

THE CULTURE OF

SPORTS FANDOM

By Victoria Greco



WHAT IS FANDOM?



An emotional connection, a shared identity, and can be a lifelong tradition. Can be passed down by family, regional/national pride, or online influence.



PSYCHOLOGY OF FANDOM



EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

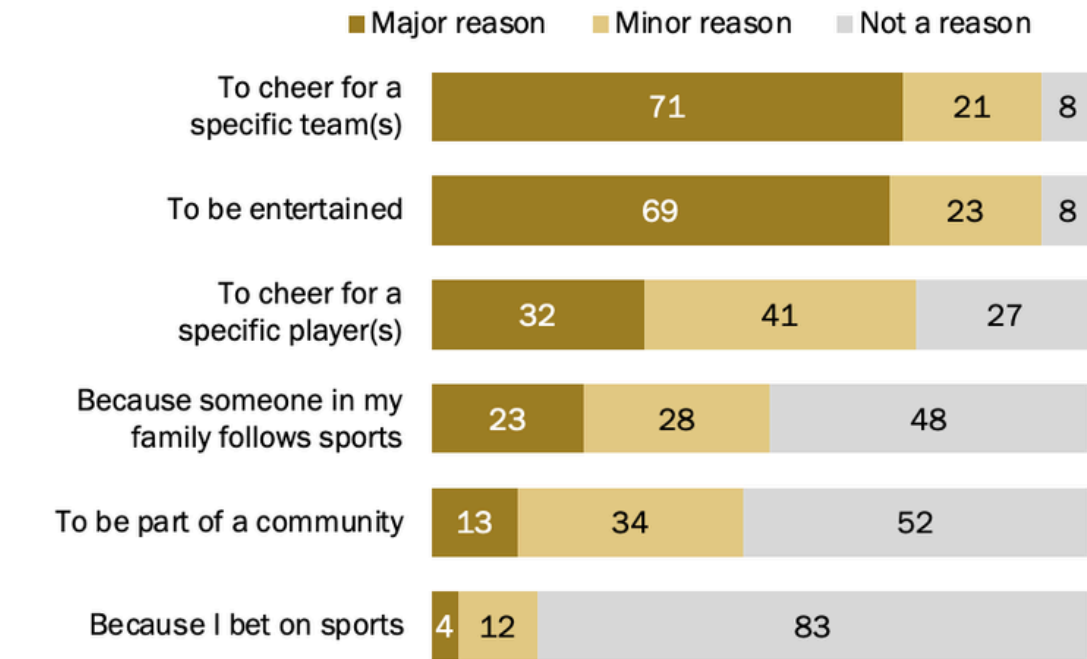
Why do people get emotionally invested in teams?

SOCIAL BELONGING

Psychological effects: Dopamine release, Social belonging

Majorities of Americans who closely follow sports do so to cheer for specific teams or to be entertained

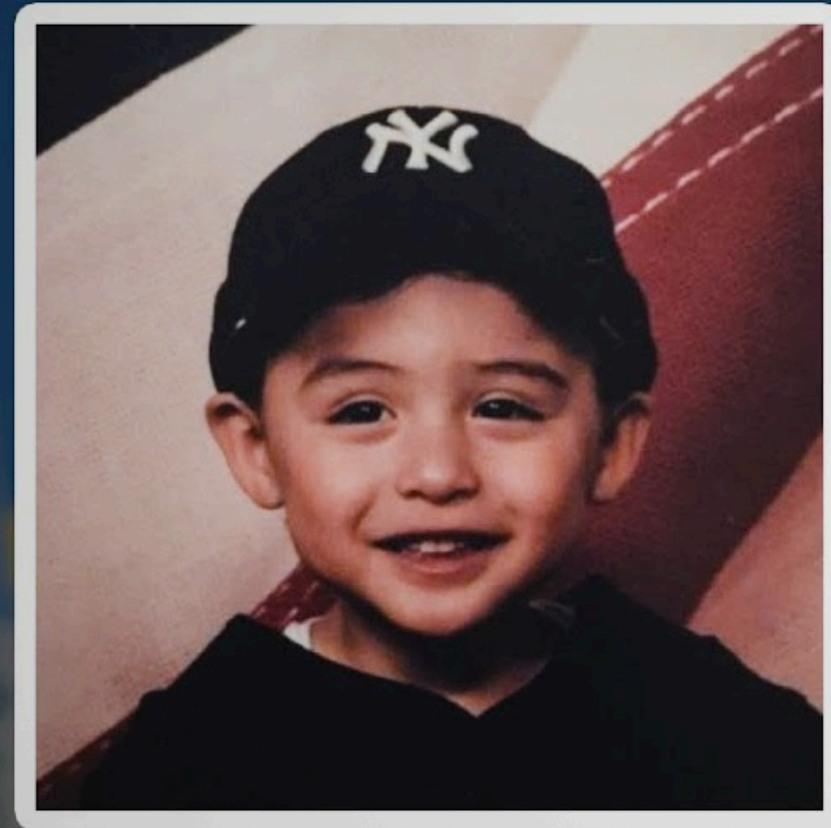
Among those who say they follow sports at least somewhat closely, % who say each of the following is a ___ why



Note: No answer responses not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 7-27, 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

THE ROLE OF TRADITION & RITUALS



SUPERSTITION

(lucky jerseys and items, game-day rituals)

FAMILY TRADITION

Family traditions in sports fandom

NATIONAL & REGIONAL IDENTITY


(e.g., Cubs fans in Chicago vs. Yankees fans in New York)




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SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT


- Rise of online sports communities (Instagram, team forums)
- Athlete-fan interaction (positive & negative effects)
- Memes, hot takes, and the 24/7 news cycle



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STADIUM ATMOSPHERE

HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

- The power of home-field advantage

CROWD TRADITIONS

- Fan chants, “The Wave,” etc

STADIUM DESIGN

- The impact of stadium design on fan experience

MERCHANDISE ECONOMY



- Jersey sales, collectibles, and memorabilia



- Sponsorships
- Commercialization of fandom



- How sports teams create loyalty through branding

BANDWAGON FANS VS. DIE-HARD FANS

TRUE FANS

- What *actually* defines a true fan?

THE DEBATE ON BANDWAGON FANS

- Surges in fandom
- (Cubs 2016 World Series Win)
- Do these fans count?





TOXIC FANDOM & FAN BEHAVIOR

- When passion turns to aggression (physical violence, online harassment)
- Athlete mental health & fan expectations
- Examples of Athletes affected by toxic fans: Kyrie Irving & Mookie Betts

THE FUTURE OF SPORTS FANDOM

- Virtual reality, immersive fan experiences
- The rise of eSports and new generations of fans
- Changing demographics & diversity in fandom



CONCLUSION

- Sports fandom = Emotion, connection, and community.
 - Traditions, social media debates, stadium experience, new and old fanbases.
- Sports fandom = Still evolving.
- Sports fandom = Powerful
 - Sports bring people together in ways that few things can

SOURCES

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[HTTPS://SPORTS.YAHOO.COM](https://sports.yahoo.com)

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