



MRI | SIMMONS

Sports Fandom in the Age of COVID-19

June 2020

An MRI-Simmons Report

Overview and Methodology

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted the world of sports. This report will help you understand consumer attitudes about sports during these unprecedented times. Find out how sports fans are feeling, as well as what they're doing with the gap of time sports once helped to fill.

Go on to uncover varying fandom levels among popular sports leagues, top media choices, motivations/benefits of being a sports fan, and consumer propensity to spend on sports-related purchases within the next year.

Methodology

- Data collected online between April 10th and May 5th, 2020
- 5,020 nationally representative completes among adults age 18+
- Final data was weighted and projected to the US population for tabulation and **fused to MRI-Simmons national datasets for deeper profiling**. Additional details available upon request.



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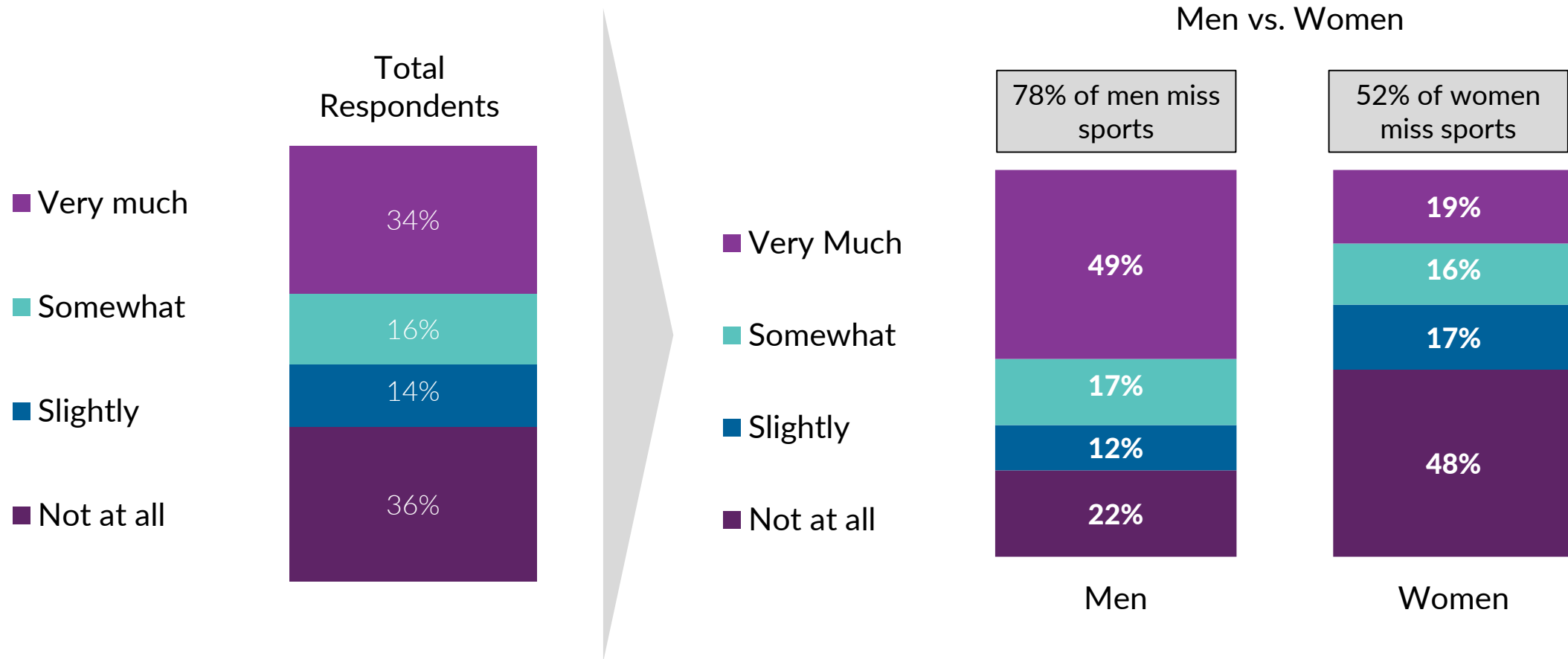


