



Popularity and Participation of Sports in the Middle East and North Africa

2011

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***Note:** whilst Yemen is not officially a member of the GCC, throughout the report it will be referred to as a GCC country on account of its cultural and social similarities to the rest of the region, as well as its geographic location

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Introduction

Welcome to the first SMG / YouGov report on sports following and participation in the Middle East and North Africa. The sporting habits of over two and a half thousand respondents across 16 countries are revealed, providing ground breaking strategic information on a fast emerging region with approximately 300m inhabitants.

Three distinct regions are analysed: the sports avid, large population countries of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa; the similarly emerging Levant region covering Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria; and thirdly the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE - along with Yemen, which will be grouped with GCC countries throughout on account of its geographical proximity and cultural and social similarities.

The survey was carried out by YouGov Siraj in March 2011 with 727 respondents in North Africa, 538 in Levant and 1,317 in GCC, with respondents being representative of large cities across all of those countries. Significantly Expats were excluded, meaning the true views of native residents in these regions have been captured for the first time. For this reason sports such as cricket, rugby, american football and baseball, have lower interest levels than might otherwise be the case.

The survey covers three core areas:

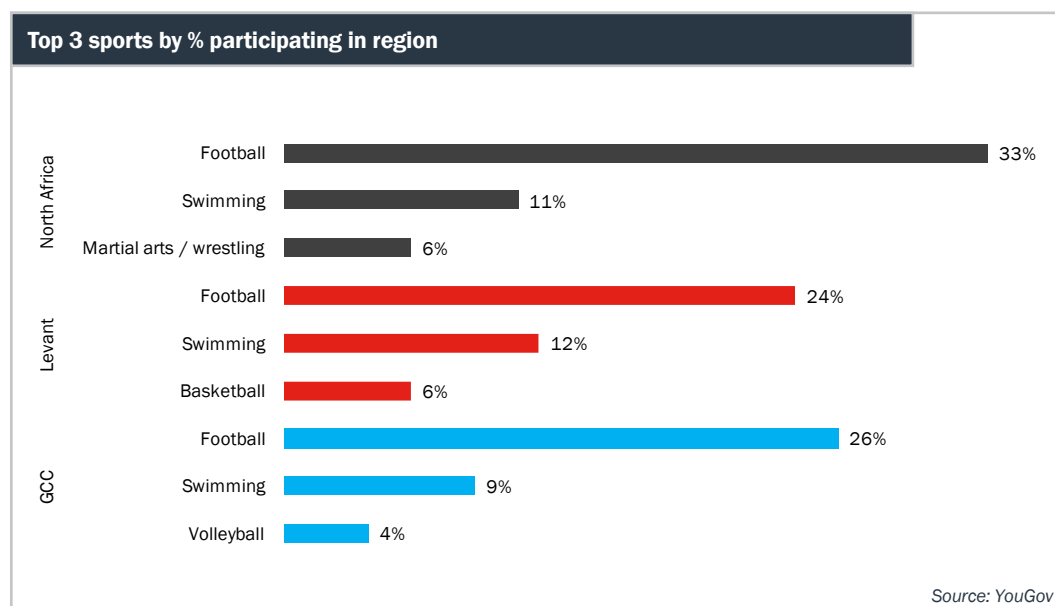
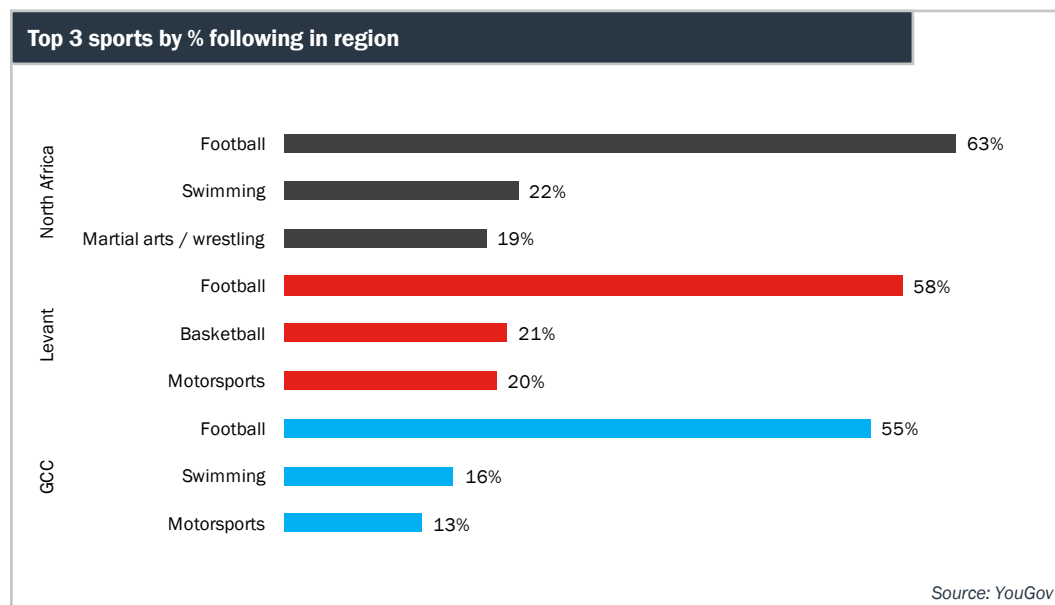
- » **Following:** Respondents were asked which sports they follow on TV or in the media on a regular basis
- » **Participation:** Respondents were asked which sports they personally participate in on a regular basis
- » **Events:** Respondents were asked which sporting events or competitions they follow on a regular basis: one set of results here are presented for football events and another for non-football events



Summary 1

Most popularly followed and played sports by region

The survey reveals a highly polarised market where football is by some distance both the highest spectator and participation sport in every country in this study. Whilst previous reports have shown football to have a similarly high following in Western Europe, participation levels are significantly higher across the Arab world, particularly in North Africa. Even more striking is the extent to which football, in both following and participation levels, dominates the entire Middle East and North Africa region in popularity with no other sports coming remotely close.



Summary 1 Most popularly followed and played sports by region
(continued)



Aside from football, participation and following levels amongst the most popular sports in the Arab world are significantly lower than those of the most popular sports in Western Europe, particularly for the Levant and GCC regions. However, while swimming is significantly less popular across Arab regions than in Western Europe, it is still comfortably the second most popular participation sport across all three regions, and the second most popular sport to follow in both North Africa and GCC regions.



Motorsports is one of the top three sports for following in GCC and is even more closely followed in Levant, where basketball is equally popular in terms of following and is also the third most participated in sport. Finally, martial arts is both regularly followed and participated in in North Africa but is less popular across the other two regions.



Summary 2

Most popularly followed sports by region and country



By region and country

Sport Following by Rank within country	North Africa				Levant					GCC						Overall	
	Algeria	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE		Yemen
Football	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swimming	3	2	4	2	5	7	4	4	4	3	2	6	9	2	4	4	2
Martial arts	4	3	7	13	7	4	11	2	6	12	8	7	14	6	3	2	3
Motorsports	8	5	8	7	3	2	3	3	3	6	5	2	2	4	5	5	4
Basketball	7	7	6	3	10	3	2	6	2	2	4	9	4	7	2	3	5
Athletics	2	4	3	6	2	6	7	5	5	7	3	11	6	8	7	6	6
Volleyball	5	6	9	5	8	11	10	7	10	4	6	3	3	5	10	11	7
Tennis	9	9	2	4	6	5	5	11	7	8	9	4	5	9	8	7	8
Horse racing	13	10	12	17	19	9	9	12	8	5	10	10	8	3	6	10	9
Boxing	6	8	5	9	9	8	8	8	9	15	7	12	10	10	9	8	10
Skiing	12	14	10	8	13	12	6	13	12	10	12	13	16	11	11	12	11
Watersports	15	12	13	10	14	13	15	15	14	9	11	16	11	12	14	13	12
Snooker / pool	18	13	15	18	4	10	14	14	15	16	16	14	7	14	12	9	13
Cycling	11	15	11	11	16	16	16	9	13	20	15	8	15	15	13	15	14
Extreme sports	10	11	16	15	12	17	17	10	11	13	13	20	12	17	16	17	15
Sailing	16	16	17	12	17	18	13	18	18	18	14	17	18	16	17	18	16
Camel racing	22	19	21	21	21	20	19	22	20	21	17	5	13	13	15	16	17
Golf	20	18	14	14	18	19	18	16	16	11	18	18	19	19	18	19	18
Powerboating	19	17	19	16	15	15	12	17	17	17	20	22	22	18	22	23	19
American football	14	20	18	19	11	14	21	19	21	22	22	15	17	20	23	14	20
Baseball	17	21	22	22	22	21	22	20	19	19	21	23	23	21	24	24	21
Cricket	21	24	20	20	20	22	23	24	24	14	19	19	20	22	19	20	22
Polo	24	22	24	24	24	24	25	21	22	23	23	21	21	25	25	25	23
Rugby Union	25	25	25	25	25	25	20	23	23	24	24	24	24	23	20	21	24
Rugby League	23	23	23	23	23	23	24	25	25	25	25	25	25	24	21	22	25

Source: YouGov

Summary 2 Most popularly followed sports by region and country
(continued)



As discussed, football is universally the number one most followed sport in these regions while swimming is also followed equally across all countries and regions, appearing in the top 10 sports in every country and second overall. No other sports have as consistent a following across all regions ; however, it is possible for at least some of the other most followed sports to classify the primary catchment area using entire geographic regions.

Interest in motorsports is consistently high in every Levant region country, appearing in the top 3 most followed sports in all 5 countries. There is also interest in the GCC region although it is concentrated primarily in Qatar and UAE.

With the exception of Iraq, basketball also has a consistently high following in absolute terms across Levant region countries, in particular Lebanon where more than one in three people follow regularly it. Similarly to motorsports, basketball also has some following in the GCC, however this is concentrated mainly in Bahrain and UAE.

GCC countries however do have consistently high levels of following across both volleyball and in particular horse racing, where interest is widespread but particularly high in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

While athletics, tennis and martial arts are significantly more popular overall in North Africa than Levant and GCC, there are some varying levels of following of these sports between countries in the region. Martial arts is followed more in Algeria and Egypt, athletics is followed more in Algeria and Morocco, while tennis is by far and away most popular in Morocco, with one in three people regularly following it.

Finally, snooker has a consistently low following across all regions – however, it is the 4th most followed sport in Iraq where one in five people follow on a regular basis.

Summary 3

Most popularly participated in sports by region and country



By region and country

Sport Following by Rank within country	North Africa				Levant					GCC						Overall
	Algeria	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE	
Football	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swimming	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	5	2
Basketball	6	4	3	3	9	3	3	6	3	4	5	3	2	4	3	6
Volleyball	13	5	6	12	8	12	9	5	8	13	15	11	3	3	7	3
Martial arts	7	3	5	7	6	11	14	8	4	5	6	8	12	8	10	11
Snooker / pool	14	10	11	5	2	4	6	3	6	7	4	7	6	5	4	2
Athletics	3	6	4	6	5	10	13	13	5	6	7	14	8	7	5	7
Tennis	15	7	8	13	13	7	4	9	11	10	8	9	7	10	8	9
Motorsports	4	9	10	9	7	5	5	10	12	11	9	10	13	9	13	14
Cycling	5	13	7	8	10	6	7	4	7	12	3	6	11	12	16	4
Horse racing	8	14	13	10	11	8	12	7	13	14	16	19	20	6	12	13
Boxing	9	8	9	4	4	13	15	14	9	8	14	18	19	17	6	8
Watersports	16	11	12	14	14	9	8	11	14	3	13	4	5	13	9	10
Skiing	17	25	20	20	20	14	10	12	15	15	17	20	9	11	11	12
Sailing	18	12	16	11	12	15	11	19	16	16	21	21	21	16	15	16
Extreme sports	10	15	17	17	17	18	18	21	10	9	20	13	15	19	18	18
Camel racing	19	19	18	18	18	19	19	22	22	22	11	16	17	14	14	15
Powerboating	11	16	21	21	21	21	21	24	24	24	12	17	18	15	21	21
Golf	20	17	14	15	15	16	16	15	17	17	10	15	16	20	22	22
American football	21	20	23	23	23	23	23	16	18	18	22	22	22	18	17	17
Rugby Union	22	21	24	24	24	24	24	17	19	19	18	12	14	21	19	19
Cricket	23	24	19	19	19	20	20	23	23	23	19	5	10	22	20	20
Baseball	12	23	25	25	25	25	25	18	20	20	23	23	23	23	23	23
Rugby League	24	18	22	22	22	22	22	25	25	25	25	25	25	24	24	24
Polo	25	22	15	16	16	17	17	20	21	21	24	24	24	25	25	25

Source: YouGov

Summary 3 Most popularly participated in sports by region and country
(continued)



Similarly to the sports following figures, football and swimming are participated in consistently highly across all countries and regions. There are also some consistent links identified below between countries in terms of their followership and participation in certain sports. However when compared to following levels, there is a little less consistency in participation in sports between countries in the same region.

