



BLACK STAR | FOR SOCCER.

INSIGHTS INTO THE BLACK SOCCER COMMUNITY



INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2021 by For Soccer, Black Star is a player and fan engagement brand facilitating the growth of soccer in Black communities through content and storytelling, on-field experiences, curated fan events, and culturally inspired merchandise offerings.

Our mission is simple: elevate soccer's status in Black culture.

At the end of 2023, we surveyed the Black Star audience ages 16+ to better understand how the Black soccer community views their relationship with soccer, as well as a brief look into their interests beyond the sport. Those who completed the survey share the following characteristics:

- 27% of the audience is age 20 or below, while nearly two-thirds are 30+
- Gender is fairly balanced—51% are Female and 48% identify as Male
- 77% have kids 14 or younger in their household
- More than half have a household income of \$100,000 or greater

The following report **introduces a sampling of insights For Soccer has about Black Star participants and serves as a focus group for the larger Black soccer community.** In certain instances within this report, this audience is compared to all soccer fans via results from For Soccer's 2023-24 United States of Soccer report.



BACKGROUND

From their favorite leagues to the time spent watching soccer each week, the Black Star community frequently has soccer on their mind. But the sport isn't the only thing they enjoy. Our report covers a variety of soccer and non-soccer topics. But before you dive in, here's a starting lineup of key insights:

- Almost all believe soccer's popularity has grown in the Black community, but opportunities to participate haven't kept pace
- Family is a major driving force of fandom, whether it begins at birth or it begins later in life through family involvement
- The Premier League and UEFA Champions League are favorites, but domestic leagues are just behind
- Want to engage with this audience on social? Turn to YouTube and TikTok where they over-index most relative to all soccer fans
- Drake, J. Cole, Beyonce, and Tupac are just a few of the artists that make up the soundtrack of their daily lives

SOCCER FANDOM

WHILE SOCCER'S POPULARITY HAS GROWN, OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE HAVEN'T KEPT PACE

Nearly all Black soccer fans believe the sport's popularity has skyrocketed. In fact, nearly half believe there's even been "tremendous" growth.

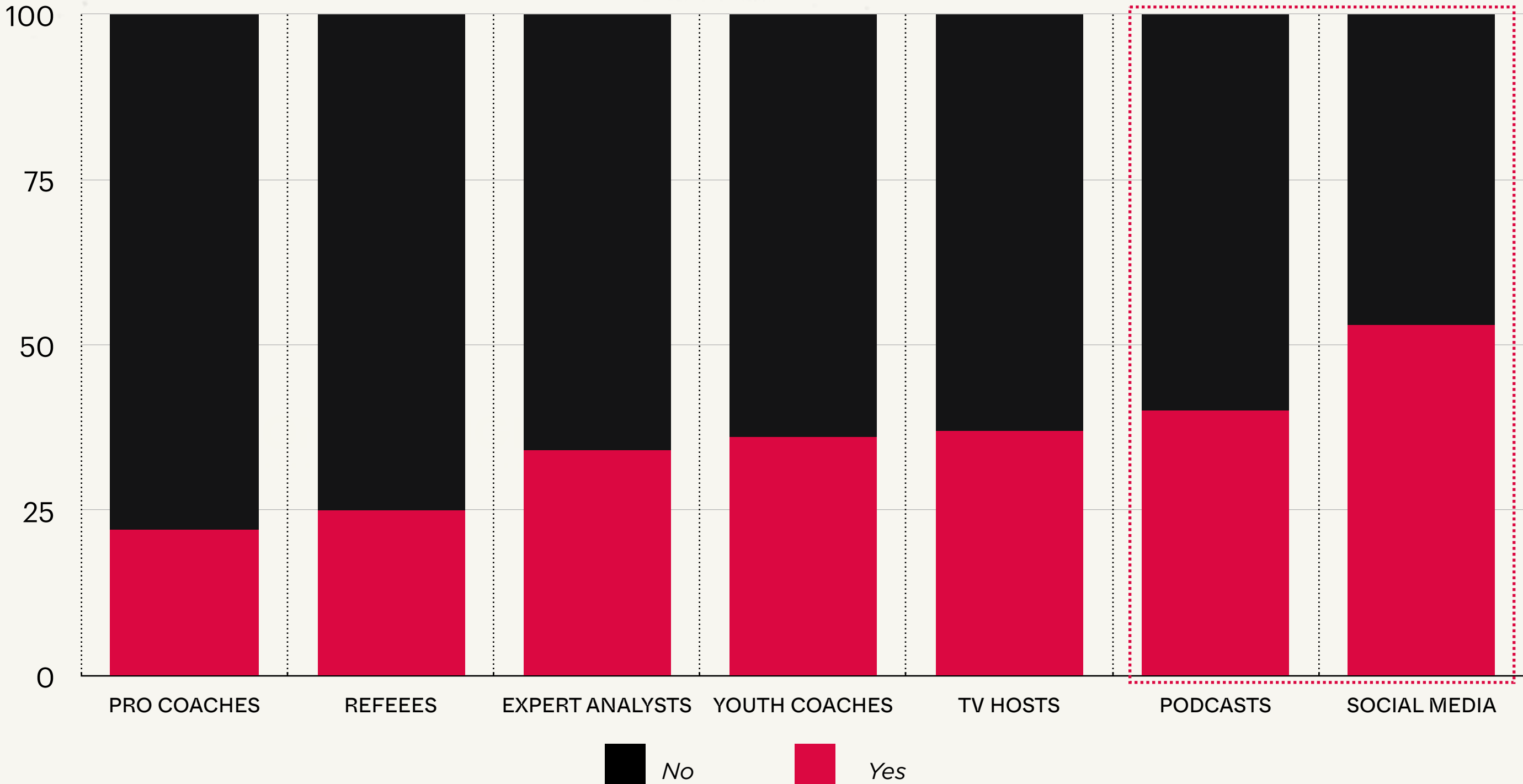
As more and more Black players take center stage around the world, fans feel the pulse of the sport more than ever before. This representation is important — 65% of the Black Star community feel more connected to the sport specifically because of the on-field successes of Black players.

But there's a catch. Despite this surge in popularity, not everyone feels they're getting a fair shake. While Black players are shining brighter than ever before, nearly a third of our Black Star audience feels the opportunities available in their community haven't quite kept pace with soccer's rise.

Fewer than 50% think there's only been a slight increase in opportunities to participate.

ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION

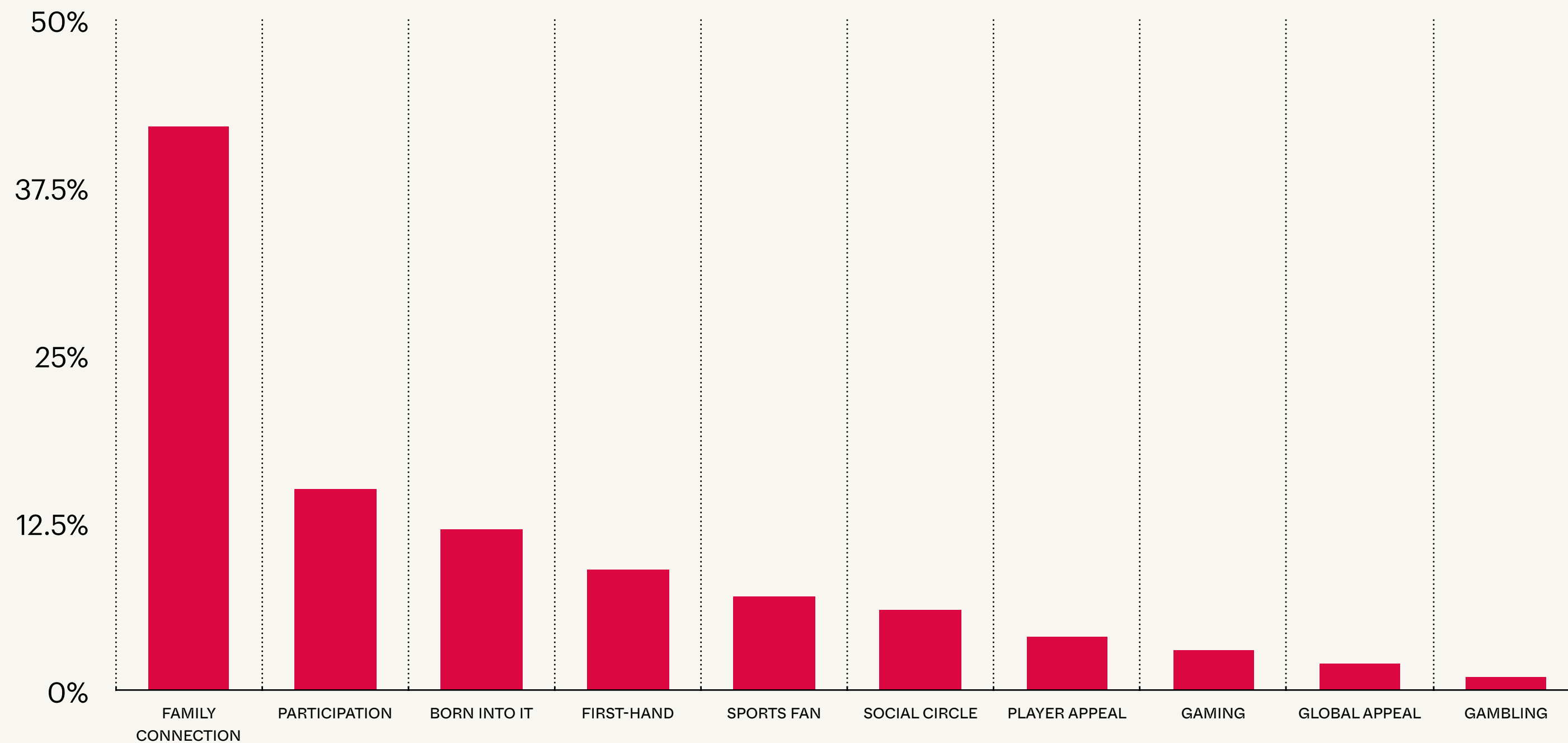
What does the Black Star community think about representation in other areas related to soccer? We asked if they feel there's adequate representation in the following, from voices on social to professional coaches:



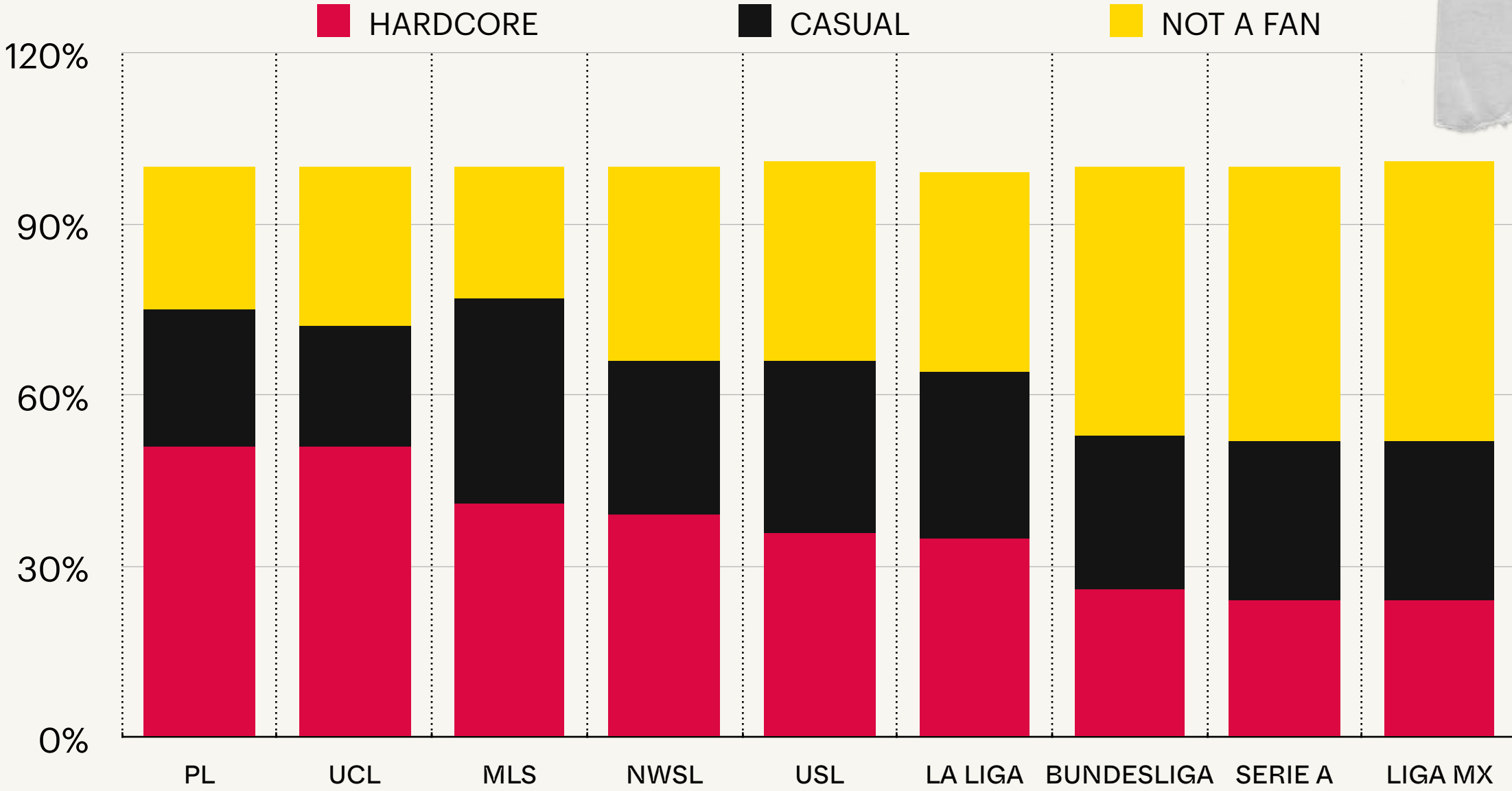
FAMILY IS A DRIVING FORCE FOR INITIAL FANDOM

The origin stories of soccer fandom within this audience are as diverse as the sport itself. To better understand the hows and whys, we asked them to shed light on how their fandom began.