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COVID-19 & Sports

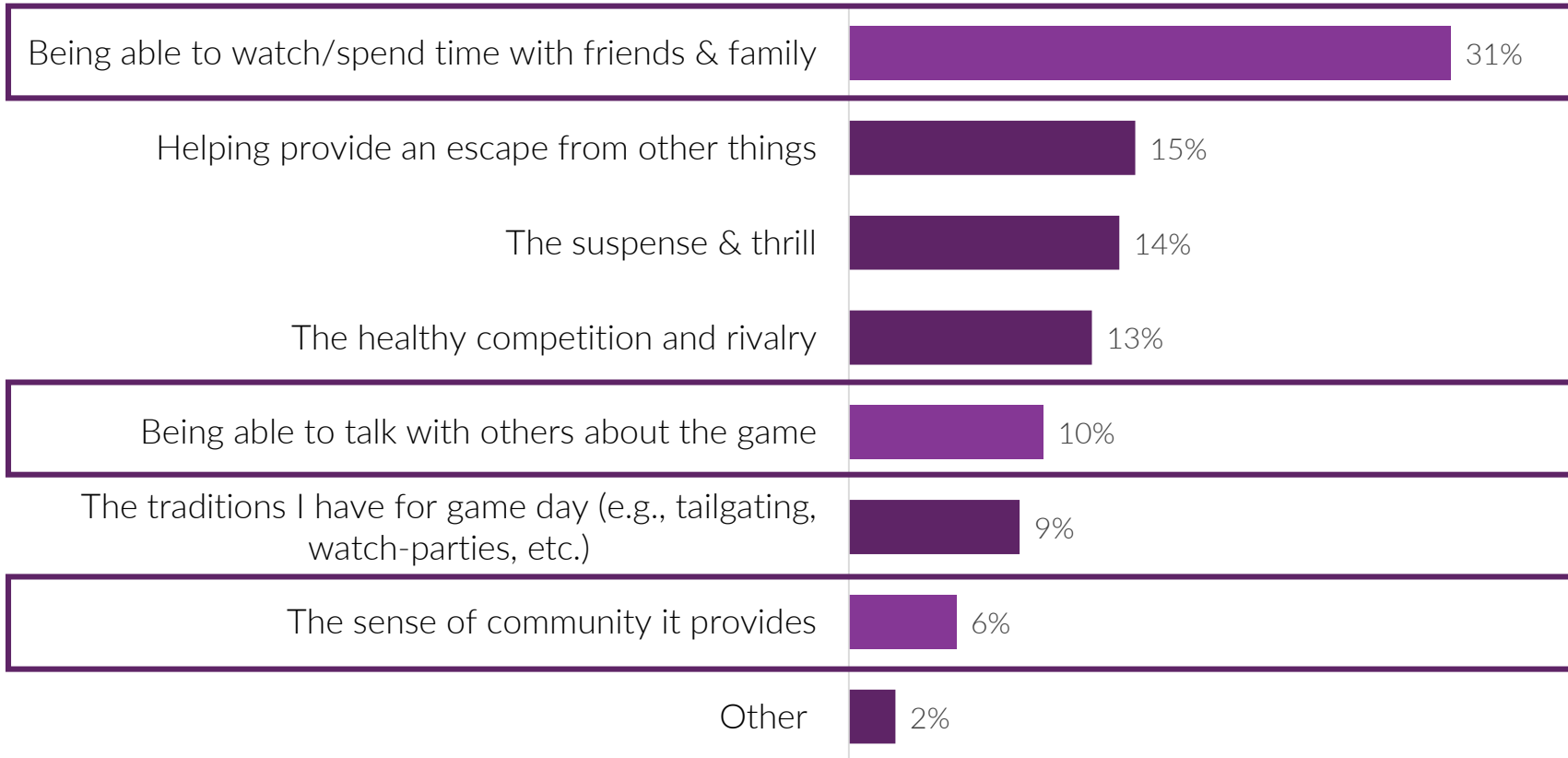
More than 6 in 10 Americans miss sports – men feel it most strongly

Since COVID-19 has cancelled/postponed live sporting events & games, how much would you say you miss sports?



Bonding is what is missed most

What do you miss the most about live sporting events and games?



Men 18-34 miss...

- The conversation sports creates
- Competition & rivalry
- Sense of community

Men 35-54 miss...

