



Phelps' Olympic Medal Record Biggest Accomplishment in Sports This Year

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Months removed from the London Olympics, stories from the games top the list of 2012's biggest accomplishments in sports. Among sports fans nationally, 28% consider Michael Phelps breaking the Olympic medal record to be the single best sports accomplishment of the year. The gold medal win by the U.S. women's gymnastics team tumbled into the hearts of 23% of U.S. sports fans. 13% believe Notre Dame's football team played like champions during their undefeated regular season while the third consecutive gold medal for the U.S. women's soccer team is deemed the biggest sports accomplishment by 12%. However, 11% think Drew Brees' record for consecutive games with a touchdown pass trumped sports while 10% of U.S. sports fans say the Triple Crown win by the Detroit Tigers' Miguel Cabrera was a home run this year. Three percent are unsure.

This Marist Poll has been done in conjunction with The Marist College Center for Sports Communication.

"The results remind us that Olympic accomplishments carry enormous weight with the American public," says Dr. Keith Strudler, Director of The Marist College Center for Sports Communication. "They also highlight Michael Phelps' place among the hierarchy of American sports greats."

Men and women differ on this question. While 31% of men think Phelps breaking the Olympic medal record deserves the title of single best sports accomplishment of 2012, 33% of women say the gold medal win by the U.S. women's gymnastics team takes the crown.

Touchdown! Big Blue's Super Bowl Win Scores as Best Sports Championship

When it comes to the best sports championship of 2012, the Super Bowl victory by the New York Giants is tops. 36% of U.S. sports fans have this view. 17%, however, believe the World Series win by the San Francisco Giants deserves the honor. 13% report the college

football national title win by the Alabama Crimson Tide is the best championship of the year while an additional 13% say the NBA Championship victory by the Miami Heat tops their list. The NHL season may be on ice due to the current lockout, but the 2012 Stanley Cup win by the Los Angeles Kings is tops in the minds of 8% of sports fans. Seven percent, though, report the NCAA men's basketball championship victory by the Kentucky Wildcats deserves the title. Six percent are unsure.

Regionally, the Super Bowl victory by the New York Giants is thought to be the top sports championship by 45% in the Northeast, 43% in the Midwest, and 29% in the South. However, in the West, the World Series triumph by the San Francisco Giants -- 35% -- edges the New York football Giants' victory -- 30%.

While 44% of sports fans age 30 to 44, 42% of those 45 to 59, and 32% of fans 60 and older give top honors to the New York Giants Super Bowl win, there is less agreement among younger fans. 27% of fans under 30 say the Miami Heat's NBA championship was the best sports championship of 2012. This compares with 24% who say the same about the New York Giants taking home the Lombardi trophy.

Sandusky Scandal Sends Shockwaves

The Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal not only stunned the Penn State community, but it had a large impact on the sports world. In fact, nearly half of sports fans nationally -- 48% -- believe this story had the biggest impact on sports in 2012. The Lance Armstrong doping scandal comes in a distant second with 18% followed by 13% who mention the replacement referees in the NFL, and 10% who pick the NHL lockout as having the greatest impact on sports in 2012. Six percent believe the NFL bounty scandal hardest hit sports this year. Four percent are unsure.

Regardless of region, income, age, ethnicity, and gender, the Sandusky scandal is thought to be the story with the largest impact on sports in 2012.

Peyton Manning Most Influential on His Sport

When it comes to the player with the biggest impact on their sport in 2012, quarterback for the Denver Broncos, Peyton Manning, takes the top spot. 35% of U.S. sports fans have this view of him. The Miami Heat's LeBron James comes in second with 24% who say he has had the biggest impact on basketball. Swimming phenomenon Missy Franklin is thought to have had the largest effect on her sport by 10%. The same proportion -- 10% -- says the PGA's Rory McIlroy was the most influential in golf while an additional 10% believe Serena Williams had the largest impact on tennis. Five percent think Major League Baseball's Mike Trout had the biggest impact on the diamond, and 6% are unsure.

Don't Believe the Hype

Which athlete do sports fans think is the most overhyped? A plurality -- 46% -- says Tim Lincecum of the New York Mets deserves this dubious distinction. Third baseman for the New York Yankees, Alex Rodriguez, is believed by 18% to be the most overrated athlete this year. NASCAR's Danica Patrick is perceived by 12% to be the most overvalued athlete. Linsanity fizzled out for the 8% of sports fans nationally who believe the NBA's Jeremy Lin is the most overhyped athlete. Six percent say Olympic track star Lolo Jones is the most overrated, and 10% are unsure.

Just how many adults nationally are sports fans? Six in ten -- 60% -- are while 40% are not.

About Keith Strudler, Ph.D.

Keith Strudler, Ph.D., is the director for the Marist College Center for Sports Communication. Dr. Strudler founded Marist's popular concentration in sports communication in 2002, now one of the nation's largest in the discipline. He studies and teaches in the areas of sports media, sport and society, and sports reporting and information. Dr. Strudler also writes weekly sports commentary for WAMC, an NPR radio station in Albany, NY.

