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SELECTED VIEWS OF THE BREWERS' FRANCHISE
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

In midwinter, coming off a playoff series where what many regarded as the dream matchup (Cubs versus Red Sox) was thwarted on both counts, roughly one third of the Wisconsin public (32%) considers themselves to be baseball fans. Men fall a bit over the one in three threshold, women below it. There are no strong distinctions among groups defined by self-described partisanship (Republicans look very much like Democrats, and both look a lot like Independents). All age groups fall within a percentage point or two of that one in three figure.

The number of self-declared baseball fans is dwarfed by those claiming to be fans of football. Fully three residents in every four (76%) so describe themselves, including nine baseball fans in every ten, so that it is rare to find someone who says they are now a baseball fan who is not ALSO a gridiron follower.

The "gender gap" for football is bigger than it was for baseball. Around seven in eight men is a football fan, which description fits about two in three women. (It may be less remarkable that there is a difference -- considering the lore of the "football widow" -- than that so many Wisconsin women follow this sport. There were modest partisan differences: seven Democrats in every ten follow football, compared to just below eight in ten for Independents and precisely that proportion for Republicans. There are greater, though still relatively modest age-based differences. The group with the largest proportion of football fans is those between thirty and forty-four years old (83% of whom claim to be fans). From there is drops a bit for the forty-five to fifty-nine year olds, more clearly among those sixty and older. The youngest group is midway between the most football devoted age group and the group least following the sport.

The third major professional sport (which is also in season now) is basketball. Just under three in ten state residents declare themselves fans of pro hoops. This includes half of baseball fans. Men and women differ about as much in percentage point terms on this question as they did on the one about football, but since the base is smaller, it means that men are more than half again as likely as women to be fans of pro basketball. Party makes little difference, but interest in probasketball starts off at just under one in two (47%) for the youngest group, and declines to the point that only one in six of those sixty and older is a basketball fan.

One can (and many do) follow specific teams as well as sports overall. One state resident in three reports that he or she is a Brewers' fan. There is overlap between fans of the sport and fans of the team, but they are by no means the same. Two thirds of those who were baseball fans said they were NOT Brewers fans, a percentage which roughly holds if one examines the proportion of Brewers fans who are also baseball fans.

In terms of other groups, men are about ten points more likely to favor the Brewers than are women. Republicans like them slightly more than Democrats (that is, a higher proportion of the former group say they are fans than is the case for the latter). Independents are least likely to call themselves Brewer fans. One distinction between following the team and following baseball is that for the youngest group, residents are more likely to be fans of baseball overall than of the Brewers specifically. The reverse is true for the immediately older group, while the two groups older than forty-five have about equal likelihood of following baseball and following the Brewers.

The Brewers' organization has been going through various changes over the recent past, and there has been discussion of the teams quality and future. This does not exactly seem to have captured the attention of state residents. Overall, one in eight said they had paid "a lot" (13%) of attention to this, and adding in the one in four whose level of attention is "some" (25%) still falls short of four in ten. These figures ARE higher for baseball fans and Brewer fans (25% and 24% respectively have paid a lot of attention, and 35% and 39% have paid some) making up between six in ten and two thirds who have paid at least some, but a clear minority who claim really to be following things.

The outlook for the team in the eyes of the public is mixed. The largest group, four in ten (40%) among all residents, does not see much difference one way or the other. Among the group which does think there is a shift, those feeling things are getting worse outnumber those who think they are improving by about two to one (25%-12%).

The situation is somewhat different among those who follow baseball more. For both baseball fans generally and Brewer fans specifically just under half (47% and 48% respectively) think things are staying about the same. In contrast with the overall figures, however, if these residents perceive a difference, they are at least as likely to feel the team is improving (23% and 26% respectively) as to think it is declining in quality (19% for both groups). This is not a ringing endorsement, but neither does it reflect pessimism on balance.

Another measure of the overall outlook for the team may come in the interest in attending a game next year compared to the past. Overall, three in four (75%) of residents said they would be about as interested (this included those who had no interest in the past and still do not, since the emphasis was on the CHANGE in interest). Among the one in four who say their interest level will be different, those who say they will be less interested (19%) outnumber those who say they will be more interested (5%). The reasonably large contrast between fans and others which was evident in the question about team quality is only partially echoed here. For both baseball fans and Brewer fans, just under three in four (73% and 70%) say their interest will be unchanged. For both groups, the balance among those who say their level of interest will change is more towards "less" than "more" (17%-9% for baseball fans, 18%-11% for Brewer fans). This is less clear, perhaps, but in the same direction as was noted for residents overall.

A particular feature of the Brewers' front office is that the Baseball Commissioner "also owns the Brewers, although he does not directly run the

team". Respondents were reminded of this and asked what they felt should happen. Specifically "do you think he should continue this arrangement, or should he sell his interest in the team". (Though the alternative was not suggested, provision was made to count anyone who gave a response indicating MORE involvement, beyond the status quo), This was very rarely taken.

Among the three residents out of four who ventured to answer this question, opinion broke two to one (49%-25%) that Bud Selig should sell out, rather than continue the present arrangement. Opinion was most closely divided among the youngest respondents. Party shows no strong link, despite some of the things the political parties are saying about executive and corporate performance. one another.

Those who describe themselves as fans (either of baseball or the Brewers) differ mostly when it comes to this question, of being willing (or able to take a position). they are about ten points more likely to come down on one side or the other than are residents in general. Among those with a view, the balance (54%-31% for selling among baseball fans, 53%-31% among Brewers fans) is not sharply different than it was for residents as a whole.

