



**Did a Stitch in Time Save the Mudville 9?
By Nearly 3-1 Fans Did Not ‘Lose Interest’ Because of Baseball Work Stoppage**

South Orange, NJ March 16, 2022 - After the announcement that Major League Baseball’s work stoppage was over and the 2022 season would be played in full, respondents to a Seton Hall Sports Poll expressed renewed interest in the game. The results were in stark contrast to a poll conducted in December 2021.

The good news for baseball: by a nearly 3-1 margin, (51 percent to 18 percent) sports fans say the work stoppage did not reduce their interest in MLB. Among self-described “avid fans,” the margin for those who said they had not had their interest reduced was 58-24 percent, and among casual fans 49-14 percent. Among the general population, the number was 35-10 percent.

The Seton Hall Sports Poll was conducted March 11-14 across the United States using a national representative sample weighted according to gender, age, ethnicity, education, income and geography based on U.S. Census Bureau figures. The Poll featured 1,528 adult respondents with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percent.

The results in December of 2021 were not nearly as optimistic for baseball, when a full 30 percent of sports fans claimed reduced interest compared to just 18 percent in this most recent poll. Among avid fans the numbers and contrast were even greater with 44 percent reporting reduced interest in December 2021 compared to just 24 percent now – a 20 point drop. Among the general population, the reduced interest number dropped from 19 percent (December) to 10 percent (now).

“Sometimes a stitch in time really can save nine,” 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 that Major League Baseball needed to get this done and did so without a moment to spare. The owners seemingly know that there is too much competition for viewers, both within sports and without, to risk the fans and sponsor’s interest. And the players clearly wanted to play and earn their full salaries – as evidenced by them outvoting their own negotiating committee.”

Who to Blame?

Asked who they blamed more for the labor disagreement in MLB, a very small percentage placed the blame on players: 6 percent of the general population, 9 percent of sports fans, 12 percent of avid fans and 7 percent of casual fans. Owners, on the other hand, received more blame by 23 percent of the general population, 28 percent of sports fans, 34 percent of avid fans, and 26 percent of casual fans. Most blame, however, went for both, owners and players together, which increased to 30 percent of the general population, 39 percent of sports fans, 38 percent of avid fans and 39 percent of casual fans.

What if There Was No Baseball Season?

All was not, however, rosy for baseball. The majority of sports fans said they would not be bothered or much bothered at all if there were no Major League Baseball played in 2022. Respondents were asked if “an agreement was not reached and there was no MLB season at all, how much would you be bothered?” An alarming 55 percent of sports fans, 39 percent of avid fans, 62 percent of casual fans and 71 percent of the general population said they would not really be bothered, or not at all bothered.

Still America’s Pastime?

Long known as “America’s National Pastime,” baseball has in recent years decreased in popularity as measured in game attendance and television ratings, especially when compared to football. However, Americans, especially among the older demographic, still see baseball as America’s National Pastime.

When asked “what do you consider America’s national pastime,” despite its overwhelming viewership advantage, football barely edged baseball across the board, with 38-36 percent among the general population in favor of football for the honor, 47-36 percent among sports fans, 49-39 percent among avid sports fans, and 45-35 percent among casual fans.

Baseball, however, enjoyed the advantage among the older demographic. Among those aged 35-54 it was baseball by 39-33 percent, and among those 55 and over, it was baseball by 42-38 percent. For those aged 18-34, however, it was football by 45-24 percent.

#

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

March 2022 Seton Hall Sports Poll Results Final

This SHSP was conducted March 11th through March 14th and includes responses from 1,528 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 16%
- I am a sports fan 38%

- I am **not** a sports fan 46%

Q2. [By Fan Level] Which sport do you consider America’s national pastime?

N=1,528	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Baseball	36%	36%	35%	39%	35%
Football	38%	47%	30%	49%	45%
Basketball	7%	10%	4%	8%	11%
Other	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%
Don’t know/No Opinion	16%	4%	29%	2%	5%

Q2. [By Age] Which sport do you consider America’s national pastime?

