

# Unlocking the growing power of Latino fans: Building a stronger sports economy

The US sports economy is booming, and Latino fans are leading the charge. Connecting with this multifaceted community can help drive growth opportunities.

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# Contents

<b>How Latino fandom is powering growth in US sports .....</b>	<b>3</b>
The sports economy's rapid rise .....	3
Latino fans: A growing force in the US sports ecosystem.....	4
Growing Latino consumer power.....	7
Latino fans: Driving sports engagement at and off the field .....	9
Latino youth: Powering the future of sports.....	9
<b>Understanding the nuances of Latino fandom .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Latino fandom is multifaceted .....	13
Opportunities for richer media engagement with Latino fans .....	16
Beyond the field: Latino underrepresentation in sports management and media.....	17
<b>Tapping into the full potential of Latino fandom .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Awareness and community building: Becoming culturally relevant.....	20
Digital: Meeting fans where they are .....	21
Youth: Investing in the next generation of fans .....	21
Brands: Cultural authenticity .....	21
<b>Alex Rodriguez on expanding Latino opportunity and representation in sports .....</b>	<b>23</b>

**Across stadiums, screens, and social platforms,** Latinos represent the future of sports fandom in America. Young, passionate, digitally fluent, and willing to spend, this fan group embodies the habits and expectations of tomorrow's audience. With ties to professional leagues, community clubs, and recreational sports, Latino fans are a powerful force that drive ticket sales, streaming, and media consumption at scale. And as members of one of the fastest growing and most diverse demographic segments in the United States, these fans have an influence that is only accelerating.

Despite this potential, the richness of Latino fandom is often overlooked by media, marketers, and sports teams. Latino fans represent an audience that is not only growing quickly but also highly engaged across multiple channels and communities. For businesses, reaching Latino fans is an economic imperative, a smart growth strategy, and a way to build a stronger sports community. Latino sports fans are a multifaceted force of influence and consumer power, capable of driving revenue, brand loyalty, and long-term engagement. The question is not whether they will transform sports; it's whether organizations will be ready and willing to capture the community-building and business opportunities that Latino fans create.

## Alex Rodriguez on expanding Latino opportunity and representation in sports

Read the full McKinsey interview on page 23



This report explores the trends, gaps and growth opportunities driven by Latino sports fandom. Our research, conducted in collaboration with NBCUniversal's Telemundo, draws from McKinsey analysis, third-party research, and two original surveys: one of about 2,500 self-identified sports fans and another of Latino executives and board members. We also interviewed dozens of executives from major sports leagues and related organizations (see sidebar "About the research"). The findings are clear: Latino fans are not a niche segment. They are a central force with potential to unlock the next era of sports growth.

Our analysis shows that the US sports economy could nearly double to more than \$300 billion by 2035, and Latino fans could represent one-third of that growth. Their youth, diversity, and deep enthusiasm across multiple sports give them an outsize role in shaping consumption patterns, media engagement, and community-building. Latinos already make up nearly 20 percent of the population in the United States, and their share continues to rise, bringing powerful new opportunities.

What makes this multifaceted demographic especially exciting is Latinos' sophistication: They are omnichannel enthusiasts who fluidly engage with sports across live, broadcast, streaming, and digital experiences. They are not monolithic but represent diverse subgroups with varied touchpoints and affinities.



## About the research

The research for this report, which was conducted in collaboration with NBCUniversal's Telemundo, draws on publicly available information and proprietary McKinsey data, research, and tools. We utilized multiple sources, including US Census data and forecast projections; Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) data on youth sports participation across age groups; Nielsen research on viewing hours and telecast metrics across US demographics; and MRI-Simmons, Ipsos, and Global Web Index (GWI) research on fandom populations and preferences by sport and league. The US Census Bureau often uses "Hispanic" in its surveys and defines "Hispanic or Latino" as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, and other Spanish culture or origin. In this article, we have chosen to use the word "Latino."

In addition to these data sources, we ran two independent surveys and conducted more than 40 expert interviews throughout the summer of 2025.

The McKinsey Sports Fan Survey was in the field from June 4 to 24, 2025, and included 2,555 self-identified sports fans currently living in the United States. Of these respondents, 59.7 percent are male and 40.3 percent are female. Additionally, 67.3 percent identified as of Latino heritage, with representation across Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican, South American, Cuban, Dominican, Brazilian, and other heritage groups. The survey was designed to ensure a representative sample of Latino respondents

relative to the broader US Latino population. Respondents range in age from 18 to 94, with the largest concentration (29 percent) aged 25 to 44. The most reported annual household income was \$50,000 to \$75,000 before taxes. Among respondents, 47 percent have children who play youth sports, while 53 percent do not.

Our board survey included 86 members from The Latino Corporate Directors Association (LCDA) who currently or formerly serve as executives or board members across major corporations and nonprofits in the United States and who self-identify as Latino. This research was in the field from July 31 to August 10, 2025, and explored the untapped potential of Latino engagement in the US sports economy, focusing on how Latino fandom can drive growth for teams, leagues, media, and sponsors, as well as the role of sports participation in wealth creation for Latino communities.

Our expert interviews included conversations with more than 40 executives from Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, the National Hockey League, the National Women's Soccer League, and the Women's National Basketball Association, as well as representatives from minor leagues, national governing organizations, and other sports-affiliated organizations. These interviews provided insights into current initiatives, key drivers, barriers, and misconceptions surrounding Latino sports fandom in the United States.

At the same time, Latinos remain underrepresented within the sports workforce—an area where progress could create even deeper connections between fans, teams, and culture.

As we examine the potential of Latino sports fans, we explore the ways in which organizations, communities, and businesses can reach this demographic. Dorene Dominguez, CEO of the Vanir Group, who holds an ownership stake in the Sacramento Kings and became the first Latina to serve as a National Basketball Association (NBA) governor, told us, "Latino fan engagement is absolutely a top priority for us. Our league is global with a diverse fan base, and here in the US, we are fortunate to have a thriving Latino community. We must nurture this intersection."

The opportunity is here. By understanding the unique characteristics and preferences of Latino fandom, sports leagues and teams, brands, and media outlets can connect with communities that will shape the future of sports in America.



# How Latino fandom is powering growth in US sports

The sports economy is experiencing a dynamic period of growth, driven by expanding fan bases, evolving media platforms, and increasing investment. As the broader sports ecosystem evolves, so does Latino fandom and its emerging role in shaping the future of sports.

## **The sports economy's rapid rise**

Sports in the United States are currently on a trajectory of significant growth. We conducted an analysis of the sports market by looking at rights holders—leagues, teams, and federations—and their four core revenue streams: media, sponsorship, ticketing, and merchandise. We also looked at the surrounding sports ecosystem that fans and advertisers engage with, including broadcasters, sportsbooks, youth sports, sports video games, agencies, venues, and ticketing platforms. Forecasts are based on expected fandom and revenue per fan evolution, which assumes modest fandom growth paired with healthy fan monetization gains.

Our analysis found that the value of the US sports economy in 2024 was \$160 billion and that it is likely to nearly double to more than \$300 billion by 2035, representing a 6 percent annual growth rate. This expansion will be driven primarily by rights holders, who currently account for over half of the market, as well as rapidly growing segments such as youth sports, which is expected to grow at a 9 percent CAGR. The growth is fueled by an increasing sports fan population, rising participation in youth sports, and heightened fan engagement across five major professional sports leagues—Major League Baseball (MLB), Major League Soccer (MLS), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL)—which account for roughly 70 percent of the sports ecosystem.

### Latino fans: A growing force in the US sports ecosystem

Latino sports fans are a vibrant and rapidly growing segment of the US sports economy. According to the US Census Bureau, Latinos are the second-largest demographic in the United States (behind non-Hispanic White people), as well as one of the fastest-growing groups. They currently make up about 20 percent of the population, with projections indicating they will constitute 28 percent by 2060.

