

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

SPORTS STARS WARS: WHERE TO BUILD THE NEW ARENA(S) MEADOWLANDS PREFERRED

NETS FANS OK WITH NEWARK; DEVILS FANS DOWN ON HOBOKEN

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Sunday, May 23rd Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll."

There will be at least one new sports arena built in northern New Jersey in the near future. The New Jersey Nets want to move to Newark. The New Jersey Devils want to move to Hoboken. But if they were to play in the same arena the majority of their fans would prefer they stay right where they are now—at the Meadowlands.

Nets fans are far more accepting of the basketball team's potential move to Newark than Devils fans are of the hockey team's move to Hoboken. Not only do a majority of Nets fans think a new arena in Newark is a good idea, but a larger number of fans say they would be "more likely" than "less likely" to go to Newark to see a game if the team moved from the Meadowlands. Just four-in-ten Devils fans think moving to a new arena in Hoboken is a good idea. And a greater number of fans say they would be "less likely" rather than "more likely" to go to Hoboken to see a game if the team moved from its home in the Meadowlands.

These are among the main findings of the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll, conducted with a statewide sample of 802 New Jersey adults between April 28 and May 6. The overall sampling error is $\pm 3\frac{1}{2}$ percent for the whole sample. Interviewing—which was almost entirely completed before the Devils were eliminated from the playoffs—found 26 percent describing themselves as Devils fans, and slightly fewer (22 percent) as Nets fans. The sampling error for the fan groups is about ± 7 percentage points.

Just under half of all state residents said they would prefer to see the Meadowlands be the site of a new arena if one venue was to be home to both teams, while a quarter chose Newark as the location. Just 7 percent said Hoboken would be their first choice as a

single home for both teams. The remaining fifth expressed no opinion. In addition, a majority of both self-identified Nets and Devils fans selected the Meadowlands as their preferred site for a single arena.

The Nets

Statewide, just 44 percent said they had heard or read something about the Nets proposed move to Newark--opinion is far from crystallized on this matter. When told the arena would be privately funded but the state would have to put in money for transportation improvements and environmental cleanup, 33 percent said they thought this was a good idea, 23 percent a bad idea, and the remaining 44 percent had no opinion or said they didn't really care about the issue.

Nets *fans*, however, were far more knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the proposed move. Just under two-thirds of Nets fans reported being familiar with the Newark arena proposal. A majority (53 percent) told the Rutgers-based poll they thought this was a good idea, while just 19 percent said it was not.

While the poll cannot predict how a move from the Meadowlands to Newark would affect the Nets attendance, it appears there might be offsetting advantages and disadvantages.

- Just over one-quarter (27 percent) of self-described Nets fans say they would be more likely to attend a game if the Nets moved from the Meadowlands to Newark, while just under one-quarter (22 percent) say they would be less likely to do so. Forty percent of Nets fans say they would be equally likely to go to both places. A final 10 percent said they would not attend a game no matter where the Nets played.
- The poll identified a larger group as "potential Nets goers"--those who either describe themselves as "fans" or say they have been to a Nets game in the last two years. People in this group are also evenly divided about whether they would be more (24 percent) or less (25 percent) likely to attend a game if the Nets moved to Newark.
- Statewide, racial minorities say they would be more likely to go to a Nets game if the team moved from the Meadowlands to Newark; whites say they would be less likely to do so.

The Devils

At the time of the survey, New Jerseyans were unfamiliar with the Devils plan to move to Hoboken--just 26 percent said they had heard or read something about the proposal, including

45 percent of self-identified Devils fans. When told the new arena would be privately financed with the state paying some money for construction and for improving transportation to the stadium, one-quarter said it would be a good idea, another quarter a bad idea and the remaining half expressed no opinion. Only four-in-ten Devils fans described the Hoboken arena as a good idea, while 29 percent thought the reverse.

