



NFL Domestic Violence Controversy Biggest Sports Story of 2014

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Looking back at some of the sports stories that made headlines in 2014, domestic violence in the National Football League tops the list as the year's biggest sports story. Regardless of demographic group, this story is the one that resonated most with sports fans nationally.

When it comes to the biggest sports accomplishment during the past twelve months, the San Francisco Giants third World Series victory in five years and the advance of the men's national soccer team to the elimination round of the World Cup top the list. And, while Peyton Manning is considered to be the athlete with the largest impact on his sport in 2014, LeBron James gives him a run for his money.

On many of these questions, there are differences based on race and age.

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

"These results reinforce the prominence of football in America. It's once again where America finds its biggest star and its most dire situation," says Dr. Keith Strudler, Director of The Marist College Center for Sports Communication. "Americans are sending the NFL a clear message that they want the League to establish a sustainable domestic abuse policy."

Poll points:

- Nearly half of sports fans, 49%, cite the domestic violence controversies in the NFL as **the story with the biggest impact on sports this year**. The banning of Donald Sterling, the, now, former owner of the Los Angeles Clippers, from the NBA for his racist remarks places a distant second with 24%. Academic fraud in University athletic programs is mentioned by 11% while another 11% think the suspension of

Alex Rodriguez for using performing enhancing drugs had the largest effect on sports in 2014.

- When it comes to **the biggest sports accomplishment of the year**, 29% of fans think the San Francisco Giants third World Series win in five years takes the top spot while 27% believe the advance of the U.S. Men's national soccer team to the elimination round of the World Cup deserves the top honor. One in five sports fans, 20%, mentions the wins by both UCONN's men and women in the NCAA basketball championship, and a similar, 19%, cite Serena Williams 18th Grand Slam victory.
- Age and race matter on this question. 38% of sports fans under 30 and 31% of those 60 and older choose the Giants' win while 36% of those 30 to 44 think the men's performance in the World Cup deserves the top honor. There is little consensus among those 45 to 59. Looking at race, 42% of Latino sports fans select the Giants' World Series win while 37% of African Americans choose Serena Williams' 18th Grand Slam title. White sports fans are torn between the performance by the men's U.S. soccer team, 30%, and this year's World Series victors, 29%.
- NFL quarterback Peyton Manning, 33%, edges out LeBron James, 29%, as **the player who had the biggest impact on their sport this year**. This is the third year that Manning has been selected as the most influential player by sports fans. A majority of sports fans, 55%, selected Manning in 2013. MLB's Derek Jeter was chosen by 24% of sports fans this year. One in ten fans pick professional soccer player Lionel Messi.
- Age and race make a difference. 42% of sports fans 60 and older and 38% of those 30 to 44 believe Manning had the largest influence on his sport, football. 32% of sports fans under 30 say James is tops as the player with the greatest impact on his sport, basketball. There is little consensus among sports fans 45 to 59 years of age. Nearly half of African American sports fans, 48%, and a plurality of Latinos, 35%, selects James while 37% of white sports fans choose Manning.
- Six in ten Americans, 60%, up from 55% last year, are **sports fans**.

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, sports 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 Poll of 1,140 National Adults

This survey of 1,140 adults was conducted December 3rd through December 9th, 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 in English 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. Respondents in the household were selected by asking for the youngest male. 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. Results are statistically significant within ± 2.9 percentage points. There are 679 sports fans. The results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 3.8 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Nature of the Sample

		National Adults	National Sports Fans
		Col %	Col %
National Adults		100%	
National Sports Fans		60%	100%
Gender	Men	49%	57%
	Women	51%	43%
Age	Under 45	44%	46%
	45 or older	56%	54%
Age	18 to 29	23%	25%
	30 to 44	21%	21%
	45 to 59	29%	29%
	60 or older	27%	25%
Race	White	67%	66%
	African American	11%	12%
	Latino	14%	16%
	Other	7%	6%
Region	Northeast	18%	16%
	Midwest	22%	24%
	South	37%	39%
	West	23%	21%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	51%	49%
	\$50,000 or more	49%	51%
Education	Not college graduate	60%	61%
	College graduate	40%	39%
Interview Type	Landline	55%	54%
	Cell phone	45%	46%

Marist Poll National Adults. Interviews conducted December 3rd through December 9th, 2014, n=1140 MOE +/- 2.9 percentage points. National Sports Fans: n=679 MOE +/- 3.8 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults	
		Do you consider yourself to be a sports fan, or not?	
		Yes	No
		Row %	Row %
National Adults		60%	40%
Region	Northeast	53%	47%
	Midwest	65%	35%
	South	63%	37%
	West	55%	45%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	58%	42%
	\$50,000 or more	63%	37%
Education	Not college graduate	60%	40%
	College graduate	60%	40%
Age	Under 45	62%	38%
	45 or older	59%	41%
Age	18 to 29	65%	35%
	30 to 44	59%	41%
	45 to 59	60%	40%
	60 or older	57%	43%
Race	White	59%	41%
	African American	64%	36%
	Latino	69%	31%
Race	White	59%	41%
	Non-white	63%	37%
Gender	Men	70%	30%
	Women	50%	50%
Interview Type	Landline	59%	41%
	Cell phone	61%	39%

