

Formula 1 Named America's Fastest-Growing Sport as 20 Years of Data Reveals Major Shift in Fan Interest

New research from Lucky Rebel reveals how America's sports preferences have evolved over the past two decades. with Formula 1 and basketball gaining momentum.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- America's sports landscape is changing faster than many people realize.

[Lucky Rebel](#) analyzed 20 years of data across all 50 U.S. states to identify which sports have experienced the greatest growth in popularity and which have struggled to maintain their position. The findings reveal a growing appetite for emerging sports, particularly among younger audiences, and highlight a more diverse sports future than ever before.

Key Findings

- Formula 1 is the fastest-growing sport in the U.S., increasing in popularity by 258% over the past 20 years.
- Basketball has grown by nearly 130%, making it one of the most consistently growing sports nationwide.
- American football remains the most popular sport overall, growth is slowing across many states.
- Golf has seen one of the steepest declines, falling by more than 70% in states including Georgia and Texas.
- Ice hockey is expanding into new markets, recording significant growth in states not traditionally associated with the sport.
- Baseball, boxing, and soccer face increasing competition as fan attention becomes more fragmented.



Formula 1

Formula 1 recorded the strongest growth of any sport analyzed by Lucky Rebel, with interest increasing well beyond states traditionally associated with motorsports.

Some of the largest increases were seen in:

- Alaska (+600%)
- Maine (+400%)
- Vermont (+400%)

The sport's growth has been driven by several factors, including increased visibility in the U.S., the expansion of races in cities such as Las Vegas and Miami, and its ability to attract younger audiences through storytelling, personalities, and digital content.

Basketball Continues to Build Momentum

While Formula 1 topped the rankings for overall growth, basketball stands out for its widespread and consistent popularity gains.

States recording notable increases include:

- Delaware (+228%)
- Alaska (+172%)
- North Dakota (+109%)

Its accessibility, cultural relevance, and global appeal through the NBA have helped basketball continue to grow across a broad range of demographics and regions.

Football Remains King, But Growth Has Slowed

Despite increasing competition, American football remains the dominant sport in the United States.

However, Lucky Rebel's analysis found that growth has become relatively modest in many states, including:

- Alabama (+3%)
- South Carolina (+4%)
- Illinois (+7%)

The findings suggest football remains highly popular, but as a mature market, it is no longer experiencing the rapid growth seen in emerging sports.

Traditional Sports Face New Challenges

Several long-established sports are facing growing pressure as consumer habits evolve.

Golf experienced some of the largest declines in the study:

- Georgia (-76%)
- Texas (-70%)
- Alabama (-70%)

Meanwhile, baseball continues to grapple with changing audience preferences, while boxing showed mixed performance, with strong growth in some states offset by significant declines in others.

A More Competitive Future for U.S. Sports

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup putting North America firmly in the global spotlight, Lucky Rebel's findings highlight just how competitive the U.S. sports market has become. While soccer is enjoying unprecedented visibility, the data shows that sports such as Formula 1 and basketball have delivered far stronger long-term growth among American audiences over the past two decades.

Rather than one or two sports dominating fan attention, audiences are increasingly spreading their interest across a wider range of options. Emerging sports such as Formula 1 are gaining ground, basketball continues to thrive, and regional sports identities are becoming more pronounced.

As viewing habits evolve and younger generations reshape the market, the next era of American sports is likely to be defined by greater competition, more diverse fan interests, and a broader mix of sports competing for attention than ever before.

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