entertainment/sporting event, can't seem to distract people's attention from their concerns.

In a Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted this week with 1,004 respondents, 68% said they are paying more attention to news stories about the economy, to only 14% the Super Bowl and 13% the Middle East. Even among those identifying themselves as sports fans, better than a 3-1 margin are paying more attention to news stories about the economy, with 65% citing that to 20% for Super Bowl and 11% for the Middle East.

As for whether President Barack Obama should take a break and watch the game, the response was evenly divided, 45% - 45% among all respondents. But among women it was 48%-42% in favor of watching the game, and among men 48%-44% saying he should work on the nation's problems.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States, with 61% of them identifying themselves as sports fans. 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.

Meanwhile, with the cost of a 30-second Super Bowl commercial \$3 million, 71% of respondents cited that as something that is wrong with American corporations, to only 16% saying it represented a sign of what's good about them.

"The public's attitude that there is something wrong about this kind of spending for a commercial could carry over to their attitude about the product being pitched -- and that can't be a good thing for the advertiser," noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute.

Even 77% of all respondents felt tickets to the Super Bowl were "way overpriced."

The respondents are pretty much evenly divided on whether they are more excited about the Super Bowl (44%) or Valentine's Day (42%), the two big February events on the calendar. 57% of men said the Super Bowl vs. 33% saying Valentine's Day, while 51% of women cited Valentine's Day to 33% Super Bowl. Among sports fans, 66% of men said Super Bowl (vs. 27% Valentine's Day), and 46% of women said Super Bowl (vs. 41% Valentine's Day).

Asked if they knew which network would be televising the game, only 23% of sports fans said NBC, the rightsholder, with the rest either not knowing or choosing the wrong network.

Asked which team of announcers they would like to have broadcasting the game, 44% of sports fans said they would like to have John Madden-Al Michaels, 26% Troy Aikman-Joe Buck, and 9% Phil Simms- Jim Nantz.

“A lot of people are going to be in for a pleasant surprise when they hear their favorite announcers, considering they didn’t even know what network was carrying the game.” noted Gentile

Fifteen percent of respondents said they will wager or participate in a pool involving money, and only 52% of all respondents said they could name the teams playing in the game.

Although last year’s game was considered one of the most exciting Super Bowls ever played, 66% of sports fans thought it would be as or more exciting. “That’s a very hopeful number,” said Gentile. “If they’re right, maybe the game WILL be a distraction from the economy for a few hours.”

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The breakdown by all respondents:

1. Which of these news stories are you paying more attention to: the upcoming Super Bowl, President Obama’s efforts to stimulate the economy, or trouble in the Middle East?

1 - Super Bowl	14%
2 – Economy	68%
3 - Middle East	13%

2. What do you think President Obama should be doing on Sunday evening: focusing on the nation’s serious problems or watching the Super Bowl?

1 - Nation’s problems	45%
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2 - Watching the Super Bowl 45%

3. Which February event are you more excited about: the Super Bowl or Valentine's Day?

1 - Super Bowl 44%

2 - Valentine's Day 42%

4. Did you watch any live coverage of last week's inauguration?

1 - Yes 78%

2 - No 21%

5. Do you plan to watch this year's Super Bowl?

1 - Yes 63%

2 - No 35%

6. Which of these is the MAIN reason you plan on watching the Super Bowl: your favorite team is playing, you are a football fan even though your favorite team is not playing, to see the commercials, to see the halftime show, or that you will be attending a Super Bowl party or event?

1 - Favorite team is playing 9%

2 - I'm a football fan even though my favorite team is not playing 53%

3 - To see the commercials 12%

4 - To see the halftime show 3%

5 - I'll be attending a Super Bowl party or event 20%

7. Can you tell me which teams will be playing in the Super Bowl?

1 - Yes 52%

2 - No 39%

8. Comparing this year's game to last year's game, do you think this year's game will be: more exciting, less exciting, or about the same?

1 - More exciting 18%

2 - Less exciting 17%

3 - About the same 42%

9. Do you think the commercials in this year's game will be: more entertaining, less entertaining, or about the same as in the past?

1 - More entertaining 22%

2 - Less entertaining 10%

3 - About the same 50%

10. Do you think that because of the problems with the economy the commercials in this year's Super Bowl will be more serious than in the past?

1 – Yes	33%
2 – No	53%

11. Do you think the cost to a company of a 30-second commercial in this year's Super Bowl is: more than, less than, or about the same as a commercial in last year's game?

1 - More than	41%
2 - Less than	15%
3 - About the same	31%

12. It has been reported that the purchase of a 30-second commercial during the Super Bowl will cost a company 3 million dollars. Do you think spending 3 million dollars for 30-seconds is a sign of what's good about American corporations or what's wrong with American corporations?

1 - What's good	16%
2 - What's wrong	71%

13. Ticket prices for the Super Bowl were listed by the NFL at between \$800 and a thousand dollars. If you could buy tickets at these prices, would you consider that a great deal, fair price or way overpriced?

1 - Great deal	4%
2 - Fair price	12%
3 - Way overpriced	77%

14. Do you plan to wager on the game or participate in a pool of any kind involving money?

1 – Yes	15%
2 – No	80%

15. Do you know which network will be broadcasting the Super Bowl?

1 - ESPN	3%
2 – NBC	19%
3 – Fox	9%
4 – CBS	3%
5 - Don't know/refuse to answer	66%

16. What team of announcers would you like to have broadcasting the Super Bowl: Troy Aikman and Joe Buck, John Madden and Al Michaels, or Phil Simms and Jim Nantz?

1 - Troy Aikman and Joe Buck	21%
2 - John Madden and Al Michaels	35%
3 - Phil Simms and Jim Nantz	8%
4 – Other	4%
5 - Don't know/refuse to answer	33%