More than half indicated family ties are the root of their interest. Whether it was kicking a ball around with a sibling, bonding over World Cup games with parents, or cheering on a cousin from the sideline, family connections or even being born directly into fandom are most impactful.



THE PREMIER LEAGUE AND UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ARE TOPS, BUT DON'T SLEEP ON DOMESTIC LEAGUES



LEAGUE LEVEL FANDOM



Early morning weekend viewing and mid-week, mid-day games don't phase this audience because the Premier League and UEFA Champions League are the leagues they love most. With big stars and well-known teams, why wouldn't they?

But don't discount the impact of the domestic leagues because MLS, NWSL, and USL are right behind the European pair. In fact, if you combine hardcore and casual interest, MLS is the league they're interested in most.

And it makes sense. As of the end of the 2022 season, 25% of MLS players were Black—up 120% from 2014. The top men's domestic league growing in Black representation is helping grow fandom of the league here at home within the Black community.

THEIR FAVORITE TEAMS HAVE WON A LOT OF EUROPEAN TROPHIES

We asked them to tell us the professional club team(s) they're most crazy about and received over 90 different teams among the entries.

The 10 most-followed clubs are a who's who of the most well-known teams from across the globe and are the heartbeat at the center of this community's soccer universe. These clubs have nearly 200 domestic league titles and 44 UEFA Champions League trophies between them.

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BLACK PLAYERS HEAVILY FEATURED AMONG THEIR LIST OF FAVORITES

In total, nearly 70 different men's players and 50 different women's players were submitted when we asked about their favorite players.

While players like Lionel Messi and Alex Morgan were submitted most, what's more interesting to note is the number of Black players featured among their list of favorites.

As we mentioned previously, the number of Black players shining on the domestic and global stages has grown significantly in recent years and representation is extremely important to this audience.

ACTIVE MEN'S PLAYERS THEY LOVE

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Lionel Messi | 6 | Christian Pulisic |
| 2 | Cristiano Ronaldo | 7 | Erling Haaland |
| 3 | Kylian Mbappe | 8 | Kevin De Bruyne |
| 4 | Neymar Jr. | 9 | Weston McKennie |
| 5 | Bukayo Saka | 10 | Jude Bellingham |

ACTIVE WOMEN'S PLAYERS THEY LOVE

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Alex Morgan | 6 | Sophia Smith |
| 2 | Trinity Rodman | 7 | Alisha Lehmann |
| 3 | Crystal Dunn | 8 | Midge Purce |
| 4 | Alexia Putellas | 9 | Rose Lavelle |
| 5 | Marta | 10 | Sam Kerr |

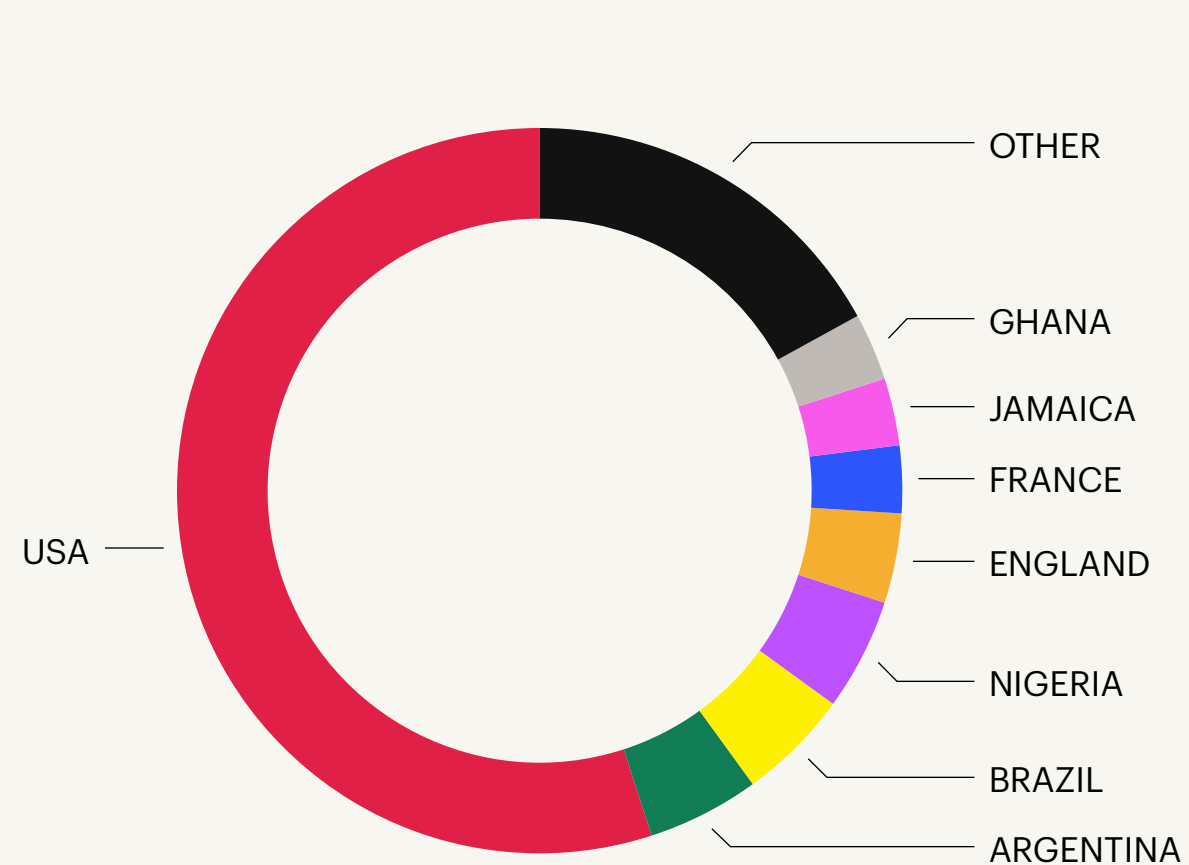


* Former U.S. Men's National Team player and the only American man to represent his country in four FIFA Men's World Cups, DaMarcus Beasley, poses with a Black Star participant at an event with the English Football Association and Emirates FA Cup.

