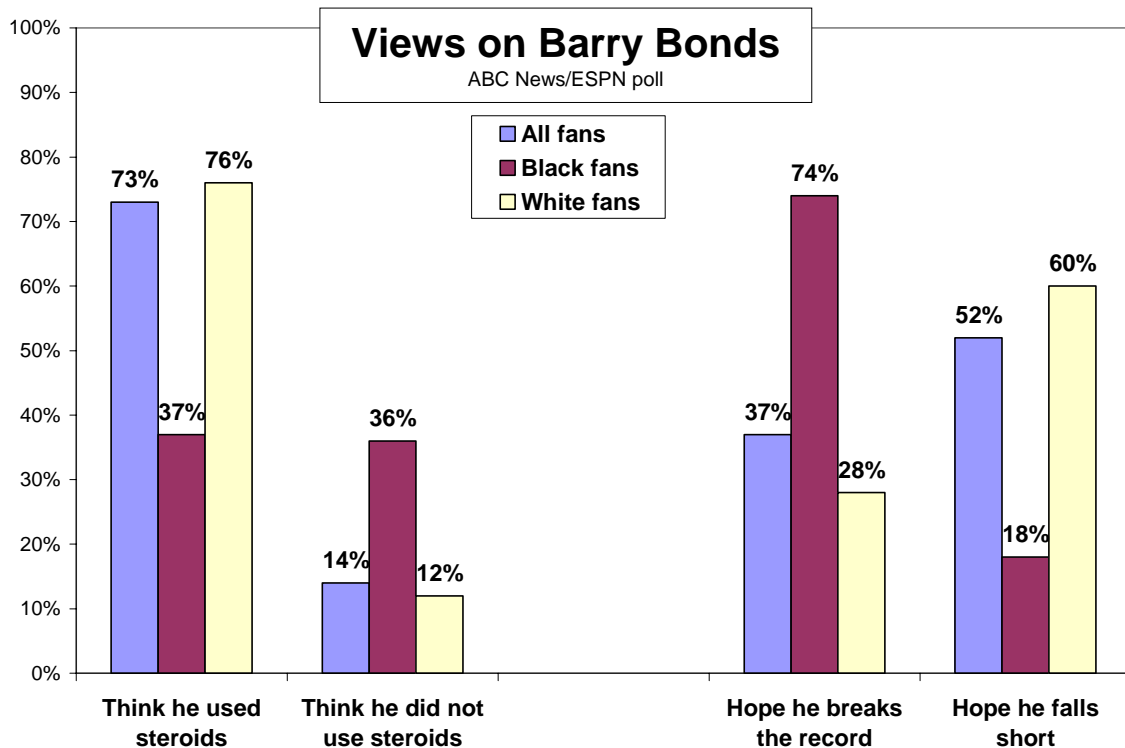


With Broad Suspicion of Steroid Use, Most Fans Hope Bonds Falls Short

With just a handful of home runs left for Barry Bonds to break one of baseball's most hallowed records, more than half the sport's fans hope he whiffs – a dramatic difference from Hank Aaron's broad support as he approached the same milestone 33 years ago.

This ABC News/ESPN poll finds that 52 percent of fans are rooting against Bonds as he approaches Aaron's record of 755 career home runs; many fewer, 37 percent, are cheering Bonds on. And while allegations of steroid use play a heavy role in these views, so does race, with black fans far more supportive of Bonds and his quest.

Overall, despite his denials, three-quarters of fans think Bonds knowingly used steroids. Those fans overwhelmingly think that makes him a cheater, discounting arguments that Major League Baseball wasn't testing for steroid use at the time; and two-thirds of them don't want to see him break Aaron's record.



Nonetheless most fans do say that if Bonds does take the home run crown he should be recognized as having done so. And most, 58 percent, back him for election to the Hall of Fame, 10 points more than in an ABC News/ESPN poll last summer.

Attitudes on Bonds are far different than they were on Aaron a generation ago. In a Harris poll in March 1974, 77 percent of sports fans said they were rooting for Aaron to break Babe Ruth's 39-year-old record. Aaron did so on April 8, 1974.

3/74: Rooting for Aaron 77%
4/07: Rooting for Bonds 37%

RACE – As noted, there's a wide gap between African-American and white baseball fans in these views. Blacks are much less apt to believe that Bonds knowingly used steroids – 37 percent think he did, vs. 76 percent of whites. And blacks are far more likely to be rooting for Bonds to break Aaron's record, whether they think he used steroids or not.

Blacks also are twice as likely as whites to think Bonds has been treated unfairly (46 percent to 25 percent). While about a quarter of these blacks think that has to do with Bonds' race, many more (41 percent) instead blame the steroids issue. An additional 21 percent blame Bonds' personality.

