

**REFEREE**.COM

**COVID-19 & OFFICIATING**

**READY TO  
RETURN?**

*Referee Magazine*  
**Return-to-Officiating  
Survey Results**

FROM THE EDITORS OF REFEREE MAGAZINE

Although many officials are hesitant about returning to officiate youth and high school sports amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a large majority appear ready to return to the fields, courts and pitches across the country, according to a survey conducted in late May by *Referee* magazine.

With nearly 20,000 sports officials responding to the survey, 67.5 percent indicated that if youth and high school sports resumed today, they would feel comfortable participating as an official from a health and safety perspective.

Still, a sizable 32.5 percent indicated they would not be comfortable officiating – a number that could have implications for staffing games as sports resume, especially in areas or sports facing pre-existing shortages of officials.

The survey results indicated the oldest officials – those 65 and older – were more concerned than young officials. Approximately 40 percent of those 65 and older indicated they were not comfortable participating as an official compared to 19 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds and 33 percent of 25-to-34-year-olds.

Looking regionally, those in the north-central part of the country (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota and Kansas) were the most ready to return – 77 percent indicating they were comfortable. The northeast region (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland and New York) reported the lowest percentage of officials who are comfortable returning – 59 percent.

*Referee* magazine conducted the survey in late May to accompany a feature story – *Back to Work?* – coming in the August issue of the magazine that explores what officials are thinking about with a return to sports amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was modeled after one conducted by United Travel Umpires of its members.

The *Referee* survey moved from sidebar-status to front stage when nearly 20,000 officials weighed in from across the country. With such a strong response on such a timely topic, we decided to release the results ahead of the August issue.

In addition to asking officials about their comfort level with returning to officiate, the survey probed into other pandemic-related topics; here are some of the results:

- 64 percent of officials who responded said if they had to travel to work a tournament, they would feel comfortable staying in a hotel from a health and safety perspective.
- 62 percent of officials felt it was reasonable for officials to be asked to adopt different mechanics and positioning to better adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- 43 percent said it was reasonable for an official to wear a mask and gloves while performing his/her duties.
- Nearly 66 percent said if required, they would wear a mask and gloves to officiate a game.
- Liability concerns were on many officials' minds. On a five-point sliding scale, with one being "not worried at all" and five being "very worried," the average of responses fell at three.
- When asked about the single most important factor dictating when they personally would feel comfortable returning to the field/court/pitch as a sports official, the following options were selected:
  - Governing organization, school or municipality taking steps to clean/sanitize a facility - 27 percent
  - Widespread testing for COVID-19 - 19.5 percent
  - Availability of a vaccine for COVID-19 - 23.5 percent
  - None of the above; I will go out there now, none of these factors are crucial for my return - 30 percent.

**REFeree / NASO**

This survey, along with others like it, was made possible by the subscribers of Referee magazine, along with members of the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO).

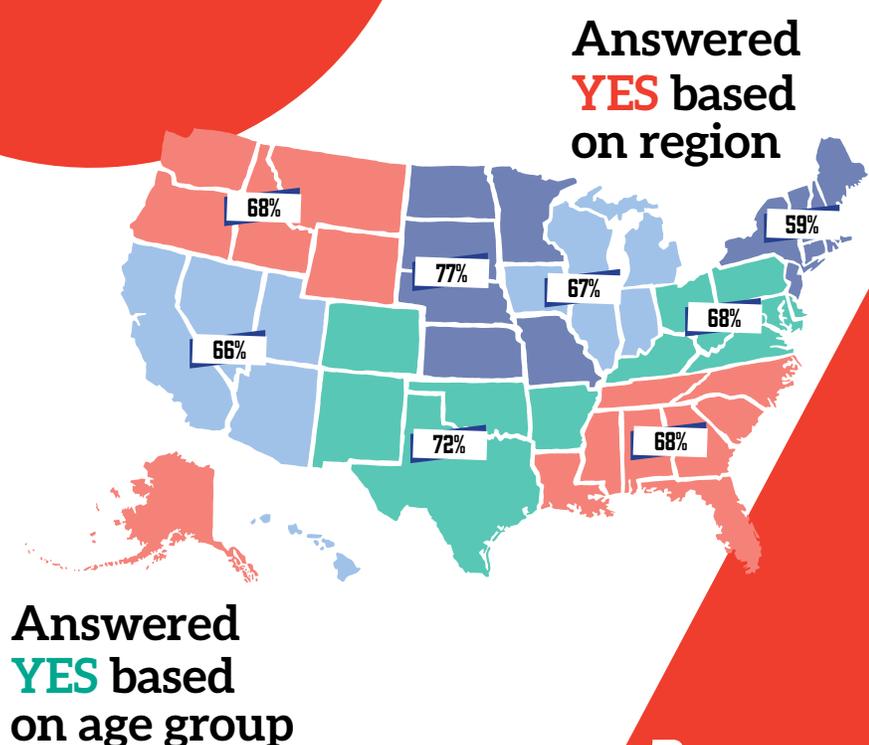
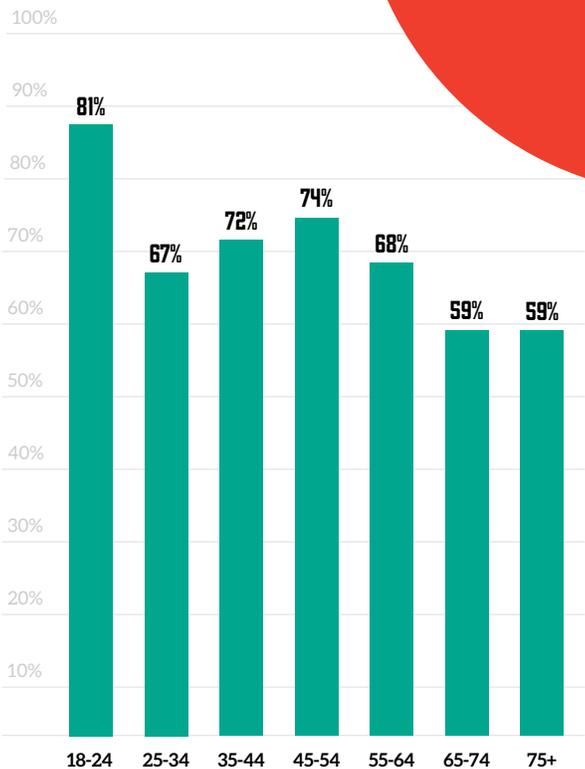
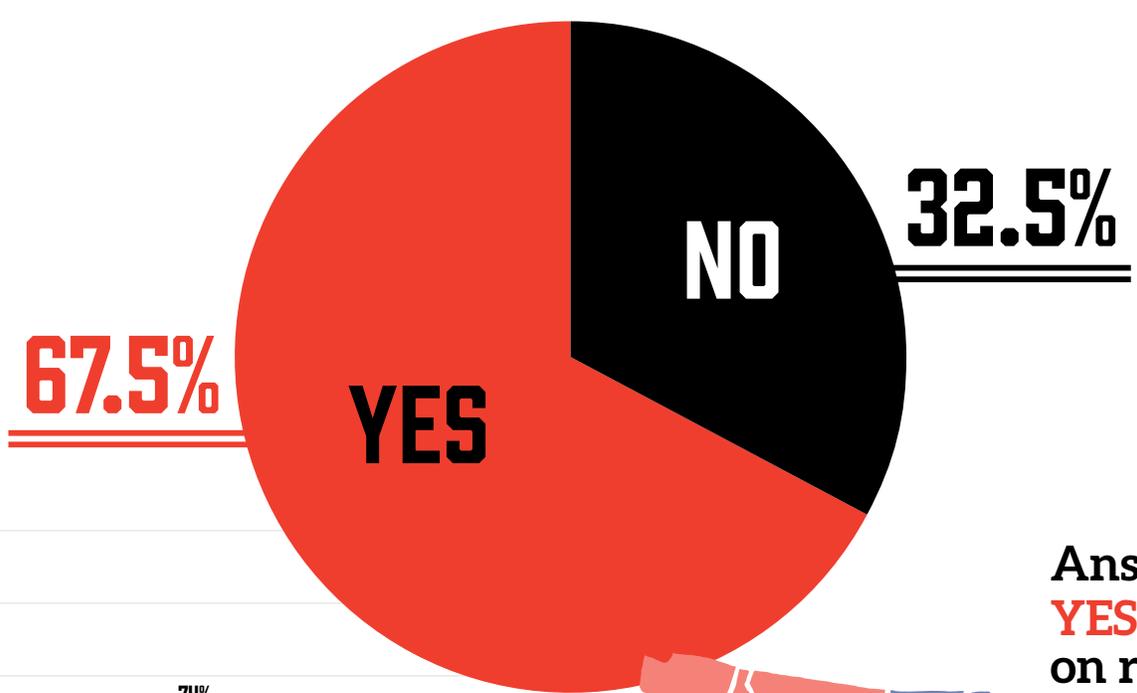
Please consider subscribing to Referee magazine or joining NASO to get the most up-to-date information in the officiating industry delivered directly to you every month.