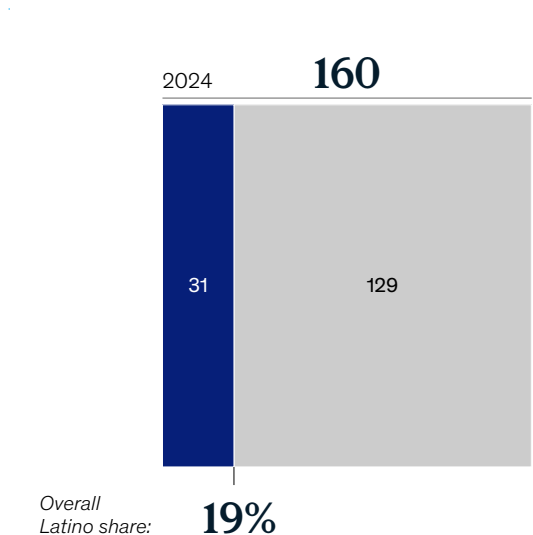
Our analysis reveals that Latinos currently represent 19 percent of the current \$160 billion sports ecosystem, a figure roughly in line with Latino representation in the general population (Exhibit 1, part 1).

Exhibit 1, Part 1

### Latinos represent 19 percent of the \$160 billion sports ecosystem in the United States.

US sports ecosystem, \$ billion

■ Latino ■ Non-Latino



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.

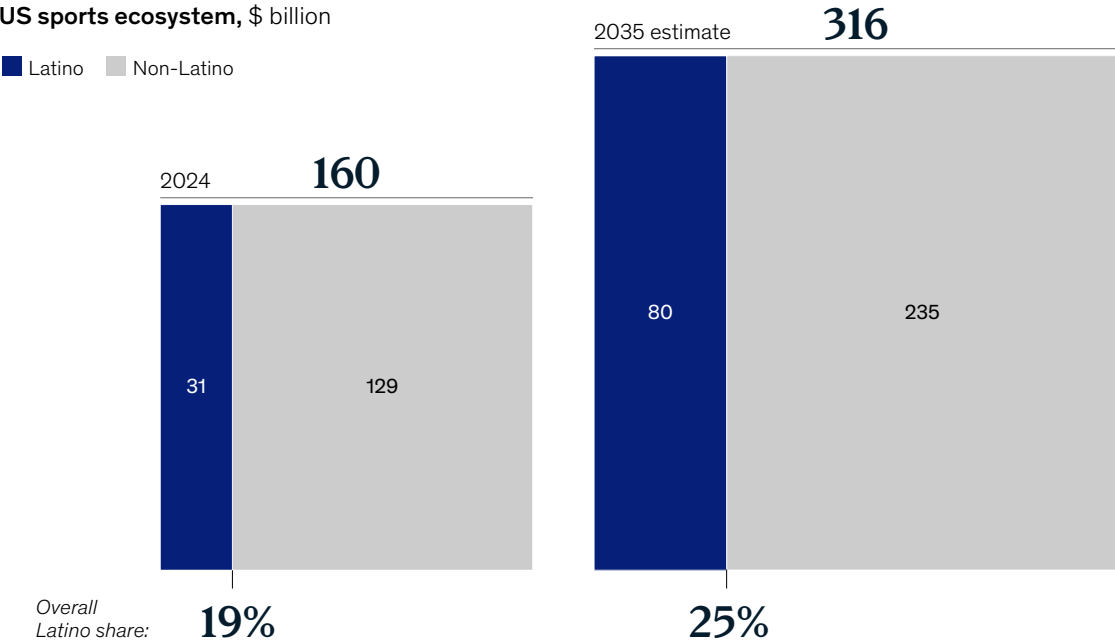
Source: Antenna; GMR; Omdia; PwC Global Media Outlook; SNL Kagan; Sportcal; McKinsey Sports Ecosystem model

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In the next decade, as the sports ecosystem grows to more than \$300 billion and as the percentage of Latinos in the United States increases, we project that Latinos will make up about 25 percent of the sports economy in 2035 (Exhibit 1, Part 2).

Exhibit 1, Part 2

**The US sports ecosystem is expected to grow at 6 percent per year and reach more than \$300 billion by 2035.**



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.  
Source: Antenna; GMR; Omdia; PwC Global Media Outlook; SNL Kagan; Sportcal; McKinsey Sports Ecosystem model

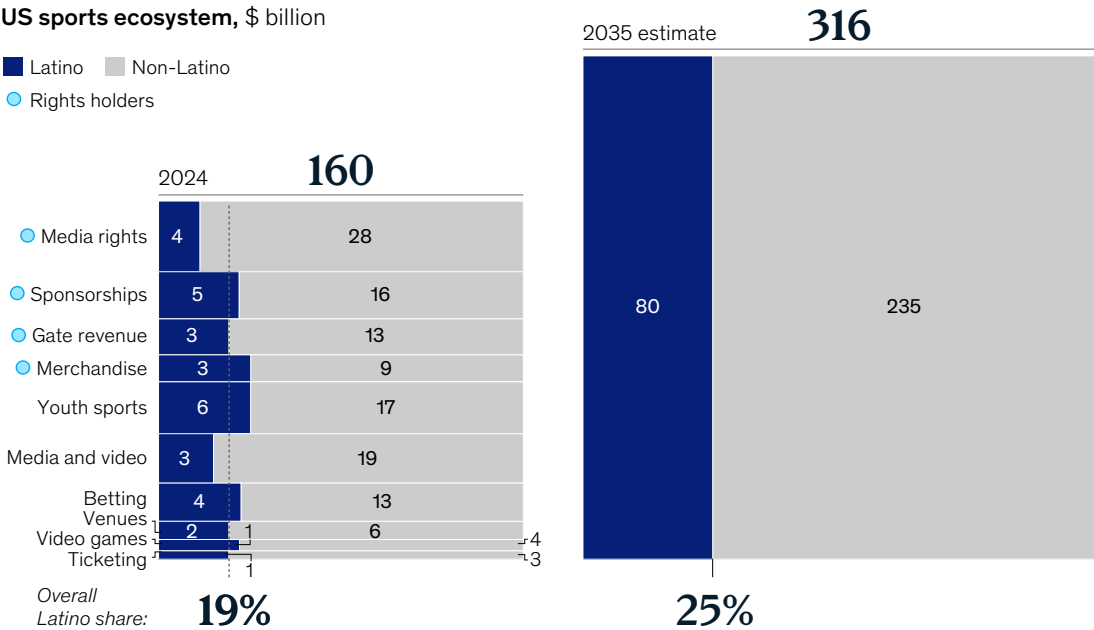
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However, Latino share of the sports economy is not uniform across all segments. We will explore the nuances and pockets of opportunity in greater depth later in this report, but as an example, Latinos are currently underrepresented in revenue generated from media rights (11 percent) and make up a higher-than-parity percentage of revenue from youth sports (25 percent) (Exhibit 1, part 3).



Exhibit 1, Part 3

**Latino representation in the US sports ecosystem varies widely across individual market segments.**



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.  
Source: Antenna; GMR; Omdia; PwC Global Media Outlook; SNL Kagan; Sportcal; McKinsey Sports Ecosystem model

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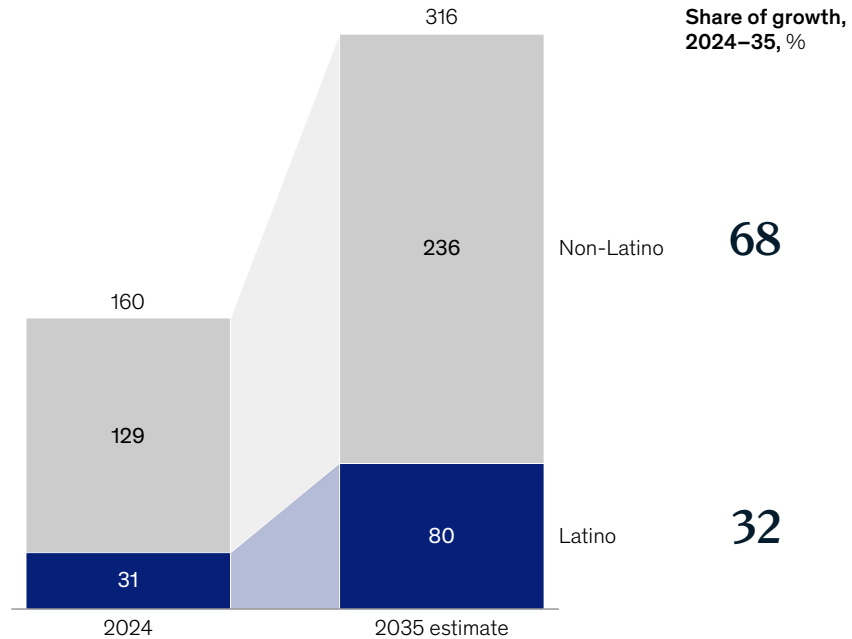
Looking forward overall, we anticipate that Latino fans will contribute one-third of growth in the US sports economy by 2035, highlighting their pivotal role in shaping the industry's future (Exhibit 2). Although Latinos will drive most of the growth of sports fans on account of their growing share of the US population (according to US Census bureau projections, they will account for 77 percent of total US population growth by 2035), their contribution to overall market value growth is likely to be closer to one-third. That's because the industry's expansion will be driven more by increases in revenue per fan than by the volume of fans. Latinos' share of that growth will continue to increase. As the sports landscape evolves, understanding and authentically engaging Latino fans will be essential for teams, leagues, and brands seeking to build lasting connections and drive growth.