Marist Poll National Adults: Interviews conducted December 3rd through December 9th, 2014, n=1140 MOE +/- 2.9 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		Sports Fans				
		Which one of the following was the best single sports accomplishment of the year:				
		The San Francisco Giants winning the World Series for the third time in five years	The US Men's national soccer team advancing to the elimination round of the World Cup	UCONN basketball winning both the men's and women's NCAA Championship	Serena Williams winning her 18th Grand Slam tennis title	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		29%	27%	20%	19%	5%
Region	Northeast	19%	38%	23%	19%	2%
	Midwest	27%	26%	29%	13%	5%
	South	25%	25%	18%	26%	6%
	West	45%	25%	11%	12%	6%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	35%	21%	18%	22%	4%
	\$50,000 or more	22%	32%	24%	18%	4%
Education	Not college graduate	32%	26%	20%	18%	4%
	College graduate	23%	31%	20%	19%	6%
Age	Under 45	30%	30%	21%	16%	2%
	45 or older	28%	24%	19%	21%	7%
Age	18 to 29	38%	25%	19%	15%	2%
	30 to 44	22%	36%	24%	16%	2%
	45 to 59	26%	24%	19%	25%	7%
	60 or older	31%	25%	21%	16%	8%
Race	White	29%	30%	21%	15%	6%
	African American	20%	17%	21%	37%	5%
	Latino	42%	19%	13%	25%	1%
Race	White	29%	30%	21%	15%	6%
	Non-white	30%	23%	18%	26%	3%
Gender	Men	30%	28%	22%	15%	4%
	Women	27%	26%	17%	23%	6%
Interview Type	Landline	29%	26%	20%	19%	6%
	Cell phone	28%	29%	21%	18%	4%

Marist Poll National Sports Fans: Interviews conducted December 3rd through December 9th, 2014, n=679 MOE +/- 3.8 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Marist Poll National Tables

		Sports Fans				
		Which one of the following stories had the biggest impact on sports this year:				
		The NFL and domestic abuse	The banning of LA Clippers owner Donald Sterling from the NBA for racist remarks	Academic fraud in University athletic programs	The suspension of Alex Rodriguez for the 2014 baseball season for using performance enhancing drugs	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		49%	24%	11%	11%	5%
Region	Northeast	48%	24%	10%	13%	5%
	Midwest	55%	21%	10%	9%	5%
	South	46%	24%	14%	11%	6%
	West	48%	28%	8%	11%	6%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	50%	23%	11%	11%	6%
	\$50,000 or more	52%	23%	12%	10%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	46%	26%	10%	12%	6%
	College graduate	55%	21%	12%	8%	4%
Age	Under 45	55%	22%	11%	9%	4%
	45 or older	45%	26%	10%	13%	6%
Age	18 to 29	48%	27%	14%	9%	3%
	30 to 44	63%	17%	7%	8%	4%
	45 to 59	51%	27%	8%	9%	5%
	60 or older	38%	24%	13%	17%	8%
Race	White	50%	22%	12%	10%	6%
	African American	50%	38%	5%	4%	3%
	Latino	47%	25%	8%	19%	2%
Race	White	50%	22%	12%	10%	6%
	Non-white	47%	29%	8%	12%	4%
Gender	Men	47%	26%	10%	11%	5%
	Women	51%	22%	12%	10%	6%
Interview Type	Landline	48%	21%	11%	13%	6%
	Cell phone	50%	28%	10%	8%	4%

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Marist Poll National Tables

		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	MLB player Derek Jeter	Professional soccer player Lionel Messi	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Sports Fans		33%	29%	24%	10%	5%
Region	Northeast	26%	21%	38%	12%	3%
	Midwest	44%	25%	24%	6%	1%
	South	31%	35%	20%	8%	6%
	West	30%	27%	19%	16%	8%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	37%	31%	18%	9%	5%
	\$50,000 or more	28%	28%	29%	11%	3%
Education	Not college graduate	38%	29%	21%	9%	3%
	College graduate	26%	28%	28%	11%	6%
Age	Under 45	31%	32%	21%	14%	2%
	45 or older	35%	26%	26%	6%	7%
Age	18 to 29	26%	32%	20%	18%	4%
	30 to 44	38%	31%	22%	8%	1%
	45 to 59	28%	29%	30%	7%	5%
	60 or older	42%	22%	22%	4%	9%
Race	White	37%	23%	28%	8%	4%
	African American	25%	48%	14%	9%	4%
	Latino	29%	35%	17%	13%	6%
Race	White	37%	23%	28%	8%	4%
	Non-white	26%	41%	15%	14%	5%
Gender	Men	31%	29%	23%	12%	4%
	Women	36%	28%	24%	7%	5%
Interview Type	Landline	37%	24%	28%	6%	5%
	Cell phone	29%	34%	19%	14%	5%

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