



50%  
of Americans  
will be watching

# America's World Cup Moment

How the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup is reshaping  
soccer fandom – and what it means for brands



# America is showing up for soccer

**Half of Americans plan to watch the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup.** Despite more than 1 in 4 saying they've only recently started following soccer. And it's because of this tournament.

The Harris Poll surveyed 2,148 U.S. adults in May 2026 to understand what's driving that shift, who it's reaching, and what it means for brands.

50%

of Americans plan to watch at least one match on TV, streaming, or social media



52%

say hosting major events in North America is making them more interested in sports they wouldn't normally follow



# Who's watching—and why it matters

Soccer's World Cup audience is not evenly distributed. Three groups are driving the surge – Millennials, Hispanic Americans, and hybrid workers. They also happen to be among the most commercially valuable audiences in the U.S.

62%

of Millennials are interested

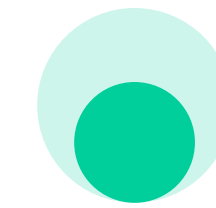
63%

of Hispanic Americans are interested

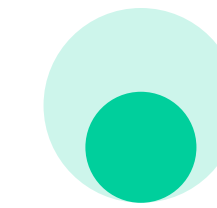
66%

of hybrid workers are interested

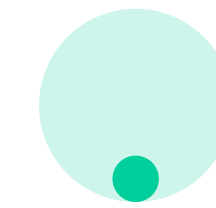
## Millennials are the core audience



62%  
of Millennials



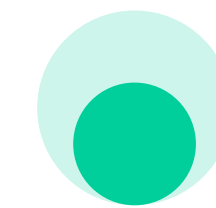
57%  
of Gen Z



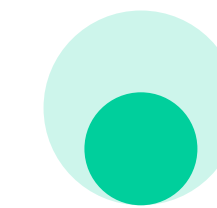
24%  
of Boomers

62% of Millennials (ages 30–45) are interested in the Men's World Cup. Gen Z follows at 57%. Only 24% of Boomers say the same.

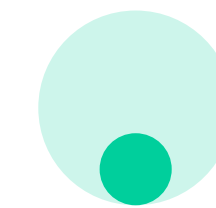
## Hispanic Americans are the most engaged group



63%  
of Hispanic Americans



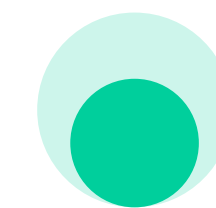
58%  
POC Americans



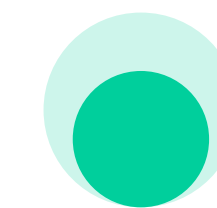
37%  
White Americans

63% of Hispanic Americans are interested in the tournament – the highest figure of any racial or ethnic group. Among people of color broadly, 58% are interested, compared to 37% of White Americans

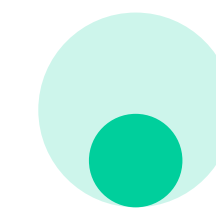
## Hybrid workers: The audience with the means to act



66%  
are interested



70%  
plan to watch



48%  
would attend

66% of hybrid workers are interested in the Men's World Cup – the highest figure of any work-location segment. They're also the most likely to watch (70%) or attend in person (48%). This is likely to be because hybrid workers tend to have greater schedule flexibility and purchasing power than fully in-person workers. For brands, that combination of high interest and high intent to attend is where sponsorship translates into real commercial reach.

# More than 1 in 4 Americans are new to soccer fandom

26% of all U.S. adults say they've only recently started growing more interested in soccer –specifically because of the upcoming World Cup.

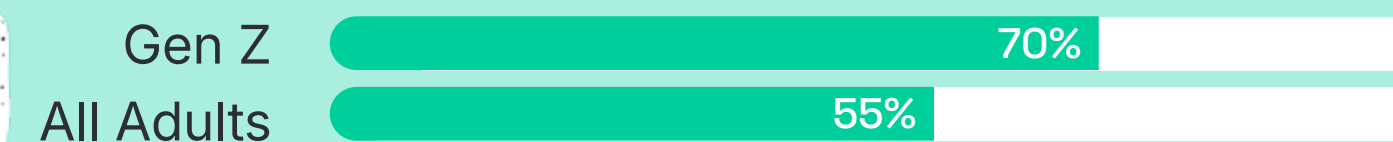
Here's what converted them.