How the Survey was Conducted

Nature of the Sample: Marist National Poll of 1,246 Adults

This survey of 1,246 adults was conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. To increase coverage, this landline sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined and balanced to reflect the 2010 census results for age, gender, income, race, and region. Results are statistically significant within ± 2.8 percentage points. There are 737 sports fans. The results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 3.6 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Nature of the Sample

		National Adults	Sports Fans
		Col %	Col %
National Adults		100%	
Sports Fans		60%	100%
Gender	Men	49%	57%
	Women	51%	43%
Age	Under 45	37%	39%
	45 or older	63%	61%
Age	18 to 29	17%	19%
	30 to 44	20%	20%
	45 to 59	32%	32%
	60 or older	32%	29%
Race	White	70%	69%
	African American	11%	12%
	Latino	12%	13%
	Other	6%	6%
Region	Northeast	18%	19%
	Midwest	22%	23%
	South	37%	36%
	West	23%	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	50%	46%
	\$50,000 or more	50%	54%
Education	Not college graduate	62%	61%
	College graduate	38%	39%
Interview Type	Landline	74%	72%
	Cell Phone	26%	28%

Marist Poll National Adults. Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=1246 MOE +/- 2.8 percentage points. National Sports Fans: N=737 MOE +/- 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		National Adults	
		Do you consider yourself to be a sports fan, or not?	
		Yes	No
		Row %	Row %
National Adults		60%	40%
Region	Northeast	63%	37%
	Midwest	62%	38%
	South	58%	42%
	West	57%	43%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	57%	43%
	\$50,000 or more	66%	34%
Education	Not college graduate	59%	41%
	College graduate	61%	39%
Age	Under 45	62%	38%
	45 or older	58%	42%
Age	18 to 29	65%	35%
	30 to 44	61%	39%
	45 to 59	60%	40%
	60 or older	55%	45%
Race	White	59%	41%
	Non-white	61%	39%
Gender	Men	69%	31%
	Women	51%	49%
Interview Type	Landline	58%	42%
	Cell Phone	64%	36%

Marist Poll National Adults: Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=1246 MOE +/- 2.8 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		Sports Fans						
		Which one of the following was the best sports championship of the year:						
		The New York Giants winning the Super Bowl	The San Francisco Giants winning the World Series	The Alabama Crimson Tide winning the college football national title	The Miami Heat winning the NBA Championship	The Los Angeles Kings winning the Stanley Cup	The Kentucky Wildcats winning the NCAA men's basketball championship	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		36%	17%	13%	13%	8%	7%	6%
Region	Northeast	45%	17%	8%	10%	9%	6%	5%
	Midwest	43%	13%	10%	10%	9%	8%	8%
	South	29%	10%	23%	17%	5%	8%	7%
	West	30%	35%	4%	10%	12%	4%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	34%	18%	14%	15%	7%	6%	6%
	\$50,000 or more	36%	17%	14%	10%	9%	8%	5%
Education	Not college graduate	37%	17%	14%	14%	6%	7%	6%
	College graduate	34%	18%	13%	11%	11%	7%	6%
Age	Under 45	34%	11%	14%	18%	11%	6%	5%
	45 or older	37%	20%	12%	10%	6%	7%	7%
Age	18 to 29	24%	12%	17%	27%	8%	5%	8%
	30 to 44	44%	11%	12%	9%	13%	7%	3%
	45 to 59	42%	17%	12%	10%	7%	7%	5%
	60 or older	32%	24%	13%	10%	5%	8%	9%
Race	White	34%	21%	14%	7%	9%	8%	7%
	Non-white	40%	10%	13%	23%	5%	5%	4%
Gender	Men	38%	15%	13%	15%	10%	7%	3%
	Women	32%	21%	13%	10%	6%	7%	10%
Interview Type	Landline	34%	19%	13%	12%	8%	7%	7%
	Cell Phone	40%	13%	15%	15%	8%	6%	4%

Marist Poll National Sports Fans: Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=737 MOE +/- 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		Sports Fans						
		Which one of the following was the best single sports accomplishment of the year:						
		Michael Phelps breaking the Olympic medal record	The U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team winning gold	Notre Dame football's undefeated regular season	The U.S. women's soccer team winning their third consecutive Olympic gold medal	Drew Brees breaking the passing record for consecutive games with a touchdown throw	Miguel Cabrera winning the Triple Crown	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		28%	23%	13%	12%	11%	10%	3%
Region	Northeast	28%	26%	14%	9%	7%	15%	2%
	Midwest	29%	24%	17%	12%	9%	8%	2%
	South	30%	18%	12%	14%	16%	7%	3%
	West	23%	29%	10%	12%	9%	15%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	22%	23%	15%	13%	13%	12%	2%
	\$50,000 or more	32%	25%	12%	11%	10%	8%	1%
Education	Not college graduate	29%	21%	15%	12%	11%	9%	3%
	College graduate	26%	27%	10%	12%	11%	13%	2%
Age	Under 45	30%	18%	13%	12%	13%	12%	1%
	45 or older	26%	26%	13%	12%	10%	9%	3%
Age	18 to 29	28%	14%	18%	12%	17%	10%	2%
	30 to 44	32%	22%	9%	12%	9%	15%	1%
	45 to 59	30%	24%	13%	11%	12%	9%	1%
	60 or older	22%	30%	13%	13%	7%	9%	5%
Race	White	29%	23%	13%	12%	8%	12%	3%
	Non-white	28%	24%	13%	10%	18%	6%	1%
Gender	Men	31%	16%	14%	11%	13%	14%	2%
	Women	24%	33%	12%	14%	9%	5%	3%
Interview Type	Landline	26%	25%	13%	13%	10%	10%	2%
	Cell Phone	31%	19%	14%	9%	12%	11%	3%

