



# Sports Season Report

Syndicated Research Report

October 2022

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# Inflation Is Driving Some Americans to Refrain From Purchasing Tickets to Sports; Interest in Women's Sports Continues to Lag Behind That of Men's; Hockey Fans Support NHL's Plans to Increase Diversity in Its Workforce; The Decision to Host the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar Could Lead to a Drop in Viewership



## Inflation Is Driving Some Americans to Refrain From Purchasing Tickets to Sports

Over the past few months, inflation has impacted spending across nearly every industry. Sports entertainment is no exception. Although interest in sports is up relative to last quarter (in a typical seasonal pattern), over half of U.S. adults who say they regularly attend sporting events report they have recently refrained from purchasing tickets to a live event due to high ticket costs/inflation.

## Interest in Women's Sports Continues to Lag Behind That of Men's

Interest in women's sports has historically lagged behind that of men's. To combat this, [some companies are pledging equal spending in paid advertising](#) across women's and men's sports. Recent polling data from CivicScience shows that, although interest in men's sports is higher among *both* U.S. adult men *and* U.S. adult women, the interest gap is wider among men. Moreover, we've identified 20 psychographic attributes that are highly predictive of being a fan of women's sports.

## Hockey Fans Support NHL's Plans to Increase Diversity in Its Workforce

After releasing the [results of an internal study, which showed that their workforce is 84% white and 62% male](#), the NHL announced plans in October to increase diversity. Hockey fans generally like the idea, with 58% saying they support plans to step up diversity within the league. Opinions differ widely based on political affiliation though, as one might imagine in our current era of political tribalism.

## The Decision to Host the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar Could Lead to a Drop in Viewership

The 2022 FIFA World Cup is coming up in November, and controversy swirls around the decision to [allow the tournament to be hosted by Qatar](#), a country that has been routinely criticized for various human rights violations. Ultimately, this decision may impact viewership, as MLS fans are more likely than the average sports fan to say they take the host country into consideration when deciding whether to watch an international sporting event.

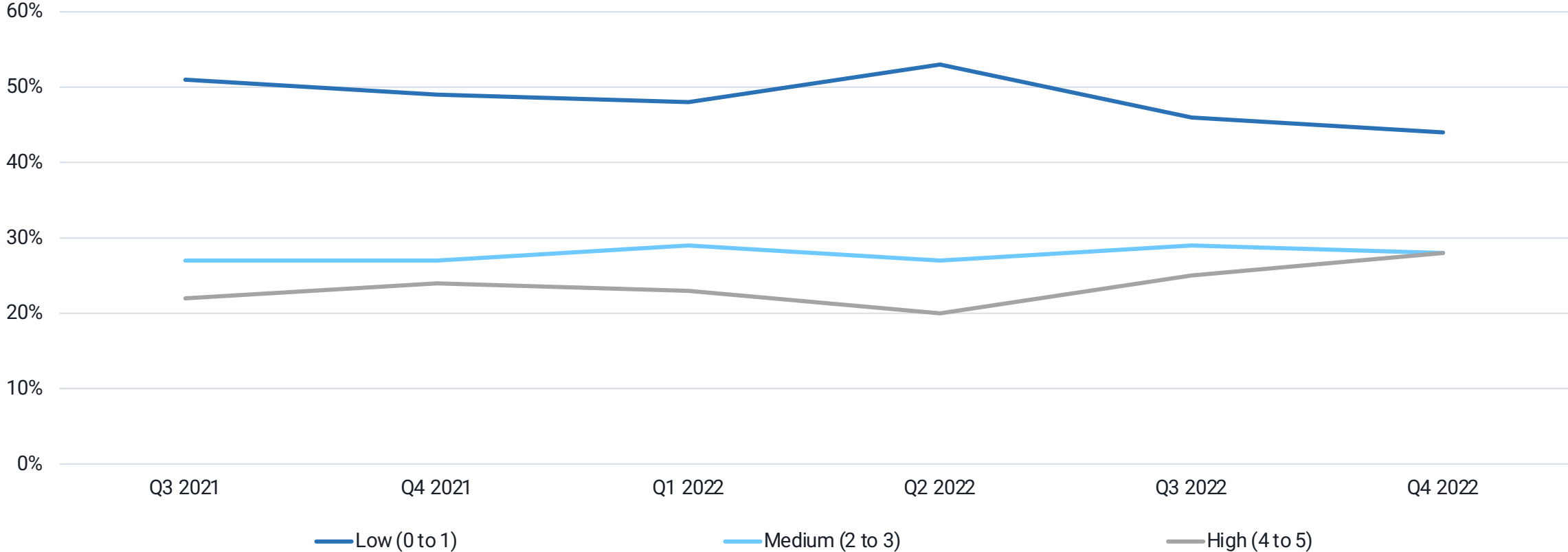


# Detailed Findings

# General interest in sports continues to follow predictable seasonable patterns, with declining interest in the spring (Q2) and rising interest in the fall (Q4).



## Current interest in sports



**Question:** On a scale of 0-5, how interested are you in sports right now?

**Field:** 161,080 responses from 07/01/2021 to 10/27/2022 (±1%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

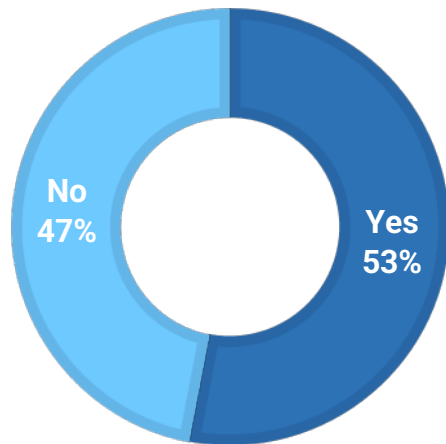
# But while interest in sports is generally up relative to last quarter, concerns about inflation and rising ticket prices are clearly impacting decisions about attending live sporting events.



