



SOCER'S COMING HOME

Report: An In-Depth Look at
Global Soccer Fandom in America
As the World Cup Arrives

“America has developed its own football culture, one that is global, diverse, and regionally dynamic.”

The future of football fandom is American and it looks like this.

The 1994 Men's World Cup was meant to make America a football loving nation.¹ It was a fever dream collision of 1990s football iconography and turn of the century Americana. The United States took the pitch in stonewash denim jerseys, Diana Ross inaugurated the opening ceremony by missing a penalty while clad in a strawberry red pantsuit, and a bipedal dog mascot named Striker downed Coca-Cola on the sidelines. Meanwhile, the very best the sport had to offer descended on these shores, Diego Maradona in Foxborough, Hristo Stoichkov in East Rutherford, Romario in Dallas. After Robert Baggio sent a penalty kick into the hazy Los Angeles sky, Brazil lifted their fourth World Cup trophy. Football was taking over America, or so the analysts thought.²

As we know now, there was no shortcut to grow the game in America. The World Cup circus left town and it has taken longer for today's surging audience to build. Indeed, the passion for the sport is probably all the better off for the deeper, more authentic foundations that have been allowed to grow authentically, World Cup to World Cup. The 2026 tournament may be the drop that makes the bucket overflow, but this audience – which the global football establishment has long coveted – is currently surging, on its own terms. We have often joked on our show that “Soccer is America's Sport of the Future... as it has been since 1972.” But make no mistake, that future is now.

Over the past 16 years, we at the Men in Blazers Media Network (MiBMN) have communed with it on both the Men's and Women's side of the game. We know it. It is passionate, knowledgeable, utterly



1. For those speaking about the sport in the United States, “football” and “soccer” are generally used interchangeably. Throughout this report, we will use these terms to refer to men's and women's, domestic club and international competitions. When referring to American football, we opt to distinguish by league name (NFL, NCAAF, etc.).

2. The 1994 World Cup introduced the American public to some of men's football's greatest stars. Romario (Brazil), Bergkamp (Netherlands), and Stoichkov (Bulgaria) were among the tournament's top performers, all arriving after massively successful club seasons in Europe. Collectibles from this tournament are still widely available on second hand markets, including stamps, figurines, trading cards, and ephemera.

committed, travelling globally. Yet, although it bears the hallmarks of global fandom, its greatest similarity is that it is distinctive and idiosyncratic. America has developed its own football culture, one that is global, diverse, and regionally dynamic. This study sets out to understand the habits and interests of football loving America as we await the first ball to roll in the country's second World Cup.

One of the joys of the American football fanbase is that it is passionate about its own growth, committed to forging authentic connection and building on its past. New fans from new demographics drive the conversation just as much as the ones who have been here since the beginning. This is the harmony of an inherently global game in an inherently global country. Everything is possible through it, but only for those who understand it, speak to it, and hear it authentically.

This Men's World Cup moment, so anxiously awaited and perpetually discussed, is finally here. It feels a bit like graduation day, years of hard work celebrated in one dizzying ceremony that will surely fly by in the blink of an eye. As exciting as this summer is, we are already looking toward what comes after, when the game steps into the cultural spotlight and that dream of 1994 is finally realized.

Let's go win the World Cup, together. To more.

Roger Bennett
Founder & CEO of MiBMN

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Methodology

We conducted a comprehensive survey, polling thousands of members of the Men in Blazers Media Network's audience. The survey was promoted on podcasts, newsletters, and all social media accounts across our platforms: Men in Blazers, The Women's Game, and VAMOS.

Data was collected via an online questionnaire, including a mix of closed and open-ended questions, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis through measurable data points and written feedback. Only complete questionnaires were used for the final data collection process. The survey results were then supplemented with a wider set of data provided by YouGov and the survey's data collection methodology was shared with and approved by YouGov to ensure any comparison to their existing data is valid.

The following report summarizes these findings.



Football is a gravitational force - one able to reach Gen Z in the most diverse, and passionate of ways - and we are all in its orbit as the singularity known as the 2026 Men's World Cup approaches.

When "The Men in Blazers Show" began production in 2010, the world of American soccer was a different place. Those were the days of Abby Wambach's USWNT and Clint Dempsey's Fulham, when "Tik Tok" was a Ke\$ha song and we only knew the word "peacock" as the name of a flightless bird. Cracks of Premier League daylight were just breaking through America's windows. When NBC expanded their coverage in 2013, host Rebecca Lowe said at the time: "There are a lot more Americans watching than I thought — it's a generational thing as the kids are playing in school and growing into the sport. There's a fan base that has been growing steadily over the years and you are now just seeing it."³

What we've all seen since is nothing short of a miracle. The sport has gone from niche interest to culturally dominant and everpresent. Football is a gravitational force - one able to reach Gen Z in the most diverse, and passionate of ways - and we are all in its orbit as the singularity known as the 2026 World Cup approaches.