**REFeree.COM**

**NASO.ORG**

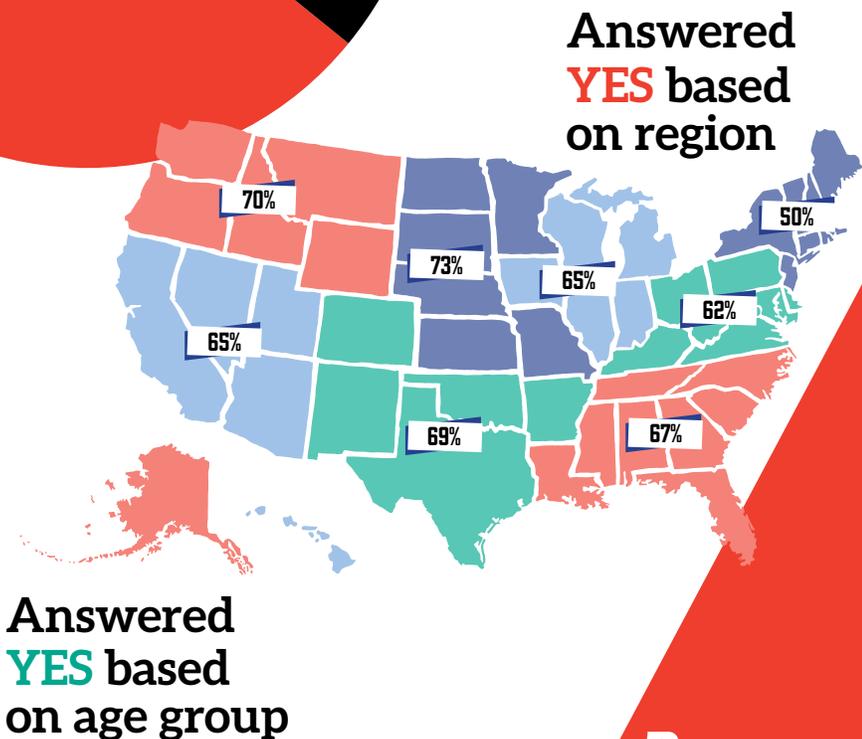
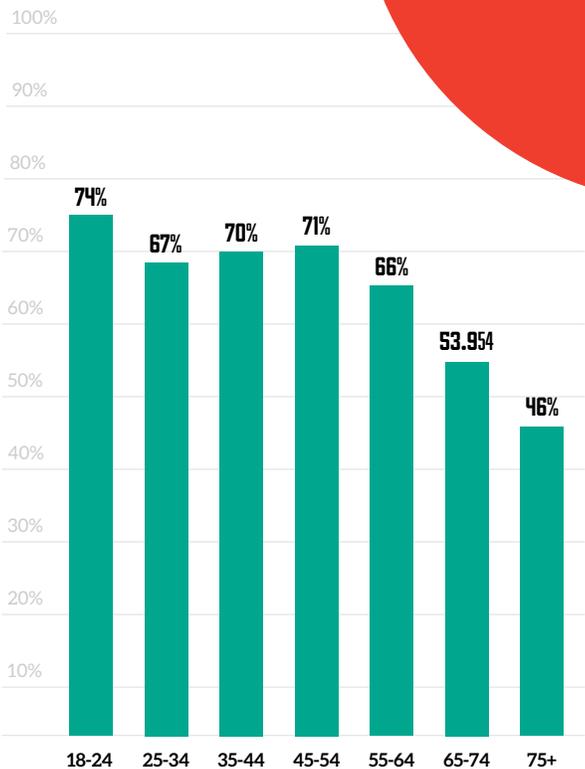
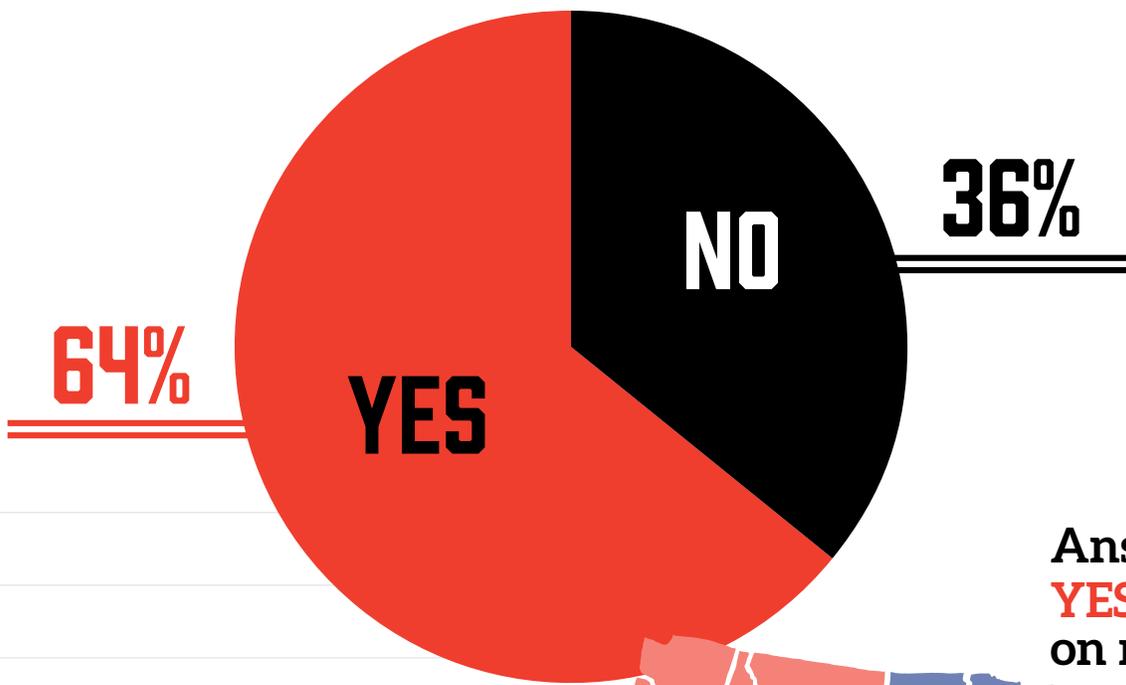
# QUESTION 01