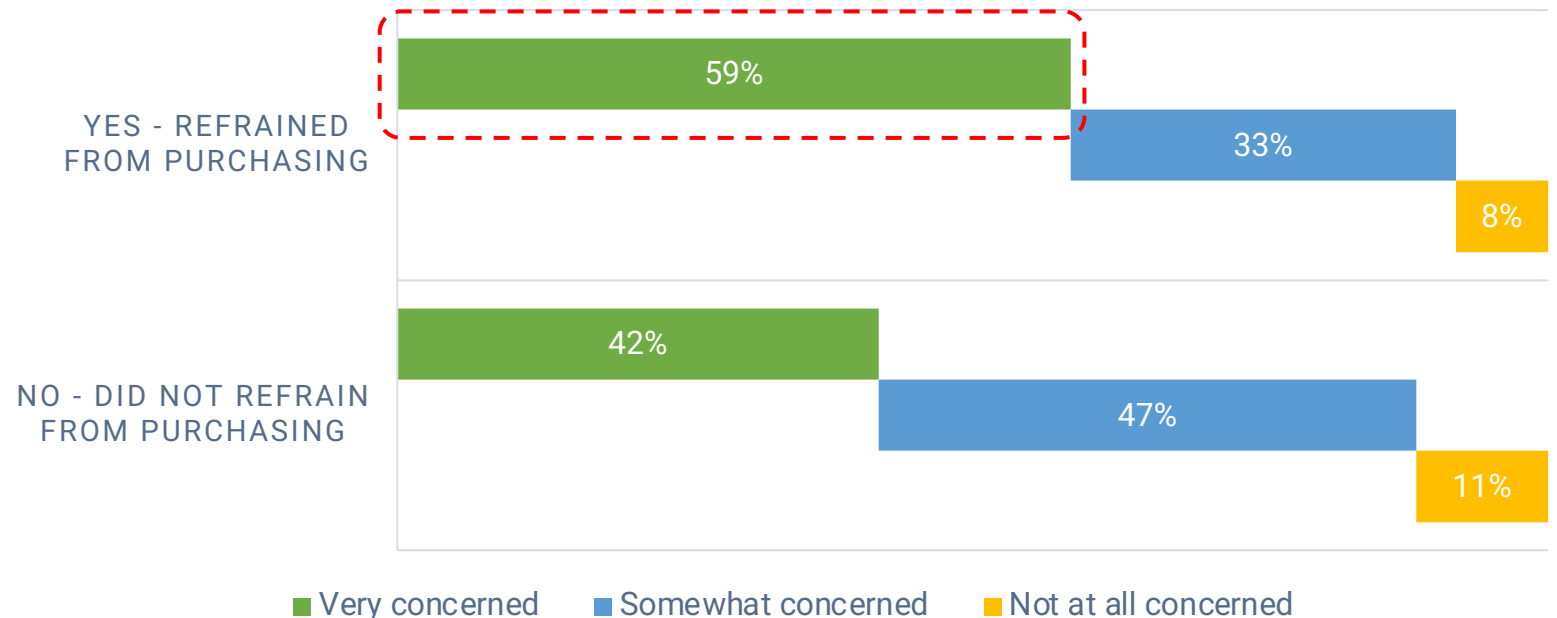
Over half of U.S. adults who attend sporting events refrained from purchasing tickets recently due to high prices/inflation – Among those, **nearly 60%** indicated that they are “very concerned” about inflation.

## Concern about inflation among adults who attend live sporting events

REFRAINED FROM PURCHASING TICKETS TO A LIVE SPORTING EVENT IN PAST 6 MONTHS DUE TO RISING PRICES / INFLATION



CONCERN REGARDING INFLATION IN ADULTS WHO DID/DID NOT REFRAIN FROM ATTENDING SPORTING EVENTS



**Question:** In the past six months, have you refrained from purchasing tickets to a live sporting event due to rising prices / inflation?

**Field:** 1,331 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±4%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