At MiBMN, we have always tried to understand our audience directly, deeply, and honestly. We have seen this community evolve in every way, and being in dialogue with this evolution has influenced our own growth. Football is a sport imbued with story, and we have always tried to use our platform to bring that to life. More than ever, those stories are coming from within our own country, and this report represents a snapshot of what those stories look like, here on the doorstep of a once in a lifetime summer (well, maybe twice in a lifetime if you're older than 32).



The 2026 Men's World Cup will transform the way soccer is talked about and experienced in this country, without a doubt. The size, scope, and scale of the audience is poised to explode. Over the years, we have learned a lot about the task of engaging with the sport with great intention – in what ways the American fan mirrors its European or South American counterparts, and in what ways it is singular and unique.

The vibrancy of our own audience is our greatest source of truth in this process. The Men in Blazers Media Network has always operated as a two-way conversation with our community. In pursuit of this mission, we have sought to understand not just who is watching the sport, but how, why, when and where. The insights that shape that understanding are what we hope to share with this report.

We are always open to discussions and collaborations, whether that be with a player, a fan, or a brand trying to have an authentic conversation with this unique, multi-faceted, and passionate community of supporters. If you want to be in touch or share your opinion, do not hesitate to drop us a line: survey@meninblazers.com

3. Before 2013, Premier League rights in the United States were held by Fox Sports and ESPN. Prior to NBC's decision to expand coverage to all 380 matches in the Premier League season, a limited selection of matches were broadcast on cable or pay-per-view basis.

Hearts, Minds, and Screens

Simply put, football culture has penetrated pop culture and captivated the American audience.



01



Those interacting with MiBMN content, daily:

2025	28%
2024	21%
2023	19%

Source: MiBMN Survey

In 2025, football seeped into every corner of popular culture. Fashion, music, television - our beloved game is everywhere. You can't turn your head without seeing Dua Lipa at the epic Brazilian Fla-Flu game in Rio, Timothée Chalamet at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge, Arsenal's Declan Rice sitting courtside with Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk at an NBA game, and even the new mayor of NYC showing off insane ball knowledge on TikTok. As a reflection of this cultural infusion, more than ever before, the American fan is football-mad, 24/7.

While the average American sports fan might still favor the country's traditional leagues, the football watching audience is making strides in overall following. Per YouGov, soccer as a whole now boasts roughly 131 million fans in the United States and ranks 5th in overall fandom, trailing only the NFL, Olympics, MLB, and NBA.

But the size and uptick of the audience is only part of the story. Their level of passion is second to none, and the MiBMN audience is no different. Among survey respondents, football had an average ranking of 1.5 out of 10 (1 being favorite sport) with the next closest, NFL at 4.7.

At MiBMN, we have seen a steady growth in engagement that reflects that football is stuck in the American mind on levels previously reserved for Michael Buble songs during the holidays. 28% of survey respondents are interacting with MiB content on a daily basis, a 33% overall increase on our platforms since 2023. There was also a jump in those interacting weekly to 53% from last year's 49%.

Total number of fans in America, by sport:

01		NFL	170 million (169,663,382)
02		Olympics	161 million (161,266,310)
03		MLB	146 million (145,801,789)
04		NBA	134 million (134,346,235)
05		Soccer	131 million (131,498,427)

Source: YouGov

Our takeaway:

Not only is the total number of football fans growing in America, for those who follow, it is fast becoming the dominant sport of interest. And that interest is passionate, obsessive, at times insatiable. For brands seeking to engage with this fanbase, it is critical to match this level of intensity.

America's Darlings

The English Premier League and the “Big Six” continue to drive fandom and shape viewership.



02

72%

of survey takers follow
a team from the EPL

Source: MiBMN Survey

4. The English Premier League's "Big Six" teams are composed of Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United, and Tottenham Hotspur, an informal designation originating from the founding years of the league when television and media coverage in the United Kingdom was dominated by these teams.

