



Vaccine Changing Attitudes Towards Attending Sporting Events

South Orange NJ, January 28, 2021 – As the pandemic began to take hold in April 2020, a Seton Hall Sports Poll asked respondents if they would attend a live sporting event – 72 percent said “No.”

In the Sports Poll completed this week, only 41 percent said “No” to attending an outdoor sporting event while 49 percent said “No” to indoors.

Although both questions posited social distancing and PPE as a condition of attending, the most recent poll asked respondents if they would attend if they also had received a coronavirus vaccine.

“Now that the vaccine is no longer an abstraction but a reality, you can see people beginning to seek a return to normalcy,” said Professor Charles Grantham, Director of the Center for Sport Management within the Stillman School of Business, which oversees the Seton Hall Sports Poll. “This is certainly encouraging for sports leagues, who last March could see no end in sight.”

The poll was conducted January 22-25 among 1,522 adults, geographically spread across the country. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percent.

Outdoor Events

In this week’s poll, 40 percent said that if they received a coronavirus vaccine they would attend an **outdoor** event with personal protection equipment, social distancing measures and restricted attendance. This is up from 28 percent when the question was asked in November, but without access to a vaccine. In April, 2020 only 25 percent said they would attend.

Indoor Events

As for attending an **indoor** event, 32 percent say they would attend now (with similar safety precautions), as opposed to just 21 percent in November 2020.

“While our poll asked specifically about sporting events, it likely carries over to concert and theater venues and other audience events coming along on the calendar,” according to Stillman Professor of Marketing and Poll Methodologist Daniel Ladik. “There’s reason to be hopeful.”

Fans

Among those who called themselves “fans,” the number who said they would attend an outdoor sporting event went up to 57 percent, with just 29 percent saying “No.” For indoor events, 46 percent said “Yes,” while 38 percent said “No.”

As might be expected, the numbers of those who would attend were higher for self-described “avid fans.” For outdoor events 69 percent said “Yes,” while just 24 percent said no. For indoor events, 57 percent said “Yes” and 33 percent said “No.”

“Although the margin of error is higher for subgroups,” said Ladik, there is reason to believe that the trend among sports fans is upward enough for leagues and associated businesses that rely upon attendance to be cautiously optimistic.”

Vaccine Spokespersons: Athletes?

The Poll also asked respondents what type of spokesperson would be most persuasive in convincing U.S. citizens to take the Covid-19 vaccine and were asked to select their top three. While the selections were wide ranging, “a medical professional” was the most cited figure, (58 percent), with “a government official” placing a distant second, named in the top three by 30 percent. A “religious leader” tied with a “local or community leader” at 25 percent, followed by a “famous/popular athlete” at 21 percent.

When asked to suggest specific names hundreds emerged. Among the athletes named were Tom Brady, Patrick Mahomes, LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Serena Williams, Mike Trout, Drew Brees, Michael Phelps and soccer stars Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar.

Vaccine Priority for Athletes?

The Poll also asked whether athletes should have priority for receiving the coronavirus vaccine, and there was little difference between the responses for pro and college athletes, with only 19 percent saying “Yes” for priority for professionals and 22 percent saying “Yes” for college players. For pros, 64 percent said “No,” and for college it was 62 percent.

Among those who identified themselves as avid fans, 35 percent said “Yes” to pro athletes getting vaccine priority and 38 percent said “Yes” for college athletes.

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Results

Q1 - Which, if any, of the following statements best describes your interest in sports? If you do not have any interest in any specific sport, please select the '*I am not a sports fan*' option.

- I am an avid sports fan **18%**
- I am a sports fan **40%**
- I am **not** a sports fan **42%**

Q3a - If you were to receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, would you attend A live outdoor sporting event in-person, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance?

- Yes, I would attend **40%**
- No, I would not attend **41%**
- Don't know/No Opinion **19%**

Q3b - If you were to receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, would you attend A live indoor sporting event in-person, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance?

- Yes, I would attend **32%**
- No, I would not attend **49%**
- Don't know/No Opinion **19%**

Q4a - Should the following type of athletes have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine? Professional athletes should have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

- Yes, they should **19%**
- No, they should not **64%**
- Don't know/No Opinion **17%**

Q4b - Should the following type of athletes have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine? College athletes should have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

- Yes, they should **22%**
- No, they should not **62%**
- Don't know/No Opinion **17%**

Q5 - Which, if any, of the following type of spokesperson would be the TOP THREE most persuasive in convincing US citizens to take the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine as soon as they are able to do so? Please select up to three options.

- A medical professional **58%**
- A government official **30%**
- A local or community leader **25%**
- A religious leader **25%**
- A famous/popular athlete **21%**
- A Hollywood entertainer/musician **15%**
- A social media ‘influencer’ **11%**
- A news anchor/news personality **11%**
- Other (please specify) **7%**
- Don’t know/no opinion **18%**

Q3a - If you were to receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, would you attend...A live outdoor sporting event in-person , with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance?

N=1,522	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, I would attend	40%	57%	18%	69%	51%
No, I would not attend	41%	29%	57%	24%	32%
Don’t know/No Opinion	19%	14%	25%	7%	17%

Q3b - If you were to receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, would you attend...A live indoor sporting event in-person, with personal protection equipment (PPE), socially distancing measures, and restricted attendance?

N=1,522	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, I would attend	32%	46%	14%	57%	41%
No, I would not attend	49%	38%	63%	32%	41%
Don’t know/No Opinion	19%	16%	23%	11%	18%

Q4a - Professional athletes should have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

N=1,522	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, they should	19%	26%	9%	35%	22%
No, they should not	64%	58%	73%	52%	60%
Don't know/No Opinion	17%	16%	18%	13%	18%

Q4b - College athletes should have priority for receiving the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine

N=1,522	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, they should	22%	29%	11%	38%	25%
No, they should not	62%	55%	71%	49%	58%
Don't know/No Opinion	16%	16%	18%	13%	17%

Q5 - Which, if any, of the following type of spokesperson would be the TOP THREE most persuasive in convincing US citizens to take the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine as soon as they are able to do so? Please select up to three options.

N=1,522	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
A medical professional	58%	58%	59%	53%	60%
A government official	30%	32%	27%	34%	31%
A local or community leader	25%	27%	23%	23%	29%
A religious leader	25%	25%	26%	25%	25%
A famous/popular athlete	21%	25%	14%	31%	23%
A Hollywood entertainer/musician	15%	14%	15%	15%	14%
A social media 'influencer'	11%	13%	8%	17%	12%
A news anchor/news personality	11%	12%	9%	14%	11%
Other (write in)	7%	6%	8%	4%	8%
Don't know/No Opinion	16%	16%	18%	13%	17%

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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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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