**Question:** How concerned are you right now about inflation in the U.S.?

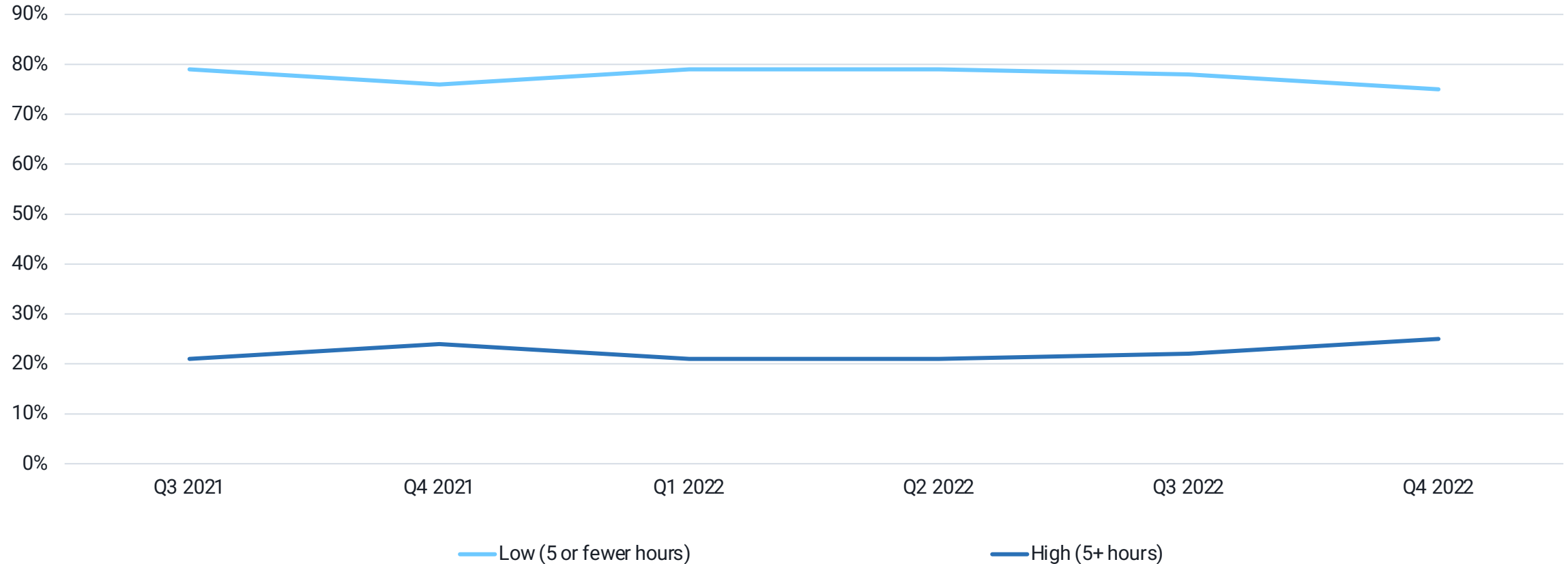
**Field:** 905 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±4%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Transition into the fall season draws U.S. adults to their TVs, with concern regarding increased ticket prices potentially aiding to TV viewership



The share of U.S. adults watching 5 or more hours of sports per week has so far ticked up in Q4.

## Hours of sports watched on TV per week



**Question:** How much would you say you watch sports on TV in an average week?

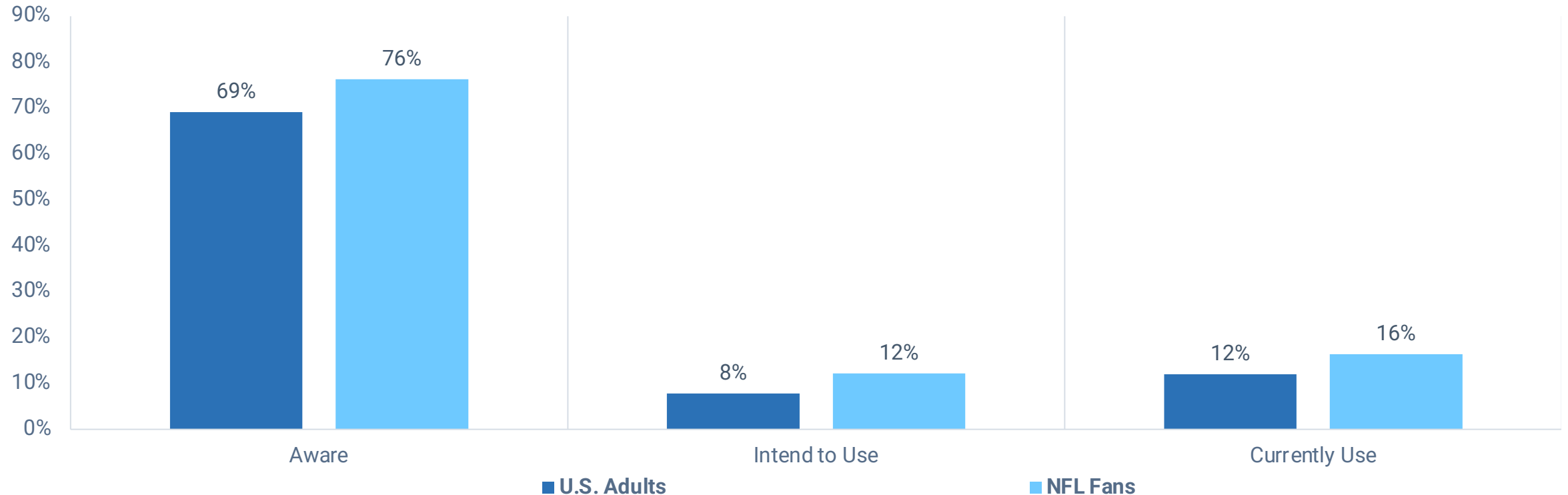
**Field:** 346,433 responses from 07/01/2021 to 10/27/2022 ( $\pm 1\%$ ) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# In addition, streaming services offer Americans new alternatives for following their favorite sports.



Around 70% of U.S. adults are aware of the NFL Plus streaming service, which launched in July.

