



SBRnet 2025 Team Sports Fandom by Generation

A Look at Team Sports Fandom Broken Down by Generation

www.sportsmarketanalytics.com

About SBRnet's Data




Sports Fandom and Fan Intelligence

Single Source Data comes directly from the annual consumer study of sports fandom and sports fan Intelligence



Sports Participation

The most comprehensive data focused on sports, fitness and activity participation from the SFIA



Equipment, Footwear and Apparel Sales

Both domestic US and International Sales data provided from multiple data vendors

[To get a Complimentary Copy of the SBRnet Annual Fandom Topline Report: click here](#)

2025 Team Sports Fandom by Generation



“ The information presented in this report comes from the SBRnet Annual Consumer Study focused on sports fandom habits, trends, and sports fan intelligence. In this year’s study, over 7,000 sports fans from a nationally representative collection of individuals ages 13 years and older in the U.S. provided us with a detailed view of their sports fandom habits and behaviors regarding 24 separate professional, college, and minor league sports. Each respondent is asked to interact with over 70 categories of demographic information, traditional media, live attendance, streaming, along with social media consumption patterns and behaviors. In addition, respondents are asked about key fandom categories such as gambling on sports, sports-focused tourism, spending on licensed merchandise, fantasy sports, sustainability, philanthropy, and much more. Data is available at the league/sport, team, along with eight consumer brand categories. ”



Sports and Categories Covered in the Annual SBRnet Fandom Study

Total Fans	Online Sports Betting Apps/Webistes Used During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	Sports Covered in the Annual Fandom Study
Live Attendance	Online Sports Betting Apps/Webistes Used Most Often During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	College Basketball
Games Viewed on Traditional TV	Legalized Live Sports Betting of those Attended/Watched	College Football
Plan to Attend (All Included Sports) in 2024 of those Attended/Watched	Use of AI services for Sports Gambling	Formula 1
Gender/Age of those Attended/Watched	Collect or Trade Sports Cards/Collectibles/Memorabilia of those Attended/Watched	Indy Car
Gender of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Away From Home During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	NASCAR
Respondent Age of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Number of Nights Away From Home During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	Minor League Baseball
Household Income of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Accommodations During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	Minor League Hockey
Region of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Mode of Transportation During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	MMA
Education of those Attended/Watched	Sports Philanthropy	Major League Baseball (MLB)
Sponsorship Influence of those Attended/Watched	Sustainability Habits and Practices	National Hockey League (NHL)
Social Media Usage of those Attended/Watched	Attended/Watched	National Basketball Assoc. (NBA)
Facebook Usage of those Attended/Watched	Collect or Trade Sports Cards/Collectibles/Memorabilia of those Attended/Watched	Major League Soccer (MLS)
Twitter Usage of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Away From Home During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	International Soccer/Football
Snapchat Usage of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Number of Nights Away From Home During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	National Football League (NFL)
Instagram Usage of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Accommodations During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	WNBA
YouTube Usage of those Attended/Watched	Sports Travel Mode of Transportation During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched	Other Women's (Women's Professional and College Sports)
TikTok Usage of those Attended/Watched	Favorite MLB Team of those Attended/Watched	Golf
Tablet Ownership of those Attended/Watched	Favorite NFL Team of those Attended/Watched	Tennis
Online Sports News, Features or Highlights of those Attended/Watched	Favorite NBA Team of those Attended/Watched	Esports
Streaming Games/Matches/Races of those Watched Streaming	Favorite NHL Team of those Attended/Watched	Consumer Brand Categories
Streaming Channels/Services Added During Past 12 Months to Watch Games/Events of those Watched Streaming	Favorite MLS Team of those Attended/Watched	Sports or Energy Drink had Most Often During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched
Streaming Channels/Services Currently Subscribe To to Watch Games/Events of those Watched Streaming	Favorite College Sports Team of those Attended/Watched	Insurance Company for Primary Residence of those Attended/Watched
Activities on Computer, Tablet or Smartphone of those Attended/Watched	Fantasy Sports of those Attended/Watched	Credit Card Network Use Most Often of those Attended/Watched
Activities on Computer of those Attended/Watched	Season-Long (All Included Sports)	Cell Phone Service Provider of those Attended/Watched
Activities on Tablet of those Attended/Watched	Fantasy Sports Leagues of those Attended/Watched	Domestic Airline Flown on Most Often During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched
Activities on Smartphone of those Attended/Watched	Days Per Week Played Short-Term	Bank Used Most Often for Checking/Savings Account During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched
Activities on Mobile Device (Tablet/Smartphone) of those Attended/Watched	Fantasy Sports of those Attended/Watched	Hotel/Motel Stayed at Most Often for Business or Leisure Travel During Past 12 Months of those Attended/Watched
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel	Short-Term (All Included Sports)	Quick Service Restaurant Visited/Had Food From Most Often During Past 12 Months of those
Sports Logo Apparel purchased at Fanatics	Fantasy Sports Games/Leagues Played in Typical Day of those Attended/Watched	
Sports Logo Apparel Type	Short-Term (All Included Sports)	
Sports Logo Apparel Outlet Type	Fantasy Sports Free Access of those Attended/Watched	
Sports Logo Apparel In-Store Purchase/Pick-up or Shipped of those Attended/Watched	Sports Gambling of those Attended/Watched	
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Gender/Age	Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Gender/Age	
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Gender	Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Gender	
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Age	Sports Logo Apparel Type	
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Income	Sports Logo Apparel Outlet Type	
Spending on Sports Logo Apparel - Region	Sports Logo Apparel In-Store Purchase/Pick-up or Shipped of those Attended/Watched	
Use of Secondary Ticketing Services	Use Fanatics for Licensed Merch Purchased	

