Global Sport Institute International Poll

Topline Data: Sex, Gender, and Equity in Sport 2021

**Method:** On behalf of the Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University, Latino Decisions in coordination with Lucid implemented an international online survey of adults from February 12-20, 2021. Overall, 751 respondents completed interviews for a margin of error of +/- 3.58%. The web survey was available in English in Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States of America through Lucid. Final data were compared to the 2018 Census ACS demographic profile, the Department of Statistics of South Africa, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and United Kingdom’s Office for National Statistics, to balance gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity so the resulting data matched the national demographic profile of each country. The average completion time for the poll was 25 minutes with a completion rate of 85%. The full set of questions and results of polling question responses from each country can be found at the Global Sport Institute’s website: [https://globalsport.asu.edu/resources/global-sport-institute-international-poll-2021](https://globalsport.asu.edu/resources/global-sport-institute-international-poll-2021)
Total response percentages (respondents from all countries together) are presented for each question. Additional highlights are provided relative to differences between countries, genders, and genders within countries. Due to a very low number of respondents identifying as non-binary (between 0 and 3 per country), gender differences are discussed relative to male and female responses.

**Girls, Women, and Sports Participation**

Think about the girls and women in your life who quit playing sports at some point. Why do you think they quit (check all that apply)?

- 59% said they pursued different interests
- 32% said they didn’t enjoy it enough
- 24% said they graduated out
- 19% said body image
- 16% said embarrassment or insecurity
- 6% said “other”

Think about the boys and men in your life who quit playing sports at some point. Why do you think they quit (check all that apply)?

- 60% said they pursued different interests
- 33% said they didn’t enjoy it enough
- 31% said they graduated out
- 11% said body image
- 9% said embarrassment or insecurity
- 6% said “other”

**Additional Highlights**

- Across countries and gender “Pursued different interests” was endorsed by the highest percentage of people for reasons both girls/women and boys/men stopped playing sports.
- “Didn’t enjoy it enough” and “graduated out” were also popular reasons selected across countries by males and females regarding reasons both boys/men and girls/women quit sports.
- US males and females did not select “body image” as a top reason, but It was a top 3 reason selected for girls/women quitting by females in UK and Australia and both males and females in South Africa.
- Across countries and gender, body image and embarrassment were not selected as top reasons why boys/men quit sports.
Do you think girls’ and women’s’ sports participation is affected by any of the following (check all that apply)?

- 55% said limited money to support sport programs
- 50% said social and/or cultural norms
- 40% said family norms
- 36% said audience interest to support professional clubs
- 4% said “other”

Additional Highlights

- The highest percentage of male and female respondents in the US and South Africa selected “social and cultural norms” as a factor and did so at higher percentages than Australia and UK.
- The highest percentage of Australians and South Africans selected “limited money to support sport programs” as a factor.

Are girls’ and women’s’ sports broadcasted in your country?

- 75% said yes
- 11% said no
- 14% said not sure

If so, how often do you watch?

- 18% said weekly or more
- 22% said multiple times per month
- 11% said once per month
- 16% said a few times per year
- 5% said once per year
- 28% said not at all

Would you watch more if they broadcasted more?

- 47% said yes
- 28% said no
- 26% said not sure

Additional Highlights

- Across all countries, more people selected “not sure” than “no.”
- The majority of respondents across countries and genders indicate that women’s sports are broadcast in their countries.
- In all countries, more men than women indicated that women’s sports is broadcasted,
- The highest percentage of people in all countries except for South Africa indicated that they do not watch women’s sports at all.
- In the US and South Africa, the highest percentage of males indicated they watch women’s sports “weekly or more” and did so at a higher rate than female respondents
- The highest percentage of US females endorsed “not at all” and did so at a higher percentage than male respondents
• In the UK, viewing patterns were more similar between males and females. The highest percentage of males and females indicated “not at all”
• In Australia the highest percentages of both males and females selected “not at all,” but females selected it at a notably higher percentage
• In South Africa a higher percentage of males selected “weekly or more” and the highest percentage of females selected “multiple times a month.”
• Only in the US and South Africa did the majority of males indicate they would watch more if broadcasted more whereas females responded yes, no, and unsure in equal percentages.
• In the UK more, females than males indicated they would watch more if broadcasted more
• The majority of females in South Africa indicated they would watch more if broadcasted more.

