

The Cost of Fandom

ally
do it right.



American Sports Fandom Runs Deep

Sports are an integral part of our culture, with a significant number of Americans identifying themselves as sports fans — and many are active participants, not just casual observers.



The Cost of Fandom

In fact, **sports fans report participating in an average of five activities per year to support their favorite teams.** From attending games to watching at home, wearing team gear or engaging online, sports have become a year-round presence in fans' lives.

Fans participate in:



5 activities on average for sports they support

88%

of fans participate in at least one activity to show their fandom





Fandom Isn't Free — And Many Are Going Into Overtime On Spending

Being a sports fan today comes with a real price tag — and many fans are forgoing a game plan to cover the costs.



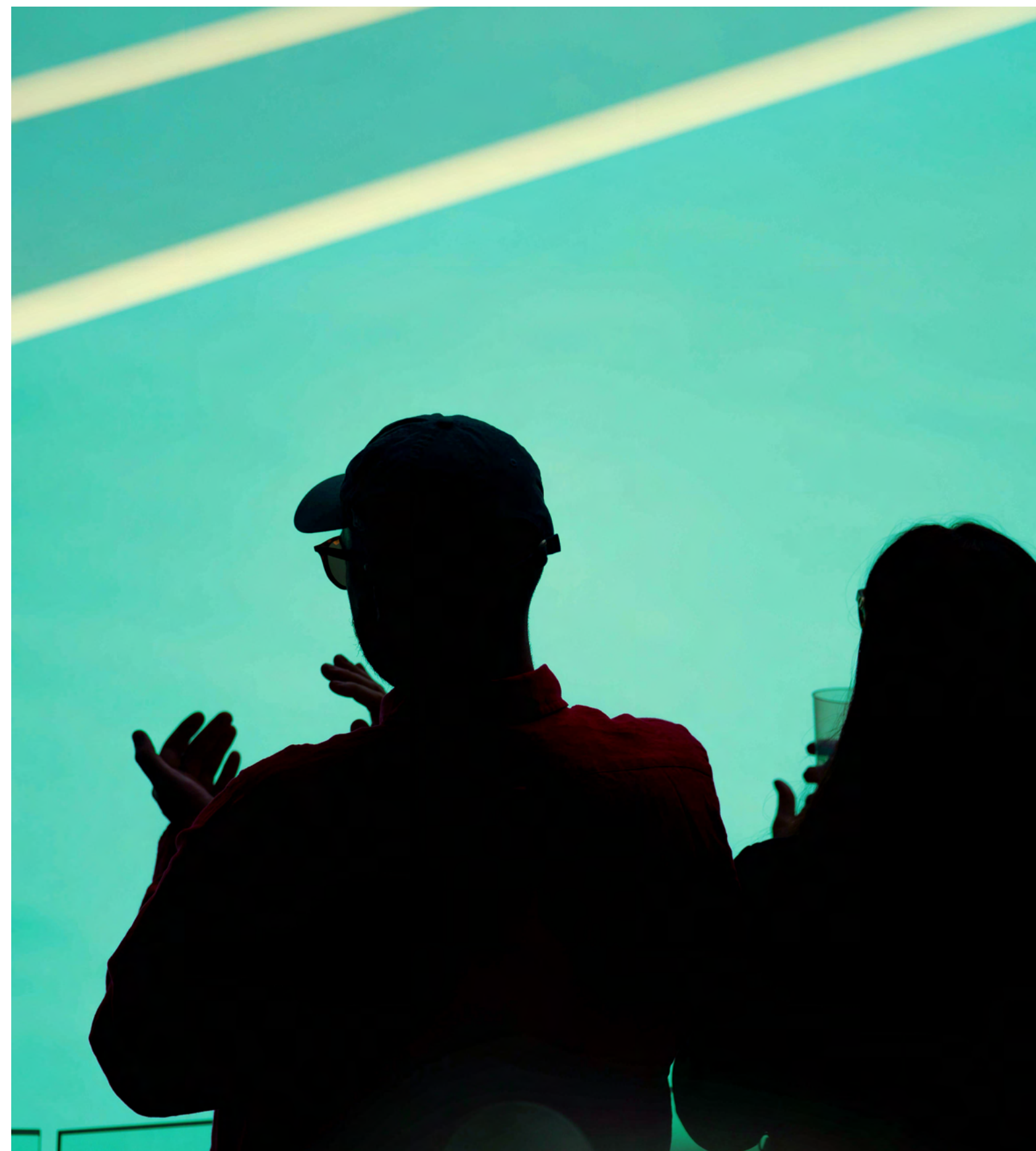
The Cost of Fandom

