



**SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY**  
[www.siena.edu/sri](http://www.siena.edu/sri)

**For Release:** Thursday, September 29, 2011  
**For information/comment:** Dr. Don Levy: 518-783-2901, [dlevy@siena.edu](mailto:dlevy@siena.edu)  
**For PDF of release or for data summary, visit** [www.siena.edu/sri/research](http://www.siena.edu/sri/research)

**Siena College New York Sports and Gambling Poll**

**Majority of NY'ers Support Casino Gambling Constitutional Amendment**  
***Bronx Bombers Top Team; Yankee Stadium Favorite Venue; Jeter Favorite Athlete***  
**79% Say Yankees Will Likely Win Series; Phillies Top Threat**  
***Support for MMA Down; Opposition High to Paying College Athletes***

**Loudonville, NY** – Fifty-seven percent of New Yorkers support a constitutional amendment to allow non-Indian casinos to be built in New York while only 36 percent oppose the initiative according to a new Siena College Research Institute (SRI) poll released today. Residents continue to say that the New York Yankees are their favorite team with 28 percent ranking the Yanks first and 10 percent second. Yankee Stadium is the top sports venue among New Yorkers cited by 22 percent with Madison Square Garden second at 13 percent.

Derek Jeter is far and away the favorite current professional athlete among state residents with one in four volunteering that the Yankee shortstop is their favorite while no other athlete gets more than 3 percent of the votes. Seventy-nine percent of New Yorkers (29% very, 50% somewhat) think the Yankees will likely win this year's World Series with the Philadelphia Phillies and Boston Red Sox each mentioned by a quarter as having the best chance to defeat the Yankees in either the playoffs or the World Series.

When asked whether they side more with supporters of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), or ultimate fighting, who say MMA should be legal in New York and that it will generate fan interest, revenues and would be an engine of economic development or with opponents who say that MMA is dangerous, even barbaric and that we should not allow such a violent sport to be practiced here in New York, respondents choose the opponents over the supporters 48 to 39 percent. In March, New Yorkers were more evenly split with 39 percent agreeing with the supporters in favor of legalizing MMA and 41 percent with opponents.

Overwhelmingly, New Yorkers oppose compensating college athletes with 66 percent siding with the opponents that say that many athletes receive a free education and seek to protect the spirit of amateur athletics.

“While not every New Yorker is wearing a Yankee cap or T-shirt, there's no question about the Empire State's top team. Nearly three times as many New Yorkers say that the Yankees are their number one team than the closest competitor, the New York Giants. Nearly a quarter say the new Yankee Stadium or the ‘House that George built’ is their favorite sports venue, and the Yankee captain, Derek Jeter, is a runaway for New York's favorite professional athlete,” according to Dr. Don Levy, SRI's director.

“When we stack the Yankees up against the Mets, eighty-three percent say, in baseball, it’s the team from the Bronx not the one from Flushing that is New York’s team,” Levy said. “As far as the Yankees’ chances this October, most New Yorkers think it likely that they will win another ring. Among Yankee fans, confidence is even higher. Ninety-five percent of pinstripe fans think it at least somewhat likely that the 28<sup>th</sup> championship will be added this year. Still, nearly one-third of Yankee fans are concerned about getting by the Phils.”

Seventy-eight percent of New Yorkers agree that legalizing casinos in New York will create thousands of jobs for residents. Slightly fewer, 71 percent, agree that non-Indian casinos will bring in significant new revenues for the state and local governments. While majorities agree that we already have enough outlets for gambling in New York (51%) and that new casinos will only increase societal problems such as crime and compulsive gambling (54%), a 21-point majority of all New Yorkers and a 22-point majority of voters support amending the state constitution to allow non-Indian casinos to be built in New York.

“Majorities of Democrats and Republicans, and of residents of every region of the state, support allowing Vegas-style casinos to be built here in New York. While there is concern about crime and compulsive gambling, the need for jobs and government revenues appears to far outweigh the downsides according to most New Yorkers and voters,” Levy said.

Sixty-four percent of all New Yorkers describe themselves as sports fans while 36 percent do not. Three-quarters of men and a majority, 53 percent of women call themselves fans. Using eight fan behaviors including watching sports or sports news on television, listening to sports, sports news or sports talk on the radio, talking about sports with friends, using the internet to track sports or reading sports news or magazines, this Siena College sports poll finds that 75 percent of New Yorkers include fan activities as part of their lifestyle. Fifteen percent are ‘Avid’ fans, 32 percent are ‘Involved’ fans, and 28 percent are ‘Casual’ fans. Only 25 percent of New Yorkers are ‘non-fans’, that is, they almost never watch, listen, read or talk about sports.

Football (30%), baseball (23%) and basketball (14%) are the favorite spectator sports. The New York Giants have the most backing for favorite football team with 10 percent calling them their favorite team and 11 percent naming them as their second favorite. The Jets are named by 15 percent (5% first, 10% second) and the Bills are cited by 8 percent (5% first, 3% second). A majority of New Yorkers, 53 percent, say the Giants are New York’s NFL team. But when asked which of the three New York teams has the best chance of reaching the Super Bowl, 41 percent say the Jets, 31 percent the Giants and 17 percent the Bills.

“While non-Indian casino gambling may not exist in New York, gambling is not new to state residents and sports fans. Nearly half of residents have bet on sporting events, entered a Super Bowl pool, and thirty-nine percent have gambled at a race track,” Levy notes.

**The Siena College New York Sports Poll was conducted September 21-22, 25-27, 2011 by random telephone calls to 597 New York adults via landline and cell phones. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party and gender to ensure representativeness. SRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of  $\pm 4.0$  points. The Siena College Research Institute, under the direction of Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in New York State. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at [www.siena.edu/sri/research](http://www.siena.edu/sri/research)**