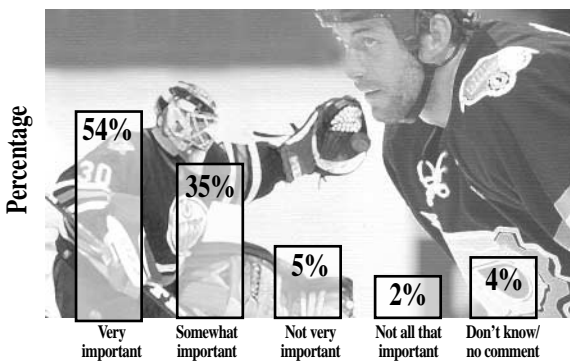


Edmontonians' poll station

By Linda Banister

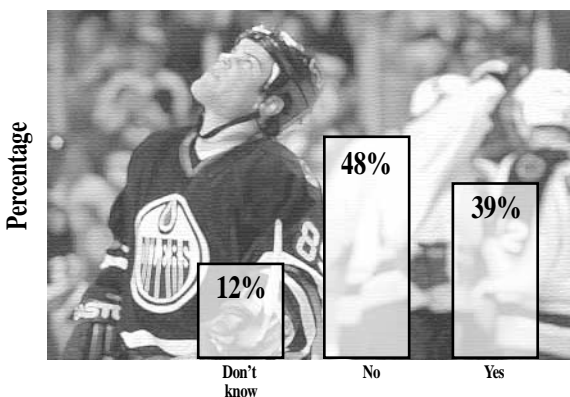
From about mid-April to mid-June, life across Canada seems to grind to a halt as people from coast-to-coast settle into their easy chairs to watch the Stanley Cup Playoffs. While Edmontonians were ecstatic about their beloved Oilers being back in the playoffs, sadly they were eliminated in an exciting first round duel. So as we watch the remaining teams battle it out for the infamous cup, this month's *Poll Station* focuses on the importance of the Edmonton Oilers to this city, their fate in the NHL and some other issues facing the league.

HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU FEEL THE EDMONTON OILERS ARE TO THE CITY?



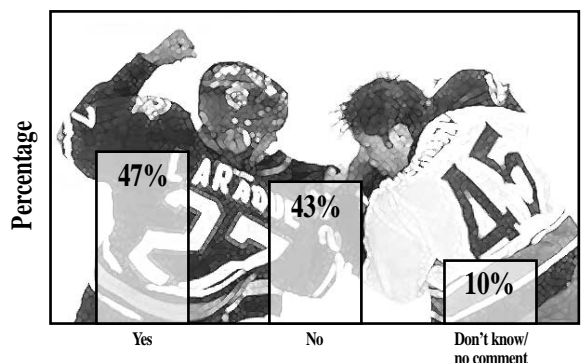
The vast majority of respondents (89%) felt that the Oilers are either very or somewhat important to the City of Edmonton. Only seven percent of respondents felt the Oilers were of low importance to the city and four percent were unsure. When asked why the Oilers are so important, almost half (48%) of respondents felt they contributed to a sense of pride and spirit within the community. Other reasons were the positive economic impact the team has on the city (37%), the exposure the team gives the city on a national and international level (30%), the entertainment value they provide (9%) and the importance of having a professional sports team (3%). Those who felt the Oilers are not very important to the city were generally not sports fans or felt that too much money goes to supporting the team.

DO YOU FEEL THAT EDMONTON IS IN DANGER OF LOSING THE OILERS?



Almost half of all respondents (48%) feel Edmonton will not lose the Oilers, while 39 percent felt the Oilers are in danger of leaving town. Twelve percent of respondents were unsure of the team's fate. When asked what more could be done to keep the six Canadian teams financially viable within the NHL, the most frequent suggestion was to cut player salaries and implement a league salary cap (40%). Other suggestions provided by respondents included increasing government support through lotteries (18%), generating more fan support through greater promotion (9%), lowering ticket prices to make the game more accessible to fans (6%) and implementing a league-wide, profit-sharing system (4%).

HAS THE SPORT OF HOCKEY BECOME TOO VIOLENT?



When asked if the game of hockey has become too violent, respondents were relatively split as 47 percent felt it is too violent, and 43 percent felt it is not. Eighty-two percent of those who feel the game has become too violent felt stronger measures should be taken by the league to curb violence. Respondents were asked if the NHL should make it mandatory for all players to wear protective facemasks to reduce injuries to the eyes and face. Sixty-two percent of respondents agreed that use of facemasks should be enforced, while 26 percent did not think it was necessary.

The *Poll Station* surveyed 100 City of Edmonton residents on the topic and while the results of the research are not statistically reliable, they do provide a qualitative indication of what Edmontonians are thinking. ✓



Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research & Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians

Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at research@banister.ab.ca. For further information on the firm visit www.banister.ab.ca.