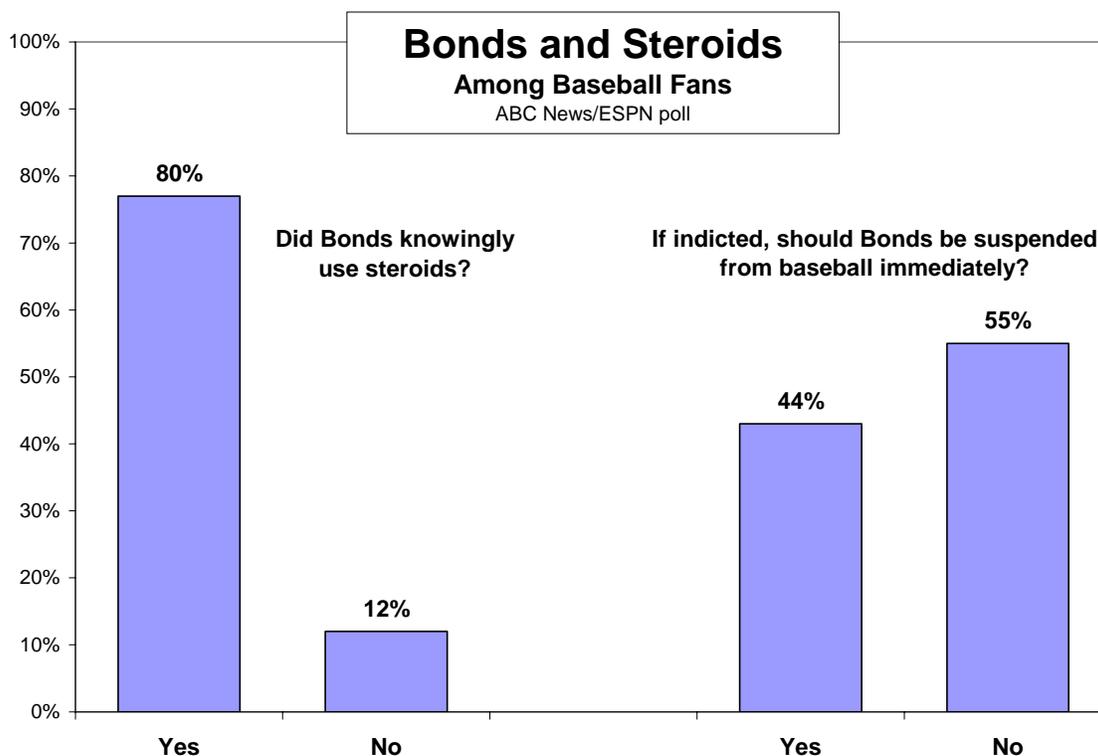


Three-Quarters Think Bonds Knew, But Most Say: Let Him Play

Contrary to his testimony otherwise, three-quarters of Americans believe baseball slugger Barry Bonds knowingly used steroids on his way to his home-run records. Yet most also oppose his immediate suspension if indicted, preferring to let his case first run its course.

Suspicion that Bonds lied has grown particularly among baseball fans: Eighty percent of fans in this ABC News/ESPN poll think he knowingly took steroids, up from 65 percent in March 2005. Still, if he's indicted, 55 percent say Bonds should be allowed to keep playing pending the outcome of his trial. Forty-four percent would prefer his immediate suspension.



RECORDS – There's less forgiveness on Bonds' records, which include most home runs in a season and second-most career homers. (He passed Babe Ruth this year and trails only Hank Aaron.) Given what they know now, just under four in 10 fans say Bonds' records should remain unsullied in the record books. About as many say they should remain, but with an asterisk; about a quarter want them removed entirely.

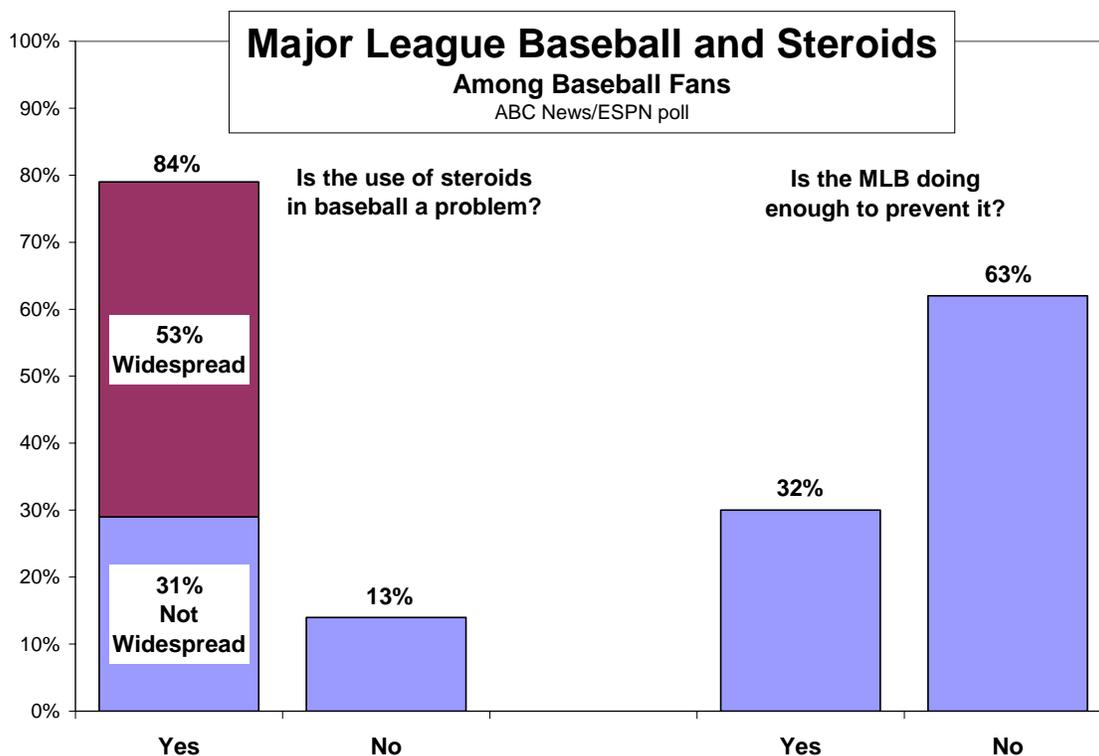
Bond's records	
Remain in the books	37%
Remain, with an asterisk	38
Remove	24