5. Tottenham Hotspur's international fanbase grew significantly in the late 2010s thanks in part to the popularity of their attacking duo Harry Kane and Son Hueng-Min. After over a decade together at the club, both Kane and Son departed Tottenham Hotspur in recent years. Now at Bayern Munich in Germany, Harry Kane became the fastest player in Bundesliga history to reach 100 goal involvements. Son departed Tottenham as the Premier League's record Asian goalscorer, and now plays for LAFC in Major League Soccer. The impact of these players at the club was massive and it's nearly impossible to separate their departures and the subsequent league form drop-off from a drop-off in popularity.

Favoritism still rules among American football fans, and the special relationship between the Premier League and American viewers remains one of the country's strongest ties to the sport. Americans love the best leagues in the world – following the NFL and the NBA. In football, we are in a unique reality where, arguably, the best league in the world, the Premier League, is not in the United States. But, that is the one Americans love the most: **72% of survey takers say they follow a club from the English Premier League.**

This holds true for those who closely follow domestic leagues as well - 86% of MLS fans and 61% of NWSL fans say that they also follow an EPL club.

Within that fandom, the Premier League's 'Big Six' teams still loom large and have an outsized impact on it.⁴ For the MiBMN audience, the top Premier League clubs supported are Liverpool (22%), Arsenal (16%), Chelsea (13%) and Manchester United (7%).

Fandom is fluid and always changing as team's fortunes rise and fall. The teams whose popularity has grown the most since last year's survey are freshly crowned Club World Cup winners, Chelsea (fourth most popular among respondents with 9% in 2024) and Manchester United (sixth most popular among respondents with 7% in 2024). The biggest faller was Tottenham Hotspur, who placed third in 2024 with 15% of respondents but received 6% in 2025. A chaotic season which saw them end 17th in the league has dimmed enthusiasm, their success in the Europa League notwithstanding. No Son, no Kane, no party.⁵

Even as other teams have challenged the hegemony of the Premier League's traditional elite on the pitch in recent years, the "Big Six" still claimed 69% of supporters who filled out the survey, down only slightly from last year's 71%. Year over year, legacy fandom continues to deepen in the United States.



RORY SMITH
British Football Journalist
Co-Host of Men in Blazers podcast
Author of MiBMN newsletter, *The Correspondent*

"American fans might be 3,000 or more miles away from the Premier League teams they follow, but it does nothing to dilute their passion or dedication. They can watch every kick of every game, track their chosen clubs through legacy outlets and fan media, and engage with their peers from all over the world digitally. And, of course, tens of thousands make the pilgrimage to England every season to witness their team in the flesh."

The top 10 Premier League clubs supported:

01		22%	06		5%
02		16%	07		3%
03		13%	08		3%
04		7%	09		3%
05		6%	10		1%

Source: MiBMN Survey

Football, Football, and More Football

*As American interest
in the game grows,
so too does the interest
in more leagues and
teams, globally.*



03

The love of the traditionally elite Premier League teams in the US **does not** mean the country has tunnel vision when it comes to watching football. In America, a more global view of the sport is growing. Across all football leagues, fans follow a greater number of teams. In 2024, 46% of respondents indicated they actively followed three or more teams. This number is up to 54% in 2025, with 19% of respondents indicating that they somehow have the time and emotional capacity to support over five teams.⁶

Here, we find the most unique aspect of American football fandom. Picture the quintessential Chicago sports fan, who finds room in their heart and schedule to cheer for the Bears, Cubs or White Sox, Blackhawks, Sky, and Bulls. Or the similarly patchwork support in Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle, or Dallas.

In an echo of this ecosystem, American fans have carried over this “sporting polygamy.” Fascinated by the global aspect of the game, they find the bandwidth to support multiple teams, in multiple leagues, in multiple countries.

Even outside of the club environment, the average respondent actively follows **TWO** national teams, a reflection of Americans’ hyphenated identity, and possibly their lack of confidence in the US Men’s National Team (more in Chapter 6).

Our takeaway:

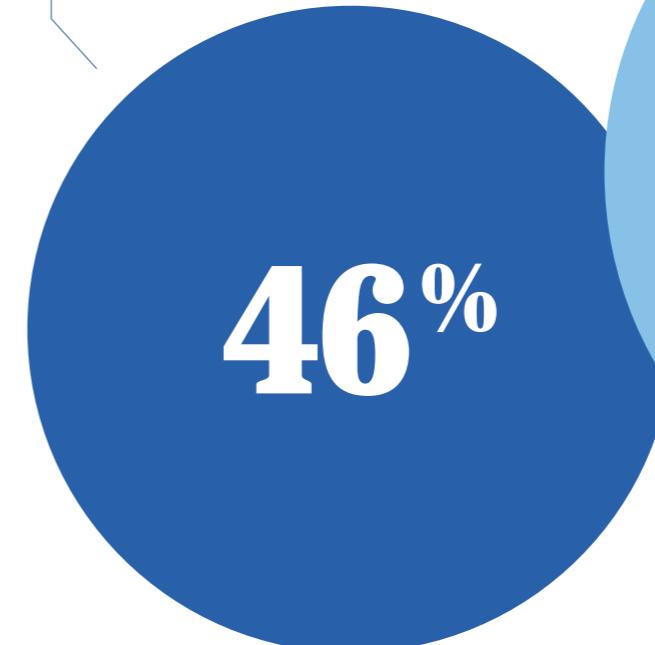
Football is an inherently global game, with more avenues than ever to engage with preferred versions of the sport in different countries, leagues, and formats. Shorn of the constraint of having to support “the local team,” the American fan has room in their heart for a dominant Premier League team, an EFL Championship contender, a team in the Italian, Spanish, or German league, a local NWSL team, and even multiple national teams. This presents a unique opportunity for these leagues, teams, and players to vie for the affections of Americans through success, access, and authentic storytelling. As Peter Drury once said, American audiences don’t want to be patronised.⁷ They want their coverage of the sport to be as nuanced as the leagues themselves.

6. Europe's five major domestic club leagues are all accessible to American viewers. Along with the English Premier League being carried by NBCUniversal's NBC, USA Network, and Peacock, Spain's La Liga (ESPN), Italy's Serie A (Paramount+), Germany's Bundesliga (ESPN), and France's Ligue 1 (beIN) all have major streaming partners in the United States. The English Football League Championship, one tier below the Premier League, also broadcasts select matches on Paramount+/CBS.

7. NBC's legendary lead color commentator and poetic genius Peter Drury has over 30 years experience in football broadcasting: “The big message I got from America was that they wanted the authentic English version of the Premier League. (They said) please don't talk to us as if we were three years old and explain the offside rule every time, please don't patronise, please do it as though you were talking to an English audience.”

More respondents are actively following 3+ clubs than last year:

2024



54 %

2025

! **19% of respondents support 5+ teams**

Source: MiBMN Survey



FABRIZIO ROMANO

Influential Football Journalist,
Global Transfer News Insider
Host of *Here We Go* on MiBMN



“American players of all levels are now highly recruited by European clubs in all leagues. Take the example of midfielder Tanner Tessman, who was wanted by Inter Milan (Italy), Feyenoord (Netherlands), and Ipswich Town (England) before choosing Lyon in France. We have seen more higher profile transfer sagas for American players than ever before, and American fans follow these movements closely, creating emotional connections to more teams as a result.”

Viewership is... Dedicated

From early morning matches to mid-day tournaments, we are increasingly scheduling our lives around the game.



04



What does this increasingly expansive view of the sport mean for our viewership style? **US fans treat football as appointment viewing**, with the sport taking a critical role in structuring our day-to-day lives. For games not taking place in the US (EPL, UEFA Champions League, Bundesliga, etc.), 78% of respondents say football is a factor in their plans. So, if you've bailed on Friday night plans to wake up for the early kickoff or called out of work to catch an afternoon match in the last year, you're in good company.⁸

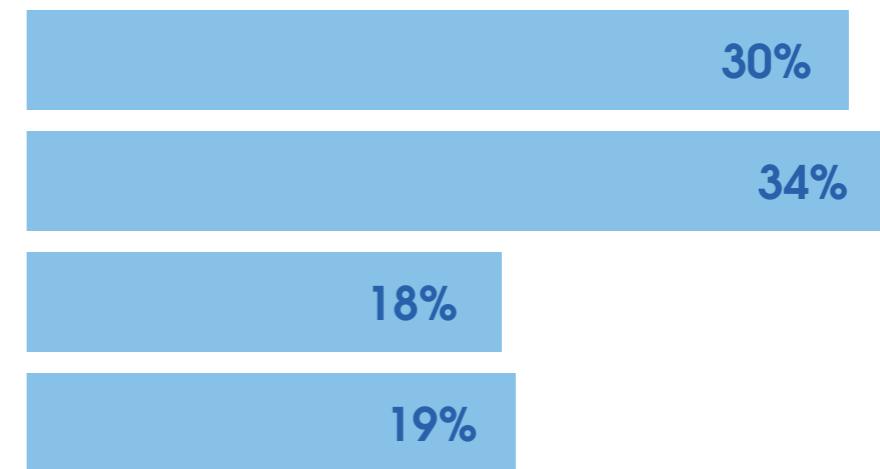
8. The scheduling of European football drives unique viewership opportunities in the United States, with domestic matches kicking off as early as 6:00 am ET on weekends. Key knock out tournaments like the UEFA Champions League kick off during the workweek, with matches ongoing from 12:00 - 5:00 pm ET.

