

# UNITED STATES OF SOCCER 2023 2024

INSIGHTS INTO SOCCER FANDOM IN THE U.S.



REPORT BY

*FOR SOCCER.*

# AMERICA'S LOVE AFFAIR CONTINUES

We began releasing insights into American soccer fandom more than a decade ago and in that time, there's been unprecedented change. Even since we released last year's report, we've witnessed countless milestones that have us more confident than ever in soccer's growth trajectory.

NWSL has set records in attendance, social media growth, merchandise sales, and sponsorship revenues. MLS and Apple surpassed 2 million global subscribers for MLS Season Pass. Viewership of the Premier League reached an all-time high. And the influence of American investors in some of the world's biggest clubs continues.

Those are just a few instances of soccer's remarkable growth as we continue our march toward the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup in North America—an event that will catapult the sport to new heights well beyond the final whistle.



# *DIVE INTO THE AMERICAN SOCCER AUDIENCE*

As the industry continues its ascension and soccer further strengthens its positioning in pop culture, it's important for stakeholders to keep their finger on the pulse of the ever-evolving American soccer fan.

Our research dives into this audience, shedding light on its demographics, characteristics, consumption habits, and factors that most shape fandom. You'll gain a more complete understanding of what soccer fandom looks like today, with insight into what the future may hold.

This annual report aims to educate brand marketers and industry professionals as our insights help shape activation decisions authentic to both the sport and their brand.

## **NEW IN THIS YEAR'S FANDOM REPORT:**

Fandom evolves and so do we. As you read through our report, keep an eye on new takes on previous insights, as well as several new areas of exploration, including:

- A review of how soccer's newest fans are finding the sport
- Differences in avid and casual fan league and competition preferences
- How age is a factor in understanding the club teams fans prefer
- A dive into how fans arrive at team fandom using specific clubs as examples
- The impact of soccer on streaming platform subscriptions
- And many more throughout the report

**SO, LACE UP YOUR CLEATS, POP IN YOUR SHIN GUARDS,  
AND LET'S TACKLE AMERICAN SOCCER FANDOM.**

# METHODOLOGY

The United States of Soccer was compiled based on findings from primary research conducted by For Soccer in Q4 2023. To reach the insights, our research team analyzed the findings of our bilingual quantitative survey of 2,040 soccer fans of varying levels ages 16 and older from 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C.

Potential respondents were served a pre-survey screening question to assess their soccer fandom level. Those indicating a fandom level of four (4) or higher on a 7-point scale were admitted into the survey.

To provide the most representative sample of overall soccer population, quotas were applied to age, gender, and ethnicity. Specific quotas were used based on a considered review of multiple credible secondary research sources including Nielsen, Scarborough, and MRI Simmons.

# GLOSSARY

You'll find the terms below referenced throughout the report.

TERM	DEFINITION
GEN Z	Term referring to respondents age 16-26 at time of survey.
MILLENNIALS	Term referring to respondents age 27-42 at time of survey.
GEN X	Term referring to respondents age 43-58 at time of survey.
BOOMERS	Term referring to respondents age 59+ at time of survey.
NEW ARRIVALS	Term referring to respondents who indicated having been soccer fans for 5 or fewer years.
ESTABLISHED FANS	Term referring to respondents who indicated having been soccer fans for 6 or more years.
HARDCORE FANS	Term referring to respondents who selected 6 or 7 when asked to self-identify their soccer fandom in a pre-survey screening.
CASUAL FANS	Term referring to respondents who selected 4 or 5 when asked to self-identify their soccer fandom in pre-survey screening.
AMERICANS	Any usage of this term is in reference to fans in the United States and not the wider North and South American audience.

# ***BEFORE WE KICK OFF***

This report explores a diverse range of topics, including American fan demographics, who and what interests them, what factors are driving fandom, and which digital and real-life influences shape modern soccer communities. Before you take the field, use these initial insights as your pre-game warmup.

- **THE NUMBER OF SOCCER FANS IS GROWING RAPIDLY**

Roughly a third of people told us they've been fans for more than 15 years, while a third have been fans for five or fewer years. The latter group, which we've dubbed New Arrival fans, has grown by 57% year-over-year and those who became fans in the past year is up 400%.

- **SOCCER'S NEWEST FANS ARE MORE DIVERSE IN ETHNICITY AND GENDER**

This group who all became fans within the past five years is 10% less likely to be White and 25% more likely to be Black than all soccer fans. They are also 20% less likely to be Male and 37% more likely to be Female than all soccer fans.

- **NON-TRADITIONAL PATHS TO SOCCER FANDOM ARE ON THE RISE**

While many fans are still discovering the sport through participation and familial influence—historically the most-impactful fandom influences—many are finding their way to soccer via gaming, gambling, and general sports enthusiasm.

- **FANS ARE ATTRACTED TO TEAMS FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS**

We asked fans to tell us why they chose the team(s) they adore and the headline is there's no stand out, one-size-fits-all reason. This means there are a myriad of ways for teams to appeal to the American audience, from club culture to super stars to fashion.

- **HISPANIC INTEREST IN AMERICAN TEAMS DROPS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE**

The percentage of those who say the U.S. Men and Women are their primary teams are 32% and 21% less than that of all soccer fans, respectively. Of note, only 40% of Mexican-Americans claim the U.S. Men as their primary team—the lowest of any Hispanic group.

- **SOCCER CONTENT IS HELPING DRIVE STREAMING PLATFORM SUBSCRIPTIONS**

In several cases, more than 50% of fans who subscribe to a specific streaming platform told us that soccer is at least a "very important" factor in maintaining their subscription to platforms like ESPN+, Apple TV+, and Paramount+.

- **TIKTOK IS CLIMBING THE TABLE**

YouTube and Facebook remain the most-preferred platforms for soccer content among all fans, but the percent of those who selected TikTok as their top platform and among their top three platforms is up 31% and 24% year-over-year, respectively.

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CHAPTER 1

# TYPES OF SOCCER FANS

DEFINING FANDOM IS MORE CHALLENGING THAN  
EVER AS IT CONTINUES TO EVOLVE.

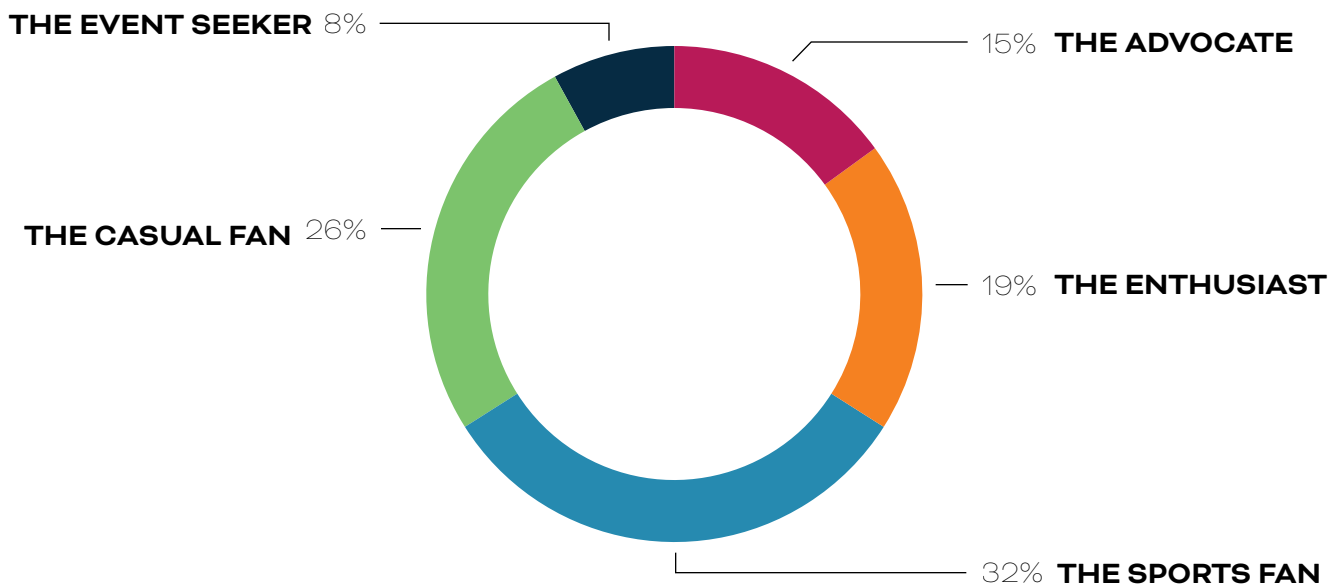
# GET TO KNOW THE TYPES OF FANS

More than 10 years ago we created fan personas based on empirical and anecdotal insights to better characterize soccer fans in America. What we originally created has since evolved to more accurately reflect the modern fan, as we try to explain our audience through a humanized understanding of fan segments.

From the most vocal and passionate of fans, to those who don their country's colors only when the sport is mainstream, we created this approach to better understand fan behaviors and more effectively tailor marketing strategies for the right audiences.

Below you'll find each of our five personas, the percentage of fans who identify as such, definitions of each, as well as a headline statement explaining where or how to reach each group.

THE ADVOCATE	THE ENTHUSIAST	THE SPORTS FAN	THE CASUAL FAN	THE EVENT SEEKER
Soccer is my obsession; it's deeply rooted in my DNA. I may like other sports, but I'm a vocal advocate for soccer and want to see it grow.	Soccer is my top sporting interest, but I'm not a vocal cheerleader for the growth of the game. I have a vested interest in my favorite team(s) and watch regularly.	I consider myself a sports fan and soccer is one of many interests. I follow the performance of my team(s), but may not be as die-hard a fan as other personas.	I enjoy soccer year-round, but it isn't an every-week experience for me. I may not be up-to-speed on all the latest news and I don't stress about results of games.	My interest in soccer is only tied to big occasions like the World Cup and other major competitions. When soccer is mainstream I want to be connected.





# LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH PERSONA

## THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate is a passionate soccer fan who views the sport as central to their identity. Unlike passive fans, they actively promote soccer's growth in the U.S., play the game, and pass their enthusiasm to others. Known for long-term loyalty, they engage with soccer content on social media and discuss political issues tied to the sport. Watching multiple games weekly and inspired by star players, their club choices reflect this.

**HOW TO REACH:** Engage Advocates with exclusive content on soccer's impact and support their grassroots efforts by partnering with local soccer events and clubs to celebrate their long-term commitment to the sport.

## THE ENTHUSIAST

The Enthusiast shows deep commitment to their favorite soccer teams, though they're less vocal in their fandom than The Advocate. Their loyalty is evident in regular viewership and close following of outcomes. Many Enthusiasts have cultural or familial ties to soccer, with a diverse fan base, including Hispanic and Black fans.

**HOW TO REACH:** Enhance Enthusiasts' team experience with content that celebrates their cultural connections and support local soccer communities through sponsorships and team events.

## THE SPORTS FAN

The Sports Fan has a broad interest in various sports, including soccer, but is less passionate than The Enthusiast or The Advocate. They appreciate sports performance and have diverse interests. Often Gen X and predominantly Male, their interest in soccer may come from a general love of sports or video games.

**HOW TO REACH:** Captivate Sports Fans with content that integrates soccer with other sports and create engaging experiences, like sports bar partnerships or multi-sport events that reflect their diverse interests.

## THE CASUAL FAN

The Casual Fan enjoys soccer as part of their entertainment mix, but isn't deeply immersed in the sport. They watch games occasionally, support local teams, and value community connections over intense fandom. Often older or non-players, they have a relaxed relationship with soccer.

**HOW TO REACH:** Appeal to Casual Fans with local-focused content and community events, such as local soccer games or fan meet-ups, fitting their occasional engagement with soccer.

## THE EVENT SEEKER

The Event Seeker is drawn to major soccer events like the Men's and Women's FIFA World Cups, with interest peaking during high-profile tournaments. They engage with soccer around big moments, favoring platforms like TikTok for short-term, energetic content. This segment has a higher percentage of women and a relatively new fan base.

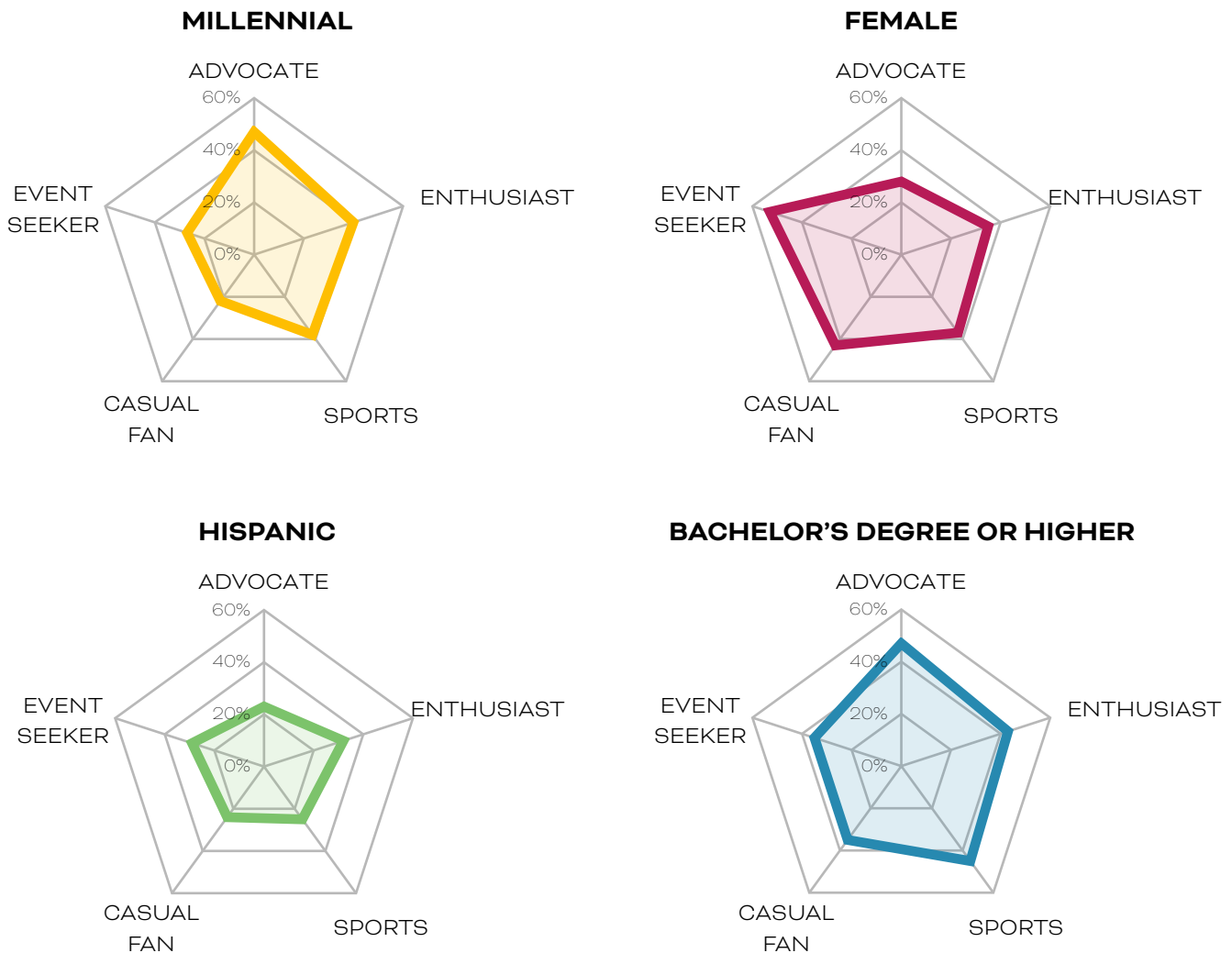
**HOW TO REACH:** Create vibrant, event-focused content for major tournaments and drive excitement with in-person event activations or watch parties that capture the thrill of key soccer moments.

# UNDERSTANDING COMPLEXITIES OF FAN TYPES

There are a million and one ways by which you can review and segment soccer fandom in America, which means one thing: understanding soccer fandom is extremely complex. The sheer number of global leagues and competitions available to American audiences alone (more than 80 already in 2024) is enough to intimidate some.

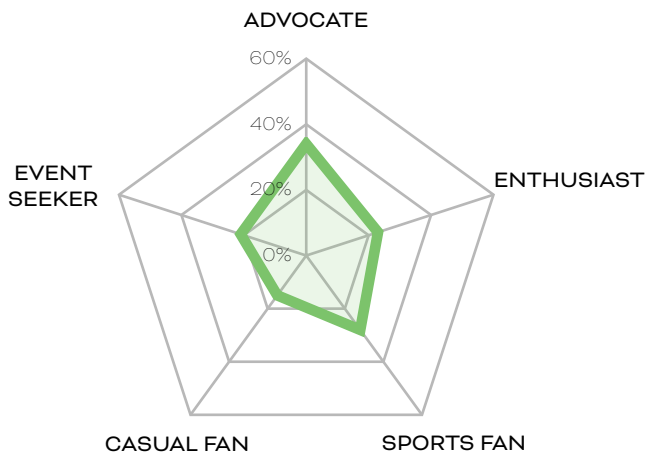
To illustrate this idea, below are a number of demographic and psychographic criteria visualized through the lens of our five personas and those who identify as such. The point is this: American fans are not a homogenous group. Each persona and segment of fans has their own unique view of the sport developed through the societal and environmental complexities that make American fans different from others around the globe.

American fandom isn't so straightforward—keep this in mind as you continue.

