

AFTERSHOCKS OF SPORTS SCANDALS ARE MEASURED IN NEW SETON HALL SPORTS POLL

**More Than 1 In 5 Sports Fans Claim to Have Less Interest in Sports;
40% of Sports fans Feel Wagering is Widespread Among NBA Officials**

Decision to Mark Bonds 756th Ball With Asterisk Complies with Online Vote

Only 1 in 5 Who Accept Sign Stealing Agree with Using Video to do it

S. Orange, NJ, October 12, 2007 – With a preponderance of sports scandals rocking high profile athletes, and in turn their teams and leagues, a new Seton Hall Sports Poll has found that 21% of sports fans – more than one in five – say they have less interest in sports in the wake of recent acts of misbehavior among players and officials.

Asked, “Have the recent cases of athletes and coaches misbehaving caused you to have less interest in sports or has it stayed about the same,” 78% said “about the same” but 21% claimed “less interest.”

The poll was held October 2-4 by the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. 872 people, with 558 identifying themselves as sports fans, responded to the random calling across the nation. Seton Hall conducts the only academically based sports poll in the US.

In view of the scandal involving wagering by an NBA referee, the question was asked, “do you think that wagering among referees is widespread in the NBA or was this an isolated innocent?” 40% of sports fans – responded “widespread.”

“That is a significantly high number,” noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. “It is augmented by demographic breakdowns in which we see 49% ages 18-29 and 52% ages 30-44 saying ‘widespread’ as well. It would seem that the NBA has a lot of damage control ahead to rebuild confidence in its game among its younger fan base.”

Asked if baseball players seemed to be treated more harshly by fans and media when a drug scandal hits, 39% thought baseball players were treated more harshly, with 60% of African-Americans saying baseball players are treated more harshly than in other sports, perhaps a reaction to Barry Bonds being the focus of steroid speculation.

Further demonstrating the public’s low tolerance for misbehavior, the question was asked: “If a star player on your favorite team were using performance enhancing drugs, would you prefer to see the player get caught if it cost your team the championship, or would you prefer to see your team win the championship with that player?” 87% said they would rather see the player get caught, with only 11% saying they would rather the player wound up with his team winning.

On the question of being “good role models,” 40% of the total respondents said they thought elected officials made good role models for young people (including 61% by African Americans, perhaps influenced by the popularity of Barak Obama), while 45% thought athletes made good role models for young people, (including 53% among African Americans). Asked “which do you think is worse, an athlete who takes bribes to

fix a game or an elected official who takes a bribe to award a government contract, 73% said "elected official" to only 9% for an athlete. However, on the question of what is more harmful to children, only 13% selected a politician taking a bribe, as opposed to 78% choosing an athlete taking drugs.

Addressing issues raised by the recent use of video to capture an opposing team's signals, 42% said stealing signals is just "part of the game" while 57% called it cheating. When asked specifically about using video cameras to accomplish the signal stealing, only 21% of those who said it was just "part of the game" said it was okay to use videotape.

"Fifty-seven percent thinking sign stealing is cheating belies what many think has always been a part of the games – trying to figure out what the other team is doing," said Gentile. "And clearly, people draw the line with videotaping signals."

With the Barry Bonds record breaking home run ball en route to Cooperstown, apparently to be marked with an asterisk (based on an unscientific online vote by the donor), 44% of respondents agreed, with 37% saying it should not be marked. Among African Americans, the numbers were 49% for no asterisk to 33% for an asterisk. The online vote (in which people could vote multiple times) was actually 47% for branding the ball to 34% for not doing it.

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* The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of 872 adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States. The poll was sponsored by Seton Hall University. The poll was weighted to it reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.4 percentage points for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

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