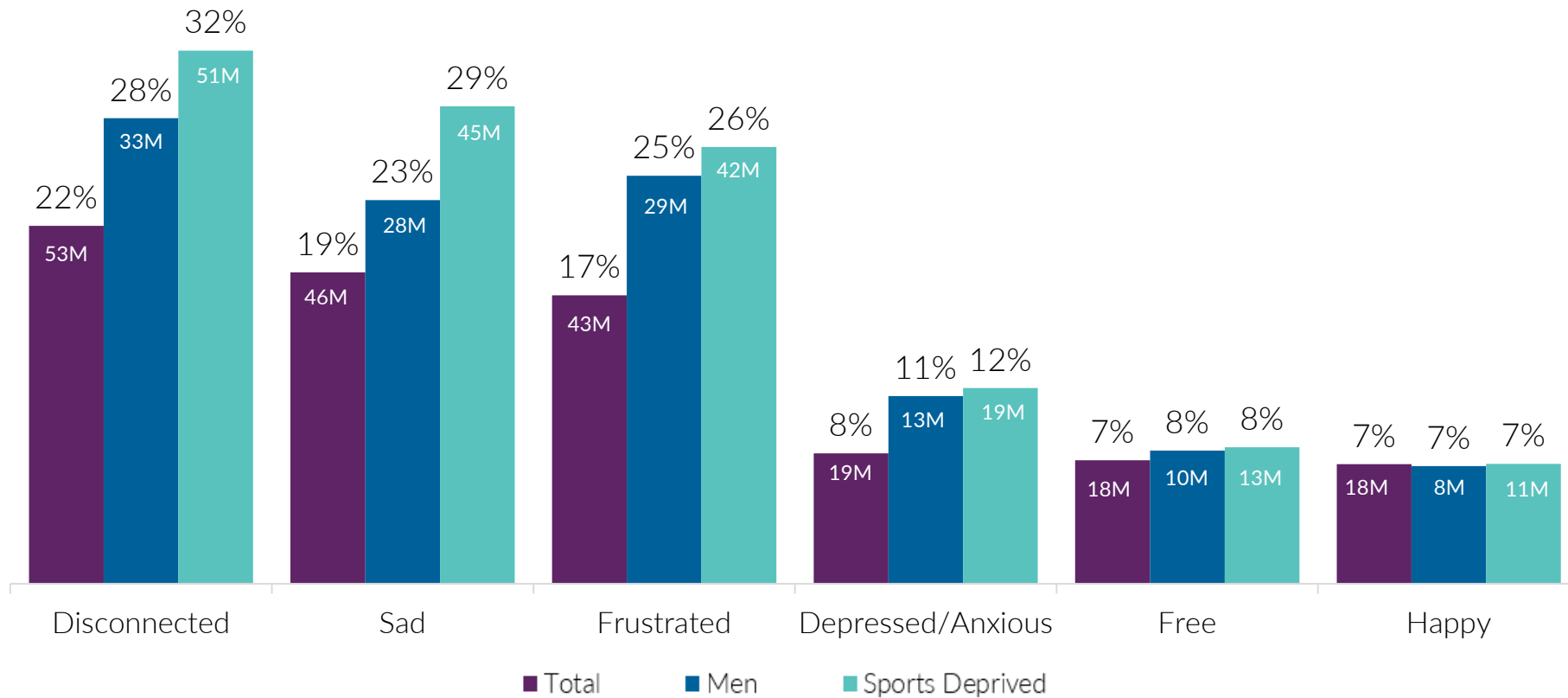
- The suspense and thrill of sports

Men 55+ miss...

- Spending time with their family and friends during sports events
- The escape sports offers

Lack of live sports adds to disconnection among Americans

Which of the following best describes how you feel without live sporting events and games?

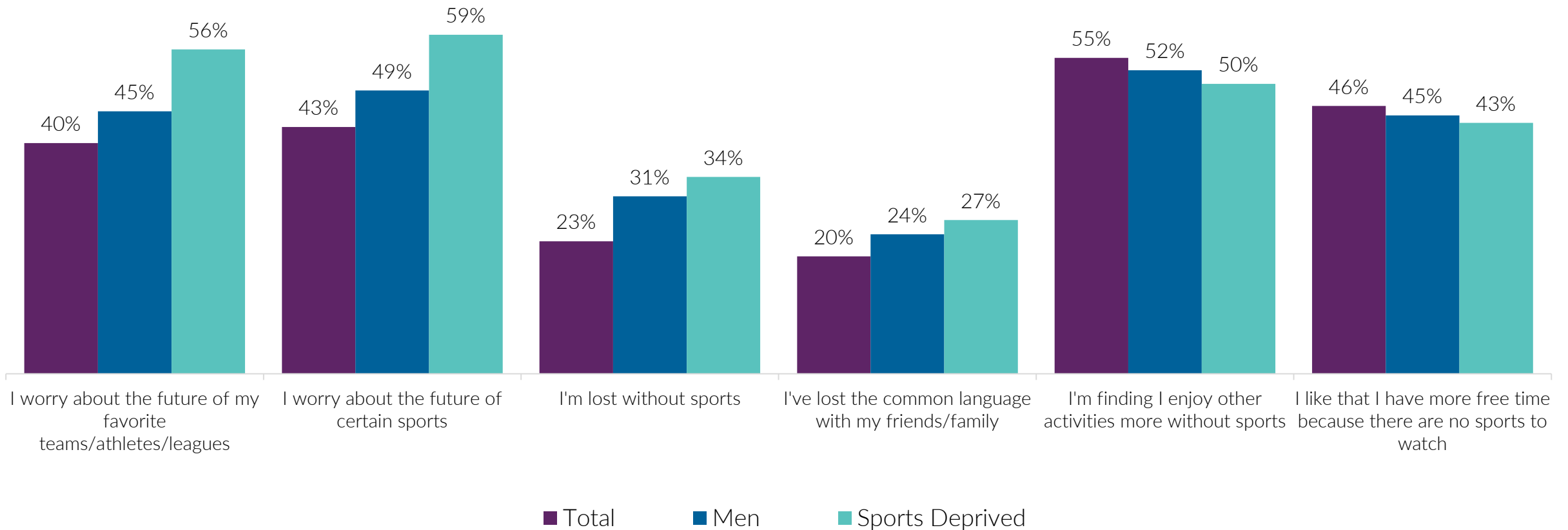


Q5. Which of the following best describes how you feel without live sporting events and games? (Sport Deprived = miss sports very much/somewhat/slightly)
Base = Total Adults



1 in 5 Americans feels lost without sports
 4 in 10 worry about the future of their favorites