WHILE MOST SUPPORT THE U.S. TEAM, DEFINING NATIONAL TEAM ALLEGIANCE IS AS COMPLEX AS FANDOM ITSELF

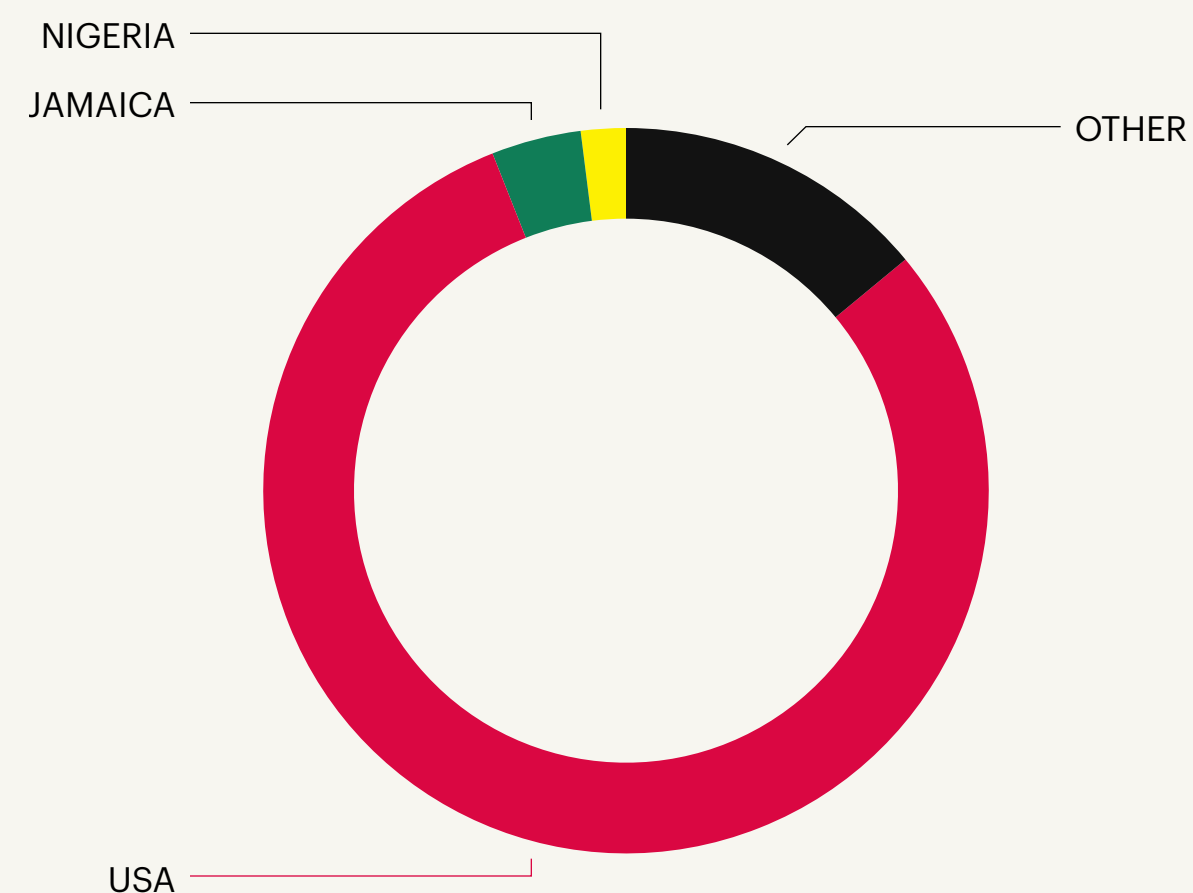
MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

While the Stars and Stripes shine brightest for over half the audience, they spread their support far and wide. From South America to the Caribbean and Africa to Europe, the teams they root for reflect the diversity of the game—with many countries led by their favorite Black players.



WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

The story on the women's side differs, where more than three-quarters told us the U.S. is their squad at the international level. And who can blame them? With young players like Sophia Smith, Trinity Rodman, and Naomi Girma alongside veterans like Crystal Dunn, the U.S. team is an inspiration for many.

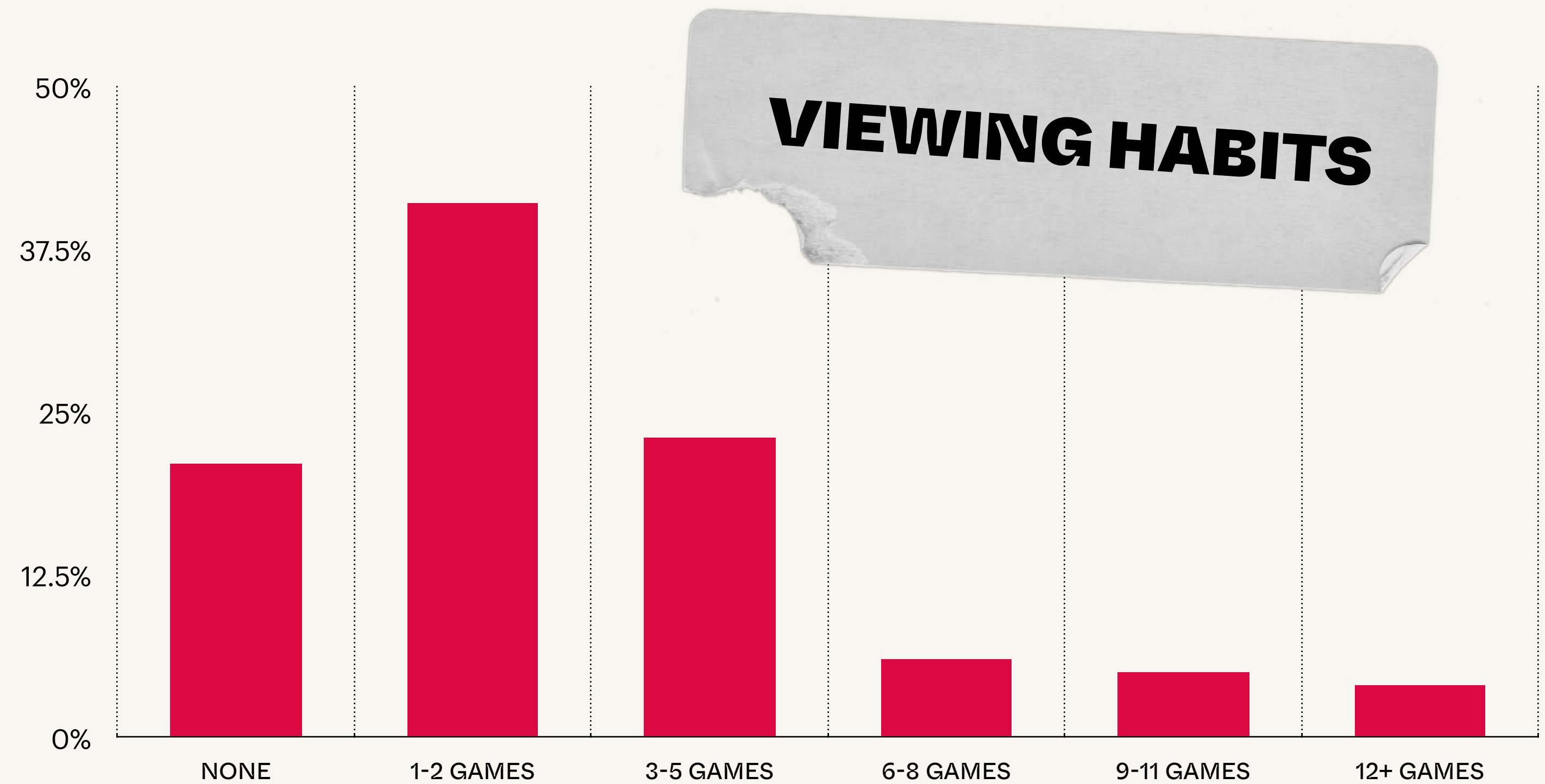


Current U.S. Men's National Team player, Tyler Adams, chats with Black Star participants at a youth clinic during a mini pitch unveiling in Detroit.