General Notes & Summary of Data

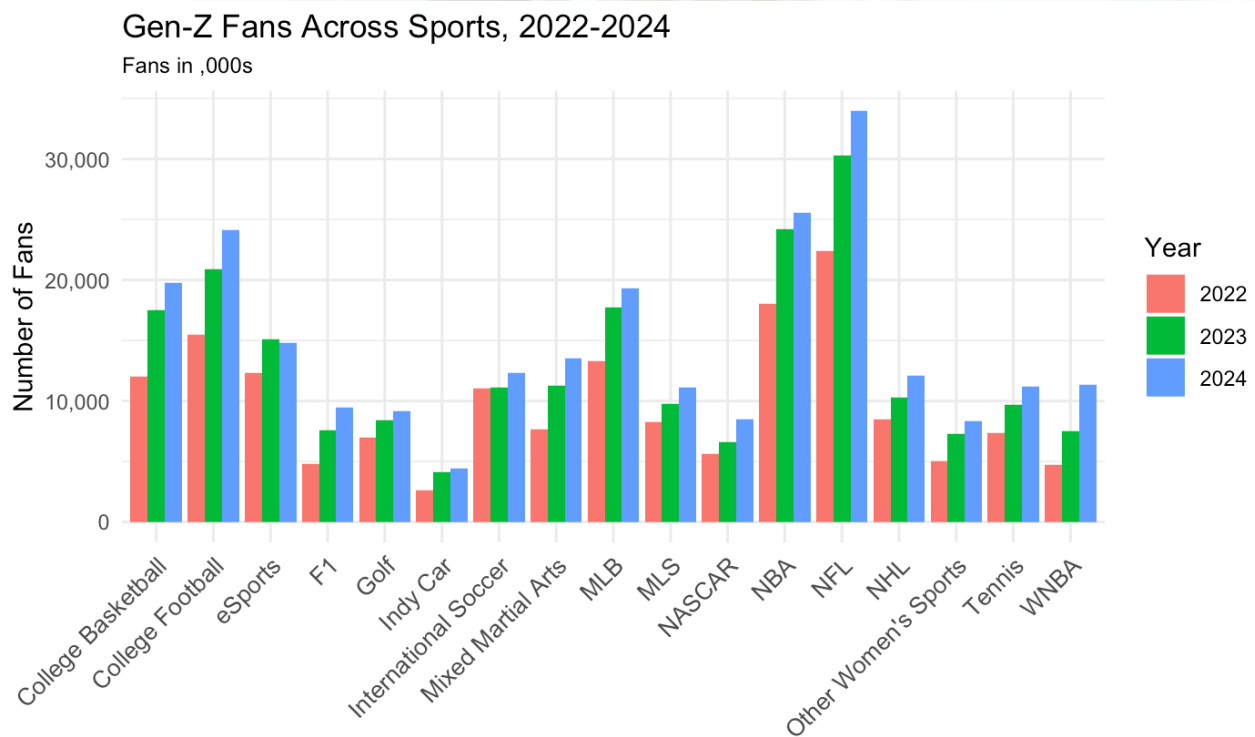


- The information presented in this report is drawn directly from the Annual Study of Sports Fandom conducted by SBRnet. This study includes responses from 7,064 participants ages 13 and older. To ensure accuracy, the sample has been balanced according to age, household income, household size, gender, ethnicity, race, and geography, using updated data from the most recent U.S. Census.
- This report includes two types of graphs. SBRnet aims to analyze the total number of fans in each generation—Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers—over a three-year period, with the data represented in millions of fans.
- The second graph shows the year-over-year growth as a percentage for the three-year period starting in 2022 and ending in 2024. To clarify, this does not represent the total percentage growth of a sport from 2022 to 2024, but rather the average annual growth during that period.
- For the purposes of this report, a sports fan is defined as someone that has attended at least one game live or watched via tradition media and/or streaming.

I want to thank Christopher Marfisi, analyst intern from The Falk School at Syracuse University for his work on this project.