On average, **sports fans spend \$1,600 per year to support their teams — and “fanatical” fans* spend nearly \$2,200 annually.**

- **Millennials are the biggest spenders, at \$2,050 per year**, compared to \$1,550 for Gen Z.

Tickets (60%) and food & drink (54%) are the

- top overspending culprits overall, with apparel (47%) and travel (36%) closely following.



Items fans are likely to overspend on (% Selected)

		Overall	Men	Women
	Tickets	60%	41%	45%
	Food and drink	54%	38%	40%
	Apparel and/or merchandise	47%	33%	44%
	Travel	36%	29%	30%
	Digital access to view events	20%	26%	25%
	Hosting	19%	19%	23%
	Season tickets	10%	17%	22%

* Fanatical fans defined as those who self-identify as being fanatical about at least one sport, spending more on average and participating in more activities compared to general sports fans.



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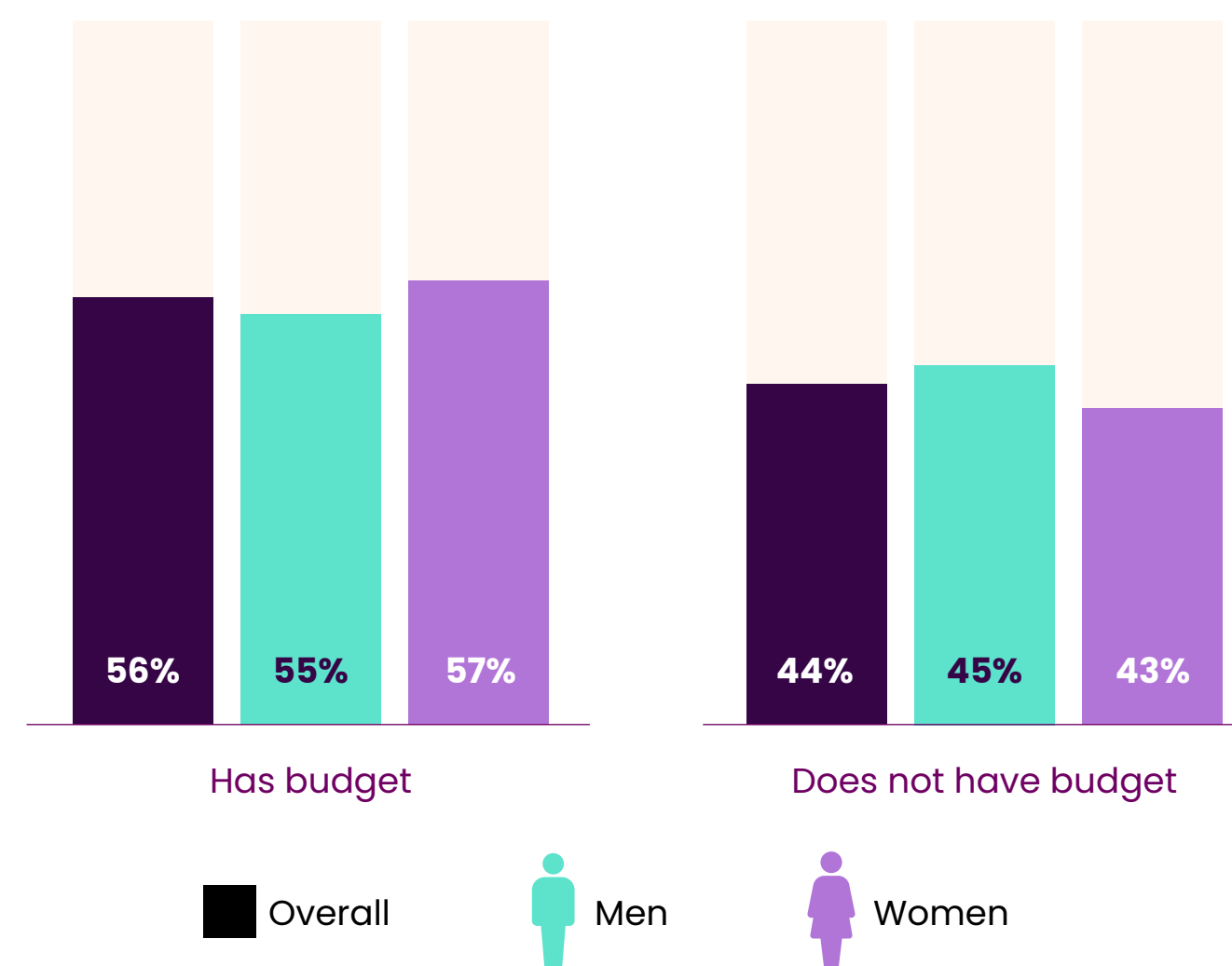