Based on the information available, if youth and high school sports resumed today, would you feel comfortable participating as an official from a health and safety perspective?



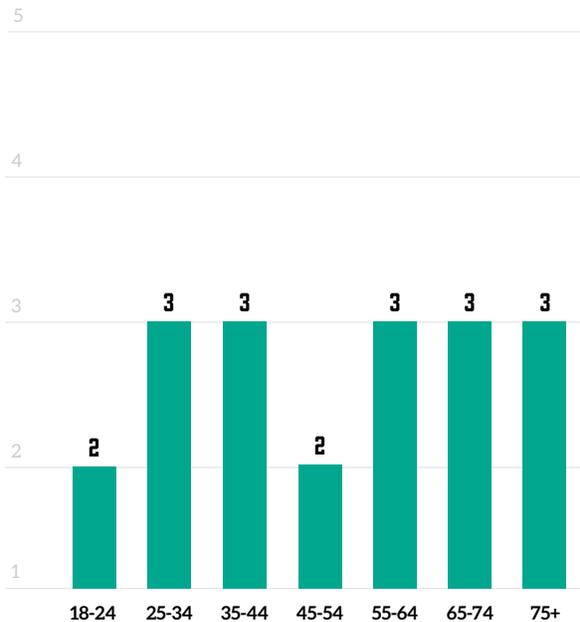
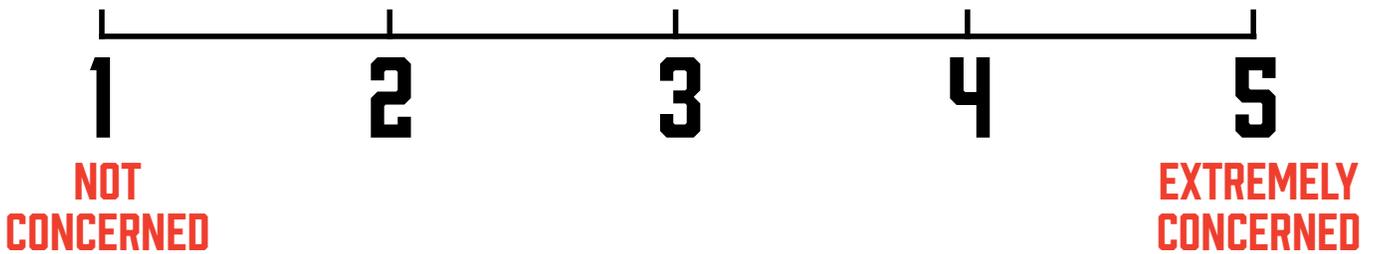
# QUESTION 02

Based on the information available, if you had to travel to work a tournament, would you feel comfortable staying in a hotel from a health and safety perspective?