Martial arts however does have a consistently high participation rate across all of North Africa where it is people in Egypt who participate the most. As seen in the previous section, Egypt also has the highest rate of following for martial arts in this study.

Snooker/pool participation rates are also consistently high across all the Levant region, in particular Palestine and also Iraq, which we saw has by far the highest following rate of any country for snooker/pool.

Finally in the region of North Africa, whilst high participation in athletics is concentrated only in Algeria and Morocco, this is at least consistent with the sports following figures which showed athletics is also followed most regularly in these two countries.

However, there is no clear participation catchment region or link between following and participation for basketball and volleyball, both of which are top 10 sports in participation and following, or cycling. In basketball, Morocco has a participation rate of 11% which is significantly higher than the rest of North Africa while the Qatar rate of 10% is significantly higher than the rest of the GCC region. As seen previously basketball was in fact most likely to be followed in the Levant region.

In Qatar, 10% of people also play volleyball regularly – however, unlike volleyball following which is high across GCC countries, volleyball participation levels are not nearly as high across any other GCC countries.

Finally, cycling participation levels also have high variation rates across countries within a region: the high participation rates of 7% in Kuwait and 6% in Palestine are not indicative of a high level across either of their regions.

Summary 4

Most popularly followed football events by region and country



By region and country

	North Africa				Levant					GCC						Overall	
	Algeria	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE		Yemen
Sport Following by Rank within country																	
FIFA Football World Cup	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	
A football league from your home country	10	2	5	2	11	8	11	12	6	11	2	6	4	2	2	14	2
Spanish La Liga	3	7	2	5	4	2	3	2	3	3	5	4	6	5	3	2	3
Champions League	2	5	3	4	5	5	2	3	4	6	8	7	8	8	6	5	4
UEFA European Football Championship	4	4	4	3	7	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	7	4	5	4	5
AFC Asian Cup	14	13	12	13	1	3	10	5	2	4	7	3	3	7	8	6	6
Gulf Cup of Nations	15	12	14	14	3	12	14	8	13	2	3	1	2	3	4	3	7
A football league in your country of residence	11	3	7	7	12	10	9	11	9	12	11	9	5	12	7	10	8
English Premier League	6	6	6	6	8	9	7	10	7	7	6	8	10	6	10	7	9
Arab Champions League	7	8	9	8	6	7	13	9	11	10	12	10	9	11	9	15	10
UEFA Europa League	5	9	8	11	10	6	5	6	8	8	9	12	11	9	12	9	11
Italian Serie A	8	10	10	12	9	11	6	7	10	9	10	11	12	10	11	8	12
German Bundesliga	9	11	13	10	13	13	8	13	12	14	13	13	13	13	13	11	13
French LFP Ligue 1	12	14	11	9	14	14	12	14	14	13	14	14	14	14	14	12	14
Scottish Premier League	13	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	13	15

Source: YouGov

Summary 4 Most popularly followed football events by region and country
(continued)



Unsurprisingly given the very high popularity of football in North Africa, most football events are in absolute terms most popular here, particularly in Algeria and Tunisia. Overall, Levant countries are the next biggest followers of football events, particularly Iraq, while last are GCC countries – however, in most countries interest levels vary significantly depending on the event itself and on whether that country is represented or has been historically successful.

Despite Algeria being the only team from this study represented in the 2010 FIFA World Cup, this event is by some margin the most popular football event overall, being ranked number one in 14 of the 16 countries. UEFA European Championship also has consistently high popularity across all countries and is especially popular in Algeria and Tunisia.

AFC Asian Cup is very popular in all of the competing Levant and GCC countries and is actually more popular than the World Cup in Iraq, who in 2007 were the most recent winners to come from either the Levant or GCC regions.

Gulf Cup of Nations is even more popular across the GCC, particularly in Oman where its following of more than 6 in every 10 people can no doubt be attributed to the country's hosting and winning of the tournament in 2009. Iraq is the only competing team from Levant and the event's popularity there, combined with its lack of popularity in the rest of the region, provides further evidence that interest levels in regional national team competitions are strongly correlated with both the presence of the team in that tournament and their previous success levels.

Domestic club football is overall second only in popularity to the World Cup and is most popular across North Africa – with the surprise exception of Algeria. Strangely, Algerians are much more likely to follow the Arab Champions League – however, aside from here, Tunisia and Iraq the Arab Champions League has generally low levels of following.

Interest in European club football is strongly dominated by La Liga which is the most popular European league in every country in the study, and UEFA Champions League which unsurprisingly has its highest following in Algeria, Tunisia and Iraq. Other European domestic leagues are generally the least popular of all football events, however outside of La Liga, the English Premier League is the most popular, attracting a consistent following of over 1 in 4 people across all of North Africa.

Summary 5

Most popularly followed non-football events by region and country



By region and country

Sport Following by Rank within country	North Africa				Levant					GCC					Overall		
	Algeria	Egypt	Morocco	Tunisia	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Syria	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia		UAE	Yemen
Summer Olympic Games	2	1	3	1	1	1	4	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
Athletics: IAAF World Championships	1	2	1	5	3	4	7	3	4	1	2	2	3	4	3	1	2
Motorsports: Formula One World Championship	4	6	5	7	5	2	2	8	1	4	5	3	6	2	1	8	3
Tennis: Grand Slam tournaments	5	3	2	2	4	3	6	9	2	6	6	11	7	7	4	2	4
Winter Olympic Games	10	4	9	4	2	6	5	2	6	3	4	8	5	6	9	10	5
Swimming: FINA World Championships	3	5	7	8	11	15	10	5	7	5	3	7	13	5	5	9	6
Basketball: NBA	7	9	6	10	20	5	1	7	5	7	11	14	11	11	6	4	7
Horse Racing: Dubai World Cup	12	10	13	14	21	12	17	6	11	9	10	9	8	3	7	5	8
Basketball: FIBA World Championship	8	7	10	11	12	9	3	11	8	13	9	10	10	12	8	14	9
Motorsports: Moto GP	14	11	14	15	7	7	8	4	10	8	12	6	12	9	10	6	10
Tennis: ATP World Tour Masters 1000	6	13	4	6	10	8	9	12	9	18	17	19	9	13	13	17	11
Volleyball: FIVB World League	15	8	20	3	18	16	12	17	18	22	7	18	4	10	15	7	12
Athletics: International Triathlon World Cup	13	14	8	13	8	11	22	28	16	12	8	4	14	18	12	16	13
Horse Racing: Grand National	16	15	21	24	28	21	19	21	22	16	20	20	16	8	18	20	14
Motorsports: Superbike World Championship	11	16	12	12	13	10	11	16	14	11	19	21	28	14	23	23	15
Athletics: Commonwealth Games	17	12	15	20	9	14	24	29	17	21	14	13	2	16	11	15	16
Cycling: Tour de France	9	17	11	9	19	20	15	14	13	19	18	16	20	23	20	13	17
World Snooker Championships	27	18	16	16	6	17	13	23	19	15	16	17	15	15	19	12	18

Source: YouGov

Summary 5 Most popularly followed non-football events by region and country
(continued)



Similarly to football events, following of most non-football events is by far the highest in North Africa. Unsurprisingly given the high levels of following and participation in Athletics, the IAAF World Championships are extremely popular in Algeria and Morocco. Interest is lower but still consistently good across all other regions. Tennis events are also significantly more popular across North Africa with an average of 22% regularly following Grand Slams and a healthy 13% following ATP World Tour Masters 1000 events.

Although the London Olympics was more than a year away when panellists were surveyed, the Summer Olympic Games is the most popular non-football event – although overall its following is comparable to only the 9th most popular football event across all regions, the English Premier League. With a following of 42% it is most popular in Tunisia, followed then by Iraq and Algeria. The Winter Olympic Games is also popular across most countries and regions.

As the 3rd most popular non-football event the F1 World Championship is most popular in the Levant region although again emphasising the strength of football across all regions, following levels of F1 overall are not significantly higher than that of the German Bundesliga and are lower than Serie A.

Consistent with earlier findings, Lebanon has the highest level of following for NBA Basketball and FIBA World Championship. Both are followed consistently across the Levant region and also across North Africa.

GCC region had the lowest overall following for non-football events. While earlier figures show horse racing is followed most across GCC countries, the Dubai World Cup and Grand National events are in fact no more popular there than in North Africa.

Finally, the Swimming FINA World Championships has by far its highest level of following in Algeria with 30% regularly following. Again snooker is seen to be very popular in Iraq where 13% of people regularly follow the World Championships.

2 | Country Profiles

Algeria (North Africa)

» **Population: 35.0m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

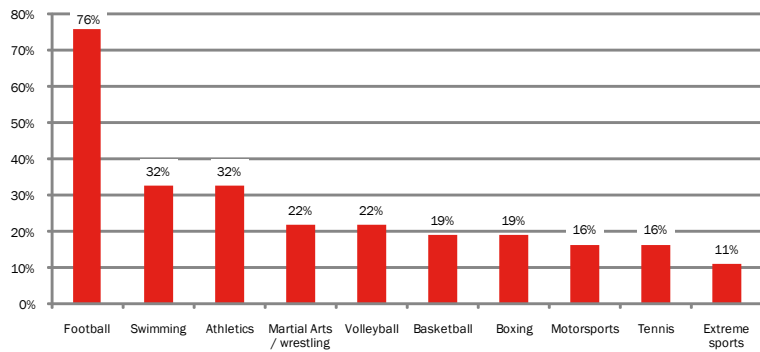
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$7,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

Algeria is a sport loving nation. Football, swimming and athletics are the three most popular sports and with respectively 43%, 27% and 11% of the respondents participating regularly, Algeria has the highest participation levels in the study for all three sports. Algerians also follow these sports very keenly with more than three in four Algerians regularly following football, which may have been increased by the team's presence at the 2010 World Cup.

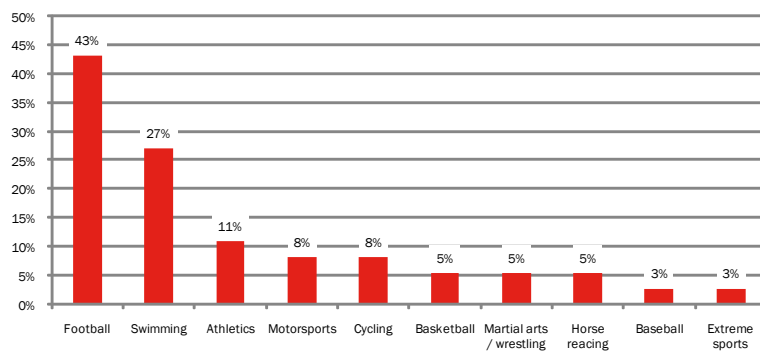
Behind the World Cup the most popular football events are the Champions League and La Liga in Spain with more than one in two people following both although strangely local football is not widely followed. Unsurprisingly, the IAAF World Championships and Summer Olympics are very popular with 43% and 30% of Algerians respectively following the events regularly during the competitions. Three in ten people regularly follow the FINA Swimming World Championships.

