

2026 NATIONAL
BENCHMARK STUDY

RESIDENT SENTIMENT

— TOWARDS —

SPORTING EVENTS



PRESENTED BY



SPECIAL SECTION
2026 FIFA World Cup™
Sentiment

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2026 Resident Sentiment Towards Sporting Events
National Benchmark Study is proudly presented by



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key Insights	3
Section 1 - General Sentiment	7
Section 2 - Desired Outcomes by Event Tiers	13
Special Section - 2026 FIFA World Cup Sentiment	19
Conclusion & Let This Study Work for You	25

WELCOME!

2026 NATIONAL BENCHMARK STUDY

And just like that, the joint teams at two of the nation's leading sport and tourism research firms, Longwoods International and Cimarron Global Solutions, are back with the second edition of the 2026 Resident Sentiment Towards Sporting Events National Benchmark Study, presented by Miles Partnership.

Just over a year ago, we published the inaugural 2025 edition of this landmark study focused on the crux of sports tourism: what residents actually think. The response was overwhelmingly positive, so we doubled down, expanded the data, and pushed harder to share the raw insights this industry needs.

As we noted last year, sports tourism is navigating a critical inflection point. The past 12+ months have only amplified the pressure. Through Cimarron's proprietary Event Tiering System and a range of tracking metrics, we're no longer guessing at what's ahead for the sector. We're seeing it.

None of this would be possible without our partners at Miles Partnership, who share our commitment to producing the best data and insights available anywhere in the industry.

For this edition, we deployed an updated and expanded survey to a representative sample of 4,000 Americans in October 2025, gauging overall sentiment toward sport, applying our Event Tiering System, and cross-referencing against the outcomes communities care about most. The result: we no longer have to guess what residents think. We know.

What follows is more data, more insight, and more actionable intelligence, all in service of improving communities through sport. Thank you for diving in.

Jennifer Stoll, PhD & Amir Eylon

**“We no longer
must guess what
residents think
about the work
we're doing.
We know.”**



Jennifer Stoll, PhD
President & CEO
Cimarron Global Solutions



Amir Eylon
President & CEO
Longwoods International

KEY INSIGHTS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

We've distilled all the data into **6 Key Insights**, which are detailed in depth on the following pages. Check them out here for a quick reference on the study's essential findings.

4,000

REPRESENTATIVE AMERICANS

surveyed across all the U.S. demographics

1

KEY INSIGHT ONE

Resident Sentiment Towards Sports Remains Strong

2

KEY INSIGHT TWO

The Overall Integrity of Sport is a Noteworthy Concern

3

KEY INSIGHT THREE

Residents Overwhelmingly Perceive an Economic Benefit from Sporting Events

4

KEY INSIGHT FOUR

Residents View Community and Youth and Amateur Sporting Events as Social and Cultural Boons

5

KEY INSIGHT FIVE

Residents Recognize the Perceived Benefits of Sporting Event-Related Media Exposure

6

KEY INSIGHT SIX

Perceived Negative Impacts of Hosting Sporting Events Should Not Be Overlooked

NUTS & BOLTS

2026 NATIONAL BENCHMARK STUDY

METHOD TO THE MADNESS

AMERICANS

We surveyed a panel of 4,000 Americans representative of U.S. demographics.

REPRESENTATIVE U.S. DEMOGRAPHICS

Our survey reflects the U.S. population by age, sex, household income, household size, and geography as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.

CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS

Our cross-tabulation data allows for next-level insights that might otherwise go undetected.

SPORTING EVENT TIERING SYSTEM

Because no two sporting events are exactly the same, we dove into the nuances of perceptions across different types of sporting events, spanning communities from small to large.

SECTIONS FOR SUCCESS

The 2026 National Benchmark Report is divided into two main sections:

1 GENERAL RESIDENT SENTIMENT TOWARDS SPORTS

Covers loads of data about sports including general sentiment, perceived personal benefits, sport participation, and the state of sports in communities.

2 RESIDENT SENTIMENT DESIRED OUTCOMES BY EVENT TIERS

This section explores resident sentiment toward sporting events by desired outcomes, using Cimarron's proprietary Event Tiering System to highlight differences in how specific types of events are perceived in the community.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLAYING FIELD

RESIDENT SENTIMENT & SPORT TOURISM

What do residents think about sporting events taking place in their communities?

