

## Report

# Canadian Sports Fandom: Uncovering the Preferred NFL Teams and Sports Leagues in Canada

With the NFL season in full swing, Leger assessed the extent of Canadian support for all 32 NFL teams. Additionally, we measured participation rate in fantasy football and determined which major sports leagues capture the closest attention of Canadians.

DATE 09 OCT 2023



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# METHODOLOGY AND KEY FINDINGS

# Methodology



## How?

Online surveys with Canadians were conducted via Leger's online panel, LEO.



## When?

From October 5<sup>th</sup> to October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



## Who?

1516 residents of Canada that are 18 years of age or older.



## Weighting

Using data from the 2021 Census, results were weighted according to, age, gender, and region in order to ensure a representative sample of the population in Canada.



## MOE

No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample. However, for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1516 respondents would have a margin of error of  $\pm 2.53\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

## Key Findings: NFL



### 31% of Canadians consider themselves a fan of an NFL team.

- Approximately 12.5M Canadians have a favorite NFL team.
- The most popular NFL teams in Canada are the **Buffalo Bills**, **Seattle Seahawks**, and **Kansas City Chiefs**.
- Regional differences include:
  - The **Buffalo Bills** are tops by far in Ontario, while Quebecers favor the **Kansas City Chiefs**.
  - The **Seattle Seahawks** are the favorite team in BC and Alberta, with the Miami Dolphins (BC), and the Dallas Cowboys (AB) the second favourites.
  - In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, fans show greater affiliation for the **Las Vegas Raiders** with the Green Bay Packers coming in second.
  - Football fans in the Atlantic region tend to cheer for the **New England Patriots**, but their allegiance is divided among the Cowboys and the Dolphins as well.



### There is a higher percentage of NFL fans in Western Canada than in Eastern Canada.

- People residing in the Atlantic provinces display the lowest inclination toward having a favorite NFL team, with a notable 76% of individuals in the area lacking allegiance to any NFL team.
- Interest in NFL is higher among males and younger Canadians (18-34), as well as University-educated, English-speaking, and BIPOC Canadians.

## Key Findings: Fantasy Sports and Pro Sports Leagues



**While the overall participation rate for Fantasy sports in Canada is low, younger Canadians are nearly twice as likely to play.**

- Approximately 2.3M Canadians are playing Fantasy Football this fall, and 2.8M intend to play Fantasy Hockey for the upcoming season.
- Fantasy Football participation is higher among men and younger Canadians, and is fairly consistent across Canada – slightly higher in MB/SK and the Atlantic region (both 8%), and lowest in Quebec (4%).
- Participation is also higher among those with a University education.



**The NHL stands out as the overwhelmingly preferred professional sports league in Canada in all regions, except Saskatchewan/Manitoba where the CFL tops the list.**

- Due to the strong support for the CFL in the Prairie provinces (49%), overall support for pro sports is higher in Manitoba/ Saskatchewan compared to other provinces – 70% support at least one team.
- While NHL remains the leader in the other provinces, there are pockets of support for other sports leagues:
  - British Columbians have the strongest NFL fan base (26%).
  - Interest in MLB is higher in Ontario (25%).
  - BC and Ontario have strong support for the NBA (23% and 22% respectively).

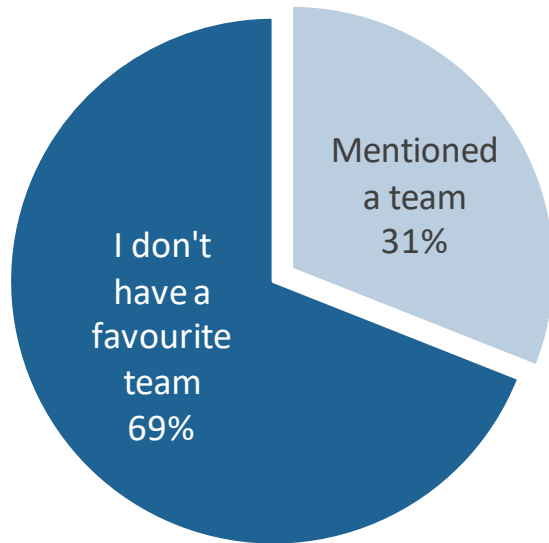


DETAILED RESULTS

# Incidence of NFL Fanship in Canada

- Close to one-third of Canadians have a favorite NFL team
- There is a great deal of variation by region in terms of which NFL team fans support

## AMONG ALL CANADIANS



## AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE A FAVOURITE TEAM

(Teams with 10% or more support shown)

	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	ATL
	n=58	n=39	n=41	n=193	n=113	n=26*
Buffalo Bills	0%	2%	3%	24%	4%	2%
Seattle Seahawks	36%	21%	3%	2%	0%	9%
Kansas City Chiefs	3%	8%	3%	7%	24%	6%
Miami Dolphins	11%	4%	0%	9%	7%	13%
Dallas Cowboys	5%	12%	5%	6%	9%	15%
New England Patriots	3%	11%	3%	5%	11%	17%
Green Bay Packers	8%	0%	11%	7%	5%	0%
Baltimore Ravens	2%	0%	11%	3%	1%	0%
Las Vegas Raiders	1%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%

- The **Seattle Seahawks** are the favourite team in both BC and Alberta, with the Miami Dolphins (BC), and the Dallas Cowboys (AB) the second favourites.
- The prairie provinces show greater affiliation for the **Las Vegas Raiders**, followed by Green Bay and Baltimore.
- The **Buffalo Bills** are tops by far in Ontario, while Quebecers favour the **Kansas City Chiefs**.
- Football fans in the Atlantic region tend to cheer for the **New England Patriots**, but their allegiance is divided among the Cowboys and the Dolphins as well.