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However, many fans are not planning ahead: **85% of fans report they have no dedicated savings set aside for fandom, and nearly half (44%) report they have no dedicated sports budget.**

- Millennials may spend more overall, but 43% of millennial fans say they don't have a set sports budget. Gen Z fans are slightly more disciplined, with 37% reporting they operate without one.
- 52% of fans say they don't want a dedicated savings fund for sports — even though it could help them manage overspending and prevent cutbacks in other areas.

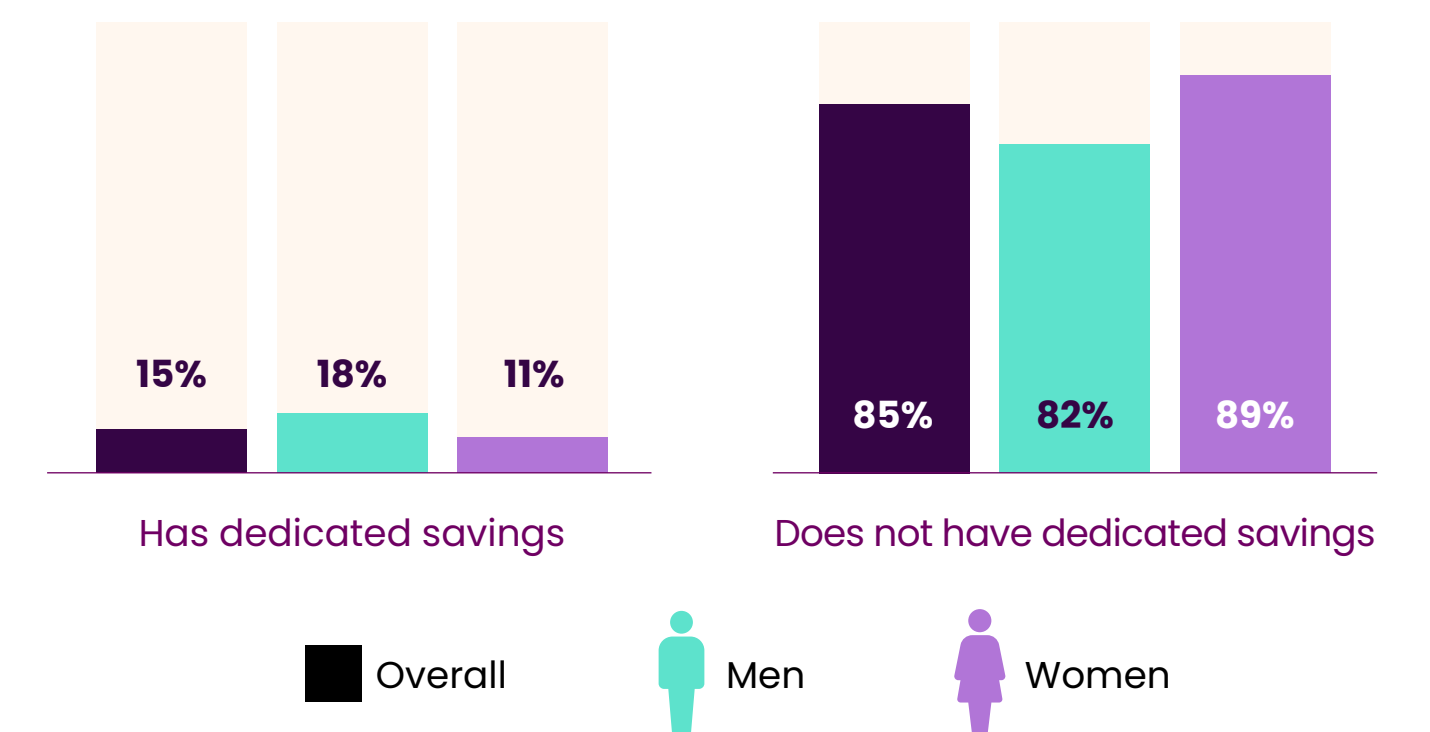
Budgeting for sports events or activities



