



SPORTS: A SURE BET TO REACH THE AFFLUENT CONSUMER

An Ipsos Point of View

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GAME CHANGERS

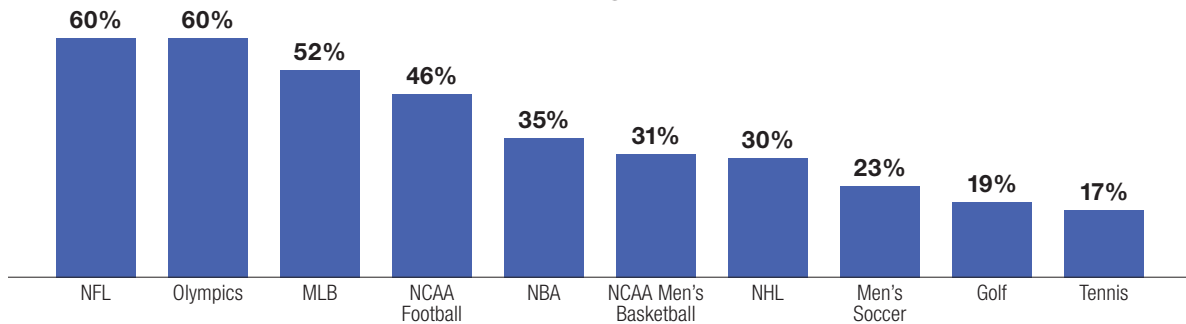


Sports are a huge part of the lives of affluent consumers with 86% considering themselves sports fans. Sports fandom, for the affluent, involves the whole family. According to data from our Q4 2021 Affluent Barometer, 50% of these fans agree that *“Sports provide important family bonding time to my family.”*

Bonding takes place both in-person and through viewing sports across various media. Although the pandemic took a toll on in-person events, Affluents still attended sporting events in huge numbers during the past year. According to data from the Spring 2022 Affluent release of the Ipsos Affluent Survey, 25 million Affluents continued to see sporting events in person.

The most popular sports among Affluents are the National Football League (NFL) and the Olympics, each with 60% of Affluents saying they’re fans. Major League Baseball (MLB) is the only other sports league with fandom of more than 50% of Affluent sports fans.

Fandom Among Sports Fans

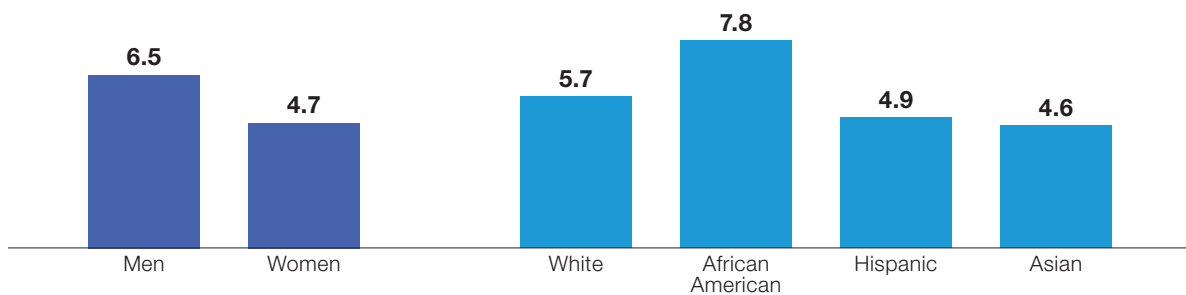


Source: Q4 2021 Ipsos Affluent Barometer

While Affluent men are more likely to be bigger sports fans generally, Affluent women are just as likely to be fans of the Olympics as men and are more likely to be fans of women’s sports, namely, women’s soccer and the WNBA.

African-American Affluents are the biggest sports fans among races/ethnicities. They are most likely to be fans of the NFL, the Olympics, MLB, NCAA Basketball and even Tennis. Looking at the NBA in particular, they are almost twice as likely as any other racial group to be a fan.

Average Number of Sports Followed



Source: Q4 2021 Ipsos Affluent Barometer

While it’s growing in popularity, fewer than 10% of Affluent sports fans are fans of eSports currently. All of these fans are from the younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) with more than half of Affluent Gen Xers, Boomers and Seniors agreeing that *“eSports are not sports.”*

Affluents use a variety of media to support their sports fandom beyond viewing events, going to multiple sources to get their sports news, scores, and updates. Cable TV, Broadcast TV and sports websites are the most popular sources with more than 40% of Affluent sports fans using each of them. Older Affluents are likely to get their sports updates from traditional media (Broadcast TV and Newspapers), while the younger generations of Affluents are likely to use Twitter for them.

As a result of its popularity, sports fandom generates a huge amount of spending, whether it be for live events, collectibles, or sports gambling. Affluent Americans spend more than \$20 billion annually on sports related expenses including admission fees or tickets, equipment, souvenirs, and other sports-related expenses. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2020 Consumer Expenditure Survey, on average, Affluents spent three times what non-Affluents spent on sporting event tickets.

Sports collectibles are a major component of affluent sports fandom with more than 20% of Affluent sports fans owning some type of collectibles. Among collectors, 70% collect memorabilia, 37% collect figurines and 32% collect sports cards. These collectors skew heavily male and are generally younger, with the exception of the sports cards market, which has an even generational split. The latest trend in collectibles is centered around the NFT (non-fungible token) market. Sports NFTs, in particular, are growing fast and account for billions of dollars. It is, however, still a relatively small market, even among Affluent collectors.

Some form of sports gambling has always been a part of sports fandom for the Affluent. One in five Affluent sports fans plays fantasy sports and 15% participate in sports pools (e.g. Super Bowl boxes, NCAA Tournament brackets). With sports gambling now legal in most states, Affluents are just beginning to dip their toes into this market—only 7% of Affluents told us they gambled on sports, but that was just before it was legalized in one of the biggest

markets: New York State. Most Affluent sports gamblers are men, and nearly half (45%) fall in the Gen-X generation. Most of the Affluent sports gamblers bet on football, with the NFL (77%) and NCAA football (56%) being the most popular sports to bet on. Expect the frequency to increase significantly as more states legalize sports gambling going forward.

The impact of sports fandom among the Affluent extends beyond spending, into the realms of social justice and government policy. Two-thirds of Affluents agree that *"Politics should be left out of sports."* This is heavily skewed towards Republicans, with 90% in agreement and less than 45% of Democrats in agreement with the same statement. On the other end of the political spectrum, almost 50% of Affluents agree that *"Athletes should feel free to talk about their political views"* with 68% of Democrats agreeing compared to only 28% of Republicans. In near universal disagreement, only 9% of Affluents agree that *"Sports stadiums should be publicly funded."*

Sports are a part of the everyday life of Affluent Americans. Thanks to their wealth and spending habits, Affluents are a key driver of revenue when it comes to anything sports related. From fandom to collectibles to gambling, understanding their love of sports and their sports media consumption is crucial in reaching these Affluent consumers. Connecting sports and the Affluent should be a slam dunk for any marketer in search of a passionate and well-funded consumer.



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