RESIDENT SENTIMENT

What residents think about tourism. This has emerged as an essential Key Performance Indicator.

SPORTS TOURISM

Continues to grow as an important sector for destinations nationwide. Like traditional tourism, we want to support positive outcomes and mitigate negative ones. We must continuously demonstrate the value of sport tourism.

THIS STUDY

Is the overlap of Resident Sentiment and Sports Tourism!

HOW RESIDENT SENTIMENT SUPPORTS YOUR DESTINATION

- 1 Supports Destination Stewardship
- 2 Improves Sustainability
- 3 Enhances Economic Development
- 4 Informs Master Planning

THE MEGA DEAL ABOUT THE MEGA DECADE

We're now well underway into the decade of several major and mega events to be held on U.S. soil. The 2025 Ryder Cup and 2025 FIFA Club World Cup are in the rear view, and the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup is now upon us! Quickly around the corner include the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, CA, and the 2034 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Salt Lake City, UT, with several others in between. The impacts of many of these events are no longer speculations but now rolling into reality... for the good or the bad!

GENERAL SENTIMENT TOWARDS SPORTS

A FORCE FOR GOOD

Americans overwhelmingly believe sports unite people, strengthen communities, and create positive impact in countless ways.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

This first section covers a variety of key metrics regarding sentiment of sport. From a national level to a community level, and even down to the personal level, these metrics provide an intriguing backdrop as to how Americans currently view many aspects of the sports sector.

89%

Believe sport can unify people and communities

87%

Believe sports positively impact individuals

86%

Think sporting events are good for their state

86%

Think sporting events are good for their community

84%

Believe sporting events positively impact their community

79%

Believe their state benefits from a strong sporting event industry

STRONG SENTIMENT TOWARDS SPORT

Residents continue to see the positive impact of sports in their lives, communities, and the country.



RESIDENT SENTIMENT TOWARDS SPORTS REMAIN STRONG

Resident sentiment toward sports is overwhelmingly positive, with strong agreement that sports unify communities (89%), positively impact individuals (87%), and benefit their state (86%). Perceptions of sporting events also outperform tourism overall, with residents more likely to say sporting events benefit their state (86% vs. 72%) and that their positives outweigh negatives (78% vs. 65%).

INTEGRITY OF SPORT

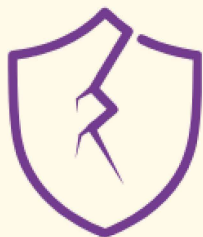
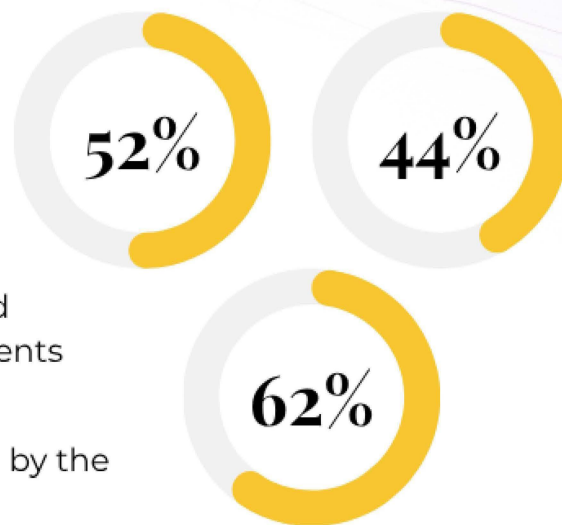
While Americans value sports, concerns about integrity and ethics remain significant.

POINTS OF CAUTION

Only **52% of respondents** feel sporting events are being conducted with a high level of honesty and ethics.

Additionally, the fact that **44% of respondents** viewed cheating/corruption as being prevalent in sporting events is a worrisome metric.

Finally, only **62% of those surveyed** were encouraged by the future of sport.



