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## **FOOTBALL AND KIDS: A DANGEROUS COMBINATION? PUBLIC SAYS NO**

A recent federal court ruling temporarily suspended the \$914 million dollar settlement between the NFL and retired players over traumatic brain injuries. The news is not likely to be received in a vacuum, as a recent national survey from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that many are following news of the settlement closely. However, awareness does not translate into concerns over the game's potential risks for children.

Almost three quarters (71%) have heard at least a little about the settlements awarded to former NFL players who experienced head and brain injuries as a result of their playing careers, with 46 percent who have followed the news "closely." Men (24%) and football fans (28%) are more likely than women (16%) and non-football fans (9%) to say they have read or heard a lot.

"The popularity of the game is obviously heightening interest over an issue that's not tied to the performance of a fan's beloved team," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Public awareness of the risk engendered through football does not translate into concern over children's participation in the sport, however. When asked whether kids should be discouraged from playing football because of inherent risks associated with participation, or whether there's little to worry about since adequate protections are already in place to protect kids from bodily harm, the overwhelming majority give kids the green light to play. Eighty percent approve of football being played among kids, compared with only 14 percent who say the game is just too risky.

Women and those who are not football fans are more cautious in this area than men and fans, with 19 percent of non-fans and 17 percent of women saying kids should not play and compared to just 11 percent of fans and 12 percent of men who agree kids should stay off the field.

"The increased safety measures of football have reached all the way down to youth football," said Brian Surace, Head Football Coach, FDU Devils. "The culture of football is changing for the better, including safer equipment, better coaching techniques, and a greater awareness and training of athletic trainers and doctors concerning head injuries. With an increased spotlight on concussions, all of these factors will continue to get better and safer throughout the years to come to make football as safe as it can be."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 1002 aged 18 and older who reside in the United States was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from December 9 through December 15, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>*

*Radio actualities at 201.692.2846      For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

**Methodology**

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University’s PublicMind was conducted by telephone from December 9 through December 15, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 1002 individuals aged 18 and older who reside in the United States. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

**Tables**

<i>Are you a professional football fan, or not?</i>									
		<b>Gender</b>		<b>Race</b>		<b>Age</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Nonwhite</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-44</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>60+</b>
Yes	<b>56%</b>	65	48	56	58	63	55	59	50
No	<b>43%</b>	34	52	43	41	37	44	40	49
DK/Refused	<b>2%</b>	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

<i>How much have you heard or read about the recent NFL settlement that gives money to retired pro football players for head and brain injuries they sustained while playing?</i>											
		<b>Football Fan</b>		<b>Gender</b>		<b>Race</b>		<b>Age</b>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Nonwhite</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-44</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>60+</b>
A lot	<b>20%</b>	28	9	24	16	20	20	18	15	24	21
Some	<b>26%</b>	28	22	26	25	28	19	17	26	29	29
Just a little	<b>25%</b>	23	27	23	27	27	22	30	27	21	24
Nothing at all	<b>28%</b>	19	39	26	30	24	38	34	30	23	24
DK/Refused (vol)	<b>2%</b>	1	3	2	3	2	1	1	2	3	2

*Some say... ROTATE.... Kids should be prevented from playing football in order to protect them from the head injuries that can result from playing the game. Others say kids should be allowed to play football since adequate protections are already in place to keep them safe from head injuries. Which comes closer to your view?*

		Football Fan		Gender		Race		Age			
	All	Yes	No	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Kids shouldn't play football	14%	11	19	12	17	15	14	12	9	14	24
Kids should play football	80%	85	73	84	75	79	81	87	85	81	69
DK/Refused (vol)	6%	4	8	4	8	6	4	2	6	6	8

### Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 through US5 released December 18, 2013

M1 released December 23, 2013

USS1 through USS4 held for future release

*Now turning to sports...*

*NFL1 Are you a fan of professional football, or not?*

*1 Yes*

*2 No*

*8 DK/Refused (vol)*

*NFL2 through NFL4 withheld for subsequent release*

*NFL5 How much have you heard or read about the recent NFL settlement that gives money to retired pro football players for head and brain injuries they sustained while playing?*

*1 A lot*

*2 Some*

*3 Just a little*

*4 Nothing at all*

*8 DK/Refused*

*NFL6 Some say... ROTATE.... Kids should be prevented from playing football in order to protect them from the head injuries that can result from playing the game. Others say kids should be allowed to play football since adequate protections are already in place to keep them safe from head injuries. Which comes closer to your view?*

*1 Kids shouldn't play football*

*2 Kids should play football*

*8 DK/Refused*

### Sample characteristics

#### Gender

Male	49
Female	51

#### Age

18-29	22
30-44	26
45-59	28
60+	24
Refused	1

#### Race/Ethnicity

White	70
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	12
Asian	2
Other/refused	4

#### Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	41
Independent/DK/refused	25
Republican/Lean Republican	34