Aside from the three big sports, Algerians have a taste for high-speed racing events. Eight percent of Algerians participate regularly in motorsports while a further eight percent regularly cycle.

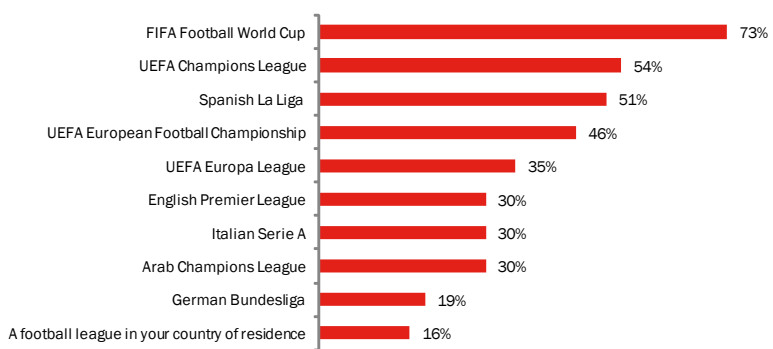
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



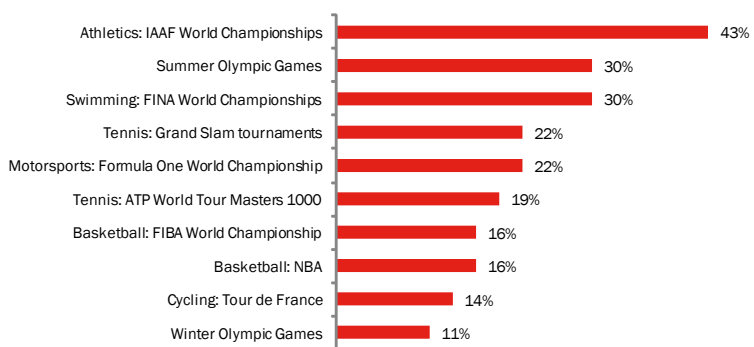
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Algeria (North Africa)

Egypt (North Africa)

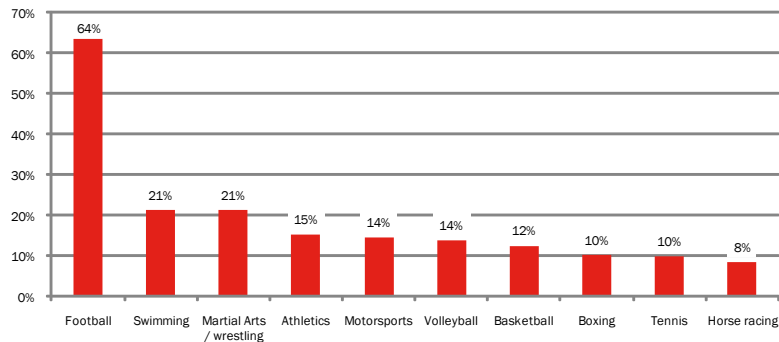
» **Population: 82.1m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$6,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

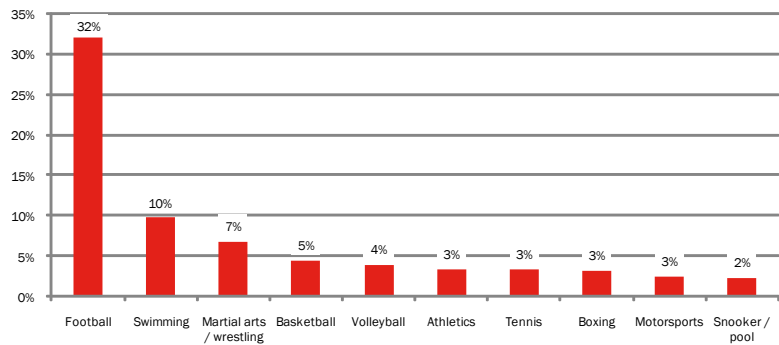
Aside from the universal popularity of football, both in following and participation terms, Egypt is quite different from other North African countries in this study in sporting interest. Martial arts, alongside swimming, is the joint second most popular sport, with more than one in five people following on a regular basis. Egypt also has the joint highest participation rate in martial arts out of all the 16 countries in this study with 7% of people participating regularly, making it the third most popular participation sport.

Another key difference between Egypt with its very large population of 80m and the remainder of North Africa in this study is the country's considerably higher interest in horse racing: 6% of Egyptians regularly follow the Dubai World Cup and 4% the Grand National. Finally, interest in local football is higher than in the rest of the North Africa region.

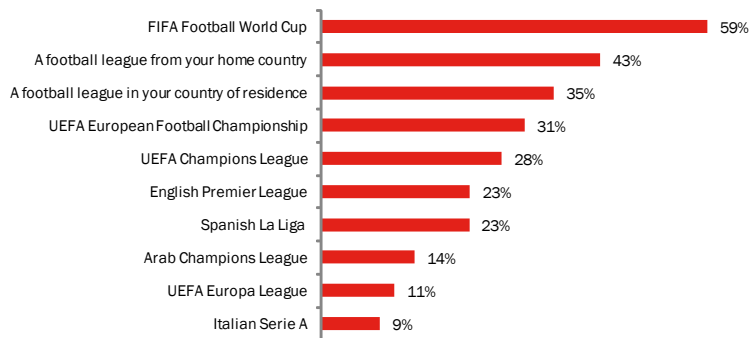
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



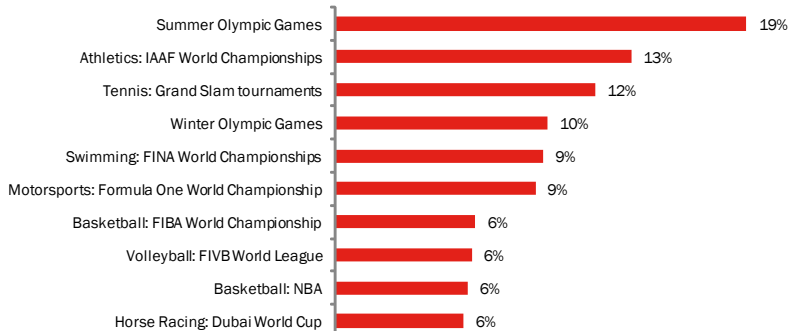
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Egypt (North Africa)

Morocco (North Africa)

» **Population: 32.0m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

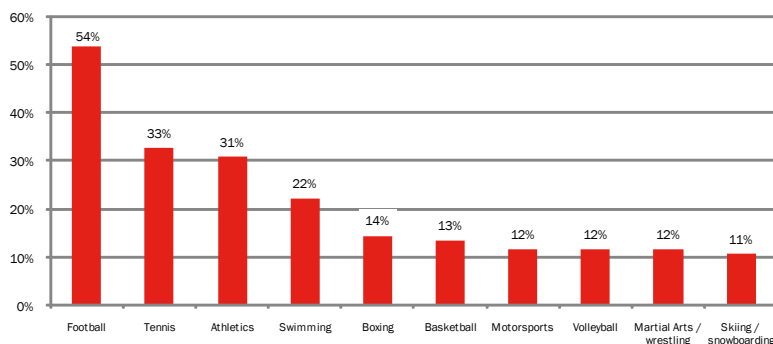
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$5,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

Along with Algeria, Morocco has the highest interest in athletics with one in three people following the IAAF World Championships. However, it is in its interest in tennis where Morocco stands out, both within the region of North Africa and across all countries in this study: 29% of Moroccans regularly follow the Grand Slams with a very healthy 16% regularly following Masters events.

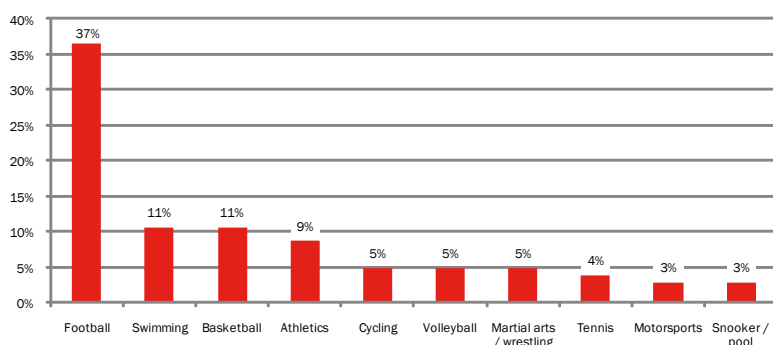
The interest in tennis can no doubt be attributed to three Moroccan players attaining top-30 world rankings since the millennium. However the keen level of spectator interest has not yet translated into high levels of participation with a relatively low participation rate of just 4%. While basketball has a lower following in Morocco compared to other North African countries, 11% of people play regularly, the highest participation levels of any country in this study.

Morocco's failure to qualify for the 2010 World Cup may have dented the level of interest in following domestic football – and most football events are less popular here than in Algeria or Tunisia - but it has not adversely impacted the participation rate, or the interest in Spain's La Liga, followed regularly by 42% of respondents.

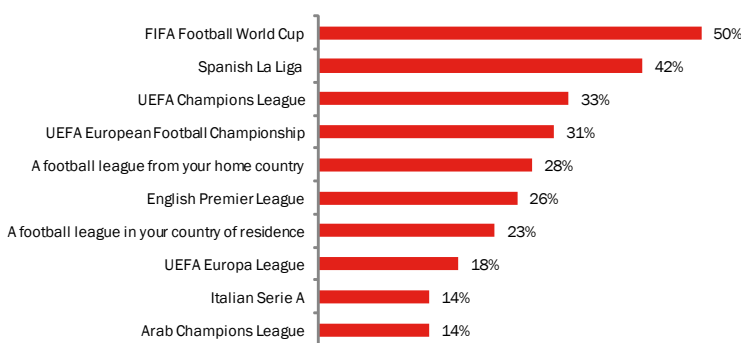
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



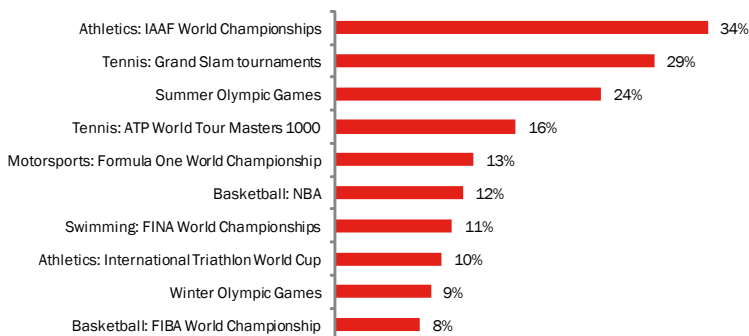
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Morocco (North Africa)

Tunisia (North Africa)

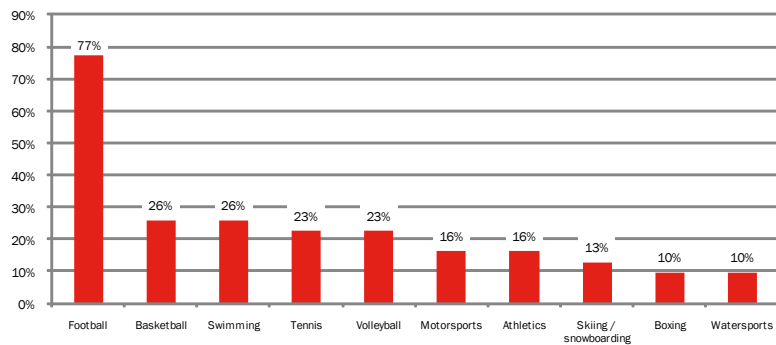
» **Population: 10.6m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$9,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

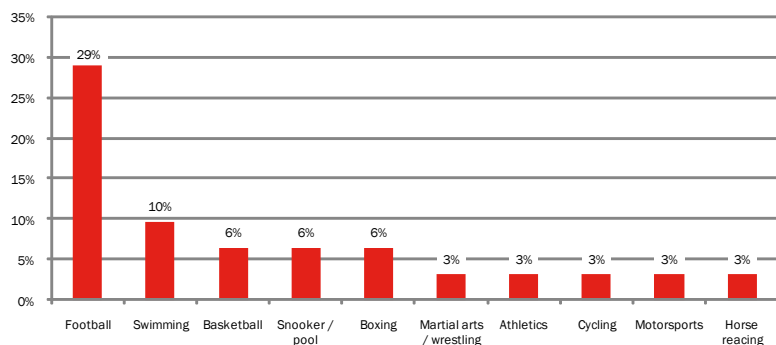
Tunisians are mad about sports – and not just those that would be expected in this region. Seventy seven percent of people regularly follow football, 42% follow the Olympic Games and 26% follow Grand Slam tennis events, all of which may be unsurprising. However, with a following of 19% of Tunisians, FIVB World League Volleyball has the highest following of any country in this study. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its location and Tunisia’s close links with France, the Tour de France has a significant following of 13%; however, with 13% regularly following skiing/snowboarding and 10% following water sports the supremacy of traditional sports in Tunisia may not be so dominant in the future.

