



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Americans Are Becoming More Accepting of Openly Gay Athletes, According to Harris Interactive-Witeck-Combs Survey

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – March 26, 2007 – In a recent national survey by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive®, nearly three-fourths (72 percent) of heterosexual adults say they would not change their feelings toward a ‘favorite’ male professional athlete if the athlete revealed he is gay. This represents an increase from 66 percent in August 2002, when heterosexual adults were asked the same survey question.

In contrast, when asked how they think ‘other sports fans would feel’ toward an openly gay sports figure, 72 percent believe that ‘others’ would have less favorable opinions. This measure, however, has decreased from 2002, when nearly 80 percent revealed that they felt ‘others’ would have a less favorable opinion.

These are some of the highlights of a nationwide survey of 2,510 U.S. adults conducted online between March 6 and 16, 2007 by Harris Interactive, a worldwide market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the GLBT market.

“Openly gay and lesbian athletes have become far more visible in the nation’s major media with the ‘coming out’ of WNBA player Sheryl Swoopes and the very recent publication of the New York Times best-seller “Man in the Middle” by former NBA pro, John Amaechi,” said Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications. “Not only does public acceptance of gay athletes seem to be on the rise, but there’s slight progress in feelings that others are becoming more accepting as well.”

TABLE 1
VIEWS TOWARDS A FAVORITE MALE ATHLETE WHO REVEALS HE IS GAY

"If a favorite male professional athlete revealed he is gay, how would this personal disclosure change your feelings toward the athlete?"

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Heterosexual 2002	Heterosexual 2007
	%	%
TOP 2 BOX (NET)	4	4
I would have a much more favorable opinion.	2	2
I would have a somewhat more favorable opinion.	2	2
It would not change my opinion of him.	66	72
BOTTOM 2 BOX (NET)	30	24
I would have a somewhat less favorable opinion.	15	13
I would have a much less favorable opinion.	15	11

TABLE 2
PERCEPTION OF OTHER SPORTS FANS' VIEWS TOWARDS AN ATHLETE'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

"How do you think a disclosure about an athlete's sexual orientation changes how other sports fans feel toward the athlete?"

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Heterosexual 2002	Heterosexual 2007
	%	%
TOP 2 BOX (NET)	1	1
Much more favorable opinion	*	--
More favorable opinion	1	1
No difference in opinion	19	27
BOTTOM 2 BOX (NET)	80	72
Less favorable opinion	58	57
Much less favorable opinion	22	15

Note: -- indicates no response. * indicates less than 0.5%.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive in collaboration with Witeck-Combs Communications within the United States between March 6 and 14, 2007 among 2,510 adults (aged 18 and over) of whom 2,037 indicated they are heterosexual. Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, nonresponse (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 2,510 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/-2 percentage points. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm, specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over nine years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications has developed respected relationships throughout the community and serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay and lesbian consumers. In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trend-spotting for their path-breaking work on the gay and lesbian market. Combs and Witeck are also the authors of "***Business Inside Out: Tapping Millions of Brand-Loyal Gay Consumers***" (Kaplan Publishing, September 2006).

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novatris in France and through a global network of independent market research firms. The service bureau, HISB, provides its market research industry clients with mixed-mode data collection, panel development services as well as syndicated and tracking research consultation. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com.

To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at www.harrispollonline.com.

Press Contacts:

Nancy Wong
Harris Interactive
585-214-7316
nwong@harrisinteractive.com

Bob Witeck
Witeck-Combs Communications
202-887-0500 x19
bwiteck@witeckcombs.com