TRUST IS THE WEAKEST DIMENSION

Only 52% believe sporting events are conducted ethically, and 44% believe cheating is prevalent, **indicating a credibility gap that could undermine long-term support.**

KEY INSIGHT TWO

THE OVERALL INTEGRITY OF SPORT IS A NOTEWORTHY CONCERN

While 78% of respondents agree that the benefits outweigh the negatives regarding sporting events, only 52% agree that sporting events are conducted with honesty and ethics. Overall, Americans love sports and believe in their social value, but the perception of a lack of integrity in sports is a noteworthy concern.

SUPPORT ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

BROAD SUPPORT FROM ALL AGES

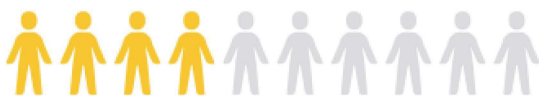
Across nearly every item assessing General Sentiment Towards Sports metrics, majorities in all generations agree or strongly agree that sporting events provide both individual and community-level benefits. For example, two-thirds (66%) of respondents who previously and/or currently participate in sports agree or strongly agree they receive personal benefits from participating in sport activities, and nearly three-fourths (73%) of respondents believe their community provides adequate physical education opportunities for its youth.

SUPPORT FOR WAGERING DROPS WITH AGE

This is one of the clearest generational divides.



Gen X, Gen Z & Millennials: ~61–67% support (agree or strongly agree) legal sports wagering in their state.



Boomers: ~40% support (agree or strongly agree) legal sports wagering in their state.

RELATED STUDY

A recent study by Dwyer (et al. 2025) revealed that younger bettors show stronger impulsivity, overconfidence, and illusion of control, which drive higher betting amounts. Older bettors display reduced cognitive distortions and greater awareness of uncertainty, leading to more cautious betting behavior and lower support for legalized sports wagering, reflecting a generational shift toward risk aversion as individuals age.

GENERATIONS

GEN Z (18-28)

Digital natives, social media era, smartphones

Millennials (29-44)

Digital growth, experiences, internet, 9/11

GEN X (45-60)

Independence, MTV, adaptability, PC era

Boomers (61-79)

Postwar prosperity, loyalty, civil rights, moon landing

FUNDING & PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC FUNDING

I support public funding for youth and amateur sports facility development in my community.



I support public funding to host sporting events in my state.



I support public funding for professional sports facility development in my community.



PERSONAL BENEFITS OF SPORT PARTICIPATION

Base: Respondents who have or currently participate in recreational or competitive sports

I receive personal benefits from participating in *sport activities*.



I receive personal benefits from participating in *sporting events*.



Sport participation is an important part of my life.



YOUTH SPORTS IN COMMUNITIES

BENEFITS OF SPORT PARTICIPATION FOR CHILDREN

Base: Respondents with children who have or currently participate in recreational or competitive sports

Sport participation is an important part of my child(ren)'s life.



My child(ren) receive personal benefits from participating in *sporting events*.



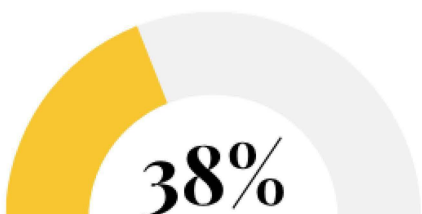
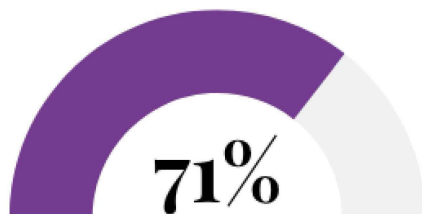
My child(ren) receive personal benefits from participating in *sport activities*.



YOUTH SPORTS COST CONCERNS ARE HIGH ACROSS ALL AGES



A majority in every generation believes youth sports are becoming too expensive. When surveyed, 68% to 75% of respondents agree or strongly agree.