Unlike their Algerian neighbours however, Tunisians are less passionate about participating in sport. Unsurprisingly football is the most popular, however both boxing and snooker/pool are amongst the top five sports in Tunisia, interests not shared with its neighbours.

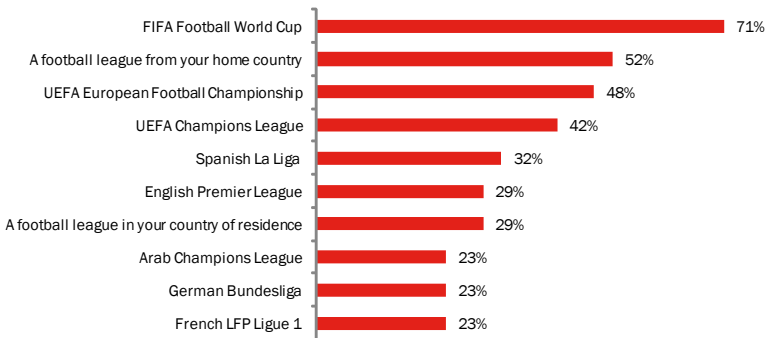
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



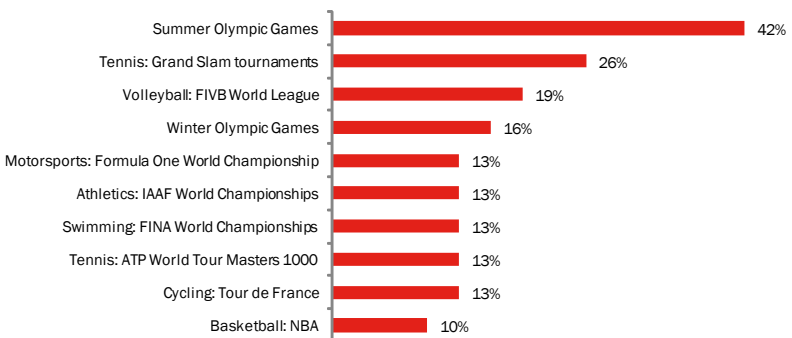
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Tunisia (North Africa)

Iraq (Levant)

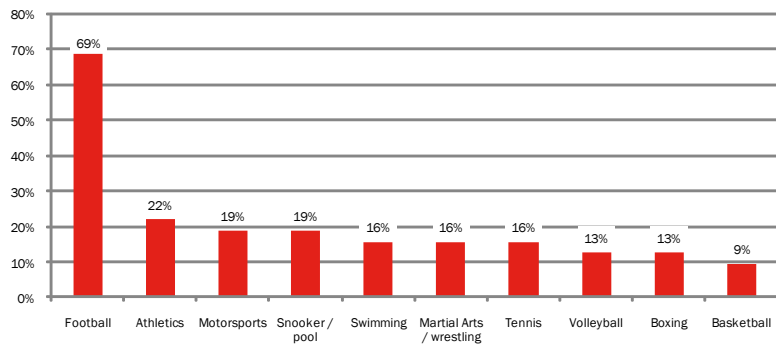
» **Population: 30.40m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$3,500**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

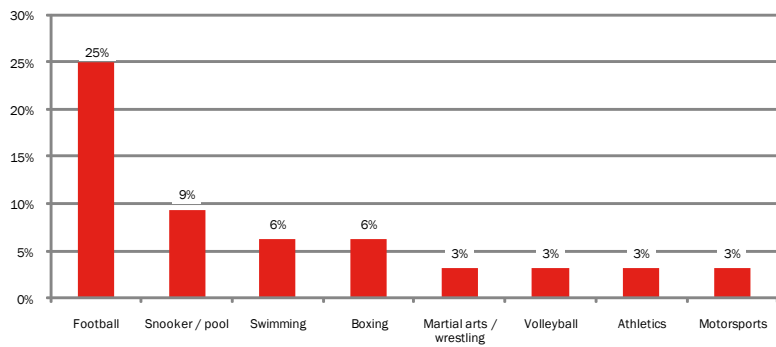
Iraq has by far the largest football following in the Levant region, with 63% regularly following the AFC Asian Cup, 50% regularly following the Gulf Cup of Nations and 28% the Arab Champions League. However it is snooker that looks set to be the largest growth sport. Of all 16 countries in the study, snooker/pool is followed most avidly in Iraq, which, with 31m inhabitants, is the largest of the Levant countries in this study. 19% of Iraqis follow snooker/pool regularly on TV or in the media with 13% of people regularly following the World Championship. Participation levels in the sport are high across the Levant region, strongly driven by Iraq where 9% of people participate regularly. With the current global expansion plans for snooker put in place by Barry Hearn, the sport is well placed to become the second most popular sport in Iraq behind football.

Away from football and snooker, The Olympics is keenly followed in Iraq with 34% and 22% respectively following the Summer and Winter Olympics, in both cases significantly higher than other countries in the Levant region. Six percent of respondents regularly participate in boxing which is the joint highest participation rate of any country in the study.

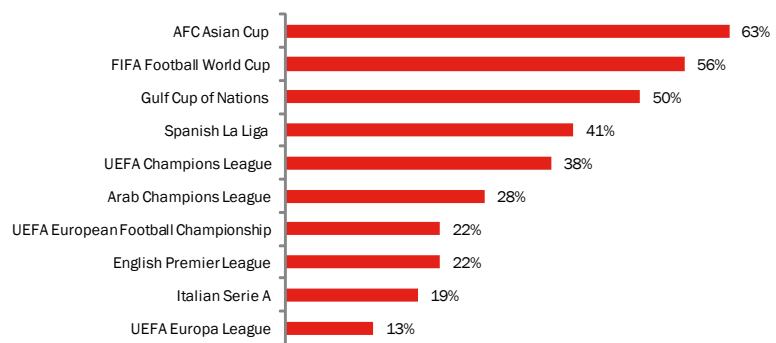
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



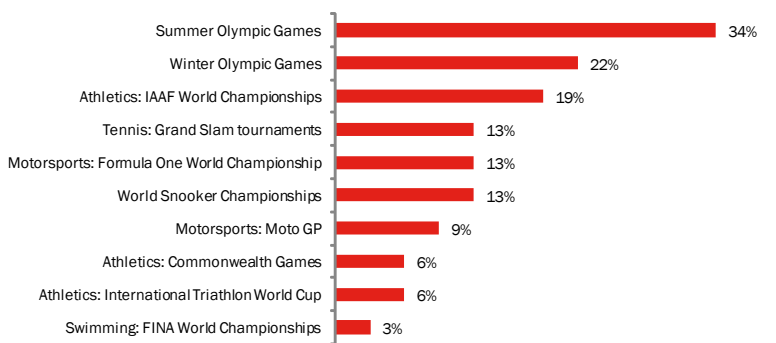
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Iraq (Levant)

Jordan (Levant)

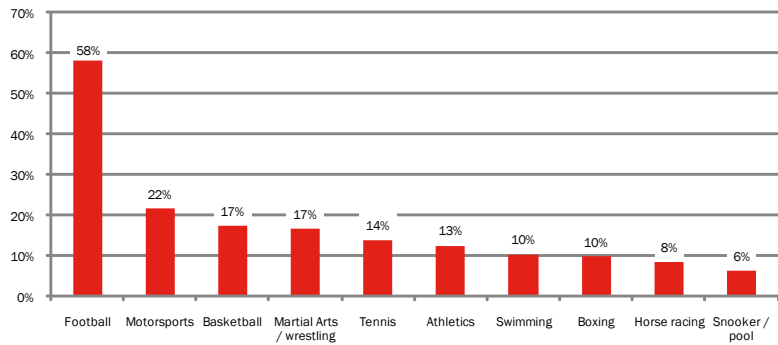
» **Population: 6.5m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$6,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

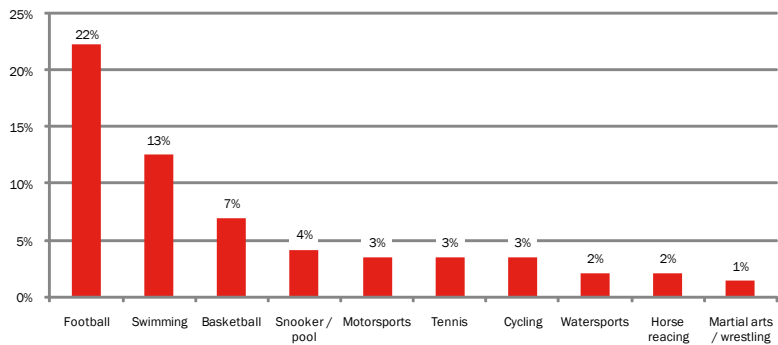
Motorsports is among the three most followed sports in every Levant region country and it is no less popular in Jordan, where 22% of people regularly follow on TV or in the media during the season. The F1 World Championship has the second highest following (15%) in the region. Seven percent follow Moto GP and, with 6%, the Superbike World Championship has its highest following here.

Aside from motorsports, both tennis Grand Slam events and ATP World Tour Masters 1000 events are followed more strongly in Jordan than anywhere else in the Levant region. Similarly to the rest of the Levant region, basketball is widely followed and snooker / pool is also popular.

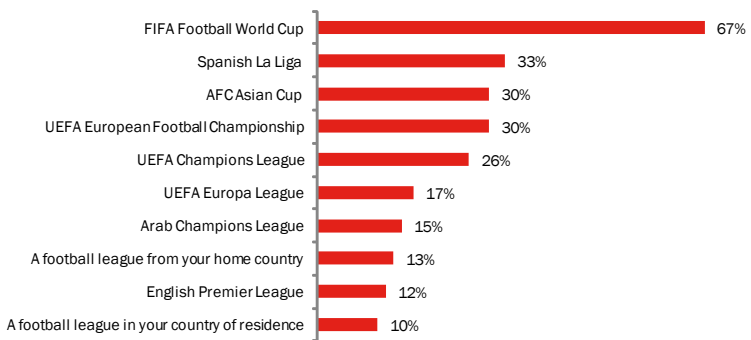
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



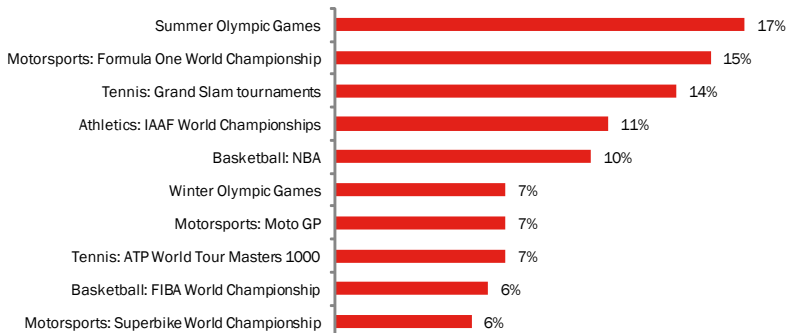
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Jordan (Levant)

Lebanon (Levant)

» **Population: 4.1m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

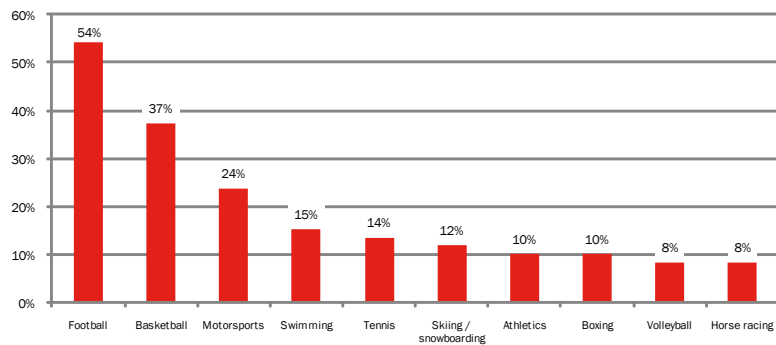
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$15,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

Lebanon has by far the highest basketball following of any country in the study with following levels comparable to the USA. With more than one in three people regularly following the sport on TV or in the media, it is possible basketball may one day rival football as the most followed sport in Lebanon. Twenty four percent of respondents regularly follow the NBA with 14% following the FIBA World Championship. Lebanon's qualification for the last three championships has undoubtedly enhanced the event's popularity.