## NFL Plus Experience



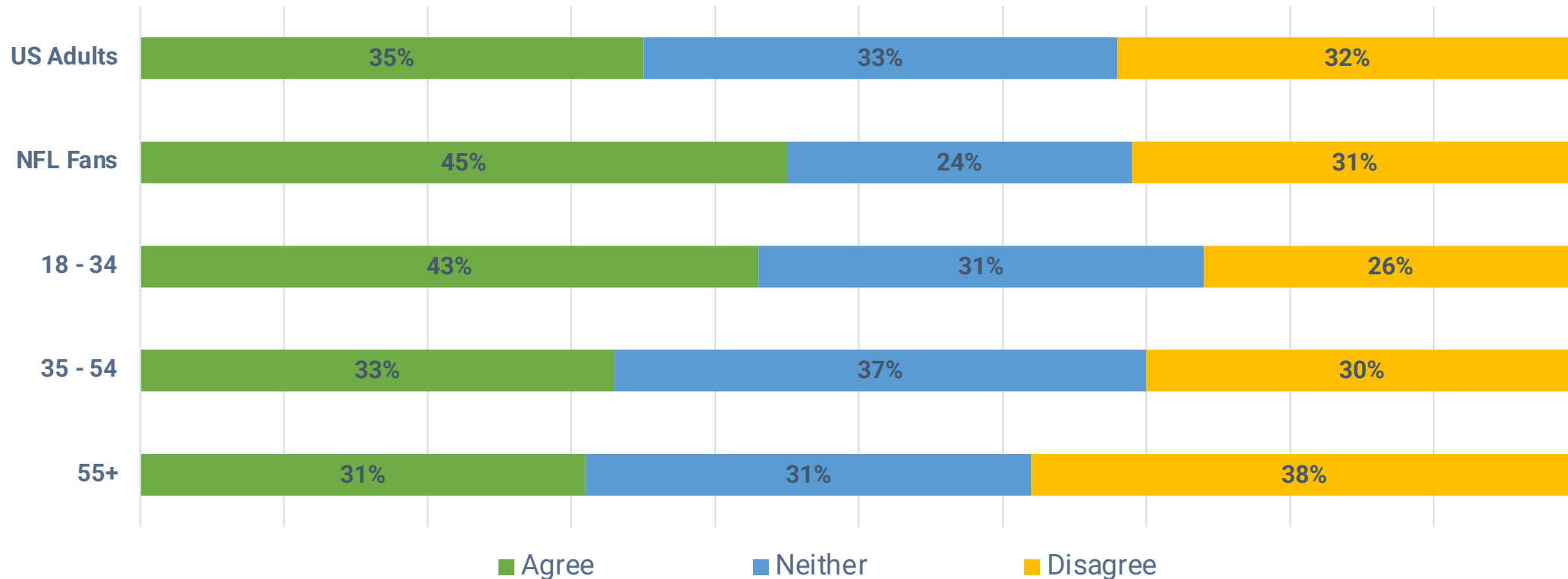
**Question:** Which of the following best describes your experience with the NFL Plus streaming service?  
Aware – excludes “haven’t heard of this”; Intend – “I haven’t used, but I plan to”; Currently Use – “I’ve used it”

**Field:** US Adults: 2,798 responses & NFL Fans: 1,119 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±2%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Despite recent attention to head injuries in the NFL, U.S. Adults are almost evenly split on whether professional sport leagues do a good job of protecting players.



Agreement with “Professional sports leagues generally do a good job protecting the health and safety of players.”



**Question:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Professional sports leagues generally do a good job protecting the health and safety of players.

**Field:** US Adults: 2,798 responses & NFL Fans: 1,119 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±2%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

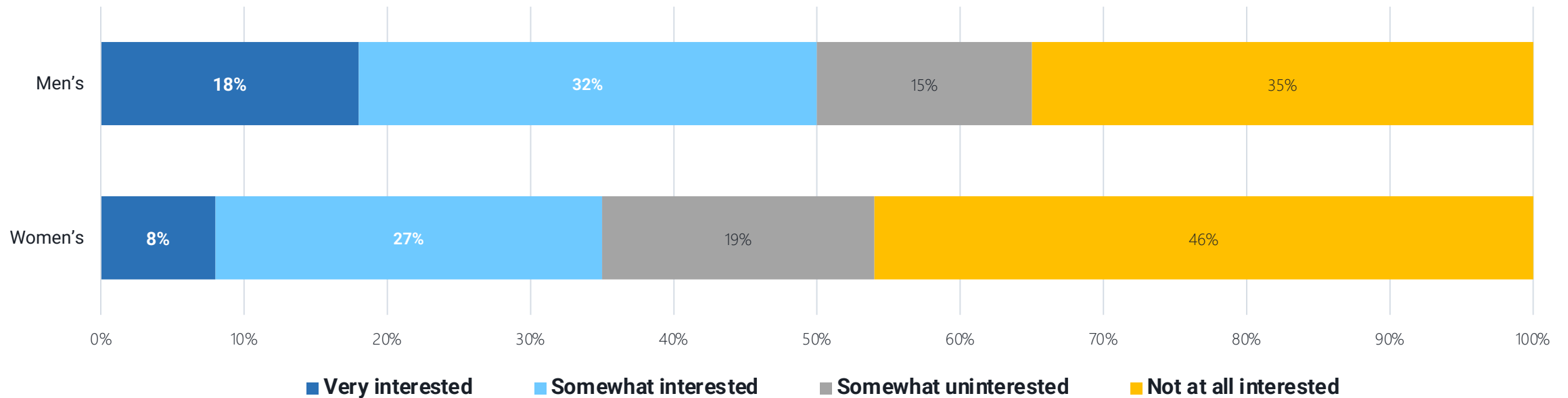


# Interest in women's sports continues to lag behind that of men's sports, highlighting the need for equality in marketing.



