



Summer action Sparks Soccer Boom Across Canada as Lionel Messi Dominates Fan Conversations

Victoria emerges as Canada's most passionate soccer city while nearly eight in 10 Canadians say injuries play a major role in tournament success

ONTARIO, CANADA, July 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Summer action Sparks Soccer Boom Across Canada as Lionel Messi Dominate Fan Conversations Along with Jonathan David and Alphonso Davies

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While Canada's journey in the biggest soccer tournament may have come to an end, Canadians' passion for soccer continues to grow. [New survey data](#) from [Betano](#) reveals the tournament has accelerated soccer's rise across the country, with fans following everything from star players and tactical decisions to injuries, squad depth and transfer values. The findings suggest the current tournament has become more than a global sporting event - it is helping cement soccer as one of Canada's fastest-growing sports.

To better understand soccer fandom in Canada ahead of this year's world tournament, Betano used AskPolly.ai, a social listening tool to capture how Canadians talk about and engage with the sport online. The study analyzed thousands of anonymized conversations among Canadians, examining discussions around favourite players, international stars, injuries, team performance, and tournament expectations across Canada. The results show Lionel Messi as the country's most popular international star, Jonathan David leading as Canada's favourite soccer player, and Victoria emerging as Canada's strongest soccer market, reflecting the growing prominence of soccer within Canada's sporting landscape.

The research also reveals that Canadian fans are engaging with the game in increasingly sophisticated ways. Conversations extend well beyond match results, with supporters closely following player fitness, squad rotation, tactical decisions and transfer values. Nearly four in five Canadians believe injuries play a significant role in determining success at major tournaments, reflecting a growing appreciation for the strategic side of the game.

"This soccer tournament has shown that Canada's connection to soccer extends well beyond the

national team's results," said betting experts at Betano. "Canadians have remained deeply engaged throughout the tournament, following global stars, debating tactics and discussing everything from player fatigue to squad depth. That level of engagement reflects a fan base that is becoming increasingly knowledgeable and passionate. While Canada's campaign has concluded, the tournament has strengthened soccer's place within Canadian sport and created momentum that is likely to continue long after the final whistle."

Key findings include:

- Lionel Messi is the most popular international player among Canadians, resonating with 35.5 per cent of fans.
- Victoria, B.C., ranks as Canada's strongest soccer market, posting a net favourability score of 69.9 per cent.
- Nearly four in five Canadians (78.5 per cent) believe injuries have a significant impact on tournament performance.
- Player fatigue emerged as the leading injury-related concern among Canadian soccer fans during the biggest soccer tournament.
- Canadian fans increasingly recognize the importance of every position on the pitch, with conversations extending beyond star forwards to include defenders, midfielders and goalkeepers who influence match outcomes.
- Germany and Spain are viewed by Canadians as the nation's best equipped to manage injuries and squad rotation during major tournaments.
- Jonathan David is Canada's most popular soccer player, earning support from 27.7 per cent of Canadians.
- Alphonso Davies remains one of Canada's most influential soccer figures, continuing to drive fan engagement throughout the tournament.

Canadian fans are evaluating players not only on popularity and performance, but also on leadership, consistency, fitness and their ability to influence results during the world's biggest competitions. At the local level, soccer enthusiasm is flourishing well beyond Canada's largest metropolitan centres. Victoria's position as the country's leading soccer market underscores the strength of grassroots participation and community engagement, while Vancouver and Toronto continue to rank among Canada's most active soccer hubs.

Although Canada's tournament has concluded, the conversations surrounding soccer continue to grow. From grassroots participation to international competition, Canadians are engaging with the sport more deeply than ever before, suggesting this tournament's biggest legacy may be the lasting enthusiasm it has inspired. As the tournament continues, Betano's findings point to a fan base that is larger, more engaged and increasingly knowledgeable than ever before.

Methodology

This research was conducted using AskPolly.ai, an AI-powered social listening and sentiment analysis platform. The study analyzed thousands of anonymized online conversations from Canadians discussing soccer for the period of 01 July 2025 – 31 March 2026. By examining how

Canadians talk about and engage with the sport across digital platforms, the analysis provides insight into the trends, attitudes, and discussions shaping soccer in Canada today.

*For Ontario, Betano is operating under a licence issued by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO). To be eligible to play, players must be over 19 years of age and physically present in Ontario. Players are encouraged to play responsibly.

About Betano

Betano is the premium online sports betting and gaming brand of Kaizen Gaming, one of the biggest GameTech companies in the world. With a focus on Technology and Innovation, Betano aims to continuously evolve the iGaming experience it offers to millions of customers around the world and entertain them in a responsible manner.

Betano has an established presence across numerous markets in Europe, the Americas and Africa, while it is also renowned for its major sports partnerships. Betano has been recognised as a leading player in the global sports betting and gaming market, having received several industry awards, including 2024 & 2025 "Operator of the Year" in both the EGR Operator Awards and the SBC Awards.

Betano offers more than 6000 games, live streaming, and a global first AI generated Trivia Live show among many others.

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