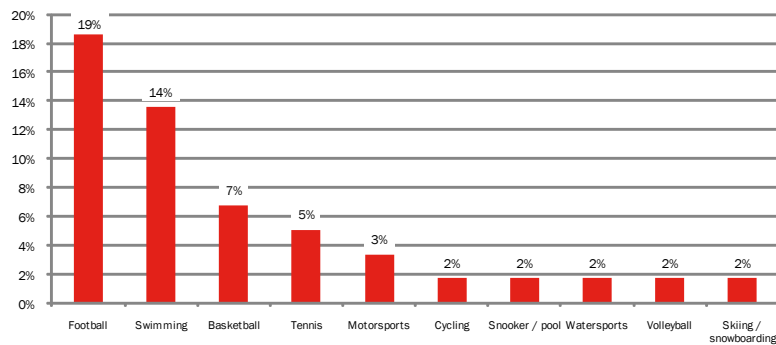
Sandwiched between the two, in terms of spectator interest, is the F1 World Championship which, with 22% regularly following it, makes Lebanon the most engaged country in the study with this event. Whilst 24% of people regularly follow motorsports, it is the F1 World Championship that is the driving force behind their interest. Only 5% regularly follow Moto GP and 3% the Superbike World Championship.

In line with the rest of the Levant region, swimming is the second most popular participation sport in Lebanon. With one in seven people swimming regularly, participation rates are almost as high as in football in Lebanon.

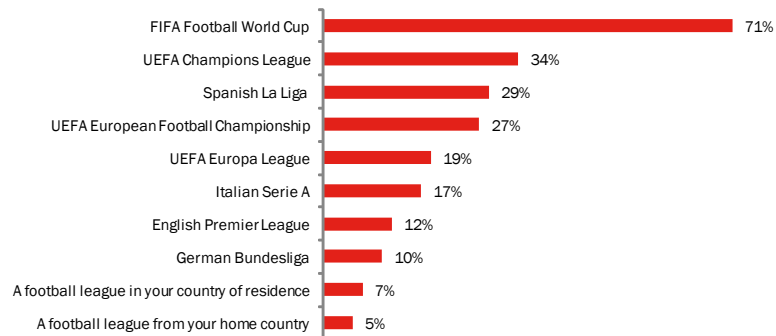
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



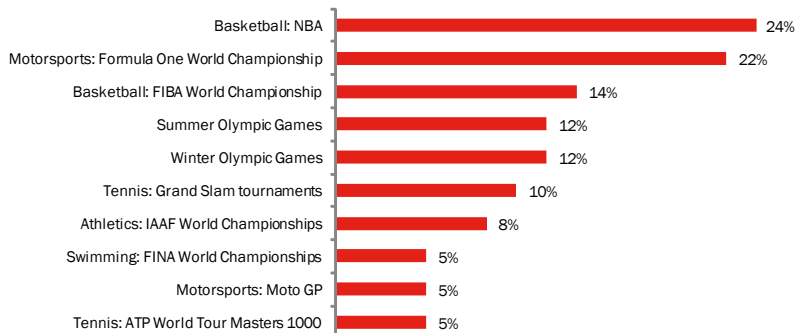
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Lebanon (Levant)

Palestine (Levant)

» **Population: 4.0m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

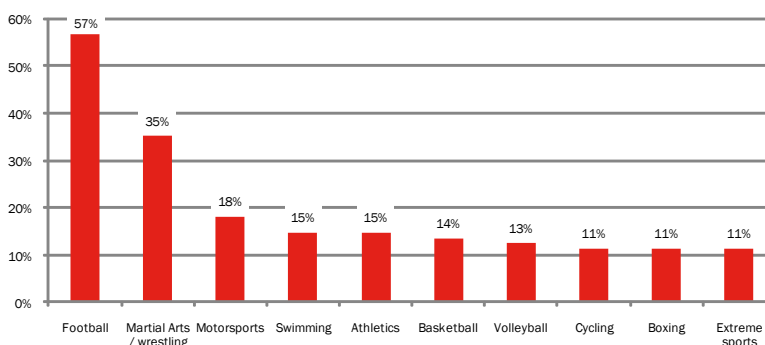
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$1,125**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

People in Palestine have a comparatively low level of interest in following ball sports. Martial arts is the second most followed sport with more than one in three people regularly following it in the media or on TV. Unsurprisingly there is a similarly high level of interest in motorsports as in the rest of the Levant region, however in Palestine it is Moto GP that is followed most (11%) while the F1 World Championship has a comparatively low following for the region of 9%. Equally noteworthy is the interest in Palestine in cycling which is unprecedented for the region: 5% regularly follow the Tour de France while 6% regularly cycle, making it the fourth highest participation sport in Palestine.

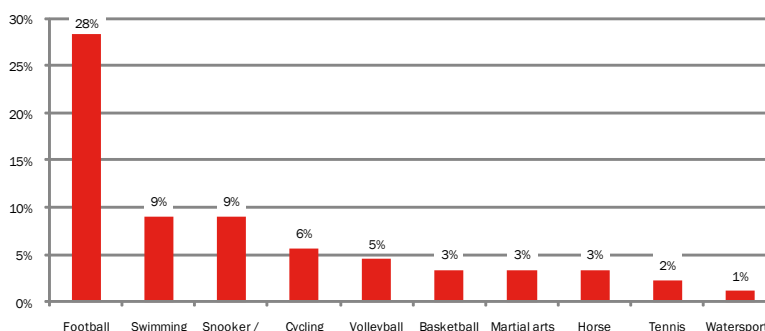
While martial arts has the highest following of all countries, it is not a strong participation sport in Palestine. Alongside swimming, the highest level of participation, behind football, is snooker/pool. However, only 1% regularly watch the Snooker World Championships.

Finally, Palestine is the only country in this study where the Rugby Union World Cup features in the top 10 sporting events followed outside football.

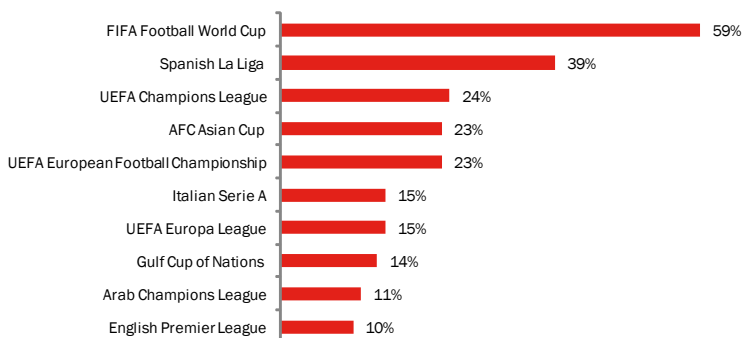
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



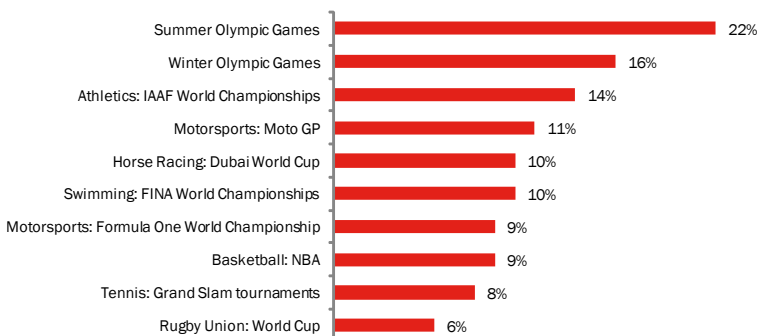
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Palestine (Levant)

Syria (Levant)

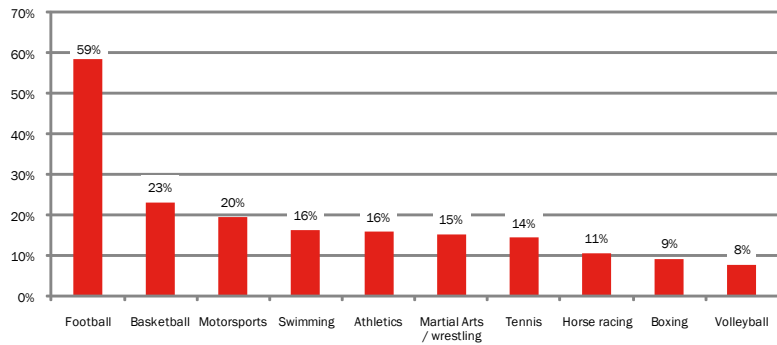
» **Population: 22.5m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$5,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

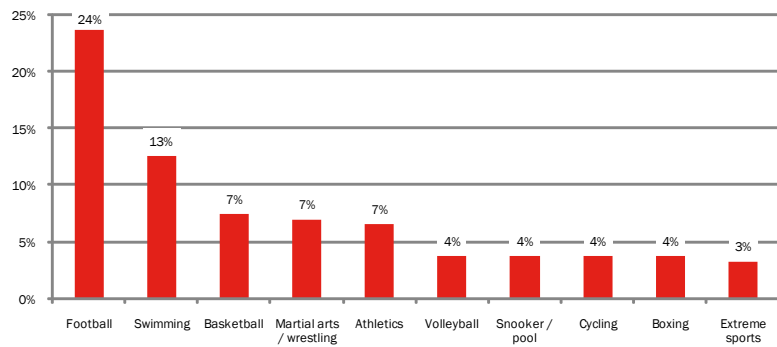
In line with the rest of the Levant region, basketball and motorsports are the most followed sports in Syria after football. 10% of people follow NBA regularly and, if Syria were to join Lebanon in regularly qualifying for the FIBA World Championship, the 6% following for this tournament could increase significantly. As could be expected for this region, the most popular sporting event of the year in Syria outside of football is the F1 World Championship with one in seven people regularly following it. The AFC Asian Cup is the second most popular football event with more than one in three people regularly following it.

In addition to basketball and swimming, athletics is both widely participated in and followed in Syria, compared to other countries in the Levant region.