U.S. adults are more than twice as likely to be “very interested” in men’s sports compared to women’s, with nearly half of U.S. adults indicating no interest at all in women’s sports.

## Interest in viewing/attending women's and men's sporting events



**Question:** In general, how interested are you in watching or attending \_\_\_\_\_ sports?

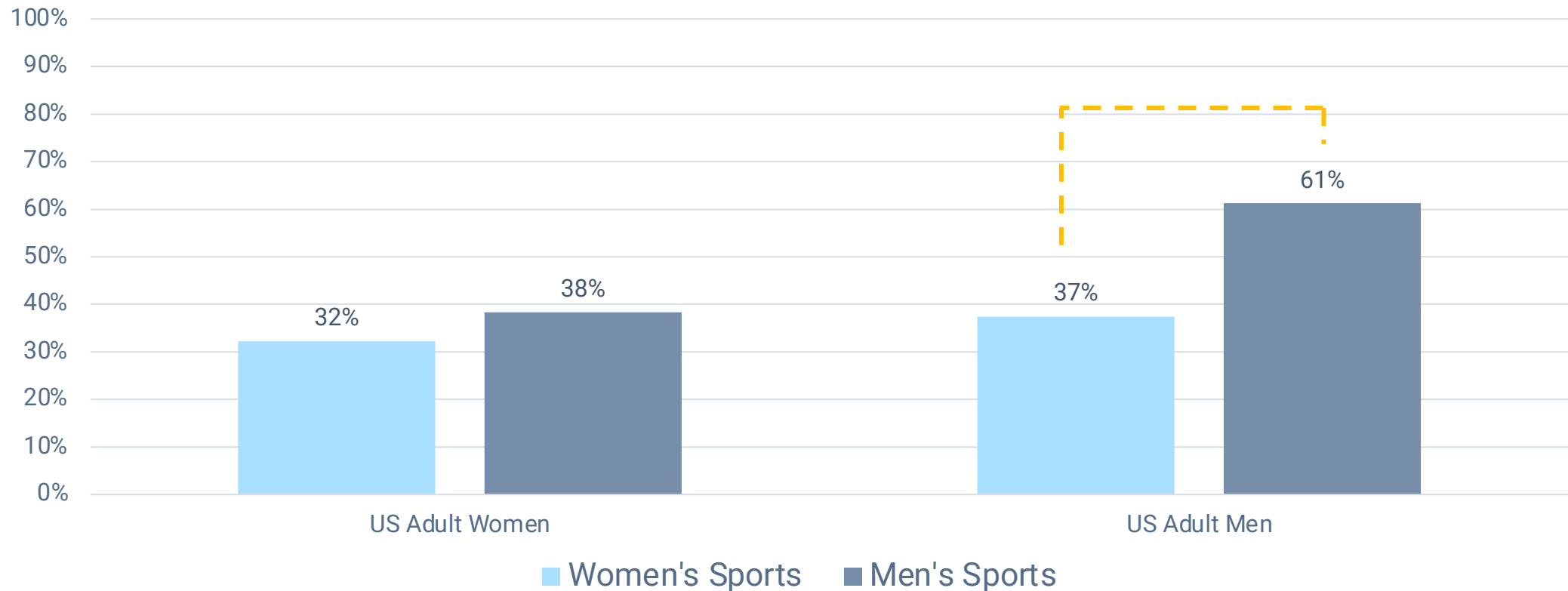
**Field:** Men: 1,397 responses (±3%) & Women: 5,149 responses (±2%) from 10/21/2022 to 10/27/2022 (±2%)

**Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Interest in men's sports is higher among *both* U.S. adult men *and* U.S. adult women, though the interest gap is wider among men.



## Interest in viewing/attending women's and men's sporting events by gender



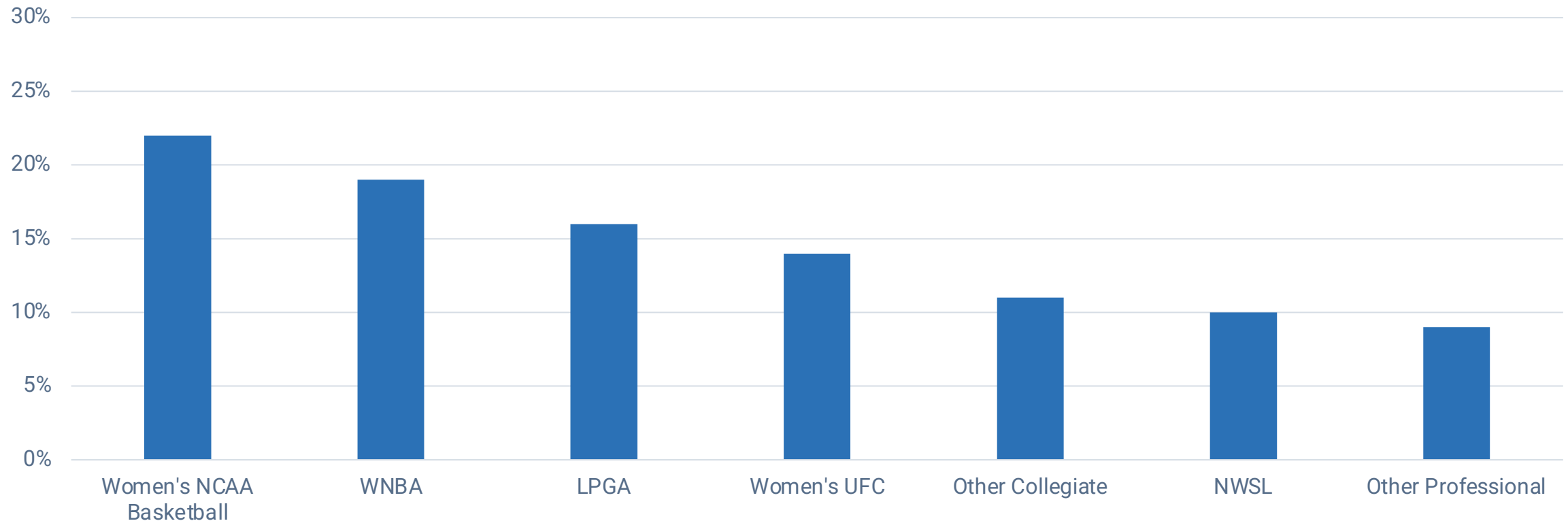
**Question:** In general, how interested are you in watching or attending \_\_\_\_\_ sports?