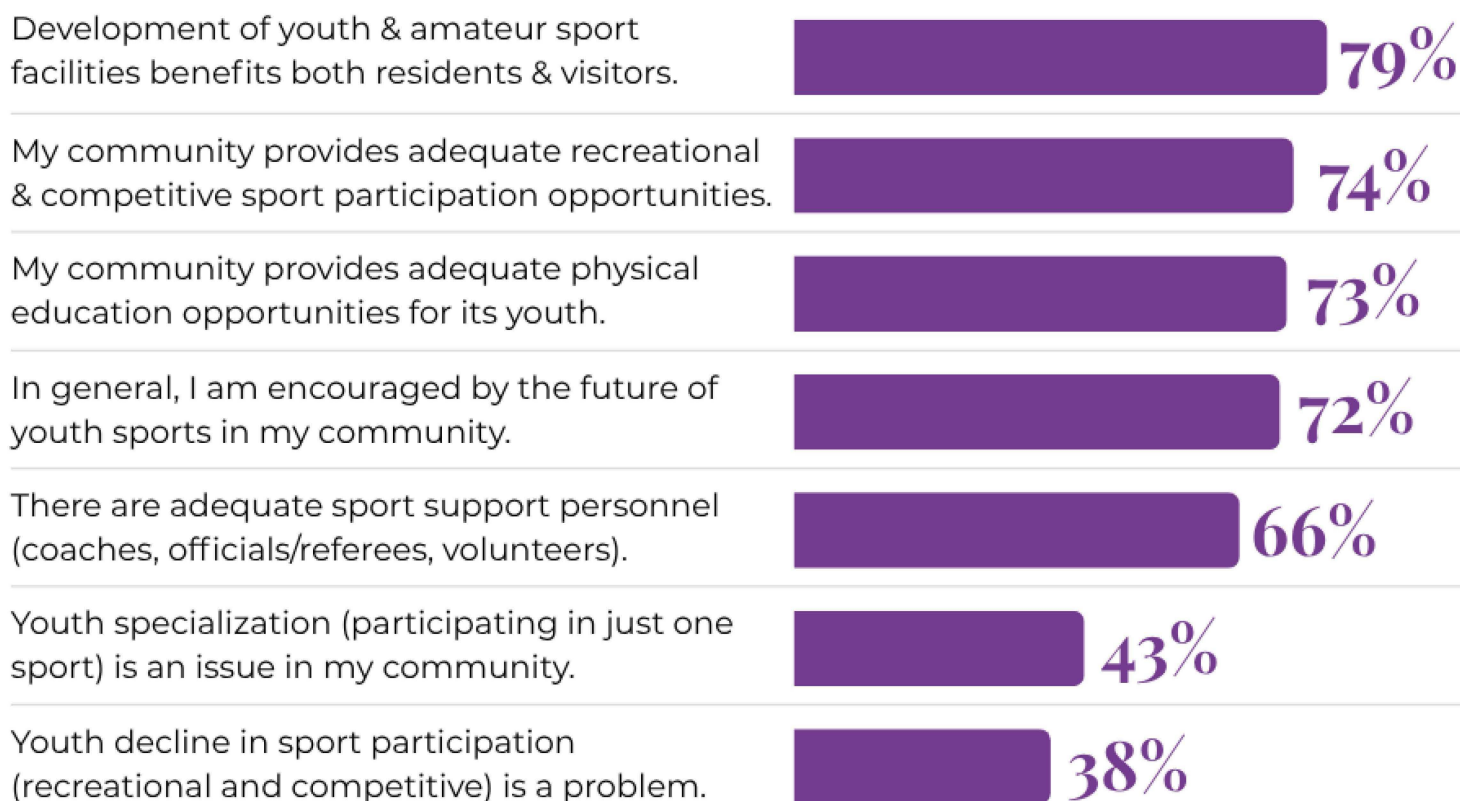


A CONCERN TO NOTE

Affordability concerns are rising: **71% say youth sports are becoming too expensive**, suggesting cost barriers may be driving the low concern about youth participation decline (**38%**)—**people may see the issue but feel powerless to address it.**

STATE OF SPORTS IN COMMUNITIES

STATE OF SPORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY



YOUTH & AMATEUR SPORTS

Americans see **youth and amateur sports as the most universally beneficial tier**—economically, socially, and culturally. This is the strongest consensus area in the entire dataset.

