

Marketers Betting on 2008 Summer Olympics May Benefit From Targeting Teens,Â Favorite Olympic Sport

Contributed by Harris Interactive
Friday, 08 August 2008

Marketers Betting on 2008 Summer Olympics May Benefit From Targeting Teensâ™ Favorite Olympic Sports Swimming, Gymnastics, Track and Field are Top Three Favorite Olympic Sports Among Nationâ™s Teens

Will brand marketers be reaching desired teens and tweens tuning into the 2008 Summer Olympics? This may depend on how well advertisers place their content within the viewing grasp of teensâ™ top rated Olympic sports.

A recent study conducted by the Harris Interactive Youth Center of Excellence shows that the Olympic gold in Beijing is not likely to draw as many teens to watch Michael Phelps or LeBron James as one might think. Just under half of 13 -18 year olds in the U.S. express an interest (46%) in the upcoming Olympics, including only one quarter (27%) who say they are extremely or very interested. Older teen boys (ages 16-18) show the greatest interest and represent the only age group where over half of youth are interested in the sporting event. Teens overall are a larger audience for the Olympics than tweens (ages 8-12) who report only a 28% interest.

"The results of this survey indicate that teens have not yet caught Olympics-fever. Marketers and advertisers may think that teens are a natural constituency for the Games, since many of the Olympic competitors are the same age. Our findings, however, indicate that the Olympics have not yet captured the majority of hearts and minds of today's teens in the U.S.," commented Dana Markow, Ph.D, VP senior consultant, Harris Interactive Youth Center of Excellence.

Favorite Sports Differ for Teen Girls and Boys

Overall, teens say they are most interested in following swimming (40%), gymnastics (38%) and track and field (33%). However, the top three favorite Olympic sporting events look very different for girls and boys. The top three Olympic sports that teen boys are interested in watching or reading about are track and field (35%), swimming (34%), and basketball (34%). Gymnastics, on the other hand, holds the attention of teen girls, with over half (56%) most interested in following this sport, followed by swimming (46%), and diving (35%).

One in Seven Teens Plans to Watch Online

TV will be the primary medium for teens to follow the Olympics this summer. Six in ten (59%) say that they plan to watch Olympics sporting events on TV. A far smaller number of teens are interested in reading about (22%) or watching (14%) Olympic sporting events online. Similar to an overall interest in the Olympics, plans to follow the Games online increases significantly with age. This is consistent with the trend for youth to spend an increasing amount of time online as they get older.

Teens Support Olympicsâ™ Vision

What do the Olympics mean to todayâ™s teens? Most teens understand that the Olympics are more than simply a sport competition and aim to bring the world together. Almost two-thirds (62%) agree that the Olympics help to build a better and more peaceful world, four times the amount who disagree (16%) with this statement. Teens who say they are interested in the Olympics are even more likely to agree that the Games are about more than merely medals and marketing (71%). Markow added, "The marketers and advertisers who capitalize on this connection, as well as being attuned to girlsâ™ and boysâ™ sporting event preferences, will be best positioned to â€bring home the goldâ™ for their bra