



# HOW SPORTS FANDOM HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

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*Image Source:*<https://unsplash.com/photos/people-watching-baseball-SEQ2VI0KI6A>

Sports fans can be found the world over, from those dedicated to watching every home game at the stadium to those yelling at their TV screens each weekend. Watching sports has been a form of entertainment for centuries, with evidence of competitive sports found in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Sports fandom has significantly changed since ancient times, thanks to the advent of new technologies and younger generations entering fandoms.

One of the biggest changes to sports fandom is the rise of digital platforms. Social media has become the go-to hub for most fans, providing the latest news as well as opportunities to connect with other fans. Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram has completely changed how fans consume sport-related news, providing them instant updates to matches, transfers, and injuries. These platforms are also used to chat with other fans and the sports stars themselves.


Fans are using various social platforms to get sports information and content:

- 51% of fans say they get their news from Facebook
- 46% consume sports content on YouTube
- 31% follow teams and players on Instagram
- 25% depend on Twitter for the latest news.

Personalization is also becoming increasingly important. Broadcast TV is no longer hitting the mark, with many fans looking for a more personal or custom experience. This resulted in fantasy sports leagues and esports, custom merchandise, and personal content platforms.

Sports fans are looking for more ways to engage with their teams or star players. Although sports betting has been around for hundreds of years, the way punters wager has changed. Historically, bettors had to be at the sporting event in person and place bets ahead of the game or race. Now, online betting platforms are the norm, and the [best betting sites](#) allow players to see odds change in real time, make live bets, and get the latest news. The lines between news sites and dedicated betting platforms have also blurred, with many websites that previously delivered only news now offering sports betting, and vice versa.

The prevalence of reputable online sportsbooks has made it more convenient and secure than ever before for fans to engage with their teams.

[Social media use](#) has also changed significantly. Where it was once  used to stay up to date with news, fans can now use it to see behind-the-scenes glimpses into the lives of their favorite stars. Many players use social media to actively engage with their fans, sharing their exercise regime, diets, and social excursions. This makes fans feel more connected to the players, as they can like, comment, and reshare posts.

Technology has also had a massive impact on sports fandom. [Virtual reality \(VR\) and augmented reality \(AR\)](#) have completely changed the game, providing more immersive experiences than ever before.

Where fans had to physically go to a stadium to watch a game live, VR now allows them to put on a headset and walk around the stadium before the game, seeing the locker rooms, suites, and stands. Or, they can take a virtual seat mid-court and watch a game in real-time without ever leaving their home. They can even select which player's action they want to follow during the game. VR can also combine with video games, where the fan becomes a player on the field.

The most notable change in sports fandom is the shifting dynamics. Historically, sports stars had a very passive relationship with their fans, and fans were also passive consumers of the sports content. But players and teams are realizing the importance of engaging directly with fans to garner support. This has resulted in frequent meet-and-greets, personal messages, and hands-on fan experiences.

People used to be fans of their local team or players. That has changed over the years, with players becoming celebrities or idols, and fans following a single sport star's journey. For example, fans of Lewis Hamilton may have been dedicated Mercedes fans for the past 12 years, but now that he has [joined the Ferarri F1 team](#), his dedicated fans are donning red shirts and caps instead of staying loyal to Mercedes.

Fandom is unlikely to remain the same for the foreseeable future. Digital trends are constantly shifting, new generations are becoming fans, and teams and players are adapting how they interact with their fans.