



NEWS RELEASE

Battle of the Sexes Heats Up Over Olympic Games

Rhythmic gymnastics the most likely battleground in New Zealand

Auckland, 4 August 2008 – Some of the toughest competitions during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games may be at home over the television remote control, according to a Visa survey which shows a divergence between men's and women's interests in Olympic sports.¹

Of the 4,556 people from the Asia Pacific region who were asked which Olympic sporting events most interested them, swimming, football and gymnastics were the clear overall winners. Men said they were also more interested in baseball and boxing than women, while women were more interested in watching gymnastics and swimming – particularly synchronized swimming.

Among the 501 New Zealand survey participants, rowing (64 percent), athletics/track and field (59 percent) and swimming (58 percent) were the top three sports that interested both sexes. Scratch the surface however, and differences between men and women soon become apparent.

It appears the biggest battle in New Zealand's living rooms will be over rhythmic gymnastics, with a massive 45 percentage point difference between women's interest (66 percent) and men's interest (21 percent). Women were also much more interested in artistic gymnastics (72 percent), swimming (70 percent), diving (45 percent) and equestrian (49 percent), while for men, boxing (24 percent) and weightlifting (32 percent) got the thumbs up.

Iain Jamieson, Visa Country Manager for New Zealand, said: "The findings show that while men and women are interested in different events, there is a strong interest in the Olympic Games overall. New Zealanders love a winner, so it is not surprising that the top three sport that interest Kiwis correlate to some of our brightest medal hopes."

¹ Between 17 March and 9 April 2008, Nielsen conducted 4,556 online and door-to-door interviews on behalf of Visa with people aged 18 years and above from nine countries and territories (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and India) in an effort to measure interest levels in global sporting events, China as a travel destination and, in particular, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. For each market, quotas were set by demographic variables to ensure the sample was representative of the general population.



It may be more than a battle of the sexes - the family lounge room may also see generational disparity over which sport to watch. According to the Visa survey findings, New Zealanders aged 45 and above are nearly four times as interested in sailing (46 percent) as those aged 18-24 (12 percent), while younger people are far more interested in synchronized swimming, volleyball and beach volleyball.

Jamieson continued: “Despite the differences, it is the passion for sport that is the unifying factor amid the diversity of views and interests of supporters. This passion is what helps create the colour and excitement at the Games, and is why the Olympic Games are such an important event in the global sporting calendar.”

Greatest Interest Gaps by Gender (Asia Pacific)

Sport	Men (% interest)	Women (% interest)	Percentage Point Difference
Baseball	35	23	12
Boxing	22	12	10
Football	53	34	19
Gymnastics	35	44	9
Swimming	45	53	8
Synchronized Swimming	10	23	13



Greatest Interest Gaps by Gender (New Zealand)

Sport	Men (% interest)	Women (% interest)	Percentage Point Difference
Rhythmic gymnastics	21	66	45
Artistic gymnastics	28	72	44
Swimming	45	70	25
Diving	20	45	25
Equestrian	34	49	15
Boxing	24	9	15
Weightlifting	32	21	11

Interest Gaps by Age Group (Asia Pacific)

Sport	18-24 Year Olds (% interest)	25-34 Year Olds (% interest)	35-44 Year Olds (% interest)	45 Years and Above (% interest)
Athletics	21	31	30	42
Baseball	19	25	26	36
Boxing	28	19	18	12
Gymnastics	28	33	40	47
Hockey	31	27	30	13
Tennis	37	29	30	22



Interest Gaps by Age Group (New Zealand)

Sport	18-24 Year Olds (% interest)	25-34 Year Olds (% interest)	35-44 Year Olds (% interest)	45 Years and Above (% interest)
Rowing	42	50	56	77
Equestrian	19	37	30	54
Sailing	12	18	25	46
Synchronized Swimming	38	19	19	21
Volleyball	28	13	15	7
Beach volleyball	31	18	16	10

Visa has been the exclusive payment card and the official payment service of the Olympic Games since 1986 and will continue its category sponsorship through 2012, including the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Visa will be the only card accepted at all Olympic Games venues for official Olympic related transactions.

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