Various findings of the poll suggest the Devils may upset more fans than they please by moving from the Meadowlands. Just 15 percent of self-identified fans said they would be more likely to go to a Devils game if the team moved from the Meadowlands to Hoboken, while 24 percent said they would be less likely to go. Half said it would make no difference. Similar figures were reported by the larger group of "potential goers"—those who either described themselves as fans or said they had been to a game in the past two years, and by the smaller group of those saying they had attended a Devils game in the last two years.

A proposed move of the Devils from the Meadowlands to Newark instead of Hoboken also received a lukewarm response from Devils fans. While 22 percent said they would be more likely to go to a game if the Devils played in Newark, 29 percent said they would be less likely to do so. A sizeable number—39 percent—said the arena location would make no difference to them and the remaining 10 percent said they would not go to a game no matter where the arena was.

Cliff Zukin, director of the poll commented, "There appears to be considerable sentiment among fans of both teams to remain in the Meadowlands. However, while Nets fans appear to be generally supportive of the team's efforts to move to Newark, Devils fans appear to be unenthusiastic about moving to Hoboken."

- 30 -

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BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP72-3 (EP122-3), SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1999

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll was conducted between April 28 and May 6, 1999, when a scientifically selected random sample of 800 New Jersey adult residents was interviewed by telephone. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for the total sample size of 800 is ± 3.5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus, if 50 percent of New Jerseyans were found to have a favorable opinion of the Governor, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all New Jerseyans been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such separate figures reported for men and women, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Click here for a [chart](#) that shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error. The sampling error for the groups reported in this release is as follows: Nets fans ± 8 percent; Nets potential goers, ± 7 percent; Devils fans, ± 7 percent; Devils potential goers ± 6 percent. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions

asked are reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

Note: In this release we refer to Nets/Devils "Fans," "Goers" and "Potential Goers." A "Fan" is someone who identifies him/herself as "a fan of the team—someone who follows them." A "Goer" is someone who reports having attended a game within the last two years. A "Potential Goer" is someone who has either described him/herself as a fan or reports having attended a Nets/Devils game in the last two years.

"Have you heard or read anything about the Nets moving from the Meadowlands to a new arena that would be built in Newark?" (AR 3)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	44%	54%	1%	100	(802)
Nets Status					
--Fans	64	35	--	100	(185)
--Goers	63	38	--	101	(114)
--Potential Goers	62	38	--	100	(223)

"The arena would be built with private money, although the state would pay some money to improve roads and transportation leading to the stadium and some environmental clean-up. Just your first reaction, on the whole do you think this is a good idea, a bad idea, or don't you care one way or the other?" (AR 4)

	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Don't Care</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	33%	23%	41%	3%	100%	(802)
Nets Status						
--Fans	53	19	26	2	100	(185)
--Goers	50	28	19	3	100	(114)
--Potential Goers	49	23	26	2	100	(223)
Race						
--White	28	27	42	3	100	(573)
--Minorities	45	13	40	1	100	(168)

"If the Nets moved to a new arena in Newark from the Meadowlands do you think you would be more likely to go to a game, less likely, no difference, or wouldn't you go to a game no matter where they played?" (AR 5)

	<u>More Likely in Newark</u>	<u>Less Likely in Newark</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Wouldn't Go</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	9%	14%	32%	42%	2%	100%	(802)
Nets Status							
--Fans	27	22	40	10	1	100	(185)
--Goers	23	34	37	4	2	100	(114)
--Potential Goers	24	25	40	10	1	100	(223)

Race

--White	4	16	29	49	2	100	(573)
--Minorities	23	11	36	28	2	100	(168)

"Have you heard or read anything about the New Jersey Devils hockey team moving from the Meadowlands to a new arena that would be built in Hoboken?"(AR 8)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	26%	72%	2%	100%	(802)

Devils Status

--Fans	45	53	1	99	(215)
--Goers	45	54	1	100	(134)
--Potential Goers	44	55	1	100	(242)