Whites who think Bonds has been treated unfairly are more likely to say it's because of steroids (66 percent); almost none see it as mainly a racial issue.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS – There are divisions on whether or not Bond's lifetime feats should be officially recognized. Overall, 57 percent of fans think Bonds should be recognized as the new career home-run leader if he surpasses Aaron; as noted, about as many support his election to the Hall of Fame.

Among blacks, 85 percent think Bonds should be elected to Cooperstown and 78 percent favor recognizing him as the home run leader; among whites, much smaller majorities – 53 percent in each case – agree.

The division is similar on the basis of suspected steroid use: Among people who don't think Bonds used the drug, nearly nine in 10 support him for these honors. Among those who think he did take steroids, this drops to just over half.

	Think he used steroids?	
	Yes	No
Recognize as home-run leader	51%	87%
Elect to Hall of Fame	54	87

Analysis of these factors in a regression equation finds that both – fans' race, and their opinion on Bonds' alleged steroid use – independently predict other attitudes on Bonds, including whether he should break Aaron's record and whether he should receive official

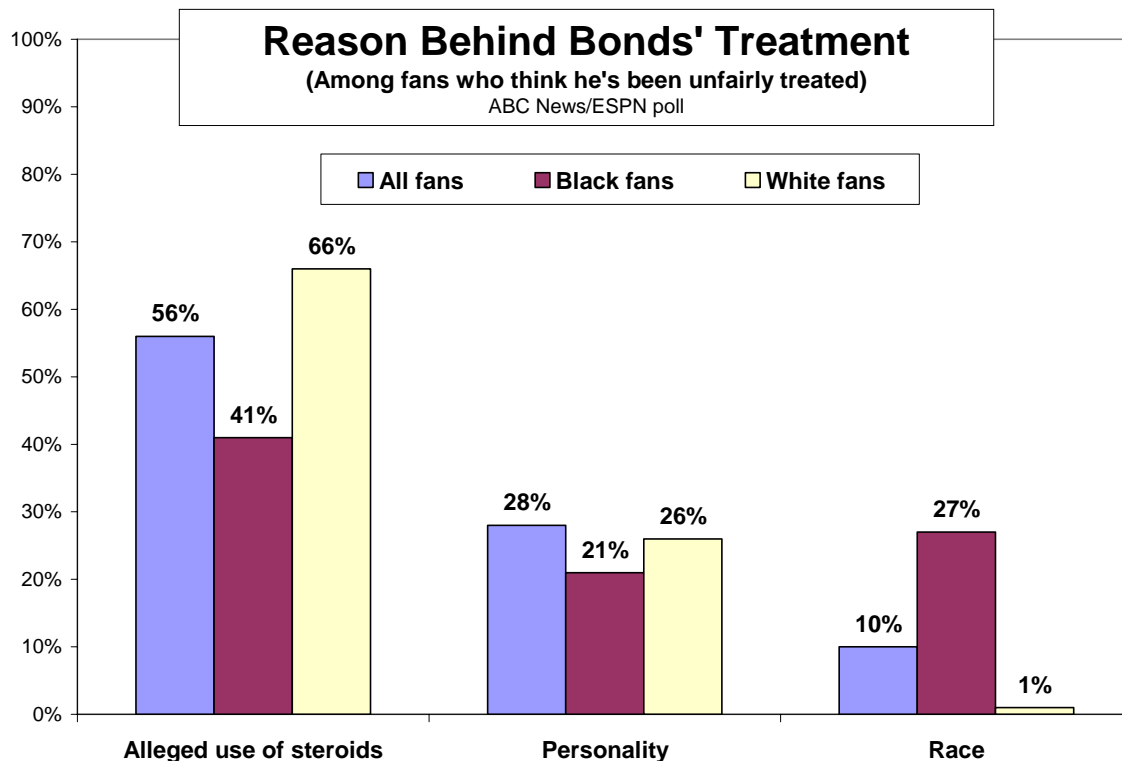
recognition for his accomplishments. Of the two, though, suspicion of steroid use is the stronger predictor.

Notably, while Bonds has overall majority support for these honors, 57 and 58 percent aren't overwhelming support numbers for a player with the single-season home run record and more MVP awards than anyone in baseball history.

TREATMENT – Nonetheless a majority of fans in general think Bonds has been treated fairly – 57 percent say he's received a fair shake, while 30 percent think he's been treated unfairly. As noted, black fans are almost twice as likely as white fans to see Bonds' treatment as unfair, 46 percent vs. 25 percent.