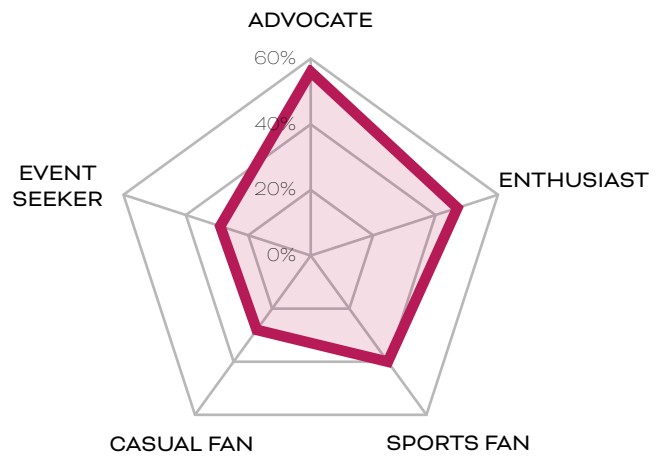


CHAPTER 2: INFLUENCES ON FANDOM

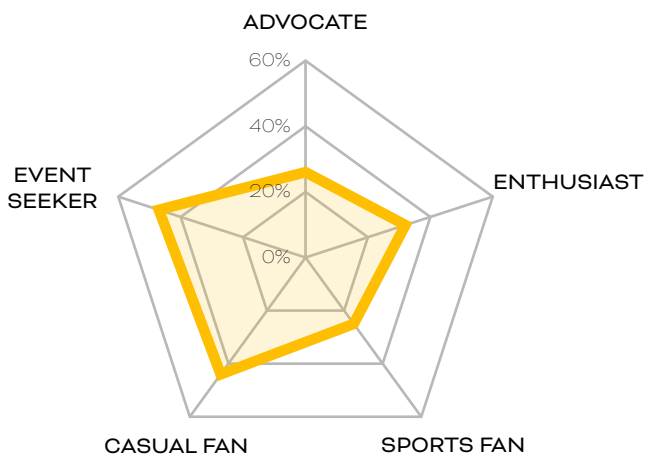
**≥\$100K HOUSEHOLD INCOME**



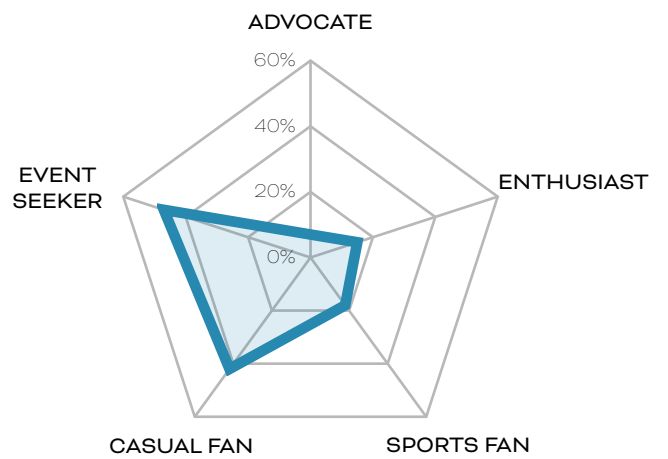
**CHILDREN ≤14 IN HOUSEHOLD**



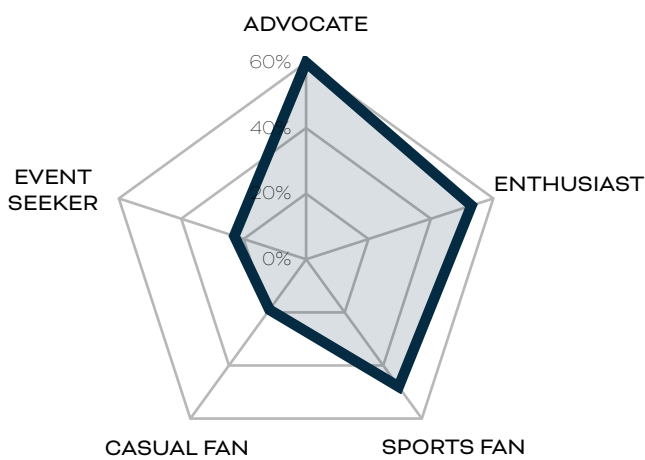
**FAN FOR ≤5 YEARS**



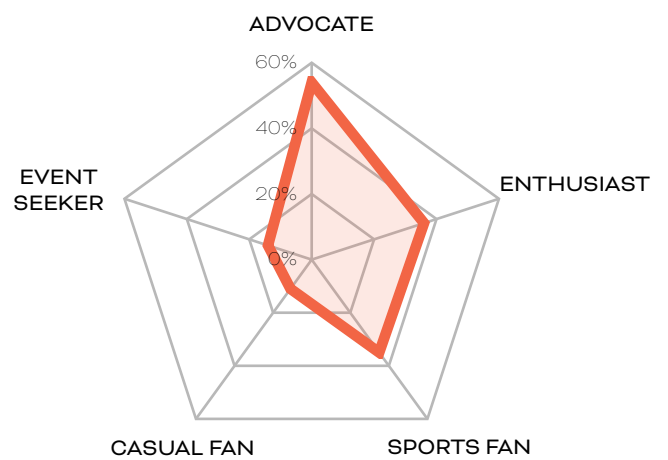
**HAVE NEVER PLAYED SOCCER**



**WATCH 3+ GAMES PER WEEK**



**GAMBLED ON SOCCER IN PAST 12 MONTHS**





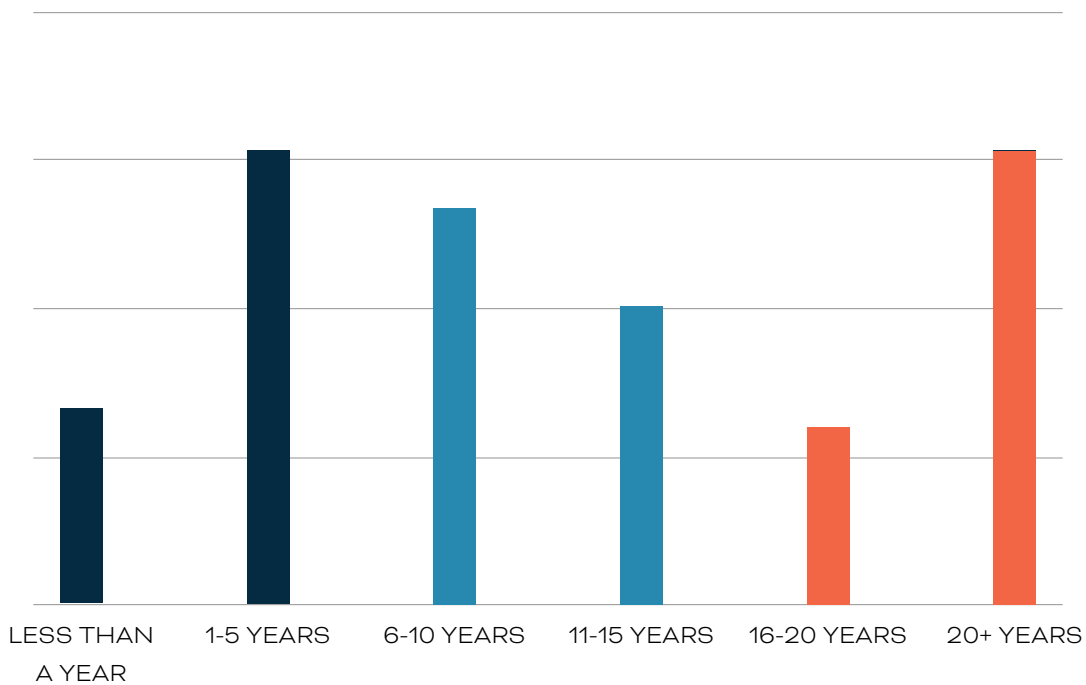
CHAPTER 2

# *INFLUENCES ON FANDOM*

FANS FIND SOCCER IN MANY WAYS WITH A  
NUMBER OF FACTORS DRIVING THEIR PASSION.

# NEW FANS ARE FLOCKING TO SOCCER

Let's kick off this section on factors influencing fandom by exploring longevity. How long have people been soccer fans? The simple answer is it varies widely—and that's a positive sign.



There's a striking balance between long-term fans (blue) and newcomers (yellow): 32% have been fans for over 15 years, while 33% have been fans for five years or fewer. The latter group, which we've dubbed New Arrivals, has grown by 57% since last year's report.

Before we dive into how this new wave of fans is entering the soccer ecosystem, let's get more acquainted with the New Arrivals and their counterparts, the Established Fans.

## ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

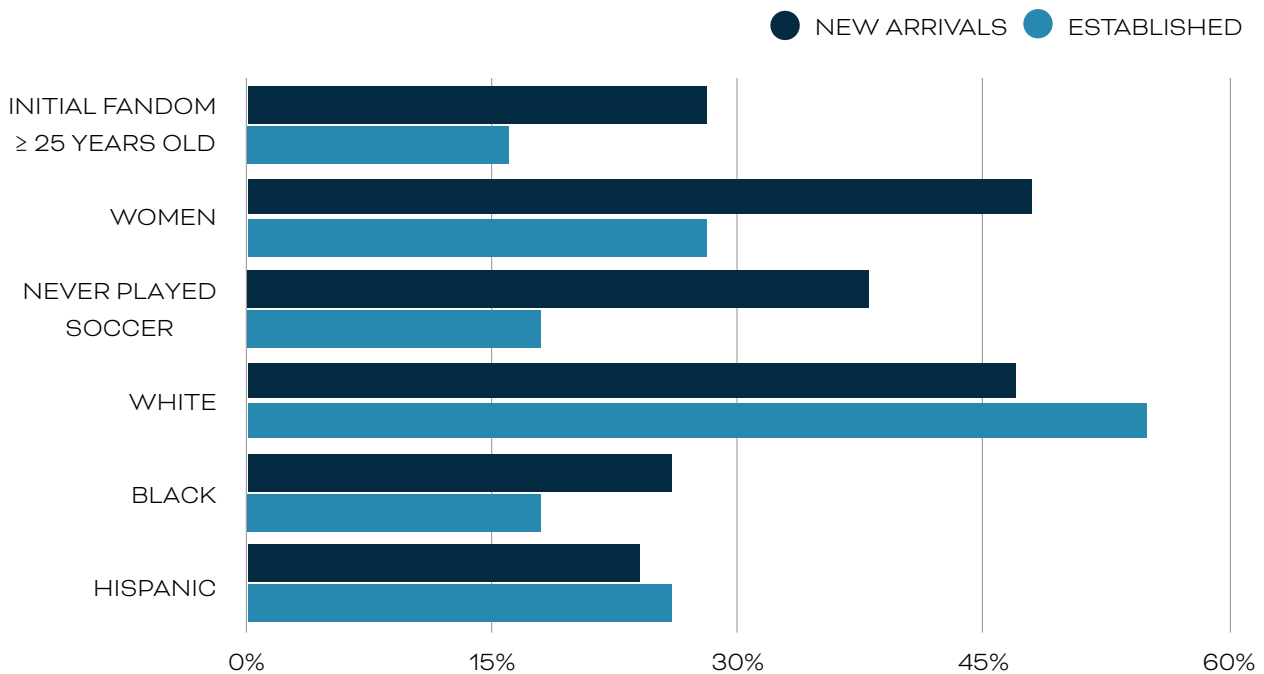
As we mentioned in the opening pages, we're in the midst of soccer's incredible growth. Beyond the growing investments and the increasing sponsorship revenues, we can see the sport's growth by looking at year-over-year change in new fandom. For example, the percentage of New Arrival fans has grown 57% and those who have become fans within the last year has skyrocketed by 400%.

## SOCCER'S NEWEST FANS ARE MORE DIVERSE, BUT FIND THE SPORT LATER IN LIFE

New fans are less likely to be White, more likely to be Black, a significantly larger percentage are women, and more than a third have never played soccer. But let's expand a bit more on age.

While over a third of soccer's newest fans are 26 years old or younger and deserve the attention of marketers, don't sleep on soccer's newest, older fans who are finding the game through non-traditional paths (something we'll touch on next) or even through their children.

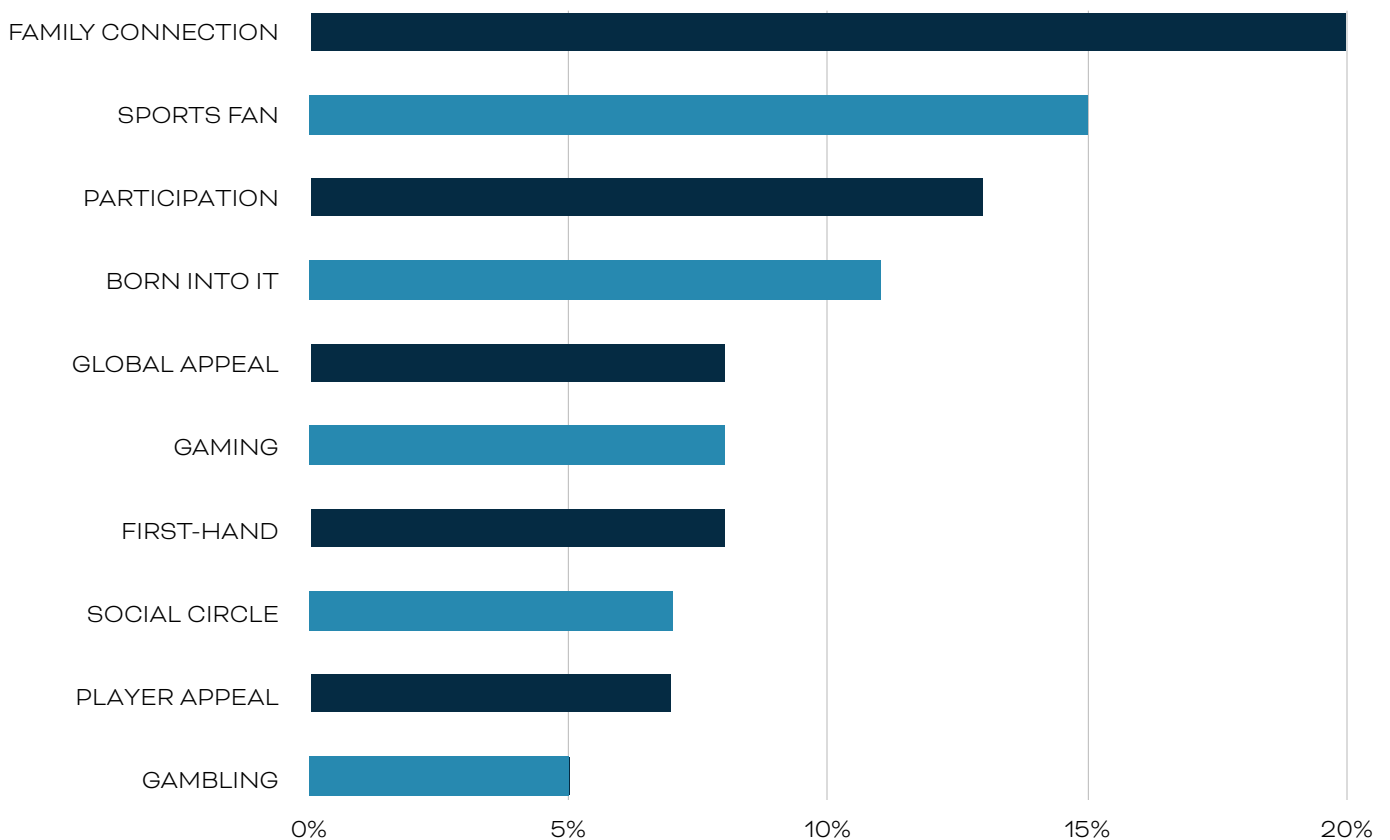
They tend to be younger than Established Fans (they're four years younger on average) and it's worth noting that over a quarter of New Arrivals are discovering soccer later in life. In fact, they're 40% more likely than all soccer fans to have begun their fandom at or after age 25, which makes sense when you consider 39% of New Arrivals are age 43 or older.



# ***SOCCER INTEREST ORIGIN***

How are fans discovering soccer? Some stumble upon the sport on their own or through their social circles, while others come to it via a broader interest in sports. And then there are those who are drawn in because, well, they had no choice.

Here's how all fans responded when asked to select, from a provided list, the option that best describes their initial reason for becoming a soccer fan.



The two family-oriented options—being born into fandom and becoming a fan due to a family member’s involvement in soccer—were selected by nearly a third of all fans. Familial influence continues to be a major contributor to fandom.

General sports fandom (i.e., "I like other sports, why not soccer?") and participation, traditionally strong drivers of fandom, were the next most-selected reasons among all fans.

### ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

As fandom evolves, we're closely monitoring two key points of origin: being born into fandom and participation. There's a noticeable increase in being born into fandom with each successive generation. From Boomers to Gen Z, each generation of fan selected this option by an average of 51% more than the previous generation. Conversely, participation as an entry point for fandom has seen a slight decline across generations, though not as pronounced.

These shifts indicate the reasons for entering soccer fandom are diversifying. While many still discover the sport through personal involvement, an increasing number are inheriting their passion from family members, highlighting the intergenerational evolution of soccer fandom.