INSIGHT

## 70% Gen Z

Social media is the #1 driver of growing interest



## WHAT'S CONVERTING NEW FANS

72% watched matches on TV or streaming

65% wanted to support the U.S. team

63% were influenced by conversations with friends and family

55% engaged with soccer content on social media

47% started following specific players or teams

47% saw brands they like engaging with soccer or the World Cup

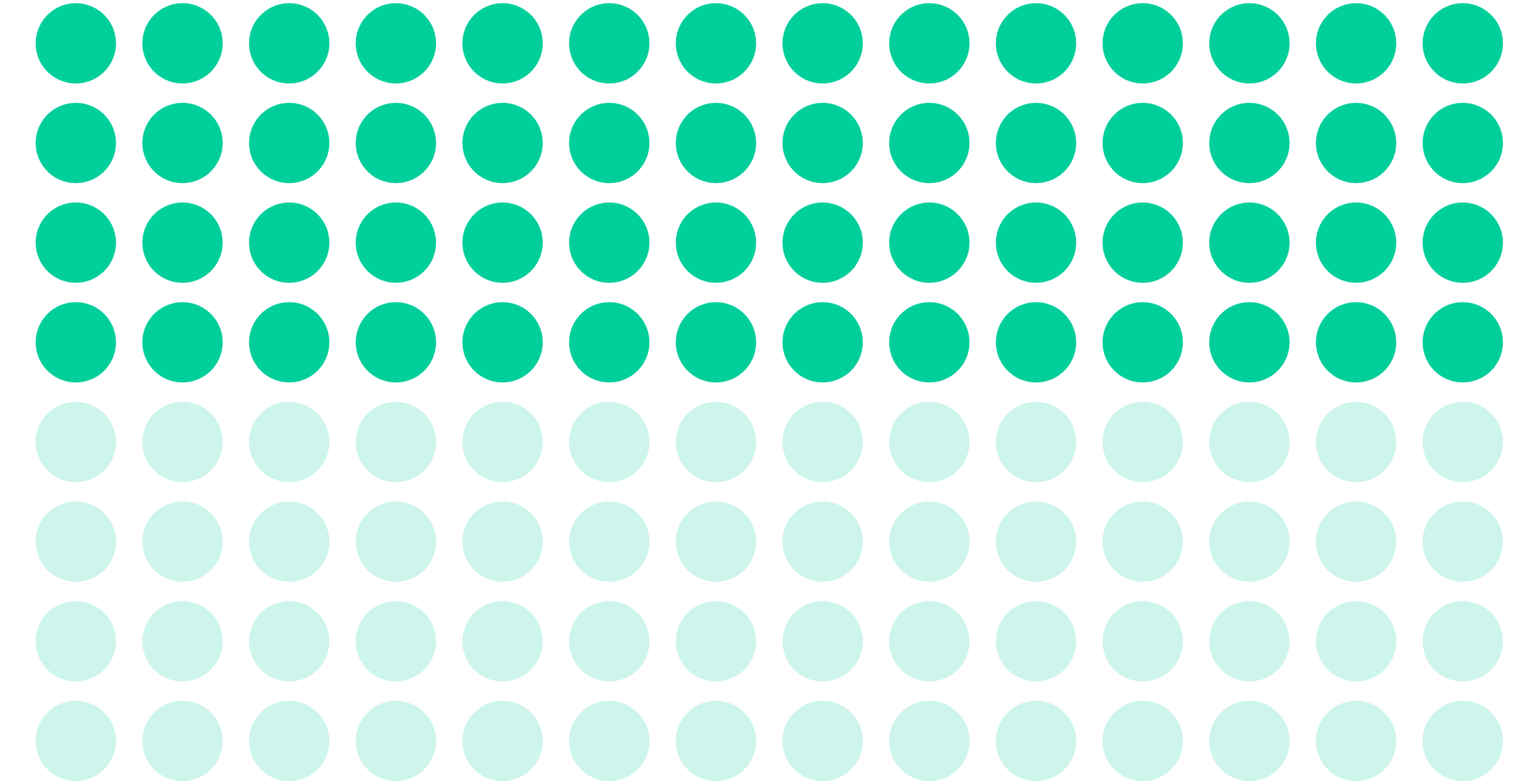
For Gen Z specifically, social media is the #1 driver – cited by 70% of new Gen Z fans, compared to 55% overall.

