

**ABC NEWS POLL: TIGER WOODS**

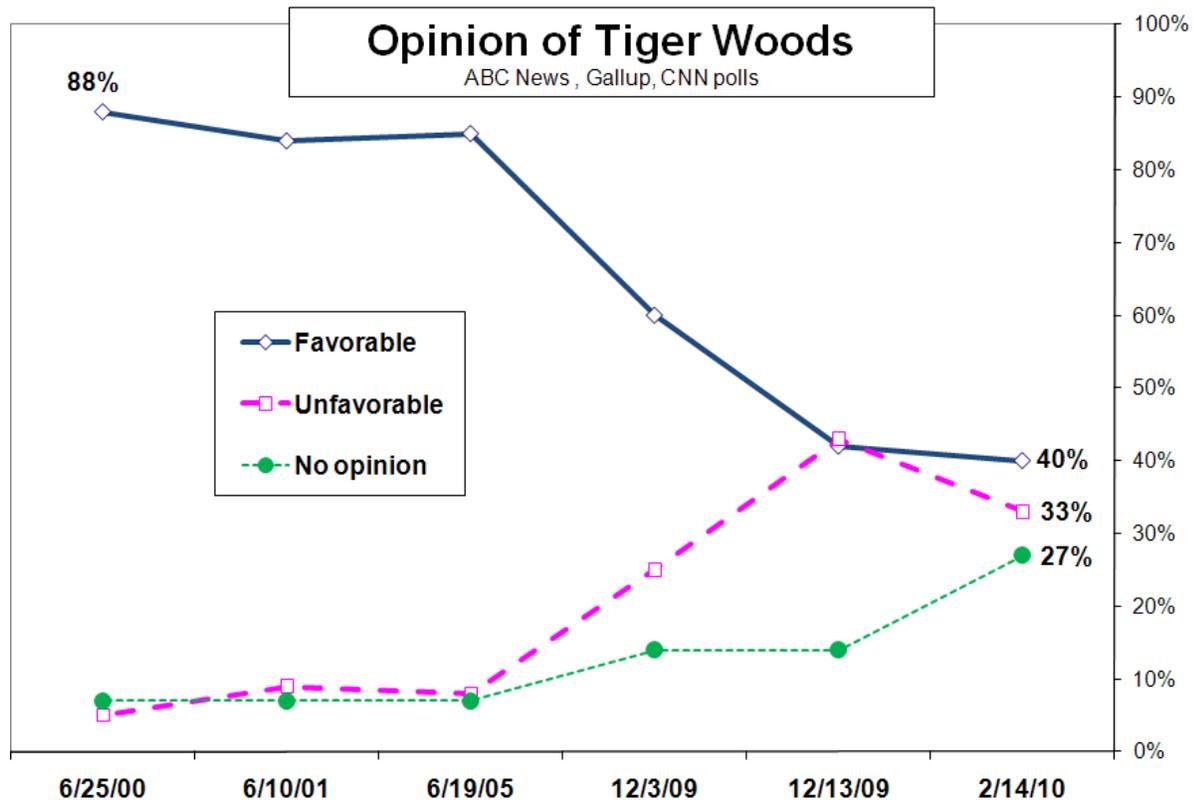
**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 7 a.m. Friday, Feb. 19, 2010**

## Censure of Woods Eases, But it's a Bogey for Golf

Tiger Woods appears to be chipping himself out of the rough, his popularity as a player overcoming public dismay at his personal behavior. But it's a double bogey for his sport, with the number of Americans who call themselves golf fans slicing to a new low.