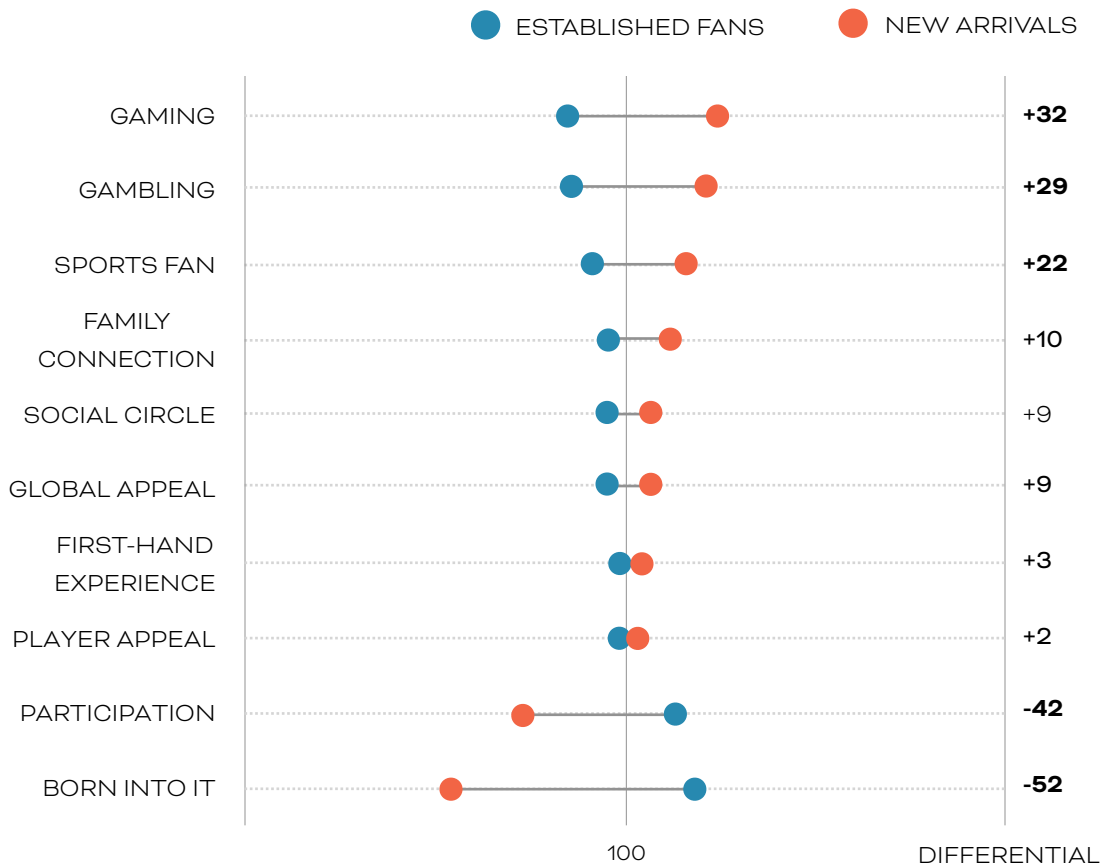




## GAMING, GAMBLING, AND GENERAL SPORTS FANDOM ARE HELPING DRIVE FANDOM AMONG NEW ARRIVALS

Understanding the diverse paths people take to their own soccer fandom is crucial for leagues, teams, marketers, and other stakeholders looking to cultivate a deeper fan base.

Below, we compare how New Arrivals and Established Fans found fandom, using indices comparing each to all soccer fans. Several intriguing insights emerge.



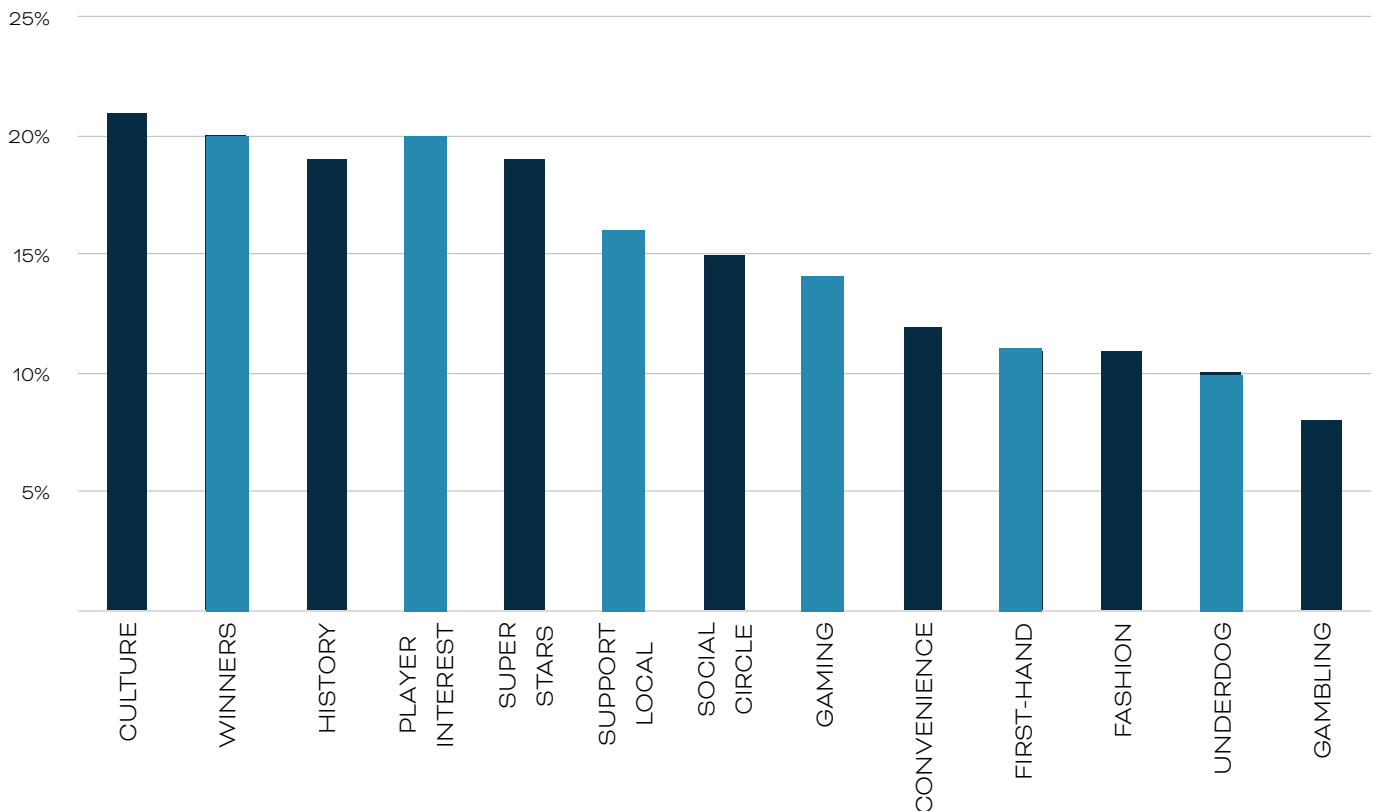
New Arrival fans are more inclined than Established Fans to attribute their soccer fandom to gaming, gambling, and general sports enthusiasm. In contrast, they are notably less likely than Established Fans to cite playing soccer and familial influence as their pathways into soccer fandom.

This trend underscores how the sport's newest enthusiasts are embracing unconventional routes to soccer passion.

## HOW FANS CHOOSE THEIR TEAMS

When you strike up a conversation with another fan, one of the first questions you're likely to ask is something like, "Who do you support?" It's a great question and we'll dive into the favorite teams of various fan segments in the next chapter. But while we're discussing influences on fandom, before we know the "who" let's understand the "why."

We asked fans how they arrived at their choice of team(s) to support. Whether it's backing winners, embracing team fashion, idolizing superstars, or rallying behind local pride, there's a plethora of reasons why individuals are drawn to certain teams.



There's not much separation at the top. A club's culture was selected the most by fans, but winners, history, specific player interest, and super stars trail by a slim margin. Supporting local leads the next grouping of most-selected choices.

In the next chapter we'll take these ways fans choose their favorite team(s) and apply them to some of the most popular teams to better understand why fans gravitate to certain teams.

## HOW OUR PERSONAS AND SELECT SEGMENTS FIND THEIR TEAMS

Let's review how fans over-index in choosing their favorite team(s) through the lens of our five personas and select segments of fans. Notable indices are included below.

CULTURE	WINNERS	HISTORY	PLAYER INTEREST
HISPANIC (120)	<b>ENTHUSIAST (119)</b> BLACK (113) <b>ADVOCATE (112)</b>	BOOMERS (125) GEN X (118) HISPANIC (118) ESTABLISHED (115) <b>ADVOCATE (113)</b>	<b>ENTHUSIAST (130)</b> HARDCORE (118)

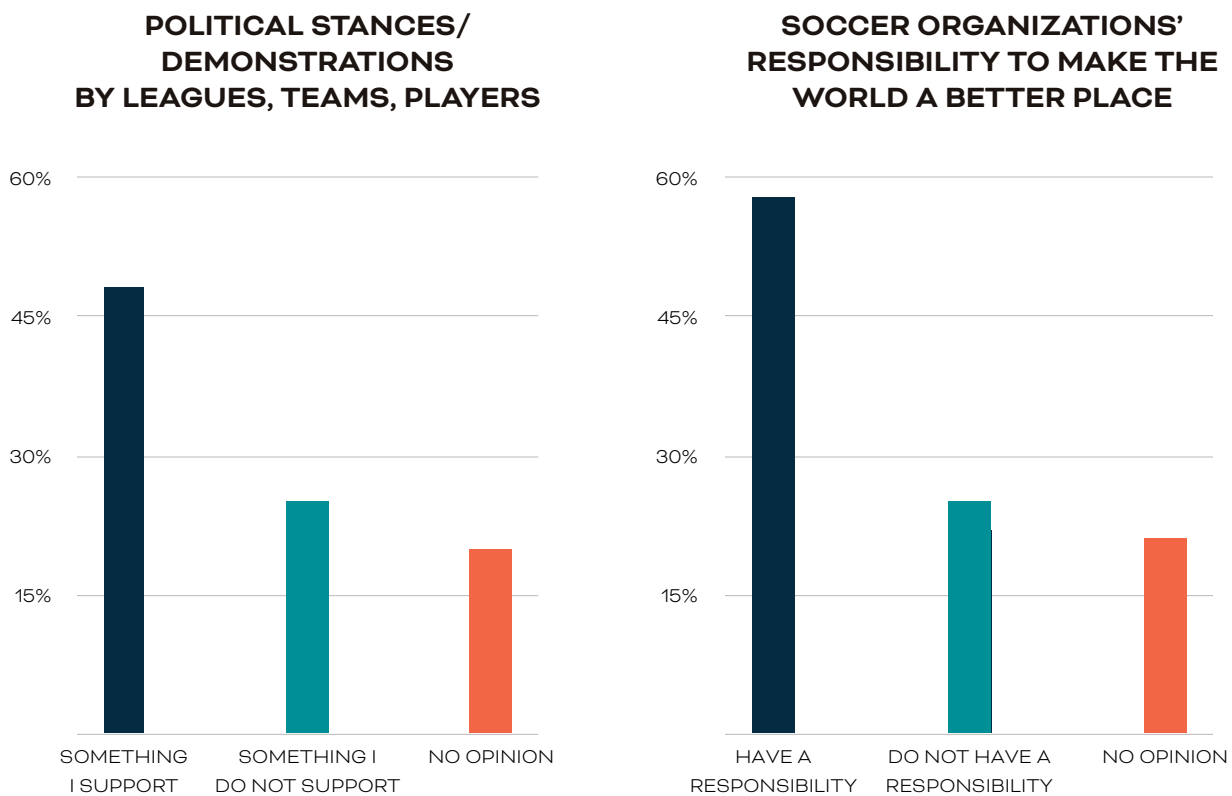
SUPER STARS	SUPPORT LOCAL	SOCIAL CIRCLE	GAMING
<b>ADVOCATE (139)</b> MILLENNIALS (120) WHITE (112)	BOOMERS (158) <b>CASUAL FAN (122)</b> <b>SPORTS FAN (115)</b> WHITE (114)	HISPANIC (129) FEMALE (112)	MILLENNIALS (140) BLACK (122) <b>SPORTS FAN (119)</b> <b>ADVOCATE (116)</b> <b>ENTHUSIAST (116)</b> GEN Z (113) HARDCORE (113)

CONVENIENCE	FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE	FASHION	UNDERDOG
MILLENNIALS (121) BOOMERS (118) <b>EVENT SEEKERS (113)</b>	<b>ADVOCATE (139)</b> MILLENNIALS (120) BLACK (117) <b>SPORTS FAN (116)</b> HARDCORE (114)	BLACK (132) <b>ADVOCATE (121)</b> GEN Z (125) MILLENNIALS (117) <b>SPORTS FAN (114)</b>	NEW ARRIVALS (128) BLACK (118) <b>CASUAL FANS (117)</b> SPORTS FAN (115)

# ***SOCIETAL INFLUENCES ON FANDOM***

Before we wrap this chapter on the diverse influences of fandom, let's explore how societal issues and the positions taken by organizations, leagues, and teams impact fan perspectives.

We posed two questions to fans: one regarding their support for political stances and demonstrations by athletes, teams, and leagues, and another about their views on whether professional soccer organizations bear a responsibility to contribute positively to society.



Nearly half of fans support their favorite leagues, teams, and athletes using their platforms. But there's an even larger percentage of fans who professional soccer organizations carry a responsibility to contribute positively to making the world a better place.

## CHAPTER 2: INFLUENCES ON FANDOM

Let's review these questions through the lens of the personas we presented earlier in the report. What differences appear? Are there any? In short, yes—big differences.

Below are our five personas with indices to illustrate how their opinions compare and contrast to that of all soccer fans.

### POLITICAL STANCES/ DEMONSTRATIONS BY LEAGUES, TEAMS, PLAYERS

	ADVOCATE	ENTHUSIAST	SPORTS FAN	CASUAL	EVENT SEEKER
IS SOMETHING I SUPPORT	148	119	112	57	62
IS SOMETHING I DON'T SUPPORT	58	88	89	129	154
NO OPINION	55	77	90	148	116

### SOCCER ORGANIZATIONS' RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

	ADVOCATE	ENTHUSIAST	SPORTS FAN	CASUAL	EVENT SEEKER
HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY	142	105	108	74	66
DO NOT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY	50	111	89	126	122
NO OPINION	34	74	89	147	172

In both cases, positive support is at its apex with Advocates—which makes sense given they're the most passionate and the most vocal segment of fans. The indices for each persona decrease as you move from left to right, mirroring the lessening in passion with each successive segment.

### ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

Who are the fans backing political stances and advocating for social responsibility from teams and leagues? Compared to the average soccer fan, they tend to over-index in having postgraduate degrees (157), be predominantly Millennials (141), rely on social media for soccer news (140), and to lesser extents have played soccer (118), are Black (115), and Male (113).



CHAPTER 3

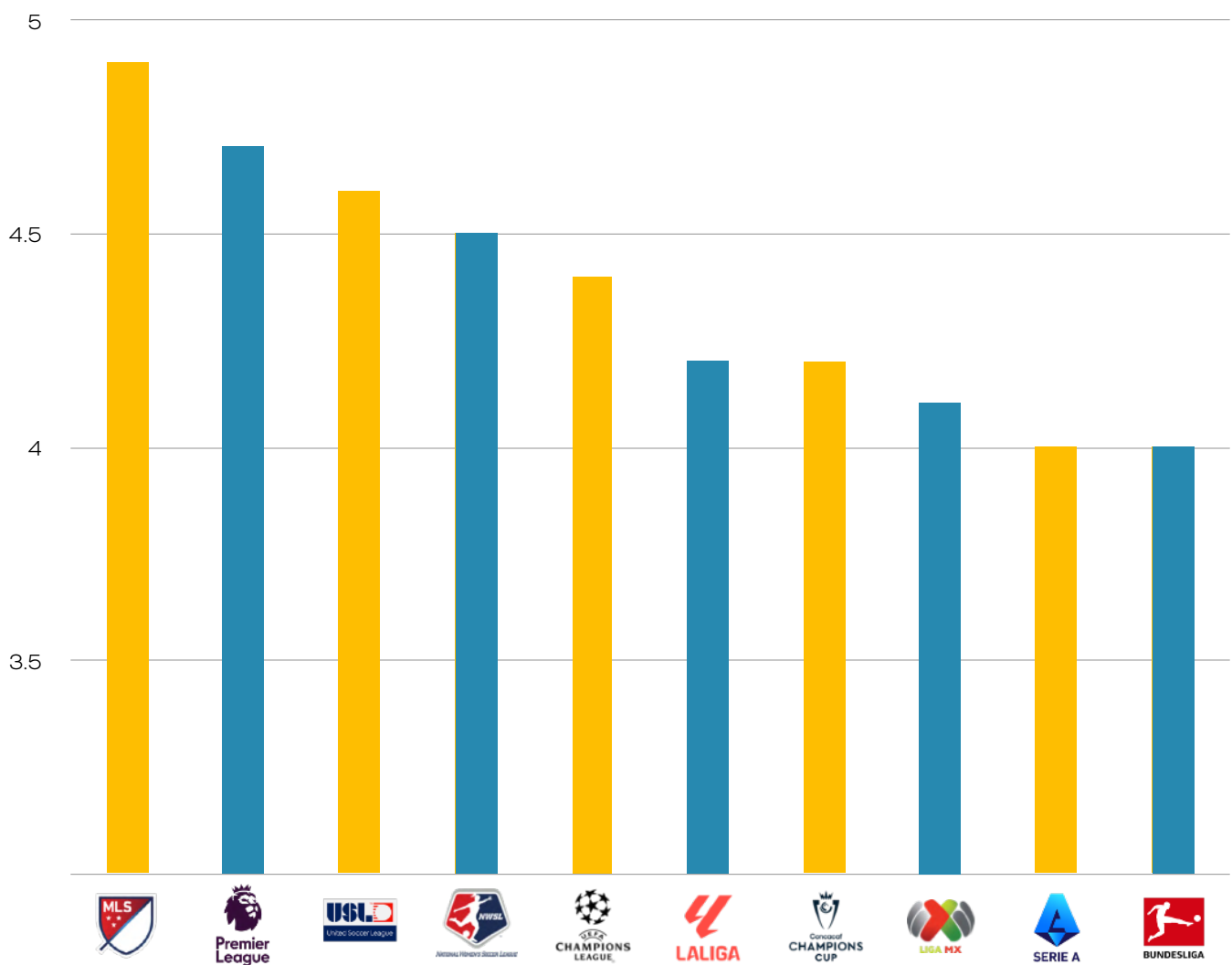
# FAN FAVORITES

FROM THE WHO'S WHO TO THE LOCAL LEGENDS,  
FANS LOVE A VARIETY OF TEAMS AND PLAYERS.

