

Poll: Majority of Americans support legalization of sports betting

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Although gambling on professional sports is illegal in most states, one in five fans have placed a bet and 73 percent of those who did so said it made watching the games more interesting, according to the results of a national UMass Lowell-Washington Post poll released today.

The [poll](#) also found that a majority of Americans (55 percent) support making gambling on [professional sports](#) legal in all states - it is legal now only in Delaware, Montana, Nevada and Oregon - compared to 33 percent who disapprove, according to the new poll. The findings illustrate a shift in opinion from two decades ago when 56 percent of respondents were opposed to legalizing sports betting, according to a 1993 Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll.

"A majority of Americans now favor sports betting, but this is especially true among respondents younger than 50. This suggests that support may actually continue to increase in years to come. I would not be surprised if we see a push to legalize sports betting in more states, especially in states with the ballot initiative," said Prof. Joshua Dyck, co-director of the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion, which partnered with The Washington Post on the national poll.

Despite much public attention in recent years on [fantasy sports](#) leagues and daily fantasy sports sites like DraftKings and FanDuel, only 16 percent of sports fans have participated in a fantasy league in the last five years, the survey found. The vast majority of those who did - 80 percent - participated in fantasy football.

Less than a quarter of those who participated in fantasy sports did so via a daily fantasy league like DraftKings or FanDuel, which award cash payouts. That translates into only 3 percent of all Americans participating in daily fantasy leagues in the last five years.

"With the controversies surrounding daily fantasy leagues, it's interesting that only 3 percent of Americans have played in a daily fantasy football league in the last five years. Compared to overall sports gambling, daily [fantasy](#) appears to be just a drop in the bucket," Dyck said.

Other findings from the poll include:

- Support for legalizing sports betting is strongest among avid sports fans (70 percent, compared to 43 percent among non-fans) and men (63 percent, compared to 47 percent of women).
- Among ethnic groups, Latinos surveyed showed the most support for legalizing sports gambling, 65 percent compared to 53 percent of white and 51 percent of black respondents.
- Among age groups, 40- to 49-year-olds (68 percent) and 18- to 29-year-olds (62 percent) were the most supportive of legalization, compared to 41 percent of those older than 65 and 51 percent of 50- to 64-year-olds.

Results of the UMass Lowell-Washington Post poll, which looks at Americans' opinions on a variety of [sports](#) and related issues, are based on live interviews with a random sample of 1,000 American adults conducted in English and Spanish via cellular telephones and landlines Aug. 14 through Aug. 21. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.7 percent for all respondents. Details on methodology and additional poll data and analysis are available at <http://www.uml.edu/polls>.

Provided by University of Massachusetts Lowell

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