ANGUS REID INSTITUTE

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Major Penalty? Canadians growing weary of switch to streaming for NHL coverage; four-in-five say it's a bad trend

Hockey Night in Canada's end seen as 'major loss'; one-in-five fans likely to watch PWHL replacement

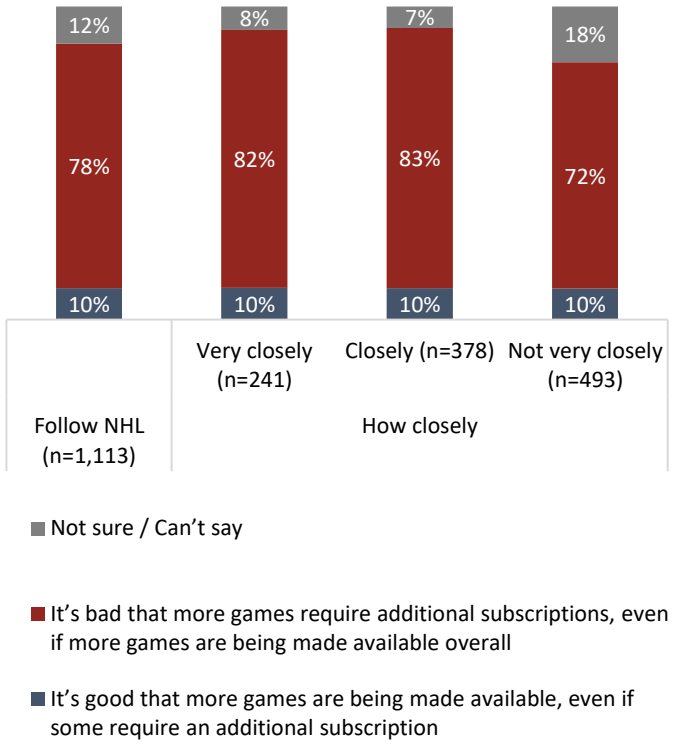
Oct 29, 2026 – For millions of Canadians, watching professional sports has become an increasingly fragmented and expensive experience as the games, once available on traditional television, have increasingly moved behind streaming subscriptions and across a growing number of platforms.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds widespread frustration with this changing landscape, particularly among hockey fans, who are watching a longstanding national tradition disappear alongside it.

Nearly four-in-five NHL followers (78%) say the movement of more games behind additional streaming subscriptions is a negative development, while seven-in-10 Canadians (70%) believe professional sports are now spread across too many channels and platforms.

Nowhere is this changing landscape more symbolic than on Saturday nights. After 74 years, the traditional Hockey Night in Canada NHL broadcast is disappearing from CBC, marking the end of an institution that has brought generations of Canadians together around the television. Three-quarters of hockey fans (74%) say the change represents a major loss for Canadian hockey and its traditions.

Its replacement, eight Saturday-night Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) games, arrives amid widespread support for greater coverage of women's sports (64%), but considerably less certainty about viewership. Just one-in-five Canadians (20%) say they're likely to tune in.



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from October 19-22 2026, among a randomized sample of 1,806 Canadian adults. Respondents are drawn from the Angus Reid Forum, a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

For more information on our polling methods, click here.

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More Key Findings:

- Nine-in-10 Canadians (90%) say hockey is an important or defining part of Canadian identity, virtually unchanged from 88 per cent in 2015. This sentiment is remarkably consistent across generation and gender

- Seven-in-10 DAZN subscribers (71%) say the service is too expensive, as do 63 per cent of Sportsnet+ subscribers. By comparison, just one-third (33%) of Amazon Prime Video subscribers feel they're paying too much

- Four-in-five Canadians who follow the NHL very closely (79%) say it has become too expensive to follow their favourite professional sports teams, compared with 73 per cent of those who follow the league closely.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Part One: The end, and new beginning, of Hockey Night in Canada