# THE LEAGUES FANS LOVE

Earlier we mentioned the percentage of New Arrivals is up 57% year-over-year. With an influx of new fans, domestic leagues have benefited.

In comparison to last year’s report, MLS has overtaken the Premier League, while USL and NWSL have surpassed the two UEFA competitions—Champions League and Europa League.



Wait, domestic leagues more popular than some European leagues? This may raise an eyebrow, but remember—fandom exists on a spectrum and casual fans represent nearly half (45%) of the audience. Among casual fans, MLS and NWSL are the two most-beloved leagues.



SEPTEMBER 12

AMERICA F



Coca-Cola

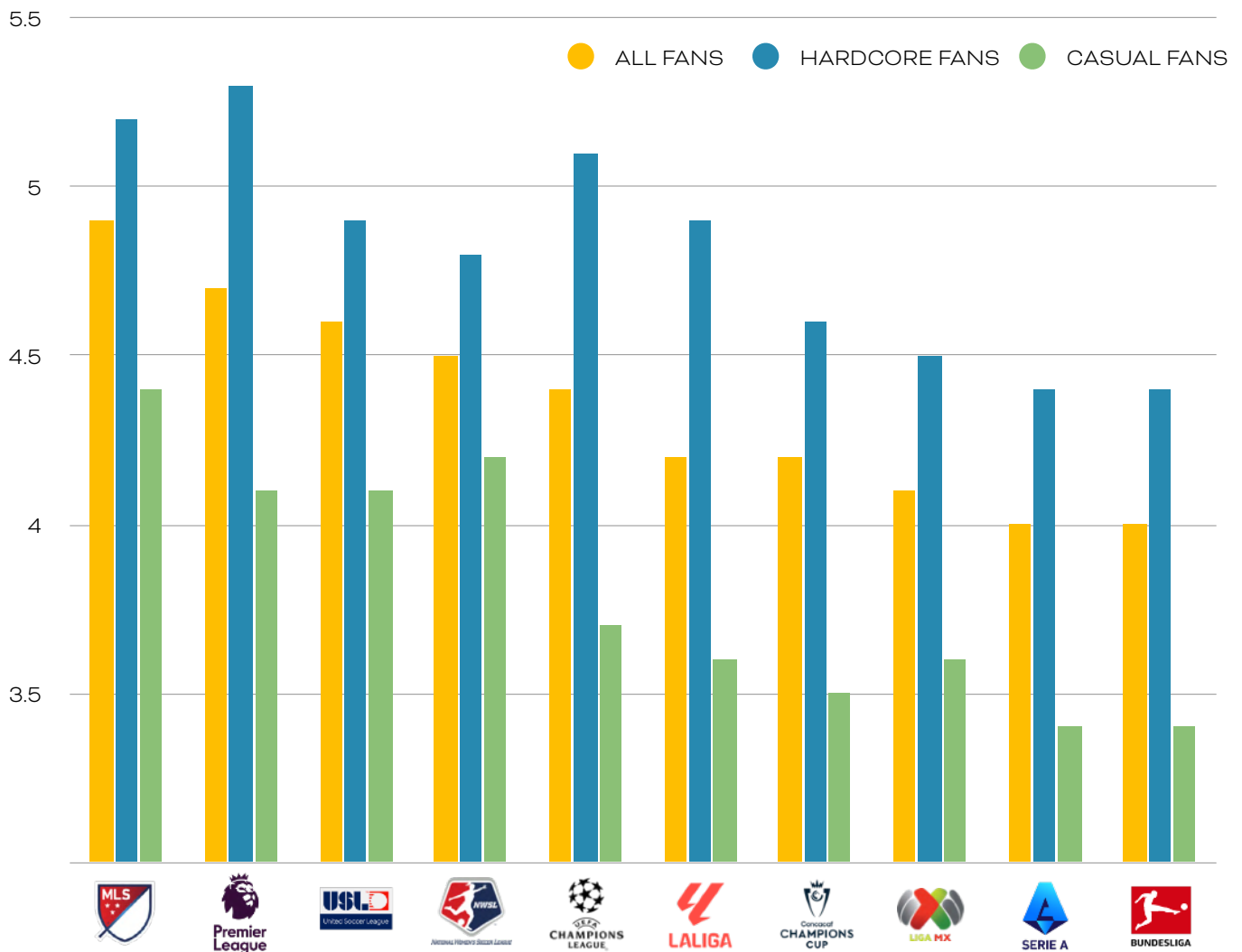




# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AVID, CASUAL FANDOM

Soccer fans in America are not a homogenous group, however. What differences appear when we review league and competition fandom through the lens of those who are most avid and casual in their fandom?

Among the most avid, the Premier League is the most popular league, followed by MLS and the UEFA Champions League. Among casual fans, the domestic leagues and the Premier League separate themselves from the other competitions.






# THE TEAMS THEY LOVE MOST

American fans are passionate about their teams, whether they're local or thousands of miles away. We asked fans to list up to five teams they care about most and received more than 200 teams from around the globe.

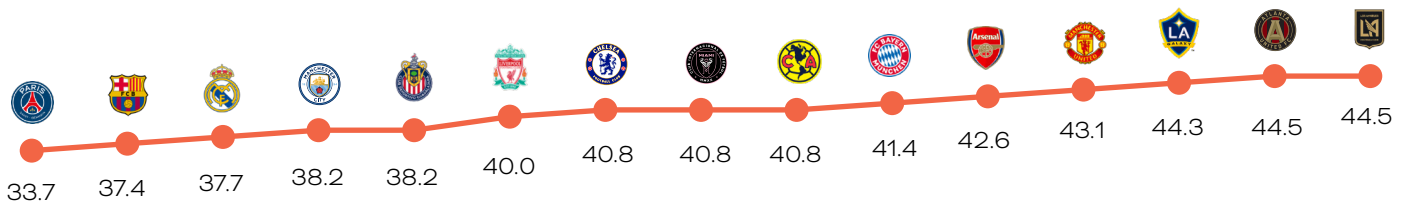
While the variety of teams is as diverse as the fans themselves, the top picks are a who's who of both foreign and domestic powerhouse brands. Consistent with over a decade of our research, the three most popular clubs among U.S. fans are Manchester United, Real Madrid, and FC Barcelona.

Joining them in the top 15 are four English teams, three MLS clubs, two Mexican juggernauts, and one club each from France, Germany, and Italy.

- |    |   |                   |    |   |                |    |   |                           |
|----|---|-------------------|----|---|----------------|----|---|---------------------------|
| 01 |   | MANCHESTER UNITED | 06 |   | CHELSEA FC     | 11 |   | PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN       |
| 02 |  | REAL MADRID       | 07 |  | ARSENAL FC     | 12 |  | CLUB AMÉRICA              |
| 03 |  | FC BARCELONA      | 08 |  | INTER MIAMI CF | 13 |  | ATLANTA UNITED            |
| 04 |  | LIVERPOOL FC      | 09 |  | LA GALAXY      | 14 |  | LOS ANGELES FOOTBALL CLUB |
| 05 |  | MANCHESTER CITY   | 10 |  | BAYERN MUNICH  | 15 |  | CHIVAS DE GUADALAJARA     |

### AVERAGE FAN AGE FOR THE MOST POPULAR CLUBS

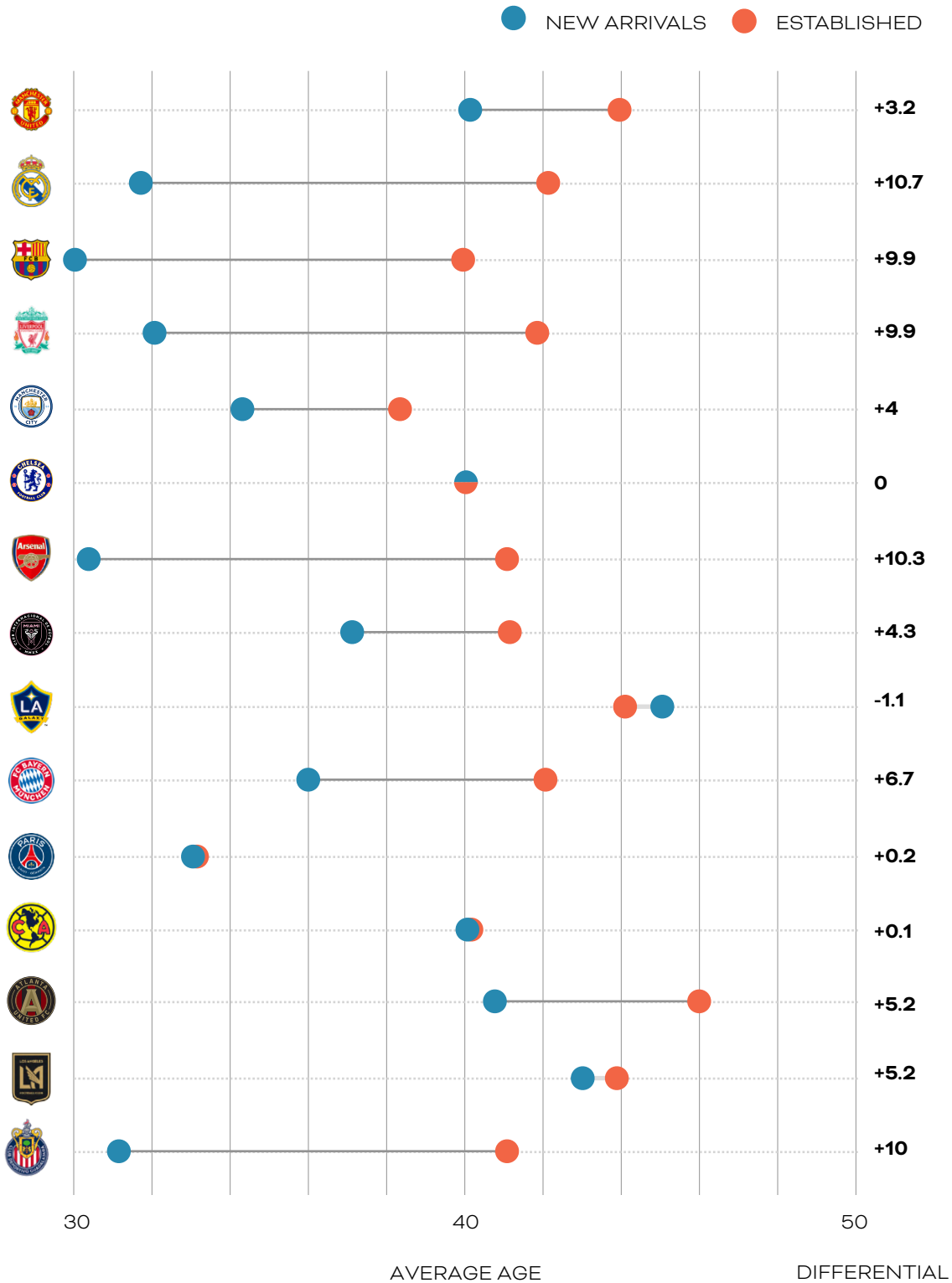
Showcasing fan favorites only tells a small piece of the fandom story. After all, fandom is complicated. One way to show its multifaceted nature comes via the average age of those who support certain teams. Below is the average age of fans for each of the 15 most-popular teams.



## CHAPTER 3: FAN FAVORITES

Let's take average age of fandom one step further and revisit the New Arrival and Established Fan segments. How do the average fan ages vary among these groups?

For clubs, the ideal scenario is a low average age for both those newest to the sport and those who have been in it for the long haul. Achieving this means that not only are you bringing younger fans into the funnel, but you've also been doing so more long-term.



## CHAPTER 3: FAN FAVORITES

Given this, clubs like PSG and Manchester City are in a great state of bringing fans—both new to soccer and those with half a decade or more of support—into their fandom funnel. We wrote about this briefly in an edition of *The Assist*—our weekly newsletter—earlier this year.

A club like PSG has been an attractive spot for super stars, including the likes of Lionel Messi, Neymar Jr., and Zlatan Ibrahimovic in recent years. Couple this with the club's intentional dip into the fashion and lifestyle space with their Jordan partnership (among other premier fashion brand partners) and you start to see why the average age of PSG fans is youngest among the 15 most popular clubs.



## WHAT MAKES THESE CLUBS SO POPULAR?

In the previous chapter we discussed reasons why people are choosing their favorite teams. From club culture to history and winners to social circles, there are a myriad of reasons why fans select their clubs to which they devote their time and attention.

To help understand what makes certain teams so attractive and how it can vary from club to club, we isolated fans who submitted any of Real Madrid, Manchester City, PSG, LA Galaxy, and Club América among their favorites and reviewed the reasons why they're attracted to particular teams.

Below is a table with these insights, where the numbers represent the indices of each fanbase relative to all soccer fans for selecting each reason for club fandom.

					
CONVENIENCE	83	83	92	92	100
CULTURE	133	133	91	152	133
FASHION	100	100	155	55	45
FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE	118	100	55	155	109
GAMBLING	75	50	100	75	25
GAMING	114	100	93	100	86
HISTORY	153	132	132	184	121
PLAYER INTEREST	158	174	211	137	158
SOCIAL CIRCLE	120	127	60	133	153
SUPER STARS	161	156	233	94	128
SUPPORT LOCAL	75	81	38	150	56
UNDERDOG	70	40	60	110	90
WINNERS	120	150	200	115	80

## CHAPTER 3: FAN FAVORITES

Your eyes may immediately go to PSG, where fans of the club are more than 100% likely to select player interest, super stars, and winners as the most important influences on their team fandom.

And to cement a previous point, don't sleep on fashion's influence—PSG fans are 55% more likely than all soccer fans to see fashion as a reason to start following a particular team.

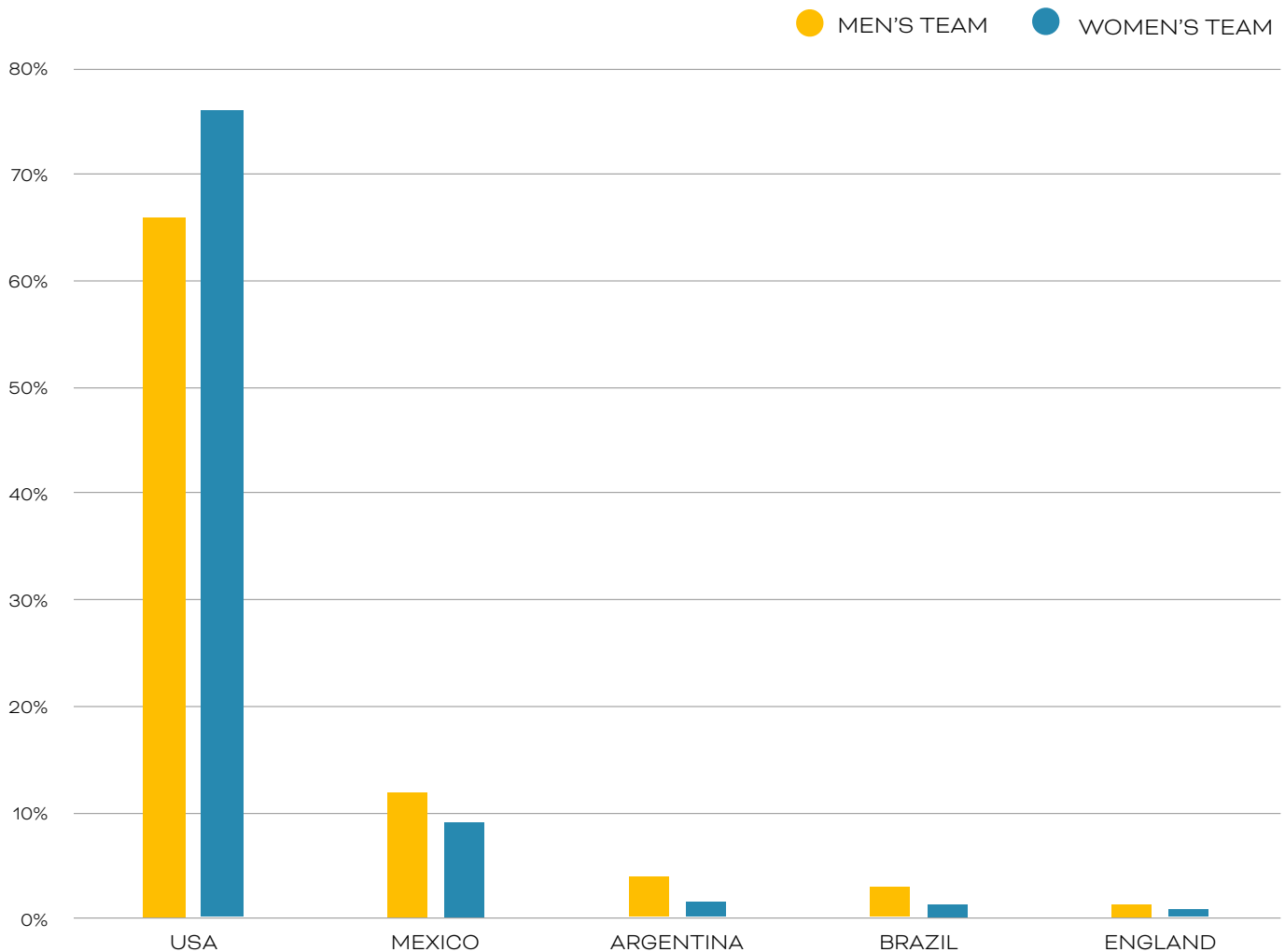
Fans of each of the five clubs all over-index in selecting a club's history (none more than fans of the LA Galaxy) and interest in a specific player as drivers of club team interest.



# INTERNATIONAL ROOTING INTERESTS

Whether it's the FIFA Men's or Women's World Cup, Copa América, the European Championships, or other international competitions, fans have a plethora of countries for which they can root thanks to the diversity of those who live in the United States.