Let's Start with: Gen-Z Total Fans

Young people show significant growth in WNBA and NFL fandom compared to previous generations, with few sports like Esports and International Soccer seeing declines or hitting a plateau.

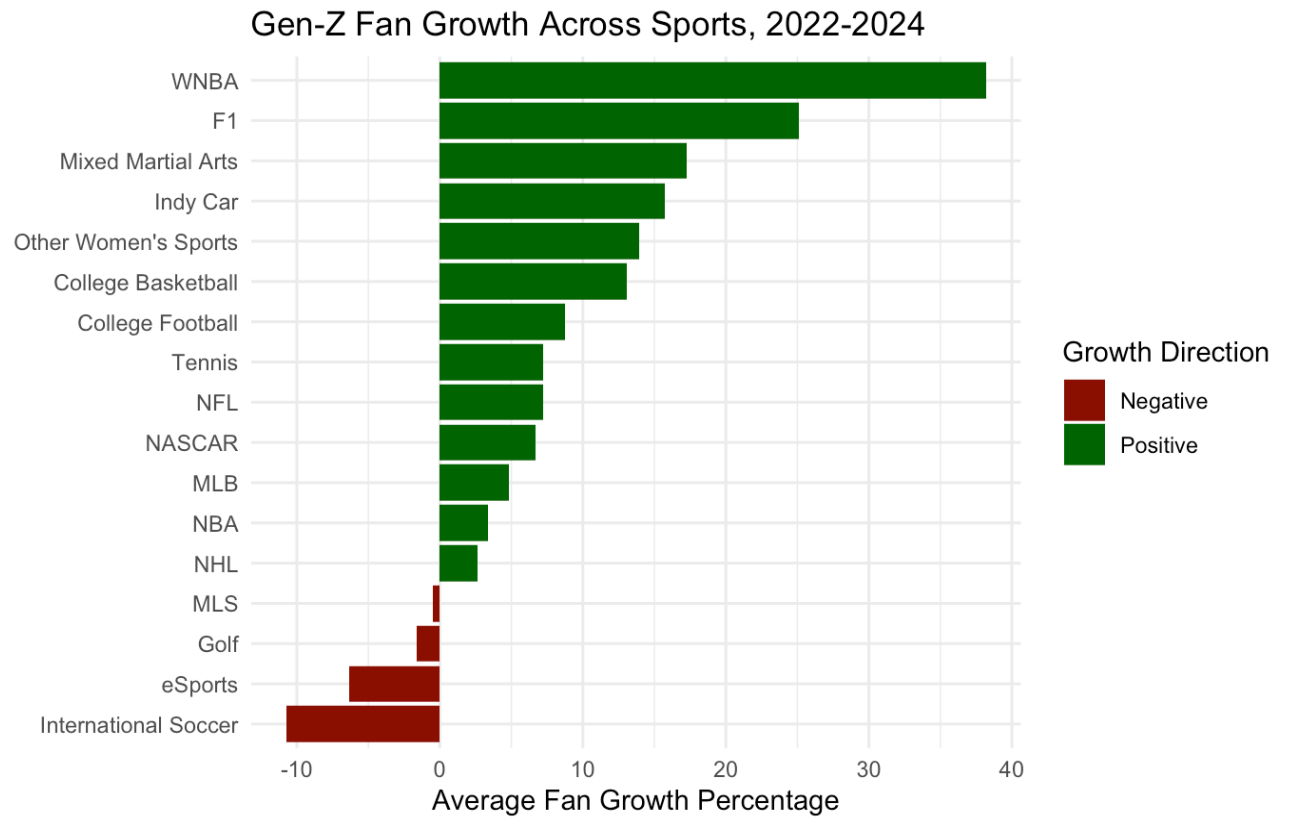


Source: SBRnet 2025 Study of Sports Fandom

Gen-Z Fandom Growth Percentage by Sport



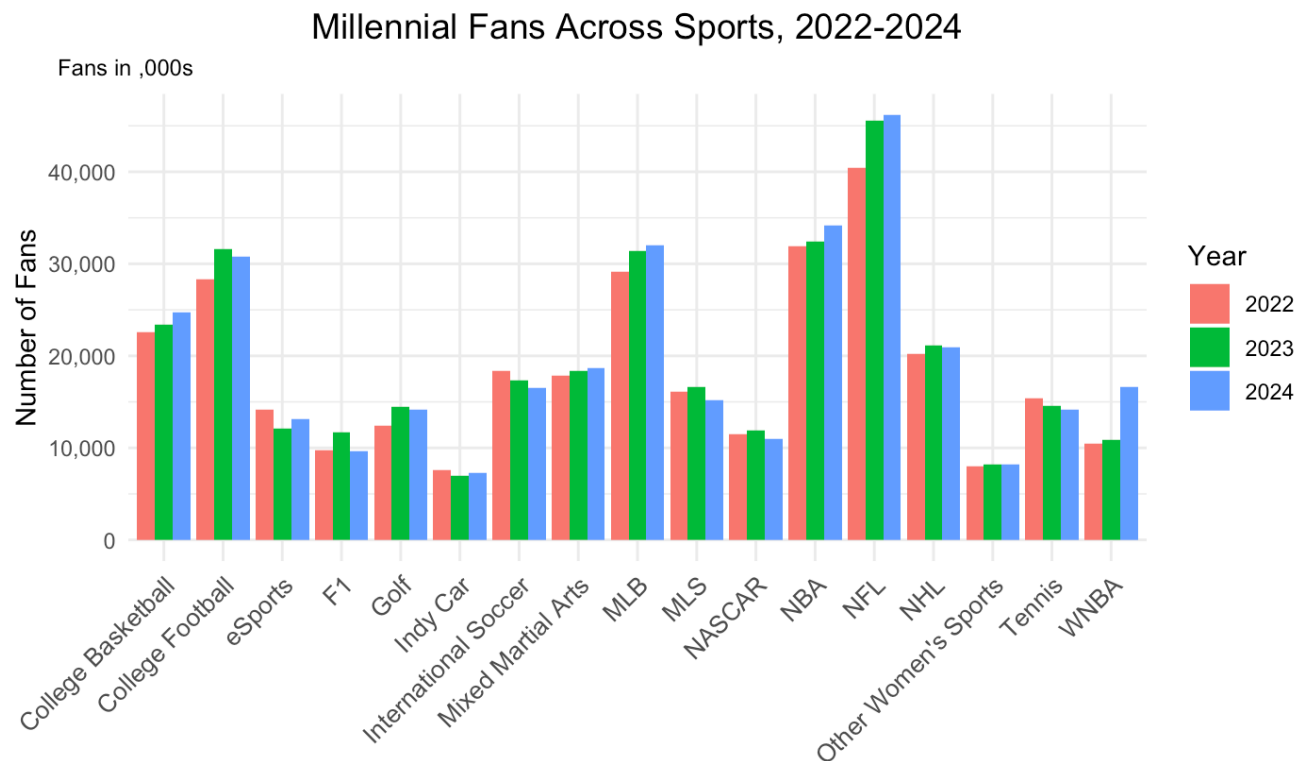
- It's no surprise that the WNBA has the highest growth rate due to the influx of Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese, who are extremely popular figures among young fans.