The Effects of COVID-19 on Sports Fans

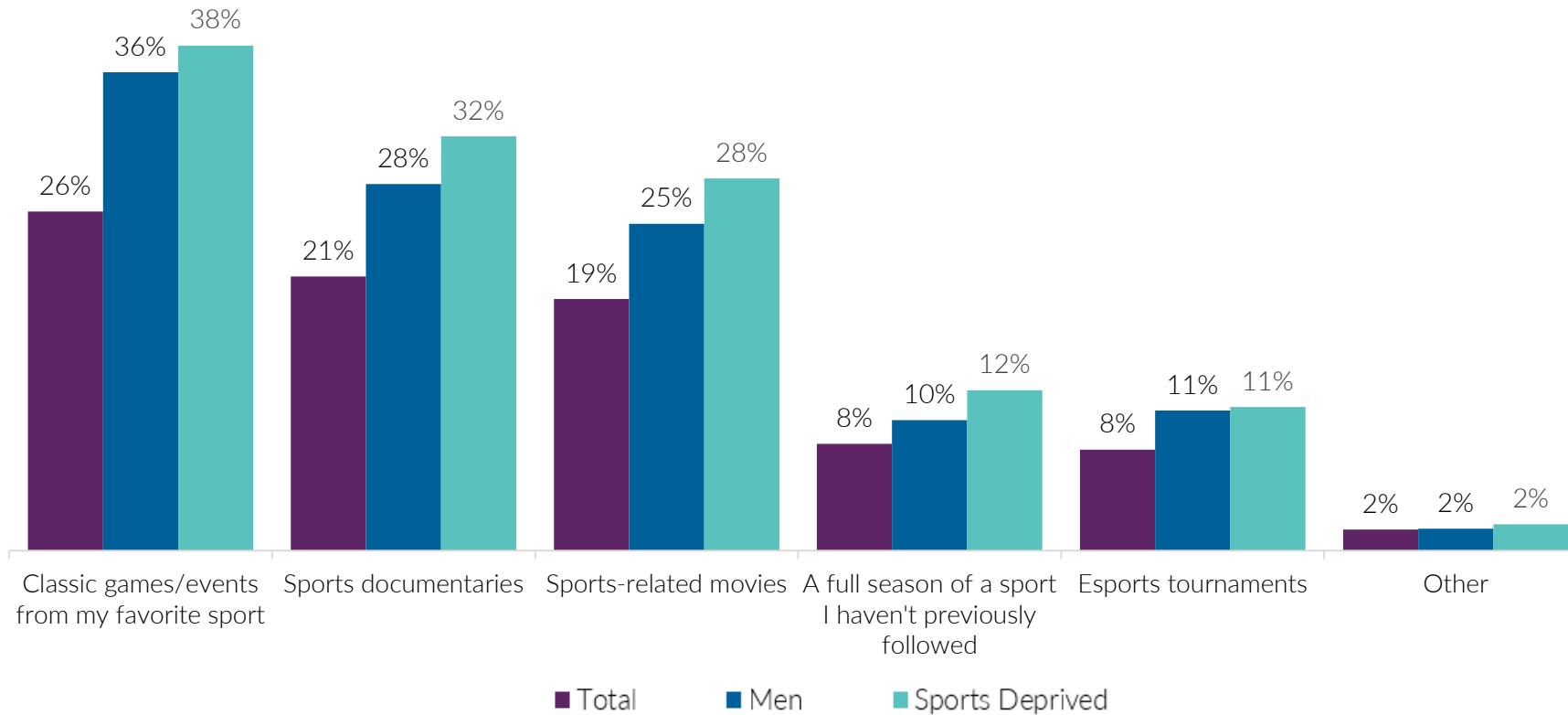


Q6. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the effects of COVID-19 on sports; Top 2 Box (Base = Total Adults) (Sports Deprived = miss sports very much/somewhat/slightly)

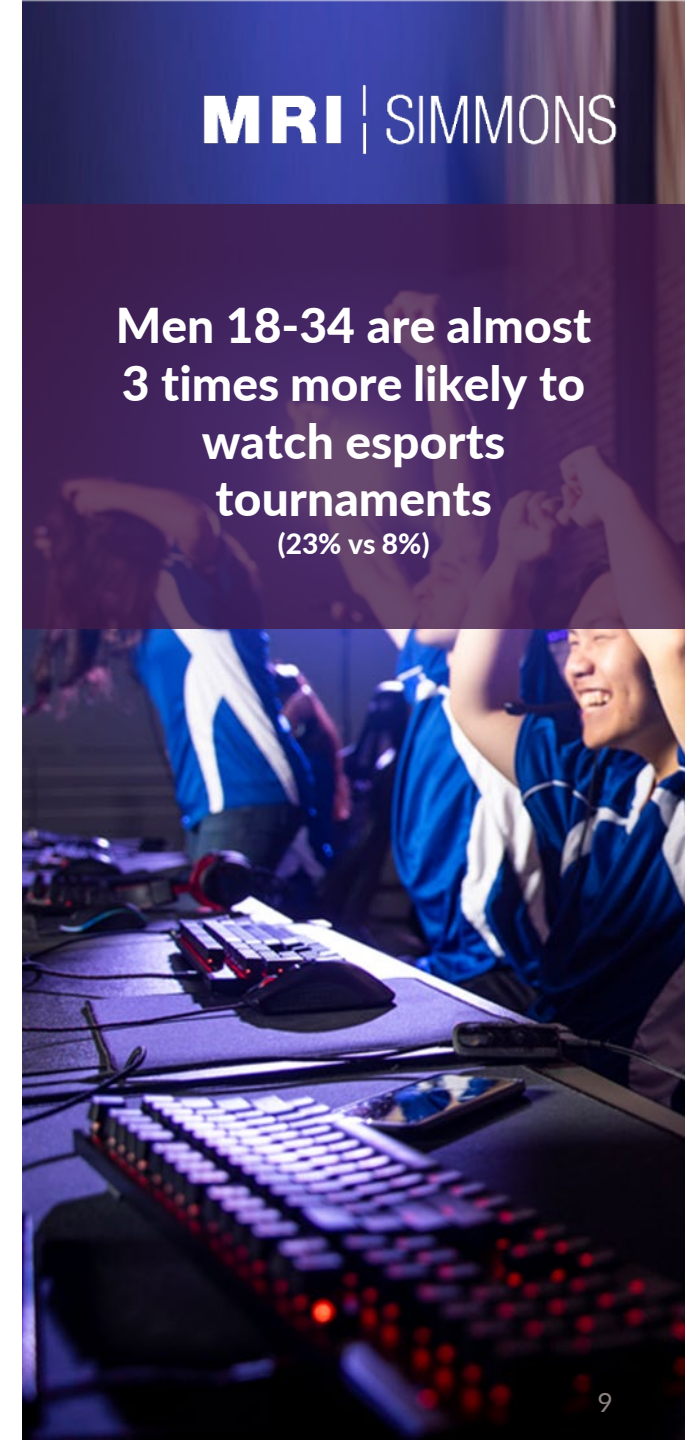
Watching sports-related content – including classics, documentaries, and movies – are popular pastimes