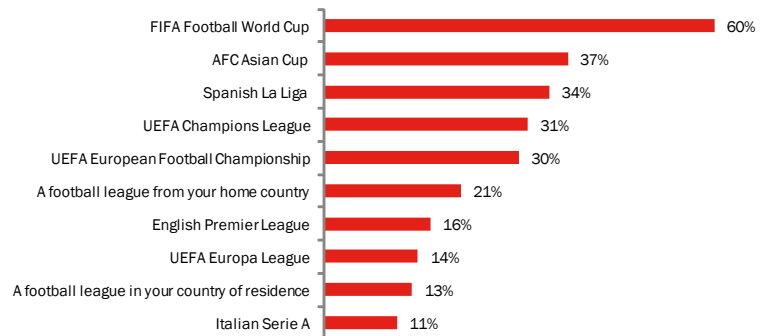
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



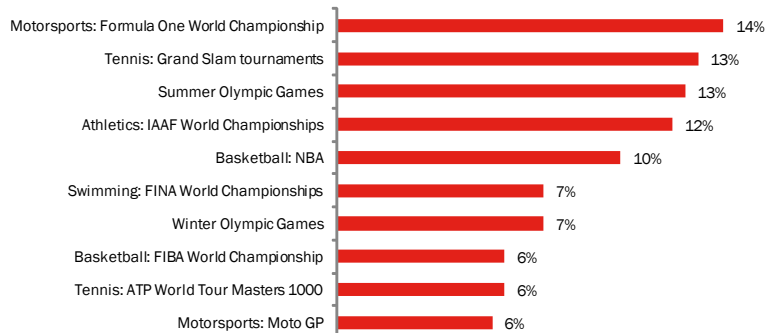
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Bahrain (GCC)

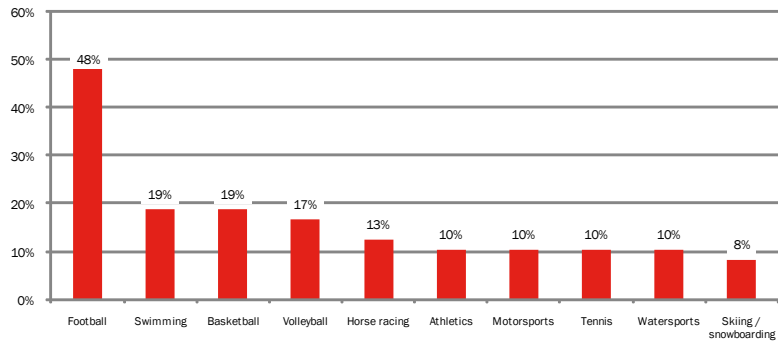
» **Population: 1.2m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$27,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

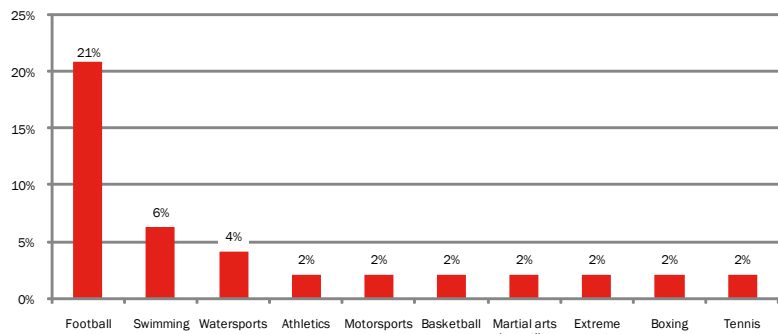
People in Bahrain are much keener on following sports than participating in them. No one sport looks set to rival football as the most followed sport, however basketball is more popular here than in any other country in the GCC region with one in five people following it on a regular basis. While horse racing is also popular across the GCC region it is no more popular than in Bahrain where 6% of people regularly follow the Dubai World Cup.

Unlike the rest of the region, watersports and skiing/snowboarding are followed here with 10% and 8% respectively. The Powerboating F1 World Championship is followed more in Bahrain than in any other country in this study.

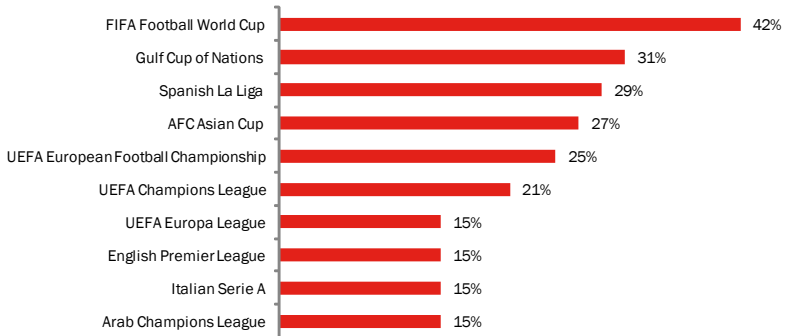
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



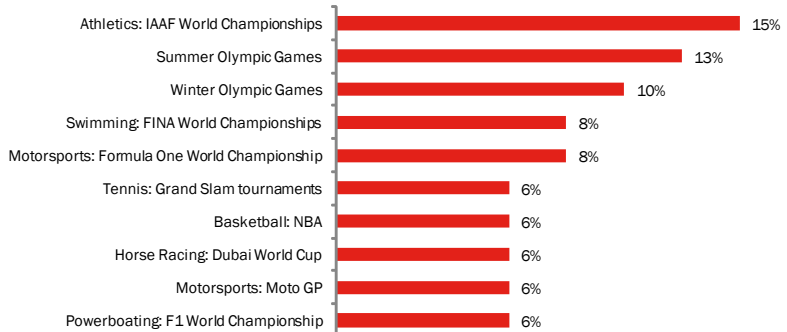
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Bahrain (GCC)

Kuwait (GCC)

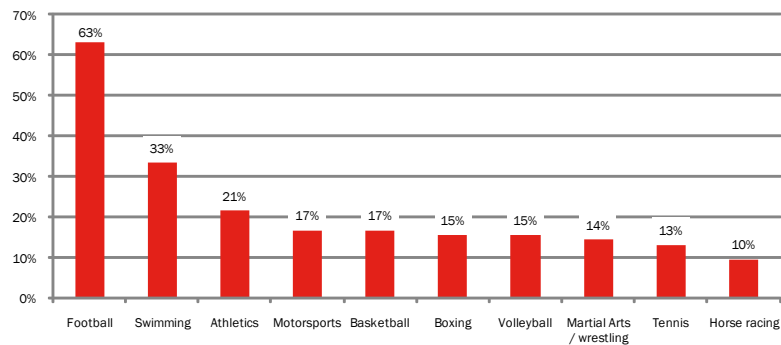
» **Population: 2.6m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$38,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

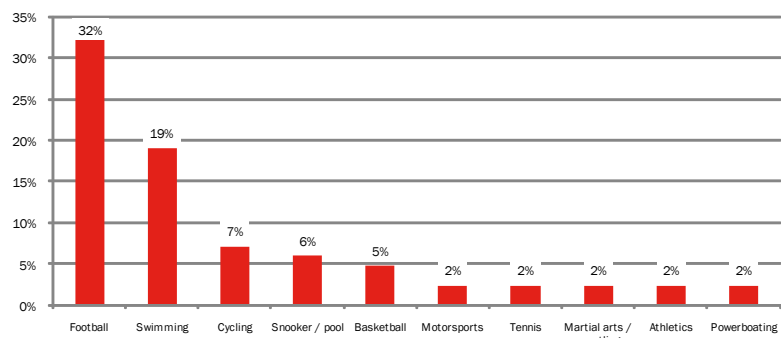
Football has high levels of participation and following, similar to most other countries in this report. Swimming is clearly the second sport of Kuwait with one in five people participate regularly, more than double the rate of its nearest competitor in the region, Saudi Arabia. However, Kuwaitis are even more passionate about following swimming: one in three people follow the sport regularly with one in six specifically following the FINA World Championships.

Behind swimming and football, athletics is the third most followed sport. With 21% regularly following, it is more than twice as popular as in any of the other GCC region countries. The level of interest in the Summer Olympic Games is also high with 25% of people regularly following the event.

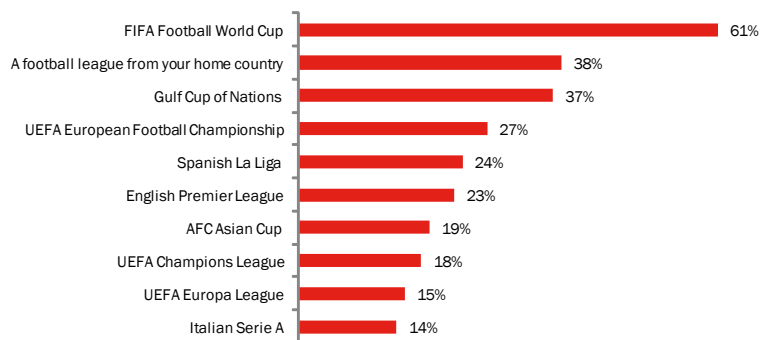
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



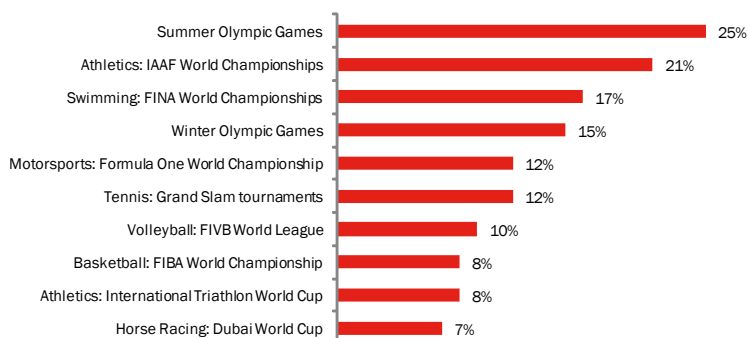
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Oman (GCC)

» **Population: 3.0m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

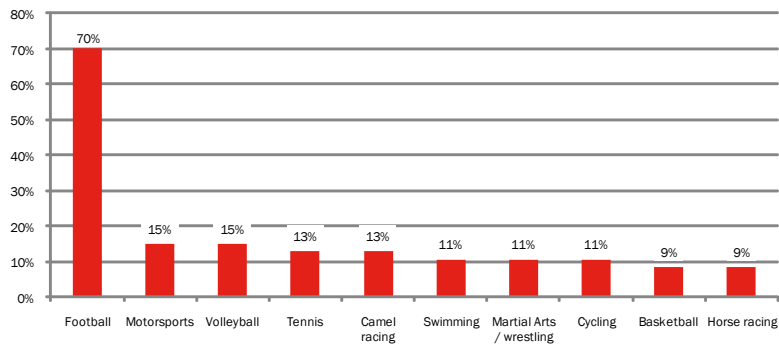
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$25,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

Football is by a clear distance the most popular spectator and participation sport in Oman, its thriving interest undoubtedly boosted by the Gulf Cup of Nations which Oman hosted and won for the first time in 2009, beating Saudi Arabia in the final. No other sport comes close in rivalling football as a spectator sport. Aside from the World Cup, people in Oman are also much more likely to follow their local leagues than the large European leagues.

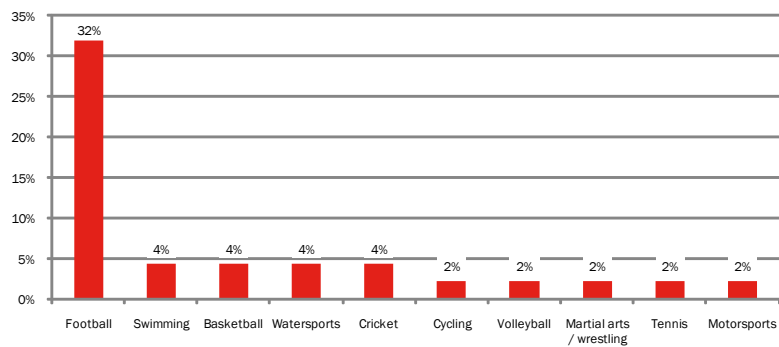
Thirteen percent of people regularly follow camel racing, a sport that does not appear in the top 10 in any other country. The volleyball FIVB league is also popular with a 9% following. As the joint highest interest level of any country in this study, 11% of people regularly follow cycling in Oman. However the interest does not extend to the Tour de France, which only 2% regularly follow.

Participation levels in sports other than football are almost non-existent.

