

ABC News.com blog item – 6 a.m. 7/26/12

Olympics are Seen Broadly Favorably, Even Without Rafalca Fever

Americans are favorably anticipating the Olympics in general, and the swimming competition in particular. But Rafalca fever hasn't exactly gripped the nation.

Seventy-two percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll express a favorable opinion of the upcoming London Olympics overall, and 79 percent see the swimming competition favorably. Far fewer, 47 percent, hold a positive view of the horse-riding competition called dressage, in which a horse co-owned by Mitt Romney's wife, Ann, is competing.

The horse, Rafalca, has been the subject of some political debate: The Democratic National Committee last week pulled a television ad showing the horse prancing around (an allusion to Romney's position on releasing his tax returns) after Ann Romney, in an ABC News interview, discussed how she has found dressage therapeutic in dealing with her multiple sclerosis.

While dressage is hardly a household word, it's notable that more Americans see it favorably than unfavorably as an Olympic sport by 20 percentage points, 47-27 percent – a testament, perhaps, to the strength of the Olympic brand. The rest, another 27 percent, have no opinion in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#).

Inescapably, there's a political component to these views: Democrats are 15 points more likely than Republicans to see dressage unfavorably, 34 percent vs. 19 percent, with independents positioned almost exactly between the two. Democrats still see dressage more favorably than unfavorably, albeit by a scant 8-point margin. That widens to 23 points among independents and 30 points among Republicans.

There are no major political divisions on the 2012 games overall, or on the widely popular swimming competition (think Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte). There differences relate to education: Favorable views of the Olympics, and of Olympic swimming, are about 15 points higher among adults with at least an undergraduate degree than among those who haven't been graduated from college.

The overall popularity of the swimming competition shows in "strongly" favorable views of that sport, 41 percent, compared with 29 percent strongly positive views of the Olympics overall. Again fewer, 16 percent, see the dressage contest strongly favorably. Perhaps a medal-winning performance by Rafalca, ridden by her co-owner, Jan Ebeling, could change that; at least, it may provide some respite to the presidential horse race here at home.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone July 18-22, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,021 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 Gary Langer.

Full results:

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

7/22/12 - Summary Table

	---- Favorable ----			--- Unfavorable ---			No
	NET	Strgly.	Smwt.	NET	Smwt.	Strgly.	op.
a. The summer Olympic Games in London	72	29	43	16	11	5	12
b. The Olympic swimming competition	79	41	38	11	6	5	10
c. The Olympic horse-riding competition called dressage	47	16	31	27	16	11	27

*item a always presented first; items b and c rotated.