4-OF-5 WATCH AT LEAST ONE SOCCER GAME A WEEK

How often are they glued to their screens for some heart-pounding action? Whether it's their favorite team, a team they dislike, or a random matchup, a whopping 79% catch at least one game per week, with 38% tuning into at least three games weekly.



SOCCER INTEREST IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SPECIFIC STREAMING SUBSCRIPTIONS

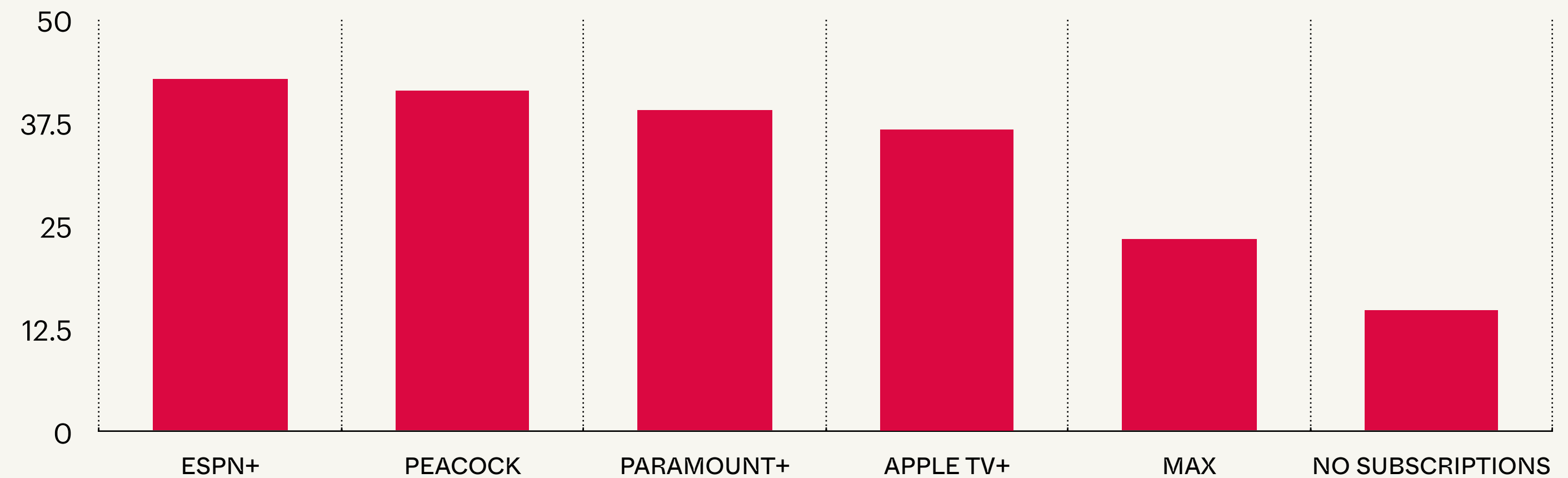
We jumped into their soccer streaming habits and, unsurprisingly, it's like a match made in streaming heaven—the platforms they subscribe to most mirror their favorite leagues.

Peacock? Premier League. Paramount+? Champions League and Serie A. Apple TV+? MLS. ESPN+? USL, La Liga, Bundesliga.

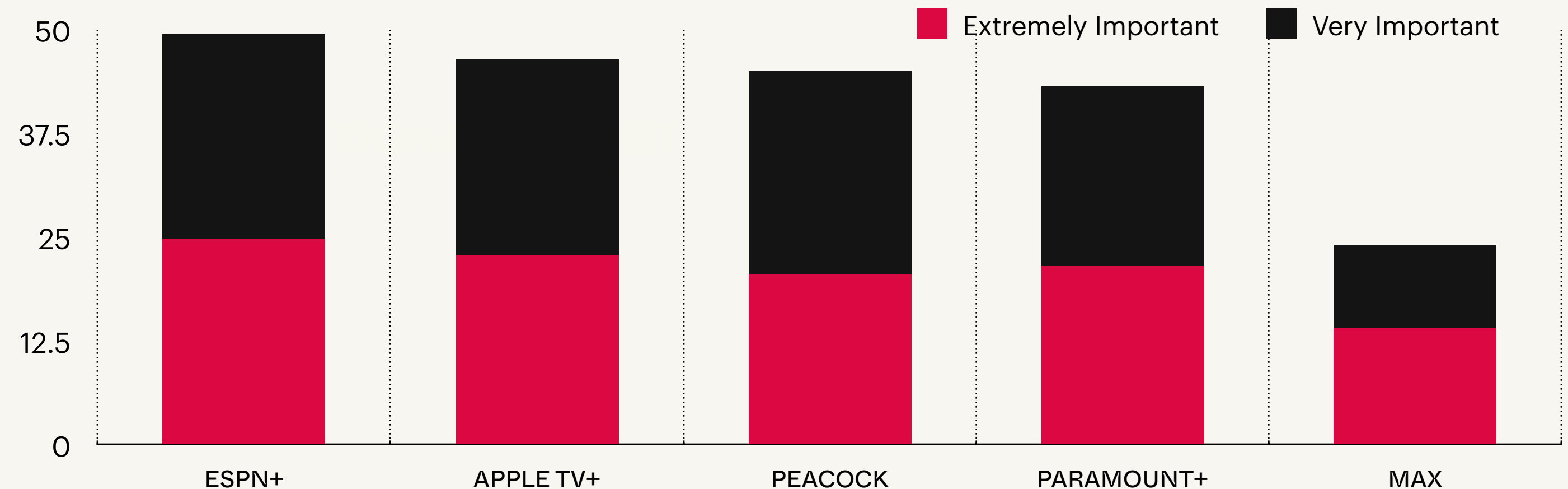
43% subscribe to ESPN+, followed by 41% and 39% for Peacock and Paramount+, respectively. Rounding out the leading foursome is Apple TV+, which 37% subscribe to for entertainment.

As it turns out, soccer is a streaming game-changer. Over 40% declared soccer as at least a “very important” factor in their subscription to the leading quartet of platforms.