But if forced to choose only one country to support, which are they choosing? The five most-selected men's and women's teams are conveniently not only the same, but in the same order.



Among all soccer fans, the United States is far and away the most-selected country, regardless of national team gender. Two-thirds (66%) root for the United States in men's competitions and more than three-quarters (76%) root for the United States in women's competitions.

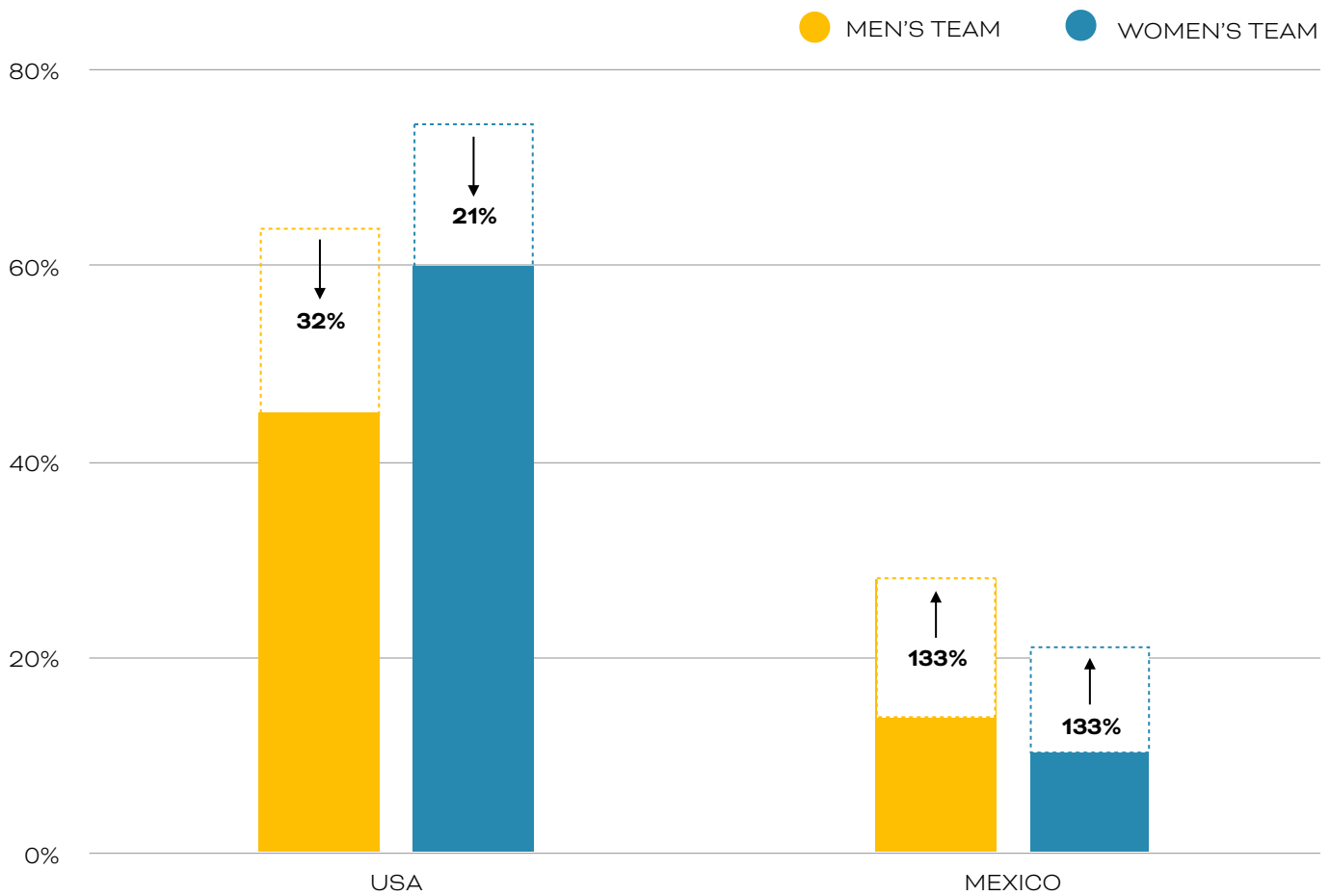




## ROOTING INTERESTS OF HISPANIC AMERICANS

Among Hispanic and Latino fans, there's no question support for the United States men's and women's teams decreases—especially on the men's side. The percentage of those who selected the United States as their primary men's team drops by 32%, while support for the United States women's team drops by 21%.

Conversely, support for the Mexican men's and women's teams both increase by 133%.

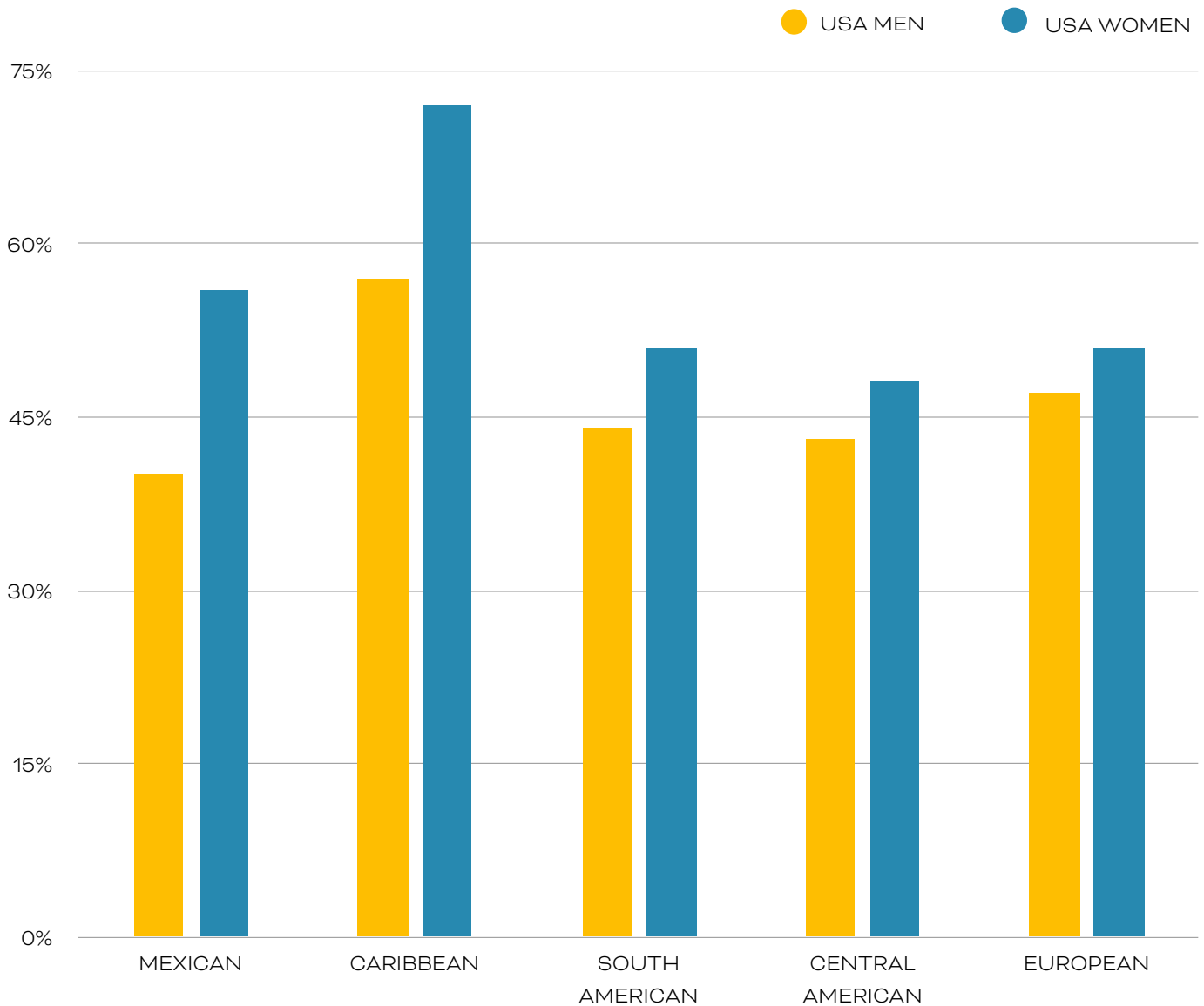


But this only tells part of the story, as Hispanics and Latinos aren't only Mexican. In fact, Mexican fans only make up 47% of Hispanic soccer fans in the U.S., with Caribbean (24%), South American (12%), Central American (10%), and European (8%) fans making up the other 53%.

## CHAPTER 3: FAN FAVORITES

Here's how each Hispanic group views fandom of the United States as their primary country of interest in international competitions. Among all segments, the interest in the women's team is higher than that of the men's team.

Of particular note, only 40% of Mexican-Americans claim the United States as their primary men's team—the lowest of any Hispanic group.



## FAVORITE ACTIVE PLAYERS

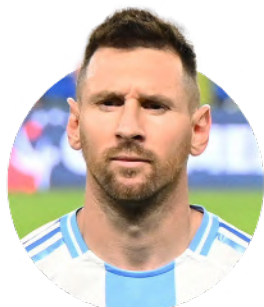
We've talked favorite leagues. We've talked favorite teams. There's only one thing left to discuss—favorite players. When asked, fans submitted more than 100 men's players and 50 women's players, featuring many of the biggest active names in the sport.

On the men's side, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo accounted for roughly 40% of all responses, down from nearly 50% last year. With the two in the twilight of their careers, a more diverse roster of players are feeling the love, including several 25 years old or younger.

Unlike the top 10 men's players who each represent a unique country, the 10 favorite women's players represent six different countries. For a local connection, five of the top 10 favorite women's players are Americans and six play in the NWSL.



# FAVORITE ACTIVE MEN'S PLAYERS



01

*LIONEL  
MESSI*



06

*KEVIN  
DE BRUYNE*



02

*CRISTIANO  
RONALDO*



07

*CHRISTIAN  
PULISIC*



03

*NEYMAR  
JR.*



08

*MOHAMED  
SALAH*



04

*KYLIAN  
MBAPPÉ*



09

*JUDE  
BELLINGHAM*



05

*ERLING  
HAALAND*



10

*ROBERT  
LEWANDOWSKI*



# FAVORITE ACTIVE WOMEN'S PLAYERS



01  
**ALEX  
MORGAN**  




06  
**SOPHIA  
SMITH**  



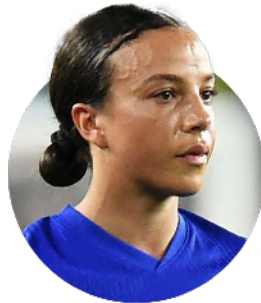

02  
**SAM  
KERR**  




07  
**LINDSAY  
HORAN**  



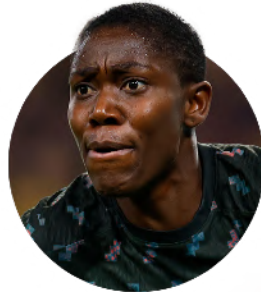

03  
**ALEXIA  
PUTELLAS**  

08  
**MALLORY  
SWANSON**  




04  
**MARTA  
VIEIRA**  

09  
**ASISAT  
OSHOALA**  




05  
**TRINITY  
RODMAN**  




10  
**LAUREN  
JAMES**  


irates

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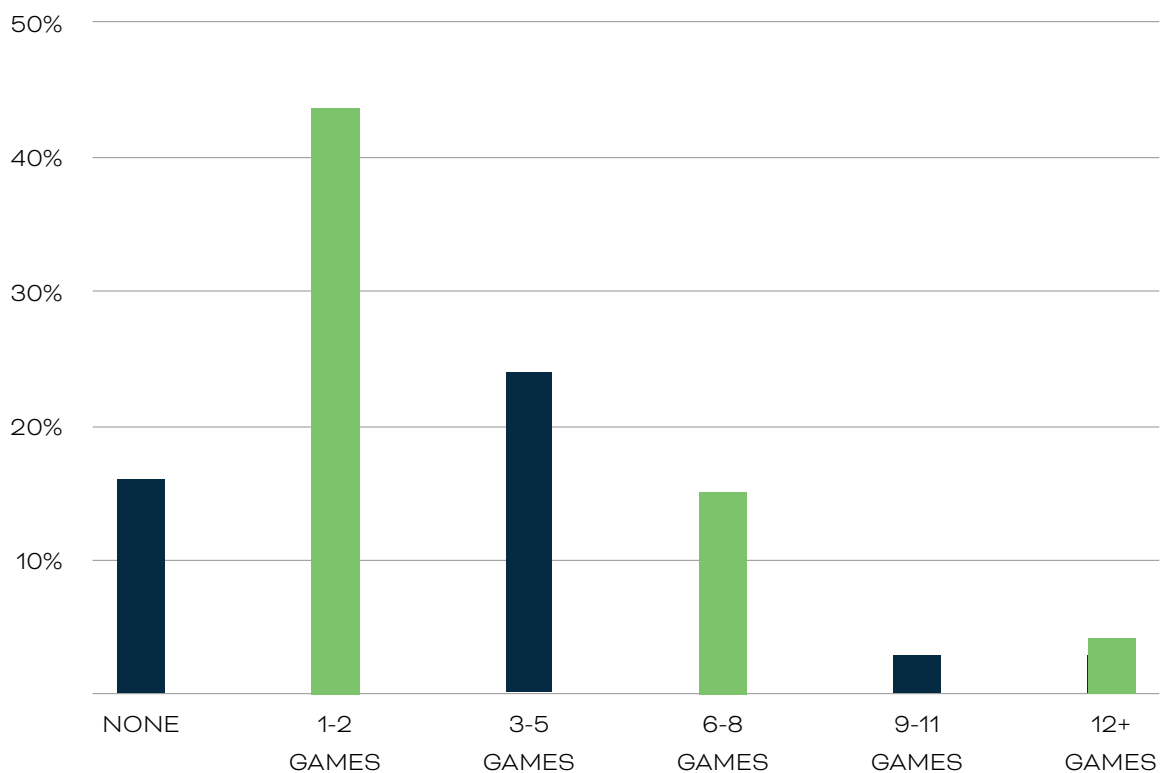
## CHAPTER 4

# *CONSUMPTION HABITS*

FROM THE BIG SCREEN TO THE ONE IN THEIR HANDS, FANS CONSUME IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

## GAMES WATCHED IN A WEEK

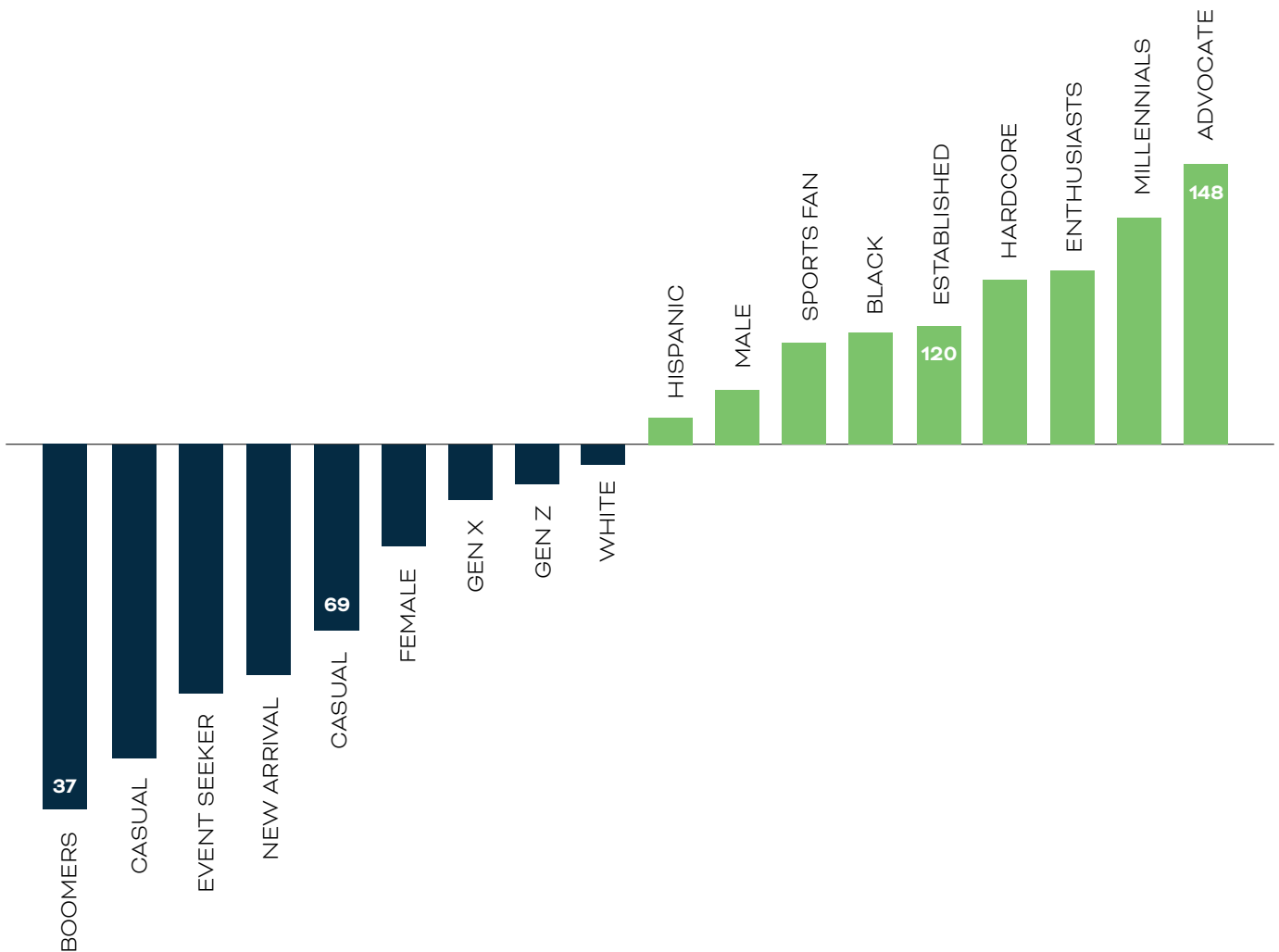
We know which leagues, teams, and players fans care to see, now let's discuss how often they're tuning in to see their favorites. Among all soccer fans, 84% watch an average of at least one game per week, with more than a third watching three or more games weekly.