Nine-in-10 say hockey an important part of Canadian identity

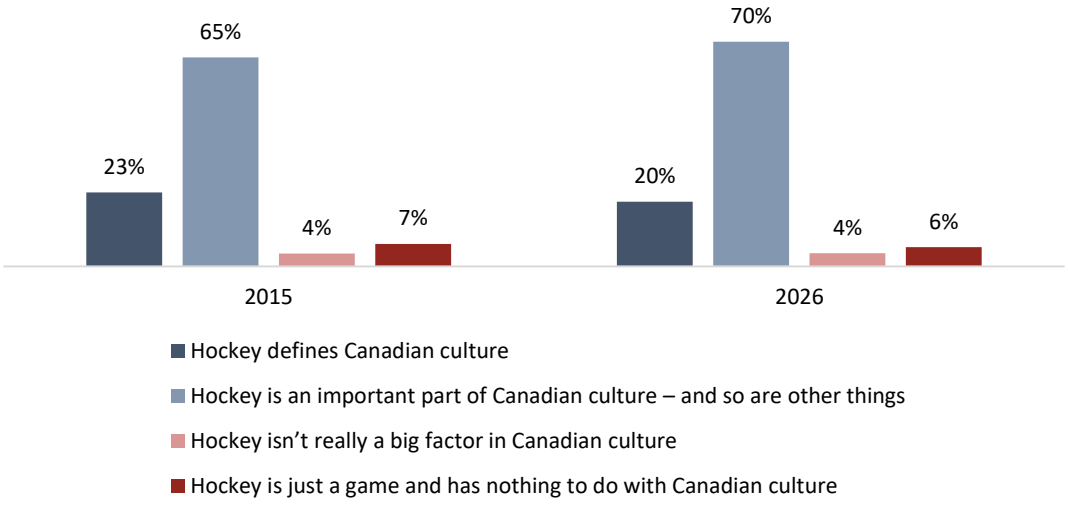
For generations, hockey has occupied a special place in Canadian culture, serving as both a national pastime and a source of shared identity. But amid changes to how the game is broadcast and controversy surrounding some of its highest-profile institutions, has its cultural significance diminished?

Despite significant negative attention surrounding the sexual assault trial of five former members of Canada's 2018 world junior hockey team, the subsequent fallout for Hockey Canada, and the end of Hockey Night in Canada as they know it, Canadians' views on hockey's place in the country's culture

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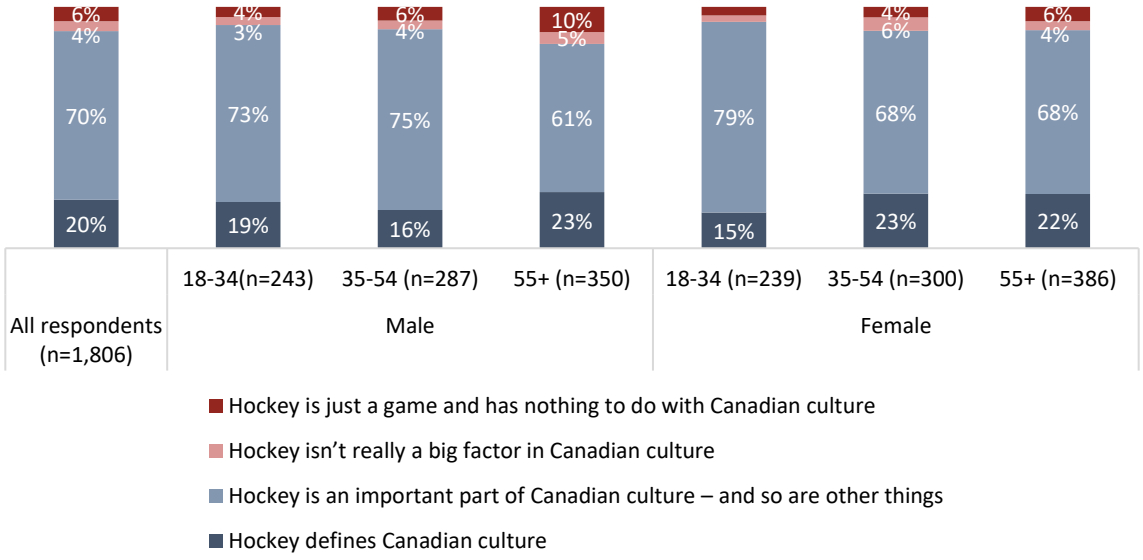
have remained largely unchanged since 2015. Nine-in-ten (90%) continue to view hockey as an important or defining part of Canadian identity, compared with 88 per cent a decade ago.