**Field:** Men: 2,721 responses & Women: 5,056 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/25/2022 ( $\pm 2\%$ ) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Among women's sports, U.S. adults are most interested in following NCAA Basketball and the WNBA.



## Interest in Women's Sports



**Question:** Which women's sports league are you most interested in following?

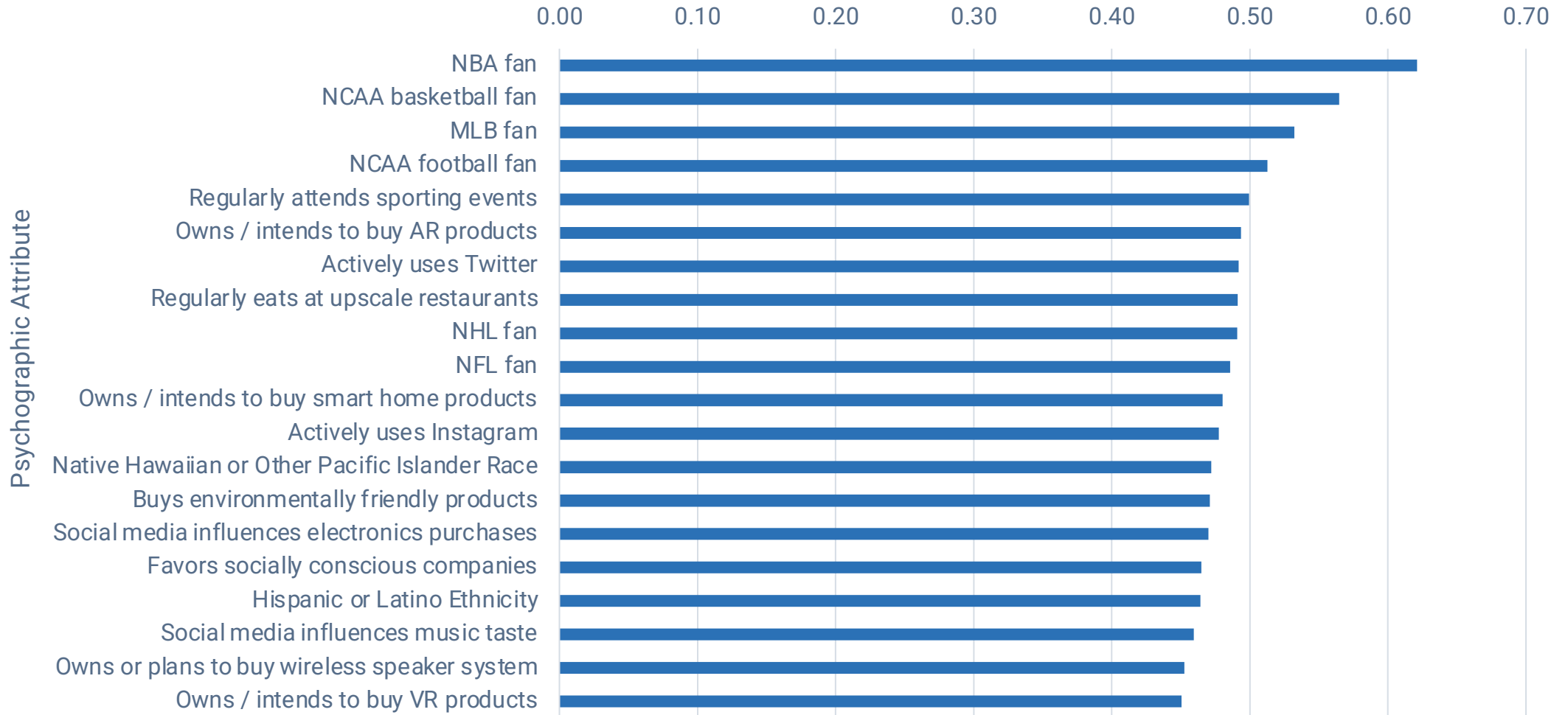
**Field:** 1,397 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/25/2022 (±3%) **Base:** Rebased by those not interested; Weighted by US adults

# So, who is most likely to be interested in women's sports?

The chart below shows the top 20 psychographic attributes most predictive of being interested in women's sports...