Transgender Athletes

The following questions are about transgender topics, referring to individuals whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth.

Is this consistent with your understanding of the term transgender?

• 78% said yes
• 10% said no
• 12% said I don’t know/understand

The majority of males and females across countries answered yes
Which statement do you agree with most: transgender people should be required to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth or transgender people should be allowed to play sports according to the gender with which they currently identify?

• 42% said transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth
• 28% said transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the gender with which they currently identify
• 30% said not sure

Do you agree or disagree that transgender athletes have an unfair advantage in sports?

• 16% said transgender men do, but not transgender women
• 10% said transgender women do, but not transgender men
• 25% said all transgender people have an advantage
• 13% said all transgender people do not have an advantage
• 37% said they don’t know
Additional Highlights

- In the US the highest percentage of males and females selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth”
- In the UK the highest percentage of males selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” but the highest percentage of females indicated “not sure”
- Males and females in Australia were fairly evenly split between “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” and “not sure”
- In South Africa the majority of males selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” The highest percentage of females selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the gender with which they currently identify” (the only group to indicate this choice with the highest percentage)
- In the US when asked about having an advantage in sports, males selected “Transgender men do but not women,” “All have an advantage,” and “don’t know” at equal rates. Women selected “don’t know” at the highest percentage.
- In the UK males and females responded with “don’t know” regarding advantages in sport at higher percentages than other response options
- South African females were evenly divided between “all have an advantage” and “all do not have an advantage” as the top choice, males were split between ‘don’t know” and “all have an advantage”

What do you think is the best way to accommodate transgender men athletes?

- **19% said allow an athlete to decide whether they compete as woman or man**
- **13% said have an expert panel interview and make a decision for athletes who request to compete in gender that does not correspond to biological sex assigned at birth**
- **20% said test hormone levels of athletes requesting to compete in gender that does not correspond to biological sex assigned at birth**
- **18% said create an additional gender division of competition for all transgender athletes**
- **1% said other**
- **29% said don’t know**
What do you think is the best way to accommodate transgender women athletes?

- 20% said allow an athlete to decide whether they compete as woman or man
- 13% said have an expert panel interview and make a decision for athletes who request to compete in gender that does not correspond to biological sex assigned at birth
- 18% said test hormone levels of athletes requesting to compete in gender that does not correspond to biological sex assigned at birth
- 18% said create an additional gender division of competition for all transgender athletes
- 1% said other
- 29% said don’t know

Additional Highlights

- In the US the highest percentage of males and females selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth.”
- In the UK the highest percentage of males selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” but the highest percentage of females indicated “not sure.”
- Males and females in Australia were fairly evenly split between “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” and “not sure.”
- In South Africa the majority of males selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the sex they were assigned at birth” The highest percentage of females selected “Transgender people should only be allowed to play sports according to the gender with which they currently identify” (the only group to indicate this choice with the highest percentage).
- In the US, males selected “Transgender men but not women,” “All have an advantage,” and “don’t know” at equal rates. Women selected “don’t know” at the highest percentage.
- In the UK males and females responded with “don’t know” at higher percentages than other response options.
- South African females were evenly divided between “all have an advantage” and “all do not have an advantage” as the top choice, males were split between ‘don’t know” and “all have an advantage.”
- People are unsure for the most part about how to accommodate transgender athletes in sports.
- In US females chose “don’t know” regarding how to accommodate both transgender men and women and did so at higher rates than other options and males were evenly split between all options other than creating an additional division and “other” (those had low selection rates) for both.
- UK also had widely distributed responses regarding accommodating transgender athletes. Females chose “don’t know” for both men and women. Males selected
“test hormone levels” and don’t know” at equal rates for both transgendered men and women.