Even for those who do budget, keeping spending “in-bounds” is a challenge. **More than half (57%) of fans admit to overspending on sports each year.** That number jumps to two-thirds (66%) when talking about “fanatical fans,” who are the most willing to blow past their budgets.

- Gen Z fans overspend the most frequently compared to other generations, with 43% reporting they do so a few months out of the year or more often.
- Although men spend more on sports fandom overall than women (\$1,950 vs. \$1,250 annually) — with football, auto racing and ice hockey fans spending the most — **both men and women overspend at a similar rate (55% vs. 57%).**
- Women are less likely to have dedicated savings for sports than men (11% vs. 18%), which may lead to greater financial strain given similar overspending behavior.

Dedicated savings for sports





More Than A Game: The Emotional ROI Of Fandom

Despite high costs, many sports fans are willing to justify their spending for the love of the game — even if that means cutting back on other expenses.



The Cost of Fandom

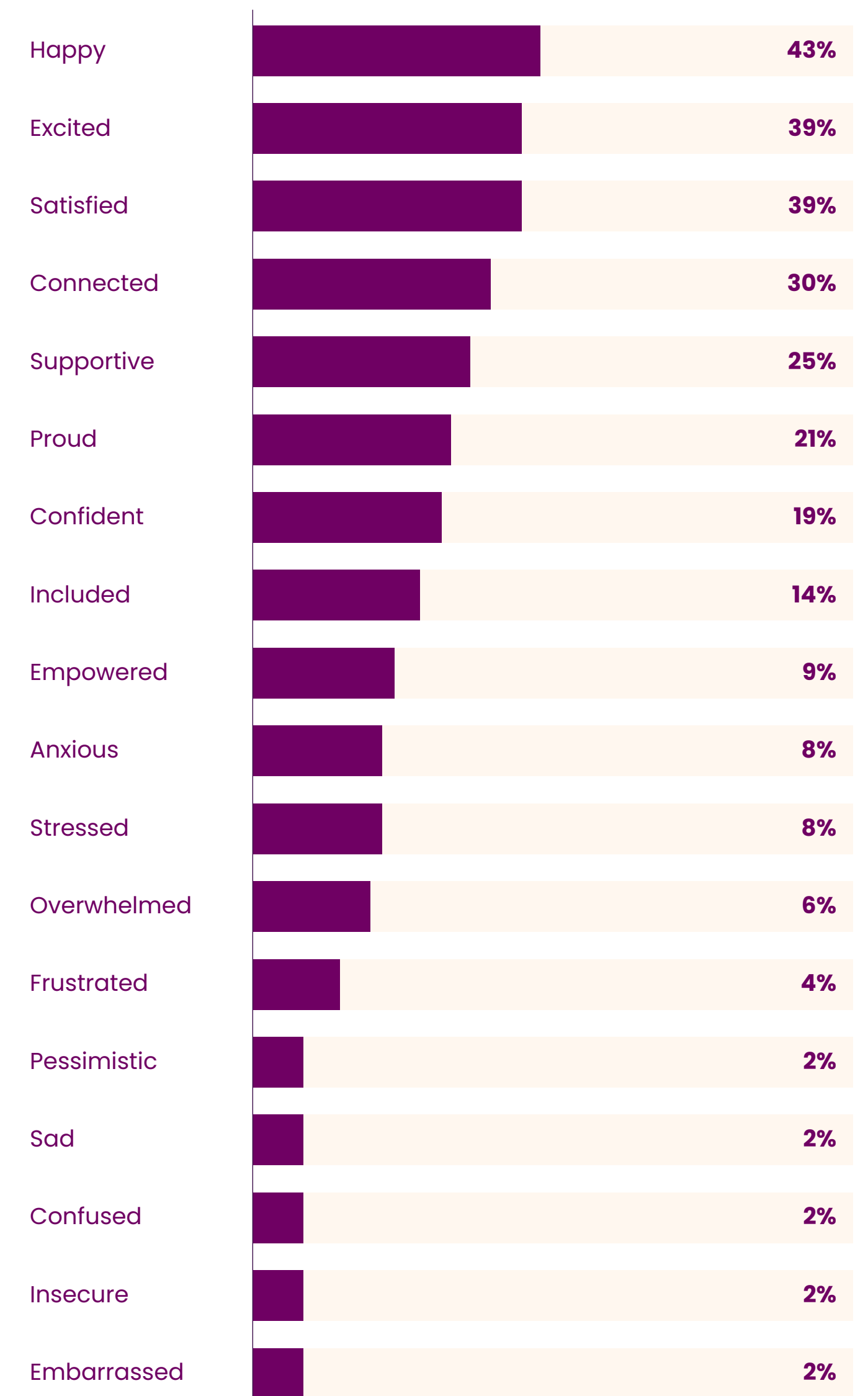