## Exhibit 2

### Latinos are expected to account for one-third of US sports ecosystem growth through 2035.

US sports ecosystem,  
transformation case,  
\$ billion



Note: Figures may not sum, because of rounding.

Source: Antenna; GMR; Omdia; PwC Global Media Outlook; SNL Kagan; Sportcal; McKinsey Sports Ecosystem model

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### Growing Latino consumer power

Latinos are also a [growing force in consumer spending](#) in the United States. According to a 2021 McKinsey report on the [economic state of Latinos in America](#), Latinos spend 20 percent more than non-Latinos, and Latino household consumption is growing faster, at rates 35 percent greater than for non-Latinos. A 2025 report from California Lutheran University and UCLA found that Latinos have been responsible for more than 30 percent of the growth of the US national GDP since 2019, despite being less than 20 percent of the population. The US Latino GDP reached \$4.1 trillion in 2023, surpassing the GDP of nations such as France, India, and the United Kingdom and equivalent to the fifth largest in the world.<sup>1</sup>

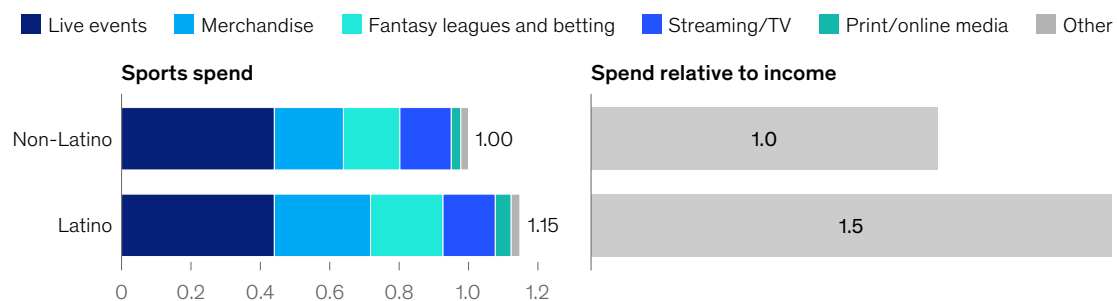
<sup>1</sup> "US Latino GDP hits high of \$4.1 trillion, marking 'growth spot' for the nation," UCLA Newsroom press release, April 10, 2025.

Our McKinsey sports fan survey reveals that dynamic Latino consumer spending is reflected in sports, with Latino fans spending 15 percent more than non-Latinos across sports categories including live event tickets, streaming TV packages, print and digital media subscriptions, and licensed merchandise. When adjusted by income, Latino fans spend 50 percent more (Exhibit 3). Notably, this higher level of spending compared with that of non-Latinos is consistent across generations and among both casual and avid fans.

Exhibit 3

## Latino fans spend more than non-Latinos across sports categories.

**US average annual sports spend across categories and vs income,<sup>1</sup> index (non-Latino level = 1)**



<sup>1</sup>Question: Thinking about your typical behavior over the last 12 months ... approximately how much did you spend on the following types of items?  
Source: US Census Bureau Median Personal Income, 2023; McKinsey Sports Fan Survey, June 4–24, 2025, n = 2,555

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## Latino fans: Driving sports engagement at and off the field

Latinos demonstrate their enthusiasm for sports through in-person attendance and engagement with media. Latino respondents to our fan survey are 27 percent more likely than non-Latinos to attend at least one live sporting event annually. This heightened in-person engagement underscores not just a passion for sports but also a strong communal and cultural connection to the game day experience. For many Latino families, sports represent more than entertainment. They are a central thread in community life, and game nights are often shared, multigenerational experiences. As one owner of a professional women's soccer team told us, "When Latinos come to games, it feels different. They bring whole families, and they're super engaged. It's not just a game; it's a way of connecting." Sports fandom, particularly around soccer, baseball, and basketball, often serves as a form of cultural identity and pride.

Excitement extends beyond the stadium, as Latino fans have higher participation rates than non-Latinos in many forms of sports media and advertising. Latinos are omnichannel enthusiasts, embracing digitally native channels. Our fan survey reveals that Latinos are 14 percent more engaged than non-Latinos across various forms of digital-native media, including social media interactions, sports website visits, participation in fantasy leagues, and viewership of game highlights. Latinos are also highly engaged with sports on streaming platforms. For example, our fan survey results reveal that Latinos subscribe to ESPN+ at a rate 18 percent higher than that of non-Latinos and to Prime Video at a rate 11 percent higher.

Latino fans spend

15%

more than non-Latinos across multiple sports categories. When adjusted by income, it's

50% more.

The pattern for social media is similar. When it comes to specific platforms, Nielsen research reveals that Latinos are 54 percent more likely than non-Latinos to consume sports content on WhatsApp, 37 percent more likely on TikTok, and 33 percent more likely on Instagram relative to the general population, illustrating a preference for fast-paced, interactive, and social formats over traditional broadcast television viewing. The segment's digital savviness, combined with strong responsiveness to sponsorships during sporting events, highlights a uniquely dynamic approach to sports consumption that blends digital engagement with brand interaction.

### Latino youth: Powering the future of sports

Latino youth are at the heart of America's sporting future. Youth sports not only represent 15 percent of today's sports ecosystem but also drive societal benefits that go well beyond the field. Participation is associated with higher college enrollment, [greater holistic health](#) (including [lower obesity rates](#)) and reduced delinquency rates. For Latinos, these outcomes have ripple effects—not just a stronger base but also more engaged communities.

Latino youth participation is thus both a leading indicator of fandom and a driver of broader societal gains. Closing the participation gap—by addressing barriers of cost, time, and inclusion—will not only strengthen the next generation of fans but also cultivate the leaders and change makers of tomorrow (see sidebar “How youth sports shapes Latino professional success”). Sports organizations that invest in Latino youth are, in effect, investing in the future vitality of the entire sports ecosystem and beyond.

With a demographic profile that skews younger and more digitally connected than the general population, Latinos already account for 26 percent of the US population under 25 years old. And according to US Census data, approximately 56 percent of Latinos are under the age of 34. This generational tilt means that how Latino youth engage with sports today will profoundly shape the sports ecosystem tomorrow.

## How youth sports shapes Latino professional success

Youth sports participation may be a powerful predictor of professional success, as our survey of accomplished board members from the Latino Corporate Directors Association (LCDA) reveals. A striking 87 percent of these leaders participated in youth sports, a rate 25 to 30 percentage points higher than for the broader Latino youth population in the United States. This disparity highlights the key role that early athletic experiences play in fostering the skills and mindset that propel individuals to the top of corporate governance.

For these Latino board members, the impact of youth sports extends far beyond the playing field. Nearly three-quarters credit sports with instilling essential boardroom qualities like discipline (71 percent), teamwork (68 percent), and leadership (68 percent). Moreover, more than half note that their early participation in sports continues to shape their families today, demonstrating the lasting influence of sports on their personal lives. These findings underscore the enduring power of sports to drive not only individual success, but also foster a legacy of resilience and collaboration that transcends generations and may be linked to future success off the field.

This data also reveals interesting gender dynamics among the 86 LCDA board members who responded to our survey. Male respondents reported starting sports earlier than females, at an average age of 7.6 years old, compared with 9.8 years for female respondents. Female board members were also more likely to drop out after childhood: their rate of participation in sports through college was 21 percentage points lower than that of their male counterparts. This data indicates that there are opportunities to better support and sustain female participation, ensuring that all young athletes can benefit from the personal and professional advantages of sports participation.