Men 18-34 are almost 3 times more likely to watch esports tournaments (23% vs 8%)

Which of the following types of sports content are you interested in watching while live sports are paused/currently off the air?



Q4. Which, if any, of the following types of sports content are you interested in watching while live sports are paused/currently off the air?
Base = Total Adults



Entertainment TV is a close second when it comes to filling the sports gap

Men 18-34

Are over 3x more likely to watch esports and over 2x more likely to play video games while sports are off the air

What are you doing to fill the gap of time that sports had filled in your life?

	Sports Fans	Sports Deprived
Watching More TV for Entertainment (Not News)	38% (109)	42% (120)
Streaming TV Shows/Movies	36% (107)	38% (112)
Watching Live TV	35% (110)	39% (121)
Cooking/Baking	34% (103)	35% (106)
Reading	33% (107)	35% (111)
Spending Time as a Family	33% (107)	36% (115)
Exercising (Indoor/Outdoor)	32% (109)	35% (119)
Looking/Sharing/Posting on Social Media	30% (106)	32% (111)
Spending Time Outdoors	29% (107)	32% (118)

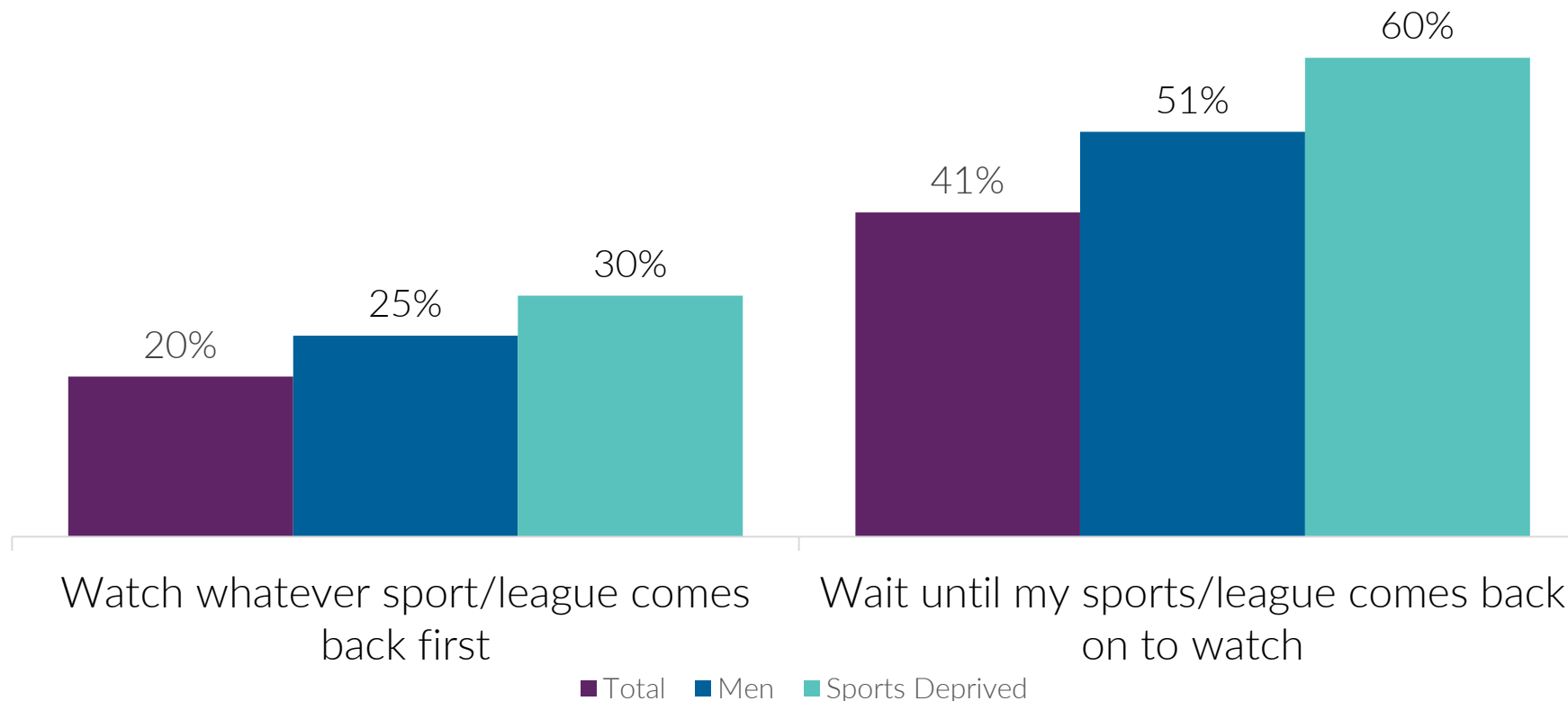
Sorted by Sports Fans % Agreement

Indexed against total US adults



When the pandemic finally passes, almost a third of the Sports Deprived will watch whichever sport comes on first

After the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, which of the following do you plan to do?