Nearly half of millennials and Gen Z report that supporting their favorite sports makes them feel **happy and excited** (millennials: 47%, 45%; Gen Z: 42%, 43%).

Roughly **1 in 3 millennials (33%) and Gen Z (31%) said their sports spending makes them feel connected** — underscoring the community connection among sports fans.

Nearly a quarter of Gen Z fans (23%) and 19% of millennials reported they have reduced spending in other areas (eating out less, shopping, etc.) to afford supporting their favorite sports.



When you think about the money you spend on sports or sport-related activities, how does it make you feel?





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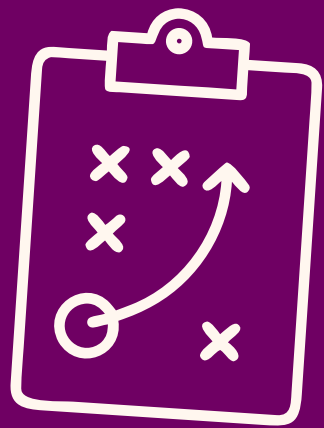
The Cost of Fandom

The connection doesn't stop among fellow fans — it also extends to their favorite teams and athletes. **34% of fans say spending on sports makes them feel attached to their favorite teams, and roughly 1 in 5 (18%) feel their spending supports their favorite athletes.**

When you think about the money you spend on sports or sport-related activities, how does it make you feel?