N=1,528	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Baseball	36%	24%	39%	42%
Football	38%	45%	33%	38%
Basketball	7%	11%	8%	4%
Other	3%	3%	2%	3%
Don’t know/No Opinion	16%	17%	18%	13%

Q2. [By Gender] Which sport do you consider America’s national pastime?

N=1,528	General Population	Male	Female
Baseball	36%	36%	35%
Football	38%	40%	37%
Basketball	7%	7%	8%
Other	3%	4%	2%
Don’t know/No Opinion	16%	13%	18%

Q2. [By Region] Which sport do you consider America’s national pastime?

N=1,528	General Population	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Baseball	36%	38%	40%	33%	33%
Football	38%	35%	37%	40%	40%
Basketball	7%	8%	4%	8%	8%
Other	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Don’t know/No Opinion	16%	14%	17%	16%	17%

Q3. [By Fan Level] How would you rate your current level of interest in MLB Baseball compared to that of your childhood years? My level of interest...

N=1,528	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Increased	12%	18%	4%	33%	12%
Stayed the same	23%	32%	13%	28%	34%
Decreased	28%	32%	23%	29%	33%
I was never a baseball fan	37%	18%	60%	10%	21%

Q3. [By Age] How would you rate your current level of interest in MLB Baseball compared to that of your childhood years? My level of interest...

N=1,528	General Population	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Increased	12%	16%	11%	9%
Stayed the same	23%	24%	24%	23%
Decreased	28%	18%	27%	36%
I was never a baseball fan	37%	42%	38%	32%

Q3. [By Gender] How would you rate your current level of interest in MLB Baseball compared to that of your childhood years? My level of interest...

N=1,528	General Population	Male	Female
Increased	12%	14%	10%
Stayed the same	23%	24%	23%
Decreased	28%	34%	21%
I was never a baseball fan	37%	28%	46%

Q3. [By Region] How would you rate your current level of interest in MLB Baseball compared to that of your childhood years? My level of interest...

N=1,528	General Population	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Increased	12%	17%	12%	9%	11%
Stayed the same	23%	22%	25%	21%	26%
Decreased	28%	30%	26%	29%	25%
I was never a baseball fan	37%	31%	37%	41%	38%

Locked out since December 2021, a new collective bargaining agreement was recently reached between Major League Baseball (represented by its owners) and the players union. Although delayed, the baseball season will resume, and a complete 162 game schedule is anticipated.

Q7b. If an agreement was not reached and there was no MLB baseball season at all, how much, if at all, would you have been bothered?

N=1,528	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Very bothered	12%	21%	2%	38%	14%
Slightly bothered	17%	24%	8%	23%	24%
Not really bothered	13%	19%	6%	16%	20%
Not at all bothered	58%	36%	84%	23%	42%

Q7. (December 2021) Now that a work stoppage has occurred and MLB's upcoming season is postponed until an agreement is met, will this reduce your interest in MLB once the games resume?

N=1,570	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, a stoppage would make me feel less interested in MLB once the games resume	19%	30%	7%	44%	24%
No, a stoppage would <u>not</u> make me feel less interested in MLB once the games resume	27%	41%	11%	46%	39%
Not applicable – I am not currently interested in MLB	54%	29%	82%	10%	37%

Q8. Who do you blame more for this labor disagreement?

N=1,528	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Owners	23%	28%	17%	34%	26%
Players	6%	9%	4%	12%	7%
Both	30%	39%	20%	38%	39%
Don't know/No opinion	41%	24%	59%	16%	28%

Q9. Now that a work stoppage has ended and MLB's upcoming season, although delayed, will occur, did the work stoppage reduce your interest in MLB?

N=1,528	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes, the work stoppage reduced my interest in MLB	10%	18%	3%	24%	14%
No, the work stoppage <u>did not</u> reduce my interest in MLB	35%	51%	15%	58%	49%
Not applicable – I am not currently interested in MLB	55%	31%	82%	18%	37%

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.

For more information, visit www.shu.edu.