The connection between sports and success remains strong, with 93 percent of LCDA board members identifying as fans of at least one professional league. This enduring passion reflects the lasting influence of youth sports, not only as a catalyst for individual achievement but also as a unifying force that fosters community and shared purpose among Latinos.

Between 2019 and 2024, according to data from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), Latino youth sports participation grew at a compound annual growth rate of 3.9 percent—nearly double that of non-Latino youth. By 2024, more than half of Latino youth (53.7 percent) were active in sports, just 2.8 percentage points shy of their non-Latino peers, marking significant progress from the 6.3-point gap in 2019.

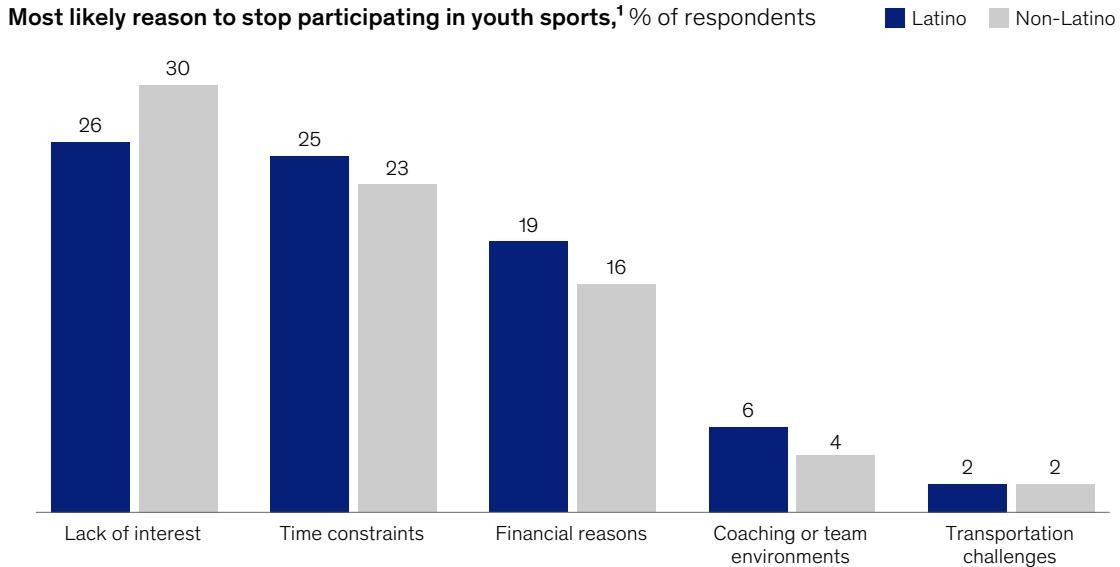
This growth has been fueled by local leagues' diversity initiatives and rising Latino household incomes, all of which have expanded access to organized activities. The shift is particularly notable among young women: Participation among Latina girls rose from 39.5 percent in 2019 to 48.4 percent in 2024, outpacing the growth of their non-Latina peers. This surge reflects national trends in team sports, including [the notable rise of women's sports](#), and the success of targeted outreach to historically underrepresented groups. Many organizations—such as Ella Sports Foundation, Girls on the Run, Sports 4 Life, and the Women's Sports Foundation—have launched or created programs with a goal of serving girls in underrepresented communities to encourage physical and mental health through sports.

Despite this growth, Latino youth still are not at parity with non-Latinos when it comes to participation in youth sports. There are several obstacles to engagement. Costs—averaging nearly \$1,000 annually per child, and up to \$3,000 for teens, according to SFIA—pose a steep barrier. Time is another constraint. Twenty-five percent of Latino parents cite scheduling conflicts, compared with lower rates among non-Latinos (Exhibit 4). Inclusion also matters. According to McKinsey research in collaboration with the US Soccer Federation, Latino and Black children are three times more likely than White children to stop playing soccer because they feel unwelcome.



Exhibit 4

**Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to cite time, money, and team environments as potential reasons to stop participating in youth sports.**



<sup>1</sup>Question: If your child were to stop participating in youth sports in the future, which of the following do you believe would be the most likely reason?  
Source: Expert interviews; Sports and Fitness Industry Association; US Census Bureau; McKinsey Sports Fan Survey, June 4–24, 2025, n = 2,555

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These challenges not only limit participation but also can have an impact on long-term fandom development. Our survey found that Latino youth who play competitive sports are three times more likely than nonparticipants to become avid fans as adults.

**Between 2019 and 2024, Latino youth sports participation grew at a compound annual growth rate of 3.9 percent, nearly double that of non-Latino youth.**



# Understanding the nuances of Latino fandom

At a time when sports organizations are seeking to grow audiences and deepen fan relationships, overlooking Latino fans means missing a vital and growing part of the sports community. Doing so effectively requires an understanding of how the Latino community in the United States is diverse and dynamic, engaging with sports in multifaceted ways. Among the key areas that can help organizations tap into Latino fandom are nuances of Latino engagement across different subgroups and sports, opportunities for growing media engagement with Latino fans, and Latino underrepresentation in the sports workforce. By exploring these opportunities and understanding the complexities of Latino sports fandom, organizations can develop strategies to better engage this vibrant and growing community.

Latino fandom is multifaceted

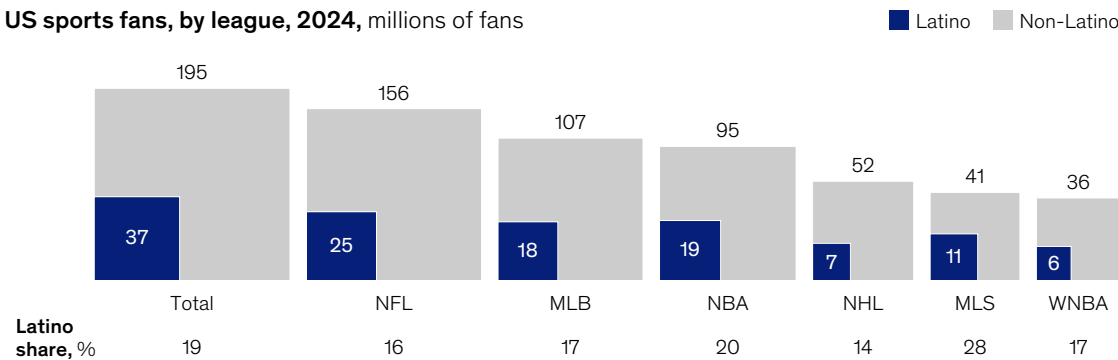
Treating Latinos as a monolith is a risk to understanding the full potential of the Latino fan. The US population includes approximately 68 million Latinos, with origins in more than 20 countries and a wide range of cultures and traditions. Mexican-heritage Latinos account for about 60 percent of the overall Latino population, followed by Puerto Ricans at about 9 percent, and people of Cuban descent at about 3.5 percent. According to Pew Research, nearly 70 percent of US Latinos are second- or third-generation Americans, with many moving easily between cultures and positioned to shape future media trends. Their expectations around language, authenticity, and inclusion will define the next generation of sports fandom.

According to Global Web Index (GWI, a market research company), Latinos represent nearly one out of every five sports fans in the United States, but as mentioned earlier, their preferences for different sports vary widely. Soccer is popular (28 percent of MLS fans are Latino), while hockey is less so (14 percent of NHL fans are Latino). In between are basketball (20 percent of NBA fans), baseball (17 percent of MLB fans), and football (16 percent of NFL fans) (Exhibit 5).

Within the broad category of Latinos, there are notable differences in sports affinity across various heritage groups. Our survey reveals that sports fans of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican descent tend to index higher for baseball. Several South American communities also maintain strong soccer traditions. Even within sports, there is variation in fandom. Multiple leaders for professional sports teams told us they engage with fans differently depending on their country of origin. As one owner of an MLS team told us, “You can’t treat Latinos as a monolith. Colombians, Argentinians, and Mexicans have different soccer traditions, and their fandom clearly reflects that.” A marketing executive for an MLB team told us, “Mexican fans have a deep historical connection to our team, but when we engage with Dominican or Guatemalan fans, their expectations are different.”