# QUESTION 03

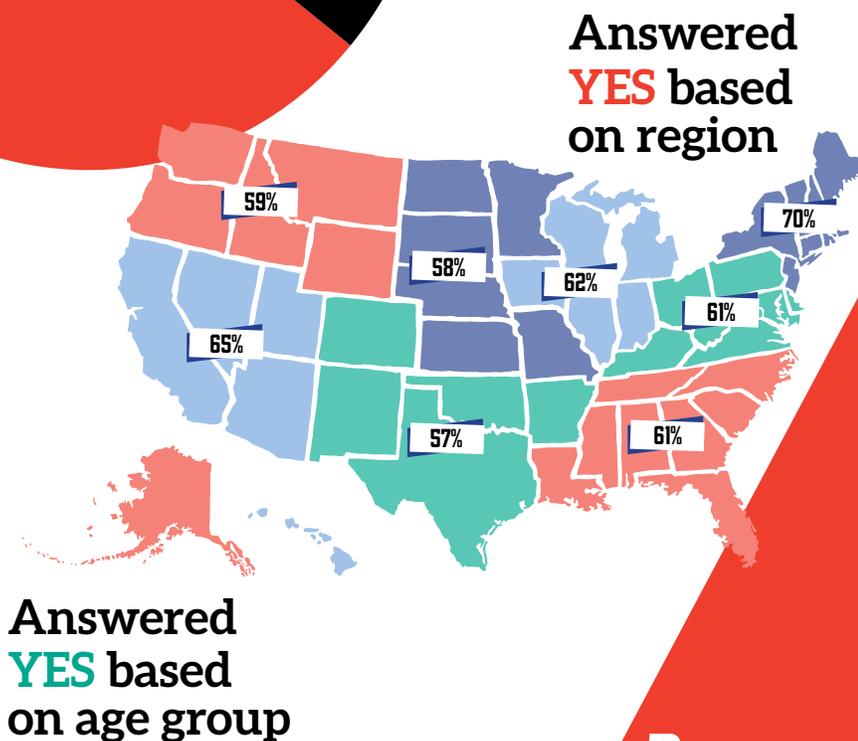
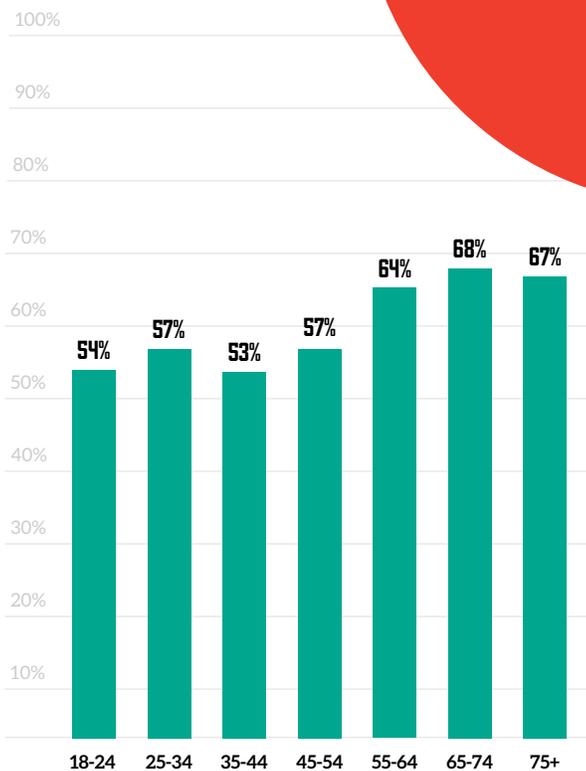
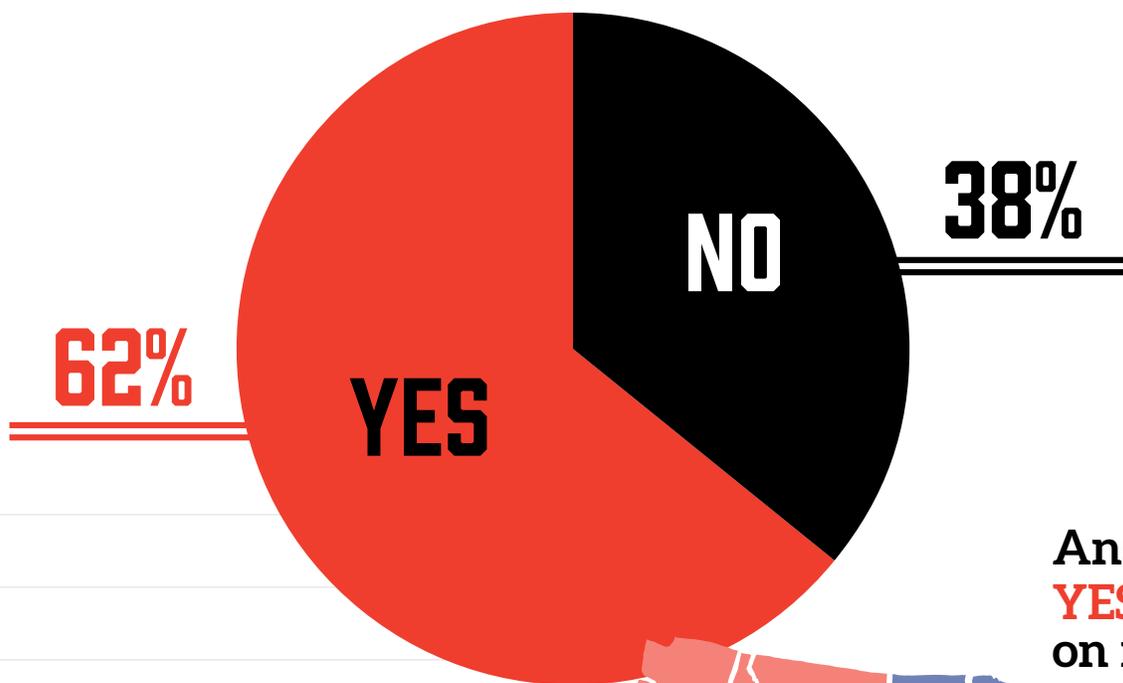
From the perspective of your own safety, what is your level of concern regarding overseeing a game?



