



BENEATH

The Trend

FOOTBALL WITHDRAWAL

Football is over — so now what?

A deep-dive into how fans really feel about football — and how they're filling their time now that the off-season is here.



WHAT WE DID

We set out to learn how people, mostly guys (71%), who watch BOTH NCAA and NFL football on a weekly basis, really feel about football – and what happens to their time once the season ends.



HOW WE DID IT

In a qualitative interview, we asked 203 people to tell us in their own words. And we probed their responses in an AI delivered conversation.



WHAT WE ASKED

We talked about their feelings about football, the role in their lives, and what they're looking forward to – and not looking forward to – with the end of the season.



WHAT WE FOUND ...

Football “dictates my weekends”

It’s social, it’s exciting and it’s tradition

For these passionate fans, football is the center of the weekend, and everything else gets scheduled around it. It’s not just the games – it’s an event: food, fun and bonding.



“*Every weekend I always look forward to the games on Sundays with my hometown team. It’s like I schedule my Sundays to watch my games, nothing can interfere with the games.*”

Low frequency, high impact (and also fun) things:



IF something does interfere (like a child’s sporting event) there’s streaming to keep up. Yes, during their kid’s game.



Fantasy x 2: Fantasy leagues and side bets enhance the fun – as does the fantasy (and recall) of actually playing



“I would say I love my family more than football but it’s close.”

Think guys aren’t emotional? Talk to them about football.

“ Football gives inspiration, excitement, bravery, helps us to think more curiously. I wait for the weekend eagerly ... who will win, who will score, all these things excite me. ”

What elicits similar feelings?



Their family – feelings for family come first (just barely, in some cases). Football actually ties to those feelings – it brings them together with people they love.



Other sports – primarily basketball and baseball. Baseball may have a slight edge as far as similar passion.



Nothing – for a small number “nothing even compares” because “football is my life.”

So football's over for the season. Now what?

For just over half, it's merely a flip in content – they're still watching something. Mostly more sports.

It seems sports lovers just need it in some capacity – it becomes “another day, different sport.”

“ The NBA is great as entertainment and sport this time of year. It will not affect my weekends in any negative way, there are plenty of sports to watch. ”



40%*

I'll Watch Other Sports

They'll fill in the time with what they know – they may love it, or it may just be a fill-in for football, but they're staying genre-loyal.

Primarily with:

- 25% Basketball
- 8% Baseball
- 3% Hockey
- 3% Olympic coverage
- Or other sports like NASCAR, soccer or golf

11%*

I'll Watch Something Different

Other screen time will fill in – movies, TV shows, even the news.

**Quantified Qualitative: Based on language, percentages are not mutually exclusive*

But wait – hello, World. The others are actually re-engaging.

They're breaking free from screens entirely:

18%*

I'll be with people

They will spend more time with people they care about. And more positive emotion: "There will be a lot more happiness to my weekends now that football is over."

12%*

I'll go outside!

The end of football signals the ability to get back into outdoor activities.

8%*

I'll do chores

It's time to catch up after ignoring things like cleaning, household repairs and yard work in order to focus on football.

Language Nerd Note: There's something compelling about the power of the language this group uses: "get to do" and "free" to do something else – it's a powerful hold! Like they've been a football prisoner. But happily.



*“ I feel that this opens my days ...
sort of nice not to have to cut my
time short to return home to
watch the game. ”*

**Quantified Qualitative: Based on language,
percentages are not mutually exclusive*

Some of this break is exciting ...

They are looking forward to:

- Relaxing and spending quality time with their family or working on their hobbies
- Watching other sports



25% Relaxing

22%

Quality Time

19%

Other Sports (10% Basketball)

10%

Hobbies

“ Spending more time with my partner and also it gives me more opportunity to watch other sports. I don't have to worry about the stress of watching the games every weekend. ”

