



Player's Sexual Orientation Will Not Impact NFL Draft, Say Nearly Two-Thirds

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Michael Sam, the University of Missouri defensive lineman who publicly announced he is gay, will participate in this year's NFL Draft. What impact, if any, will Sam's sexual orientation have on his NFL prospects? Close to two-thirds of football fans nationally -- 65% -- do not think it will make any difference where he is selected in the draft. One in four -- 25% -- thinks NFL teams will be less likely to pick him while 6% say it will make teams more likely to select Sam. Three percent are unsure.

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

Men are slightly more likely than women to think that Sam's announcement will have a negative impact on his professional football future. 29% of men, compared with 20% of women, believe Sam's sexual orientation will make NFL teams less likely to choose him.

"These results indicate that many football fans view professional football as a sport which is increasingly accepting of openly gay athletes," says Dr. Keith Strudler, Director of The Marist College Center for Sports Communication. "They believe that Michael Sam's abilities, not his orientation, will determine his professional future."

To be eligible for the NFL Draft, football players need to be out of high school for at least three years. And, more than seven in ten football fans -- 71% -- think this is the right amount of time to wait before entering the draft. 15% believe the length of time is too long while 12% say it is not long enough. Two percent are unsure.

Majority Supports Rookie Salary Cap

57% of football fans think there should be a salary cap for new players and that they should be paid less than players who have more experience. 39%, however, believe rookies should receive whatever the market will pay them even if they earn more than their experienced teammates. Four percent are unsure. Men -- 41% -- are slightly more likely than women -- 36% -- to think the pay limit should be lifted.

How many Americans are football fans? 65% follow professional football, at least, a little. This includes 22% who watch a great deal of the game, 16% who follow a good amount of it, and 27% who catch a few games. 36% of adults nationally do not follow the game at all. The proportion of football fans has remained steady. When Marist last reported this question in 2011, 67% of Americans said they followed football, at least, a little.

Although there is a gender divide, nearly six in ten women -- 57% -- say they are football fans. This compares with more than seven in ten men -- 72% -- who follow the sport.

How the Survey was Conducted

Nature of the Sample: Marist National Poll of 1,212 Adults

This survey of 1,212 adults was conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014 by The Marist Poll in partnership with the Marist College Center for Sports Communication. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline telephone numbers were randomly selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation from ASDE Survey Sampler, Inc. 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 from Survey Sampling International. The two samples were then combined and balanced to reflect the 2010 Census results for age, gender, income, race, and region. Respondents in the household were selected by asking for the youngest male. Results are statistically significant within ± 2.8 percentage points. There are 774 football fans. The results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 3.5 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Nature of the Sample

		National Adults	Football Fans
		Col %	Col %
National Adults		100%	
Football Fans		65%	100%
Gender	Men	49%	55%
	Women	51%	45%
Age	Under 45	45%	43%
	45 or older	55%	57%
Age	18 to 29	23%	20%
	30 to 44	22%	22%
	45 to 59	29%	30%
	60 or older	27%	27%
Race	White	67%	66%
	African American	11%	11%
	Latino	14%	14%
	Other	7%	8%
Region	Northeast	18%	18%
	Midwest	22%	22%
	South	37%	38%
	West	23%	23%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	50%	47%
	\$50,000 or more	50%	53%
Education	Not college graduate	63%	60%
	College graduate	37%	40%
Interview Type	Landline	59%	58%
	Cell phone	41%	42%

Marist Poll National Adults. Interviews conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014, n=1212 MOE +/- 2.8 percentage points. National Football Fans: n=774 MOE +/- 3.5 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		Football Fans			
		College football player, Michael Sam is slated to be part of the 2014 NFL draft and has publicly announced he is gay. If drafted he will become the first openly gay football player in the NFL. Do you think his announcement of his sexual orientation will make NFL teams:			
		More likely to pick him in the draft		Or not make any difference to his selection in the NFL	
		Less likely to pick him	draft	Unsure	
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Football Fans		6%	25%	65%	3%
Gender	Men	6%	29%	62%	2%
	Women	7%	20%	69%	3%
Age	Under 45	8%	25%	65%	2%
	45 or older	5%	26%	66%	3%
Age	18 to 29	10%	25%	64%	2%
	30 to 44	7%	25%	66%	2%
	45 to 59	6%	30%	61%	3%
	60 or older	4%	21%	72%	4%
Race	White	4%	28%	66%	3%
	Non-white	11%	21%	65%	3%
Region	Northeast	5%	24%	70%	1%
	Midwest	5%	27%	62%	6%
	South	6%	28%	63%	2%
	West	9%	19%	69%	2%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	5%	28%	64%	2%
	\$50,000 or more	7%	25%	65%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	8%	27%	63%	3%
	College graduate	4%	23%	70%	3%
Interview Type	Landline	5%	25%	67%	3%
	Cell phone	9%	25%	63%	3%