Answers based on age group

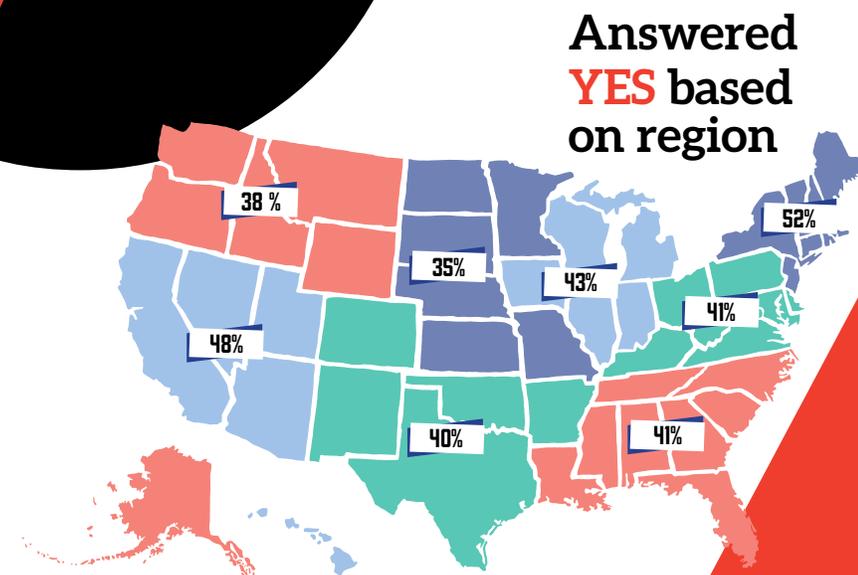
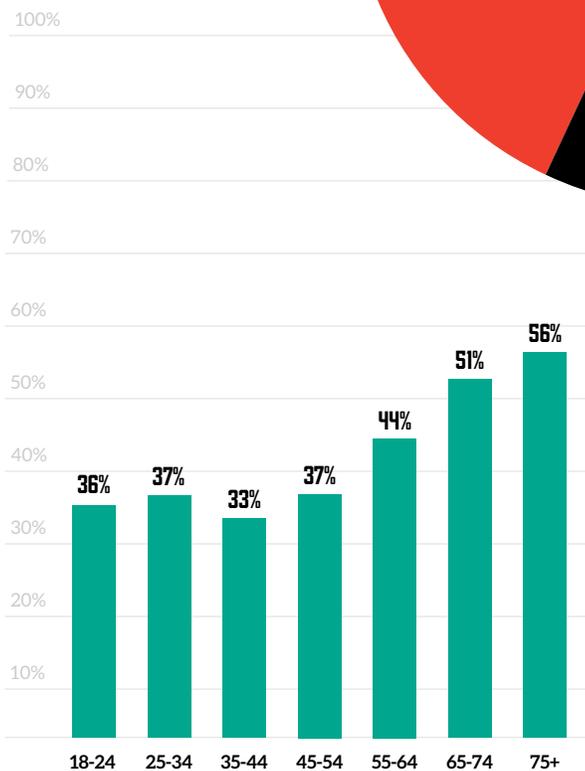
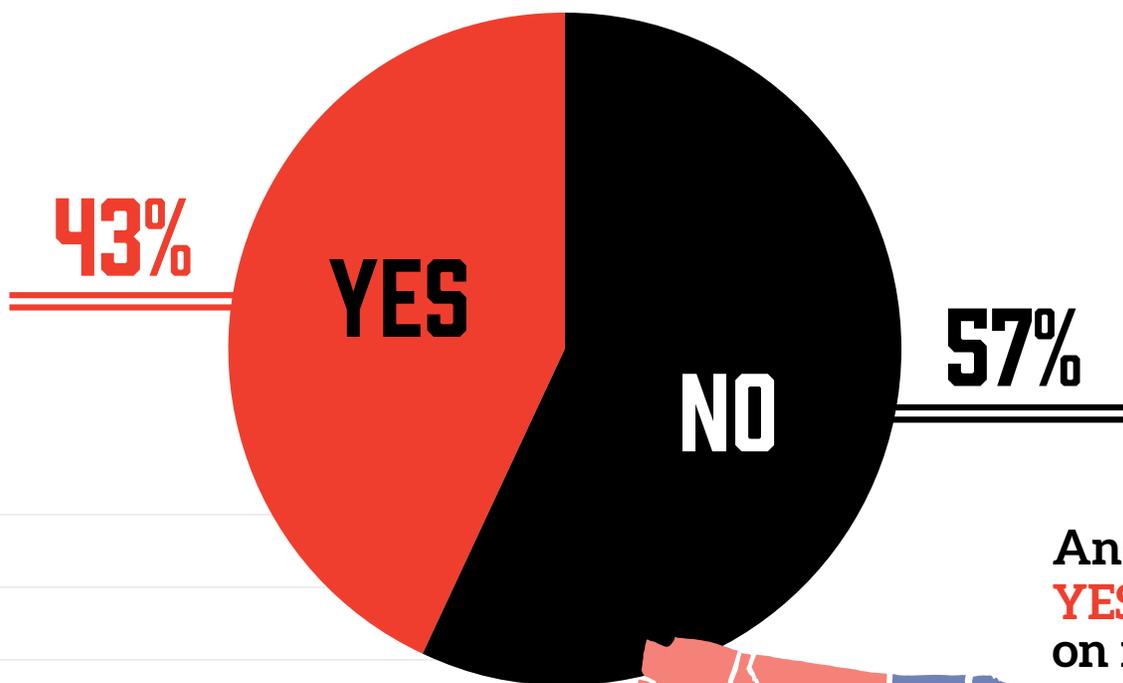
# QUESTION 04

Do you feel it's reasonable for officials to be asked to adopt different mechanics and positioning to better adhere to social distancing guidelines?