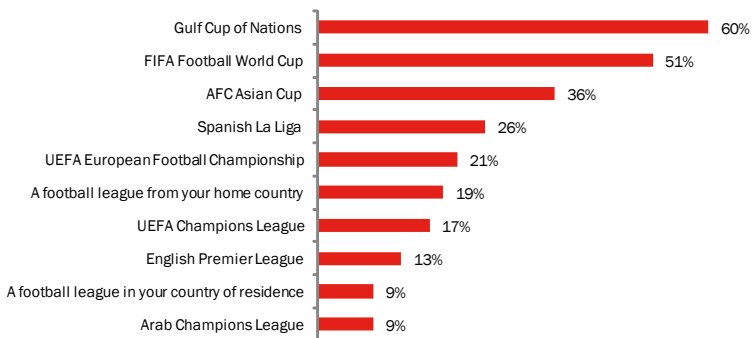
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



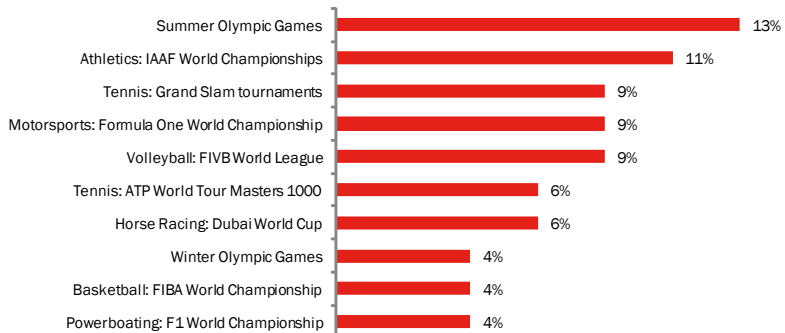
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Qatar (GCC)

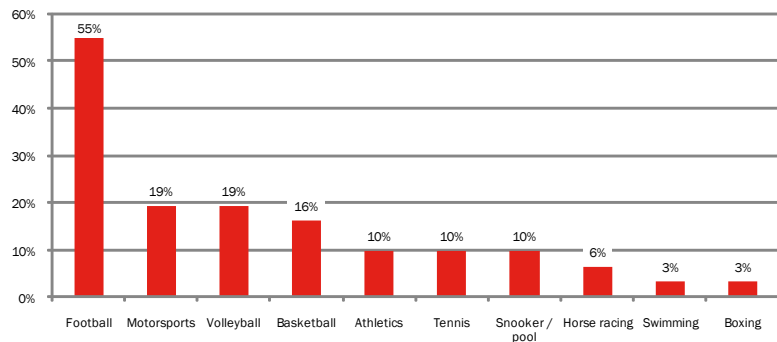
» **Population: 0.8m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$88,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

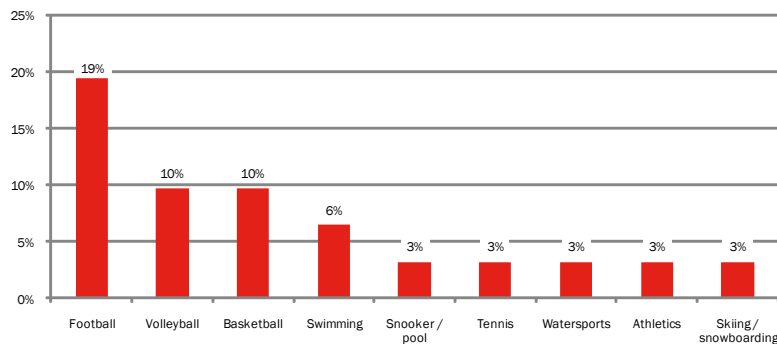
Despite being the most followed sport in Qatar, the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar does not seem to have boosted interest or participation levels in football when compared to other countries in the region. Local football is quite popular but overseas football leagues are not. As the richest country in this study, motorsports generate the highest level of interest in the region, with one in five Qataris following regularly. Moto GP is as popular as F1 which is undoubtedly due to the Qatar GP becoming a regular part of the Moto GP calendar.

However, the second sport of Qatar is volleyball which is played regularly by 10% of the population, the highest participation rate for volleyball in this study. People in Qatar are equally keen on following volleyball with 10% regularly following the FIVB World League. Basketball is also keenly followed and again, 10% of respondents play regularly.

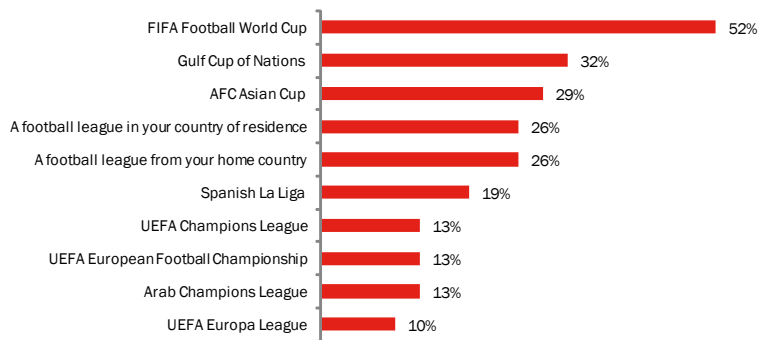
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



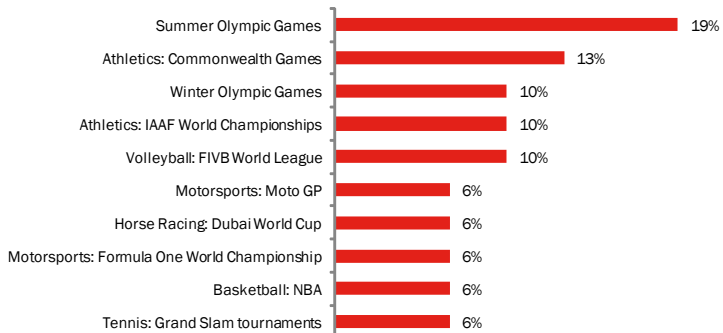
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Saudi Arabia (GCC)

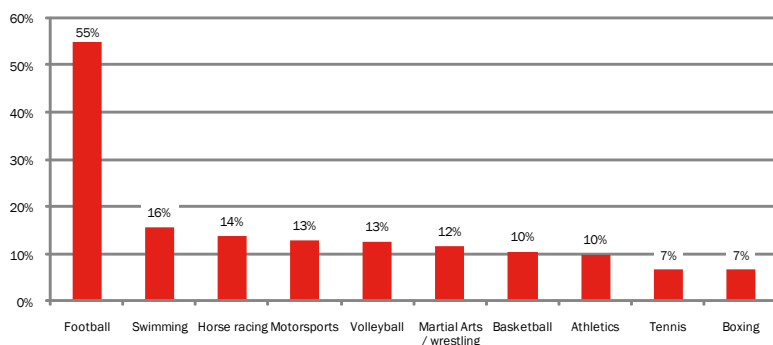
» **Population: 26.1m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$24,000**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

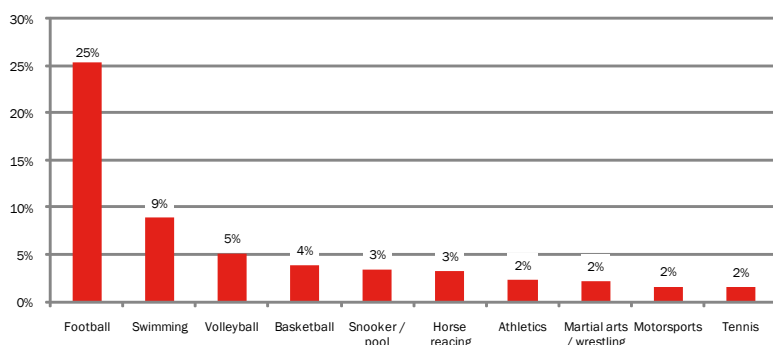
Whilst horse racing is followed more across the GCC region countries than any others surveyed, it is most followed in Saudi Arabia, which has the largest population of the GCC countries. The third most popular sporting event here outside of football is the Dubai World Cup which is followed regularly by 8% of the population. This interest also extends across global borders with 5% regularly following the Grand National which is presumably due to Saudi ownership of high class race horses.

Football is followed regularly but people are much more likely to watch local and regional football events than the European leagues. Relatively low interest in the World Cup for this region may well be a reflection on the fact that Saudi Arabia did not qualify for World Cup 2010 – the first World Cup the Saudis have missed since 1990.

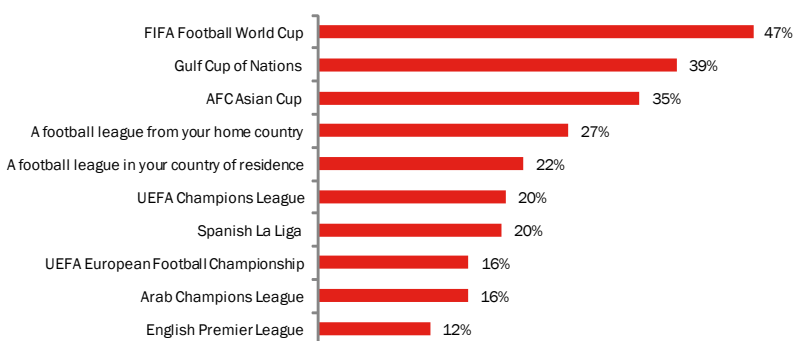
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



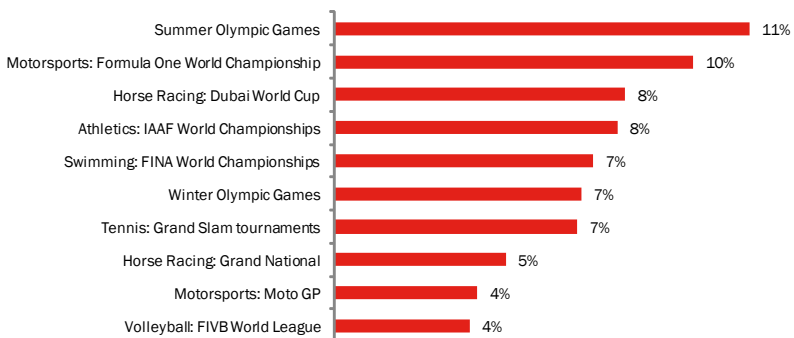
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Saudi Arabia (GCC)

UAE (GCC)

» **Population: 5.1m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

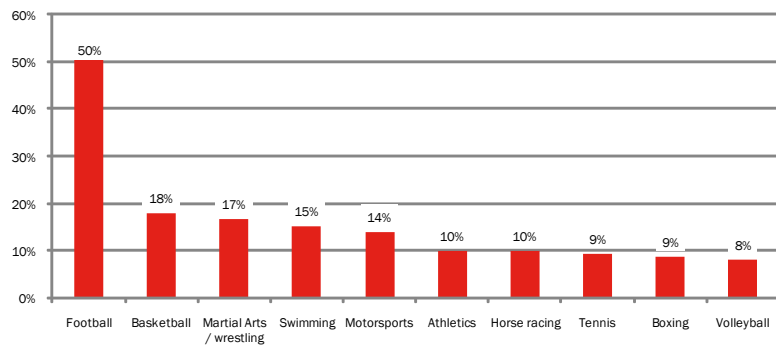
» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$36,175**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

Along with Yemen, within the GCC region martial arts/wrestling is most popular in the UAE. Basketball is the second most followed sport in UAE with 18% following regularly. There are equal levels of interest in FIBA and NBA with both attracting a regular following of 7%.

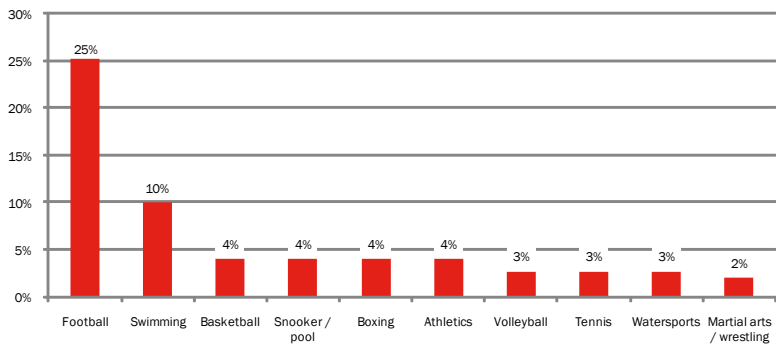
The Formula One World Championship is the most popular sporting event outside football in the UAE with 15% regularly watching. However, given general interest levels in motorsports are no higher than those in neighbouring countries, it is clear that it is the prestige of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix that is driving the popularity of the Formula One World Championship.