Probability of being interested in women's sports, by attribute

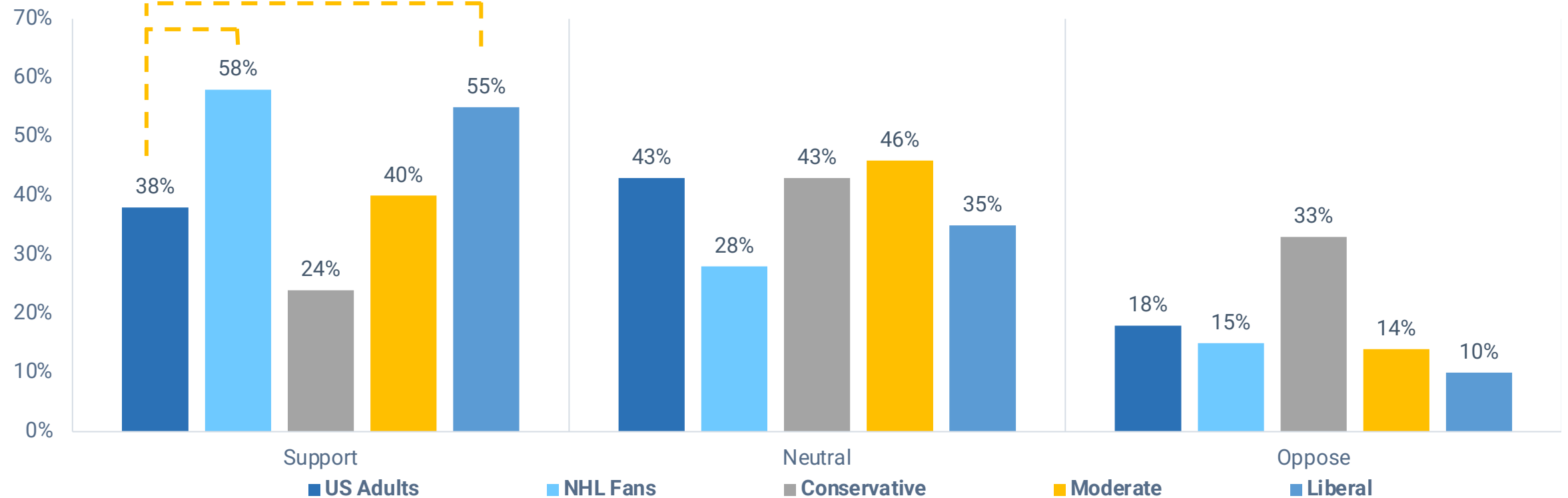


# The NHL recently announced plans to increase diversity among its workforce, and hockey fans are generally supportive of the idea. Opinions differ, however, based on political affiliation.



Compared to general U.S. adults, NHL fans and liberal adults support the NHL decision to diversify their workforce

## Opinion of NHL decision to diversify their workforce



**Question:** How do you feel about the National Hockey League's decision to increase diversity in their workforce (i.e., players, coaches, referees, etc.)?

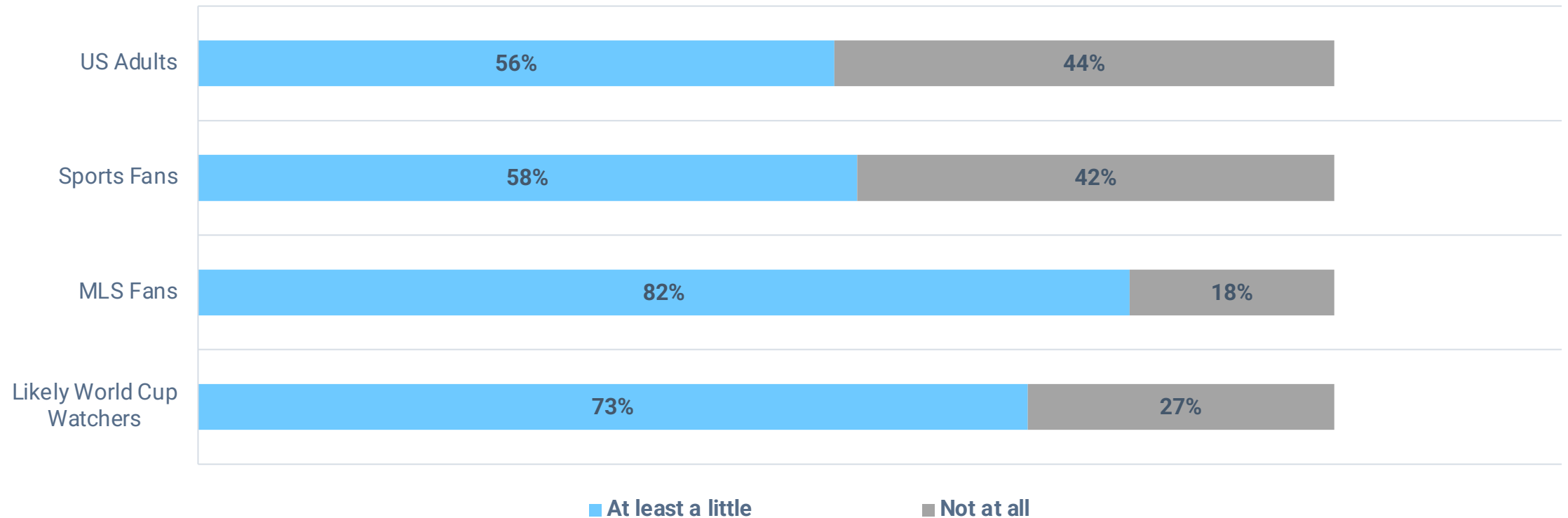
**Field:** 2,689 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±2%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# The 2022 FIFA World Cup is coming up in November, but many fans are uneasy about the tournament being hosted in Qatar.