Thinking about Canadian culture and identity, how important is the game of hockey?



What is most striking about these data is perhaps the consistency across gender and generation. At least four-in-five across all age and gender combinations say that the game is an "important" part of our shared identity:

Thinking about Canadian culture and identity, how important is the game of hockey?

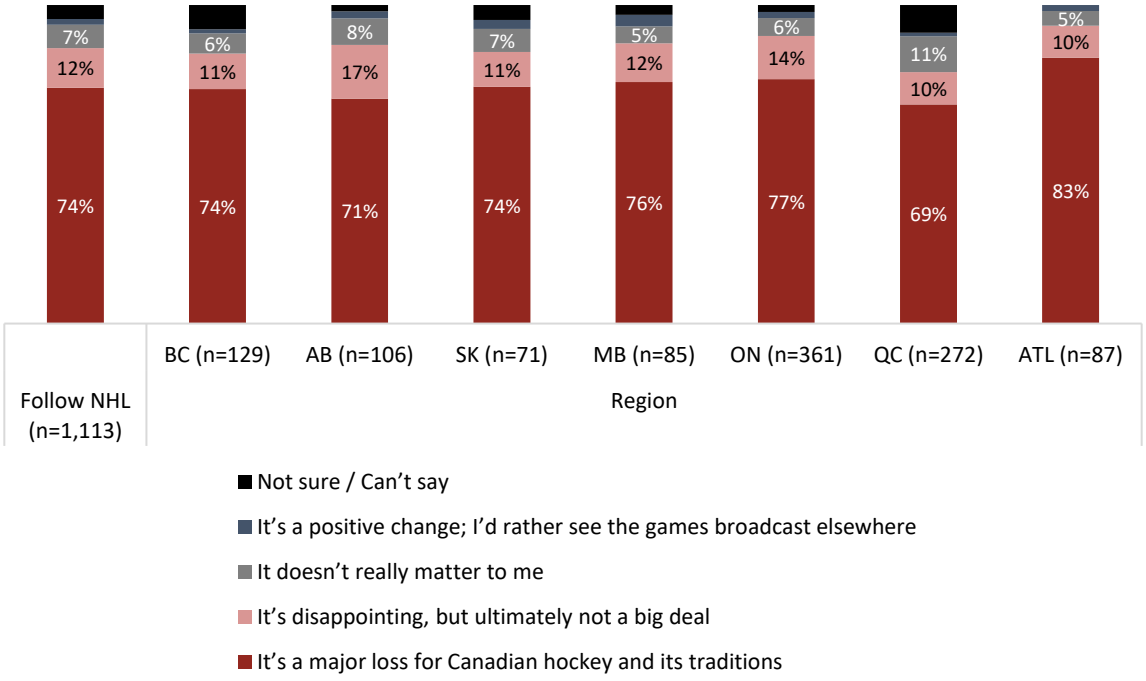


Among hockey fans, three-quarters lament loss of HNIC

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While hockey's place in Canadian culture remains secure, changes to one of the sport's most enduring traditions are proving less popular. Following the announcement that the traditional Hockey Night in Canada NHL broadcast would not return to CBC this season, ending a 74-year tradition, three-quarters of hockey fans (74%) say the change represents a major loss for Canadian hockey and its traditions. This sentiment is widespread across the country, reaching its highest level in Atlantic Canada (83%), while remaining the majority view in every region. Relatively few fans (7%) see the change as a positive development, while another 12 per cent say they are disappointed but do not consider it a major loss.

