



By More Than 3-1, Americans Agree with US Diplomatic Boycott of Winter Olympics; 40% Think US Should Have Pulled Athletes Too!

South Orange, NJ, February 2, 2022 – By more than a 3-1 margin, the general population of the United States agrees with the decision to have diplomats boycott the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, which begin this Friday in Beijing, China.

Citing human rights violations, the United States along with Great Britain, Canada and Australia are staging a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics, meaning that no ambassadors or officials from these countries will attend. The athletes, however, will still be competing in the games.

Among the American public 57 percent agreed with the boycott while just 18 percent disagreed. The remaining 23 percent said they did not know or held no opinion. Among those who intend to watch the Winter Olympics, the margin rose to nearly 4 to 1 – with 67 percent agreeing with the boycott and 17 percent disagreeing.

Pull Athletes as Well?

On the question of whether the U.S. should have pulled its athletes from the Winter Olympics competition in addition to the diplomatic boycott, 40 percent of the general population said yes, with 32 percent saying no (28 percent said they did not know or held no opinion).

Sports Fans?

Among sports fans, the number who said that the U.S. athletes should have been pulled from competition rose slightly from the general population to 41 percent (37 percent saying no, 21 percent don't know/no opinion). Among self-described "avid fans," slightly more weighed in favor of pulling the athletes, rising to 43 percent with 38 percent saying no (18 percent don't know/no opinion).

These were the findings of a Seton Hall Sports Poll conducted January 28-February 1 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 had 1,513 adult respondents with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percent.

Interestingly, even among those who said they intend to watch the Winter Olympics, 35 percent said they think the U.S. should have pulled its team.

“These survey findings reflect years of increasingly caustic rhetoric by politicians on both sides of the Pacific,” said Martin Edwards, Professor and Chair of the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University. “They also reflect a realization that we do need to shine a greater spotlight on China’s human rights record. The diplomatic boycott sends a message to a status-conscious power without punishing athletes in the process.”

Protest Ok?

The public was also asked what they thought about Olympic athletes voicing their opinions on social causes. Among respondents, 62 percent said it is appropriate for these athletes to speak out against perceived human rights issues in their own nation, while 21 percent said it is not (remainder did not know/no opinion).

With regard to Olympic athletes speaking out against perceived human rights issues in other nations, however, the approval number, though still a majority, dropped to 53 percent, with 27 percent objecting.

Although more Americans than not thought it appropriate to protest at the Olympics, those in favor totaled 46 percent while those against came to 36 percent.

“In some ways, we’ve come a long way in our views regarding the rights of athletes to call out human rights issues both here and abroad,” said Professor Charles Grantham, director of the Poll and the Center for Sport Management within Seton Hall’s Stillman School of Business. “When John Carlos and Tommie Smith protested at the 1968 Olympics for social justice in America, they were expelled from the games and vilified. More than half a century later, American attitudes have changed.”

Anticipated Viewership Much Higher for 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics

Thirty-seven percent of the general population said they planned on watching part of the Beijing Games. That number, however, was 49 percent when the Seton Hall Sports Poll asked people about their plans to watch the 2021 Tokyo Summer Games. Among avid fans, 58 percent said they planned on watching the Winter Games as opposed to 71 percent when the Poll asked about Tokyo.

Will Time Zone Difference Impact Viewing, Excitement? Will You Check News/Social Media for Results?

Twenty percent of the general public, 29 percent of sports fans and 38 percent of avid fans say they plan to check internet/social media for any event results prior to watching on broadcast TV.

“This is a trend worth noting,” said Seton Hall Marketing Professor and Poll Methodologist Daniel Ladik. “Information accessibility is ubiquitous and as readily accessible as the smartphone in your hand. This is a real dilemma for broadcasters and, it would seem advertisers, who are dealing with potentially less engaged viewers.”

As for whether the time zone difference between the U.S. and China diminishes excitement, however, 53 percent of sports fans and 46 percent of avid fans said no (those saying yes were 36 percent among sports fans and 51 percent among avid fans).

Lack of NHL Players Diminishes Value of Hockey's Gold Medal?

The Poll asked several questions in light of the National Hockey League's decision (supported by the NHL Players Association) not to have its players participate in the Beijing Games. Asked if that diminishes the value of the gold medal in men's ice hockey, 40 percent of both the general population and sports fans (42 percent of avid fans) said it did not. Among the general population, 31 percent said it did diminish the medal's value, and 30 percent said don't know/no opinion. Among sports fans, it was evenly divided with 40 percent to 40 percent (20 percent don't know, undecided). Among avid fans, it was also fairly well divided, with 42 percent saying that the absence of NHL players will not diminish the value of the gold medal in hockey, and 44 percent saying yes it will. Thirteen percent said they did not know or had no opinion.