# QUESTION 05

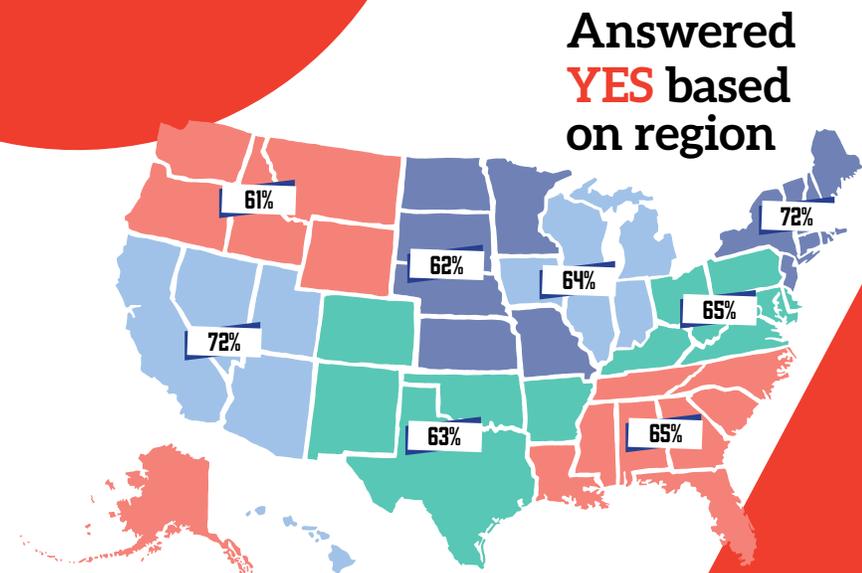
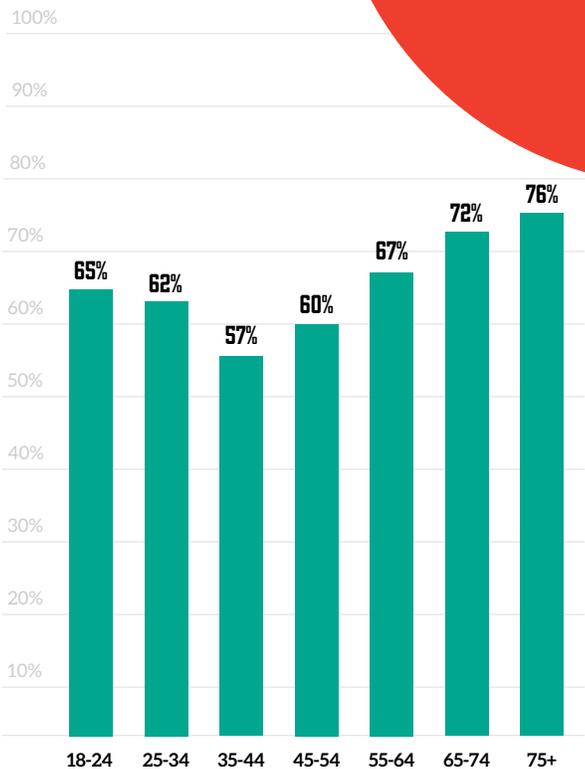
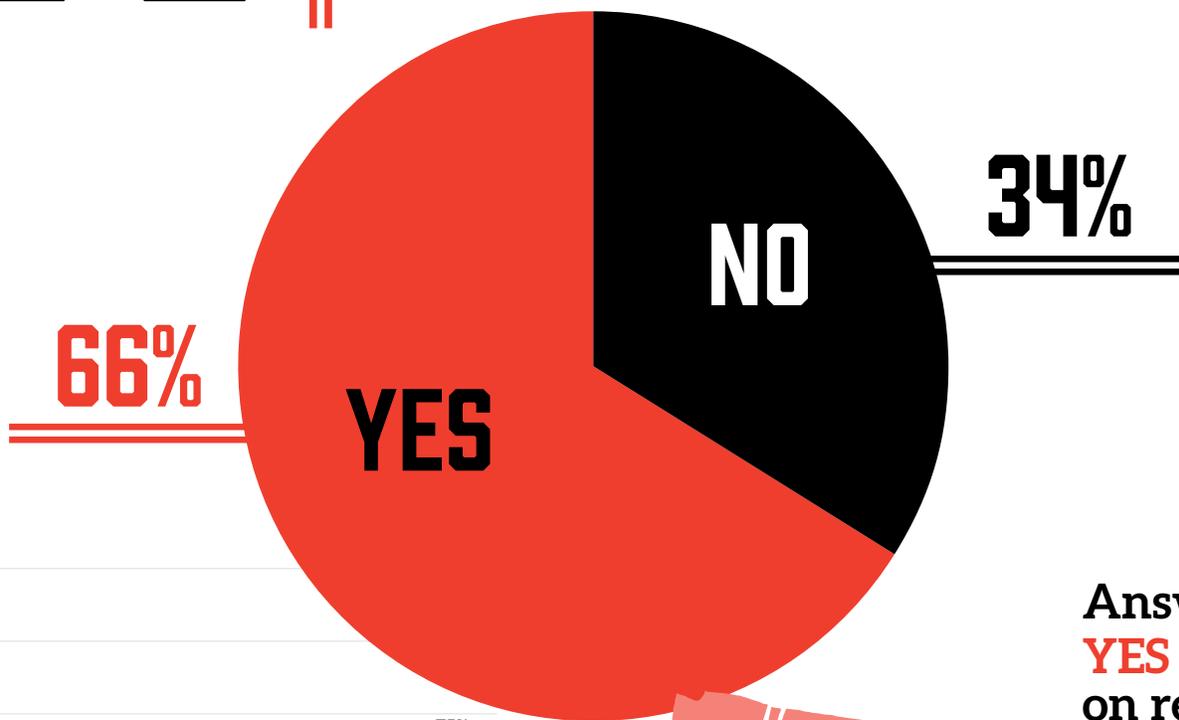
Do you feel it's reasonable for an official to wear a mask and gloves while performing his/her duties?



Answered YES based on age group

# QUESTION 06

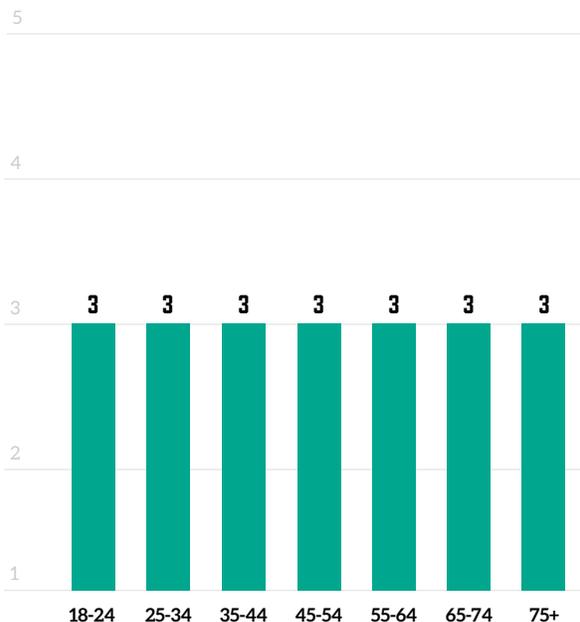
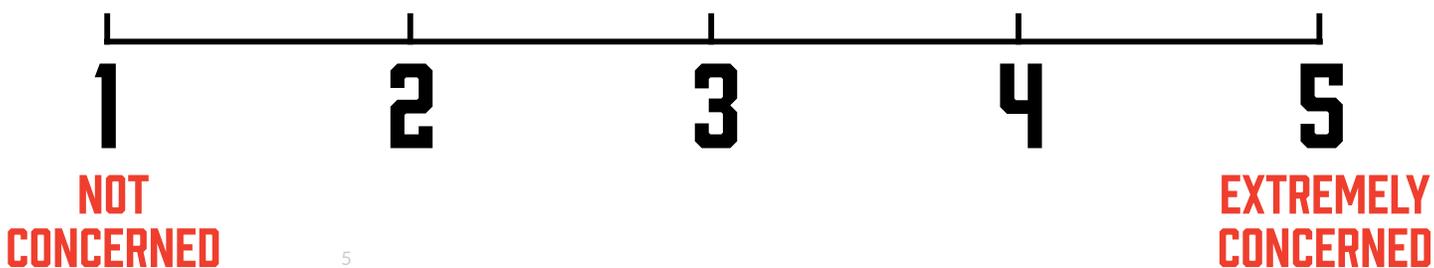
If required, would you wear a mask and gloves to officiate a game?