Watching sports is entertaining	42%
I feel attached to my favorite team(s)	34%
I am proud to display clothing or other merchandise for my favorite team(s)	32%
Sports help me to connect with my family and/or friends	29%
As a fan of a team, I feel a sense of community with other fans	27%
I like to discuss sports with other people	26%
I enjoy participating in events that are important cultural moments, like the World Cup or the Olympics	25%
Spending on sports helps support my favorite team(s)	21%
Sports distract me from daily life	20%
I like to listen to experts discuss sports	19%
Spending on sports helps support my favorite athlete(s)	18%
My favorite celebrity or influencer follows my team	12%





The Sports Fan Playbook: His vs. Hers

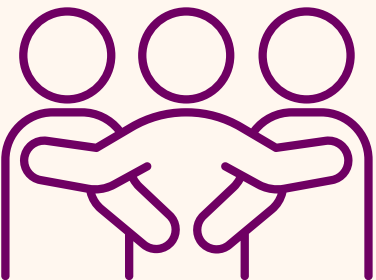
Fandom isn't one-size-fits-all. Men and women are equally passionate about their favorite sports — but they show it, spend it, and experience it in unique ways.



The Cost of Fandom

Men are more likely to splurge on big-ticket items — spending hundreds more per year on average — while **women overspend in smaller, but consistent ways** — like buying merchandise, apparel or hosting watch parties.

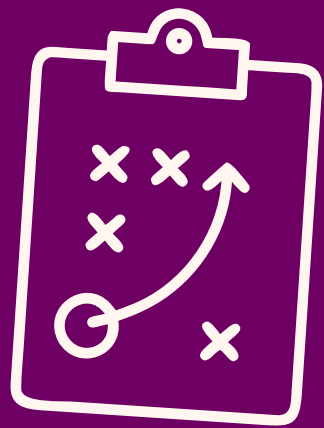
- **Women favor certain social fandom more than men.** They are more likely to gather at friends' houses (52% vs. 46%) and host watch parties (31% vs. 26%) — embracing fandom as a source of belonging, community and expression.
- **Men lean toward more high-spend, experiential fandom.** They're more likely to travel long distances for games (31% vs. 25%) and splurge on tickets and VIP packages — signaling a willingness to go all-in on live experiences.



These nuances show that fandom is shaped not just by spending — but by the values and identities that drive it.

Activities by sports fans over the past 12 months (% Selected)

	 Men	 Women
Watched at home on a TV on other device	75%	74%
Attended a sporting event in person	51%	48%
Went to a restaurant or bar to watch a sporting event	50%	43%
Followed a team or individual on a team on social media	48%	52%
Went to someone's home to watch a sporting event	46%	52%
Bought apparel and/or merchandise related to a sport	46%	51%
Played sports video games	45%	23%
Bought tickets for a specific sporting event	42%	36%
Traveled more than 2 hours for a sporting event	31%	25%
Added a streaming service/cable package	28%	28%
Hosted a gathering or party to watch a sporting event	26%	31%
Purchased collector's memorabilia	25%	19%
Paid for digital access to sporting events	21%	16%
Had a season ticket	10%	10%
Purchased a VIP package for a sporting event	10%	7%



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Overall, sports fans feel the greatest ways they can contribute to the further growth of their favorite sports are: **watching games to boost ratings (46%), attending games in-person (40%), and wearing apparel (38%)** to represent the teams they support.



Considering the sports you are a fan of, what are the best ways you can contribute to their growth?



Watch more games on TV or streaming to boost ratings

46%



Attend more games in-person

40%



Wear apparel that promotes the sports I am a fan of

38%



Purchase team or league merchandise

32%



Host gatherings to encourage family/friends to watch sports I am a fan of

21%



Invite friends and/or family to games

21%



Purchase season tickets or membership packages

17%



Engage with teams/athletes on social media

17%



Women’s Sports: Working To Level The Playing Field

While still not equal, women’s sports are gaining ground — and fans across demographics, from men to Gen Z, are helping drive the momentum.