NHL/NHLPA Opted Out, OK?

Fifty percent of the population agreed with the NHL/NHLPA decision to not have its players take part in the Beijing Winter Olympics, with 23 percent opposed (26 percent don't know/no opinion). Among sports fans support for the decision to not take part was higher at 55 percent and among avid fans 56 percent. Those not supporting the decision were 25 percent and 26 percent respectively.

Asked whether interest in Olympic men's hockey was reduced by elimination of NHL players, 54 percent of sports fans and 47 percent of avid fans said their interest was not diminished, while 40 percent of sports fans and 44 percent of avid fans said their interest was indeed diminished.

Lockdowns, Travel Bans and Covid-19

There was general agreement with China's restrictions, not allowing fans from other nations to attend the game. Forty-six percent of the general population agreed that this was a good policy (vs. 30 percent disagreeing), 50 percent of sports fans agreed (vs. 32 percent disagreeing) and 57 percent of avid fans agreed (vs. 28 percent saying no).

The host nation has also banned families of Olympic athletes, and here there is more disagreement. The general population disagrees with the exclusion of the families of athletes by 41-34 percent, sports fans disagree with the policy by 44-37 percent. For those who identify as avid fans, however, 47 percent agree with the family ban vs. 38 percent who disagree.

"Selected" spectators will be allowed at Olympic events in Beijing, a greater restriction than that which was imposed at Tokyo last summer. The general U.S. population agrees with this policy by 37-34 percent, sports fans by 43-31 percent, and avid fans by 46-28 percent.

No Cheering, Only Hand Clapping

There is also a restriction on cheering, with fans in attendance permitted to clap but not cheer. While avid fans support this by 43-38 percent, the general population disagrees (42-32 percent). The number disagreeing with the policy grows to 46-35 percent among sports fans.

Asked if the limited attendance in the stands will diminish excitement while watching the Games, the “no’s” have it. Among the general population 54-22 percent say the limited attendance will not diminish their excitement; among sports fans, 53-30 percent say the same, and 46-41 percent among avid fans.

Most Popular Winter Olympics Sports

Respondents were asked to name the sports in the Winter Olympics they were most interested in, with the ability to check all that applied. Perhaps unsurprisingly, figure skating led (33%), ski jumping was second (25%), snow boarding third (23%), speed skating fourth (23%), and bobsled took fifth place (21%).

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

#

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 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.

February 2022 Seton Hall Sports Poll

This SHSP was conducted January 28 through February 1 and includes responses from 1,513 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 **19%**
 I am a sports fan **38%**
 I am **not** a sports fan **43%**

Citing human rights violations, the United States along with Great Britain, Canada and Australia are staging a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, meaning that no ambassadors or officials from these countries will attend. The athletes, however, will still be competing in the games.

Q5a. Do you agree with the U.S. diplomatic boycott?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	57%	64%	48%	67%	62%
No	18%	19%	16%	19%	19%
Don’t know/No opinion	25%	17%	36%	14%	19%

Q5b. Do you think the U.S. should have pulled its athletes as well?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	40%	42%	38%	44%	40%
No	32%	37%	25%	38%	37%
Don't know/No opinion	28%	21%	37%	18%	23%

Athletes have used their platform to voice their opinions on social causes.

Q6a. Do you think it is appropriate for Olympic athletes to speak out against perceived human rights issues in their own nation?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	62%	64%	58%	67%	62%
No	21%	22%	20%	21%	22%
Don't know/No opinion	17%	14%	22%	12%	16%

Q6b. Do you think it is appropriate for Olympic athletes to speak out against perceived human rights issues in other nations?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	53%	58%	47%	65%	54%
No	27%	26%	28%	21%	29%
Don't know/No opinion	20%	16%	25%	14%	17%

Q6c. Do you think it is appropriate for Olympic athletes to protest at the Olympics?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	46%	50%	40%	60%	45%
No	36%	38%	34%	27%	43%
Don't know/No opinion	18%	12%	26%	13%	12%

Q6d. Should governments use sporting events to influence or affect social change?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	31%	36%	24%	49%	30%
No	47%	46%	49%	36%	51%
Don't know/No opinion	22%	18%	27%	15%	19%

Q7a. Citing the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Hockey League Player Association (NHLPA) decided not to allow its players to compete in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Do you agree with this decision?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	51%	55%	44%	56%	55%
No	23%	25%	21%	26%	25%
Don't know/No opinion	26%	20%	35%	18%	20%

Q7b. Does the NHL and NHLPA's decision to keep players out of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics reduce your interest in Olympic ice hockey?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	20%	29%	8%	40%	24%
No	55%	54%	58%	47%	57%
Don't know/No opinion	25%	17%	34%	13%	19%

Q7c. With no NHL players competing, does this diminish the value of the men's ice hockey Gold medal?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	31%	40%	19%	45%	38%
No	40%	40%	39%	42%	38%
Don't know/No opinion	29%	20%	42%	13%	24%

The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics are set to start on February 4th.