STREAMING SERVICE SUBSCRIPTIONS



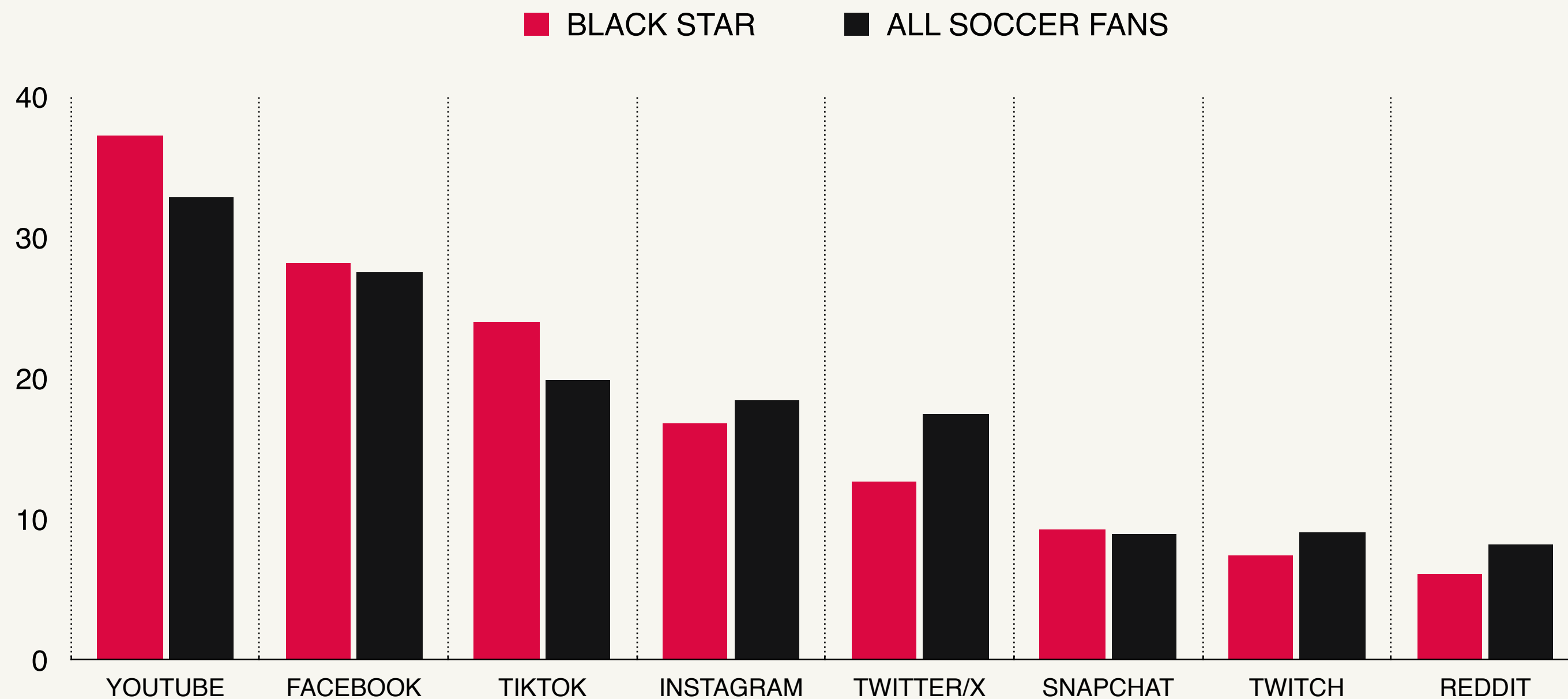
SOCCER'S IMPACT ON SUBSCRIPTIONS



THEY OVER-INDEX MOST IN TURNING TO YOUTUBE AND TIKTOK FOR SOCCER CONTENT

Nearly two-thirds use social media for the latest and greatest soccer scoop, and get this—half of their social media timelines are dedicated to soccer-specific content.

But where are they going for all this insight? YouTube is the most visited, with Facebook and TikTok trailing. These three platforms are the only ones where the Black Star audience over-indexes relative to all soccer fans.



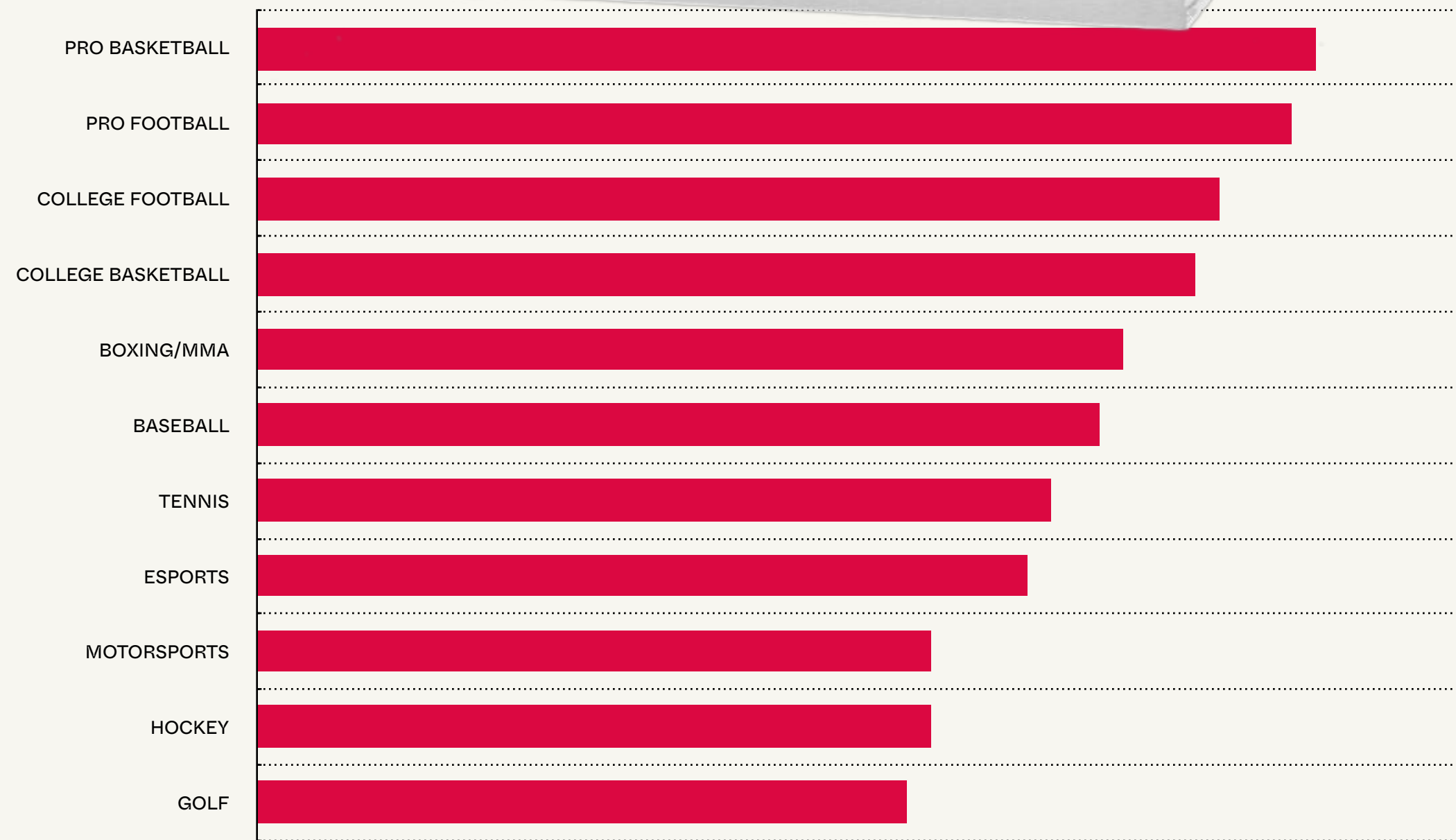
NON-SOCCER INTERESTS



OUTSIDE OF SOCCER, BASKETBALL AND AMERICAN FOOTBALL ARE LOVED MOST

While soccer holds a special place in their hearts, the Black fans aren't a one-sport wonder. They have a roster full of athletic passions, with basketball and American football leading the way. Professional leagues matter most, but don't discount their interest in the collegiate competitions.