Exhibit 5

Latinos represent nearly one in every five sports fans in the United States, but their level of interest varies widely across different leagues.



Note: Leagues are National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Soccer (MLS), Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA). Figures may not sum, because of rounding.  
Source: GWI; US Census Bureau

The variance among fandoms across leagues can provide insights into how Latinos engage differently across sports. There's also opportunity to convert current Latino enthusiasm for international soccer leagues to major league soccer in the United States. According to market research company MRI-Simmons, Latinos are 10 percent more likely to follow international soccer than the MLS, which includes teams only in North America. Nielsen reports that in 2022, Latinos watched 1.6 times more total viewing hours of the English Premier League and 9.4 times more hours of Liga MX (the highest level of Mexico's professional soccer system) relative to the MLS (see sidebar "*¡Gooooool!* How Latino engagement fuels *fútbol* frenzy in the United States").

## ***¡Gooooool!* How Latino engagement fuels *fútbol* frenzy in the United States**

The upcoming FIFA World Cup—returning to North America for the first time in 32 years—is poised to be the largest sporting event in history, with a record 48 national teams playing 104 matches over 39 days. As the primary host, the United States (which will host 78 matches alongside Canada and Mexico, each scheduled to host 13 matches) anticipates significant cultural excitement and economic activity from the global soccer madness that grips the world every four years. Early forecasts project 6.5 million live event spectators and tens of millions of television viewers. There will be billions of dollars of activity, with FIFA projecting \$11.1 billion in event-related expenditures spanning media, infrastructure, sponsorship, and tourism.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, the year of the last World Cup, FIFA reported more than \$500 million in revenue from television broadcasting rights for North America alone, a figure that will likely be surpassed in 2026.

From the passion of fans to the influence of media and marketing, Latinos in the United States are set to play a central role in shaping the 2026 World Cup experience. According to an Ipsos Global Influentials study, 44 percent of Latinos in the United States plan to follow the tournament, more than any other demographic group.<sup>2</sup> Many Latinos consider the event to be as important as a holiday, where friends and families come together to share their passion for *fútbol* through watch parties and other celebrations. Their enthusiasm for soccer translates into high engagement across ticket sales, TV viewership, and social media buzz. And with many matches taking place in Latino-majority cities like Los Angeles and Miami, Latino fans are expected to fill stadiums, create electric

atmospheres, and drive local economic activity through travel, dining, and merchandise.

Latino influence extends beyond the stadium. NBCUniversal obtained Spanish-language rights in the United States to broadcast every single 2026 World Cup match on Telemundo for linear TV and on Peacock for streaming—with the most expansive Spanish-language sports coverage in US history. Although Spanish-language coverage may primarily be driven by a desire to reach US Latino audiences, it is sure to have wider appeal. During the 2022 World Cup, 38 percent of Telemundo and Peacock's audience did not speak Spanish. But as a *New York Magazine* headline blared during the last World Cup in 2022, "There's nothing more American than watching soccer in Spanish." With joy, flair, and sharp insights, Spanish-language soccer broadcasts transcend language barriers.

The Latino impact in the United States during the World Cup goes deeper than television and streaming viewership. Multilingual and multicultural familiarity can help welcome international fans and elevate the World Cup experience. On the field, perennial powerhouse teams from Latin America have fervid fans in the United States. Matches involving these teams are expected to be fast-selling and high-grossing, and brands and sponsors may identify opportunities to craft targeted marketing campaigns that appeal directly to fans of those teams. Together, these dynamics position Latinos in the United States as more than fans of the World Cup; they could also be players who will deliver, shape, and amplify its success.

<sup>1</sup> "FIFA World Cup 2026 Socioeconomic Impact Analysis," Goaleconomy, March 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Isaac Mizrahi, "Multicultural marketing scores big in the 2026 FIFA World Cup playbook," *Forbes*, June 23, 2025.



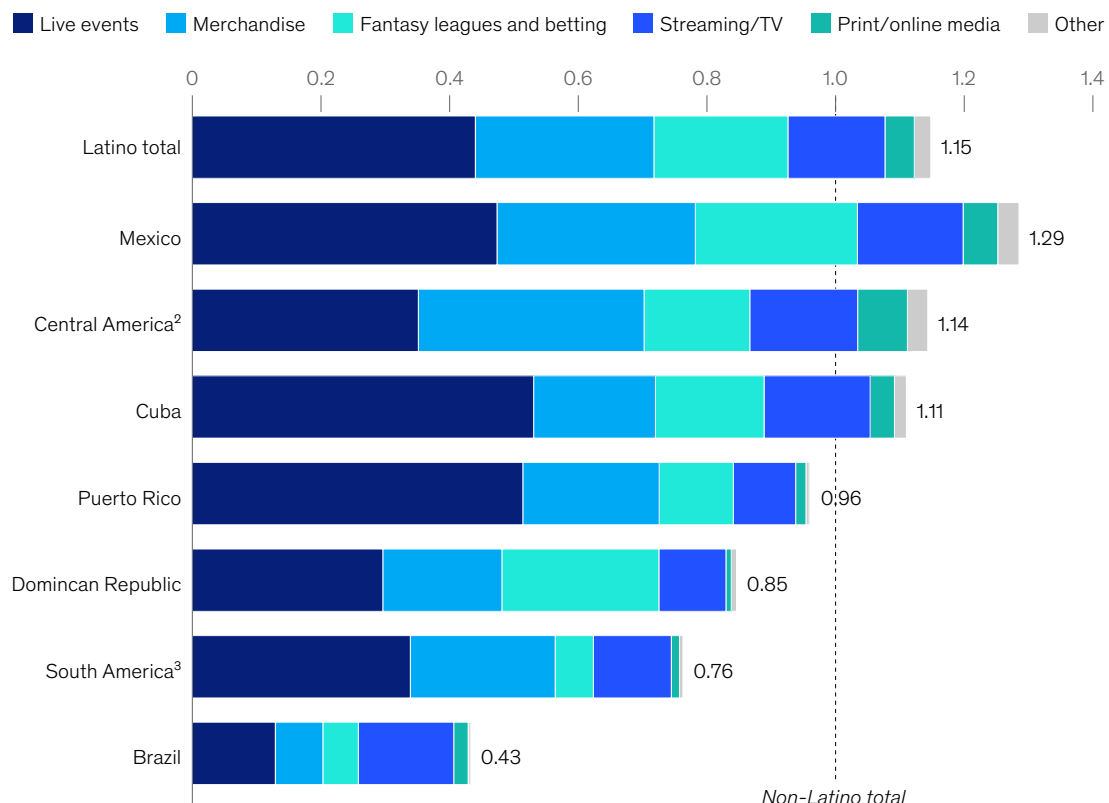
As noted earlier, Latinos spend 15 percent more across sports-related categories than non-Latinos (and 50 percent more when adjusted by income), but subgroups vary in how they choose to spend (Exhibit 6). For example, people with Cuban and Puerto Rican heritage tend to spend proportionately more on live events than other groups, while fans of Dominican Republic descent spend relatively more on fantasy leagues or betting. And those of South American descent spend relatively less on fantasy leagues or betting but proportionally more on branded merchandise.

In serving Latino audiences, organizations can deepen engagement by understanding and honoring cultures. Latino respondents to our fan survey are four percentage points less satisfied than non-Latinos with the amount of sports content reflecting their culture and perspectives. Sixty-three percent express an interest in sports content highlighting their culture, athletes, and communities, versus 55 percent of non-Latinos. Fifty-seven percent indicate they would deepen their engagement with sports if teams launched culturally specific initiatives such as heritage nights, partnerships, or community celebrations.

Exhibit 6

## Latino spending on sports-related categories varies across different heritage groups.

US average annual sports spend across categories, by heritage group,<sup>1</sup> index (non-Latino level = 1)



<sup>1</sup>Question: Thinking about your typical behavior over the last 12 months ... approximately how much did you spend on the following types of items?

<sup>2</sup>Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama.

<sup>3</sup>Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Source: US Census Bureau, Median Personal Income, 2023; McKinsey analysis

Latino fans express a strong connection to brands and content that visibly incorporate cultural elements that are meaningful to their communities. For example, according to Nielsen, Latinos are 37 percent more likely to feel loyal to a brand that sponsors a sport they follow.<sup>2</sup> This points to an opportunity for more inclusive storytelling and tailored media experiences.