Q8a. Do you plan on watching any part of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	37%	48%	21%	58%	44%
No	46%	36%	59%	30%	39%
Don't know/No opinion	17%	16%	20%	12%	17%

Q8b. Given the time difference between the US and Beijing, many of the events will not be broadcast live in the US. Does this diminish your excitement that you will be watching a pre-recorded event because of the time difference?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	26%	36%	11%	51%	28%
No	56%	50%	65%	39%	56%
Don't know/No opinion	18%	14%	24%	10%	16%

Q8c. Are you planning to check the internet/social media for any event results prior to watching any events on broadcast TV?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	20%	29%	9%	38%	25%
No	61%	53%	70%	46%	57%
Don't know/No opinion	19%	18%	21%	16%	18%

Q6a – Do you plan on watching any part of the 2021 Tokyo Olympics*?

N=1,554	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	49%	65%	27%	71%	61%
No	38%	24%	56%	21%	26%
Don't know/No opinion	13%	11%	17%	8%	13%

**Data collected May 21st through May 24th, 2021 - - - sample = 1,554 US adults*

While China has seemingly avoided major virus outbreaks with a regimen of lockdowns, mass testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and travel restrictions, it continues to fight COVID-19 surges in several large cities, including the port of Tianjin, about an hour from Beijing.

Q9a. China and the Olympic Committee are not allowing any fans from other nations to attend the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Do you agree with this decision?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	46%	50%	42%	57%	46%
No	30%	32%	26%	28%	34%
Don't know/No opinion	24%	18%	32%	15%	20%

Q9b. Within this ban of fans from other countries, the families of Olympic athletes are also excluded. Do you agree with this decision?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
---------	--------------------	------------	---------	----------	------------

Yes	34%	37%	30%	47%	31%
No	41%	44%	38%	37%	48%
Don't know/No opinion	25%	19%	32%	16%	21%

The Chinese government has opted to only allow Olympic attendance to “selected” spectators because of the pandemic. Fan attendance restriction seem to be more limited than those in Tokyo for the 2021 Summer Olympics.

Q10a. Should the Chinese government allow fan attendance in the stadiums?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	37%	43%	28%	46%	41%
No	34%	31%	38%	28%	33%
Don't know/No opinion	29%	26%	34%	26%	26%

Q10b. In an effort to reduce the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), fans selected to attend Olympic games will be allowed to clap but not cheer. Do you agree with this decision?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	32%	35%	27%	43%	32%
No	42%	46%	38%	38%	50%
Don't know/No opinion	26%	19%	35%	19%	18%

Q10c. With limited fans in the stands, will this diminish your excitement while watching the Olympics on a TV broadcast?

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Yes	23%	30%	12%	42%	25%
No	54%	53%	56%	46%	56%
Don't know/No opinion	23%	17%	32%	12%	19%

Q11. The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics are scheduled to include a record 109 events over 15 disciplines. Which of the following are you the most interested in? Please check all that apply.

N=1,513	General Population	Sports Fan	Non Fan	Avid Fan	Casual Fan
Biathlon	8%	11%	3%	15%	9%
Bobsled	21%	29%	11%	25%	30%

Skeleton	10%	15%	4%	12%	30%
Curling	14%	19%	7%	20%	19%
Ice Hockey	18%	26%	7%	32%	23%
Luge	18%	25%	10%	25%	25%
Figure Skating	33%	36%	30%	29%	39%
Short Track Speed Skating	14%	19%	8%	20%	19%
Speed Skating	23%	29%	14%	33%	28%
Alpine Skiing	18%	24%	11%	25%	23%
Cross-Country Skiing	9%	12%	5%	15%	10%
Freestyle Skiing	16%	20%	11%	25%	18%
Nordic Combined Skiing	10%	12%	7%	14%	11%
Ski Jumping	25%	30%	17%	31%	30%
Snowboarding	23%	28%	15%	28%	28%
None of these	39%	24%	58%	16%	28%