78%

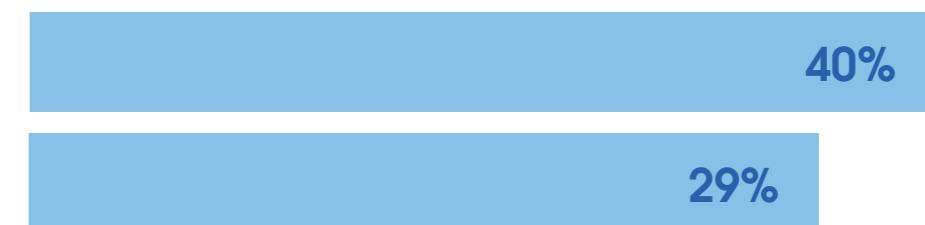
of respondents say they plan around football



For games taking place **within the United States**, Women's football fans are more likely to plan around the game (30% of NWSL fans and 34% of USWNT fans, compared to 18% of MLS fans and 19% of USMINT fans).



For games taking place **outside of the United States**, Men's football fans are more likely to plan around the game (40% of Premier League fans, compared to 29% of Women's Super League fans).



Source: MiBMN Survey

Viewership is... Unique

*Because of the distance
from the sport's home,
the American football
experience is unlike
any other.*



05

Viewership Is... Unique

Contrasted to Europe, where the football tradition has grown around full-day match day experiences in stadia and community spaces. American viewership is intrinsically different, and has built from an individualized experience. Since matches kick off in the early morning hours, solo viewing ranks as the most common way to watch a match.

This means online community spaces can be a key form of connection for American fans.

Taking the Men in Blazers Discord as a case study, matchdays see 30% more unique members participating in the conversation, driving 89% more messages per day, compared to non-matchdays.



ROGER BENNETT

Founder & CEO of MiBMN
Host of Men in Blazers



“Back before the days of streaming, broadcasters would televise a select handful of international club soccer games each weekend. This drove the storied tradition of the American soccer bar, when early adopters of the sport would gather at the watering holes reliably known to show matches at the early morning kickoff times. This unique ritual blending beers, breakfast, and a nice strong coffee has only grown stronger, as more and more bars have grown hyperlocal communities by adding football to their TVs. The love of the American soccer bar experience has taken on cult-like status and we set out each year to find the very best of the best. In 2025, out of 1,600 nominations, Atlanta’s Brewhouse Cafe was voted America’s best soccer bar by the Men in Blazers audience, which in turn led to local media coverage, a major boost in turnout, and a potential expansion to more locations.”

Overall, 60% of total weekly messages come from just those two weekend days, alone.

One thing we didn't need a survey to tell us: football is better with friends, in any form. Whether celebrating a last minute winner or commiserating a derby loss, football remains a popular reason to gather, with survey takers ranking “with friends or family at home” as the second most common match-viewing environment, and “with others at a bar or pub” third.



MiBMN Discord

60%

of Total Weekly Messages Come From Two Weekend Days

MiBMN Discord on Matchdays,
Compared to Non-Matchdays

+89% Messages

+30% Unique Member Participation

MiBMN Discord During Actual Matches,
Compared to All Other Times

+81% Messages

+200% Emoji Reactions to Messages

Our takeaway:

While the “second screen” phenomenon is old news, a digital-first matchday experience is now a key outlet. In Discord servers, WhatsApp groups, and watchalong chats, people can share pre-match nerves, realtime reaction, and post-match analysis within self-selecting communities. For many of the most engaged fans, a multiplatform experience is a must have.

Riding the Wave

Winning or losing, the United States Men's National Team captures attention and stimulates conversation, with room for growth at a pivotal moment.



06

35%

of respondents indicated specifically subscribing to HBO Max/HBO for the purpose of watching the United States international games.

Source: MiBMN Survey

9. Founded in 2007, the official fan group of the USMNT is known as the American Outlaws. As of 2025, the Outlaws have over 200 chapters and 25,000 members.

10. The USMNT will play all of its 2026 World Cup group stage games on the West Coast: June 12 at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, June 19 at Lumen Field in Seattle, and June 26 back at SoFi Stadium.

