



67 Percent of Americans Say No To Indoor Sporting Events Without Vaccine

South Orange NJ, November 18, 2020 -- Even masked, wearing personal protective equipment and socially distanced, 67 percent of Americans surveyed said they would not attend an indoor sporting event without the availability of a vaccine for COVID-19. Fifty-eight percent said they would not attend an outdoor event under the same circumstances.

Only 21 percent said they would attend an indoor sporting event, with 12 percent saying they did not know or had no opinion; for outdoor events the number of those who said they would attend with PPE and social distancing rose to 28 percent with 14 percent saying they did not know or had no opinion.

These were the findings of a Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted November 13-16 among 1,506 American adults, geographically spread across the country. The Poll has a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percent.

A Seton Hall Sports Poll in April of this year, which received widespread international attention, and combined indoor and outdoor events, found that 72 percent would not attend these events without access to a vaccine. The poll in April also found that 61 percent of those who described themselves as sports fans said they would not attend.

In this most recent poll, 60 percent of those who described themselves as sports fans said they would not attend indoor events, while 50 percent said they would not attend outdoor events.

“The recent news of vaccine breakthroughs has got to be enormously uplifting to those in the business of selling tickets, be it sports or entertainment,” said Professor Charles Grantham, Director of the Center for Sport Management within the Stillman School of Business, which oversees the Seton Hall Sports Poll. “Even though the percentages who would not attend have improved since the spring and the onset of the pandemic, these are just awful numbers to ponder.”

Stillman Professor of Marketing and Poll Methodologist Daniel Ladik agreed, “The Pfizer announcement of an imminent and efficacious vaccine was widely published prior to our polling and is presumably reflected in these numbers. An eager nation of sports fans awaits.”

People with Children More Likely to Attend Events

Interestingly, and perhaps related to school and youth athletic events, the number of those who would attend sporting events with PPE and social distancing was greater for those with children under the age of 18. Only 49 percent of these parents said they would not attend outdoor events (compared to 58 percent of the overall population); and 60 percent said they would not attend indoor events (compared to 67 percent overall).

Do Fans in the Stands (Virtual or Otherwise) Make a Difference?

Noting that some professional and college sporting events have allowed fans with limited capacity, the poll also asked whether or not fans in the stands under these circumstances provide an advantage for the home team. Whereas 43 percent of the overall population said they believed the presence of fans provided a “home team advantage,” 53 percent of those who described themselves as sports fans said it did.

In addition, respondents were also asked whether “virtual fans” in stadiums, arenas and TV broadcasts were a good replacement for actual fans. Among the general population, 27 percent felt they were; 26 percent thought they weren’t even noticeable; 11 percent thought they were a distraction; and 36 percent did not know or had no opinion.

Self-described sports fans looked more favorably upon the virtual fans, with 35 percent saying they were a good replacement and 13 percent thinking that they were a distraction. Among the subset of those who described themselves as “avid sports fans,” the number who thought virtual fans were a good replacement was higher (by double digits) than that of sports fans in general.

Is this an Asterisk Season?

Asked to think about the impact of COVID-19 on sports in 2020 (shortened seasons, changes in game formats, etc.) respondents were asked whether or not this year’s champions in professional baseball (Los Angeles Dodgers), basketball (Los Angeles Lakers) and hockey (Tampa Bay Lightning) were “less deserving” than the champions of previous years. Among sports fans, 27 percent thought the Dodgers were less deserving; 31 percent thought the Lakers were less deserving; and 24 percent thought the Lightning were so. Among the smaller subset that described themselves as “avid sports fans,” the number that thought of the teams as less deserving was even higher (by a double digit margin in each case).

“Although many of the leagues tried admirably to salvage their seasons when most thought they would be lost, it’s obvious from these findings that the public has some doubts and concerns,” said Grantham, former executive director of the National Basketball Players Association. “It will be interesting to see how the leagues— and fans – adjust moving forward.”

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ABOUT THE POLL

The Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted regularly since 2006, is performed by the Sharkey Institute within the Stillman School of Business. This poll was conducted online by YouGov Plc. using a national representative sample weighted according to gender, age, ethnicity, education,

income and geography, based on U.S. Census Bureau figures. Respondents were selected from YouGov's opt-in panel to be representative of all U.S. residents. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls. The Seton Hall Sports Poll has been chosen for inclusion in iPoll by Cornell's Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and its findings have been published everywhere from USA Today, ESPN, The New York Times, Washington Post, AP, and Reuters to CNBC, NPR, Yahoo Finance, Fox News and many points in between.

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The Results:

Q1. Would you attend... A **live outdoor** sporting, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance, **before** a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is widely available?

- a) Yes, I would attend (**28%**)
- b) No, I would not attend (**58**)
- c) Don't know/no opinion (**14**)

Q2. Would you attend... A **live indoor** sporting, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance, **before** a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is widely available?