Interest levels in overseas football leagues are low while similarly to most other GCC countries, participation levels in sport are low.

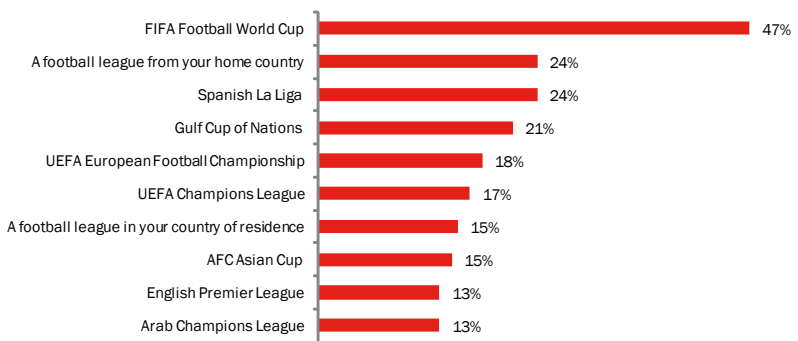
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



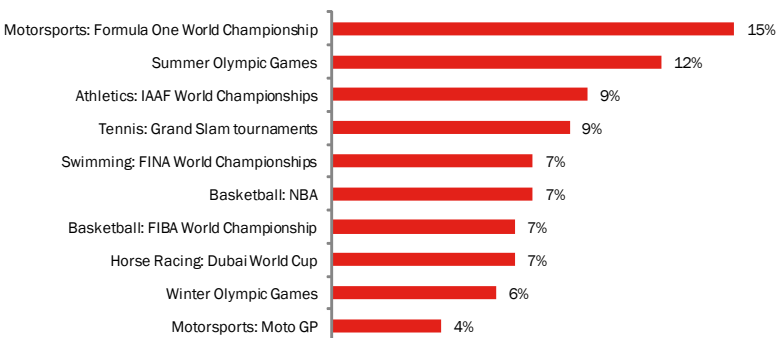
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



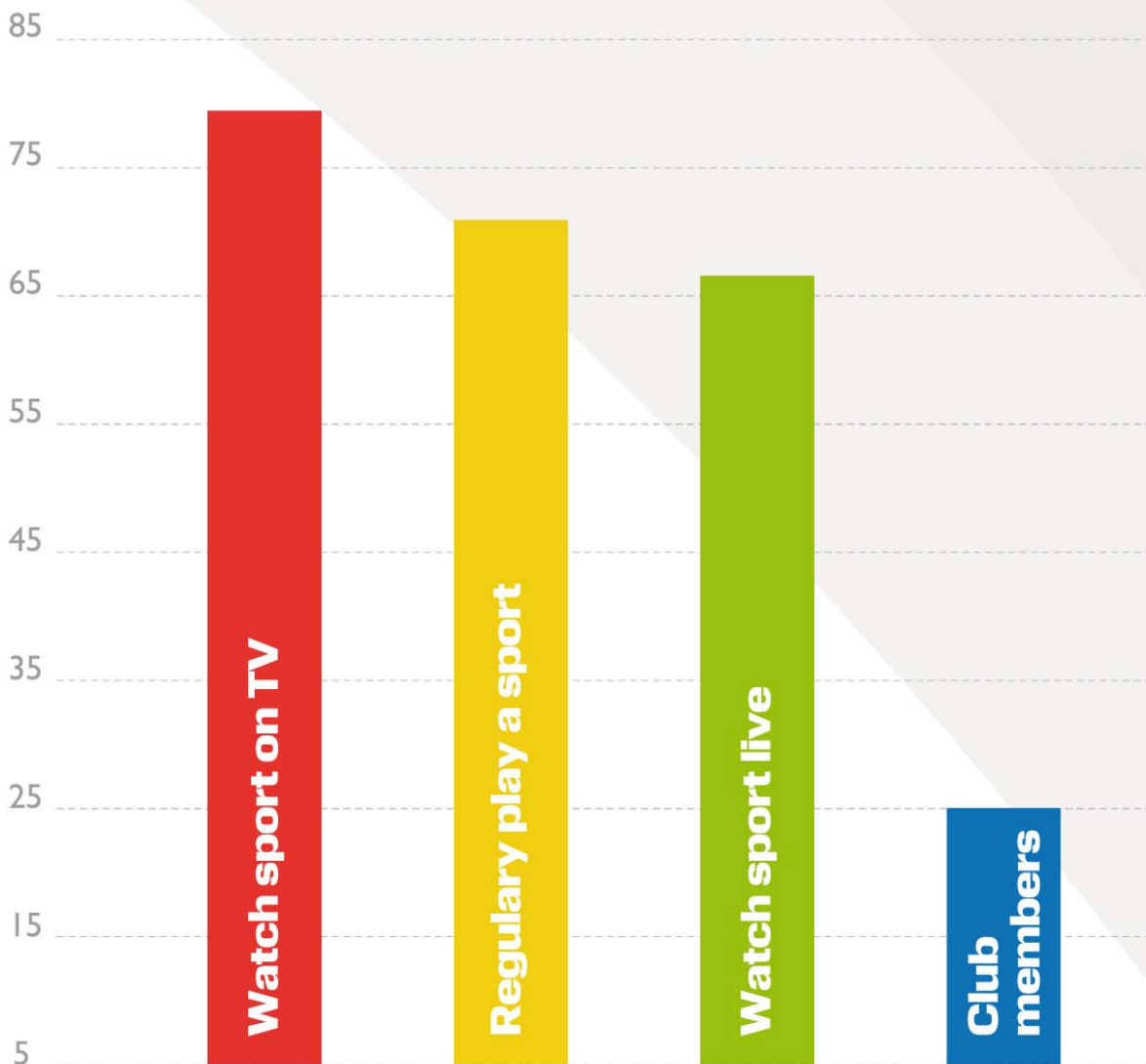
Source: YouGov

United Arab Emirates (GCC)

The National

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- 80% of our readers follow sport on TV
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- 25% of our readers hold a membership at a recreational club (health/fitness, sailing or golf)

Source: YouGov Siraj December 2010: The National Reader Profiling Study conducted amongst readers of The National.

Yemen (GCC)

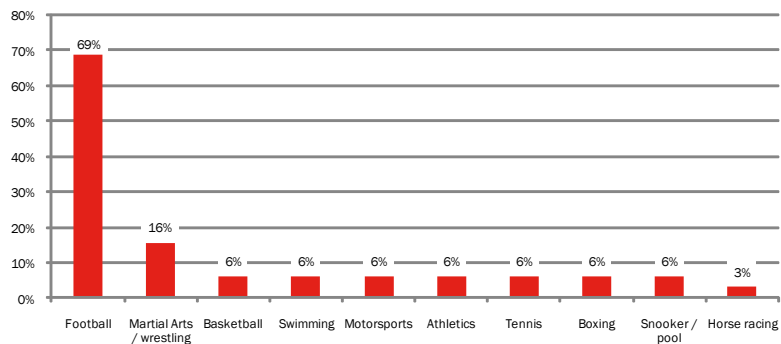
» **Population: 24.1m**
(Source: US Census Bureau, 2011)

» **GDP per capita (PPP): \$2,500**
(Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011)

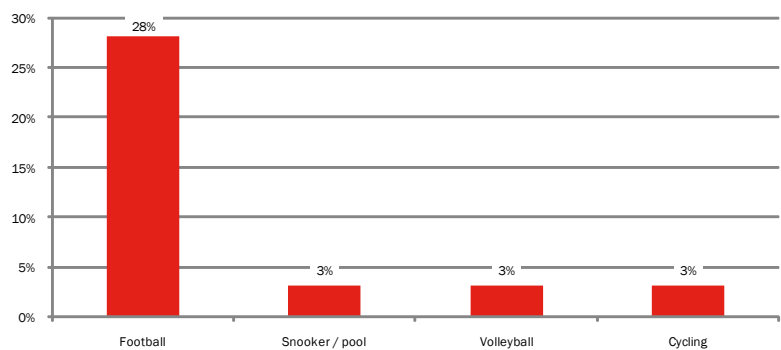
Yemen is the second poorest country in this study, particularly when compared to the generally smaller, very wealthy GCC countries it has been summarised with in this report. Perhaps unsurprisingly football dominates the sporting market both in terms of following and participation. Spanish La Liga is incredibly popular in Yemen with nearly one in two people following the league regularly, more than twice the interest in its nearest European competitor, the Premier League. Football tournaments local to the region are also popular. Martial arts is the second most popular spectator sport, but at 16% compared to football's 69% attracts less than a quarter of the interest.

Yemen has the lowest participation levels of any country in this study with football being the only sport with any significant level of participation at 28%.

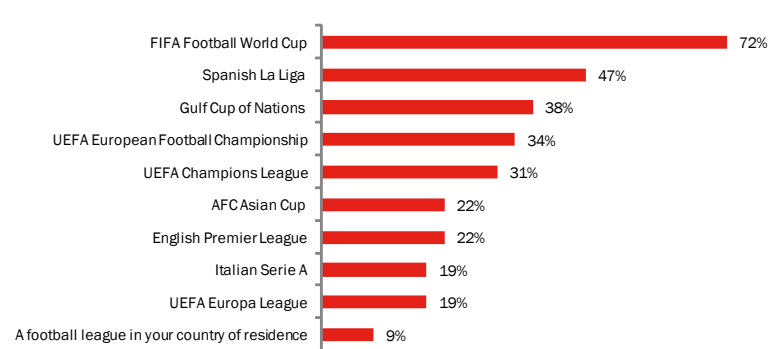
Top 10 sports followed regularly on TV or in the media



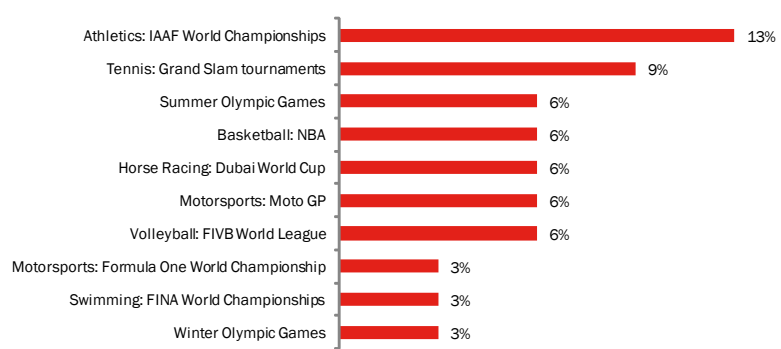
Top 10 sports participated in regularly



Top 10 football events most regularly followed



Top 10 sporting events most regularly followed



Source: YouGov

Yemen (GCC)

*Note: whilst Yemen is not officially a member of the GCC, throughout the report it will be referred to as a GCC country on account of its cultural and social similarities to the rest of the region, as well as its geographic location

Contact Details

About SMG/YouGov

SMG Insight and YouGov deliver leading edge Business to Business and Business to Consumer research and consulting solutions for world-leading sports governing bodies, sponsors and sports investors in order to meet their strategic and business objectives. Through partnership our new generation sports research company, offers a combination of thought leadership, strategic insight and comprehensive data analysis that enables our global clients to achieve a higher return on investment from sports sponsorship, investment and marketing.

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YouGov Siraj is a full-service market research company, specializing in online polling. YouGov Siraj has the region's largest pure research panel of 250,000+ members, who respond to surveys. The company has particularly strong analytical skills, with research specialists who have many years regional experience.

YouGov Siraj acts as a research consultancy for clients on research projects of any size, outsourcing face-to-face and telephone, ensuring the very best service the region can offer. It is a subsidiary company of YouGov Plc in the UK and applies the same online methodology, which has proven levels of accuracy.

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