- As you'll see throughout this presentation, the WNBA appears to have the largest growth across every generation in terms of percentage of fan growth.
- Formula One has also experienced substantial growth, but relative to other sports, its total fan count remains significantly lower than that of other major US sports.
- The two sports that have largely declined in terms of growth are International Soccer and Esports.



Source: SBRnet 2025 Study of Sports Fandom

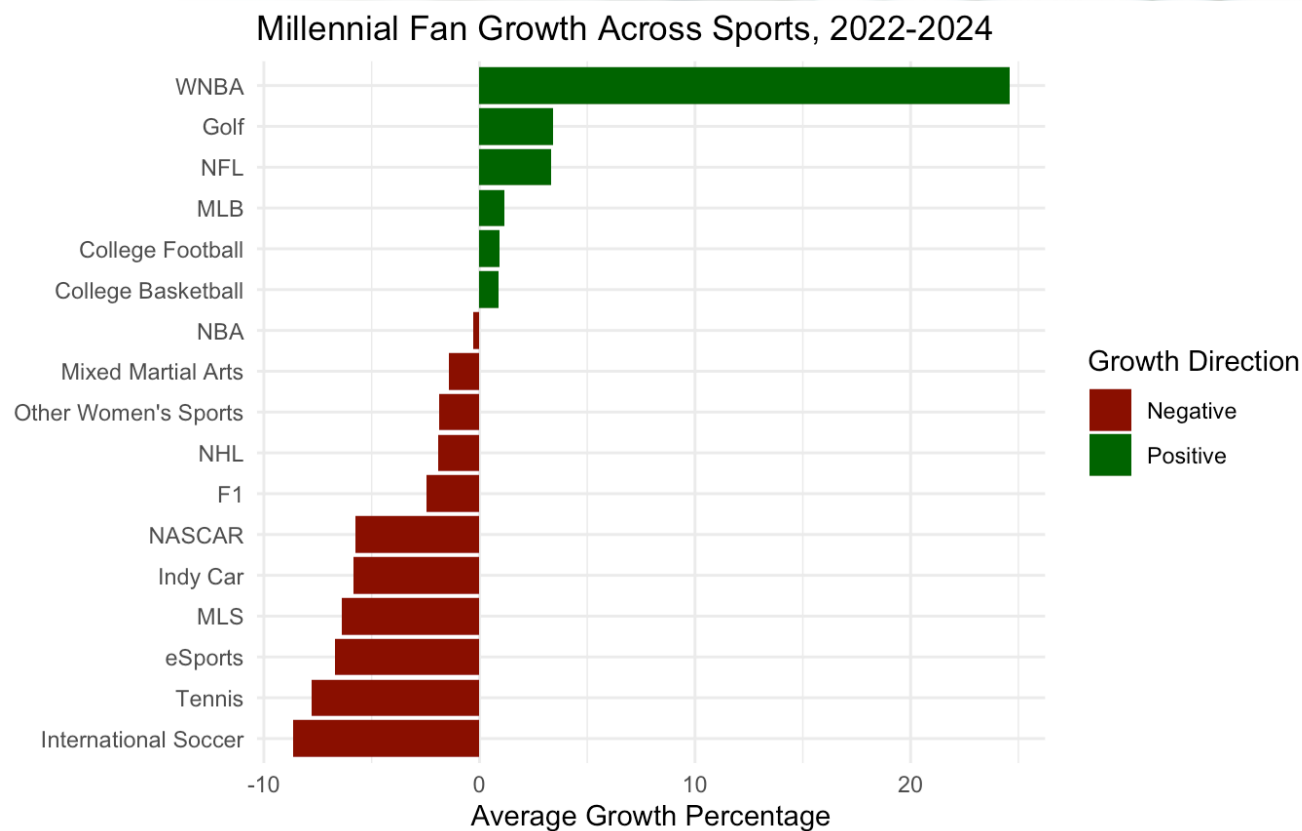
Now, Let's Look at the Millennial Generation's Total Fans

