

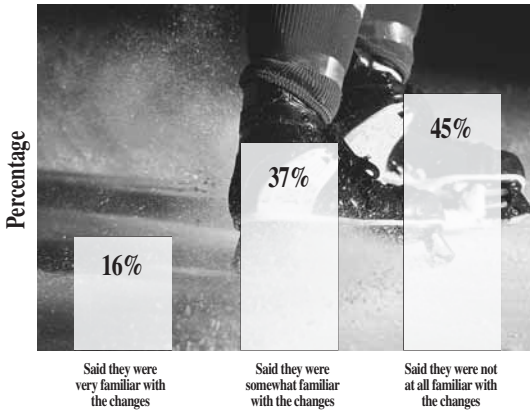


# Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

**E**dmontonians have always had a fondness for hockey. The entry of the Oilers into the National Hockey League for the 1979-1980 season was a dream come true. The 2004-2005 year saw a hiatus in NHL hockey, coming back as a “new” NHL. In this month’s *Poll Station*, we asked people about the new NHL and their predictions for this year’s Edmonton Oilers.

## ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH NHL RULE CHANGES?



First we asked respondents how familiar they were with changes implemented to the NHL as a result of the league lock-out in 2004/2005. Sixteen percent said they were very familiar with the changes implemented. A further 37 percent indicated they were somewhat familiar, while 45 percent said they were not at all familiar.

Respondents were then presented with two of the more prominent changes. First, they were asked about the shoot out. Almost half (48 percent) said the shoot out has had a positive impact on the game. Only eight percent suggested the shoot out has had a negative impact. More than one-third of respondents (35 percent) were unsure.

Next, respondents were asked to comment on the impact the salary cap has had on the game. Over two-thirds (68 percent) felt this had a positive impact on the game, while 22 percent were unsure.

Respondents were then asked whether they thought there were other changes that made the game better. Over one-third (39 percent) said yes. These respondents were then asked what those changes were. The elimination of the two-line pass and a reduction in fighting were identified by

almost one-third (31 percent) of this group. Other mentions included a faster game (23 percent) and stricter refereeing (13 percent).

## DO YOU PLAN TO ATTEND ANY OILERS' GAMES?

Respondents were asked whether they had purchased tickets to the Oilers' games this season. Four percent had purchased season tickets, two percent had purchased mini-packs, and two percent had purchased individual game tickets already. However, despite these smaller numbers, over one-third (37 percent) were planning on attending at least one game this season.

The 63 percent of respondents that had no plans to attend a game this season were asked for their reasons. Forty-three percent said the expense of attending the games was a main reason, another 37 percent simply had no interest in hockey, and 10 percent said they prefer to watch the games on television in the comfort of their homes.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS YEAR'S TEAM?

Finally, respondents were asked to comment on this year's version of the Oilers. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), almost half (45 percent) rated the team as a 4 of 5. In fact, 17 percent predicted the team will win the Stanley Cup, with another 18 percent saying the team will make it to the finals but not win.

*Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research and Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll? Contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at [lbanner@edmontonians.com](mailto:lbanner@edmontonians.com). Visit [www.banister.ab.ca](http://www.banister.ab.ca).*