

UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion

2017 Sports Poll: College sports

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N=1,000 American adults
Margin of error +/- 3.7% for all respondents

See <http://uml.edu/pops> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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HIGHLIGHTS

In partnership with the Washington Post, the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion surveyed 1,000 American adults on their attitudes about sports. This is the fourth release in a series focusing on attitudes towards college sports and the question of whether or not college athletes should be compensated.

FINDINGS

College football and basketball have fan bases that rank in the top 5 of all American sports in this survey.

- x College football and basketball have the biggest fan base among American sports with professional baseball; only professional football (60%) has a larger fan following. Not far behind is college basketball whose fan base includes 35% of American adults, ranking it fifth among all sports surveyed behind only pro and college football, professional baseball, and professional basketball.
- x College football is especially popular among respondents with a college degree (50%), who are African-American (58%) and who reside in the Midwest (51%) and South (54%). Similarly, college basketball draws its biggest support among respondents who have a college degree (41%), have a family income over \$100,000 per year (40%), are African-American (57%) and reside in the South (42%).

- x Among African Americans, 54% support revenue based compensation compared to 42% who say scholarships are adequate compensation. However, among white respondents, just 31% believe in revenue based compensation for college athletes and 59% say that scholarships represent adequate compensation. Also of note is that there is stronger support for revenue based compensation among avid sports fans (45%) than among non-fans (25%); regular fans (42%) and casual fans (38%) in the middle.

Two-thirds of Americans support paying college athletes when their name or image is used in video games or to sell merchandise.

- x Respondents in our survey were randomly asked one version of a similar question:
 - a. Do you think college athletes should or should not be paid when their name or image is used in video games or to sell merchandise?
 - b. Do you think college athletes should or
should not be paid when their name or image is used in video games or to sell merchandise?
 - c. Do you think college athletes should or should
not be paid when their name or image is used in video games or to sell merchandise?
- x Interestingly, no matter which version of the question respondents received, 66% indicated that respondents should be paid, and less than 30% indicated that they should not be paid (24% for version a, 29% for version b, 25% for version c). While in principle it appears as though a majority of Americans think that scholarships represent adequate compensation for college athletes, on the specific question of name, image, and likeness, there is strong support for compensating athletes.