OTHER SPORTING INTERESTS



SPORTS PREFERENCES VS. ALL FANS



BLACK SOCCER FANS

ALL SOCCER FANS

HIP-HOP, R&B, AND POP ARE THE SOUNDTRACK OF THEIR DAILY LIVES

Whether they're kicking it on the field, crunching numbers in the classroom, or grinding away at the office, this audience has music playing. It's not just background noise—it's a soundtrack to their life. A diverse lineup of genres accompany them throughout the day and their 10 favorite artists have racked up over 470 million plays on Spotify.

GENRES

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1 Hip-hop | 6 Jazz |
| 2 R&B | 7 Rock |
| 3 Reggae | 8 Funk |
| 4 Pop | 9 Blues |
| 5 Soul | 10 Reggaeton |

ARTISTS

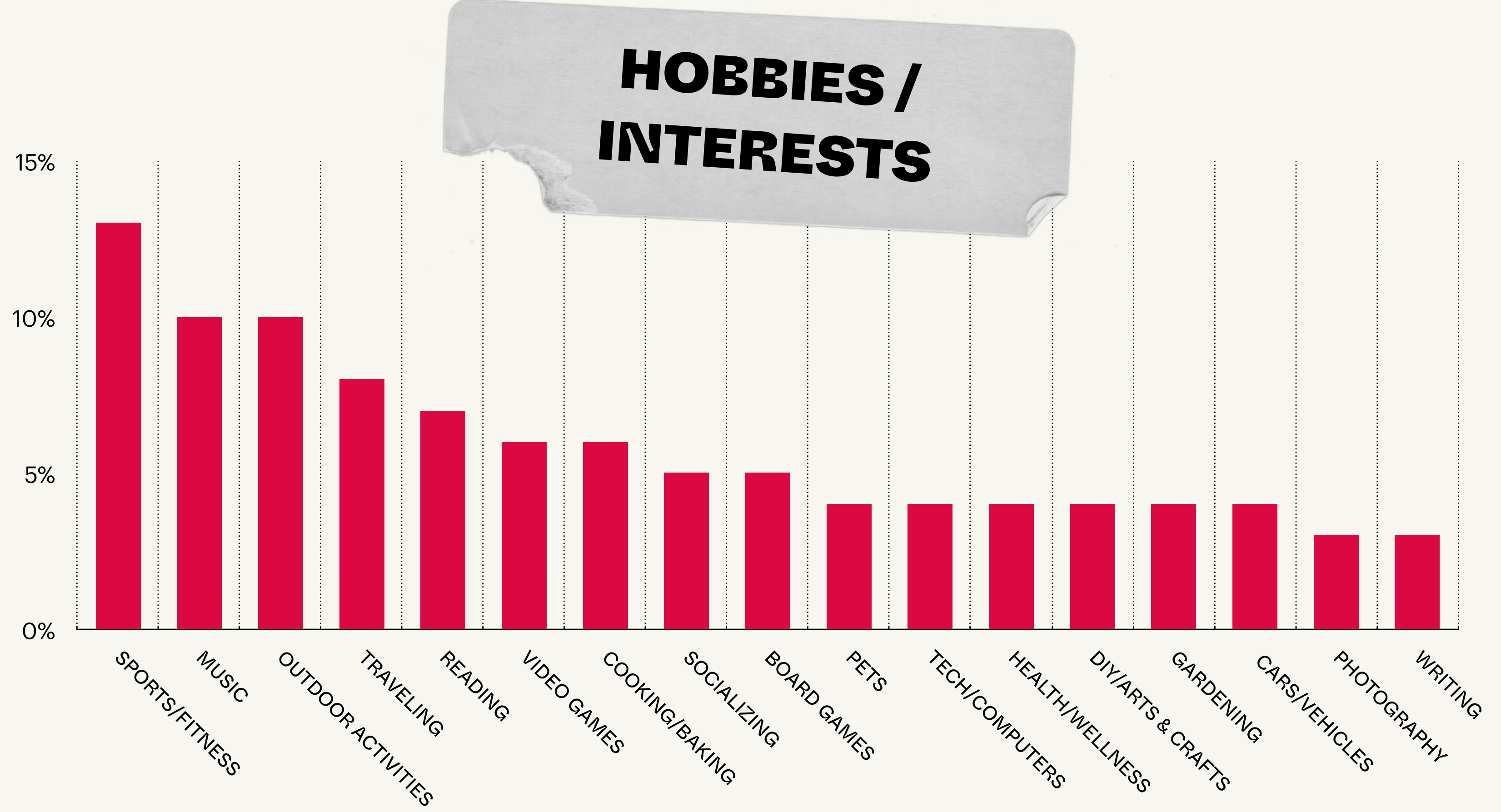
- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 Drake | 6 Bruno Mars |
| 2 J. Cole | 7 Prince |
| 3 Beyonce | 8 Jay-Z |
| 4 Tupac | 9 Lil Baby |
| 5 Bad Bunny | 10 Michael Jackson |



Former U.S. Men's National Team player, Cobi Jones, poses with a Black Star participant at a special-edition clinic with the LA Galaxy held on Juneteenth.