Answered YES based on age group

# QUESTION 07

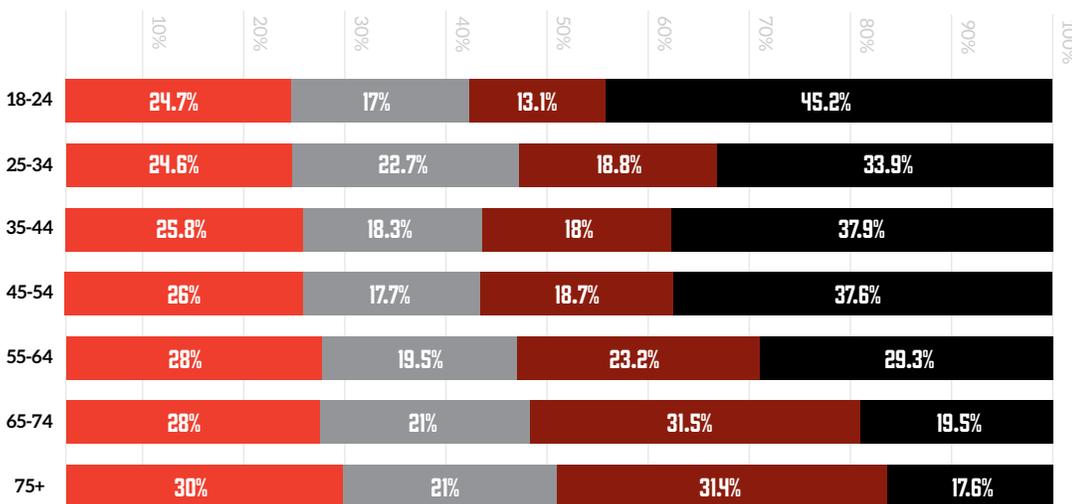
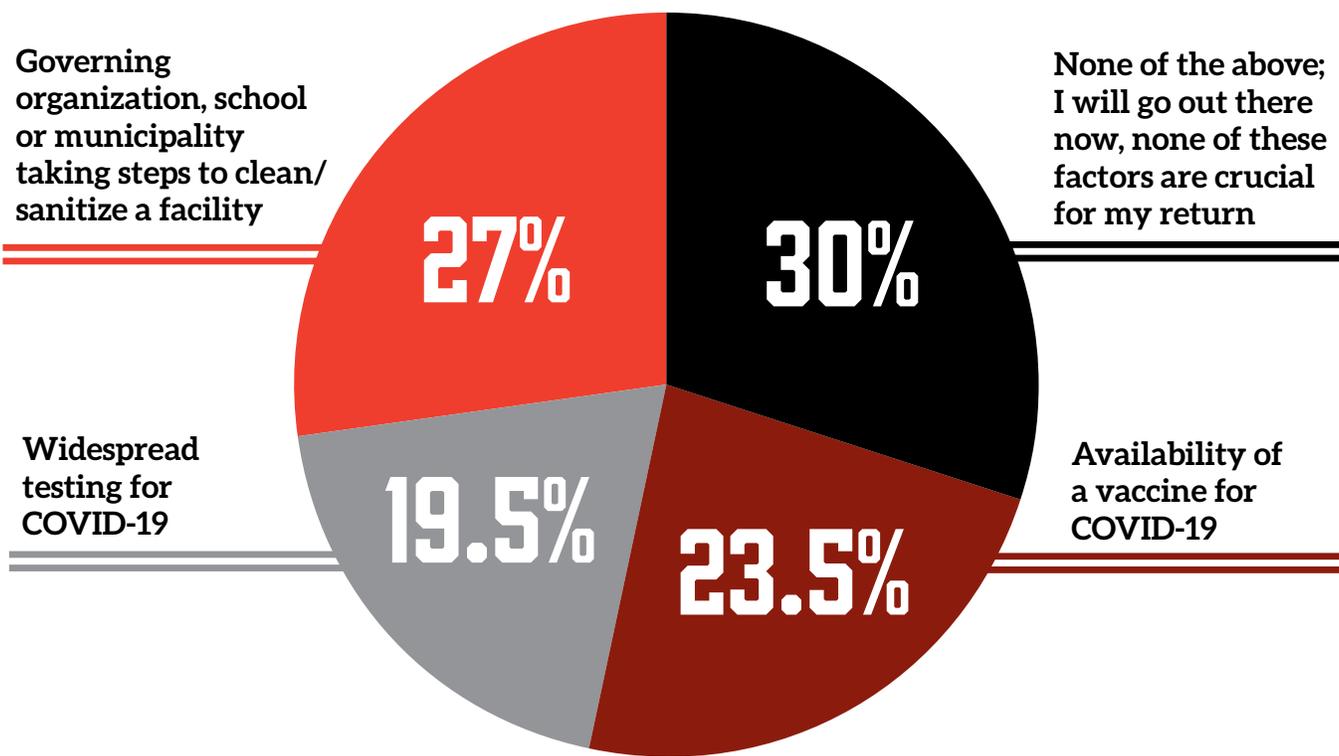
From a liability standpoint, what is your level of concern regarding overseeing a game where COVID-19 could be transmitted between participants?



