

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Sunday's *Star-Ledger*. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll."

In this release *The Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll includes a classification of voters that is based on how firmly they support a candidate. A "firm voter" is one who selects a candidate and says they are "very sure" about their choice and will not change their mind before the election. "Not firm voters" are those who select a candidate and say they might change their mind or who are initially undecided.

All of the percentages in this release, unless otherwise indicated, are based on New Jersey residents who report that they are registered to vote.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll web address: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~eaglepol>

RUTGERS FOOTBALL

MAJORITY SAY IT CAN IMPROVE STATE IMAGE WANT "BIG TIME" FOOTBALL

Slightly more than half of New Jersey residents agree that having a successful Rutgers University football team can improve the image of the state of New Jersey. In addition, somewhat more than half of those who have followed Rutgers football this season want the team to continue with a "big time" college football program rather than changing to play in a lower football division. Overall, New Jerseyans are not sure about the support Rutgers is giving to the football team with close to 6-in-10 residents reporting they don't know if Rutgers is spending the right amount of money on its football program.

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The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll of 800 state residents 18 years old and older conducted by telephone between October 12 and 15, 1997 also found that 6-in-10 New Jerseyans have not paid any attention to the Rutgers football team this season.

RUTGERS FOOTBALL AND NEW JERSEY'S IMAGE

Overall, 56 percent of the state's residents agree strongly (29%) or mildly (27%) that having a successful Rutgers football team can improve the image of the state of New Jersey compared to 31 percent who mildly (15%) or strongly (16%) disagree and 13 percent who don't know. New Jerseyans who report they have followed the Rutgers football team a lot (76%) or some (78%) are more likely to agree that a successful team will improve the state's image than those who have followed the team a little (55%) or not at all (49%). About equal percentages of males (58%) and females (55%) say a successful Rutgers football team will improve the image of the state. Also, slightly more Central (59%) and North (57%) Jersey residents agree that the image of the state can be enhanced by a successful football team compared to 52 percent in South Jersey.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT RUTGERS PROGRAM

Overall, slightly more than half (56%) of New Jerseyans don't have an opinion on whether or not the Rutgers football program is going in the right direction or if it has gotten off on the wrong track while about equal percentages say that it is going in the right direction (21%) as report it is on the wrong track (23%). Those who say they have paid a lot of attention to the Rutgers team this season (65%) are more likely to feel the team is on the wrong track than are state residents who have followed the team some (49%), a little (37%), or not at all (10%). Those who are 18 to 29 years old are more

likely to say the team is going in the right direction (30%) than to say it is on the wrong track (24%) when compared to New Jerseyans in other age groups.

ATTITUDES TOWARD “BIG TIME” COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Among those who have followed Rutgers football this season, slightly more than half (55%) say Rutgers should continue to compete in “big time” college football compared to 33 percent who say they should change to a lower division, 3 percent who volunteer an answer that it “depends”, and 10 percent who don’t know. Those who have followed Rutgers football and agree that a successful team can improve the state’s image (63%) are more likely than those who disagree that the team can enhance New Jersey (38%) to want Rutgers to continue with “big time” college football. Also, state residents who followed the team this season and feel it is moving in the right direction (66%) are more likely than those who say it is on the wrong track (47%) to want Rutgers to continue with “big time” football. Those who have followed the team some (61%) this season are more likely than those whose have followed it a lot (51%) or a little (51%) to support Rutgers continued play in “big time” football.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SPENDING ON RUTGERS FOOTBALL

While almost 6-in-10 (58%) residents do not have an opinion on the amount of money Rutgers University spends on the football program, 12 percent say they spend too much, 12 percent too little, and 18 percent feel about the right amount is being spent. Residents who say they have paid a lot of attention to the team this season are more likely to say too little (32%) has been spent than too much (20%) or the right amount (18%). Those who have paid some attention are more likely to say the right amount (35%) is being spent compared to 23 percent who say too little and 8 percent too much. New Jerseyans who want Rutgers to continue with “big time” football are more likely to say about the right amount (32%) or too little (28%) is being spent than to feel too much (6%) money is committed to the program. On the other hand, those who say Rutgers should change to a lower division are more likely to report too much (25%) is currently being spent rather than too little (17%) or the right amount (20%).

Among the 55% of attentive New Jerseyans who feel the team should continue to compete in the “Big Time,” 18 percent say Rutgers spends the right amount, 15 percent say they spend too little and 3 percent say they spend too much, and 19 percent don’t have an opinion on what is being spent. Among the 33% of attentive New Jerseyans who feel Rutgers should play in a lower division, 7 percent say they spend the right amount, 6 percent too little, and 8 percent too much, and 12 percent don’t have an opinion on spending.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between October 12 and October 15, 1997, when a random sample of 800 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about ± 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are presented below. The location of each question on the actual questionnaire is in brackets. This data has been weighted using voter registration information from the New Jersey Secretary of State's office for party identification.

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP65-3 (EP115-3), SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1997

R-1. How much attention have you paid to the Rutgers University football team this season -- a lot, some, a little, or not at all?

