

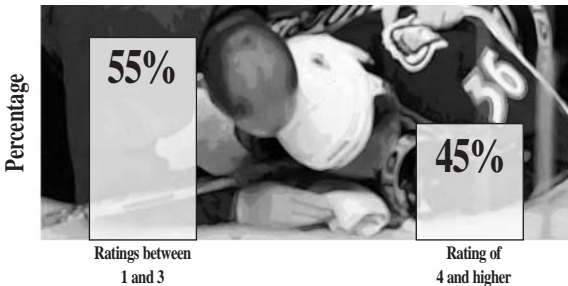


Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

The world of professional sports can be fierce. As the level of intensity increases on the playing field, so do tempers flare. The sport doesn't seem to matter, players and fans alike are getting caught up in the emotion of the game and, as we've seen in just the past year, the results alarm. This month, the Poll Station, asked Edmontonians their views on the level of violence in professional sports and the effect that it has on sports and youth.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT VIOLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS?



First, respondents were asked how concerned they were with the current level of violence in professional sports, using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means not at all concerned and 5 means very concerned. The main level of concern was 3.1 out of 5, with almost half (45 percent) of all respondents providing a rating of 4 or 5, or high concern.

WHICH INCIDENTS DO YOU RECALL?

When respondents were asked if any specific incidents came to mind when they heard the term “violence in professional sports”, over three-quarters (76 percent) were able to recall a specific incident. Of these, the incident involving Todd Bertuzzi of the Vancouver Canucks attacking Steve Moore of the Colorado Avalanche from behind was the most cited response (78 percent). This was followed by the high-stick to the head by Marty McSorley on Donald Brashear (17 percent), and this season's brawl involving both fans and players during a Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers basketball game (16 percent).

When asked how concerned they were, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 meaning not at all concerned, and 5 meaning very concerned, that a Bertuzzi-Moore kind of incident would occur again, respondents were relatively neutral in their level of concern (mean of 3.38). Similarly, respondents were moderately concerned that an incident such as the one that occurred during the Pistons-Pacers game would transpire again (mean of 3.33).

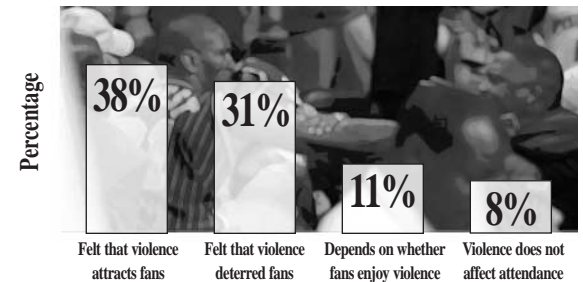
HOW SHOULD VIOLENCE BE REDUCED?

When asked if violence in professional sports should be reduced, the majority of respondents (78 percent)

felt that it should be. Suggestions to reduce the violence included instituting longer and harsher penalties, including criminal charges (56 percent), having the referees better enforce the rules (15 percent), and making the sports co-ed (10 percent).

Respondents were then asked what type of effect they think violence in professional sports has on children and youth sports. Kids mimicking the actions of professional athletes was the most common response (59 percent), followed by athletes setting a poor example of sportsmanship (38 percent). Fourteen percent felt these incidents do not have any effects on children.

DOES VIOLENCE ATTRACT FANS?



Lastly, respondents were asked if they think these incidents attract or deter fans from coming to games. Thirty-eight percent felt it attracts fans, while 31 percent felt it deterred them. Eleven percent stated it depends whether fans enjoy violence or not, while eight percent said violence has no effect on whether they attend.

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 lbanister@edmontonians.com For further information on the firm visit banister.ab.ca.