DESIRED OUTCOMES BY EVENT TIERS

A NEW VIEW ON THE DATA

Section 2 explores how residents perceive the impacts of different types of sporting events—from local community races to global mega events. The study examines how each event tier performs across key outcome categories including economic, exposure, social and cultural, and infrastructure and environmental impact.

DESIRED OUTCOMES	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4	TIER 5
	Mega	Major	College & Professional	Youth & Amateur	Community
Economic	●	●	●	●	●
Exposure	●	●	●	●	●
Social & Cultural	●	●	●	●	●
Infrastructure & Environmental	●	●	●	●	●

CIMARRON'S PROPRIETARY EVENT TIERING SYSTEM

Tier 1 – Mega Sporting Events

Global events with international audiences and massive media attention.

Tier 2 – Major Sporting Events

High-profile annual events with major attendance and media coverage.

Tier 3 – College & Professional Sporting Events

Regular college and pro events with strong spectator interest.

Tier 4 – Youth & Amateur Sporting Events

Amateur competitions featuring local and traveling participants.

Tier 5 – Community Sporting Events

Local recreational events focused on community participation.

Learn More



ECONOMIC IMPACT COMPARISON

Exploring several factors related to perceptions of economic impact, or the return on the investment (ROI) generated by hosting sporting events. These impacts include elements such as spending, overnight visitors, job creation, and more.

HOSTING THIS TIER OF SPORTING EVENTS...

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4	TIER 5
	Mega	Major	College & Professional	Youth & Amateur	Community
Benefits the local economy.	89%	91%	91%	84%	89%
Increases spending by visitors in our community.	90%	90%	90%	82%	85%
Results in more visitors staying in our local accommodations.	89%	90%	88%	76%	81%
Creates more local jobs.	84%	85%	81%	65%	69%
Generates tax revenue for my community that would not otherwise occur.	84%	86%	84%	73%	77%
Attracts too many visitors making it difficult for residents to enjoy local restaurants and businesses.	53%	46%	40%	38%	36%

PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS

KEY INSIGHT THREE

RESIDENTS OVERWHELMINGLY PERCEIVE ECONOMIC BENEFIT FROM SPORTING EVENTS

Across all tiers, residents agree or strongly agree sporting events benefit the local economy, with 89–91% agreement for Community, Collegiate/Pro, Major, and Mega events.

Most people watch Major and College/Professional sporting events—but far fewer travel to them, thus reducing the potential economic impact of sporting events. In other words, greater economic impact is achieved when people travel to sporting events to participate or spectate, not when they watch them from home. While there

are numerous contributing factors for these decisions, ticket and/or travel cost, event location, and perceived

safety at sporting events, all impact residents' decisions to attend games in person.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
	Mega	Major	College & Professional
Watching on TV or Online	32%	68%	59%
Traveling to Attend	7%	29%	30%

YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON

More respondents watched College/Professional and Major sporting events on TV/online than they did in 2024. College/Professional sporting events viewership is up five points (59% in 2025 vs. 54% in 2024), with Major sporting events up 7 points (68% in 2025 vs. 61% in 2024). These remain the two most popular categories of events when it comes to TV or online viewership.

89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that hosting Community sporting events benefits the local economy (up 4 points over the 2024 study).




POINTS OF CAUTION

Despite the sheer volume of these tiers of events, resident perception of job creation is notably lower for Community (69%) and Youth & Amateur (65%) events.

73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Youth and Amateur sporting events generate tax revenue for their community that would not otherwise occur, demonstrating their awareness of the perceived financial impacts of hosting this tier of event.

While hosting sporting events may boost economic benefits, residents report much higher congestion concerns for Major (46%) and Mega (53%) events than for smaller events. Operational impact should be assessed in proportion to both event and community size. For example, a large Youth and Amateur event can still create significant congestion in a smaller host community. Residents should weigh event size and type against local infrastructure and support capacity rather than event tier alone.

ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

-  Economic optimism is universal, but perceived benefits scale with event tiers. Larger events are seen as stronger economic engines. However, numerous research studies dispute the accuracy of economic gains among Major and Mega events. It is important to understand that actual performance does not always correspond with projected economic performance, and local officials must utilize honest evaluation to provide prudent stewardship of public resources.
-  Mega events trigger the highest resident burden, with 53% saying they attract too many visitors, making it difficult for residents to enjoy local restaurants and businesses, signaling a tradeoff between economic gain and quality-of-life strain.
-  Sports consumption is high, but travel is limited—likely due to cost, time, accessibility, and economic and geopolitical climate. This gap is important for tourism and event-hosting strategy.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPACT

Beyond solely economic impact, hosting sporting events can also drive return on mission, or ROM, initiatives such as increase in participation, enhancement of quality of life, civic pride, or increased volunteerism. Sometimes deemed “intangible benefits” of sports, this subsection explores resident sentiment towards a variety of these ROM factors.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4	TIER 5
Hosting this tier of sporting events...	Mega	Major	College & Professional	Youth & Amateur	Community
Creates opportunities for local sport participation.	72%	76%	77%	89%	89%
Helps develop local sport programming in my community.	74%	76%	79%	85%	86%
Improves the quality of life for residents in my community.	66%	69%	70%	73%	73%
Creates opportunities for residents to connect with one another.	82%	82%	85%	87%	89%
Improves the health and wellness of my community.	65%	66%	68%	78%	77%
Enhances the sense of pride in my community.	85%	83%	84%	84%	83%
Creates long-term positive impacts for my community.	76%	80%	82%	84%	84%

KEY INSIGHT FOUR

RESIDENTS VIEW COMMUNITY, YOUTH AND AMATEUR SPORTING EVENTS AS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BOONS

Community and Youth & Amateur events consistently outperform larger sporting events in perceived social and cultural benefits. For example, though a relatively narrow spread, 89% of respondents agree or strongly agree Community events create opportunities for residents to connect with one another, compared to 82% for Major and Mega events.

RELATED STUDY

Xu and Sato (2025) found that most large one-off sporting events generate only temporary economic, social, and infrastructure benefits, which fade after the event ends. In contrast, recurring events create longer-term social and tourism benefits by building familiarity, community attachment, and ongoing resident engagement.

YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON

86% of parents agree their children benefit from sport participation, down slightly from 89% in 2024. While still highly positive, this decline is worth monitoring given growing reliance on the Youth & Amateur Sports sector.

POINTS OF CAUTION

Resident perceptions of community health benefits decline as event size increases. Youth & Amateur events received stronger ratings for quality of life (73%), health and wellness (78%), and long-term community impact (84%) than mega events (66%, 65%, and 76%).

ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Bigger events are not always perceived as better, with social benefits declining as event size increases.
- ★ Community-level events are viewed as the “sweet spot” for social cohesion and participation, while larger events are often prioritized for economic impact. A balanced event portfolio should aim to maximize both return on mission (ROM) and return on investment (ROI).

RELATED STUDY

Deloitte (2026) found sports districts are increasingly being designed as year-round community hubs that provide jobs, youth programs, wellness initiatives, and neighborhood revitalization. As public investment grows, long-term community impact is becoming just as important as financial return.

RESIDENT SENTIMENT TOWARDS THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP™

The expanded 48-team, 104 match 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup is upon us! For the first time, this mega event is being held across three countries and 16 host cities.



WHAT THE RESULTS MEAN



Overwhelmingly positive sentiment exists among Americans toward the U.S. hosting the FIFA World Cup, ranging from 63-80% across all metrics with **the highest benefit being perceived opportunity for cultural engagement**. This finding highlights the interest respondents have in the multi-cultural aspect of this worldwide mega event.



Despite reported rising costs, **respondents are still favorable that the FIFA World Cup will result in long-term economic benefits for the U.S.** Bear in mind, these results do not mean there will be long-term economic benefits, but rather respondents thought there would be at the time of data collection. It's important to recognize those are two different things.

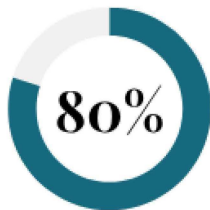


For a country that prides itself on, well, pride, it seems interesting that **slightly less than 70% of respondents expressed pride that the U.S. is hosting the FIFA World Cup**. While still favorable towards this metric, we'll have to wait and see how the event unfolds.

