

Only 17% Favor Boycott By US Team of Opening Ceremony

**Seton Hall Sports Poll Finds 56% of Americans Feel President Bush
Should Not Cancel Plans to Attend
Opening Ceremonies at Olympics Despite Growing Protests**

Democrats, by 48%-23%, Say Rights Violations Are Good Cause for Protest

S. Orange, NJ, April 18, 2008 – Fifty-six percent of Americans feel that it would be inappropriate for President Bush to cancel plans to attend Olympic Opening Ceremonies in Beijing, and only 17% feel the US Olympic team should boycott the ceremonies, according to a Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted this week.

Thirty percent said the President *should* cancel his plans to attend.

The poll, conducted among 786 people who were randomly called throughout the country, found that 29% felt corporate sponsors should withdraw their support because of political and social issues raised by protestors, with 27% saying they would consider boycotting products of those sponsors. Only 10% said yes to a complete team boycott, such as the one held in 1980 for the Games in Moscow.

Asked if human rights violations were a “good reason” to protest the Olympics, 34% said yes and 50% no, with the others having no opinion.

“There is awareness of the growing protests,” said Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. “Only 21% were unaware of the protests that have plagued the Torch Run, and only 16% say that human rights violations will effect their viewing the Games. The majority still wants the games to go forward without protest.”

The poll also asked whether people felt that the use of steroids was rampant at the Games, and 44% felt that a quarter or more of athletes used them, with 50% saying it would be a major problem at the Games.

Those who identified themselves as Democrats were more likely to favor protest, except in one area. Asked if corporate sponsors should withdraw from the Games, 32% of Republicans vs. 29% of Democrats answered yes. To other forms of protest, such as President Bush not attending, 34% of Democrats vs. 28% of Republicans said he should now attend.

In other findings:

Asked if the Games were more interesting if the U.S. wins medals, or if world or Olympic records fell (no matter who set them), 50% of Republicans to only 40% of Democrats said the interest was greater if the U.S. was winning.

Asked about performance enhancing drugs as an issue at the Olympic Games, 56% of Democrats vs. 44% of Republicans felt it was a major problem.

59% of all respondents said they would like to see the games revert to the days when it was an all amateur competition without professionals competing, but when broken down by age, 62% of those 18-29 wanted pros to compete, while 70% of those 30-44 wanted it limited to amateurs.

Only 31% of all respondents knew that NBC was broadcasting the Olympic Games despite years of promotion by the network including use of the Olympic rings in its logo.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of 786 adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States, with 76% of them identifying themselves as fans of the Olympics. The poll was weighted to reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.6% percentage points for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OLYMPIC POLL

1. Can you please tell me where the Summer Olympic Games this August are being held?

1 – Beijing	68%
2 - Gives another answer	7%
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	26%

2. Would you consider yourself an avid fan, casual fan or not a fan at all of the Olympic Games?

1 – Avid	13
2 – Casual	62
3 - Not at all	26

3. In general, do you think the Olympic Games are an appropriate or inappropriate forum for making political or social protests?

1 – Appropriate	22
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2 – Inappropriate	66
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	12

4. How closely have you been following the controversy surrounding the Olympic Torch Run which has been met with protests in Paris, London and San Francisco: very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all?

1 - Very closely	12
2 - Somewhat closely	35
3 - Not too closely	28
4 - Not at all	21

5. Do you think the concerns about human rights violations by China are a good reason to protest the Olympic Torch Run or are they not?

1 - Good reason	34
2 - Not a good reason	50
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	14

6. I am going to read some possible acts of protest because of concerns about human rights violations in China. Tell me if you think they are appropriate or inappropriate: President Bush should cancel his plans to attend the Opening Ceremony in Beijing where foreign leaders gather to celebrate the beginning of the Games.

1 – Appropriate	30
2 – Inappropriate	56
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	14

7. The U.S. Olympic Team should boycott the Opening Ceremony

1 – Appropriate	17
2 – Inappropriate	70
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	12

8. Corporate sponsors that spend millions of dollars supporting the Games should withdraw their sponsorship.

1 – Appropriate	29
2 – Inappropriate	55
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	16

9. There should be a complete boycott of the Games by the U.S. Olympic Team

1 – Appropriate	10
2 – Inappropriate	77
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	13

10. Would you consider boycotting the products provided by Olympic sponsors because of concerns about China's human rights violations?

1 – Yes	27
2 – No	58
3 - Don't know/Refuse to Answer	15

11. Thinking back to the television coverage of past Olympic Games, have you watched a lot, some, a little, or none?

1 - A lot	24
2 – Some	37
3 - A little	25
4 – None	8
5 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	7

12. Please tell me what network is broadcasting the Olympics this summer in Beijing?

1 - NBC (Any form of NBC)	31
2 - Gives another answer	14
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	56

13. How much do you plan to watch of NBC's coverage of the Olympic Games from Beijing? Most, some, a little or none?

1 – Most	12
2 – Some	36
3 - A little	31
4 – None	12
5 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	9

14. Will the controversy over China's alleged human rights violations affect how much of the Games you will watch on television or the internet this August?

1 – Yes	16
2 – No	73
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	11

15. Do you think the use of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs by Olympic athletes is a major problem, a minor problem or no problem at all?

1 - Major problem	50
2 - Minor problem	35
3 - No problem at all	4
4 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	11

16. How many American Olympic athletes do you think use steroids or other performance enhancing drugs: most of them, about half of them, about a quarter of them, or only a few of them?

1 - Most of them	7
2 - About half of them	15
3 - About a quarter of them	22
4 - Only a few of them	38
5 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	18

17. Which is more interesting to you, having athletes of the United States win the most medals in the upcoming Olympics or having new Olympic and world records set regardless of the country that the athlete represents?

1 - U.S. Medals	35
2 - Olympic or world records	51
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	15

18. In your opinion, should the Olympics return to its original role as a competition for amateur athletes, or should all Olympic sports be opened to professional athletes?

1 - Competition for amateurs	59
2 - Opened up to professionals	28
3 - Don't know/Refuse to answer	13