As a host nation, the United States Men's National Team entered directly into the 2026 World Cup, avoiding the turbulence of a qualification campaign. Now led by former Argentine coach Mauricio Pochettino – formerly of Tottenham Hotspur, Paris Saint-Germain, and Chelsea – the USMNT has inched towards its final form over the past year.

The US soccer audience's attentiveness to the team's activities is holding steady. Survey results show a marginal increase in interest level, with the USMNT ranking 3.27 out of 5 (5 being the highest) in 2025, up from 2.96 in 2024.

In the previous months, Pochettino has underlined the importance of an engaged and vocal fanbase to the team's performance: "We need the people. We need the fans. The fans have one year to realize how important are the fans in soccer."⁹

Major news drives how the team is viewed and engaged with. Per YouGov, 2024 showed a 21% increase in perception and interest year over year, coinciding with the arrival of Pochettino as manager. In 2025, among mixed on-field performances, perception and interest dipped by an enormous 17%. As Pochettino alluded to, consistency in broad support remains an area of growth for the USMNT.

What's certain is that, good or bad, the USMNT's performances will not fly under the radar,¹⁰ 35% of respondents indicated specifically subscribing to HBO Max/HBO for the purpose of watching the United States international games.

Perception and Interest in USMNT, YoY:

▲ 21%

▼ 17%

Source: YouGov

In 2024, perception and interest increased year over year, coinciding with Pochettino's arrival as manager.

In 2025, among mixed on-field performances, perception and interest dipped by an enormous 17%.



CLINT DEMPSEY

Former Premier League forward & USMNT Legend
Host of *The Deuce*



"Crowds make a massive difference in international tournaments. Because national teams assemble in limited windows within set cycles, the USMNT has to take every opportunity to show fans a team to get excited about. A clear identity on the pitch - grit, quality, excitement - is what convinces fans to spend their money and get to the matches. That's what I'm looking for in the remaining USMNT games before the World Cup - a team we can all get excited about."

Parallel, but Not Mirrored

Fans in the USA are not a monolith as evidenced by the distinct passions and interests of the Hispanic American audience.



07

53%

of Hispanic American fans say family tradition is the main reason they support a specific team.

Source: YouGov

11. 200%ers® is a term established by NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises. Hispanics 200%ers® are 100% American and 100% Hispanic. This means they share the values of both cultures, are bilingual, and flawlessly jump between cultures.

12. Good news for the World Cup: All five of the most populated cities for Hispanic American football fans are host cities — LA, NYC, Houston, Dallas, and Miami.

13. Top level football in Mexico reorganized as Liga MX in 2012. Historically, the most successful in the league are Club América, Chivas de Guadalajara, and Toluca. Liga MX runs in two distinct league phases, the Apertura (opening) from July to December, and Clausura from January to May. In recent years, Liga MX teams have competed against Major League Soccer teams in the summer tournament Leagues Cup.

An enormous driver of the football viewership equation in the United States has always been the Hispanic fanbase. This multinational, multicultural, and multilingual audience has given shape to the evolution of the sport domestically and our viewership globally.

Respondents identifying as Hispanic create a unique dual fandom dynamic, bridging the domestic and international cultures of two countries into one, with many falling into the category of “200%ers” — a term NBC defines as those who support the US and Mexican National Teams with 100% passion dedicated to two different causes.¹¹

The Hispanic American audience is also unique as a deeply multigenerational group. As many throughout the country are falling in love with football for the first time, within respondents identifying as Hispanic, the top reason for supporting a specific team is family tradition, with 53% saying this is how they choose their team.

And while club football remains a huge draw, the World Cup looms massively on the horizon for this group of respondents. For 200%ers, the World Cup is the top sporting event, with interest at an astronomical 89%, compared to the general US audience's 30%.¹²



HERC GOMEZ

Former striker for MLS,
Liga MX, & USMNT
Host of VAMOS



“There is a Spanish saying that goes “ni de aquí, ni de allá.” Not from here, not from there. For Mexican Americans or others in the United States with multinational backgrounds, there has long been a sense of being between unique definitions when it comes to place, identity, and belonging. When it comes to fútbol, many households hold divided support, with parents supporting one national team and younger generations supporting another. To engage with this audience requires understanding the nuance that goes into this balancing act and respecting the complexity that comes with it.”

Soccer is the top sport for the Hispanic American community:

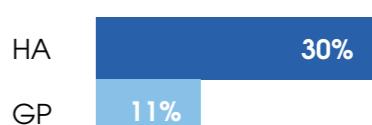
- Hispanic Americans (HA)
- General Public (GP)

Source: YouGov

Interest in men's soccer:



Interest in women's soccer:



Where is this interest directed? As expected, Liga MX overindexes with Hispanic survey respondents.¹³ Generally, compared to all survey takers, Hispanic American fans' interest is high with most leagues in the Americas.

