

For Immediate Release

COST OF NHL LOCKOUT: 2 MILLION FANS

TORONTO (July 22, 2005) – As the National Hockey League ratifies its new collective bargaining agreement, a recent research study finds that the lockout cost the sport nearly 2 million fans in Canada.

In a survey conducted by Solutions Research Group among 1,776 Canadians in May/June 2005, 55% of Canadian sports fans aged 12 or older identified hockey as one of their favourite sports, down 13 points from 68% in a survey conducted in 2003.

% Identifying Hockey as One of their Favourite Sports Canadian Sports Fans May 2005

	<i>2003</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>Difference</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>(2005- 2003)</i>
<i>Total 12+</i>	68	55	-13
<i>Male 12+</i>	72	59	-13
<i>Female 12+</i>	63	50	-13
<i>Teens 12-19</i>	64	50	-14
<i>20-29</i>	72	63	-9
<i>30-49</i>	69	59	-10
<i>50+</i>	65	51	-14

*Q: Thinking of the sports you follow in general, which ones are your personal favourites?
[ASKED AMONG THOSE WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS BIG/CASUAL SPORTS FANS, 64% of Canadians 12+]*

“By being out of sight, hockey has been out of mind – but, more than that, a lot of fans got very angry with the NHL,” said Jeff Vidler, partner with Solutions Research Group. “It’s time to kiss and make up with the fans – and the league is making the first move with the rule changes and the new draft system. But the changes will have to deliver a more entertaining and responsive product.”

The information for this release comes from comprehensive telephone interviews with 1,776 Canadians 12 and older in May/June 2005 conducted as part of Fast Forward™, Solutions Research Group's syndicated consumer trend research series. To maintain an unbiased perspective, Solutions Research Group funds its own syndicated research. The sample statistically reflects the regional and age/sex composition of the Canadian population. The results of the survey are accurate to ± 2.3 points for the population as a whole, 19 times out of 20.

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