Men 18-34

- 40% Wait
- 32% Watch

Men 35-54

- 52% Wait
- 29% Watch

Men 55+

- 58% Wait
- 16% Watch

Sports Fandom Overview

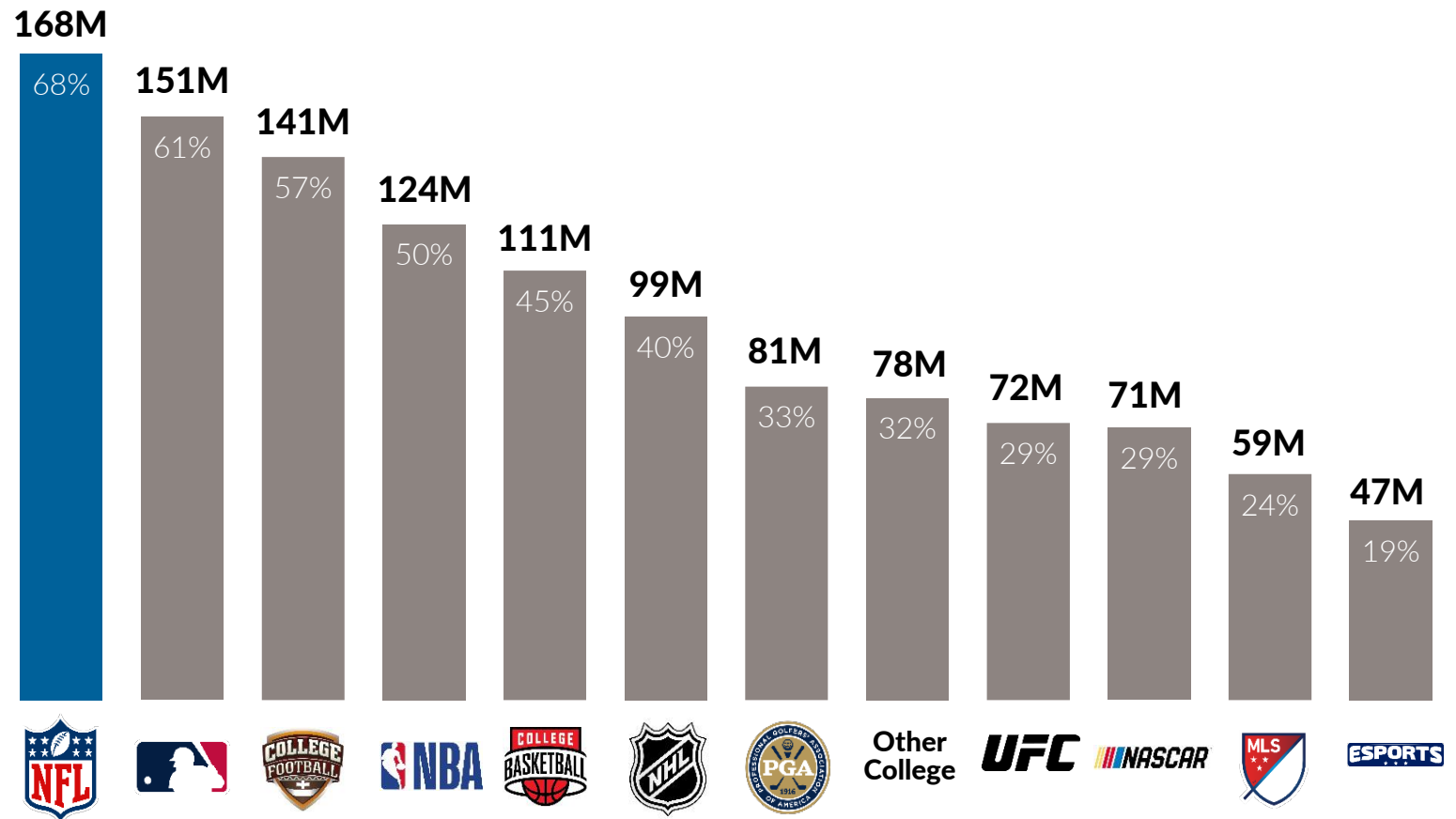


83% of Americans (204M) are sports fans, 50% are super fans (124M) of at least one sport

Football, baseball and basketball are top sports, with **over two-thirds being fans of the NFL**