Fans split about evenly, 48-47 percent, on whether Bonds should or should not be elected to the Hall of Fame – a notable absence of support given his many accomplishments on the field (including seven MVP awards). And if he were indicted and convicted, just 30 percent say they'd want him in the Hall.

Federal prosecutors have been examining whether to charge Bonds with perjury for denying to a grand jury that he knowingly took steroids, and also with tax evasion. A federal grand jury investigating the case was set to expire today; prosecutors said they're seeking more testimony. Bonds has denied wrongdoing.

PROBLEM – Bonds is not the only target of criticism. Eight in 10 Americans, fans and non-fans alike, say the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs by professional baseball players is a problem; despite stricter new rules, 53 percent of fans call it a "widespread" problem.

Indeed, and again despite its much tougher stance, 63 percent of fans also say Major League Baseball still is not doing enough to prevent the use of performance-enhancing drugs by its players. About a third say it is doing enough; that does mark some progress for management from Spring 2005.



Baseball doing enough to prevent drug use?		
(Among fans)		
	Yes	No
Now	32%	63
3/05	21	69

One potential option for baseball – reversing course and allowing players to use steroids and other such drugs (as in effect was the case before 2002) – is a vastly unpopular idea: Eighty-six percent of Americans, fans and non-fans alike, oppose it.

GROUPS – There are some differences among groups; younger adults – and, most notably, men – go somewhat easier on Bonds. Among fans, 60 percent of men say Bonds should be allowed to keep playing if indicted; that falls to 48 percent of women. Fifty-eight percent of men would like to see him in the Hall of Fame; 37 percent of women agree. If he's convicted, 44 percent of male fans would like to see him in the Hall nonetheless; just 15 percent of women go along.

Part of these differences stem from broader perceptions of the issue: While 79 percent of men who are fans call the use of performance-enhancing drugs a problem in baseball, that goes higher – 90 percent – among women.

FANS – More people in this poll than in the 2005 ABC News/ESPN poll – 55 percent vs. 46 percent – identify themselves as baseball fans (and another 10 percent say they're "somewhat" of a fan). A possible reason is that the 2005 poll was done in March, rather than in the midst of another baseball season. Nonetheless, on most issues views of fans and non-fans on these issues are quite similar, likely because of the notoriety of Bonds' case.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/ESPN poll was conducted by telephone July 19, 2006, among a random national sample of 500 adults. The results have a 4.5-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. Do you think the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs by professional baseball players is a problem, or not? IF YES: Is it a widespread problem, or a problem, but not widespread?

		-----Problem-----			Not a	No
		NET	Widespread	Not widespread	problem	opinion
7/19/06	All	79	50	29	14	7
	Fans	84	53	31	13	3

2. Do you think Major League Baseball is or is not doing enough to prevent the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs by professional baseball players?

		Enough	Not enough	No opinion
7/19/06	All	30	62	8
	Fans	32	63	5
3/15/05	All	18	61	21
	Fans	21	69	10

3. It's been reported that the baseball player Barry Bonds may be charged with lying under oath about using steroids, and also with tax evasion. If he is charged, do you think Bonds should be (suspended from baseball immediately), or should he be (allowed to keep playing pending the outcome of his trial)?

		Suspended immediately	Allowed to keep playing pending outcome of trial	No opinion
7/19/06	All	43	55	2
	Fans	44	55	2

4. Just your best guess, do you think Bonds did or did not KNOWINGLY use steroids?

		Did	Did not	No opinion
7/19/06	All	77	12	11
	Fans	80	12	8
3/15/05	Fans	65	16	19

5. Bonds holds the record for most home runs in a single season, and he's number two in career home runs. Given what you know now, do you think his baseball records should (remain in the record books; remain but be marked by an asterisk; or be removed from the record books?)

		Remain in record books	Remain with an asterisk	Remove from record books	No opinion
7/19/06	All	37	36	24	3
	Fans	37	38	24	2

6. Do you think Bonds should or should not be elected to the baseball Hall of Fame?

		Should	Should not	No opinion
7/19/06	All	46	48	6
	Fans	48	47	4
3/12/06	All*	49	43	7
8/7/05	All*	57	34	9

*Gallup

7. (IF SHOULD, Q6) What if Bonds is convicted of perjury and tax evasion - in that case do you think he should or should not be elected to the baseball Hall of Fame?

		Should	Should not	No opinion
7/19/06	All	61	35	4
	Fans	63	32	5

6/7 NET

		-----Should be elected to HOF-----			
		Should if	Should not	Should not	No opin.
		NET	convicted	if convicted	
7/19/06	All	46	28	16	48
	Fans	48	30	16	47

8. What would you think of baseball changing its current policy and ALLOWING players to use steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs - is that something you'd support or oppose?

		Support	Oppose	No opinion
7/19/06	All	12	86	3
	Fans	12	86	2

9. Are you a fan of professional baseball or not?

		----- Fan -----			
		NET	Yes	Yes, somewhat (vol.)	No
7/19/06		65	55	10	35
3/15/05		58	46	12	42

END