## SEGMENT INDICES FOR WATCHING 3+ GAMES

As we've discussed elsewhere, looking at all fans only tells a piece of the story. Which fan segments tune into games more frequently, and which less frequently? Check out the chart below for the indices of select fan segments.



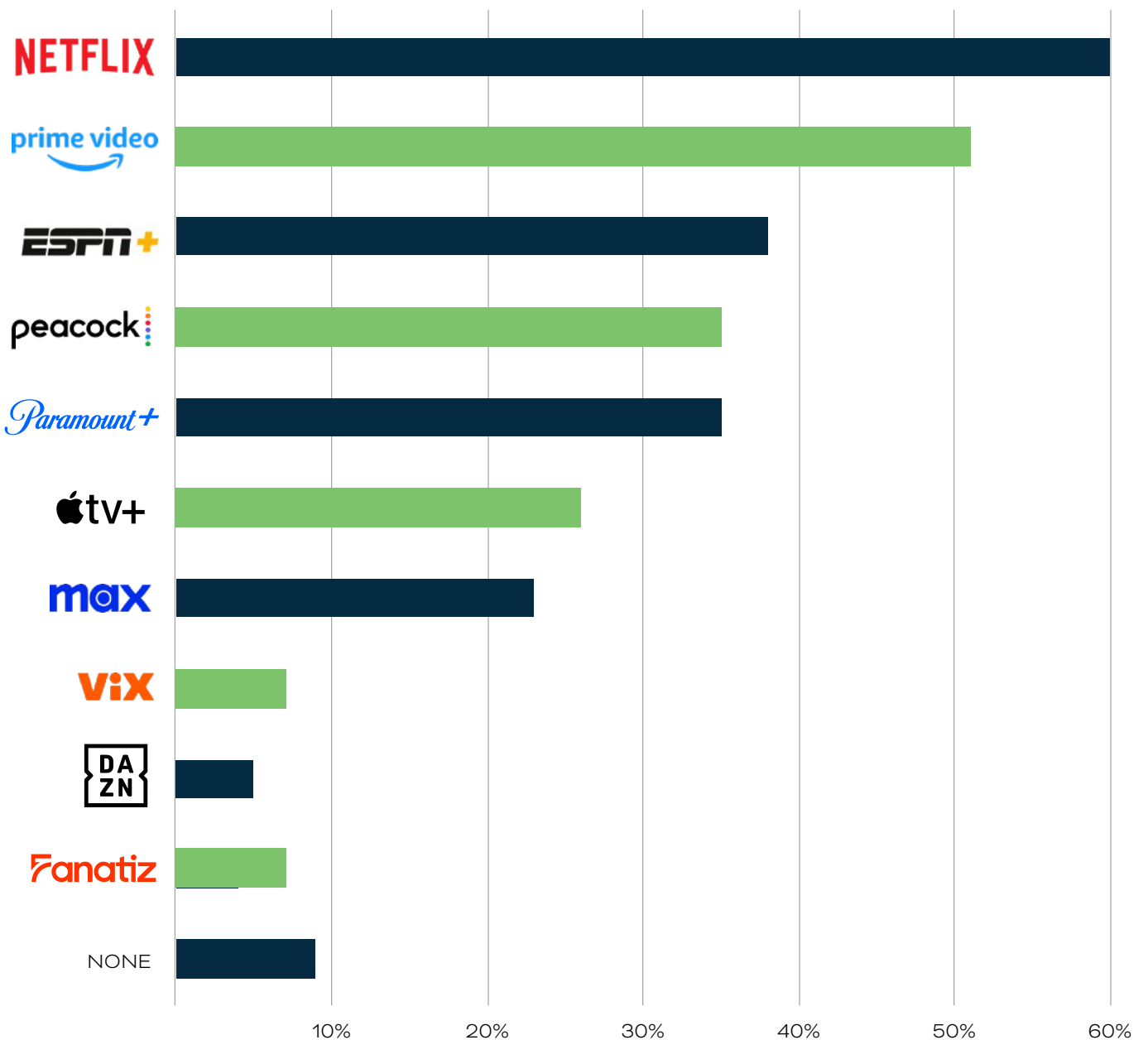
Millennials are the only generation of fans that over-index in watching three or more games a week. In fact, they're nearly 40% more likely than all fans to do so.

The two personas most fanatical about soccer, Advocates (148) and Enthusiasts (129), as well as Sports Fans (117) all over-index, while, unsurprisingly, Event Seekers (57) and Casuals (46) are among the select segments which under-index most.



# THE PLATFORMS TO WHICH FANS SUBSCRIBE

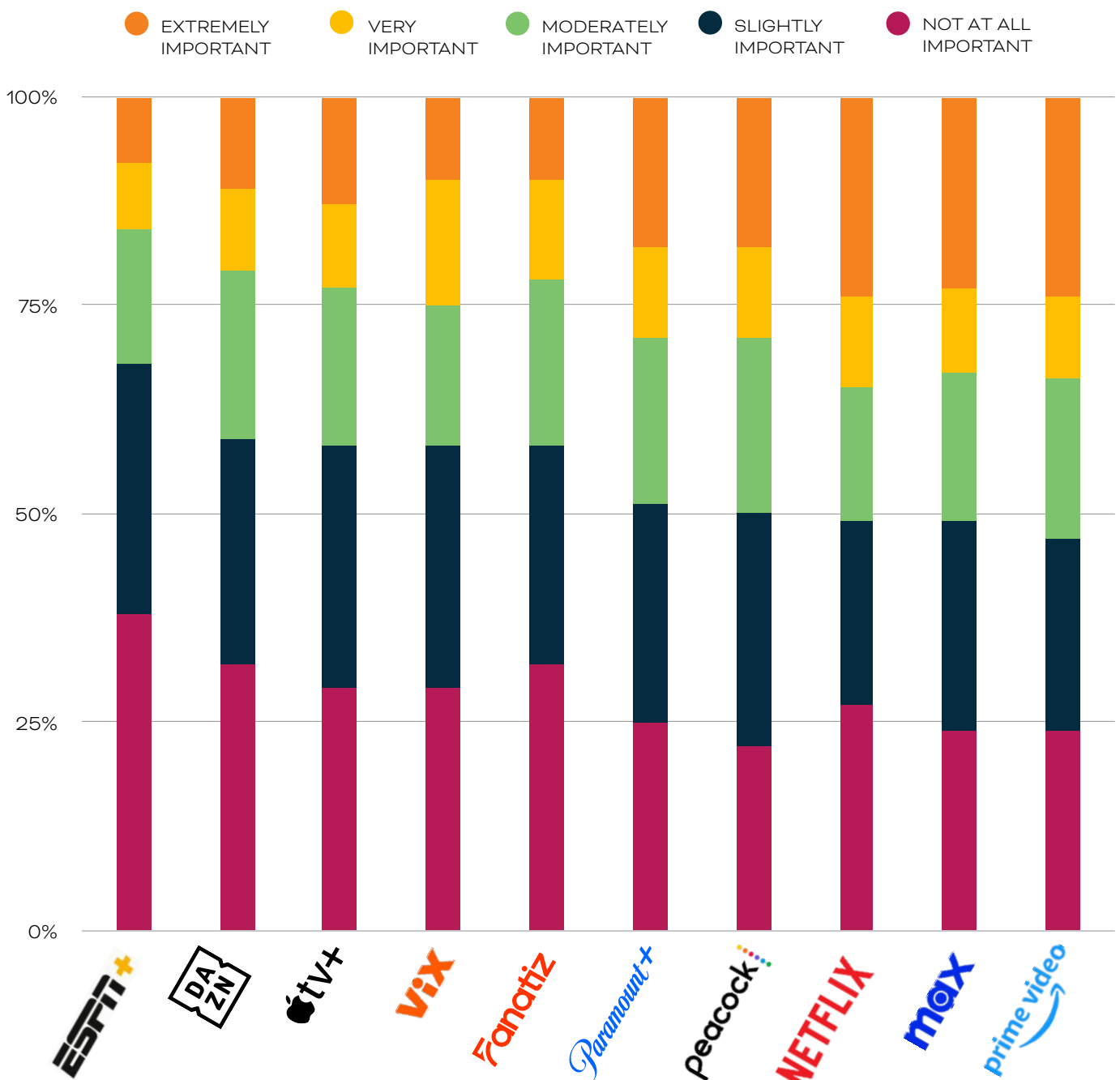
We provided fans a list of streaming platforms and asked that they select the ones to which their household subscribes. Nine-in-ten subscribe to at least one of the provided platforms, with Netflix, Prime, ESPN+, Peacock, and Paramount+ selected most.



## HOW SOCCER DRIVE SUBSCRIPTIONS

But is soccer, at least in part, helping drive the need for these subscriptions? Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which soccer played in their decision to subscribe to platforms.

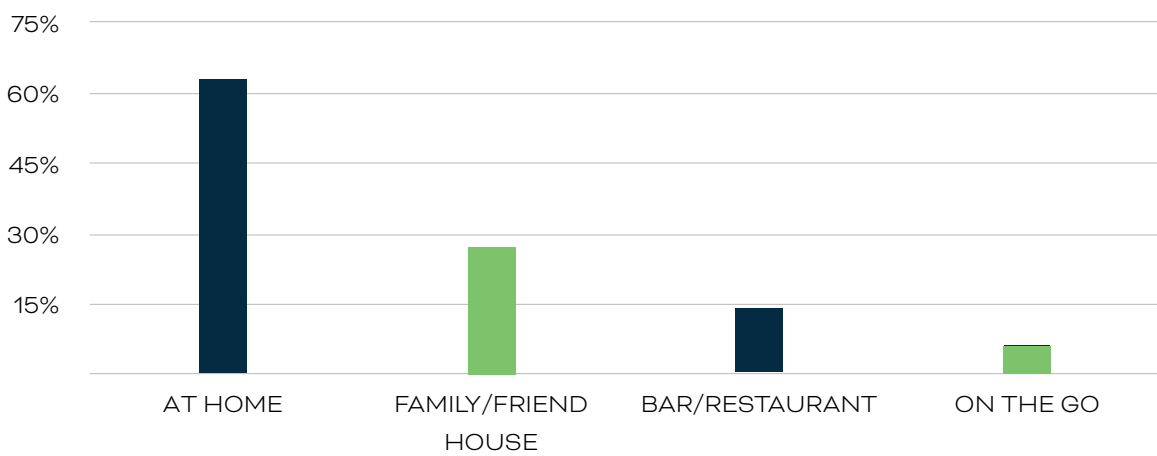
In several cases, more than 50% of fans who subscribe to specific services told us soccer is at least a “very important” factor in maintaining their subscription.





## WHERE FANS FREQUENTLY WATCH SOCCER GAMES

When asked to specify where they most frequently watch games, nearly two thirds selected at-home viewing and over a quarter selected viewing at others' homes. For marketers, this is a valuable insight into where the majority of fans are viewing games. Want to reach them? Better craft campaigns that take your brand into the home environment.



## SEGMENT INDICES FOR GAME VIEWING LOCATIONS

Knowing which segments are more likely to view games in specific locations can help when crafting marketing strategies. Take bars and restaurants, for instance. If you're an alcohol brand, understanding who your target audiences are is extremely valuable in on-premise marketing.

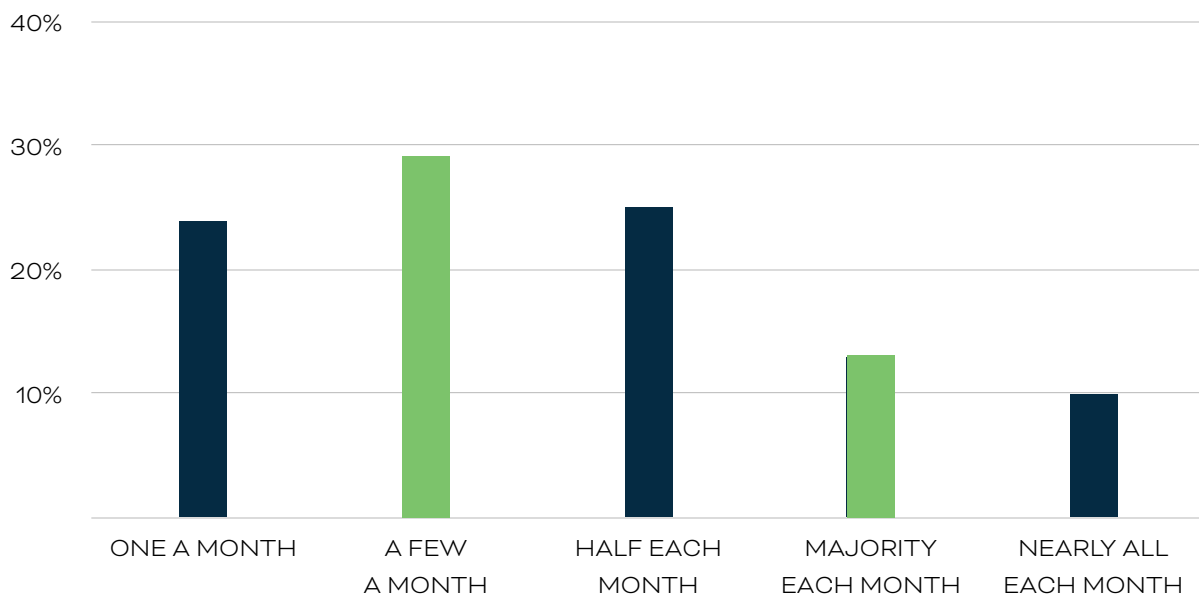
In this case, Millennials are 28% more likely to watch games at a bar or restaurant than all soccer fans. The presence of Established fans and Enthusiast and Advocate personas also indicates that more passionate fans have an increased likelihood of watching games here.

AT HOME	FAMILY/FRIEND HOUSE	BAR/RESTAURANT	ON THE GO
<p><b>ADVOCATE (118)</b>  <b>SPORTS FAN (115)</b>                      MALE (111)</p>	<p>GEN Z (129)  <b>ENTHUSIAST (128)</b>  <b>ADVOCATE (121)</b>                      HISPANIC (121)                      MILLENNIAL (120)                      HARDCORE (113)                      FEMALE (110)</p>	<p>MILLENNIAL (128)                      ESTABLISHED (122)  <b>SPORTS FAN (120)</b>                      GEN X (117)  <b>ENTHUSIAST (116)</b>                      MALE (115)                      HISPANIC (114)                      HARDCORE (111)</p>	<p><b>EVENT SEEKER (179)</b>  <b>ADVOCATE (171)</b>                      GEN Z (169)                      HARDCORE (132)                      ESTABLISHED (118)                      HISPANIC (118)                      MILLENNIAL (111)</p>

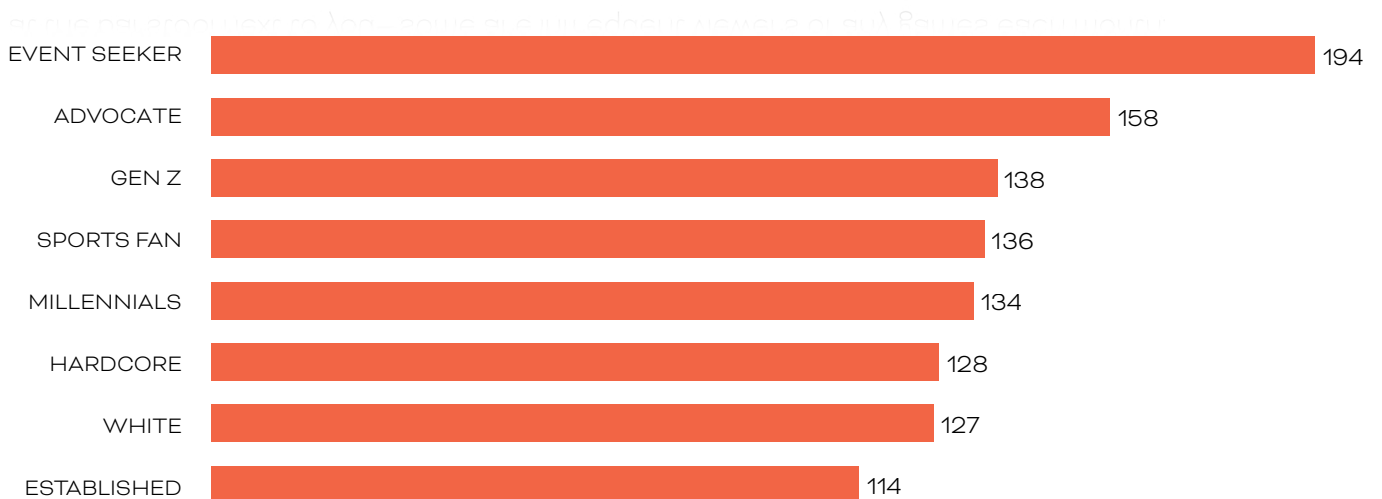
## WATCHING GAMES AT THE BAR

As you saw on the previous page, 14% of fans love to watch games in bars or restaurants. Communal viewing is a big part of the soccer experience for many and fans love to pack bars from sunrise to sunset to watch their teams.

Of those who watch at their favorite watering hole, 48% watch at least half of the games there and nearly a quarter (23%) watch a majority there.



Which segments over-index most relative to all fans in choosing to go to bars to watch nearly all of their games of interest? Check out the list below, but remember, you won't see each segment at the barstool next to you—some are infrequent viewers of any games each month.





