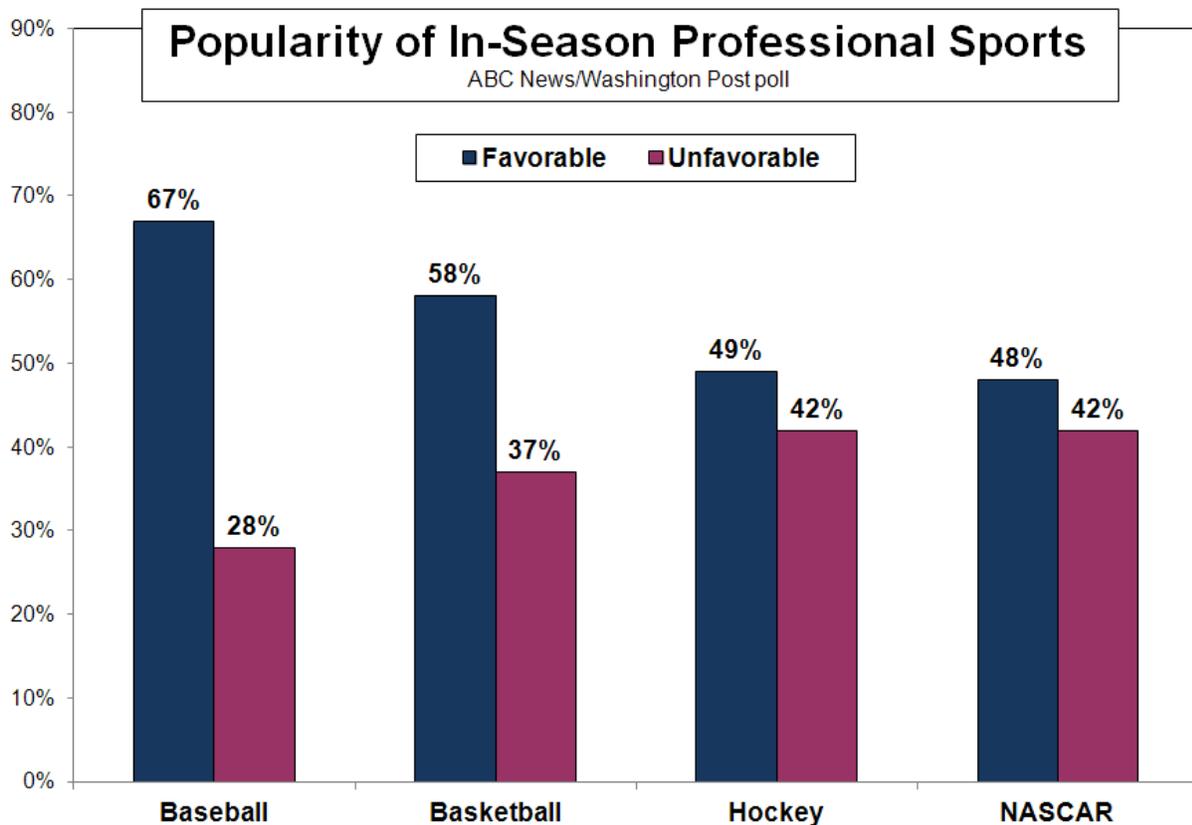


Baseball Leads, B-ball's Runner-up, While Hockey and NASCAR Lag

America's favorite pastime hits a home run in public popularity, and basketball's bouncing along nicely. But in the rink and on the raceway, hockey and NASCAR could use a little better buzz.

Two-thirds of Americans express a favorable opinion of professional baseball, vs. just 28 percent who see it negatively in this ABC News/Washington Post poll. That gives it the top spot among the four currently in-season professional sports tested.

Professional basketball's not far behind, rated favorably by 58 percent, unfavorably by 37 percent in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). Professional hockey and NASCAR draw closer calls, 49-42 and 48-42 percent favorable-unfavorable, respectively.