- Here you'll see some of the same information such as large growths amongst the NFL and the WNBA.
- There is some stagnation and decreases across other sports like NASCAR and Indy Car.
- This generation seems to be significantly less interested in sports, with more sports fandom shrinkage than any other generation.



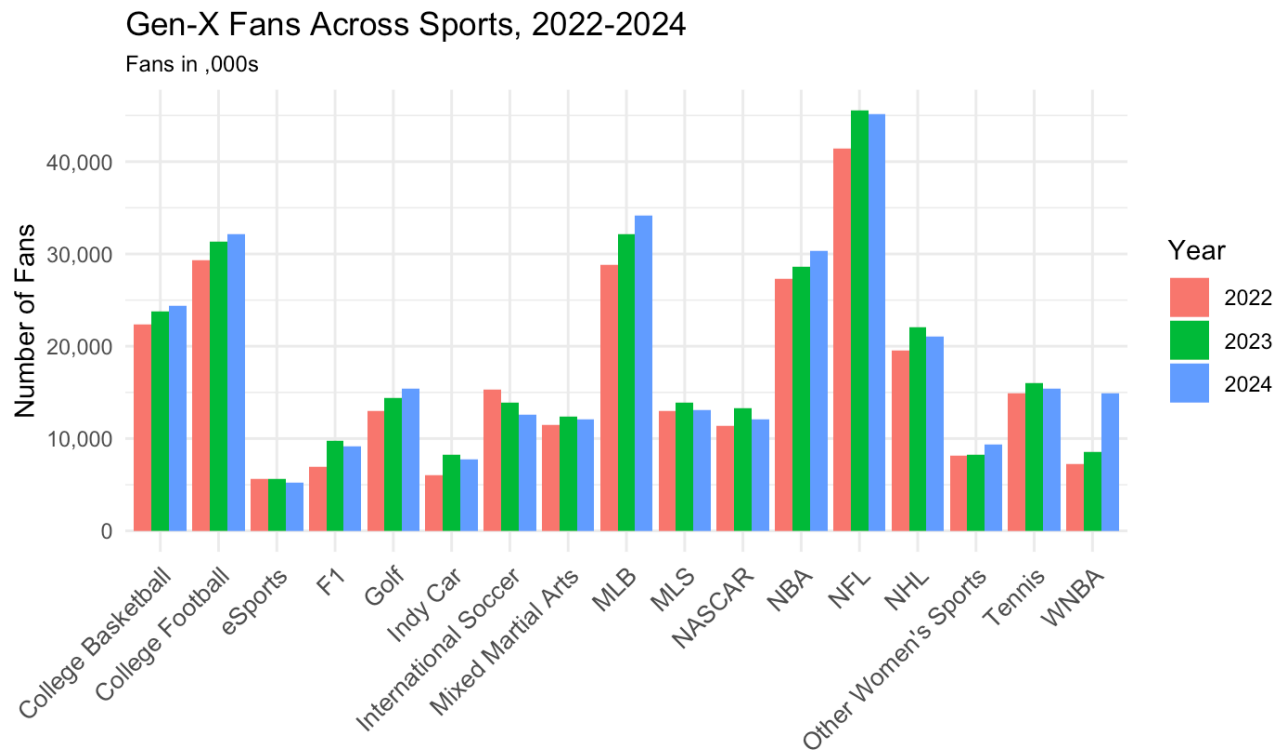
Millennial Gen Growth Percentage by Sport

- Though all other generations have this drastic WNBA increase, this age group seems to have the starkest increase in 2024, nearly doubling from 2023.
- There's also been some steady growth in the MLB and the NBA as well, with some small contraction in sports like Tennis and the NHL.



