

Seton Hall Sports Poll's Super Bowl and Olympics Findings

MORE FANS WILL BE ROOTING FOR SAINTS SUNDAY IN SB XLIV

"Classic American Underdog Story"

Attention Still on Economy, Health Care; Olympics Has Own Issues for NBC

S. Orange, NJ, February 4, 2010 – It's the classic American love story – rooting for the underdog – and that's where most neutral fans will turn Sunday, according to a Seton Hall Sports Poll, which finds that 41 percent of fans will be rooting for the New Orleans Saints, compared with only 30% for the Indianapolis Colts.

"With 53% of respondents saying they are just football fans, not tied with loyalty to either team, the Saints clearly have the emotional ties of the nation," noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. "It's a classic American 'root for the underdog' story. Despite the national visibility of the Colts' Peyton Manning, especially with his good-guy commercials and positive image, the fans like that the Saints are in their first Super Bowl, and also benefit from 24% of respondents who lean to the Saints doing so because of emotional support for the city that was wracked by Hurricane Katrina."

The poll, conducted this week of 1,063 randomly dialed adults 18 and over across the continental United States, found that while two-third of the nation plan to watch the game, most people are paying more attention to matters of the economy and health care, with 65% paying more attention to those subjects than to the Super Bowl, which scored 20%. Last year's poll also showed 20% caring first for the Super Bowl, with 65% focused on the economy and the Middle East.

The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.1 percentage points for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

CBS's Super Bowl announcing team of Jim Nantz-Phil Simms scored lowest (9%) among sportscasters presented to respondents, who were asked "who would you like to have calling the game?" The retired John Madden-Pat Summerall team scored 25%, Fox's Joe Buck-Troy Aikman team scored 16%, and 10% for Cris Collinsworth and Al Michaels of NBC.

Meanwhile, with the Winter Olympics less than two weeks away (as the poll was conducted), NBC still seems to have its promotional work to do.

Fifty-one percent said they "didn't know," or named another city other than Vancouver as the site of this year's games, and 18% said they had less interest than they did in past Olympics. Among people who follow sports closely, 16% said they had less interest in these Games. Still, NBC would be pleased to know that 24% said it would be more likely that they would watch the figure skating competition because it would be live.

"NBC has had a difficult time promoting these games because they have a smaller prime time audience to work with than they would like," said Gentile. "They are the last place network, and for 51% to not know where the games are at this stage is staggering."

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The results:

1. Which of these news stories are you paying more attention to: the upcoming Super Bowl, the health care debate, President Obama's efforts to stimulate the economy, or the upcoming Winter Olympics?

1 - Super Bowl	20%
2 - Health Care	27
3 - Economy	38
4 - Winter Olympics	7
5 - Don't know	8

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

1 - Yes	64
2 - No	34

3. 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 isn't playing, to see the commercials, or that you will be attending a Super Bowl party or event?

1 - Favorite team is playing	11
2 - I'm a football fan even though my favorite team isn't playing	53
3 - To see the commercials	12
4 - Attending a Super Bowl party or event	21

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

1 - Colts	5
2 - Saints	7
3 - Colts and Saints	57
4 - Don't know	32

5. Which team will you be rooting for in the Super Bowl: the Colts, Saints, or neither?

1 - Colts	30
2 - Saints	41
3 - Neither	28

6. Which of the following is the primary reason you're rooting for the New Orleans Saints? Because you are a New Orleans Saints fan, because it is their first time in the Super Bowl, or due to sympathy towards the city of New Orleans following the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina?

1 - Saints fan	18
2 - First trip to the Super Bowl	46
3 - Sympathy due to Hurricane Katrina	24
4 - Don't know	12

8. How closely do you follow sports: very closely, somewhat closely, not closely, or not at all?

1 - Very closely	19
2 - Somewhat closely	40
3 - Not closely	20
4 - Not at all	20

7. 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	23
2 - No	53
3 - Don't know	23

9. Compared to years' past, would you say that the commercials in recent Super Bowls have been more interesting, less interesting, or about the same?

1 - More interesting	19
2 - Less interesting	18
3 - About the same	48
4 - Don't know	16

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

1 - Aikman and Buck	16
2 - Madden and Summerall	25
3 - Collinsworth and Michaels	10
4 - Simms and Nantz	9
5 - Other	7

11. Do you happen to know where the 2010 Olympics will be held?

1 - Vancouver	33
2 - Canada	16
3 - London	0
4 - Other	7
5 - Don't know	44

12. Do you plan to watch any coverage of the upcoming Winter Olympics?

1 - Yes	71
2 - No	26

13. NBC, the broadcaster of the upcoming Olympics, will be covering the figure skating competition live in prime time while it usually has been carried on a tape delay. Will that make it: more likely that you will watch the broadcast, less likely that you will watch the broadcast, or make no difference?

1 - More likely	24
2 - Less likely	6
3 - No difference	68

14. Will the fact that the Olympics are taking place in Canada make it: more likely you'll watch, less likely you'll watch, or have no affect?

1 - More likely	12
2 - Less likely	2
3 - No affect	86

15. Would you say that your interest in these upcoming Olympics is: more than in the past, about the same as in the past, or less than in the past?

1 - More	8
2 - Same	72
3 - Less	18

16. Do you tend to watch more coverage of the Summer Olympics, Winter Olympics, neither or each equally?

1 - Summer Olympics	22
2 - Winter Olympics	18
3 - Neither	19
4 - Equal	40