- Australia females chose “I don’t know” at the highest rate for transgendered men and women. Males distributed their responses across multiple categories including “test hormone levels” “expert panel” and “don’t know” for both transgendered men and women athletes.
- South Africans were the only ones to NOT select “don’t know” at the highest percentage. They were equally split between “allow athlete to decide” “test hormone levels” and “create an additional division” for both transgendered men and women athletes. Males selected “Test hormones” at the highest rate.

Coach Hiring & Pay

Which statement most closely matches your feelings about hiring women as head coaches for men’s teams?

- 45% said it is silly that we don’t have more women coaching
- 26% said very few women are qualified
- 8% said it is not appropriate for women to coach men’s teams
- 21% said don’t know

Do you believe that women and men should receive the same pay for coaching university teams?

- 72% said yes
- 11% said no
- 17% said don’t know

Why do you think there is a pay gap between men (who typically make more) and women (who typically make less) in the same sport?

- 30% said it is because of popularity / viewership
- 21% said it is because of skill
- 33% said it is because of inequality and/or discrimination
- 2% said it is for another reason
- 14% said not sure

Do you see female coaches / managers for girls’ and women’s sports at the following levels (check all that apply)?

- 31% said youth level
- 34% said community / recreational
- 40% said professional / Olympic
- 24% said I don’t watch these sports
- 15% said I don’t see female coaches/managers for boys’ and men’s sports at any level
Do you see female coaches / managers for boys’ and men's sports at the following levels?

- 27% said youth level
- 32% said community / recreational
- 35% said professional / Olympic
- 23% said I don’t watch these sports
- 22% said I don’t see female coaches/managers for boys’ and men’s sports at any level

Do you think more women should have the opportunity to coach in men's leagues?

- 68% said yes
- 15% said no
- 16% said not sure

Do you think more women should have the opportunity to officiate / referee in men's leagues?

- 73% said yes
- 14% said no
- 13% said not sure

Additional Highlights

- Across all countries, females endorsed “It is silly that we don’t have more women coaching” as the top response choice (highest percentage).
- In UK and South Africa, males also endorsed “it is silly that we don’t have more women coaching” as the top choice.
- US and Australian males equivocated on the response, splitting their top choices between “It is silly we don’t have more women coaching” and “very few women are qualified.”
- The highest percentages of males and females across all countries polled agreed that women and men should receive the same pay for coaching university teams.
- Within countries response patterns regarding the pay gap looked similar for males and females.
- In the US, Australia, and South Africa the highest percentage of females selected “discrimination” as the cause of pay gaps, vs. males who largely selected “popularity of viewership.”
- Females and males in UK were split between “popularity of viewership” and “discrimination” as causes for the pay gaps.
- The highest percentages of males and females across countries indicated they did not see female coaches/managers of girls’ or boys’ teams at the youth level, community/recreational, or professional levels except for South Africans.
- South African males: majority see female coaches/managers of girls at the youth and professional levels, and boys’ teams at the community/recreation level. South African females see female coaches/managers of girls at the professional level.
• Across countries and genders, the majority of respondents indicate they watch women’s sports.
• Across countries and genders the majority agreed that more women should have the opportunity to coach and officiate in men’s leagues.

Girls and Women Playing Sport

Do you think pregnant professional or Olympic athletes should be allowed to compete? If you feel that they should be allowed to compete, do you feel that pregnant professional/Olympic athletes should receive greater compensation?
• 33% said yes
• 19% said yes and they should receive greater compensation
• 48% said no

Do you think that girls’ sports participation thorough the end of high school is at a sufficient level?
• 35% said yes
• 31% said no
• 34% said not sure

Do you think that boys’ sports participation through the end of high school is at a sufficient level?
• 48% said yes
• 22% said no
• 30% said not sure

When you compare women and men playing the same sport (e.g., basketball, soccer), do you perceive one as better than the other, or their style of play as different without being better/worse?
• 10% said women play better
• 19% said men play better
• 59% said they just play with different styles
• 11% said not sure

Do you think girls (under 18 years old) should play sports with heavy physical contact, such as rugby and American football? [D43] Same question for boys
• 51% said yes
• 26% said no
• 22% said not sure