This comes after Sportsnet and CBC announced the traditional version of Hockey Night in Canada, a weekly broadcast of NHL games on the CBC, would not be happening this season.

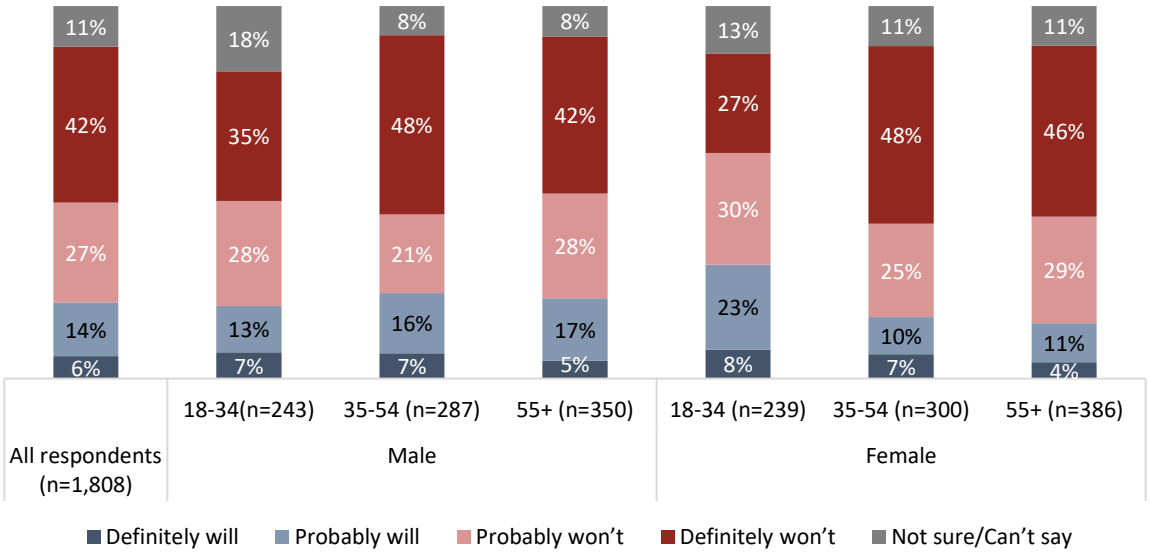


How many will tune into PWHL on Saturday nights?

In place of the NHL games Canadians have come to associate with Saturday nights, the CBC will air eight Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) games beginning December 5. The league is entering its 4th season and has expanded to 12 teams. Asked whether they will tune in, one-in-five Canadians (20%) say they are likely to do so.

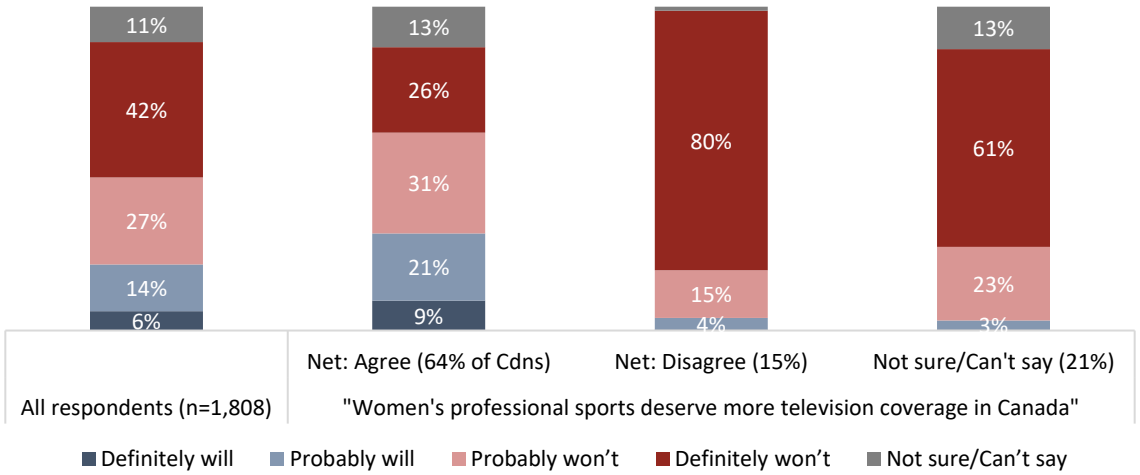
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CBC will now air eight prime-time Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) games on Saturday nights under the banner of Hockey Night in Canada. How likely are you to tune in and watch a PWHL game this season?