	<u>A</u> <u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A</u> <u>Little</u>	<u>Not At</u> <u>All</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Total	7%	13%	16%	61%	2%	99%	(800)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	12	18	22	45	3	100	(386)
--Female2	9	11	77	2	101	(413)	
<u>Age</u>							
--18 - 29 7	12	18	61	2	100	(168)	
--30 - 49 5	13	15	66	1	100	(317)	
--50 - 64 10	15	16	54	5	100	(159)	
--65 and older	7	15	18	56	3	99	(137)
<u>Region</u>							
--North	7	11	16	63	2	99	(384)
--Central	13	13	18	55	2	101	(207)
--South	2	17	15	63	3	100	(208)

R-2. Do you agree or disagree that having a successful Rutgers football team can improve the image of the state of New Jersey? [**PROBE:** Do you agree/disagree strongly or mildly?]

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Mildly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Mildly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
TOTAL 29%	27%	15%	16%	13%	100%	(800)	
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	35	23	15	14	13	100	(386)
--Female24	31	15	17	13	100	(413)	
<u>Region</u>							
--North	31	26	15	14	14	100	(384)

--Central	30	29	16	14	10	99	(207)
--South	25	27	14	20	14	100	(208)

Attention to RU Football

--A lot	54	22	13	9	1	99	(69)
--Some	56	22	11	9	3	101	(109)
--A little 23	32	22	12	10	99	(130)	
--None	22	27	14	19	17	99	(491)

R-3. And based on what you have read or heard, would you say the Rutgers football program is going in the right direction or has it gotten off on the wrong track?

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
TOTAL 21%	23%	56%	100%	(800)	

Gender

--Male	26	34	40	100	(386)
--Female 16	13	71	100	(413)	

Age

--18 - 29 30	24	46	100	(168)	
--30 - 49 19	27	54	100	(317)	
--50 - 64 15	21	64	100	(159)	
--65 and older	18	19	63	100	(137)

Region

--North	23	22	55	100	(384)
--Central	19	34	47	100	(207)
--South	18	17	66	101	(208)

Attention to RU Football

--A lot	25	65	10	100	(69)
--Some	38	49	13	100	(109)
--A little 30	37	33	100	(130)	
--None	14	10	76	100	(491)

R-4. Do you think Rutgers University spends too much money, too little money, or about the right amount of money on its football program?

	<u>Too Much</u>	<u>Too Little</u>	<u>Right Amount</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
TOTAL 12%	12%	18%	58%	100%	(800)	

Gender

--Male	11	20	23	46	100	(386)
--Female 12	5	14	69	100	(413)	

Attention to RU Football

--A lot	20	32	18	30	100	(69)
--Some	8	23	35	34	100	(109)
--A little 18	19	19	44	100	(130)	
--None	10	6	15	69	100	(491)

RU Success Can Improve NJ Image

--Agree	6	18	22	55	101	(441)
--Disagree	25	7	16	52	100	(263)

Direction of RU Football

--Right direction	13	18	46	23	100	(141)
--Wrong track	18	30	16	36	100	(216)

Should RU Stay in "Big Time"

--Yes	6	28	32	34	100	(159)
--No	25	17	20	38	100	(114)

ASKED IF PAY ATTENTION TO RUTGERS FOOTBALL A LOT, SOME, OR A LITTLE

R-5. Should Rutgers continue to compete in "big time" college football, or should they change to playing in a lower division?

	Compete In "Big Time"	Change To Lower Division	Depends (Vol)	Don't Know	Total	(n)
TOTAL 55%	33%	3%	10%	101%	(308)	
<u>Gender</u>						
--Male	55	35	3	6	99	(209)
--Female	28	1	18	101	(99)	
<u>Race</u>						
--White	48	38	4	11	101	(235)
--Non-white	69	23	--	8	100	(64)
<u>Attention to RU Football</u>						
--A lot	51	38	7	3	99	(69)
--Some	61	33	2	4	100	(109)
--A little	31	1	17	100	(130)	
<u>RU Success Can Improve NJ Image</u>						
--Agree	63	27	4	7	101	(209)
--Disagree	38	50	1	12	101	(84)
<u>Direction of RU Football</u>						
--Right direction	66	24	--	10	100	(81)
--Wrong track	47	44	5	4	100	(162)

COMBINED RESPONSES FOR QUESTIONS R-4 AND R-5
AMONG THOSE WHO PAY ATTENTION TO RUTGERS FOOTBALL:

Overall Attitudes to RU Football Program

--Stay in "Big Time" and they spend right amount now	18%
--Stay in "Big Time" but they spend too little	15
--Stay in "Big Time" but they spend too much	3
--Stay in "Big Time" but don't know about spending	19
--Should play lower division and they spend right amount now	7
--Should play lower division but they spend too little	6

--Should play lower division but they too much	8
--Should play lower division but don't know about spending	12
--Don't know what division they should play	13
TOTAL	101%
(n=308)	