Brand engagement ranks alongside player loyalty as a conversion driver – both at 47%. Brands that show up for this tournament aren't just gaining visibility. They're pulling people into fandom.

# Hosting at home is an interest accelerator

52% of all adults say they're more interested in following this tournament because it's on home soil. Among Millennials and Hispanic Americans, that rises to 70%. Among dedicated fans, 84%.

The effect isn't limited to soccer fans. More than half of all Americans say hosting these events in North America is pulling them toward sports they'd never normally watch.



# 52%

say the home-hosting effect is expanding their sports interests beyond soccer

# Brand opportunity: the numbers are compelling

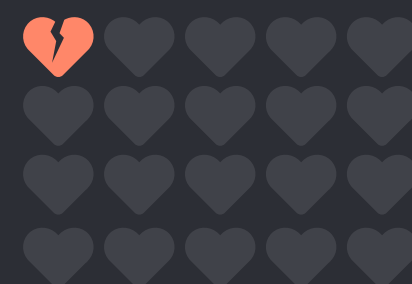
The World Cup is a commercial moment – and brands that show up benefit.

Sponsorship is being noticed – and it's changing minds. 51% of all U.S. adults say they've noticed brands sponsoring or advertising around the 2026 World Cup.

Among those who've noticed:



**50%**  
have a better  
opinion of those  
companies



only  
**4%**  
say their opinion  
has worsened

The ratio of upside to downside is **12 to 1.**



AUDIENCE SEGMENT

BETTER BRAND OPINION

Dedicated soccer fans



**72%**

Hybrid workers



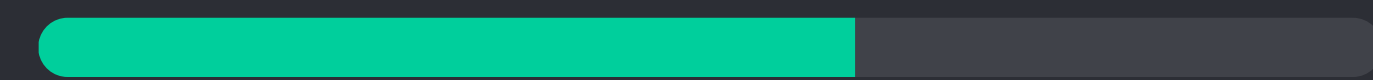
**66%**

Millennials



**62%**

Hispanic Americans



**62%**

All adults who noticed



**50%**

aramco



VISA

JACQUEMUS



ABInBev



Coca-Cola



# Fans want their brands involved

# 85%

of dedicated fans say they hope their favorite brands get involved with the World Cup

LOEWE



# 50%

of all Americans say they hope their favorite brands get involved with the World Cup in some way



With the Women's World Cup in 2027 and LA28 to follow, brands that use this moment to build genuine audience relationships – not just tournament visibility – are the ones best positioned for what comes next.

LOOKING AHEAD

# 2027, 2028 and the sports super cycle

The World Cup doesn't close a chapter. It opens one. The U.S. is entering an unprecedented run of major international sporting events on home soil – and our data shows audiences are already primed for it.

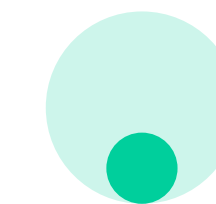


## The Women's World Cup in 2027

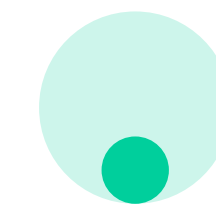
39%

of all U.S. adults are already interested in the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil – before the 2026 tournament has even finished converting new fans.

### Interest by audience



37%  
of Millennials



35%  
of Hispanic Americans

The 2026 tournament is creating a new audience. The question for brands is whether they're in the room when that audience arrives in 2027.

# The LA28 Olympics: A bigger opportunity still

# 64%

of Americans are interested in the 2028 LA Summer Olympics – making it **the most anticipated international sporting event** of the next three years.