On to Gen-X: Total Fans by Sport

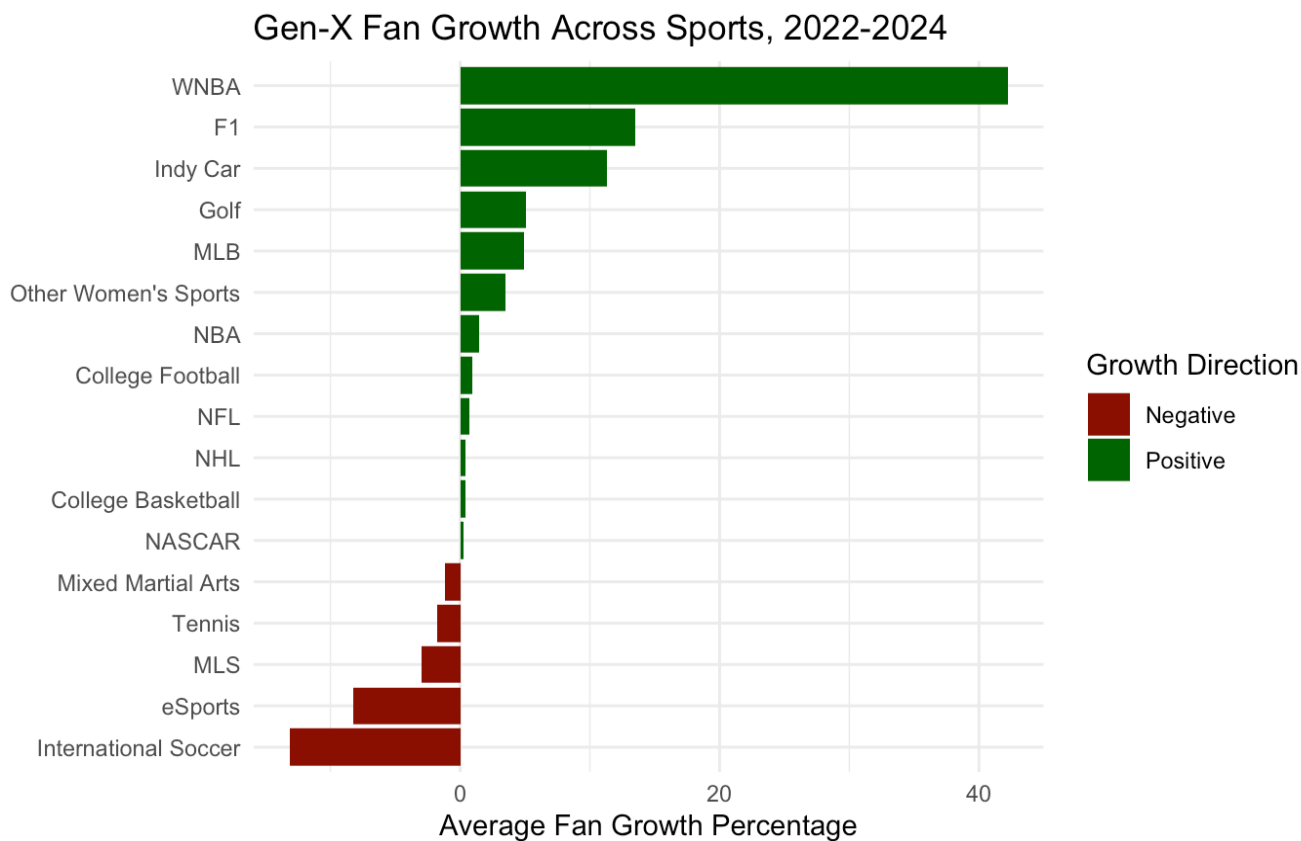
- There's substantial growth from the WNBA once again, alongside a substantial fall from International and domestic Soccer as well as Esports.
- This age group also expectedly isn't too fond of Esports with a substantial drop across this generation.