Fans who think Bonds hasn't taken steroids are more likely – by a 3-1 margin – to think he's been treated unfairly than those who don't believe him.

Overall, among those who think he's been treated unfairly, a majority (56 percent) point to his alleged use of steroids as the main reason, while 28 percent say it's mainly because of his personality, and 10 percent think it's because of his race. As noted, there are racial differences in these views, although a plurality of blacks, as well as a majority of whites, chiefly blame the steroid issue, rather than race or personality.



AGE – There are two differences by age within racial groups: Older blacks (age 50 and up) are particularly unlikely to think Bonds knowingly took steroids (29 percent think so, vs. 44 percent of younger blacks, with no such age difference among whites). And

younger whites are about 15 points more likely than their elders to favor recognizing Bonds as the home-run leader and electing him to the Hall of Fame.

FANS – Finally, this poll shows continued variation in the number of adults who identify themselves as baseball fans – 36 percent in this survey (including two percent who say they’re “somewhat” fans), encompassing 39 percent of whites and 26 percent of blacks.

Across 84 polls from various organizations dating to 1989, the incidence has averaged 48 percent, but with a wide range – 60 percent or more in seven of those polls, but fewer than 40 percent in 10 of them. Events in the sport may be part of the reason: Just 29 percent called themselves fans during the 1994 strike, compared with 63 percent in September 1998, as Mark McGuire raced Sammy Sosa to break Roger Maris’ single-year home-run record. That record later was surpassed, in 2001, by Barry Bonds.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/ESPN poll was conducted by telephone March 29-April 22, 2007, among a random national sample of 799 adult baseball fans, including an oversample of 203 African-Americans. The results have a 3.5-point error margin among all respondents, seven points among blacks. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Patrick Moynihan.

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

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

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

	-----Fan-----			No
NET	Yes	Yes, somewhat (vol.)		
4/22/07	36	34	2	64
Blacks	26	24	2	74
Whites	39	36	3	61

2. (AMONG FANS ONLY) As you may know, the baseball player Barry Bonds has been accused of using steroids, which he’s denied. Just your best guess, do you think Bonds did or did not knowingly use steroids?

	Did	Did not	No opinion
4/22/07	73	14	13
Blacks	37	36	26
Whites	76	12	11
7/19/06	80	12	8
3/15/05	65	16	19

3. (AMONG FANS ONLY; IF DID, Q2) Do you think that (makes him a cheater), or do you think it (is O.K. because major league baseball was not testing for steroids at the time)?

	Makes him a cheater	OK, no testing at the time	No opinion
4/22/07	67	29	4

(Insufficient sample size for racial comparison)

2/3 NET

-----Did knowingly use steroids-----						
	NET	Makes him a cheater	OK, no testing at the time	No opinion	Did not knowingly use steroids	No opin.
4/22/07	73	49	21	3	14	13

(Insufficient sample size for racial comparison)

4. (AMONG FANS ONLY) Bonds is number two behind Hank Aaron in career home runs. (Are you rooting for Bonds to break) the home-run record, or (do you hope Bonds falls short of) it?

	Rooting	Falls short	No opinion
4/22/07	37	52	11
Blacks	74	18	9
Whites	28	60	12
10/18/06*	33	48	19

*AP/AOL/Ipsos

5. (AMONG FANS ONLY) If Bonds does pass Aaron, do you think Bonds should or should not be recognized as the new career home-run leader?

	Yes	No	Depends (vol.)	No opinion
4/22/07	57	34	4	5
Blacks	78	15	1	6
Whites	53	36	5	6

6. (AMONG FANS ONLY) Do you think Bonds should or should not be elected to the baseball Hall of Fame?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
4/22/07	58	33	8
Blacks	85	10	5
Whites	53	37	10
7/19/06	48	47	4

7. (AMONG FANS ONLY) Overall, do you think Bonds has been treated fairly or unfairly?

	Fairly	Unfairly	No opinion
4/22/07	57	30	13
Blacks	34	46	20
Whites	61	25	14

8. (AMONG FANS ONLY; IF UNFAIRLY, Q7) Do you think he's been treated unfairly mainly because of his (race), mainly because of his (personality), or mainly because of his (alleged use of steroids)?

	Race	Personality	Alleged use of steroids	Any two (vol.)	All three (vol.)	No opinion
4/22/07	10	28	56	3	2	*
Blacks	27	21	41	5	5	1

Whites	1	26	66	4	3	0
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7/8 NET

	Fairly	NET	Race	Personality	Steroids	Two/ three	No opin.
4/22/07	57	30	3	8	17	2	13
Blacks	34	46	12	10	19	5	20
Whites	61	25	*	7	17	2	14

END