



Pro Football in the Spring? American Fans Say ‘More Please’

57 percent of sports fans and 68 percent of avid fans favor Spring football; majority intend to follow USFL and like its new rule changes.

South Orange, NJ May 12, 2022 – A majority of American sports fans, especially the younger demographic, like the idea of pro football played in the spring, a concept the new United States Football League (USFL) is counting on during its first season of operation, which began on April 16.

A Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted May 6-9 across 1,512 adults throughout the United States, found that 57 percent identifying themselves as sports fans – and 68 percent identifying themselves as avid fans – like the idea of pro football in the spring. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percent and uses a national representative sample weighted according to gender, age, ethnicity, education, income and geography based on U.S. Census Bureau figures.

With four weeks of the USFL 10-week schedule completed, 64 percent of avid fans and 44 percent of sports fans said they have actively watched live broadcasts or highlights, read about the new league and/or attended games in person.

Going forward, 60 percent of avid fans and 43 percent of sports fans say they intend to watch and follow games this season, meaning the new league has seemingly captured many of those fans who first watched out of curiosity.

“This is a very positive sign for a league finding its footing,” said Professor Charles Grantham, Director of the Center for Sport Management within Seton Hall’s Stillman School of Business, which sponsors the Poll. “The numbers show, once again, that football is king and fans want more. The USFL has recognized that there is a void, and they are filling it.”

A Younger Crowd

According to the Poll, the audience thus far for the USFL has skewed heavily to a younger demographic. Of those who have watched or followed 43 percent were 18-34 years old, 22 percent were 35-59 years old, and just 15 percent identified as 55 years old or older.

“Maintaining viewers beyond their initial curiosity and building a fan base will be key to the league’s success,” said Seton Hall Marketing Professor and Poll Methodologist Daniel Ladik.

“Having said that, these are impressive initial numbers for a new league – and the potential viewer demographics align well with the coveted age group for marketing and advertising.”

USFL Rule Changes Favored

The USFL has employed several rule changes which distinguish it from the NFL, and fans approve.

Extra Point, Two or Three?

The USFL features new extra-point options. In addition to the familiar NFL one-point and two-point attempts after a touchdown, the USFL allows a three-point opportunity with a quarterback-initiated play (not a kick) from the ten-yard line. Of those queried, 68 percent of avid fans and 57 percent of sports fans like this rule, which would give a team trailing by nine points a chance to tie the game on a single drive.

No Ties

The league also has an overtime shootout rule in case of a tie at the end of regulation. In the USFL teams are given three attempts to score from the 2-yard line, alternating between the two teams. The team with the most successful attempts wins, and if the score is still tied after those three attempts, the first team to then score wins. An overwhelming number of avid fans – 72 percent – like this rule, and 54 percent of sports fans agree.

Onside Kick?

There is also an alternative to an onside kick. In the USFL the team that just scored can maintain possession by running a single play from their own 33-yard line. If the team runs a play and gains 12 yards or more they keep the ball and maintain possession. On this rule, 60 percent of avid fans and 43 percent of sports fans are in favor.

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Questions with charted breakdowns below; an online version of this release may be found at <http://blogs.shu.edu/sportspoll/>

May 2022 Seton Hall Sports Poll Results

This SHSP was conducted May 5th through May 9th and includes responses from 1,514 US adults with a margin of error of 3.2%. The sample mirrors the US Census percentages on age, gender, income, education, ethnicity, and region.

Q1. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes you?

- I am an avid sports fan **21%**
- I am a sports fan **35%**
- I am **not** a sports fan **44%**

There is a new a professional football league, the United States Football League (USFL), playing during the Spring...

Q2a. A new professional football league, the USFL, debuted on April 16th. Have you watched or followed any games thus far?

By watch/follow, we mean that you either:

- actively **read** about the USFL
- AND/OR **watched** live broadcasts or highlights of games online or TV
- AND/OR **attended** games in person.

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	26%	44%	3%	64%	32%
No	65%	51%	83%	33%	62%
Don't know/No opinion	9%	5%	14%	3%	6%

Q2a. [By Age] A new professional football league, the USFL, debuted on April 16th. Have you watched or followed any games thus far?

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	26%	43%	22%	15%
No	65%	46%	67%	79%
Don't know/No opinion	9%	11%	11%	6%

Q2b. Are you likely to watch or follow any of the USFL games this season?

By watch/follow, we mean that you will either:

- actively **read** about the USFL
- AND/OR **watch** live broadcasts or highlights of games online or TV
- AND/OR **attend** matches in person.

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	25%	43%	3%	60%	34%
No	62%	43%	85%	31%	50%
Don't know/No opinion	13%	14%	12%	9%	16%

Q2b. [By Age] Are you likely to watch or follow any of the USFL games this season?

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	25%	35%	25%	18%
No	62%	52%	60%	70%
Don't know/No opinion	13%	13%	15%	12%

Q2c. Do you like the idea of professional football being played in the spring?

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	36%	57%	10%	68%	50%
No	27%	23%	31%	23%	23%
Don't know/No opinion	37%	20%	59%	9%	27%

Q2c. [By age] Do you like the idea of professional football being played in the spring?

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	36%	44%	38%	29%
No	27%	27%	24%	28%
Don't know/No opinion	37%	29%	38%	43%

Q3a. The USFL has instituted some new rules that differentiate it from the NFL. In addition to the one-point kick, or the two-point quarterback-initiated attempt from the 2-yard line after a touchdown, the USFL introduced a chance for a three-point conversion after a touchdown, with a quarterback-initiated play from the 10-yard line. Do you like this rule?

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	34%	53%	7%	73%	41%
No	22%	20%	26%	18%	21%
Don't know/No opinion	44%	27%	67%	9%	38%

Q3a. [By Age] Extra Point options...

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	34%	44%	34%	24%
No	22%	27%	21%	20%
Don't know/No opinion	44%	29%	45%	56%

Q3b. Another rule change is an alternative to an onside kick, where the team that just scored can try to maintain possession. The USFL also allows teams to run a single play from their 33-yard line and if they advance the ball 12 or more yards, they maintain possession. Do you like this rule?

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	27%	43%	6%	60%	32%
No	28%	30%	26%	27%	33%
Don't know/No opinion	45%	27%	68%	13%	35%

Q3b. [By Age] Onside kick...

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	27%	36%	32%	15%
No	28%	29%	23%	32%
Don't know/No opinion	45%	35%	45%	53%

Q3c. Another innovation is the overtime shootout. If the game ends in a tie, teams are given three attempts to score from the 2-yard line, alternating between the two teams. The team with the most successful attempts wins. If the score is still tied after three rounds, the first team to then score from the two-yard line wins. Do you like this rule?

N=1,514	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	35%	54%	12%	72%	43%
No	24%	23%	24%	17%	27%
Don't know/No opinion	41%	23%	64%	11%	30%

Q3c. [By Age] Overtime shootout...

N=1,514	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes	35%	47%	38%	25%
No	24%	22%	20%	27%
Don't know/No opinion	41%	31%	42%	48%

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.

Media: Michael Ricciardelli, Associate Director of Media Relations, Seton Hall University michael.ricciardelli@shu.edu, 908-447-3034; Marty Appel, AppelPR@gmail.com

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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