78% of sports fans report being fans since they were kids



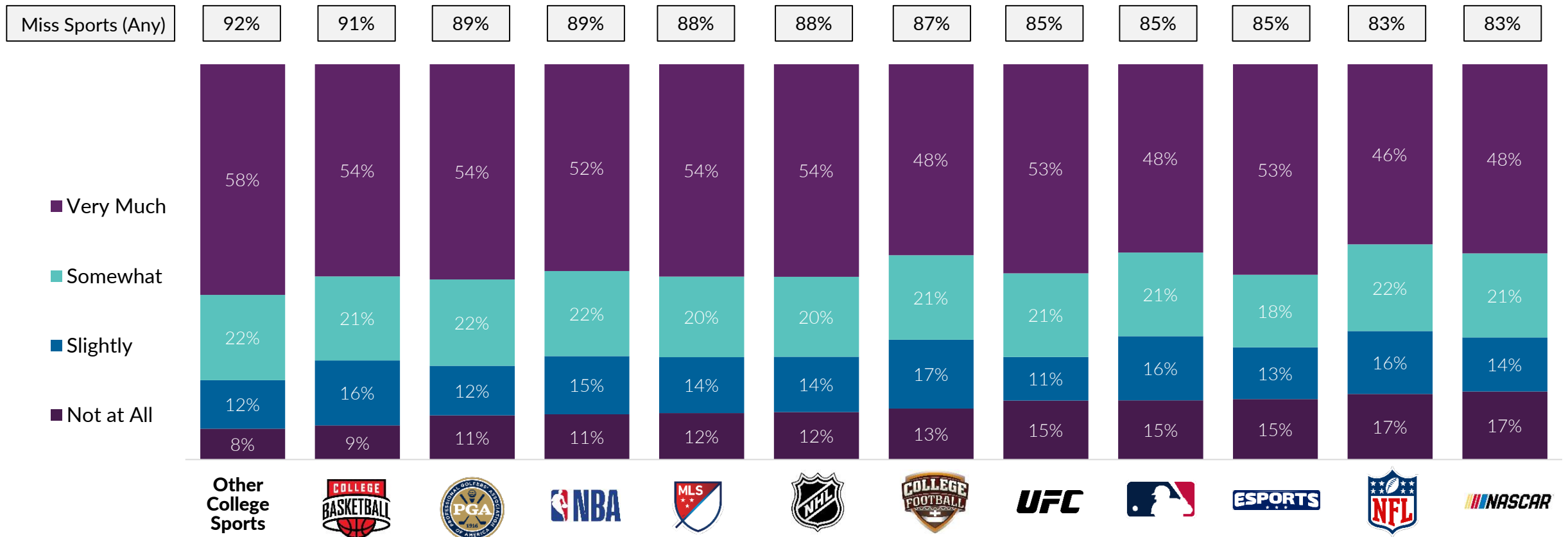
Q2: How would you describe your level of fandom for each of the following sports? (Super Fan, Average Fan or Light Fan; 1-10 on 10-point scale for each sport/league to create overall fanship)

Q6X: Which of the following describes the type of (sport) fan you are; "I've been a fan since I was a kid"

Super Fans: Respondents rate themselves as an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale of fandom levels (including the sum of super fans from sports listed on this slide)

No matter the type of fan, the majority of Americans miss sports one way or another

Since COVID-19 has cancelled/postponed live sporting events & games, how much would you say you miss sports?



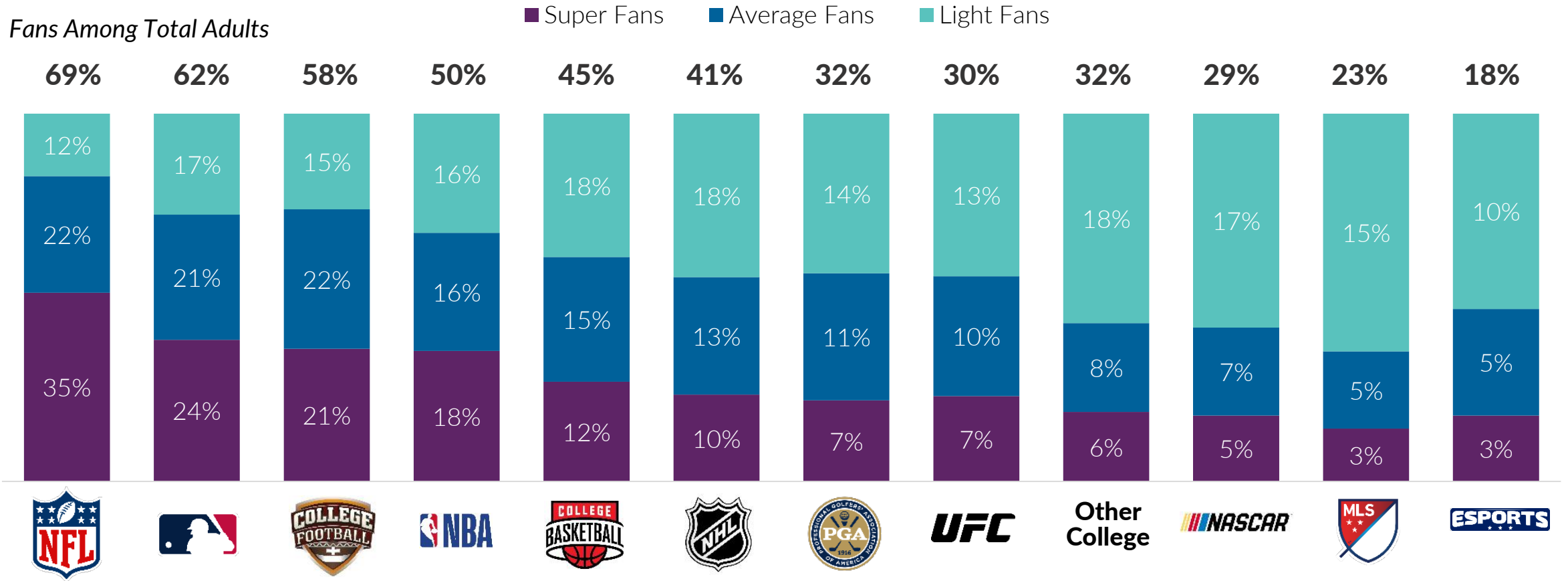
Fans by League/Sport

Sorted by "Miss Sports (Any)"