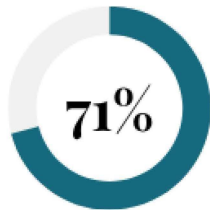
HOSTING ACROSS THREE COUNTRIES



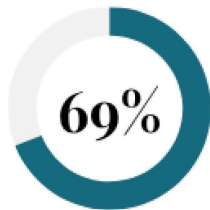
HERE'S WHAT AMERICANS THINK ABOUT KEY ASPECTS OF THE EVENT



80% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that hosting the FIFA World Cup **will create cultural engagement opportunities.**



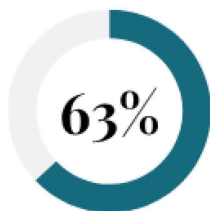
71% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that hosting the FIFA World Cup **will result in long-term economic benefits.**



Just over two-thirds of respondents (69%) either agreed or strongly agreed that **they are proud the U.S. is hosting the FIFA World Cup.**



While another 69% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that hosting the tournament **will result in long-term positive impacts** and just about two-thirds believe hosting the event **will improve the U.S.'s image.**



The lowest level of agreement came in at 63% of respondents who either agree or strongly **agree the U.S. is prepared to host the FIFA World Cup.**

REPUTATION, MEDIA & EXPOSURE

Visibility for a community derived from hosting notable sporting events is often one of the key decision-making drivers for hosting and investment. But what do residents think about the reputation, media, and exposure impacts of hosting sporting events? This outcome subsection dives into several key metrics.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4	TIER 5
Hosting this tier of sporting events...	Mega	Major	College & Professional	Youth & Amateur	Community
Improves my community's image to residents.	80%	80%	80%	79%	79%
Improves my community's image to visitors.	85%	85%	84%	81%	81%
Raises awareness about all my community has to offer.	84%	83%	80%	80%	81%
Gives people a reason to visit my community who wouldn't otherwise visit.	91%	89%	89%	82%	83%
Creates media exposure (TV, newspapers, social media, online, etc.) for my community.	91%	90%	86%	72%	76%

Major and Mega sporting events are viewed as the strongest brand builders, generating the highest levels of community awareness and media exposure among all event tiers.

KEY INSIGHT FIVE

RESIDENTS RECOGNIZE THE PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF SPORTING EVENT-RELATED MEDIA EXPOSURE

Reputation and exposure benefits increase with event size, peaking with Major and Mega events. For example, 91% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Mega events create media exposure, compared to 76% for Community events.


INTEGRATING MEDIA REACH TO TOURISM

A December 2025 article from Miles Partnership "[Scoring from International Sporting Events](#)" highlights how international sporting events offer destinations a rare chance to reshape and elevate their global reputation by placing them at the center of massive, multi-platform media coverage. Broadcast visibility, digital storytelling, and social media amplification can introduce a destination's culture, attractions, and identity to millions who may have never considered visiting. The article emphasizes the importance of integrating this invaluable media reach in practical ways with the tourism industry and community including official or unofficial fan zones or watch parties at local bars and restaurants, suggested itineraries or touring routes around the event(s), and cooperative marketing opportunities for local businesses to reach sporting event visitors.

POINTS OF CAUTION

Resident perception that sporting events improve the community's image to residents is relatively flat across tiers (79–80% agree or strongly agree), suggesting limited differentiation.

ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

 Major and Mega events are the strongest brand builders, driving the highest awareness (Major: 83% and Mega: 84%) and media exposure (Major: 90% and Mega: 91%) according to **respondents who agree or strongly agree these benefits are realized when their communities host events at this tier level.**

INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL

Beyond ROI and mission-related outcomes, sporting events affect residents through infrastructure and environmental changes. Some of these impacts are discussed below.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4	TIER 5
Hosting this tier of sporting events...	Mega	Major	College & Professional	Youth & Amateur	Community
Negatively impacts the local environment in my community.	40%	35%	29%	26%	28%
Should promote environmentally friendly practices among spectators and participants.	76%	73%	72%	72%	74%
Creates too much congestion and strain on my community's infrastructure (e.g., roads, traffic, emergency services).	50%	45%	37%	29%	33%



KEY INSIGHT SIX

PERCEIVED NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF HOSTING SPORTING EVENTS SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED

Environmental and congestion concerns rise sharply with event size. Mega events show the highest perceived negative environmental impact at 40% (agree or strongly agree) and the highest congestion strain at 50%. People like the prestige and economic upside of Mega events, but they're far more worried about downsides compared to smaller events. **This suggests communities may support Mega events only with strong mitigation plans.**

POINTS OF CAUTION

Environmental impact concerns: **35% of respondents agree or strongly agree Major sporting events negatively impact the local environment** and this number rises to 40% for Mega events.