Source: MIBMN Survey

Interest broken down by leagues in the Americas (5 being the highest):



USWNT Wins Gold

Women's soccer in America is drawing a broader cross-section of audiences than men's.



08

Within the varied and diversified map of interests across American soccer fans, the US Women's National Team emerges as a singular unifier. 72.0% of ALL survey respondents rate their interest in the USWNT as 4 or 5 out of 5 (5 being the highest), compared to just 49% of ALL survey respondents ranking their interest in the USMNT at the same level.

This level of interest is fairly consistent across age groups, with 83% of those in the 65+ category indicating an interest in the USWNT, compared to 84% of those 18-34.

However, the NWSL has formed a strong connection within the latter group. Compared to 45% of those in the 65+ category, a noteworthy 75% of those 18-34 follow the NWSL, indicating the league's following is skewing younger.¹⁴

Additionally, women's leagues draw larger mixed-gender audiences than men's soccer. So, while there are large overlaps in audience interests, a unique and engaged audience is growing at a fast rate within women's soccer leagues.

Within the wider landscape of women's sports in the United States, the WNBA and women's NCAA basketball continue to surge in popularity. These leagues, tied to sports with longstanding roots in American culture bolstered by direct continuity in players, personnel, and personality, are trailed closely by the NWSL. YouGov data suggests that NWSL is only marginally behind women's NCAA basketball in cross-audience interest, a sign of massive promise for the league.

44%



of men are fans of the WNBA

34%



of men are fans of Division 1 Women's College Basketball

33%



of men are fans of the NWSL

Source: YouGov

14. Founded in 2012, the NWSL and its teams are relatively young institutions. The NWSL's star players often have social media followings that outweigh those of their clubs. In the past, fans have indicated that the league's stars are entry points to choosing a team to follow, with a willingness to change this team as players move.

15. Emma Hayes became manager of the United States Women's National Team in 2024, winning Olympic Gold with the team in her first major tournament. Prior to the USWNT, she was a decorated coach in women's club soccer, winning the Women's Super League with Chelsea Women seven times. Her coaching career began in the United States in 2002 with the Long Island Lady Riders and Iona Gaels.

The NWSL is catching up to legacy leagues and bringing the younger fans along:



Interest in the USWNT by Age



Interest in the NWSL by Age



SAM MEWIS



Former Pro, World Cup Champion, & Olympic Medalist
Editor-in-Chief & Host of The Women's Game



"What an exciting time for the USWNT under Coach Emma Hayes!¹⁵ If this last year showed us anything, it's that this team has immense depth and talent. The USWNT continues to be a true unifier and with the 2027 World Cup right around the corner, the future is even brighter for this young squad."



ROGER BENNETT

Founder & CEO of MiBMN
Host of Men in Blazers



"Reflecting on the roots from which US Soccer has grown, we have the US Women's National Team to thank for engaging a broad and dedicated public fanbase from the very beginning. The trailblazing success of the USWNT in the 1990s yielded two World Cup championships and an Olympic Gold medal. The 1999 World Cup final, contested by the United States and China, drew more than 90,000 fans to the Rose Bowl, and began with a publicity campaign led and conducted by the players themselves. This level of success, fame, and influence was a profound driver for the entire game's popularity in America - both women's and men's."

Planes, Trains and Automobiles

American fans put their money where their fandom is and seek out domestic and international travel experiences linked to football.



09

Soccer Fans Are More
Likely To Travel:

80%

*All Soccer Fans Compared
to General Population*

84%

*Hispanic American
Soccer Fans Compared to
General Population*

Source: YouGov

16. Amazon Prime's All or Nothing series (2016-present) presents fly on the wall documentary portraits of individual teams, including England's Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, and Arsenal, Italy's Juventus and the German and Brazilian National Teams. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta's halftime team talks utilizing visual metaphors like light bulbs maintain social media popularity, now four years after publication.

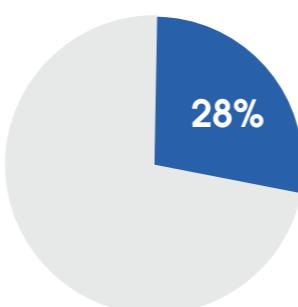
17. As detailed in chapter three of this report, the Premier League overindexes among American fans. 80% of survey respondents who say they traveled internationally did so for a Premier League game.