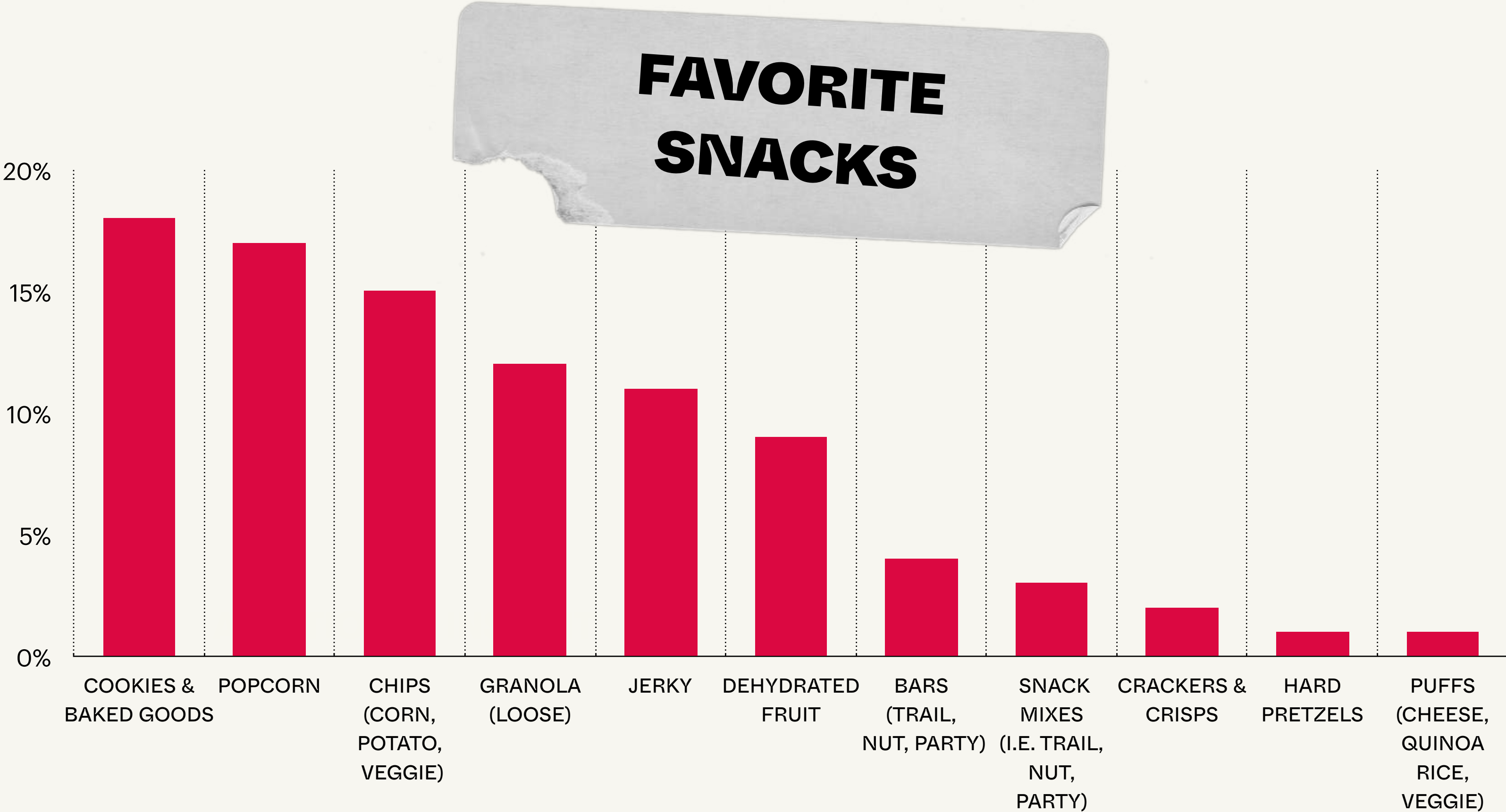
SPORTS / FITNESS, MUSIC, AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES ARE THE HOBBIES THEY'RE INTERESTED IN MOST

From breaking a sweat to baking up a storm, and tinkering with tech to capturing memories on camera, they have a number of hobbies to dive into during moments of downtime. Physical activities lead the way, followed by listening to music and enjoying outdoor activities.



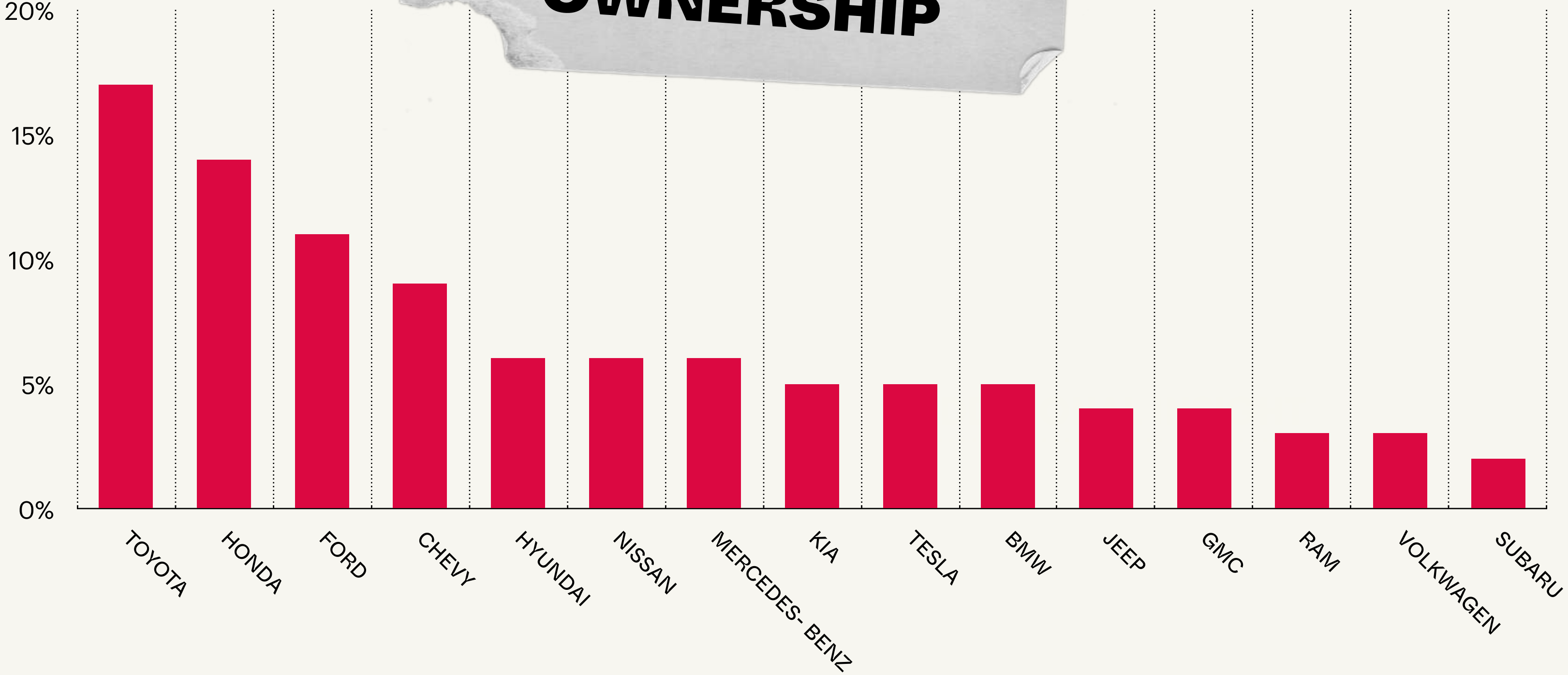
COOKIES, BAKED GOODS, POPCORN, AND CHIPS ARE THE SNACKS THEY CRAVE MOST

When your stomach rumbles, what snacks send your taste buds into a frenzy? We asked this question and, as it turns out, when the snack attack strikes, cookies and baked goods, followed by popcorn and chips are the snacks they crave most.



TOYOTA, HONDA, FORD, AND CHEVY ARE THE MOST-OWNED VEHICLES

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP



From the practice fields to the grocery store and school to the office, they spend a lot of time on the road. Nearly 90% own or lease their own set of wheels, but which brands are driven most? Toyota and Honda lead the way, with Ford and Chevy a few car lengths behind. But the foursome have separated themselves from the rest of the pack.

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