The league may take time to garner widespread viewership, but the Canadian public appears to have an appetite for women's sports. Two-thirds (64%) say that women's pro sports deserve more television coverage. However, among that group, just three-in-10 say they're likely to watch the PWHL on HNIC:

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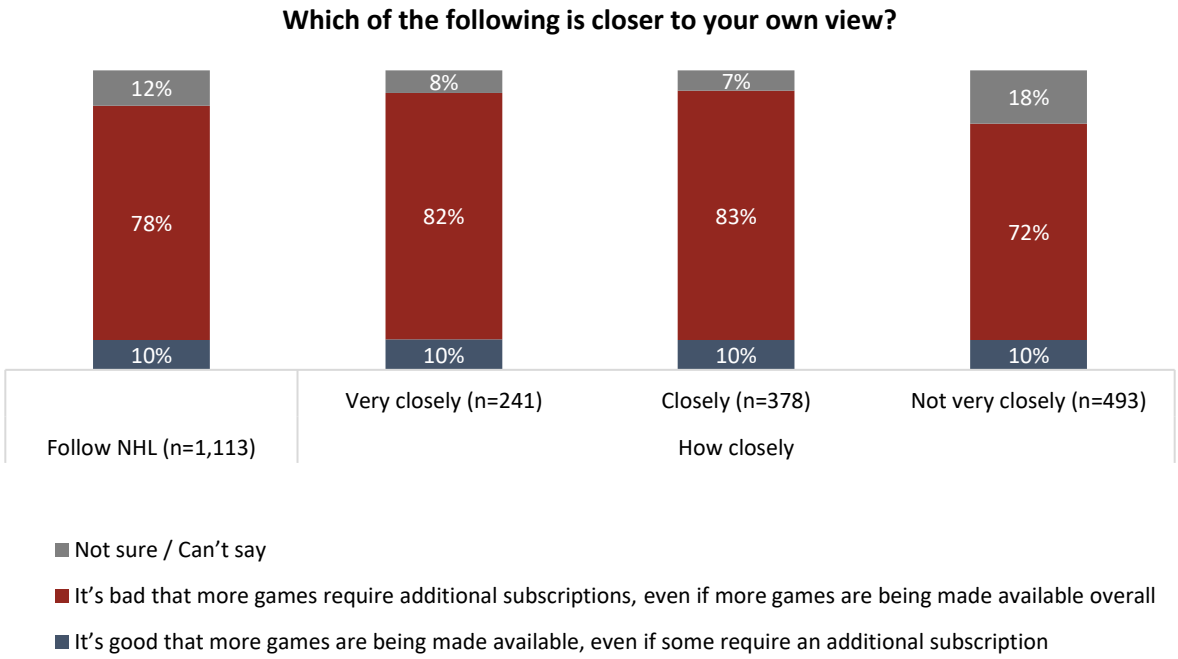
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Part Two: More options or more barriers? NHL coverage on streaming platforms riles fans

As streaming and on-demand platforms have expanded to become a more dominant form of content delivery, the old ways associated with cable have been diminishing. With respect to the game Canadians love, the trend is no different. In September, Sportsnet announced it was adding Monday Night Hockey, but that it would be available exclusively on their streaming app (which costs $34.99 a month). Wednesday Night Hockey is also available behind a streaming paywall, with Amazon Prime Video hosting those feature matchups.