2026  
World Cup

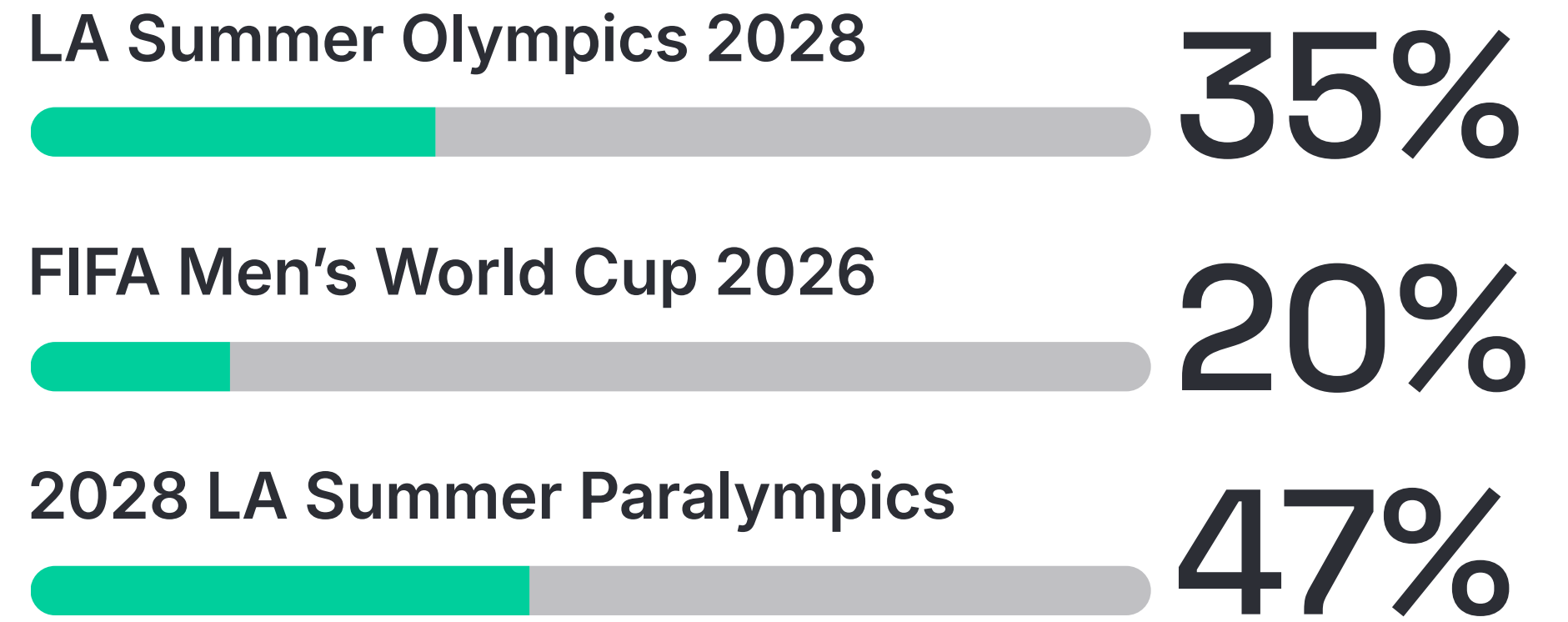


2027  
Women's World Cup



2028  
LA Olympics

"WHICH EVENT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?"



52% of all Americans say hosting major international sporting events in North America is making them more interested in sports they wouldn't normally follow.

**That's not a World Cup effect – it's a home-field effect that runs through 2028 and beyond.**

# What's changed since our last report

The Harris Poll published our [Soccer Fandom Report in 2025](#). The 2026 data doesn't just update those findings – in several areas, it accelerates them.

## 2025 FINDING

**17%**  
increase in soccer fandom since 2020

**45%**  
said their interest in soccer was increasing

**70%**  
of soccer fans more excited because it's in North America

## 2026 UPDATE

**27%**  
of Americans say they're more interested in soccer now than a year ago

**26%**  
now self-identify as newly growing fans specifically because of the World Cup

**52%**  
of all adults – not just fans – say hosting here has made them more interested in sports generally

## TOP CONVERSION DRIVERS FOR NEW FANS

**32%**  
World Cup was the #1 fandom entry point

**72%**  
TV/streaming

**65%**  
U.S. team pride

**55%**  
social media

54% of fans pay attention to World Cup sponsors. 51% of all adults have noticed World Cup brand activity – and half of those have a better opinion of sponsoring brands



Jennifer Musil  
Global Head of Research,  
The Harris Poll

“The 2026 World Cup is doing something our data rarely captures in real time: converting passive observers into active fans. More than 1 in 4 Americans say they're newly interested in soccer specifically because of this tournament. That's not just a sports story – it's a signal about how major cultural moments reshape consumer behavior.”



# About the research

This survey was conducted by The Harris Poll from May 7–9, 2026, among a sample of 2,148 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. Data are weighted to be representative of the U.S. general adult population on the basis of age, sex, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, and household income.

Respondents were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The sampling precision of The Harris Poll is measured using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 2.4$  percentage points using a 95% confidence interval. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

## Dig deeper into the data

Connect with The Harris Poll team at [theharrispoll.com/contact](https://theharrispoll.com/contact)

