



**MLB PERCEIVED AS HAVING BEST OFFICIATING AMONG MAJOR SPECTATOR SPORTS,  
BEATING NFL BY 64-48% MARGIN**

**Democrats and Republicans Can Agree on Something: The Quality of Officiating**

South Orange NJ, October 29, 2019 -- Despite seeing nearly half of all disputed calls reversed by video replay, Americans perceive the officiating of Major League Baseball better than any other major sport.

And what's truly remarkable in this day and age of polarization, is that Democrats and Republicans are in agreement on whether officiating is good or terrible on a sport-by-sport basis.

"At last, something they can agree on," noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, which is sponsored by the Sharkey Institute within the Stillman School of Business. "The differences were negligible in almost every case."

These are the findings of a Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted last week among 703 adult Americans across the country on both landlines and cellphones. The Poll has a margin of error of +/-3.8 percent. (The margin of error for the smaller sample of Democrats and Republicans, 176 of each, is +/- 7.5 percent.)

Major League Baseball scored a 64 percent approval rating for umpiring, with only 3 percent saying it was terrible. And here we find 65 percent of Democrats saying it is good, and 67 percent of Republicans.

For the NFL, 48 percent rated the officiating as good (57 percent Democrats; 54 percent Republicans), but 27 percent called it terrible. A separate question, the suggestion of using replay on every call, found the public equally divided - 41 percent approving, and 42 percent disapproving, with 17 percent having no opinion. (While the parties can agree on officiating, they don't agree on how to improve it. On this there was division by party, with 51 percent of Democrats approving of replay on every play, but only 27 percent of Republicans approving.)

The NBA had a 49 percent rating of “good” for its officiating; the NHL 44 percent; college basketball 48 percent, and college football 53 percent, all very close along party lines (see breakdown at the end of this release).

Percent saying that each sport has “good officiating.”

SPORT	DEM	REP
Major League Baseball	65	67
National Football League	57	54
National Basketball Assoc.	55	57
National Hockey League	43	45
College Basketball	55	60
College Football	65	67

Asked if legalized sports betting influence people’s reaction to officiating of NFL games, 62 percent said yes, 20 percent no and 18 percent don’t know - again, fairly equal along party lines.

#### **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 the third most diverse national Catholic university in the nation.

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](http://www.shu.edu).

**About the poll:**

This poll was conducted by telephone October 21-23 among adults in the United States. The Seton Hall Sports Poll is conducted by the Sharkey Institute within the Stillman School of Business. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard landline and cell phones. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls. The Seton Hall Sports Poll has been conducted regularly since 2006. Recently chosen for inclusion in iPoll by Cornell's Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, its findings have been published everywhere from USA Today, ESPN, The New York Times, Washington Post, AP, and Reuters to Fox News and most points in between.

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The results:

1. The NFL has been criticized recently for a series of questionable calls by officials. One suggestion is to have a referee overseeing every call made or not made on video and confirming or overruling the call on the field. Do you approve or disapprove?

		Dem	Rep	Ind
1 - Approve	41	51	27	43
2 - Disapprove	42	40	56	39
3 - Don't know/No opinion	17	9	17	18

I'm going to read you a few sports. Tell me if you think the officiating is good or terrible:

2. Major League Baseball

1 - Good	64	65	67	63
2 - Terrible	3	2	7	3
3 - Don't know/No opinion	33	33	27	33

3. National Football League

1 - Good	48	57	54	41
2 - Terrible	27	19	29	31
3 - Don't know/No opinion	25	24	17	28

4. National Basketball Association

1 - Good	49	55	57	42
2 - Terrible	13	19	29	17
3 - Don't know/No opinion	38	24	17	41

5. National Hockey League

1 - Good	44	43	45	45
2 - Terrible	6	6	6	5
3 - Don't know/No opinion	51	52	49	50

6. College Basketball

1 - Good	48	55	60	38
2 - Terrible	9	8	3	13
3 - Don't know/No opinion	44	37	37	49

7. College Football

1 - Good	53	65	67	41
2 - Terrible	12	8	13	14
3 - Don't know/No opinion	34	26	20	45

8. Is sports betting, which has been legalized in many states, influencing people's reaction to officiating of NFL games?

1 - Yes	62	64	62	60
2 - No	20	19	26	18
3 - Don't know	18	18	13	22

9. Would you describe yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent or something else?

1 - Democrat	25
2 - Republican	25
3 - Independent	30
4 - Other	15
5 - Don't know/No Opinion	4