Few say more games on streaming a good thing

In one way, more games than ever are now available to Canadians, but in another, more monthly subscriptions are required to view them. Angus Reid Institute asked fans of the NHL (62% of Canadians) how they feel, and the perspectives are overwhelmingly negative:



Part of the challenge appears to be the cost of subscription. For both Sportsnet+ and DAZN (which offers, among other events, all NFL games) at least 63 per cent say they price is too expensive. Only Amazon Prime Video, which comes with the attached benefit of Prime delivery services, is perceived as a good price - if not a deal - by two-thirds:

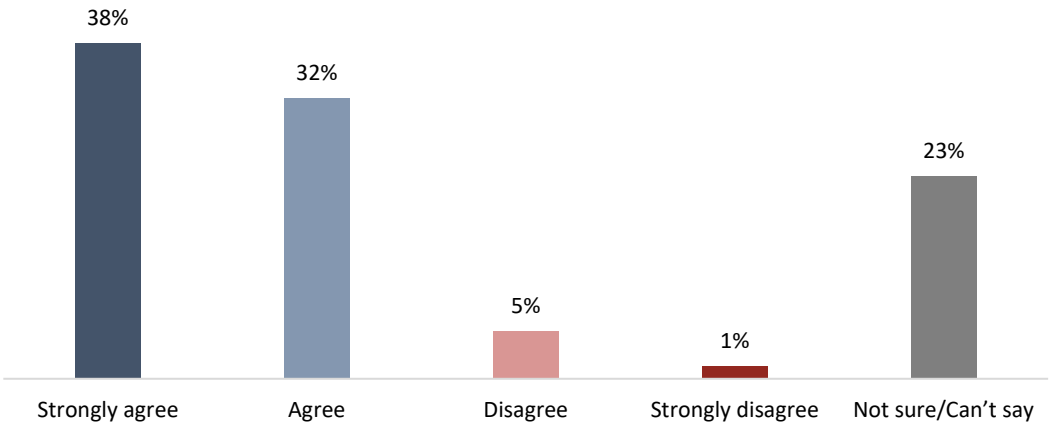
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And would you say the monthly cost you pay for the following is…			
	Too expensive	About the right price	A good deal
DAZN	71%	26%	3%
Sportsnet+	63%	31%	6%
Disney+	57%	36%	7%
Netflix	55%	41%	5%
TSN+	52%	38%	10%
Paramount Plus	51%	41%	8%
Apple TV	47%	44%	8%
Crave	46%	40%	14%
Amazon Prime	33%	54%	13%

Seven-in-10 view games as too spread out over too many options

With TSN, Sportsnet, Netflix, Prime, DAZN, and others all offering sports programming, it may seem obvious that many Canadian fans feel the games are spread out over too many options. Just six per cent of Canadians disagree with that idea:

Agree vs Disagree: "Too many professional sports games are now spread across different television channels and streaming services"

