

New Study Identifies Canada's Most Intense Sports Rivalries, Led by CF Montréal in MLS and Roughriders-Argonauts

A new study by Betano ranks the most intense rivalries across six major leagues and Canadian clubs punch well above their weight

ONTARIO, CANADA, July 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study by sports betting platform [Betano](#) found that Canadian teams are involved in some of North America's most intense professional sports rivalries, with CF Montréal in Major League Soccer's top-ranked rivalry, the Battle of Alberta among the NHL's 10 fiercest matchups, and the Roughriders-Argonauts rivalry topping the Canadian League.

The study evaluated rivalries across the Canadian League, NHL, MLS, MLB and NBA using measures of on-field intensity, including penalties, fouls, turnovers, close-game frequency and physical confrontations. Each matchup was assigned a composite rivalry score out of 100.

"Few countries embrace sport quite like Canada. Across the country, fans grow up with these rivalries, pass them down through generations and wear them as a badge of pride," said betting experts at Betano. "The data confirms what fans have always known: when Canadian teams are involved, the passion, intensity and stakes are among the highest in North American sport."

Key highlights:

Canadian League

Roughriders vs. Argonauts tops the Canadian League index with a score of 82.4, driven by the highest combined penalties per game and 6 of 9 games decided by 8 points or fewer.

The RedBlacks appear in two of the CFL's top three rivalry slots, making Ottawa the league's most contested franchise.

The Roughriders feature in three of the top six rivalries, cementing their status as the league's most rivalrous team.

NHL

Calgary Flames vs. Edmonton Oilers (Battle of Alberta) ranks #9 in the NHL with a score of 74.8; 22 of 23 head-to-head games were classified as fighting or rough matches, the highest share of

any all-Canadian rivalry.

Toronto is the most contested Canadian city in the NHL: the Maple Leafs appear in two top-ten matchups, vs. Tampa Bay Lightning (#4, 78.1) and vs. Boston Bruins (#6, 77.5).

Florida Panthers vs. Ottawa Senators is the third most intense rivalry in the NHL overall (78.6), the highest-ranked matchup involving a Canadian home team.

196 of roughly 496 NHL rivalry pairs involve at least one Canadian franchise.

MLS

CF Montréal vs. Chicago Fire is the #1 rivalry in MLS with a score of 81.5, the only Canada-involved matchup to top a major league's index.

CF Montréal appears in five of the top 57 MLS rivalry matchups, more than any other Canadian club, ranking #7 against Orlando City SC (70.7).

Seattle Sounders vs. Vancouver Whitecaps (#20, 56.9) is the fiercest Pacific Northwest cross-border rivalry in MLS.

NBA & MLB

Philadelphia 76ers vs. Toronto Raptors is the top Canada-involved NBA rivalry (#36, 54.5), driven by fouls per game and close contest frequency.

Los Angeles Angels vs. Toronto Blue Jays is Canada's fiercest MLB matchup, scoring highest among Blue Jays rivalries on close-game share and strikeout differential.

Across every league studied, Canadian clubs and their rivals consistently produce some of the most physically intense, tightly contested, and emotionally charged matchups in professional sport.

Methodology

This study ranked rivalry intensity across the CFL (2021–2025), NHL (2021/22–2025/26), MLB (2022–2026), NBA (2021/22–2025/26), and MLS (2022–2026), using a custom weighted index drawing on metrics such as close-game share, physicality, discipline, and turnovers. MLB rivalries were ranked by the percentage of games decided by a single run. Data was sourced from cfl.ca, sofascore.com, and baseball-reference.com. Pairings with fewer than 10 games (CFL) or 50 games (MLB) were excluded.

Betano's full rivalry index can be found [here](#).

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. With a focus

on Technology and Innovation, Betano continuously evolves the iGaming experience for millions of customers worldwide, entertaining them responsibly.

Betano has an established presence across Europe, the Americas and Africa, and is renowned for its major sports partnerships. It has been recognised as a leading player in the global betting and gaming market, including "Operator of the Year" (2024 & 2025) at 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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