BAR OPEN LATE EVERY NIGHT

**World Cup Beer**

THE OFFICIAL BEER OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP

**Bud \$7**

**Buckets of Bud**  
(3.5oz bottles)

**5 for \$30**



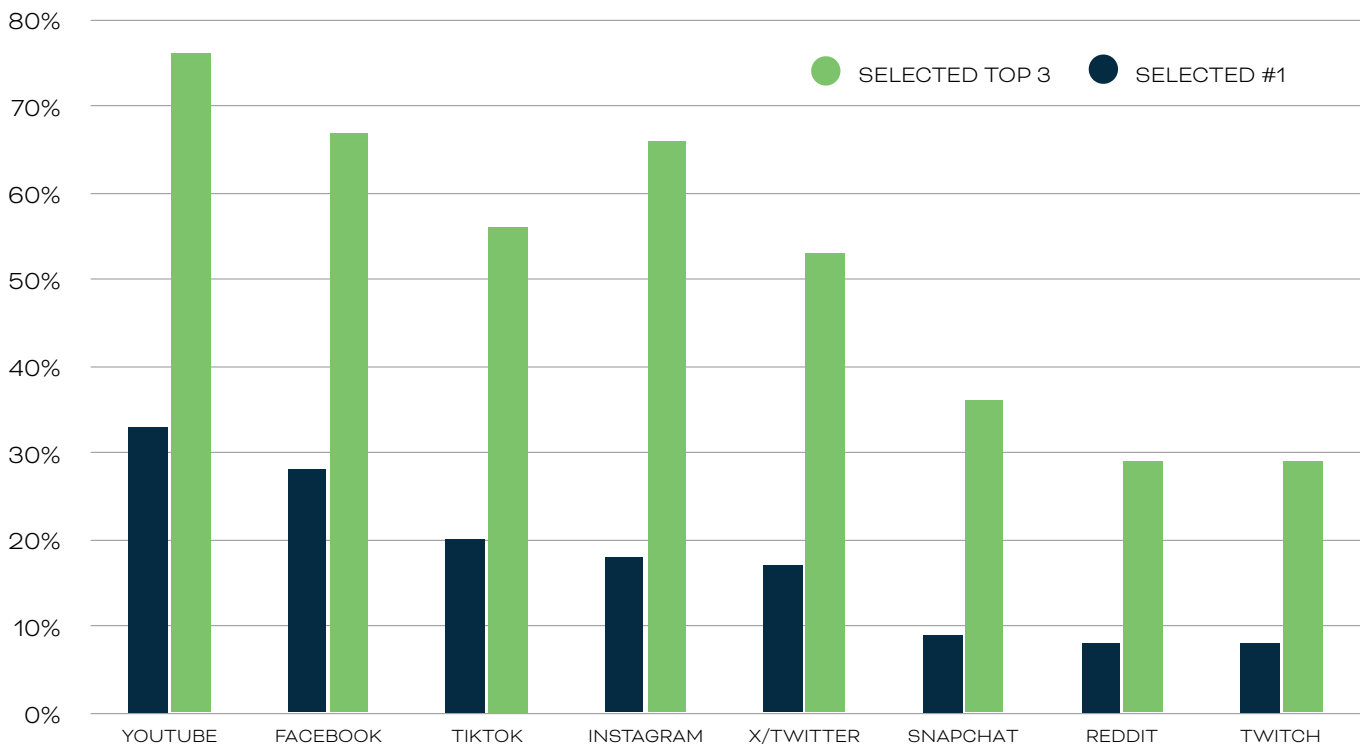
# SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCCER NEWS

Whether during the on-field action or when the latest news breaks, fans love to join the conversation on social media. In fact, more than half (56%) of soccer fans use social media for soccer news and content. An additional 34% have social media, but don't use it for soccer-related content. And 10% have no presence on social media.

Of those who use social media for soccer purposes, 52% of the content that appears on their feeds has ties to soccer—albeit breaking news, highlights, behind-the-scenes videos, or other forms of content.

## THE SOCIAL PLATFORMS THEY TURN TO FOR NEWS

From YouTube to Instagram and TikTok to Reddit, there are plenty of options fans can turn to for soccer news and updates. We asked fans to rank the platforms they turn to most and, as was the case in last year's report, YouTube remains the most popular. 33% selected YouTube as their top overall platform and 76% included it among their top three platforms.



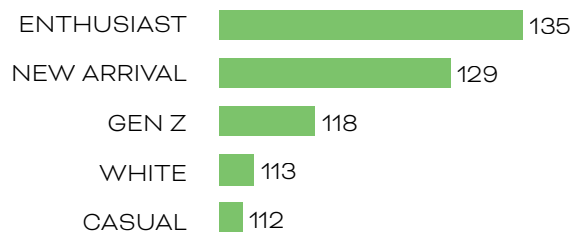
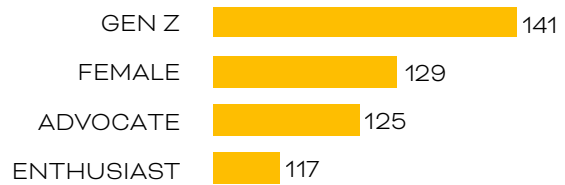
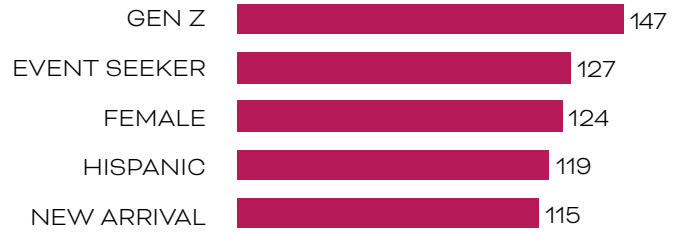
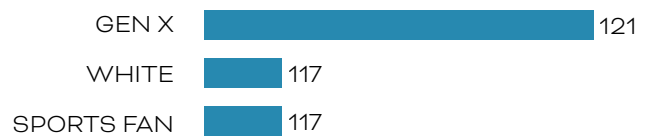
## CHAPTER 4: CONSUMPTION HABITS

While Facebook also remained the second most-selected platform, one noteworthy rise to point out is TikTok's ascension to the third most-selected platform. In fact, the number who selected it as their top platform for soccer content is up 31% year-over-year, while the percentage of those who selected it among their top three platforms is up 24% year-over-year. The percent of those who selected Instagram and X / Twitter dropped year-over-year.



## CHAPTER 4: CONSUMPTION HABITS

Curious which segments over-index versus all soccer fans in naming social platforms among their favorites for soccer content?



## GO-TO NON-SOCIAL APPS FOR SOCCER NEWS

Of course, social media platforms aren't the only app or online outlet to which fans can turn for soccer news and updates. From popular media outlets, to soccer-specific score and news apps, to web searches, below are the five most commonly submitted non-social media apps by fans.

Of particular note, submissions for ESPN totaled 52% of all submitted apps and outlets.



# GAMING AND GAMBLING RELATIONSHIP AMONG SOCCER FANS

Beyond watching and conversing on social, gaming and gambling are two additional outlets through which fans can consume the sport. In total, 51% of fans said they played soccer video games in the past year, while 32% said they played video games, but not soccer-related games. The remaining 17% didn't play video games at all.

When it comes to gambling, 30% of fans have placed a legal bet on soccer in the past 12 months, while 13% said they have placed a legal bet, just not on soccer. An additional 12% told us they illegally gambled on soccer, while 45% of fans didn't gamble at all.

Which segments over-index in gaming and gambling in the past 12 months?

## PLAYED SOCCER VIDEO GAMES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



## LEGALLY BET ON SOCCER IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

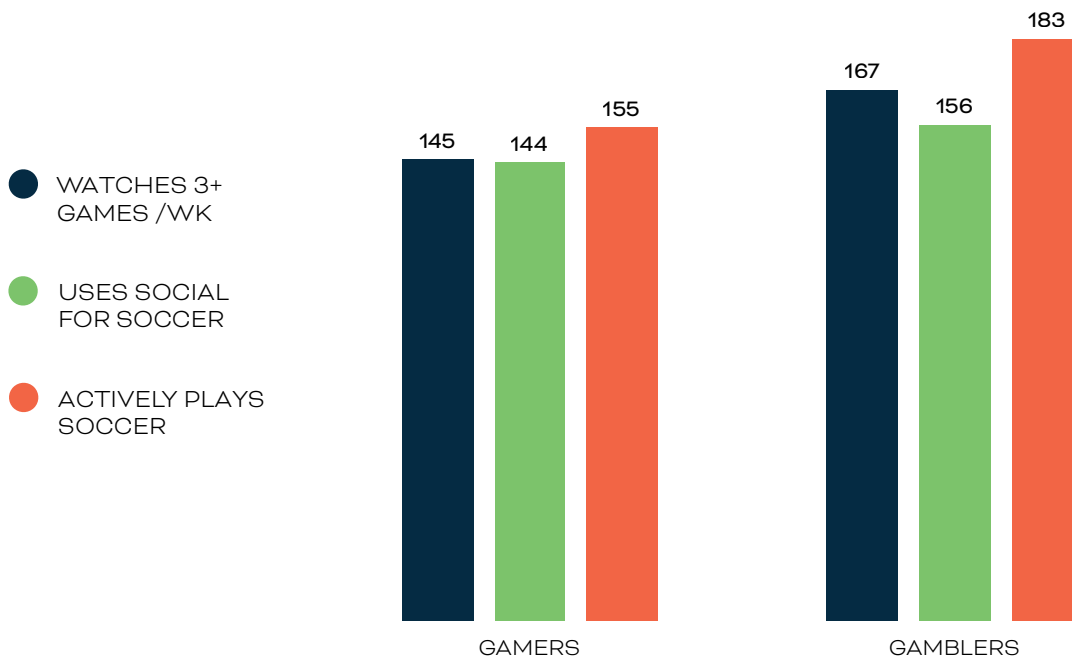


## GAMING AND GAMBLING ACTIVITY ARE DRIVING CONSUMPTION

Participation in gaming and gambling is helping drive consumption of soccer. Let's look at watching, conversing, and playing as three key elements of consumption.

Those who indicated they played soccer video games in the previous 12 months are 45% more likely to watch three or more games a week, 44% more likely to use social media for soccer news, and 55% more likely to actively play soccer.

Those who have legally bet on soccer are 67% more likely to watch three or more games a week, 56% more likely to use social media for soccer content, and 83% more likely to actively play soccer.



### ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

According to fans who legally gambled in the past 12 months, money line is the most common bet type they place on soccer games, followed by point spread.

Want more insight into fans who play soccer video games and their gaming platform of choice? Or want to know the types of bets gamblers are placing, how frequently, and at what value? We have plenty more insights to share—give us a call.

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a black hoodie, is smiling broadly and looking off to the side. He is in a warehouse or store setting. In the foreground, there are several orange Nike shoe boxes and a blue and white soccer jersey with the word 'KING' visible. In the background, another person wearing a blue baseball cap and a blue jacket is partially visible. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

CHAPTER 5

# *CROSSOVER SPORTS INTEREST*

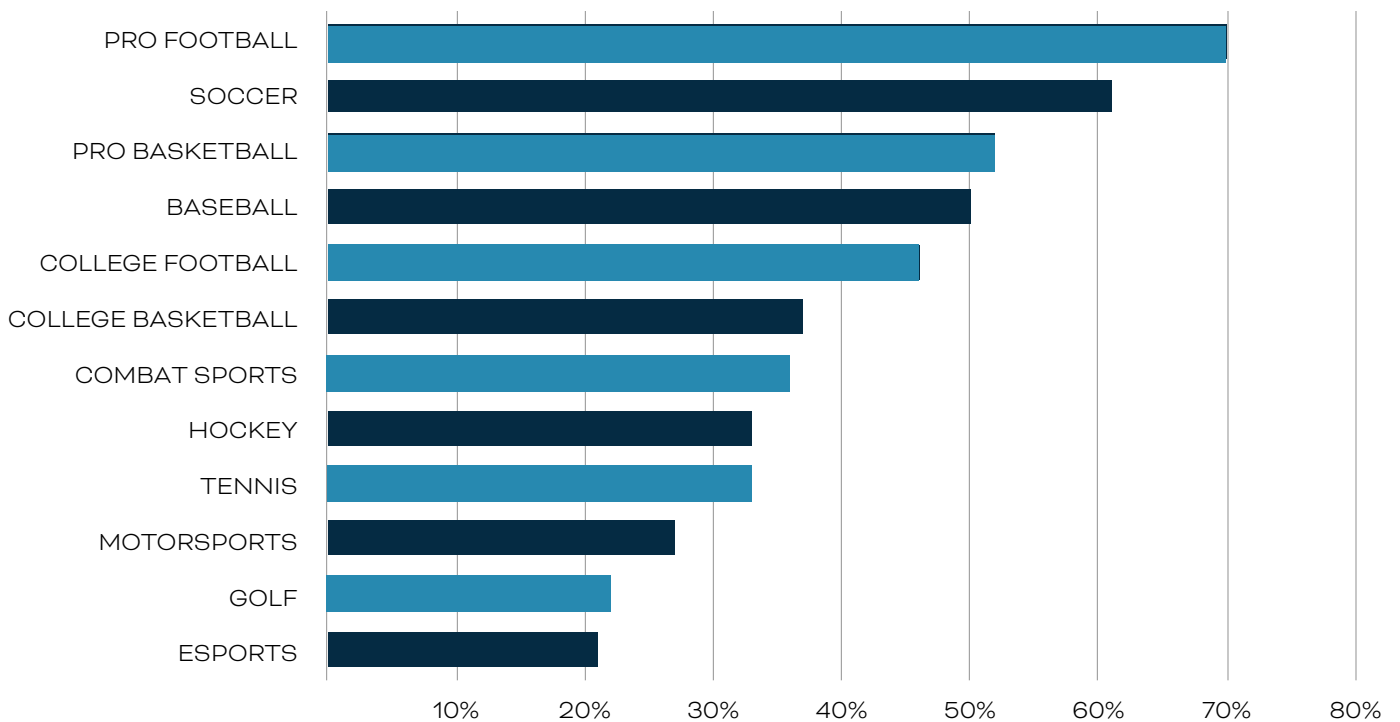
FROM THE GRIDIRON, TO THE HARDWOOD, TO THE DIAMOND, FANS LOVE MORE THAN JUST SOCCER.

As soccer's popularity continues to surge, fans are flocking to the sport through diverse avenues, including their love for other sports. Whether it's seeing their favorite athlete attend a game or wearing a soccer jersey, or simply their general sports enthusiasm extending to soccer, sports have a unique way of uniting people and drawing them into the soccer community.

## HOW SOCCER STACKS UP

How do soccer fans rank their love for soccer compared to other sports? We asked them to rate 12 sports from their favorite to their least favorite. Unlike last year's report, we differentiated between professional and collegiate football and basketball.

Here's what they revealed about the sports they ranked among their three favorites:



Among all soccer fans, pro football still reigns supreme—but soccer isn't too far behind. Nearly three-quarters of all fans included pro football among their three favorite sports, while over half included pro basketball.



## *NO TWO AUDIENCES ARE THE SAME*

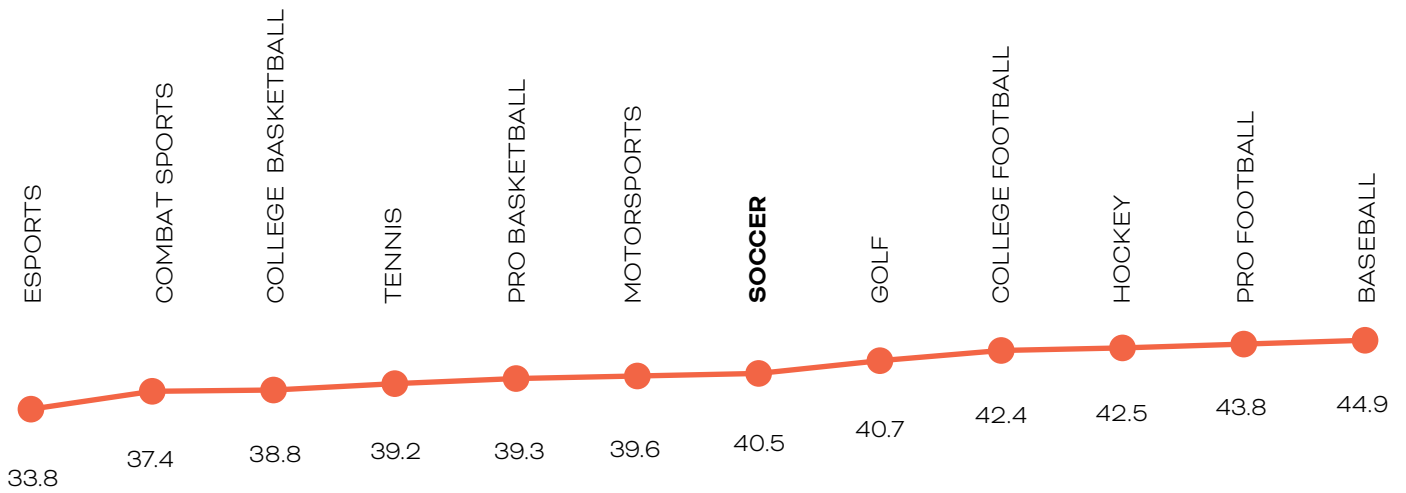
We know what soccer fans enjoy outside of soccer, but there's more to the story—the audiences that prefer pro football, for example, differ from those who favor combat sports or motorsports.

Let's dive into this from two perspectives: first, the average age of fans who included certain sports in their top three, and second, how different fan segments compare in their fandom relative to all soccer fans. Some noteworthy insights emerge.



## AVERAGE AGE OF FANS WHO LIKE CERTAIN SPORTS

Average ages of those who like certain sports run the gamut. For instance, soccer fans who listed baseball among their top three favorite sports have the oldest average age. On the flip side, those who included esports in their top three are the youngest.