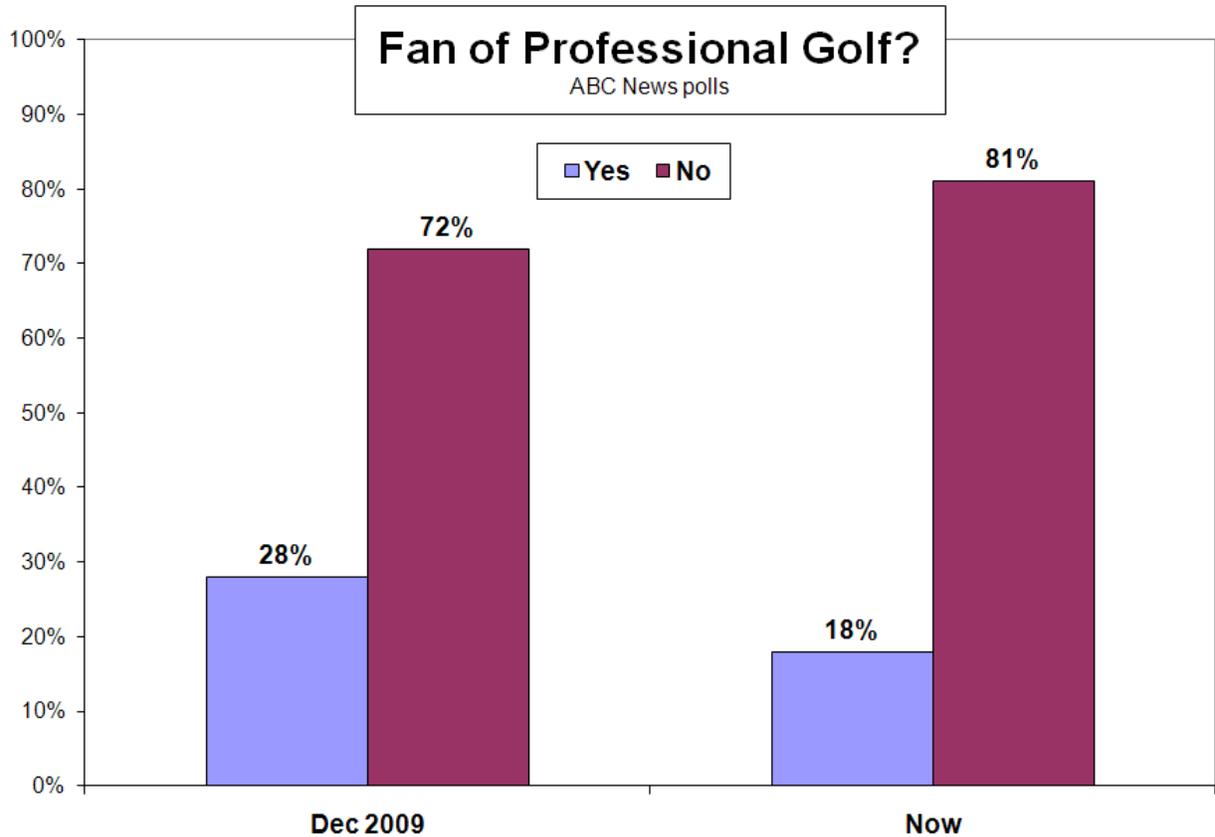
In advance of his first public comments on the scandal that bunkered his personal popularity, 65 percent in this ABC News poll say Woods should return to the sport this season, rising to 75 percent of golf fans. Very few – 7 percent of adults overall – want to see him retire permanently.

Other trends indicate an easing of initial outrage at the Woods sex scandal. Unfavorable views of the golf star have eased by 10 points since December, to 32 percent, with more people taking a neutral stance. And there's been a slight decline, to 33 percent, in calls for his sponsors to drop him. Among golf fans just a quarter say Woods should lose his lucrative sponsorships.



Even with a better shot at redemption, it may be a long slog; while Woods' favorability rating has not worsened further, it also has not improved, and at 40 percent remains less than half its

peak. There's trouble, moreover, for his sport overall: Not only have television ratings for tour play tanked during Woods' recent absence, but only 18 percent of Americans in this poll describe themselves as golf fans, down 10 points just since December.