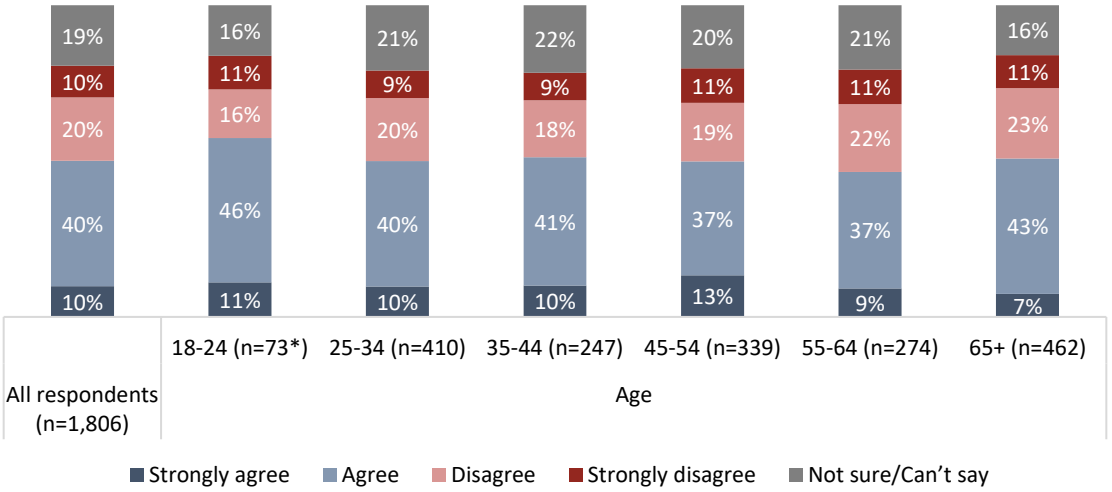


Young people more likely to rely on highlights and social media to follow sports

If league's make finding regular games too difficult, they risk pushing the next generation to something with which they're already growing accustomed. It appears that many young people – and a significant number of fans overall - are comfortable following their teams with freely available highlights on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and elsewhere.

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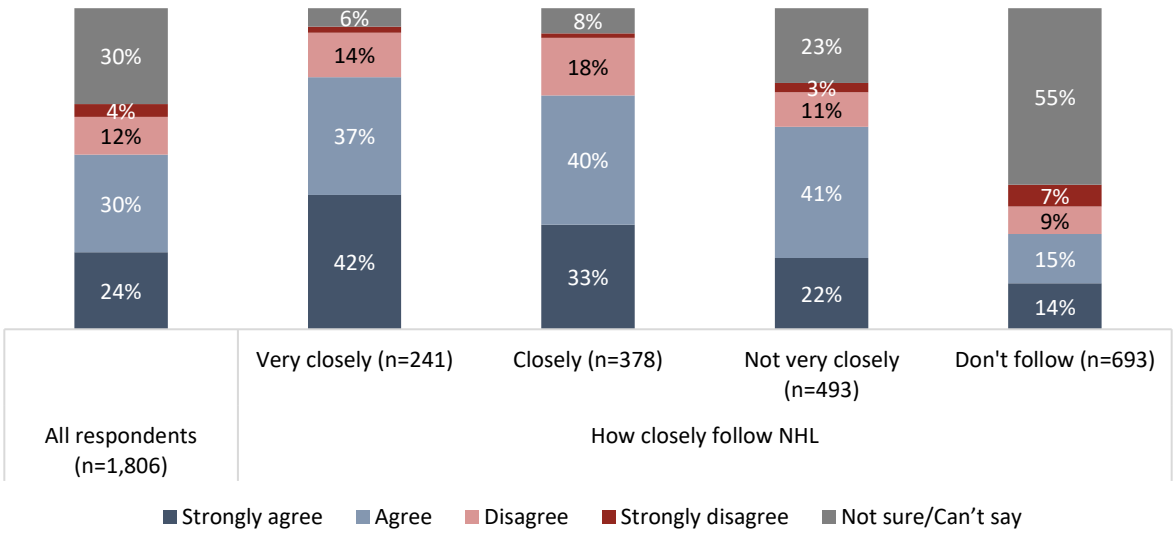
Agree vs Disagree: "Highlights and clips on social media are often enough for me to keep up with professional sports"



Half feel priced out by their favourite teams

The Edmonton Oilers are off to one of the best starts in franchise history but had their second worst attendance for a game since moving to their new building on October 15. Some have suggested that this reflects a broader trend; fans are being priced out of supporting their teams in person. That suggestion seems plausible according to fans. Asked if they agree or disagree that it has become too expensive to follow their team in the way they like, four-in-five who follow the NHL very closely agree, as do three-quarters of those who follow closely:

Agree vs Disagree - "It has become too expensive to follow my favourite professional sports teams"



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For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, click here.

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