Source: SBRnet 2025 Study of Sports Fandom

Gen X Growth Percentage by Sport

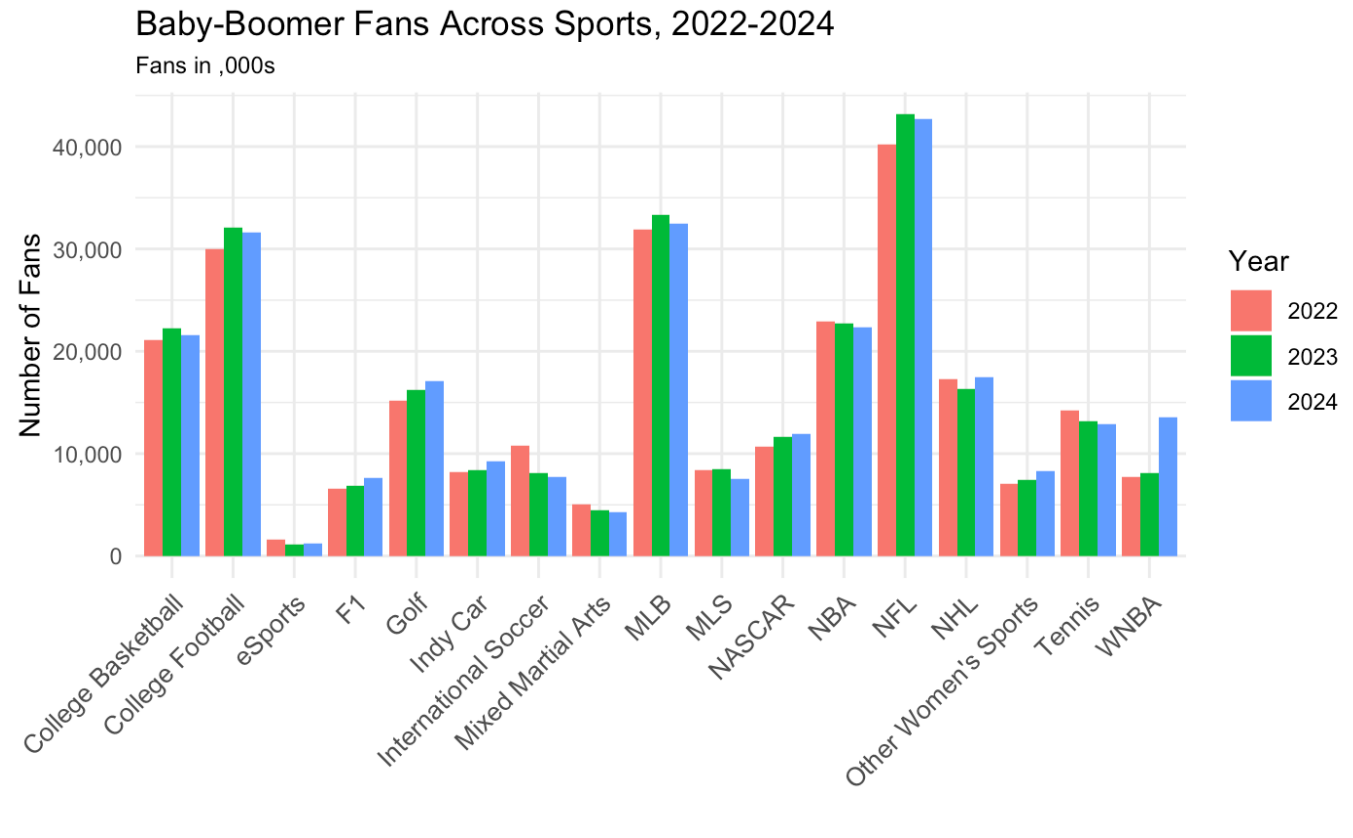
- This age range has much more in the red than other age ranges. Millennial and early Gen-Z age ranges seem to not follow organized sports nearly as much, besides the obvious increase in WNBA fandom.
- This underscores the previous slides assessment that this generation seems to lack growing interest in sports as a whole, aside from the consistent increase in WNBA interest.