Like a light bulb in a Mikel Arteta team talk, MiB fans are plugged in.¹⁶ Respondents who listen to Men in Blazers or The Women's Game podcasts are 3x more likely to attend a live match, 2x more likely to buy soccer merch, and significantly more likely to follow both U.S. national teams.

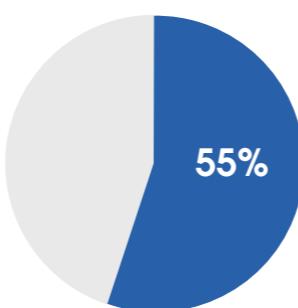
Even as participation in domestic soccer has grown in recent years, football and travel remain inextricably linked. YouGov data shows soccer fans are 80% more likely than the general population to have taken at least one trip abroad in the last 12 months. Even within the United States, 54% of American soccer fans have traveled domestically in the past year, compared to only 47% of the general population. This inclination towards travel holds steady across the board; Hispanic Soccer fans are 84% more likely than the average US adult to have traveled abroad in the last 12 months.

This means American soccer fans are developing strong and consistent matchgoing habits. Even as travel among the American public is down across the board, 63% of survey respondents traveled domestically to see a game in the past year, and a whopping 35% of respondents traveled internationally to a European game.¹⁷

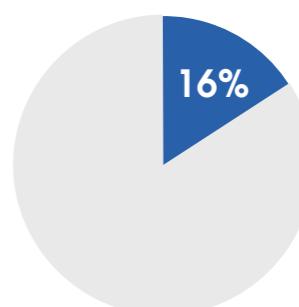
Broken down by league:



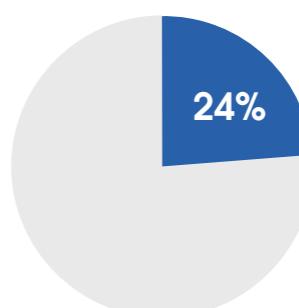
attended PL
match

attended an
MLS game

attended non
PL EU match



attended
NWSL


Source: MiBMN Survey

Our takeaway:

The Men in Blazers audience is passionate about forming football memories beyond the bounds of television screens. In-person attendance is, and always has been, the gold standard. It is also becoming not just commonplace, but a core tenet of soccer fandom for many Americans. This increase in football-driven travel is one of the most impressive and noteworthy developments we have seen across the years.

A Two-Way Conversation

*Fans love brands
that support football
authentically and are
discerning with those
that don't.*



10

At Men in Blazers Media Network HQ, we have sought to mold our content offerings to reflect the complexity and diversity in our audience's interests. Even among the ever-increasing avenues to engage with the sport, more than half of all survey respondents indicated they interact with some MiB touchpoint every week.

The football community in America is aware of the sport's growth, the brands who are investing to aid in that growth, and those who truly get the hyper-nuanced cultures and experiences within it.

*Brands that partner with MiB win with our audience.
Of our survey respondents:*

35%

say that brands sponsoring or advertising with MiB are the types of brands they like or want to try

67%

react to brands sponsoring MiB positively

55%

say that advertising within MiB content makes them feel better about a brand

28%

have tried a new brand because they support MiB

44%

are more likely to purchase a product that partnered with MiB

Source: MiBMN Survey

Conclusion

Soccer in the United States has long been viewed as a world of opportunity, potential, and possibility. This is no longer the case. The sport is here. It has established deep roots and stimulated the growth of an authentic and committed culture – not subculture – within the popular imagination of the United States.

At the Men in Blazers Media Network, our goal has long been to nurture our audience's natural relationship with the sport. We have had the distinct privilege of watching the country build its own patterns and styles of engagement, developing a truly nuanced understanding of not just the sport, but the customs that surround it.

So, while we stand on the precipice of a "Taylor Swift kicking off the Eras Tour" moment in which the sport is poised to truly dominate the American cultural consciousness, we no longer see this culture as something in its infancy. In the United States, we find legacy fans of clubs domestic and global, support driven by family inheritance, and communities grown organically on a hyperlocal level and broadcast across the nation.

We have always valued the Men in Blazers audience helping us learn how our platform can foster greater access and interest in the sport. Along the way, we have worked with some of the game's biggest advocates, greatest players, most vocal fans, and most storied partners.

But we have also always tried to keep a seat at the table for the Soccer Curious newcomer - new fans and new partners looking to understand the culture of football in this country. As our World Cup countdown goes from triple, to double, and eventually single digit number of days, our goal is to guide these efforts with clarity and intention, joy and optimism. To more.

