

SSI QuickPoll Reveals NFL® Player Safety Rules Increased Viewer Enjoyment

Contributed by SSI QuickPoll
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National Football League games are constantly generating the largest viewership in the broadcast ratings game. On Jan. 7, the SSI QuickPoll's online survey asked 1,012 participants living in the United States some questions about Super Bowl XLIX® as well as general NFL® viewing habits.

When asked if rule changes to protect NFL players on the field increased or decreased enjoyment of the game, survey participants were much more likely to say rule changes "increased" their enjoyment of the game (33% vs. 9% who said it "decreased" their enjoyment). The majority of participants (58%) said rule changes have had no impact on their enjoyment of the game. The SSI QuickPoll regularly surveys people about business, technology, sports, the economy and current events.

Today's NFL players "must use improved techniques to avoid hitting or blocking defenseless opponents in the head or neck area, or using the crown of the helmet to make forcible contact," according to the NFL 2014 Player Health & Safety Report. Some of the NFL rules prohibit a player from launching himself off the ground and using his helmet to strike a player in a defenseless posture in the head or neck. The old rule only applied to receivers getting hit, but now it applies to everyone.

NFL Super Bowl XLIX is Now the Focus

In 2011, SSI fielded a pre-Super Bowl survey of 575 U.S. participants online and 64% of those responding said they planned to watch the Super Bowl. This year, that number has grown to 79%.

Who Will Win?

When asked to predict which team would win Super Bowl XLIX, the Seahawks were the majority favorite in four of five countries. (This question was exclusive to these five countries.)

In the U.S., the Seahawks were favored by a slight margin of 9%, and only 17% chose "don't know." As expected in other countries, more than half of those asked said they didn't know who would win, (57% of people in the United Kingdom said they didn't know, 70% in France, 60% in Germany and 68% in Australia). Of those who did make a prediction, the Patriots were favored in the U.K. and the Seahawks were favored in Australia, France and Germany.

Why Do You Watch the Super Bowl?

Although the Super Bowl audience continues to grow, people watch for a variety of reasons. In 2011, 61% of survey participants said the main reason they watch the Super Bowl® is to see the game, while in 2015 this percentage dropped to 50%. Other reasons cited such as "watching the commercials," the "halftime show" and an "excuse to get together with friends" remains the option selected second most often, chosen by 21% of survey participants in 2015.

NFL's Popularity

When evaluating the 2014 NFL season, the SSI QuickPoll revealed 21% of participants "never miss" an NFL game, while another 33% "often" watch the NFL, concluding most people usually watch football on Sundays. In fact, only 15% of

survey participants said they “never watch” an NFL game, and an additional 14% said they hardly ever watch.

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NFL’s Viewership Comparisons 2013 Vs. 2014

Potential NFL viewers, which exclude those who “never” watch NFL football, were asked if they watched more football in 2014 than in 2013.Â Although almost half the sample recalled watching a similar amount in both years, the proportion of viewers that recalled watching more football in 2014 was much higher than 2013 (40% vs. 11%).

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Research Methodology

The SSI QuickPoll regularly surveys people about business, technology, sports, the economy and current events.Â For this survey, 1,012 participants in the U.S. were sampled online on Jan. 7.Â In 2011, 575 participants in the U.S. were sampled online from Jan. 14 through Jan. 19.Â Samples were balanced on age, gender and region.Â The global question on which team will win the Super Bowl was asked of 480-500 people from each country on Jan. 21 “ 22.

SSI is the premier global provider of data solutions and technology for consumer and business-to-business survey research, reaching respondents in 86 countries via Internet, telephone, mobile/wireless and mixed-access offerings.Â SSI staff operates from 25 offices in 18 countries, offering sample, data collection, CATI, questionnaire design consultation, programming and hosting, online custom reporting and data processing.Â SSI’s 3,300 employees serve more than 3,000 clients worldwide.Â Visit SSI at www.surveysampling.com .