45% of residents agree or strongly agree Major sporting events create too much strain on their community's infrastructure strain and 50% have similar concerns about Mega events.

ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

★ Mega events carry the heaviest perceived burden, with half (50%) of respondents citing infrastructure strain. This percentage dropped by 4 points compared to the 2024 study.

★ Support for environmentally friendly practices is strong, with 72–76% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing eco-friendly practices should be promoted. Sustainability is now a baseline expectation, not a bonus.



CONCLUSION

Photo by Fancy Crave

There you have it, another compelling round of research by the Longwoods International and Cimarron Global Solutions teams shedding more light on the foundations of the sports tourism industry. While this report contains only a fraction of the intelligence to be gained through our custom data pool, we've done our best to distill it down to the essence of critical datapoints and analysis our team of experts see impacting the industry today, and in the future.

There is no doubt resident sentiment toward sports overall, and sporting events is high; however, this report has revealed that when you dig beyond the impressive numbers, factors such as negative impacts, integrity of sport, and generational trends are lurking under the surface deserving due attention. Sports and sports tourism can be catalysts for tremendous good in a community, when stewarded appropriately.

As this sector continues to grow, the impacts – both good and bad – become magnified. Like any ecosystem, it's delicate and should be handled with care so as not to negate the positive desired outcomes. Data from this report are key tools for practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of what their core constituencies – their community's residents – think about sporting events taking place in their locale. The information contained in this report is a vital resource to monitor and refine industry practices to achieve the overall goal: improving communities through sport!

LET THIS STUDY WORK FOR YOU

Like any research, the data and insights contained in this report are only as valuable as your ability to use it. So here are some tips on how:

1. COMPARE TO 2025 STUDY RESULTS

They say three's a trend... and we're almost there! The next iteration of this report will allow our research team to draw on trends, but this second year of the study allows for important year-over-year (YOY) comparisons that may provide advance clues of trends to watch in the future.

2. USE DATA FOR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

There are two sides to the advocacy sword: First, use strong data to support the efficacy of your work. Second, just as importantly, identify perceived weaker data to glean insight as to where your work – or its message! – is lacking support.

3. DISCOVER INDUSTRY NUANCES

Look beyond simply the main data point and ask yourself “why?” this may be the case. Remember, there are real people with real thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs behind this data, so take the time to go a step further in your understanding of their responses.

4. DRIVE BETTER BUSINESS DECISIONS

Don't “set it and forget it”. As you explore deeper meaning here, and ponder our expert key insights, use that information to make changes in your operations and then measure shifts in results.

5. DEPLOY WISER STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

Remember, you are likely a steward of your community's resources, so you have a profound obligation to use them wisely. Use this report to glean insight as to where those resource may need adjusting.

ABOUT CIMARRON & LONGWOODS



LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

Longwoods International is a leading travel and tourism research consultancy with headquarters in Columbus, Ohio and Toronto Canada, and offices in Indiana, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. It conducts Longwoods Travel USA®, the largest ongoing survey of American travelers, as well as image, advertising effectiveness, advertising return on investment, sentiment, and other custom research in 12 countries around the globe.



CIMARRON GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

Cimarron Global Solutions is the sport and tourism industry's leading research, strategy, and advisory company. Established in 2024 by Dr. Jennifer Stoll, Cimarron is committed to providing customized insights and forward-thinking strategies tailored to meet the distinctive challenges of the sport and tourism sectors. They are not just trendsetters; they are shaping the future of sport and tourism. Rooted in integrity, teamwork, and an unwavering pursuit of excellence, Cimarron empowers organizations to thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

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