Impact in Sports Spending During Current Economic Downturn Measured by Seton Hall Sports Poll

Fans, Participants, Show Downward Turns in Attendance, Participation and Purchases of Merchandise, and Health Club Memberships.

Uncertainty Over Buying Cable TV Packages

S. Orange, NJ, November 18, 2008 – The nation’s sports fans and participants in sporting activities have signaled downturns in almost every area of spending from ticket and merchandise purchases to participation in events requiring a fee and health club memberships.

The results were determined by a Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted November 11-13, in which 664 randomly called people throughout the United States answered questions to measure the potential impact of the economic downturn which has dominated news coverage since September.

Respondents were asked if they were likely to cut back in things they were already doing. The poll found:

- 16% of those with health club memberships are likely to cut back on them
- 47% of golfers are likely to cut back
- 49% of skiers are likely to cut back
- 45% of those that purchased team merchandise in the last year are likely to cut back

58% of all respondents said they would be less likely to spend money on entertainment (concerts, movies, sports, theater, etc.), and of those, 76% identified tickets to sporting events as a place they would cut back.

When asked, if they could only buy a ticket to one sport, which would it be, 48% said football to 18% baseball, 16% basketball, 7% hockey and 9% other.

On the subject of purchasing tickets for sporting events, 20% said they would cut back on football tickets, followed by 18% on basketball, 17% on hockey, and 16% on baseball.

“it appears that the American public -- at least the sports crowd -- is already feeling the economic pinch or at least anticipating feeling it,” said Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. "It's not just theoretical anymore but becoming an actual part of people's lives and more specifically their leisure lives.

“While these numbers could arguably be read in different ways, I think that football might be least effected by the downturn because it is so clearly the most desirable ticket," he added.

Sixteen percent said that they had purchased TV sports packages in the last year, and of these, 1% would increase the number, 4% would decrease, 10% would stay the same, and 84% were in the ‘don't know/refuse to answer’ category.
“There appears to be more uncertainty and more of a wait-and-see approach when it comes to the purchase of cable TV packages offered by the NFL and MLB,” said Gentile.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of 664 adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States, with 67% of them identifying themselves as sports fans. The poll was weighted to reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.8% percentage points for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

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**The questions:**

Do you frequently attend, occasionally attend, or never attend professional or collegiate sporting events?
- Frequently attend 11%
- Occasionally attend 39%
- Never attend 50%

As a result of what’s been happening with the stock market and economy, please tell me if you will be less likely to spend money on entertainment such as going to concerts, movies, sporting events, theater?
- Yes 58%
- No 39%

*(Asked of those that said they would be less likely to spend money on entertainment)*

Are you less likely to buy tickets for sporting events?
- Yes 76% of sports fans
- No 31% of sports fans

Do you have a health club membership?
- Yes 23%
- No 75%

*(Asked of those that have health club memberships.)*
Will you be cutting back on your health club membership because of the economic downturn?
   Yes          16%
   No           80%

Do you play golf?
   Yes          21%
   No           78%

*(Asked of those that play golf)*
Will you be cutting back on expenditures for golf because of the economic downturn?
   Yes          47%
   No           53%

Do you ski?
   Yes          16%
   No           83%

*(Asked of those that ski)*
Will you be cutting back on expenditures for skiing because of the economic downturn?
   Yes          49%
   No           50%

Do you participate in any other sports?
   Yes          35%
   No           64%

*(Asked of those that participate in other sports.)*
Will you be cutting back on some of these expenditures because of the economic downturn?
   Yes          33%
   No           65%

Do you consider yourself a sports fan?
   Yes          67%
   No           31%

If you decide to cut back on purchasing tickets this year, which sport are you most likely to cut back on: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or other?
   Baseball     16%
   Basketball   18%
   Football     20%
   Hockey       17%
   Other        12%

If you could only buy a ticket to one sport this year, which one would it be: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or Other?
   Baseball     18%
   Basketball   16%
   Football     48%
Have you bought any college or professional team merchandise, such as team jerseys, hats, etc. in the past year?
   Yes  51%
   No   48%

*(Asked of those that bought merchandise in the last year)*

Are you less likely to buy team merchandise because of the economic downturn?
   Yes  45%
   No   54%

Have you purchased any sports packages on television in the past year; for example NFL Sunday Ticket, MLB Extra Innings, etc?
   Yes  16%
   No   84%

*(Asked of those that purchased sports packages in the past year.)*

In the coming year, do you expect to increase; decrease or keep the number of sports packages the same?
   Increase  1%
   Decrease  4%
   Keep the same  10%
   Don’t know/refuse to answer  84%

Which sport do you think will be most negatively impacted by the economic downturn: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or Other?
   Baseball  16%
   Basketball  14%
   Football  19%
   Hockey  19%
   Other  16%