The decision to have the tournament in Qatar could impact viewership, as MLS fans are more likely than the average sports fan to take the host country into consideration when deciding whether to watch an international sporting event.

## Impact of host country on international sport event viewership



**Question:** How much does your decision to watch international sporting events (e.g. Olympics, World Cup, etc) depend on who the host country is?

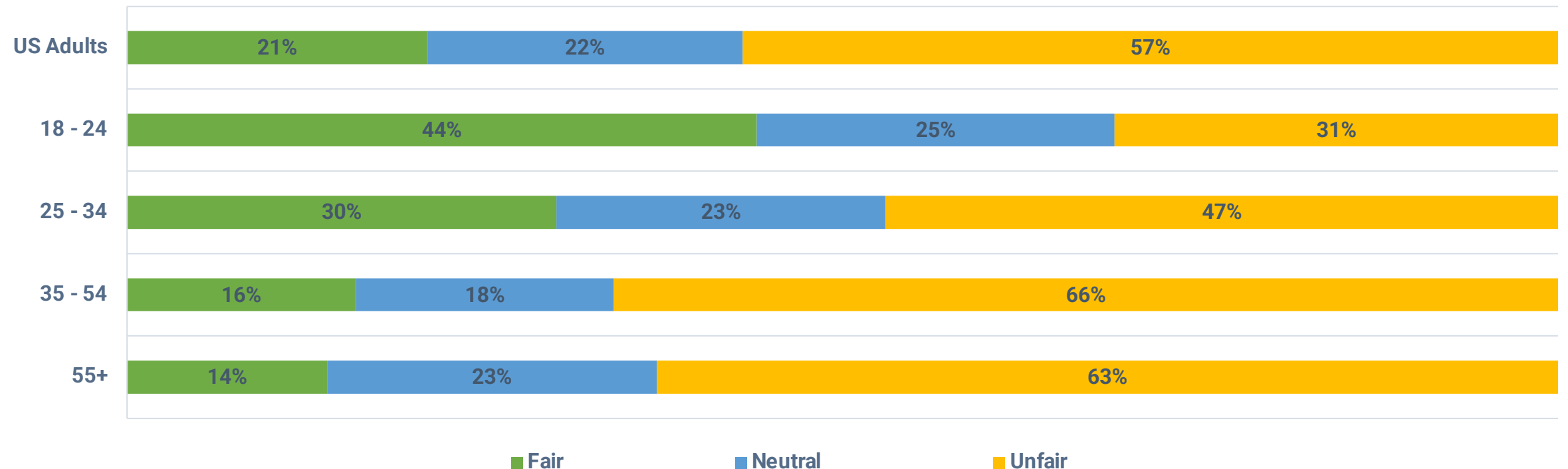
**Field:** 2,738 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±2%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Finally, the matter of whether it's fair for transgender athletes to compete in gendered sports continues to prove controversial.



In general, U.S. adults consider it unfair to allow transgender athletes to compete in gendered sports. However, opinions differ widely based on age, with younger adults far more supportive of transgender inclusion than older adults.

## Opinion of "fairness" regarding transgender athletes competing in gendered sporting events



**Question:** Do you think it is fair or unfair for transgender athletes to compete in gendered sporting events?

**Field:** 2,806 responses from 10/21/2022 to 10/26/2022 (±2%) **Base:** Weighted by US adults

# Background & Methodology



## Background

This report is intended to track and identify trends surrounding the state of sports fandom in the US. Specifically, you'll see featured here a look into the impact of inflation on live sports attendance and a deep dive into some of the psychographic factors that drive interest in women's sports.



## Methodology

CivicScience leveraged its standard collection methodology (explained in more detail on [the following slide](#)) to capture thousands of responses across dozens of questions--some of which have been collecting for months or years, and others which have only been asked one time for this report.

Because of our proprietary collection methodology, every question and cross-tab has a unique number of responses and date ranges, which are mentioned at the bottom of each slide where response data is shown. Appropriate weighting schemes are also applied to ensure a balanced and representative sample according to US Census figures (age / gender).



# The CivicScience Intelligent Polling Platform and Methodology

We've pioneered a new method of "always-on" quantitative online research that can capture representative samples all day, every day.



## OUR DATA SOURCING

We source our data through partnerships with hundreds of online and mobile content publishers. For them, the integration of our polls and quizzes improves on-site engagement time and provides audience detail unavailable elsewhere. We aggregate all the response data into our centralized platform.



## OUR COLLECTION PROCESS

Our quizzes and polls are non-intrusively embedded in a website's content experience and serve a short set of diverse questions designed to keep respondents engaged. If they choose, respondents can continue to answer a seemingly endless series of fun quizzes and engagement questions as well as custom and syndicated research questions.



## OUR RESPONDENTS

Our data is reliable and organic because our polls are 100% voluntary and respondents are kept anonymous, even to us. They enjoy voicing their opinions and seeing aggregate results presented back to them. Because we collect large response volumes on a national scale, we can deliver representative samples that can be segmented and analyzed in many ways.



## OUR ANALYTICS

As respondents answer our questions, we store all their answers over time in an anonymous profile. We then use proprietary advanced technology to analyze the data in aggregate and in near real time, cross-tabulating questions to find statistically meaningful correlations for clients to navigate.