Q1. Who is your favourite NFL football team?

Base: All respondents (n=1,516)



# Favorite NFL Team By Province/Region

Province/Region	Favorite NFL Team
British Columbia	Seattle Seahawks
Alberta	Seattle Seahawks
Saskatchewan/ Manitoba	Las Vegas Raiders
Ontario	Buffalo Bills
Quebec	Kansas City Chiefs
Atlantic Canada	New England Patriots

Mother Tongue	Favorite NFL Team
English	Seattle Seahawks
French	Kansas City Chiefs
Other	Miami Dolphins



Q1. Who is your favourite NFL football team?

Base: All respondents (n=1,516)

# Favorite NFL Teams by Overall Fan Base

Top 10 Most Followed NFL Teams in Canada	Approximate Number of Fans in Canada	League
1. Buffalo Bills	1.34M	AFC
2. Seattle Seahawks	1.27M	NFC
3. Kansas City Chiefs	1.18M	AFC
4. Miami Dolphins	955K	AFC
5. Dallas Cowboys	902K	NFC
6. New England Patriots	849K	AFC
7. Green Bay Packers	748K	NFC
8. San Francisco 49ers	548K	NFC
9. New York Giants	456K	NFC
10. Pittsburgh Steelers	425K	AFC

- The top ten favorite teams in Canada are evenly split between the AFC and NFC.
- French Canadians are more likely to be fans of the Kansas City Chiefs.
- Canada's least liked NFL teams include the Indianapolis Colts, Atlanta Falcons, Los Angeles Chargers, Houston Texans, and Jacksonville Jaguars.



1.34M



1.27M



1.18M



955K



902K



849K



748K



548K



456K





425K



Q1. Who is your favourite NFL football team?

Base: All respondents (n=1,516)

# Fantasy Sports Participation Rate

- While the overall participation rate for Fantasy sports in Canada is fairly low (6% for Football, 7% for Hockey), younger Canadians are nearly twice as likely to play (11-14% of 18-34 year olds).

			By Province						
			Canada	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	ATL
	<b>Fantasy Football</b>	Currently Participating	6%	7%	6%	8%	5%	4%	8%
	<b>Fantasy Hockey</b>	Intend to Participate	7%	8%	7%	6%	6%	7%	9%

			By Age						
			Canada	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	<b>Fantasy Football</b>	Currently Participating	6%	11%	14%	8%	3%	2%	1%
	<b>Fantasy Hockey</b>	Intend to Participate	7%	14%	14%	11%	5%	4%	0%

Q3. Are you currently participating in a Fantasy Football league for this NFL season?  
 Q4. Do you intend to participate in a Fantasy Hockey league for the upcoming NHL season?  
 Base: All respondents (n=1,516)

# Professional Sports League Popularity in Canada

- The NHL stands out as the overwhelmingly preferred league, holding the top spot in popularity across all regions except Saskatchewan/Manitoba, where the CFL boasts a larger fanbase.
- British Columbia exhibits the strongest affinity for the NFL, but it trails behind the NHL's dominance in the province.
- Quebecers are the least likely to follow any professional sports league, followed by Albertans.

		By Province						
		Canada	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	QC	ATL
	NHL Hockey	38%	43%	40%	42%	37%	32%	46%
	NFL Football	18%	26%	21%	21%	18%	14%	11%
	MLB Baseball	18%	18%	8%	19%	25%	9%	17%
	NBA Basketball	15%	23%	7%	12%	22%	5%	9%
	CFL Football	15%	14%	19%	49%	11%	9%	12%
	MLS Soccer	6%	7%	3%	3%	7%	7%	4%
Not a fan of any Pro Sports Leagues		45%	42%	47%	30%	40%	58%	43%

- Men are more likely to follow Pro Sports compared to Women (65% vs. 46%).
- Younger Canadians (18-34) are more likely to be fans of at least one Pro Sports team (62%).

Q4. Which of the following sports league(s) would you consider yourself a fan of?

Base: All respondents (n=1,516)

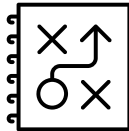
## Insights



- A sizeable proportion of Canadians consider themselves fans of an NFL team.



- It is important to understand regional nuances: fans are more likely to support a given team or league depending on which province they live in. However, some provinces have a less consolidated NFL fan base, and there are smaller pockets of support for a variety of organizations.



- Canadian NFL fans, professional sports supporters in general, and fantasy sports players represent a key target market: primarily younger males who tend to have higher income and education, Western Canadians, and people who identify as BIPOC.



# RESPONDENT PROFILE

# RESPONDENT PROFILE

	Weighted
n=	1516
<b>Gender</b>	(%)
Male	49
Female	51
<b>Age</b>	(%)
18 to 34	26
35 to 54	32
55 years of age or older	41
<b>Region</b>	(%)
West	31
East	69

	Weighted
n=	1516
<b>Employment</b>	(%)
Working	58
Student	6
Homemaker	4
Unemployed	6
Retired	26
<b>Income</b>	(%)
Under \$40K	21
\$40K-\$80K	29
\$80K+	41

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Leger is also a member of the [Insights Association](#), the American Association of Marketing Research Analytics.



# Leger

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*We know Canadians*