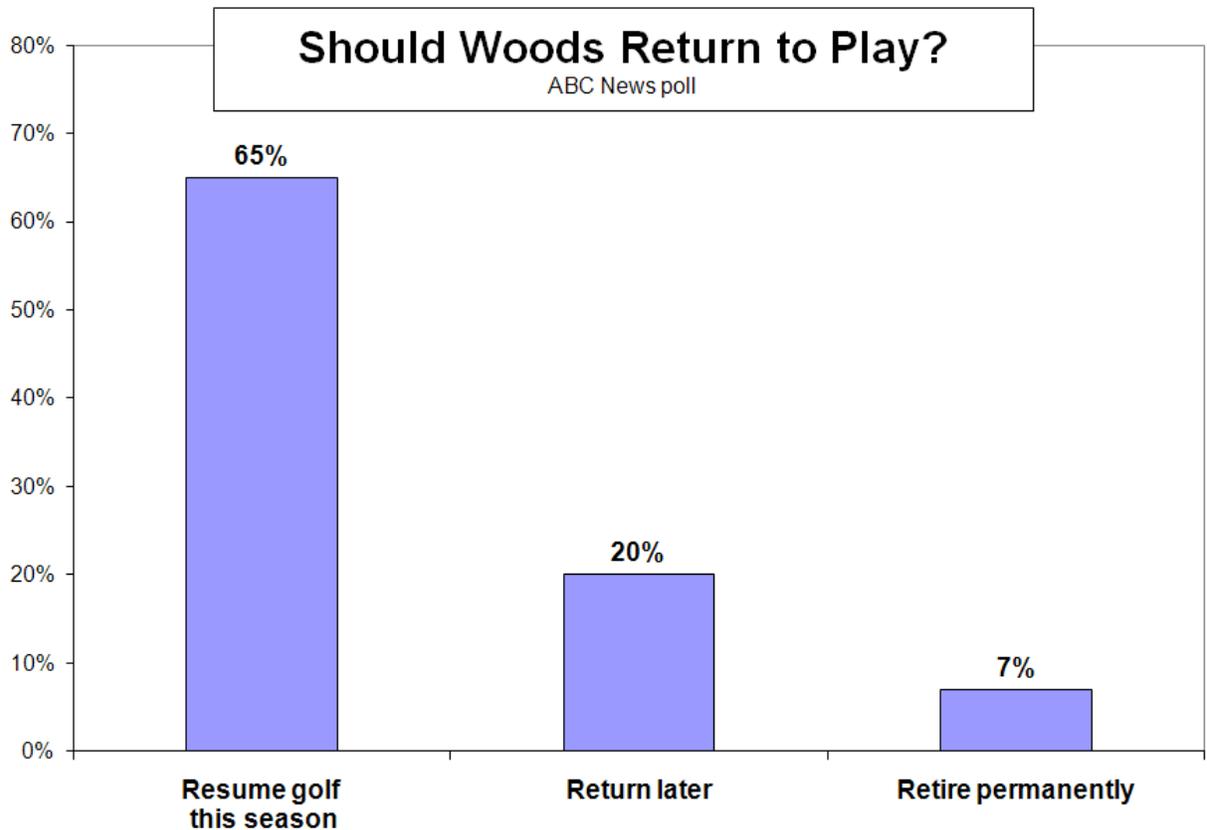


Woods is to speak publicly on the scandal for the first time today, delivering prepared remarks to a group at PGA Tour Headquarters in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

That's a step most people see as unnecessary: Fifty-six percent call the scandal a personal matter Woods need not talk about in public. Nonetheless, a substantial number, 40 percent, think he owes it to his fans to address the issue publicly, then move on.

The scandal broke Nov. 27 when Woods was involved in a car crash outside his home, reportedly after an altercation with his wife. Allegations of marital infidelity with more than a dozen women followed, and Woods announced an indefinite leave from the sport Dec. 11. Two days later one of his most prominent sponsors, the management firm Accenture, dropped him.