- a) Yes, I would attend (**21%**)
- b) No, I would not attend (**67**)
- c) Don't know/no opinion (**12**)

Q3. Thinking about the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the current sports season (e.g., shortened sports seasons, changes in game formats, etc.)... To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Please select **one** option on each row.

Q4. The Los Angeles Lakers (2019-2020 NBA Champions) are a less deserving champion than previous NBA champions

- a) Strongly agree (**13%**)
- b) Somewhat agree (**10**)
- c) Neither agree nor disagree (**51**)
- d) Somewhat disagree (**8**)
- e) Strongly disagree (**17**)

Q5.The Tampa Bay Lightning (2019-2020 NHL Champions) are a less deserving champion than previous NHL champions

- a) Strongly agree (8%)
- b) Somewhat agree (10)
- c) Neither agree nor disagree (56)
- d) Somewhat disagree (9)
- e) Strongly disagree (17)

Q6.The Los Angeles Dodgers (2020 MLB Champion) are a less deserving champion than previous MLB champions

- a) Strongly agree (9%)
- b) Somewhat agree (11%)
- c) Neither agree nor disagree (52%)
- d) Somewhat disagree (10)
- e) Strongly disagree (18)

Q7.In stadiums where fans were not allowed to attend, many teams featured “virtual fans” on screens in the arena or as part of the TV broadcast. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes your thoughts about this practice? Please select the option that best applies.

- a) Virtual fans were a good replacement for actual fans (27%)
- b) Neutral - virtual fans weren’t even noticeable (26)
- c) Virtual fans were a distraction to my overall enjoyment of the game (11)
- d) Don’t know/no opinion (36)

Q8.Some professional and college sporting events have allowed fans, but with limited capacity. Do fans in the stands, even in a limited capacity, provide an advantage for the home team?

- a) Yes, the fans provide an advantage (43%)
- b) No, the fans do not provide an advantage (22)
- c) Don’t know/no opinion (35)

November 2020 SHSP Tables

Q₁ Would you attend... A **live outdoor** sporting event, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance, **before** a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is widely available?

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Yes, I would attend	28%	39%	8%	60%	40%	30%	8%	11%
No, I would not attend	58%	50%	73%	30%	51%	57%	75%	40%
Don’t know/no opinion	14%	11%	19%	10%	9%	13%	17%	49%

Q₂ Would you attend... A **live indoor** sporting event, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance, **before** a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is widely available?

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Yes, I would attend	21%	29%	8%	48%	29%	22%	8%	8%
No, I would not attend	67%	60%	79%	43%	63%	65%	80%	49%
Don't know/no opinion	12%	11%	13%	9%	8%	13%	12%	43%

Thinking about the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the current sports season (e.g., shortened sports seasons, changes in game formats, etc.). To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Please select **one** option on each row.

Q_{3a} The Los Angeles Lakers (2019-2020 NBA Champions) are a less deserving champion than previous NBA champions

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Agree	24%	31%	9%	49%	32%	23%	8%	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	51%	40%	74%	22%	35%	51%	75%	58%
Disagree	25%	29%	17%	29%	33%	26%	17%	25%

Q_{3b} The Tampa Bay Lightning (2019-2020 NHL Champions) are a less deserving champion than previous NHL champions

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Agree	18%	24%	7%	39%	25%	16%	6%	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	54%	44%	76%	30%	41%	56%	78%	55%
Disagree	28%	32%	17%	31%	34%	28%	16%	28%

Q_{3c} The Los Angeles Dodgers (2020 MLB Champion) are a less deserving champion than previous MLB champions

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Agree	20%	27%	8%	40%	29%	18%	7%	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	52%	40%	73%	30%	34%	53%	75%	51%
Disagree	28%	33%	19%	30%	37%	29%	18%	31%

Q4 In stadiums where fans were not allowed to attend, many teams featured “virtual fans” on screens in the arena or as part of the TV broadcast. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes your thoughts about this practice? Please select the option that best applies.

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Virtual fans were a good replacement for actual fans	27%	35%	13%	56%	36%	25%	13%	11%
Neutral - virtual fans weren't even noticeable	26%	34%	11%	26%	38%	32%	13%	4%
Virtual fans were a distraction to my overall enjoyment of the game	11%	13%	7%	9%	13%	13%	6%	14%
Don't know/no opinion	36%	18%	69%	9%	13%	30%	68%	71%

Q5 Some professional and college sporting events have allowed fans, but with limited capacity. Do fans in the stands, even in a limited capacity, provide an advantage for the home team?

N=1,506	General Population	Sports Fan	Non-Fan	Avid Fan	Avg Fan	Casual Fan	Not a Fan	No Opinion
Yes, the fans provide an advantage	43%	53%	24%	62%	56%	45%	25%	14%
No, the fans do not provide an advantage	22%	25%	15%	27%	25%	25%	15%	16%
Don't know/no opinion	35%	22%	61%	11%	19%	30%	60%	70%

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 among the most diverse national Catholic universities in the country.

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.

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