Do you think girls (under 18 years old) should play sports with heavy physical contact, such as rugby and American football? [D43] Same question for boys
• 61% said yes
• 19% said no
• 20% said not sure
How do you feel about women playing in men’s sports leagues?
• 43% said there should be more
• 30% said women should not be allowed to play in men’s leagues/teams
• 27% said not sure

Are girls encouraged to play sports as much as boys?
• 37% said yes
• 44% said no
• 18% said not sure

Do girls have as much access as boys to training, coaching, and resources to develop in sport?
• 35% said yes
• 41% said no
• 24% said not sure

Compare the female and male athletes whose careers and/or lives you follow. What percentage of them are female and male?
• 5% said 0-25%
• 37% said 26-50%
• 27% said 51-75%
• 31% said 76-100%

Additional Highlights
• Regarding whether pregnant women should compete, in the US females said “no” at higher percentages than males (the majority of whom said “yes they should be allowed to compete”)
• Although less disparate than the US, in South Africa a higher percentage of females said “no pregnant women should not be allowed to compete” compared to males
• Across countries males and females chose “yes pregnant women should compete and they should receive greater compensation” at the lowest percentages
• In the US, females and males agreed that high school was a sufficient level for both boys and girls, although a larger percentage of male vs. female selected “yes” to this question regarding both boys and girls.
• There was less decisiveness in other countries, with percentages fairly evenly distributed across yes, no, and not sure about sufficient playing levels for girls.
• In UK the majority of males selected “not sure” for sufficient playing level for girls, but split responses across choices for boys. Females in UK were more decisive
with boys selecting “yes” that high school was sufficient at the highest percentage

- In Australia, males and females largely equivocated regarding both boys’ and girls’ playing levels. However, a higher percentage of females (vs. males and vs. other response) did endorse “yes” regarding whether high school was a sufficient playing level for boys.

- In South Africa, males and females responded similarly and evenly across all three response options for girls but agreed that high school was a sufficient playing level for boys.

- The majority of females and males across all countries polled said that men and women played with different styles, not better or worse than one another.

- Regarding boys playing physical sports, males and females responded “yes” with the highest percentages and at similar rates to one another.

- They were not as decisive regarding girls playing physical sports.
  - Majority of US females and males said yes (and at similar rates to one another)
  - Majority of UK and Australian females said “yes” and the highest percentage of males responded “yes”, but at a lower rate than the females did.
  - South African females were split evenly between “yes” and “no” where males more decisively selected “yes”.

- Regarding women playing in men’s sports leagues, in the US females responded fairly equally between “there should be more” and “women should not be allowed” but males selected “there should be more” at the highest percentages and at a higher percentage than females.

- In UK females were evenly split between “there should be more” and “not sure” where males more were evenly split between “women should not be allowed” and “not sure”.

- Australian females were evenly split between “there should be more” and “not sure” where males were fairly divided between “there should be more” and “women shouldn’t be allowed” with the latter slightly edging out the former.

- Only South African provided a clear choice, with the majority of females selecting “there should be more” and the highest percentage of males selecting “there should be more women playing in men’s sports leagues”.

- In terms of whether or not girls are encouraged to play sports as much as boys, only the US was clearly divided by gender. In the US males and females were divided. The highest percentage of females selected “no” and the majority of males selected “yes”.

- In UK males and females agreed with one another about whether girls were encouraged to play sports as much as boys with both selecting “no” at highest percentages.

- Australian and South African females selected “no” at the highest rate, but males were divided between “yes: and “no”.
Regarding girls’ access to sports coaching and training resources, responses were similar to those regarding encouragement to play sports. Females selected “no” at the highest rates and the majority of males selected “yes”

Again, UK males and females agreed with the highest percentages selecting “no”

Australian females were divided equally among response choices, while males more decisively selected “yes” that girls had as much access to training and coaching resources as boys

The majority of South African females selected “no” to the sports training access question, while males were divided between “yes” and “no”

Regarding following female’s careers: In the US the highest percentage of females and males indicated 50%, with 75% of females choosing between 0-50% and 85% of males choosing between 0-50%

  o In terms of following male athletes: The 50% numbers look similar between males and females, but 56% of males follow male athletes 55-100% (vs 15% following female careers)

Response rates related to following male and female athletes’ careers were similar across countries