### Opportunities for richer media engagement with Latino fans

Media outlets, teams, and leagues that invest in culturally informed, bilingual content and more inclusive representation stand to unlock greater resonance and long-term development.

As previously noted, Latinos have high levels of engagement when it comes to digital-native forms of media consumption, including paid subscriptions. However, their sports consumption of linear broadcast TV depends on the content provided.

Nielsen reports that Latinos account for only 11 percent of hours spent watching MLB, NBA, NFL, and NHL broadcasts, significantly below their 20 percent share of the US population and fan base (Exhibit 7).<sup>3</sup> In contrast, Latinos represent 26 percent and 98 percent of watched hours in the United States for the English Premier League and Liga MX, respectively.

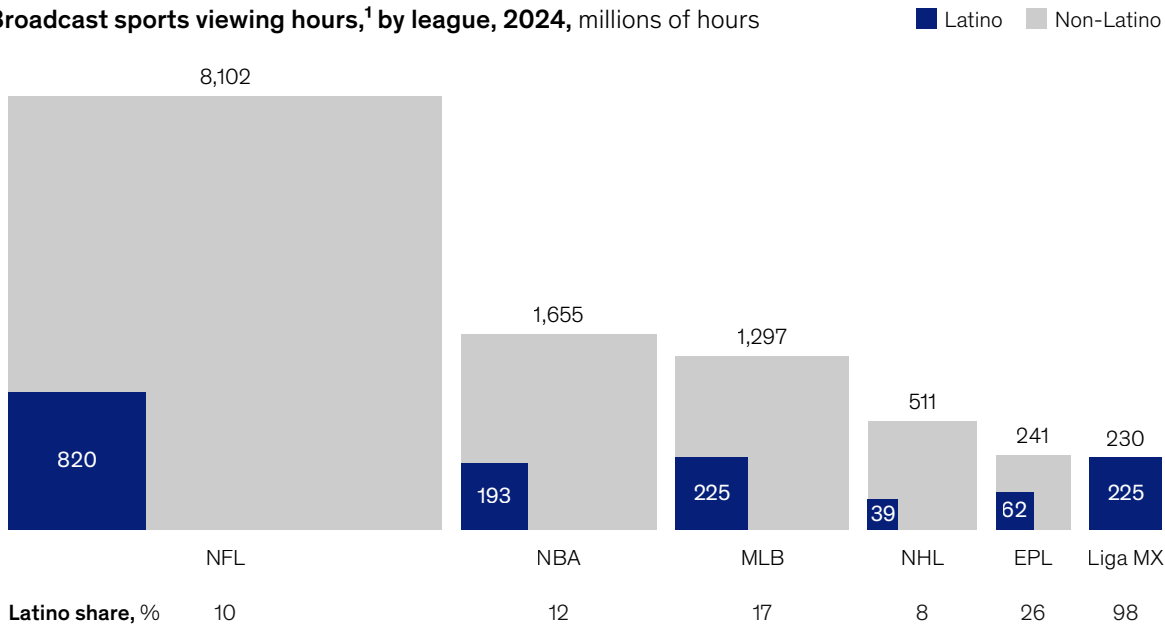
<sup>2</sup> "Fanáticos: Nielsen's playbook on Hispanic media consumption and sports engagement," Nielsen Diverse Intelligence Series, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Nielsen does not track viewing hours for the MLS, since most games are streamed and not broadcast on linear television in the United States.

Exhibit 7

### Latino share of traditional broadcast TV viewership varies widely across different leagues and sports.

Broadcast sports viewing hours,<sup>1</sup> by league, 2024, millions of hours



Note: Based on persons aged 2 and older (P2+) units and total minutes (calculated as units × duration). Data reflects each individual sport's season calendar in 2024 across broadcast and cable networks where the events aired (for NBA and NHL, 2024 = 2023–24 season). Leagues are National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Hockey League (NHL), English Premier League (EPL), and Liga MX (Mexican soccer league).

<sup>1</sup>Excludes broadcast sports viewing hours for Major League Soccer, which is largely viewed through streaming services in the US and is not tracked by Nielsen. Source: Nielsen

# The challenge and opportunity for sports organizations is to meet them where they are—with the appropriate content, on the appropriate platforms, and in the appropriate language.

Although viewership for linear TV has gone down across all audiences due to the rise in popularity of streaming, Latinos in the United States show lower engagement with traditional broadcast television than non-Latinos. Using GWI's audience insights platform, we found that they are 20 percent less likely than non-Latinos in the United States to watch games on broadcast TV and 8 percent less likely than viewers in Mexico. This structural under-engagement in traditional media reflects broader challenges in aligning sports content delivery with the habits and preferences of younger Latino fans. This pattern extends beyond sports: Nielsen reports that across age groups, Latinos average 14 to 26 percent fewer hours of total television viewing compared with non-Latinos.

Language plays a critical role in shaping Latino sports media consumption. Although 68 percent of US Latino respondents to our fan survey speak Spanish at home, there is relatively little Spanish-language content availability. According to Nielsen, Spanish-language sports broadcasts represent only about 5 percent of their total viewing hours. This underrepresentation particularly affects Latinos born outside the United States, 30 percent of whom prefer to watch games in Spanish, according to our fan survey. The supply is not there to meet the demand. For many bilingual fans, the issue may not be a lack of interest but a lack of options.

While Latinos may be underrepresented when it comes to linear TV, they overindex on streaming. Nielsen data shows that Latinos consume 56 percent of their television content through streaming, compared with 46 percent for non-Latinos.<sup>4</sup> Latino fans are clearly present and engaged. The challenge and opportunity for sports organizations is to meet them where they are—with the appropriate content, on the appropriate platforms, and in the appropriate language.

## **Beyond the field: Latino underrepresentation in sports management and media**

Representation across sports organizations—on rosters, in front offices, and among game day staff and leaders—plays a critical role in determining whether outreach feels authentic and whether fans see themselves reflected. Increasing Latino presence, particularly in decision-making roles, is essential for strengthening community ties, cultivating authentic fandom, developing more relevant campaigns, and avoiding cultural or linguistic gaffes. Visible pathways from the field to leadership positions indicate belonging and can help foster a sense of community. As one MLS team owner told us, “Having Latino players on the roster and in the front office isn't just about talent, it's about connecting with the community. Representation on the field translates to representation in the stands.”

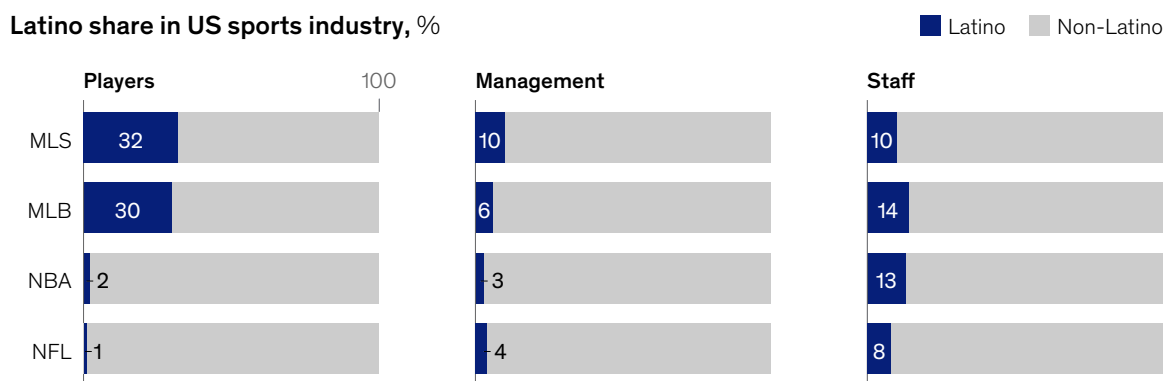
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<sup>4</sup> “Hispanic consumers overindex on streaming consumption versus rest of US, new Nielsen report finds,” Nielsen News Center, September 2025.