**Quantified Qualitative: Based on language, percentages are not mutually exclusive*

... but in some ways it's a huge negative

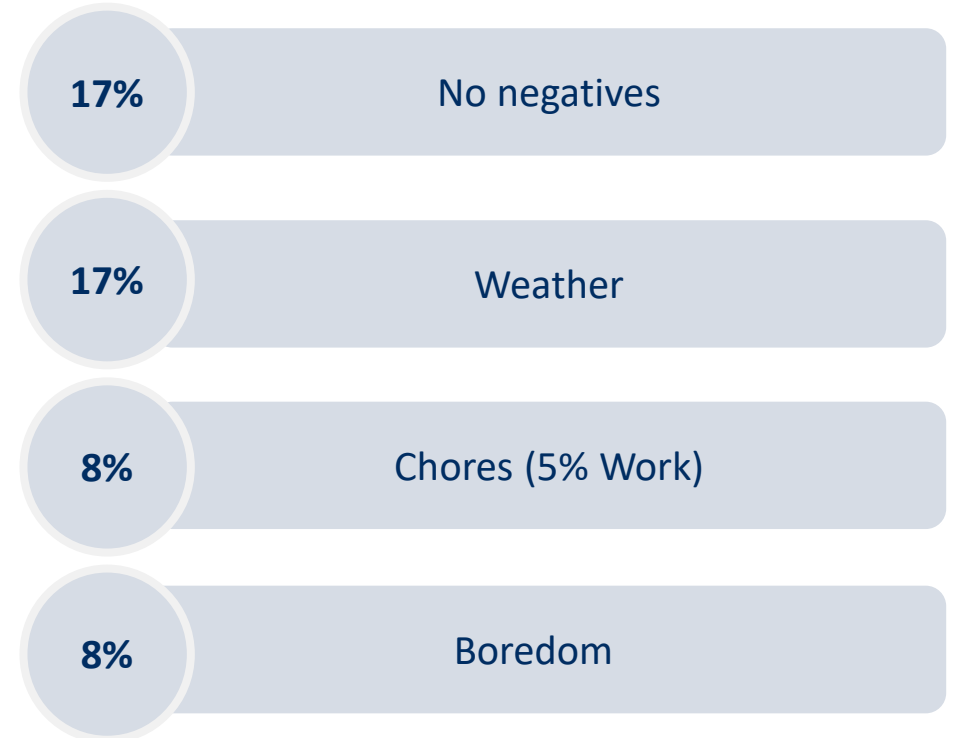
They are not looking forward to:

- The long stretch of football free time and the boredom that comes with it. For some, there's even a sense of withdrawal.
- Taking care of things they've been putting off – like work and chores.
- And, by the way, the weather's still gross. And summer heat's no better.



26%

No Football for Months



“ Missing playing fantasy football. Not being able to turn on the TV and find a game when I am lounging around at home. ”

**Quantified Qualitative: Based on language, percentages are not mutually exclusive*







Spotlight on the Ladies

Female sample size was small –
however, we found:

- ❖ Football is a tradition – it connects them to family and community.
“We love football. We watch our Pittsburgh Steelers play starting in August and through the season. We grew up watching football and have continued the tradition with our own families.”
- ❖ Some are football enthusiasts because of the men in their lives.
“I don’t really have much of a choice. I watch because he’s watching. I love him and he loves football.”
- ❖ Food and socializing are key aspects of what they enjoy.
“I love it. Usually plan Sundays around it and make good snacks and food with plenty of drinks I enjoy it.”
- ❖ A few mention that the end of football means more peace in the household.
“If the Bears are losing my husband is screaming at the TV. He watches every weekend. Even if it is not his team. He roots for the underdog and screams at the TV for his underdog team.”

Keep in Mind

-  This is just the beginning – these are condensed results meant to highlight an overview of key topics
-  There is an incredible amount of additional language, detail and nuance – this 13 minute interview yielded over 40,000 words for analysis
-  Males/females are highlighted – additional comparative cuts (kids/no kids) are typically incorporated
-  This interview was intended for fun – interviews targeted for specific objectives yield specific results – and detailed, tailored recommendations



In the Weeds – Conversation & Detail



WHO WE TALKED TO

- Watchers of NFL and NCAA Football
- Make it a point to watch weekly
- 71% Male



203 INTERVIEWS

Online with AI moderator

TECHNIQUES APPLIED

- ✓ Customized probing
- ✓ In-depth language review
- ✓ Quantified qualitative language analysis



1

Since we're coming into February, tell me about the things that you are thinking about, and the things you're looking forward to this time of year. Please list as many things that come to mind about this month for you.
(Note: Warm up topic)

2

We're around the time of the Super Bowl – just out of curiosity, is the Super Bowl something that you care about?
(Note: Pretty much yes all around). Why is that?

3

Okay, let's forget about the Super Bowl for a minute and go back to thinking about the sport of football, overall. Tell me about your thoughts on football and how it impacts your typical weekend.

4

Just so I understand, tell me about something else in your life you feel the same way about ... tell me about what else is comparable. This could be another sport or event in the sports world, or something completely different. I am really just trying to understand where football fits in your life, and what other things share a similar place of importance or relevance.

5

So now that the football season is wrapped up, tell me about the impact, if any, that will have on the way you spend your weekends.

6

Tell me about what you are most looking forward to about football-free weekends.

7

Now tell me what you're not looking forward to...