One insight worth calling out is the positioning of basketball—both college and pro—relative to hockey, football, and baseball. Among the traditional “Big Four” sports, the average age of soccer fans who included basketball among their three favorite sports is under 40 years old.

Looking for the perfect crossover pairing with soccer? Consider leaning into basketball.



## HOW DIFFERENT SEGMENTS INDEX IN SPORTS FANDOM

So, baseball fans tend to be older, while esports and combat sports fans skew younger. Age provides valuable insight for targeted crossover marketing, but it's just one part of the story.

To paint a fuller picture of crossover sport interest, let's review various fan segments and how they over- or under-index in their fandom of certain sports compared to all soccer fans.

	GEN Z	MILLENNIAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	NEW ARRIVAL	ESTABLISHED	MALE	FEMALE
PRO BASKETBALL	99	110	75	154	106	96	102	106	90
COLLEGE BASKETBALL	121	98	92	157	70	115	93	97	105
PRO FOOTBALL	67	94	106	100	92	99	100	111	81
COLLEGE FOOTBALL	83	102	114	112	62	108	96	108	86
BASEBALL	79	78	107	76	118	95	103	101	99
HOCKEY	95	76	128	63	80	96	102	91	114
COMBAT	120	110	81	116	125	106	97	100	99
ESPORTS	132	140	99	81	112	100	100	107	88
MOTORSPORTS	108	97	104	88	95	115	93	97	103
GOLF	74	126	133	54	55	99	101	113	73

Think about this through a marketing lens. Suppose you're crafting a campaign aimed at targeting Gen Z soccer fans, but not exclusively through soccer. Our survey results indicate that esports, college basketball, and combat sports are prime sports to leverage, given that Gen Z soccer fans over-index in their fandom of each.

If your focus is on Black soccer fans, consider leveraging pro and college basketball, along with combat sports, to significantly boost your chances of capturing their attention.

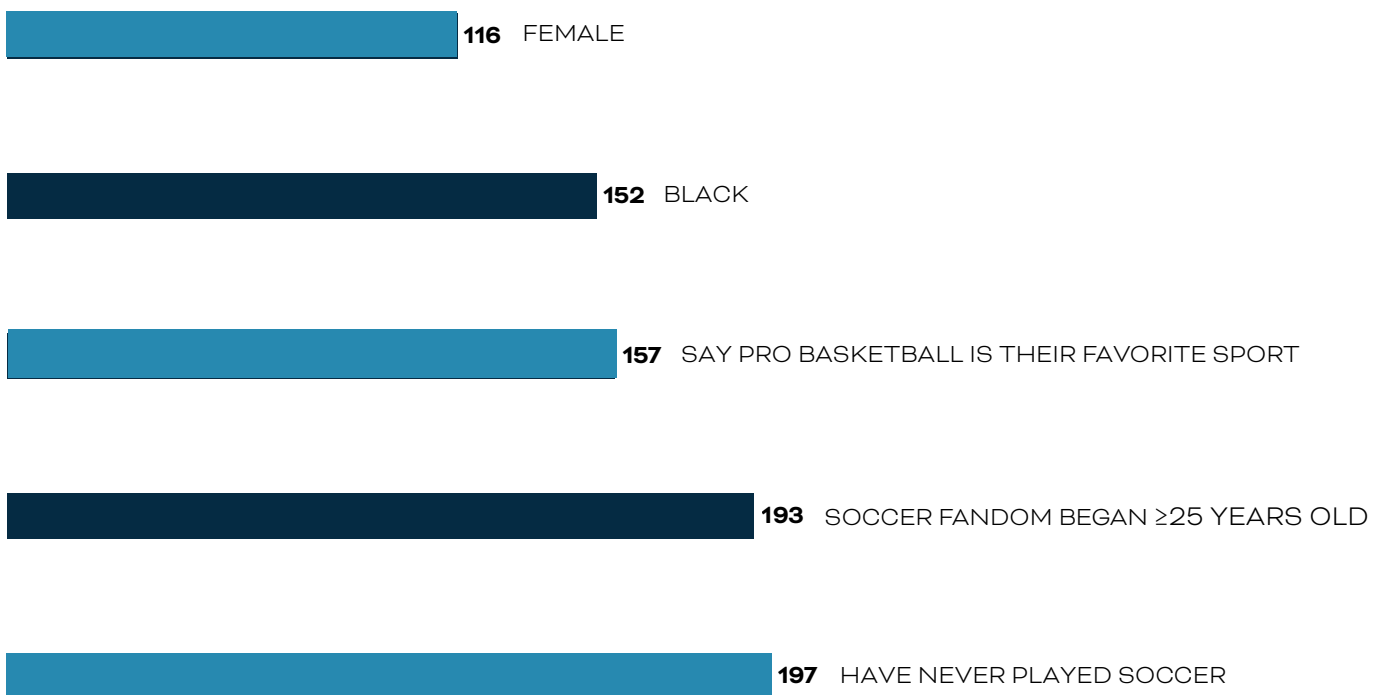
## SPORTS FANDOM AS A MEANS FOR SOCCER FANDOM

Soccer fans aren't just soccer fans, of course. Whether they're NFL enthusiasts who toured Stamford Bridge while in London for a game, or their favorite NBA player is a part-owner of a soccer team, many people are discovering soccer through their broader sports interests.

Earlier, we revealed how fans are finding the game. Notably, 17% of soccer's newest fans cited their general sports fandom as a primary entry point into soccer—the second most popular choice, right behind family connections.

Given that general sports fandom is a significant gateway for new soccer fans, let's shine a spotlight on these newcomers. Who are they? How old are they? How diverse are they? Understanding these demographics is crucial because there are even more potential fans out there waiting to be converted.

### INDICES OF NEW ARRIVAL FANS WHOSE MAIN ENTRY IS GENERAL SPORTS FANDOM



To summarize the select indices, in a comparison to all soccer fans, those new to soccer thanks to their fandom of other sports are more diverse and more likely to have found soccer after age 25, to have never played soccer, and to say professional basketball is their favorite sport.

**BODYARMOR**  
Sports Drink  
**CREATORS CUP**



# BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

SOME BRANDS GO HAND-IN-HAND WITH SOCCER.  
HERE ARE THE MOST NOTABLE.

## *THE BRANDS SHAPING SOCCER'S FUTURE*

The United States of Soccer report underscores a key message we've championed for over a decade—soccer in America represents a tremendous commercial opportunity.

Now is the moment to seize it. Unlike other American sports, soccer offers brands a unique chance to engage authentically while the sport's fan base is still evolving. This is your opportunity to make a genuine impact and help shape the future of soccer fandom in America.

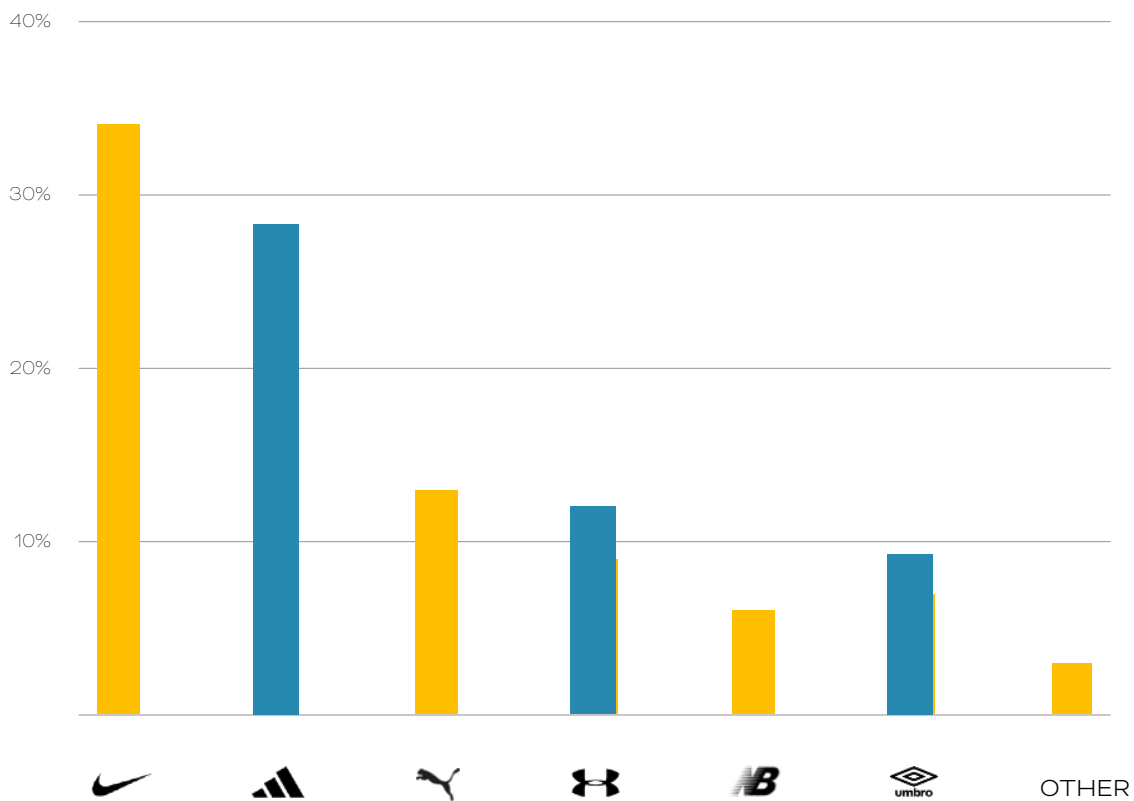
In Chapter 6, we spotlight the brands currently making waves in soccer. From iconic apparel leaders like Nike and Adidas to influential non-apparel giants like Pepsi and McDonald's, this section reveals which brands resonate most strongly with soccer fans.

Eager to connect with a youthful, diverse, and inclusive audience? Reach out—we're excited to discuss these opportunities with you.



# BRANDS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH SOCCER

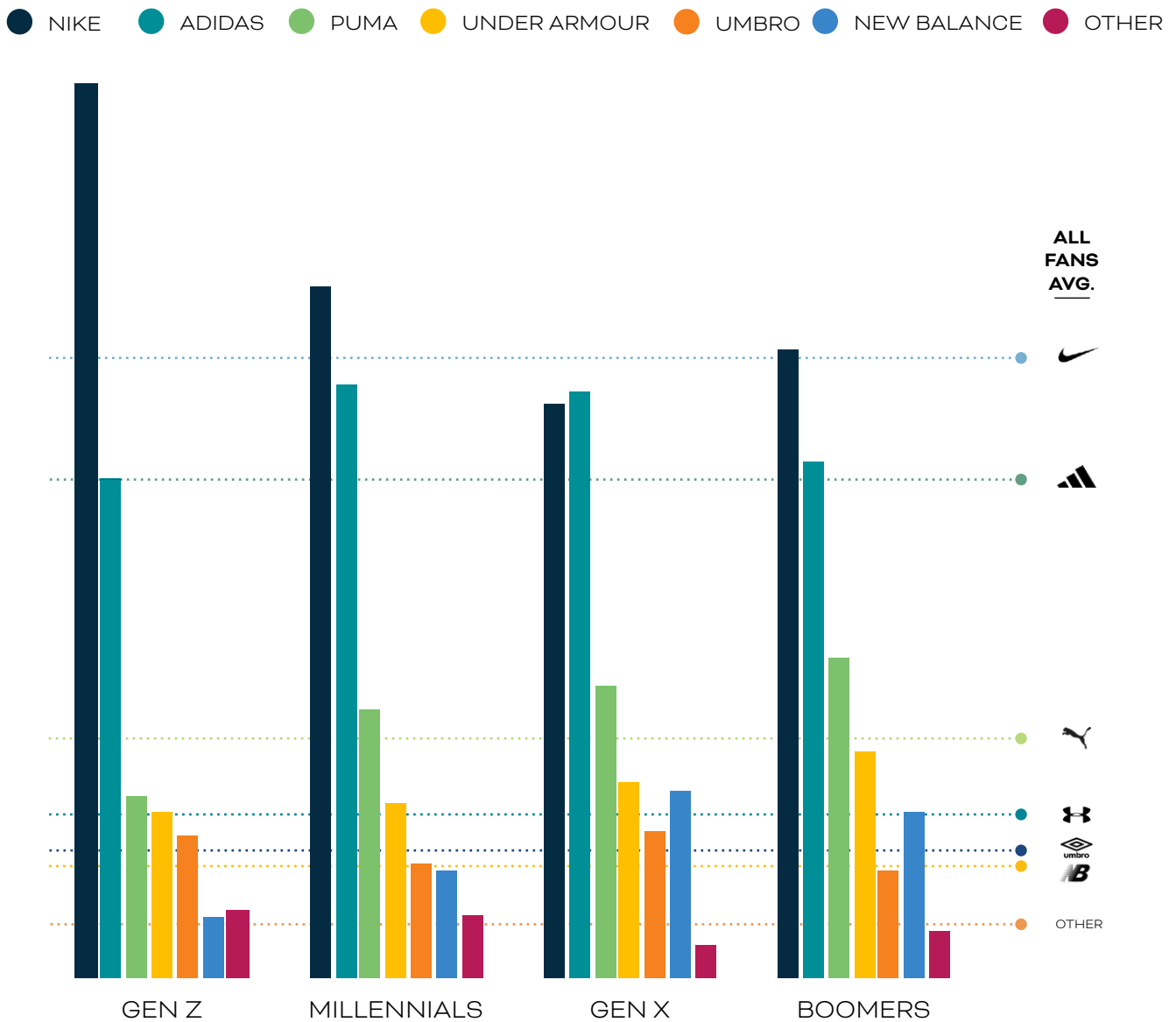
When you think about soccer, which apparel brand immediately comes to mind? We asked fans and, to no surprise, two brands dominate the market. Nike and adidas together capture over half of all mentions, with Nike alone commanding more than a third of responses.



## THE APPAREL BRANDS GENERATIONS LINK WITH SOCCER

But what if we look at how each generation perceives these leading apparel brands? There are distinct differences in which brands Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers most associate with soccer. Below we've illustrated each generation's perception of brand association relative to all soccer fans.

Nike is the most commonly associated brand with soccer for Gen Z, Millennials, and Boomers, while adidas is the most associated for Gen X. Interestingly, PUMA's and Under Armour's association with soccer decreases with each successive generation.





# NON-APPAREL BRANDS AND SOCCER

Soccer has a unique and infectious fan culture that exists both on and off the field. This creates ample opportunities for non-apparel brands to connect with fans.

We asked fans to identify up to five of these non-apparel brands they most associate with soccer. Many of the popular brands, seen below, are new to the sport, while others have been involved for decades.



# *CONNECT WITH SOCCER'S EVOLVING FAN*

As soccer's influence continues to expand in American pop culture, understanding the evolving fan remains crucial. This report has provided a comprehensive look at American soccer fans, detailing their demographics, behaviors, and the factors shaping their connection to the sport.

In addition to revisiting core insights, we've explored new dimensions of fandom, including how new fans are engaging with soccer, the preferences of avid versus casual fans, and the impact of age on team loyalties. We've also examined soccer's effect on streaming services and more.

We hope these insights empower you to connect more effectively with today's soccer enthusiasts. This report is the result of collaborative efforts from several For Soccer contributors. Please connect with the dedicated team to dig in further.

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## **ABOUT FOR SOCCER**

For Soccer is the preeminent North American soccer marketing, media, and experiences company, focused on accelerating the growth of soccer by delivering unique soccer experiences to brands, fans, and players through research and insights, experiential and event marketing, content, partnerships and sponsorships, and properties (Alianza de Futbol and Black Star).

For more information, visit [www.forsoccer.com](http://www.forsoccer.com).

# *ON THE FIELDS & IN THE STANDS*

Insights drive action. Our custom research, including this census, reveals evolving fan and player motivations, consumption habits, and cultural influences. We enhance our findings with insights from our properties (like Alianza, pictured below, and Black Star, shown on page 16) and strategic partnerships (such as Girls Academy), as well as our engagement with soccer content. We distill the data to uncover key truths and actionable intelligence, guiding your marketing strategies.



## PHOTO CREDITS

The images you see throughout the report were contributed by photographer friends of For Soccer or were obtained through various photo library resources.

- 1 – Px Images / Alamy Stock Photo
- 2 – Cal Sport Media / Alamy Stock Photo
- 7 – Sebastian Ramirez
- 12 – Nick Carnera
- 14 – Sebastian Ramirez
- 16 – Avery Junius
- 22 – Sebastian Ramirez
- 24 – Danny Miller
- 27 – ZUMA Press, Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo
- 29 – Leonard Zhukovsky / Alamy Stock Photo
- 31 – Ben Nichols
- 33 – Kirby Lee / Alamy Stock Photo
- 36 – Aflo Co. Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Action Plus Sports Images / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Sipa USA / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Orange Pics BV / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Powerpics / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Px Images / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Sebastian Frej / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Powerpics / Alamy Stock Photo
- 37 – Pressinphoto Sports Agency / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – Kirby Lee / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – UK Sports Pics Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – SPP Sport Press Photo / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – Aflo Co. Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – DPPI Media / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – SPP Sport Press Photo / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – Kirby Lee / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – Brent Clark / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – SPP Sport Press Photo / Alamy Stock Photo
- 38 – Sportimage Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo
- 39 – Sebastian Ramirez
- 40 – Danny Miller
- 42 – Morgan Tencza
- 45 – Timothy Yoon
- 48 – Sipa USA / Alamy Stock Photo
- 50 – Nick Carnera
- 52 – dpa picture alliance / Alamy Stock Photo
- 55 – Timothy Yoon
- 57 – Gabriel Bayona
- 58 – ZUMA Press, Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo
- 61 – Gabriel Bayona
- 62 – For Soccer
- 63 – Zhamak Fullad
- 67 – SEQL

*FOR SOCCER.*