Source: SBRnet 2025 Study of Sports Fandom

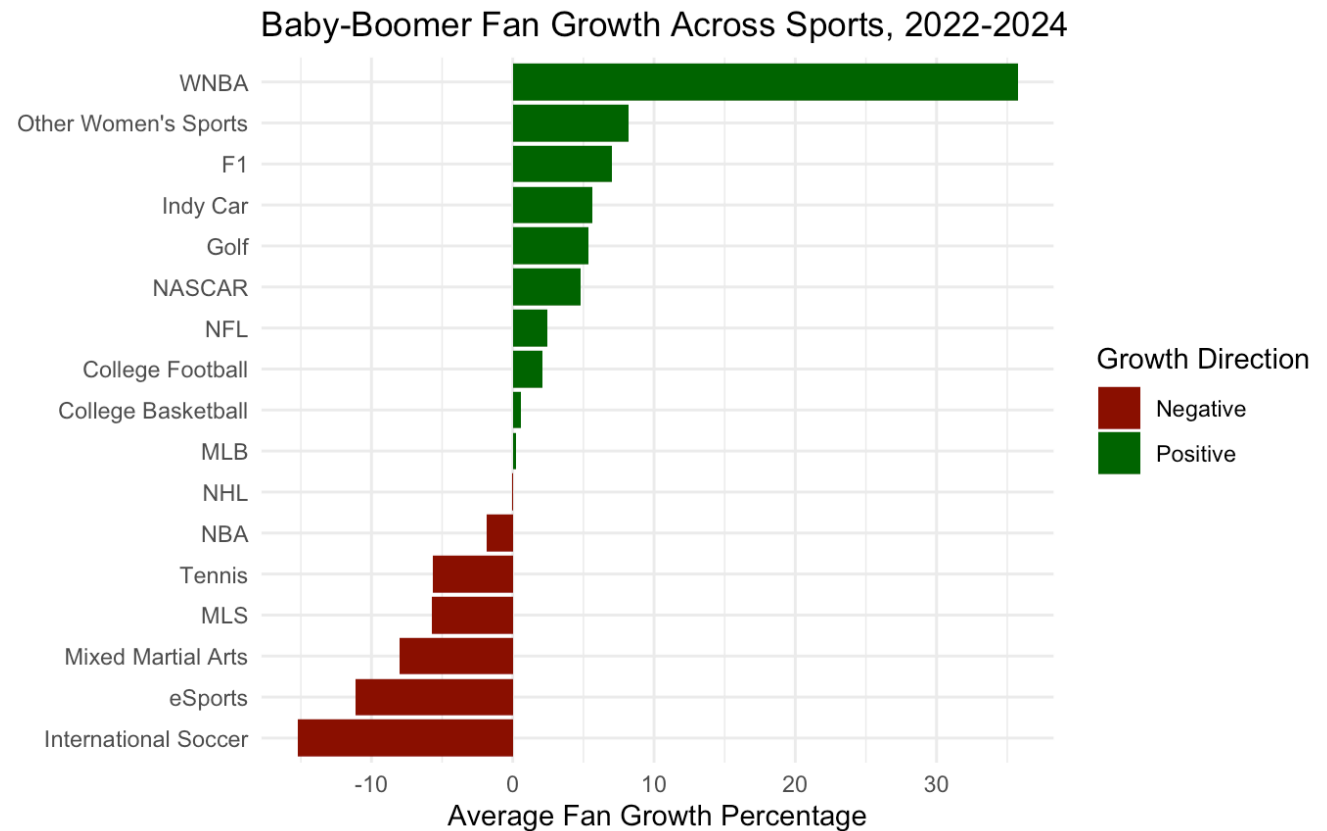
And Finally: Baby Boomer Total Fans by Sport

- This graph shows nearly a doubling in WNBA fans among Boomers, along with some marginal gains in the NFL and Formula 1.
- As one may expect, there doesn't seem to be too much change across the board, as most people in this generation seem to have cemented their fandom.



Baby Boomer Growth Percentage by Sport

- Aside from the seemingly inevitable WNBA growth, there's also a substantial Formula One increase, which has come up across all generations.
- This graph also points out the poor performance of International Soccer and Esports in the United States, as they've placed at or near the bottom on Growth Percentage Graph regardless of which generation.



Source: SBRnet 2025 Study of Sports Fandom

Conclusions

- **WNBA's Historic Surge Across All Generations**

The WNBA stands as the most consistently high-growth sport across all generations. Driven by the stardom of athletes like Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese, it's capturing attention especially among Gen Z and Millennials. Even Baby Boomers show a near doubling in fandom — a rare cross-generational success.

- **NFL's Multi-Generational Strength & Cultural Penetration**

The NFL continues to benefit from pop culture integrations (e.g., the Kelce-Swift effect), strong media partnerships, and wide generational appeal. Growth is strong among younger fans while also showing resilience with Boomers.

- **Formula One's Media-Driven Momentum**

F1's rise is attributable to media storytelling (“Drive to Survive”) and increased U.S.-based races. While Gen Z leads the interest surge, it has gained traction even among older groups.

- **Esports and International Soccer Plateau**

Despite early momentum, Esports and International Soccer have failed to sustain growth. Esports in particular has experienced sharp generational drop-offs, especially among Millennials and Gen X. Possible reasons include oversaturation, lack of mainstream exposure, or shifting tech/entertainment preferences.

- **Millennial Disengagement in Niche Sports**

Millennials display more fragmentation in fandom. While they maintain strong ties to traditional leagues like the NFL, NBA, and MLB, their disinterest in niche sports (e.g., NASCAR, Tennis, Golf) could signal waning mainstream relevance for these categories unless repositioned.

Generational Highlights



- **Gen Z** gravitates toward progressive, socially aware leagues (WNBA), high-octane sports (F1), and legacy leagues (NFL). This group is highly responsive to media influence and athlete-driven narratives.
- **Millennials** show solid interest in legacy team sports but are cooling on solo and niche events. Their fandom is less expansive but more deeply tied to entertainment value and nostalgia.
- **Gen X** is transitioning toward college-based fandom, with strong retention in NCAA sports. While WNBA interest rises, overall engagement levels suggest a need for targeted re-engagement strategies.
- **Baby Boomers** are the most stable cohort, loyal to long-standing preferences. WNBA growth here is unexpected but promising, while Tennis sees declines despite recent promotional efforts.

Get In Touch

Reach out to SBRnet at any of the contact points listed below.

561-990-5590



neil@sbrnet.com



<https://sportsmarketanalytics.com>



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