Statewide Marginals and Percentages for Key Groups

What follows is the exact question wording for each of the items referred to in the release. All results shown are for the basic sample of state residents. The first column is the percentage of the entire sample giving each response. The second and third reports the percentages for men and women separately. The fourth, fifth, and sixth columns show self-described Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Columns seven through ten group respondents by age.

Q01. INTERVIEWER: (DO NOT ASK) Enter respondent's gender

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
MALE	49%	100%	--%	47%	50%	50%	48%	48%	49%	48%	55%	55%
FEMALE	51	--	100	53	50	50	52	52	51	52	45	45

ABNER04. Thinking now of professional sports... Would you say that you are a baseball fan?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
YES	32%	36%	28%	34%	33%	32%	35%	31%	34%	31%	100%	67%
NO	67	64	71	65	67	68	65	69	66	68	--	32
DON'T KNOW	*	--	*	1	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	1
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ABNER05. Would you say that you are a football fan?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
YES	76%	84%	68%	71%	77%	80%	74%	83%	78%	65%	89%	92%
NO	24	15	32	28	23	20	26	17	22	35	11	8
DON'T KNOW	*	*	*	1	--	--	--	--	*	*	--	--
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	--

ABNER06. Would you say that you are a fan of professional basketball?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
YES	29%	36%	21%	32%	23%	33%	47%	34%	24%	16%	51%	44%
NO	71	64	78	68	77	66	53	66	76	84	49	56
DON'T KNOW	*	--	*	1	--	--	--	*	--	*	--	--
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	--

BREW01. Would you describe yourself as a Brewers fan

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
YES	33%	38%	29%	35%	27%	39%	30%	37%	34%	31%	69%	100%
NO	66	62	70	64	73	61	70	63	65	69	31	--
DON'T KNOW	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	*	1	--	--	--
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	--

BREW02. How much attention, if any, have you paid to the recent changes in the Brewers' organization because of disagreements about the team's future? A lot, some only a little, or none at all?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
A LOT	13%	20%	7%	14%	10%	16%	10%	15%	11%	16%	25%	24%
SOME	25	30	21	23	24	33	21	23	29	25	35	39
ONLY A LITTLE	22	19	25	19	28	21	18	25	25	17	21	23
NONE AT ALL	38	30	46	43	38	30	50	37	35	40	18	13
DON'T KNOW	*	--	1	1	*	--	--	*	--	1	*	1
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	*	--	--	--	*	--	--	--

BREW03. In general, do you think the Brewers as a team are improving, getting worse, or not really changing much at all?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
IMPROVING	12%	16%	8%	12%	8%	13%	12%	12%	15%	8%	23%	26%
GETTING WORSE	25	27	23	22	23	30	22	32	19	24	19	19
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE	40	41	39	42	44	40	53	36	42	36	47	48
DON'T KNOW	22	15	29	22	24	16	13	20	23	31	10	6
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	--	1	--	--	1	2	1	1

BREW04. Compared to the recent past, do you think you will be more interested in attending a Brewers' game next year, less interested, or about as interested as you have been?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
MORE INTERESTED	5%	6%	3%	7%	2%	5%	7%	3%	5%	3%	9%	11%
LESS INTERESTED	19	23	15	19	17	22	12	20	14	28	17	18
ABOUT AS INTERESTED	75	70	79	72	80	73	80	76	79	64	73	70
DON'T KNOW	2	1	2	2	1	1	--	1	1	4	2	2
REFUSED	*	*	*	1	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	--

BREW05. As you may know, Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig (SEE-lig) also owns the Brewers, although he does not directly run the team. Do you think he should continue this arrangement, or should he sell his interest in the team?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
CONTINUE ARRANGEMENT	25%	26%	24%	29%	22%	27%	34%	26%	24%	22%	31%	31%
SELL INTEREST IN TEAM	49	59	39	44	51	52	48	48	51	44	54	53
BE MORE ACTIVE (VOL.)	*	1	--	1	--	1	--	1	1	--	1	1
DON'T KNOW	24	13	34	24	26	19	16	25	21	33	14	14
REFUSED	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	--	1

QD05. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
DEMOCRAT	26%	25%	27%	100%	--%	--%	23%	22%	30%	30%	28%	28%
REPUBLICAN	34	34	33	--	--	100	38	36	27	35	33	39
INDEPENDENT	25	25	24	--	100	--	25	25	25	26	25	20
OTHER	10	11	9	--	--	--	10	13	10	5	10	8
NONE	3	2	4	--	--	--	4	2	5	1	4	3
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	*	2	2	1	1
REFUSED	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	1	1	1	--	1

QD11. In what year were you born? (ENTER FOUR-DIGIT YEAR) (Calculated and grouped as below)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS				FAN	
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+	BB	MKE
18-29	14%	14%	15%	13%	14%	16%	100%	--%	--%	--%	15%	13%
30-44	30	30	31	25	30	32	--	100	--	--	29	33
45-59	32	32	32	37	32	26	--	--	100	--	34	32
60 and over	22	22	22	25	23	23	--	--	--	100	21	21
DK/REFUSED	1	2	*	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	1	1

* denotes less than .5%

-- denotes 0%

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin, under the direction of G. Donald Ferree, Jr., Associate Director for Public Opinion Research of the Center. The media sponsors of the survey are the (Madison) Capital Times, and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

A total of 510 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between December 2 and 9, inclusive. Telephone numbers were generated by computer in proportion to the number of adults living in each area of the state. Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every eligible resident

in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error".