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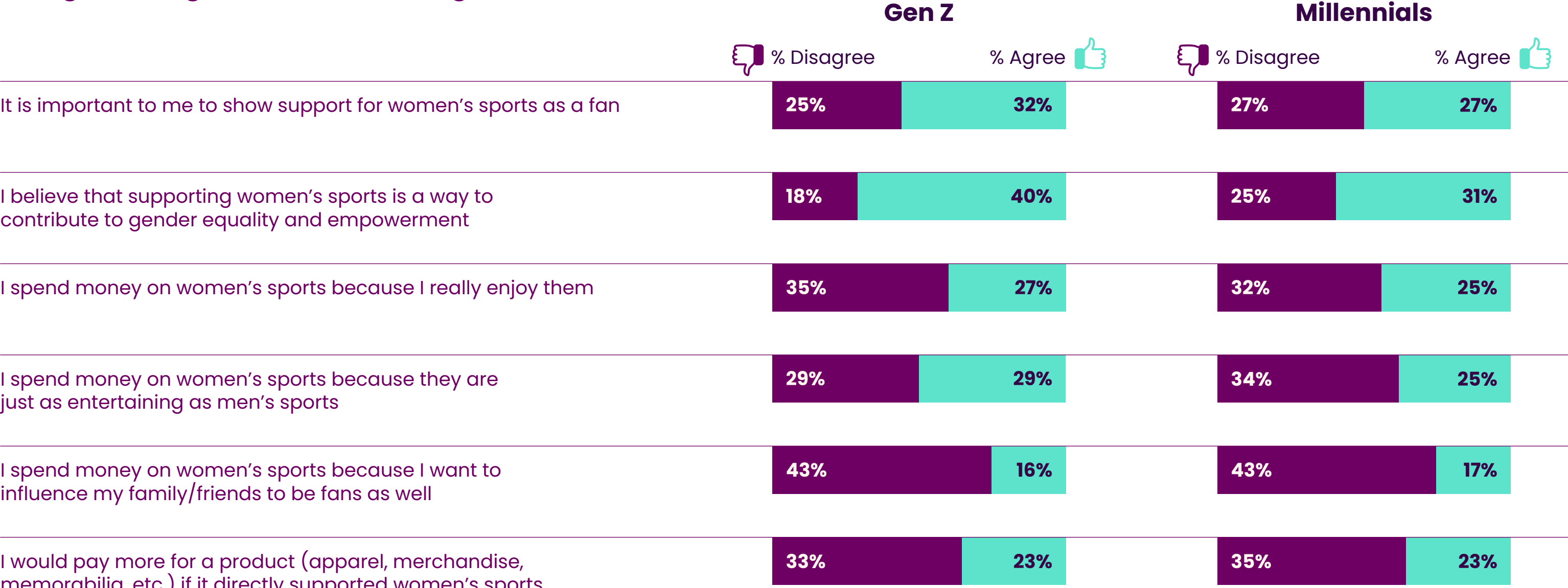
Average spend on men’s sports spend is 90% higher than spend on women’s sports — with overall spending on men’s sports being \$950 vs. women’s sports being \$500.

Men outspend women on women’s sports annually (\$600 vs. \$400).

Nearly 7 in 10 fans (67%) say spending on women’s sports has increased (22%) or stayed the same (45%) — a sign that more fans are showing up for their favorite women’s sports teams.

Fans see women’s sports as a statement of values: Roughly 1 in 3 Gen Z fans (32%) say it’s important to show up as a women’s sports fan, with 40% of Gen Z saying supporting women’s sports is a form of supporting equality and empowerment.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree to the following statements:



Survey Methodology: Surveyed 3,000 sports fans of at least one sport across Gen Z, millennial, Gen X and Boomer populations in September 2025 to better understand the financial consequences of fandom