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and Playing Fields Is Widely Supported***

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Americans See Bullying as Being a Widespread Issue in Youth Sports, but One That Often Goes Unaddressed

Enforcement of Anti-Bullying Policies, Training, and Monitoring of Locker Rooms and Playing Fields Is Widely Supported

New York, NY – According to a new nationwide survey of over 1,000 respondents, ages 13-54, conducted by Ipsos on behalf of NYU Sports and Society, a majority (53%) have witnessed bullying in a sports setting when they were playing, spectating, or coaching a sport, and over a third (36%) say that they have been bullied themselves. Yet only 17% admit to having bullied someone in a sports setting when they were either playing or coaching a sport.

While more than three quarters (77%) say that they know how to deal with bullying if they themselves, someone in their family, or someone they know is bullied, less than half (48%) say that they have done something to stop someone from bullying another person in a sports setting.

- Those most likely to say that they have intervened include respondents aged 20 and younger (57%), men (56%), and parents (55%), as well as those who have been bullied (76%) and those who have bullied others (85%).

Bullying in Youth Sports Is Seen as Being Pervasive

Two thirds of those who know enough about the subject to have an opinion (66%) agree that bullying is a widespread issue in youth sports – compared to 58% who say the same thing about bullying in college and professional sports.

- Women (69%) are significantly more likely than men (63%) to agree that bullying in youth sports is a widespread issue, as are respondents over the age of 20. Similarly, those who have experienced bullying first hand – those who have been bullied (71% vs. 63% of those

who have not) or are bullies themselves (74% vs. 64% non-bullies) – are more likely to agree that bullying in youth sports is widespread.

Given the widespread acknowledgement of bullying in youth sports, nearly eight in ten (79%) agree that youth athletes, coaches, and athletic directors should be punished in some way when they are involved with bullying. Nearly half (48%) of respondents who know enough about the subject to have an opinion go so far as to say that bullying in youth sports should be considered a crime, while a greater proportion (56%) feel this way about bullying in college and professional sports.

- Parents are significantly more likely than those who do not have children to feel that bullying both in youth sports (54% vs. 44% of non-parents) and college/professional sports (61% vs. 54%) should be considered a crime.
- Those who have bullied someone else are also more likely to agree that bullying in youth sports should be considered a crime (57% vs. 46% non-bullies).

Some Feel Bullying and Hazing Have a Place in Youth Sports

While many believe that bullying in youth sports should be considered criminal, nearly a quarter (22%) agree that there is a need for some bullying in youth sports to build character and teamwork, and a similar proportion agrees that hazing rituals for new players should be allowed in youth sports (22%).

- Men are more likely than women to agree that there is both a need for some bullying to build character and teamwork (29% vs. 16% women) and that hazing rituals should be allowed in youth sports (32% vs. 12%).
- Similarly, parents are more likely than those who do not have children to also agree that there is a need for some bullying (32% vs. 16%) and hazing rituals (27% vs. 17%).

- Meanwhile, both those who have been bullied themselves (34% vs. 16% of those who have not) or have bullied someone (54% vs. 15% non-bullies) are more likely to agree there is a need for some bullying to build character and teamwork. Similarly, those who have been bullied (34% vs. 14% of those who have not) and those who are bullies (51% vs. 15% non-bullies) are also significantly more likely to agree that hazing rituals for new players should be allowed in youth sports.

Prevention: Anti-Bullying Policies, Training, and Monitoring

A majority of those surveyed agree that practice and enforcement of anti-bullying policies, proper training, and third party monitoring should be used to help in the prevention of bullying in youth sports. This includes slightly more than eight in ten respondents (81%) who agree that youth sports environments should have a strict and enforced "no-bullying" policy, and another three quarters (76%) who agree that bullying in youth sports can be reduced if proper training is enforced.

- Women (83%) are significantly more likely than men (79%) to agree that there should be a strict and enforced "no-bullying" policy, as are respondents over the age of 20 (84% vs. 69% of those 20 and under).
- Parents (79%) are significantly more likely than non-parents (74%) to say that bullying in youth sports can be reduced if proper training is enforced, as are respondents over the age of 20 (79%).

In addition to establishing policies and providing training, 62% say that to prevent bullying, youth sports locker rooms, playing fields, and other sports settings should be monitored by a third party. Here again, women (65%) and respondents over the age of 20 (66%) are most likely to agree.



Is Enough Being Done to Curb Bullying?

While many see bullying in youth sports as a pervasive yet preventable issue, many feel that more needs to be done; only one third (33%) believe that youth sports leagues are properly addressing bullying.

- Men (42%) are nearly twice as likely as women (24%) to agree that youth sports leagues properly address bullying, as are parents (42% vs. 27% of non-parents).
- Those who have either been bullied (38% vs. 30% those who have not) or have bullied others (51% vs. 29% non-bullies) are also more likely to agree that youth sports leagues properly address bullying.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted May 12 – 17, 2014. For the survey, a national sample of 1,034 respondents aged 13-54 was interviewed online. Quotas were set to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the U.S. population ages 13-54 according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 1,034 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of 13 - 54 year olds in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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