**GOT GAME** – Whatever his personal sins, 65 percent in this poll say Woods should resume playing golf this season, and an additional 20 percent say he should return to the sport, but later. As noted, just 7 percent overall – and a mere 2 percent of fans – say he should quit permanently.



Another result shows Woods' durability among fans: Despite the scandal 62 percent in this group still express a favorable opinion of him overall, essentially the same as in December. Among non-fans, by contrast, just 35 percent see him favorably. But his unfavorable rating among fans and others alike has eased, with many more non-fans undecided.

	View of Woods overall		
	Favorable-Unfavorable-No opin.		
	Now	December	
All	40-33-27	42-43-14	
Golf fans	62-29-9	62-37-1	
Not a fan	35-34-31	35-46-19	

In a further example of his continued strong standing among fans, 62 percent in this group say his sponsorships should continue, vs. 26 percent who say companies should drop him. Fewer non-fans, 51 percent, say he should keep the sponsorships, 35 percent not, with the rest unsure.

**GENDER GAP** – There are some gender gaps in views of Woods. Men are 14 points more apt than women to see him favorably (though it's fewer than half for both, 47 percent vs. 33 percent); this likely relates to the fact that men are three times more apt than women to be golf fans.

Twenty-nine percent of men and 37 percent of women see Woods unfavorably. Perhaps surprisingly, given his behavior, relatively few women see him “strongly” unfavorably, 16 percent. It’s similar, 12 percent, among men.

Women also are 12 points more apt than men to say sponsors should drop Woods (but still well fewer than half of women, 39 percent, say so). At the same time, similar numbers of men and women say Woods should return to the sport, and there’s no difference between the sexes on whether or not he needs to address the issue publicly.

	All	Men	Women	M-W diff
Golf fan	18%	27	10	17 points
Favorable opinion of Woods	40	47	33	14
Think sponsors should drop him	33	27	39	-12
Think he should resume play this season	65	68	63	5
Think he should address scandal publicly	40	40	40	0

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 11-14, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,030 adults reached by landline and cell-phone alike. Results for the full sample have a 4-point error margin; click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by Social Science Research Solutions at ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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

1. Are you a fan of professional golf, or not?

	----- Golf fan -----				
	NET	Yes	Somewhat (vol.)	No	No opinion
2/14/10	18	16	2	81	0
12/13/09	28	22	6	72	*
11/24/02	23	16	7	78	0

2. Overall do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the professional golfer Tiger Woods? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
2/14/10	40	20	20	33	19	14	27
12/13/09	42	22	20	43	17	26	14
12/3/09*	60	NA	NA	25	NA	NA	14
6/19/05	85	NA	NA	8	NA	NA	7
6/10/01	84	NA	NA	9	NA	NA	7
6/25/00	88	NA	NA	5	NA	NA	7

\*12/3/09 CNN; 2005 Gallup; 2001, 2000 Gallup/CNN. No opinion inc. "never heard of."

3. Woods has been accused of having extramarital affairs, and has apologized for what he called "personal sins." Given this situation, do you think companies should or should not continue to use Woods to endorse their products? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Should -----			----- Should not -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
2/14/10	53	31	22	33	13	21	14
12/13/09	54	33	20	38	13	24	8

4. What comes closer to your opinion? Would you say (this is a personal matter and Woods does not need to say anything about it in public) or (as a public figure, Woods owes it to his fans to address the situation publicly and then move on).

	Personal matter	Address situation publicly	No opinion
2/14/10	56	40	3

5. Do you think Woods should resume playing professional golf this season, remain out of the sport for a longer period but return eventually, or retire permanently from the sport?

	Resume golf this season	Remain out longer but return eventually	Retire permanently	No opinion
2/14/10	65	20	7	8

\*\*\* END \*\*\*