Today, Latino representation presents a mixed picture, with significant disparities across leagues and roles. According to The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), Latinos constitute between 1 and 30 percent of players in major leagues, depending on the sport. Yet they hold just 5 percent of management positions and 12 percent of staff roles overall. Baseball and soccer illustrate the imbalance most clearly: Latinos make up more than 30 percent of players but a much smaller share of management and staff (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

## Latino representation in US professional sports leagues varies across role and sport.



Note: Leagues included in this research are Major League Soccer (MLS), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), and National Football League (NFL). MLS data is from 2022; MLB, NBA, and NFL data is from 2023.  
Source: The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES)

McKinsey & Company

The underrepresentation extends into the media landscape. Nielsen reports that Latinos in the United States are 19 percent more likely than the general population to feel underrepresented on television. In sports journalism, the data backs this up. A 2021 Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE) survey of more than 100 sports-related newspapers and websites found that Latinos constituted only 5.3 percent of reporters—well below their share of the US population.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Richard E. Lapchick, "The 2021 sports media racial and gender report card: Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE)," The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), September 22, 2021.





# Tapping into the full potential of Latino fandom

Latino fans in the United States are one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing segments of sports fandom. They engage deeply with sports—attending games in greater numbers, consuming more content across platforms, and spending more on sports-related products than non-Latinos. But future growth is not guaranteed. It requires intentional strategies to sustain engagement and build connection across generations.

Previous McKinsey research on the [opportunity to close the monetization gap in women's sports](#) identified four stakeholders that can accelerate growth: investors, marketers and sponsors, media, and rights holders (teams and leagues). The following four areas—awareness and community building, digital, youth, and brands—are key focus points for these stakeholders as they seek opportunities for growth with Latino fans.

# Latino fans in the US are one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing segments of sports fandom—attending games in greater numbers, consuming more content across platforms, and spending more on sports-related products than non-Latinos.

## **Awareness and community building: Becoming culturally relevant**

The most effective engagement starts with presence in communities and culturally relevant storytelling. Teams like the Los Angeles Dodgers have built Viva Los Dodgers into a signature program, offering live music, food, and partnerships with local organizations to celebrate Latino heritage every season. The Brooklyn Nets' Nets Unite campaign does the same in basketball, blending culture and sport to support fandom. The NFL's announcement that Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny will headline the next Super Bowl halftime show is generating excitement from sports and music fans alike. Beyond events, greater Latino representation on the field, as well as in front offices, can foster belonging and help organizations think like their audiences.

Lowering access barriers also matters. Initiatives to lower ticket prices packages and provide affordable merchandise—as the NBA's Utah Jazz did recently when it lowered concession prices in response to fan feedback—can make sports experiences more attainable for families of differing income levels (including but not exclusive to Latinos) and strengthen long-term ties. Media accessibility matters, too. As one MLB executive told us, partnering with Spanish-language broadcasters led to a “significant uptick in Latino viewership,” underscoring the appetite for content that speaks directly to Latino fans.

However, it's important to note that these efforts cannot be one-off events or symbolic gestures. Superficial efforts that simply showcase diverse faces risk constituting tokenism. Real impact requires sustained commitment, authentic engagement, and true community building that integrates Latino voices and perspectives into the core of the sports experience.

## **Digital: Meeting fans where they are**

Latinos skew younger and more digitally native, meaning sports engagement from rights holders, brands, and sponsors [must be omnichannel](#) and span multiple platforms. Because Latinos also overindex in streaming compared with non-Latinos, digital content delivery represents a key growth channel. Teams are experimenting with short-form video, interactive fan features, and influencer partnerships across outlets like Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube to meet fans where they spend their time. For example, there are MLB Español

and NBA Latam TikTok accounts that post in Spanish. And several basketball teams, including the Los Angeles Lakers and the Miami Heat, focus on engaging with Latino communities through Instagram Live sessions and Reels.

At the same time, Spanish-language sports content remains undersupplied relative to demand, creating a notable growth opportunity. Broadcasters are beginning to expand Spanish coverage of major sports in the NFL, NBA, and the Olympics, while streamers are investing more in live sports rights to capture Latino audiences. As Latinos continue to lead in streaming adoption, sports content delivered in Spanish across digital platforms represent a powerful lever for deepening engagement.

Brands also have the opportunity to use gen AI to [tailor messages](#) that resonate more with Latinos. Bilingual and culturally specific ad campaigns that engage Millennials and Gen Z, supported by data-driven personalization, can help rights holders and brands craft messaging that better resonates with audiences across devices and channels.

## **Youth: Investing in the next generation of fans**

Sustaining Latino fandom over the long term requires investment in the next generation. Collaborations with Latino-focused organizations and schools build trust while making sports more accessible. The Denver Broncos have set an example with community grants for youth sports equipment, helping reduce the cost barrier for underserved families. Neighborhood leagues and school-based hubs also matter, as they limit travel and lower time commitments for parents.

The payoff is clear. According to *Youth Sports Business Report*, 80 percent of parents view brands more favorably when they actively support local youth sports programs.<sup>6</sup> By investing in grassroots participation, leagues and sponsors alike cultivate not only healthier communities but also future fans.

## **Brands: Cultural authenticity**

Sports play a meaningful role in many Latino households, but authenticity is critical. Campaigns that tap into shared cultural touchpoints, such as sports as a gathering point for family and friends, can resonate. At the same time, marketers should account for the great diversity within the Latino community, tailoring to different heritage groups differently across different sports and understanding nuances between leagues and among teams.

Some brands have already demonstrated how tailored strategies can succeed. Corona's long-standing MLB sponsorship integrates bilingual content and in-stadium activations. McDonald's has used FIFA World Cup campaigns to highlight Latino traditions of family viewing, pairing ads with community watch parties. Pepsi has blended sports and Latin music—sponsoring events while activating with reggaetón artists—to connect with younger bicultural audiences. Nike has invested heavily in grassroots soccer programs in Latino neighborhoods, focusing on free clinics and community partnerships.

The payoff is real. According to Nielsen, Latino sports fans are 39 percent more likely than the general US population to recommend a company that sponsors sports they follow and 37 percent more likely to feel loyal to those brands.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Youth sports marketing: The new frontier for brand building and community engagement," *Youth Sports Business Report*, May 2, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> "Hispanic sports fans drive record viewership and brand loyalty, Nielsen highlights untapped potential," Nielsen news center, September 2024.



The Latino fan base is no longer a niche; it is the blueprint for the next generation of American sports fandom. Young, digitally fluent, and deeply connected to community, Latino fans embody where sports consumption is heading. For leagues, teams, media, and sponsors, this is an opportunity to foster connections: By 2035, Latinos are expected to account for one-third of total US sports market growth. Organizations that act now—by creating authentic content, meaningful experiences, and with greater representation—can drive growth, build lasting trust with one of sports' most dynamic fan communities, and foster a more inclusive industry. The question is no longer whether Latino fans will shape the future of sports but who will rise to meet them there.

**Alberto Chaia** is a senior partner in McKinsey's Miami office, where **Sebastian Cubela** is a partner; **Ben Vonwiller** is a partner in the New York office; and **Lucy Pérez** is a senior partner in the Boston office.

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This report was edited by Christine Y. Chen, a senior editor in the Denver office.



# Alex Rodriguez on expanding Latino opportunity and representation in sports

A-Rod Corp CEO and former Major League Baseball star Alex Rodriguez discusses mentorship, access, and how the sports industry can better serve Latino communities.



**Alex Rodriguez** is a seasoned entrepreneur, investor, and leader who has transformed his success on the baseball field into a multifaceted business career. Known for his 22 seasons in Major League Baseball as an All-Star and World Series champion with the New York Yankees, Rodriguez is the founder and CEO of A-Rod Corp, a diversified investment and holding company with a wide-ranging portfolio that spans real estate, sports, media, and technology. In June 2025, he became co-owner of the National Basketball Association's Minnesota Timberwolves and the Women's National Basketball Association's Minnesota Lynx. Rodriguez recently spoke with McKinsey senior partner Alberto Chaia about Latinos in sports, the subject of a new report from the [McKinsey Institute of Economic Mobility](#). The following is an edited version of their conversation.

**Alberto Chaia:** What was it like growing up Latino and making it to the top of your sport?

**Alex Rodriguez:** I was born in 1975 to immigrant parents from the Dominican Republic, in New York City—right in the shadow of the old Yankee Stadium. Later, we moved to Miami.