Favorability, not quite the same measurement as fandom, is a basic measure of public popularity, be it for a political figure, celebrity, corporation or other enterprise. For sports, of course,

positive buzz can come and go with the seasons, which is why this survey tested only those that are currently in play. Professional football, notably, is in its off season, draft aside.

There are other ways to measure success. Indeed these popularity scores – baseball on top, basketball nearby, hockey and NASCAR downfield – mirror gauges such as total revenue and average collective franchise value, again with the NFL out of the equation. Among other factors, while baseball’s ahead, basketball gets props for maintaining substantial popularity despite a lockout that shortened the current NBA season.

The two tiers in overall ratings are reflected in strength of sentiment. About equal numbers of Americans see baseball and basketball “strongly” favorably – 26 and 23 percent, respectively. Those slip to 14 and 16 percent for hockey and NASCAR.

There’s also a sizable contingent of general sports enthusiasts. One in five adults has a favorable opinion of all four sports; half as many, about one in 10, dislikes all four.

RACE and POLITICS – A variety of factors go into views of these individual sports. Notably, among them, are political and racial divisions in views of NASCAR and basketball.

NASCAR pulls ahead among Republicans, who rate it more favorably than unfavorably by a 28-point margin, 60-32 percent. Its favorable rating slips to 51 percent among independents and drops to 39 percent among Democrats, with 52 percent unfavorable. NASCAR also does 12 and 15 percentage points better in favorability among whites than among blacks or Hispanics.

Basketball’s support profile trends in the opposite direction. It’s much more popular with Democrats – 67 percent favorable, 29 percent unfavorable – and much less so with Republicans, 45-48 percent. (Again, independents fall in between, tilting favorable, 55-39 percent.) And basketball’s far more popular among blacks and Hispanics – 87 and 73 percent see it favorably, respectively, vs. 50 percent among whites.

There are far more muted political divisions in views of baseball and hockey. Baseball has majority appeal across racial groups, though it’s 14 points more popular among whites than blacks, as is hockey by a slight 11-point margin.

	Favorable-Unfavorable Ratings			
	Baseball	Basketball	Hockey	NASCAR
All	67-28%	58-37	49-42	48-42
Democrats	67-29	67-29	47-44	39-52
Republicans	73-23	45-48	48-44	60-32
Independents	64-29	55-39	53-37	51-40
Whites	69-25	50-44	51-40	51-40
Blacks	55-44	87-10	40-53	39-55
Hispanics	63-30	73-24	46-41	36-50

OTHER GROUPS – For the two sports angling for greater popularity, hockey’s profile skews younger – it’s a slight 11 points more popular than NASCAR among 18- to 29-year-olds – while NASCAR does a dozen points better than hockey among seniors. Like hockey, professional basketball also appeals particularly to younger adults.

Perhaps surprisingly, regional differences in popularity are negligible. And there’s little to no difference between men and women in views of these sports, apart from hockey’s somewhat greater appeal to men than women.

	Favorable-Unfavorable Ratings			
	Baseball	Basketball	Hockey	NASCAR
All	67-28%	58-37	49-42	48-42
Northeast	63-30	52-44	53-43	47-43
Midwest	70-27	53-40	51-41	50-44
South	67-28	63-32	48-42	49-42
West	66-27	58-36	44-44	45-41
Men	66-28	55-40	53-39	50-41
Women	67-28	61-34	45-45	46-44
18-29	66-30	69-27	52-43	41-51
65+	65-26	56-33	38-44	50-31

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone April 25-29, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,000 adults. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: David Ford, (212) 456-7243, and Julie Townsend, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat? (ITEMS SCRAMBLED)

4/29/12 - Summary Table

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Smwht	NET	Smwht	Strongly	
a. Professional basketball	58	23	34	37	21	16	5
b. Professional baseball	67	26	40	28	16	12	5
c. Professional hockey	49	14	35	42	23	19	9
d. NASCAR	48	16	32	42	23	20	10

*** END ***