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PDF version; crosstabs; website:

[American Sports Fanship Survey](#) / sbu.edu/communication

Siena/St. Bonaventure Survey:

**7 in 10 Americans Support Rule Changes to Make Football Safer For Players
and Want to See Independent Doctors on Sidelines**

60% Support Display of Slogans Like “End Racism” on Helmets and Field;

Football Does More to Overcome – Not Perpetuate – Racism: 54%-14%

53% of Americans Say Football Promotes Values that Make America a Better Country

Public Funds to Build New Football Stadiums Opposed 53-27%

NOTE: This is Third of Three Releases – “Societal & Cultural Sports Issues”

February 8, 2023 – An overwhelming majority of Americans support rule changes designed to make the game safer for its players, according to a new national survey of 3,201 United States residents released today by the Siena College Research Institute and St. Bonaventure University’s Jandoli School of Communication. Sixty-nine percent of fans – including 79% of “Avid” fans – favor rule changes aimed at reducing the potential for neurological injuries, “even if the rules change the game.” And 71% of adults believe that independent doctors – not paid for by the individual teams – should make the decisions on whether injured players can re-enter a game.

“After seeing Damar Hamlin collapse on the field, and questionable responses to head injuries sustained by star quarterbacks such as Tua Tagovailoa and Matthew Stafford, many people are wondering if the NFL is doing enough to keep players safe,” Aaron Chimbel, dean of St. Bonaventure’s Jandoli School, said. “Their recent decision that requires independent doctors to determine whether injured players can return back into games is supported strongly by Americans, and will hopefully keep players healthy and safe.”

Strong Support for On-Field Messaging Like ‘End Racism’; Football Seen As Helping Overcome Racial Discrimination

The Siena/St. Bonaventure survey found that a large majority of Americans – 60% – support displays of slogans such as ‘end racism’ on the back of helmets and on fields, including 78% of Avid fans. Support differed greatly by age – 75% of respondents under 34 years old support social messaging, while only 38% of those over 65 years did. Blacks (78%) and Latinos (73%) were much more likely to support messaging displays than whites (54%).

More than half (54%) say football does more to overcome racial discrimination in America rather than to perpetuate it (14%). By a 46-12% margin, Americans say the “Rooney Rule,” which requires NFL teams to conduct interviews with minority candidates for vacant coaching positions, is good for sports. While 27% say Black coaching candidates do not receive as much consideration for coaching jobs in the NFL as white candidates, a plurality (42%) of all respondents believe they do – although a plurality of African-American respondents say Black candidates do not receive as much consideration as white candidates (48% to 33%).

“A strong majority of Americans – 53% – think football promotes values that make this a better country. As racial issues have come to the forefront in the NFL over the last few years, by 54-14%, Americans, including majorities of Blacks, whites, Latino, and Asians, say football does more to overcome – rather than perpetuate – racial discrimination in America,” said Don Levy, director, Siena College Research Institute.

Domestic Violence and Penalties for Players

Forty percent of Americans – including 54% of Non-fans and 49% of women – support a permanent ban from the NFL for players accused of domestic violence, while 28% support a one-year suspension, and 15% a shorter suspension.

| <i>How Do Americans Feel About Penalties for NFL Players Accused of Domestic Violence?</i> | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| | Total | Avid | Involved | Casual | Non-fan | Men | Women |
| <i>Permanent ban from playing in the NFL</i> | 40% | 27% | 34% | 43% | 54% | 31% | 49% |
| <i>One year suspension</i> | 28% | 36% | 31% | 27% | 20% | 32% | 24% |
| <i>6-8 game suspension</i> | 15% | 21% | 18% | 15% | 10% | 19% | 13% |
| <i>No suspension but having to make financial arrangements</i> | 5% | 5% | 7% | 4% | 3% | 5% | 5% |
| <i>No suspension but having to perform community service</i> | 6% | 6% | 5% | 7% | 7% | 8% | 5% |
| <i>No penalties, I want them to play</i> | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 6% | 6% | 5% |
| Siena / St. Bonaventure American Sports Fanship Survey - February 8, 2023 | | | | | | | |

Public Funding for New Stadiums

By two-to-one, 53-27%, Americans oppose using public funds to build new football stadiums, such as the new stadium for the Buffalo Bills which will be built using \$850 million in taxpayer funds. Fifty-five percent of Avid fans support the use of taxpayer funds, while 68% of Non-fans and 59% of Casual fans are opposed.

Fantasy Football

Twenty-one percent of Americans say they play fantasy football, including 65% of Avid fans, 22% of Involved fans and 28% of men. Respondents under 35 years old are eight times more likely to play than those 65 or older (32%-4%). Of those who play fantasy football, the top activities are updating rosters once a week (87%), reading articles about players on their teams (81%), listening to sports talk shows about the players on their teams (78%), and trading with other teams in their leagues (77%).

NFL Merchandise

Forty-one percent of Americans – including 82% of Avid fans and 54% of Involved fans – say they have purchased merchandise, clothing, or memorabilia associated with an NFL team or athlete over the last year. Of those who have purchased merchandise, over one-third (42%) say they have spent \$101-\$250 over the last year. Thirty-eight percent say they have spent no more than \$100, 17% say they have spent \$251-\$1,000 and 2% say they have spent more than \$1,000.

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The American Sports Fanship Survey was conducted January 3 - 8, 2023, among 3201 responses drawn from a proprietary online panel (Lucid) of United States Residents. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region, race/ethnicity, education, and gender to ensure representativeness. It has an overall margin of error of +/- 1.8 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social, and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Don Levy at 518-783-2901. St. Bonaventure University's Jandoli School of Communication, offers multiple undergraduate and graduate degrees in sports journalism, marketing and related fields. For more information or comments, please contact Dean Aaron Chimbel at 716-375-2040.