Q1. Since COVID-19 has cancelled or postponed live sporting events & games how much would you say you miss sports? (Sports fans: rated themselves between 1-10 on a 10-point scale of fandom) Base = Total Adults

The more popular sports have a higher composition of super fans

Fandom Among Total Adults



Sorted by Super Fans

Entertainment, tradition, and personal athletic experience helps motivate Americans to become sports fans

Motivations to be a Sports Fan



66% of MLS fans have an affinity for a sport they used to play – 36% more than total sports fans

Esports fans are 37% more likely to not want to feel left out

Sports Fans and the Sports Deprived overwhelmingly agree that sports create a sense of community, provides suspense, and sparks inspiration



Benefits of Being Sports Fan	Total	Sports Fans	Sports Deprived
Creates a form of “social glue” that wouldn’t be there otherwise			
It brings people together	83%	89% (107)	91% (110)
It can be shared across generations	82%	87% (106)	90% (110)
It provides a sense of community	79%	84% (107)	87% (111)
It unifies people from all walks of life	79%	84% (107)	88% (112)
Elicits excitement & emotion			
It provides suspense and thrill	79%	85% (108)	89% (113)
It provides a healthy form of competition	78%	84% (108)	89% (114)
It provides a healthy outlet for aggression	66%	70% (107)	76% (116)
Sparks positivity, enthusiasm, & motivation			
It creates traditions	80%	85% (107)	89% (112)
It offers inspiration	73%	78% (108)	83% (114)
It provides a sense of identity	64%	69% (108)	75% (117)

The Sports Deprived are still interested in buying sports-related merchandise despite the hiatus in live games/tournaments

Sports-Related Merchandise Interested in Purchasing in Next 12 Months

The Sports Deprived report being interested in purchasing:

- 48%**
(135) **Fan Gear/ Apparel**
(shirts, jackets, hats, etc.)
- 17%**
(146) **Sports Memorabilia**
(signed photos, equipment, etc.)
- 17%**
(136) **Other Accessories**
(backpacks, cell phone covers, etc.)
- 15%**
(140) **Auto Accessories**
(specialty license plates, bumper stickers, etc.)
- 13%**
(132) **Home/Lawn Decor**
(all décor, signs, flags, etc.)



Men 18-34

Are 81% more likely than total adults to purchase sports memorabilia in the next 12 months



Super Fans are most influenced to purchase brands that sponsor sports leagues

How influenced would you be to purchase brands that sponsor the following sports leagues?

						Other College
Sports Fans	40% (114)	30% (113)	30% (114)	28% (114)	24% (112)	19% (112)
Sports Deprived	47% (136)	36% (136)	36% (140)	34% (138)	29% (138)	23% (136)
Super Fans	49% (141)	38% (142)	37% (142)	35% (142)	30% (140)	24% (142)

						
Sports Fans	19% (113)	17% (112)	16% (110)	15% (110)	15% (111)	13% (108)
Sports Deprived	22% (133)	20% (130)	18% (124)	18% (127)	18% (135)	15% (125)
Super Fans	23% (138)	21% (134)	18% (125)	18% (130)	19% (137)	15% (125)

Percentages reflect top 2 box (very/somewhat influenced); indices are against total US population

56% of the Sports Deprived are more likely to notice a brand if they sponsor their favorite athlete/ team/ league (compared to 44% of total adults)

Even when/if their favorite athlete/ team/league switches sponsors, 37% of the Sports Deprived will support the new sponsor



The Sports Deprived are usually heavy consumers of sports content across media channels



TV NETWORKS

MAGAZINES

RADIO FORMATS

WEBSITES

RANKED BY % WITH INDEX OVER 110

- ESPN** (137)
- ESPN2** (136)
- NFL Network** (134)
- ESPNEWS** (133)
- Fox Sports 1** (131)
- NBC Sports Network** (130)
- MLB Network** (127)
- NBA TV** (127)
- Golf Channel** (127)

- ESPN Magazine** (133)
- Golf Digest** (131)
- Golf Magazine** (130)
- Sports Illustrated** (128)
- Men's Health** (125)
- Motor Trend** (122)
- Popular Science** (121)
- Car & Driver** (120)

- All Sports** (139)
- Classic Rock** (113)
- News/Talk** (113)
- Alternative** (111)

- ESPN.com** (139)
- MLB.com** (139)
- FoxSports.com** (138)
- NFL.com** (137)
- CBSsports.com** (137)
- NBA.com** (136)
- PGATour.com** (133)
- NHL.com** (131)
- SportingNews.com** (130)

Thank you

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