Marist Poll National Football Fans: Interviews conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014, n=774 MOE +/- 3.5 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		Football Fans			
		Currently, football players need to be out of high school for at least three years to enter the NFL draft. Do you think that is too long, not long enough, or about the right amount of time to wait after high school to enter the NFL draft?			
		Too long	Not long enough	About the right amount of time	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Football Fans		15%	12%	71%	2%
Gender	Men	16%	13%	70%	2%
	Women	14%	12%	72%	2%
Age	Under 45	15%	10%	74%	1%
	45 or older	14%	14%	70%	3%
Age	18 to 29	20%	11%	70%	0%
	30 to 44	12%	9%	78%	1%
	45 to 59	14%	11%	74%	1%
	60 or older	14%	17%	65%	4%
Race	White	13%	15%	70%	2%
	Non-white	19%	6%	75%	0%
Region	Northeast	15%	11%	72%	2%
	Midwest	10%	16%	72%	3%
	South	19%	10%	71%	1%
	West	14%	14%	70%	3%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	18%	11%	69%	2%
	\$50,000 or more	12%	13%	74%	1%
Education	Not college graduate	17%	11%	70%	2%
	College graduate	12%	13%	74%	1%
Interview Type	Landline	14%	14%	70%	2%
	Cell phone	16%	10%	73%	1%

Marist Poll National Football Fans: Interviews conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014, n=774 MOE +/- 3.5 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		Football Fans		
		Currently, new NFL players' salaries are limited by a rookie salary cap. Which statement comes closer to your view:		
		NFL rookies should have a salary cap and earn less than experienced NFL players	NFL rookies should be allowed to earn whatever the market is willing to pay them even if they make more than experienced NFL players	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Football Fans		57%	39%	4%
Gender	Men	56%	41%	2%
	Women	57%	36%	6%
Age	Under 45	60%	38%	2%
	45 or older	55%	40%	5%
Age	18 to 29	54%	45%	2%
	30 to 44	65%	31%	3%
	45 to 59	56%	40%	4%
	60 or older	54%	39%	7%
Race	White	59%	37%	4%
	Non-white	54%	42%	4%
Region	Northeast	62%	36%	2%
	Midwest	64%	31%	6%
	South	47%	49%	4%
	West	62%	33%	5%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	60%	36%	4%
	\$50,000 or more	55%	42%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	57%	38%	4%
	College graduate	57%	40%	4%
Interview Type	Landline	55%	40%	5%
	Cell phone	59%	38%	3%

Marist Poll National Football Fans: Interviews conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014, n=774 MOE +/- 3.5 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults			
		Do you watch or follow professional football a great deal, a good amount, a little, or not at all?			
		A great deal	A good amount	A little	Not at all
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		22%	16%	27%	36%
Gender	Men	28%	19%	25%	28%
	Women	16%	12%	29%	43%
Age	Under 45	20%	17%	25%	38%
	45 or older	23%	15%	29%	33%
Age	18 to 29	19%	18%	21%	42%
	30 to 44	21%	16%	29%	34%
	45 to 59	28%	15%	25%	32%
	60 or older	18%	15%	32%	34%
Race	White	20%	17%	27%	36%
	Non-white	26%	14%	25%	34%
Region	Northeast	19%	21%	25%	35%
	Midwest	20%	15%	28%	37%
	South	25%	16%	25%	35%
	West	21%	13%	30%	37%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	20%	13%	29%	38%
	\$50,000 or more	24%	20%	25%	31%
Education	Not college graduate	21%	15%	25%	38%
	College graduate	24%	17%	29%	30%
Interview Type	Landline	23%	14%	27%	36%
	Cell phone	20%	18%	27%	35%

Marist Poll National Adults: Interviews conducted April 7th through April 10th, 2014, n=1212 MOE +/- 2.8 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.