When I was 12, two years after my father left, I remember going to a supermarket with my mother, and she used food stamps. That was the first time I realized that she was getting help from the government. My mom had to work two jobs. I remember her getting up at 4:30 in the morning and taking two trains to work. She worked as a secretary during the day, and she served tables at night.

I can count on one hand the number of times my mother saw me play in Little League and in high school, because she was always working to pay the bills. I think I got a lot of my determination and grit from my mom.

**Alberto Chaia:** Have things changed for up-and-coming Latino players today? Or do they still face the same kinds of barriers you did?

**Alex Rodriguez:** It's great to see someone like Juan Soto, who's Dominican and signed with the Mets for \$765 million over 15 years, but players like him are far and few between.

Most come from very humble beginnings. The average career [of a baseball player] is only about five and a half years, and many players don't have the financial literacy or the knowledge to be able to take competitive advantage of their capital. Having millions of dollars in your twenties puts you in the 1 percent of the 1 percent. But if you can't capitalize on that, it can slip away fast. There's a big opportunity to help players bridge that gap.

**Alberto Chaia:** How important was mentorship for you when you were younger? And how did youth sports shape your success later in life?

**Alex Rodriguez:** When my dad left, I naturally gravitated toward strong, smart men who could guide me. Two things saved my life: the Boys & Girls Club and sports.

Two mentors shaped my path before I turned 17. One was Eddie Rodriguez [no relation], who coached baseball at the Boys & Girls Club in Coconut Grove, Florida, for over 40 years. More than 25 Major League players came out of that tiny club.

The other was my high school coach, Rich Hoffman, at Westminster Christian School. He was there for over 30 years, won 11 championships, and had many Major League Baseball players come out of his program. When I was 15 years old, I was very insecure and a shadow of the player that I eventually became. Coach Hoffman told me, "This year, you're going to do OK in your sophomore year. Next year,

you'll be the number-one junior in the country. And then in your senior year, you're going to be the number-one pick in the Major League Baseball draft." I looked around and said, "Are you talking to me, Coach?" He said, "Yeah. I'm talking to you."

That taught me the power of words and the power of mentorship. A great leader will see you in a light that's sometimes 100 percent better than what you think of yourself. That can give you a lot of energy to chase your goals.

**Alberto Chaia:** One of the findings in our recent research is that Latino kids start playing sports at very similar rates as other groups but tend to drop out of organized sports faster. Why is that happening?

**Alex Rodriguez:** There's never been a time in American history when more kids are playing baseball and softball. However, at the age of 13, there's massive drop-off.

Affordability is becoming a much bigger issue. If I were a ten-year-old again in today's 2025 environment, my mother would not be able to pay thousands—and in some cases, tens of thousands—of dollars for me to travel every weekend for a game. Aluminum bats cost more than \$500 today, and gloves are \$300 or \$400. Before you know it, you're having to refinance your house. And we didn't even have a house.

I was lucky because I had mentors who stepped up and sponsored me. But you're talking about a few hundred dollars back then, compared to tens of thousands of dollars today, to keep up with the Joneses.

A lot of kids quit on the ride home with their parents or mentors. That signals to me that we're putting too much focus on results. Instead of asking, "Did you hit a home run?" or "Did you strike out ten batters?" we should be asking, "Did you enjoy the game? Were you well prepared? How did you feel out there?"

We need to put the focus on the process and take out the emphasis on results. The game has gotten so competitive. It's become such a big business that I hear 12- and 13-year-old kids—or the parents, who are, honestly, the worst sometimes—saying, "My kid throws 78 miles an hour. My kid hit a home run like [New York Yankees outfielder] Aaron Judge."

**We should be asking kids, "Did you enjoy the game? Were you well prepared? How did you feel out there?" We need to put the focus on the process and take out the emphasis on results.**

**—Alex Rodriguez**

None of that stuff is important. What's important is: Are you enjoying the game? Do you have good passion for the sport? Are you learning how to pitch, versus how fast you pitch? Are you learning how to be a good hitter?

Who cares how far you hit the ball at the age of 13? Thank God, I didn't have any of these cobwebs in my mind, because these are restrictions that people put on themselves, rather than just enjoying the art of baseball.

**Alberto Chaia:** You're the father of two daughters. How do you view female participation in sports today?

**Alex Rodriguez:** I think we're in a good place. We've seen incredible growth with the WNBA. With those rising tides, all kinds of boats get lifted.

The [growth in women's sports](#) is visible everywhere—in participation, in viewership, and in social media engagement.

**Alberto Chaia:** How important is Latino fandom and engagement for sports today?

**Alex Rodriguez:** I think all four of the American major sports commissioners from the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL<sup>1</sup> see the Latino community as an enormous opportunity for growth.

There's real passion among fans. Your mood, your self-esteem, how you feel about yourself, and how you feel about your community is often tied up with wins and losses from your team. What's interesting about our community is that we are true fans. We buy the sport, we watch the sport, and we live the sport. The more sports leaders can connect with that energy, the more growth there will be.

**Alberto Chaia:** Are you seeing any teams or sports engaging Latino fans better than others?

**Alex Rodriguez:** The NFL is going back to Mexico City for games in 2026. They're taking real initiative. The Dallas Cowboys also do an outstanding job. Jerry Jones is one of the great owners of our generation, and he has a real focus on Latin America, especially Mexico as the neighbor to the south of Texas. You hear Jerry going around saying, "Los Vaqueros." It's not the most perfect Spanish, but he's trying like hell.

One big opportunity is outreach in our native language. I come from a generation that spoke English at the mall, and Spanish at home with Grandma, and Spanglish with my brothers. If teams and media are producing content in English, why not add Spanish subtitles, or vice versa? It's also important to meet the fans where they are—in the barrios, in their media channels, in their language.

**Alberto Chaia:** How well do you think teams, leagues, and the media engage with Latino communities at the level of their individual heritage?

**Alex Rodriguez:** Billions of dollars have been spent and lost over many years in efforts to try and understand our community. But we can be fragmented. Some in the Mexican community may feel ties with Europe. The same goes for those from Colombia or Venezuela. Dominicans or Puerto Ricans might connect more with the East Coast, while Mexicans might identify with the West Coast.

It's not that one suit fits all. Sports leaders should be strategic about creating more custom-made suits for each part of this Latino community. As an owner and a former player, I see enormous potential. We have to figure out how to unlock it.

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<sup>1</sup>National Football League, National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, and National Hockey League.

What's interesting about our Latino community is that we are true fans. We buy the sport, we watch the sport, and we live the sport. The more sports leaders can connect with that energy, the more growth there will be.

—Alex Rodriguez

**Alberto Chaia:** There's increasing Latino representation among players in some sports, but not necessarily at the managerial or executive level. What are your reflections on that?

**Alex Rodriguez:** It has never made sense to me when I see a company trying to grow business through the Latinx community but doesn't have any Latinos on its board.

Organizations need diversity. People of color, women, and folks that understand the community are able to speak to the community and able to grow that community. If you want to grow in the Hispanic market, you need to have Hispanic folks at the executive level.

**Alberto Chaia:** You're now a co-owner of the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx. What has your experience been like as a Latino owner in a predominantly non-Latino sport?

**Alex Rodriguez:** It's been a dream come true. I grew up with a single mom on food stamps, and in one generation, I've experienced the kind of wealth creation that really only happens in America. I'm very fortunate to be born here, live here, have become a champion with the New York Yankees here, and now grow my businesses here in this country.

I'm also very fortunate to work with Adam Silver. He's a progressive and forward-thinking NBA commissioner who wants representation in the room from all colors and genders. I've been one of the beneficiaries of that. I feel really good being in that room. But my job doesn't stop there. It's not enough just for me to be in the room and be "one of the few" or "the only." I want to leave that door open and let others come in with me as well.

**Alex Rodriguez** is the founder and CEO of A-Rod Corp, and the co-owner of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx. **Alberto Chaia** is a senior partner in McKinsey's Miami office and a leader of the [McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility](#), McKinsey's think tank focused on inclusive economic growth.



*This interview has been edited for length and clarity. Comments and opinions expressed by interviewees are their own and do not represent or reflect the opinions, policies, or positions of McKinsey & Company or have its endorsement.*

This interview was edited by Christine Y. Chen, a senior editor in the Denver office.

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