Marist Poll National Sports Fans: Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=737 MOE +/- 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		Sports Fans					
		Which one of the following stories had the biggest impact on sports this year:					
		The Jerry Sandusky trial	Lance Armstrong's doping scandal	Replacement refs in the NFL	The NHL lockout	The NFL bounty investigation	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		48%	18%	13%	10%	6%	4%
Region	Northeast	48%	19%	9%	12%	7%	4%
	Midwest	46%	16%	16%	13%	4%	4%
	South	54%	18%	13%	5%	6%	4%
	West	41%	22%	14%	13%	8%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	46%	19%	12%	12%	8%	4%
	\$50,000 or more	51%	16%	15%	9%	6%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	42%	21%	13%	11%	8%	5%
	College graduate	57%	14%	14%	9%	4%	2%
Age	Under 45	42%	17%	15%	13%	10%	3%
	45 or older	53%	18%	12%	8%	4%	4%
Age	18 to 29	26%	27%	13%	18%	13%	3%
	30 to 44	57%	8%	17%	8%	7%	3%
	45 to 59	49%	20%	14%	10%	4%	3%
	60 or older	56%	16%	10%	7%	5%	6%
Race	White	49%	16%	15%	10%	6%	4%
	Non-white	45%	24%	9%	10%	8%	3%
Gender	Men	45%	19%	14%	11%	8%	3%
	Women	53%	17%	13%	8%	5%	4%
Interview Type	Landline	48%	20%	13%	8%	7%	4%
	Cell Phone	48%	13%	13%	16%	6%	3%

Marist Poll National Sports Fans: Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=737 MOE +/- 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		Sports Fans					
		Who was the most overhyped athlete of the year:					
		Tim Tebow	Alex Rodriguez	Danica Patrick	Jeremy Lin	Lolo Jones	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		46%	18%	12%	8%	6%	10%
Region	Northeast	43%	22%	11%	10%	5%	9%
	Midwest	48%	17%	14%	7%	6%	8%
	South	43%	18%	11%	10%	6%	12%
	West	53%	17%	11%	6%	5%	9%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	46%	19%	12%	8%	3%	12%
	\$50,000 or more	47%	18%	12%	8%	8%	7%
Education	Not college graduate	46%	17%	11%	9%	5%	11%
	College graduate	46%	20%	12%	8%	7%	7%
Age	Under 45	50%	14%	12%	14%	6%	4%
	45 or older	44%	21%	11%	5%	6%	14%
Age	18 to 29	50%	13%	12%	15%	6%	3%
	30 to 44	51%	15%	12%	12%	5%	4%
	45 to 59	45%	20%	10%	6%	8%	11%
	60 or older	42%	22%	12%	4%	3%	17%
Race	White	45%	19%	13%	6%	5%	11%
	Non-white	51%	14%	7%	14%	7%	7%
Gender	Men	48%	19%	11%	9%	5%	8%
	Women	44%	18%	12%	7%	7%	13%
Interview Type	Landline	46%	18%	12%	7%	6%	11%
	Cell Phone	46%	18%	11%	12%	6%	6%

Marist Poll National Sports Fans: Interviews conducted December 4th through December 6th, 2012, N=737 MOE +/- 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

		Sports Fans						
		Which one of the following players had the biggest impact on their sport this year:						
		NFL quarterback Peyton Manning	NBA player LeBron James	Swimmer Missy Franklin	Golfer Rory McIlroy	Tennis player Serena Williams	MLB player Mike Trout	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		35%	24%	10%	10%	10%	5%	6%
Region	Northeast	31%	25%	12%	8%	11%	6%	7%
	Midwest	37%	25%	15%	9%	7%	2%	5%
	South	34%	28%	7%	9%	11%	4%	6%
	West	36%	17%	9%	14%	11%	9%	5%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	38%	24%	6%	8%	11%	7%	5%
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Age	Under 45	31%	30%	8%	8%	8%	9%	5%
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	60 or older	37%	16%	9%	16%	12%	3%	7%
Race	White	38%	18%	14%	10%	8%	5%	7%
	Non-white	26%	38%	3%	12%	14%	5%	3%
Gender	Men	37%	25%	8%	12%	5%	8%	5%
	Women	31%	24%	14%	7%	17%	2%	7%
Interview Type	Landline	36%	22%	11%	11%	11%	5%	5%
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