"The arena would be built mostly with private money, although the state would pay some money for construction and to improve roads and transportation leading to the stadium. Just your first reaction, on the whole do you think this is a good idea, a bad idea, or don't you care one way or the other?" (AR 9)

	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Don't Care</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	24%	23%	50%	4%	100%	(802)

Devils Status

--Fans	40	29	29	2	100	(215)
--Goers	35	38	26	2	101	(134)
--Potential Goers	39	30	30	2	100	(242)

"If the Devils moved to a new arena in Hoboken from the Meadowlands, do you think you would be more likely to go to a game, less likely, no difference, or wouldn't you go to a game no matter where they played?" (AR 10)

	<u>More Likely in Hoboken</u>	<u>Less Likely in Hoboken</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Wouldn't Go</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	8%	13%	35%	42%	2%	100%	(802)

Devils Status

--Fans	15	24	52	9	--	100	(215)
--Goers	16	25	53	6	--	100	(134)
--Potential Goers	15	24	51	10	--	100	(242)

"And what about if the Devils moved to a new arena in Newark from the Meadowlands? Do you think you would be more likely to go to a game, less likely, no difference, or wouldn't you go no matter where they played?" (AR 11)

	<u>More Likely in Newark</u>	<u>Less Likely in Newark</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Wouldn't Go</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	9%	16%	31%	42%	2%	100%	(802)

Devils Status

--Fans	22	29	39	10	--	100	(215)
--Goers	15	32	47	6	--	100	(134)
--Potential Goers	20	28	41	10	--	100	(242)

"People who want to see a new arena built in Newark say it would contribute to the revitalization of the city. How important a factor do you think this should be in deciding where the arena should be built-- very important, somewhat important, or not an important factor?" (AR 12)

	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not Very</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	23%	28%	32%	6%	100%	(802)

Nets/Devils Status

--Fans	31	38	28	4	100	(297)
--Potential Goers	30	38	29	3	100	(342)

Race

--White	20	40	34	5	100	(573)
--Minorities	30	35	27	8	100	(168)

"If the Nets and Devils were to play together in a new arena, which would be your first choice for its location: Newark, Hoboken or the Meadowlands?" (AR 13)

	<u>Newark</u>	<u>Hoboken</u>	<u>Meadowlands</u>	<u>Other Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	24%	7%	48%	4%	16%	100%	(802)

Nets Status

--Fans	30	10	54	--	6	100	(185)
--Goers	31	8	56	1	3	99	(114)
--Potential Goers	29	10	54	--	7	100	(223)

Devils Status

--Fans	26	7	62	2	3	100	(215)
--Goers	23	7	67	2	1	100	(134)
--Potential Goers	25	8	62	2	3	100	(242)

Race

--White	19	7	53	5	16	100	(573)
--Minorities	37	6	37	4	15	100	(168)

The following table shows "yes" answers to the following questions:

(AR 1) "Would you call yourself a fan of the New Jersey Nets basketball team—that is, do you follow them?" (Nets Fan)

(AR 2) "Have you gone to any Nets games in the last two years, or not?" (Nets Game)

(AR 6) "Would you call yourself a fan of the New Jersey Devils hockey team—that is, do you follow them?" (Devils Fan)

(AR 7) "Have you gone to any Devils games in the last two years, or not?" (Devils Game)

	<u>Nets Fan</u>	<u>Nets Game</u>	<u>Devils Fan</u>	<u>Devils Game</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Statewide	22%	12%	26%	15%	(802)
By Gender					
--Male	28	18	35	22	(395)
--Female	17	8	19	9	(407)
By Age					
--18-29	25	17	30	21	(140)
--30-49	22	14	27	18	(354)
--50+	21	7	24	9	(283)
By Region					
--North	28	18	33	19	(365)
--Central	23	12	25	18	(215)
-- South	12	4	16	8	(214)
By Race					
--White	17	10	29	17	(573)
--Minorities	33	20	20	11	(168)
(n)	(185)	(114)	(215)	(134)	