Answers based on age group

# QUESTION 08

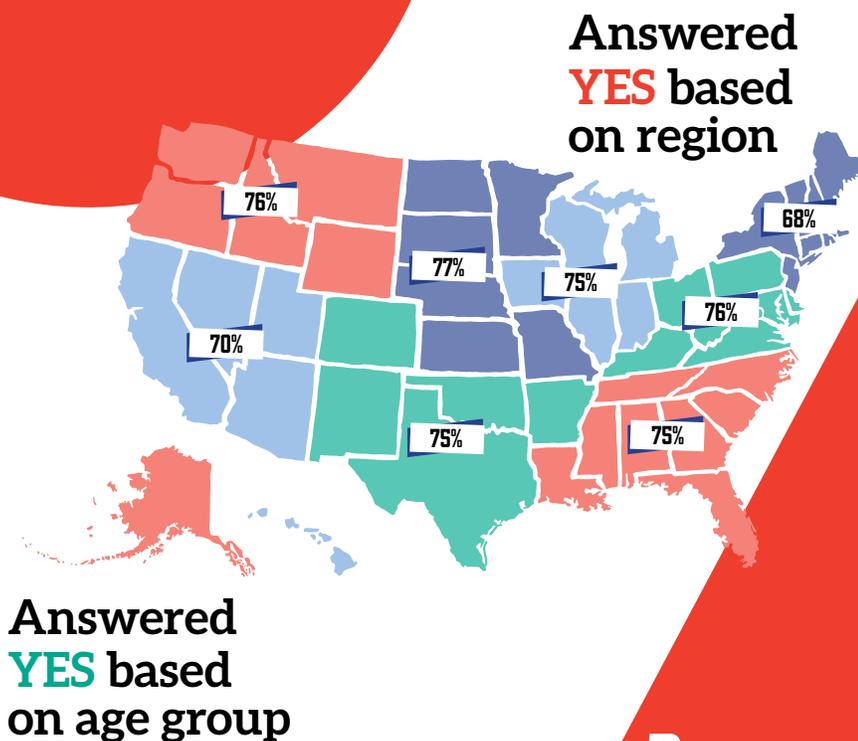
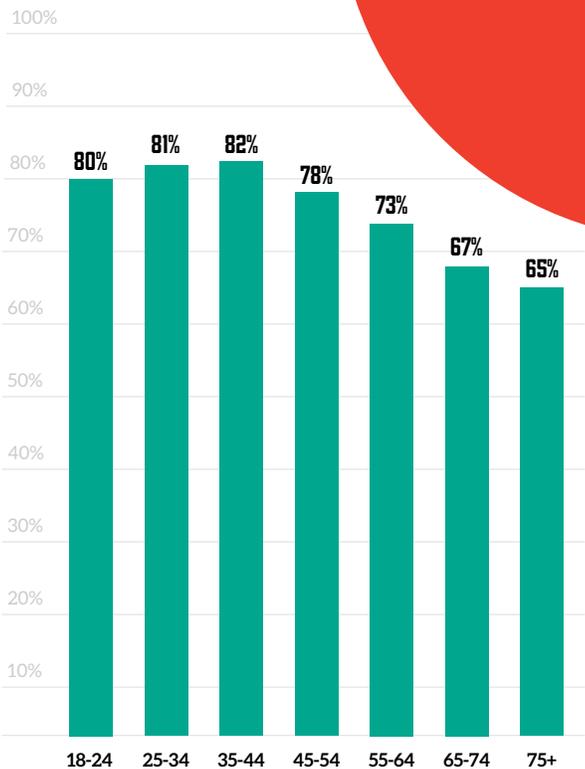
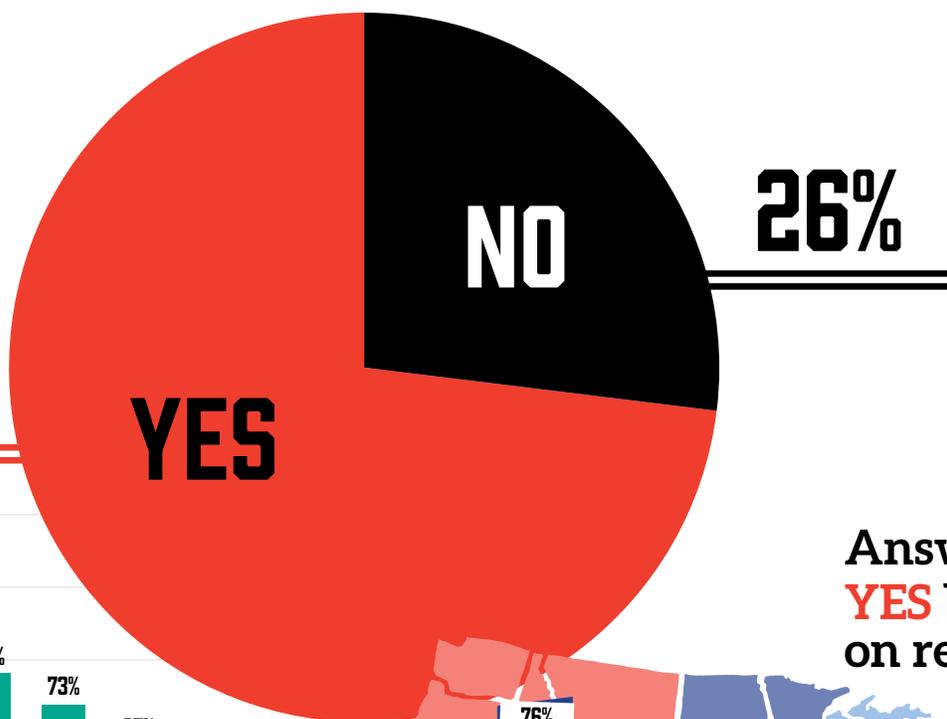
What is the single most important factor dictating when you personally feel comfortable returning to the field/court/pitch as a sports official?



Answers based on age group

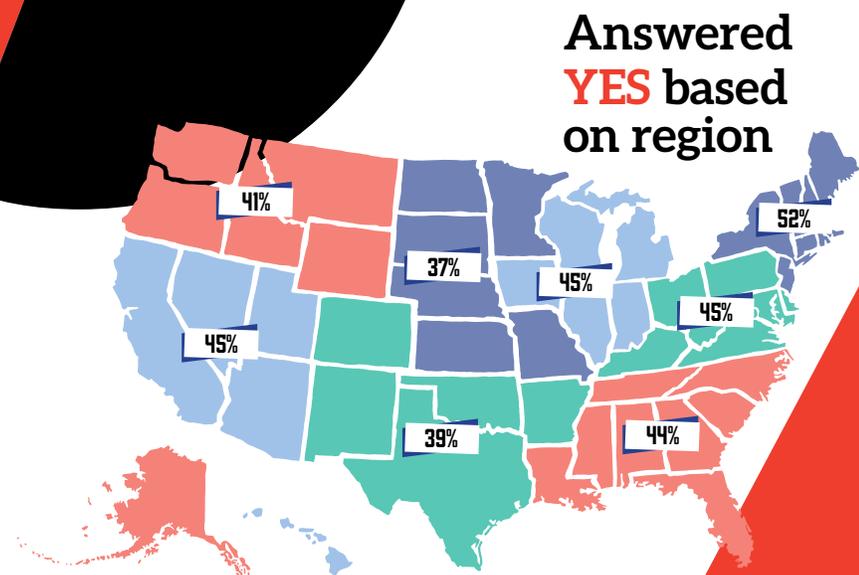
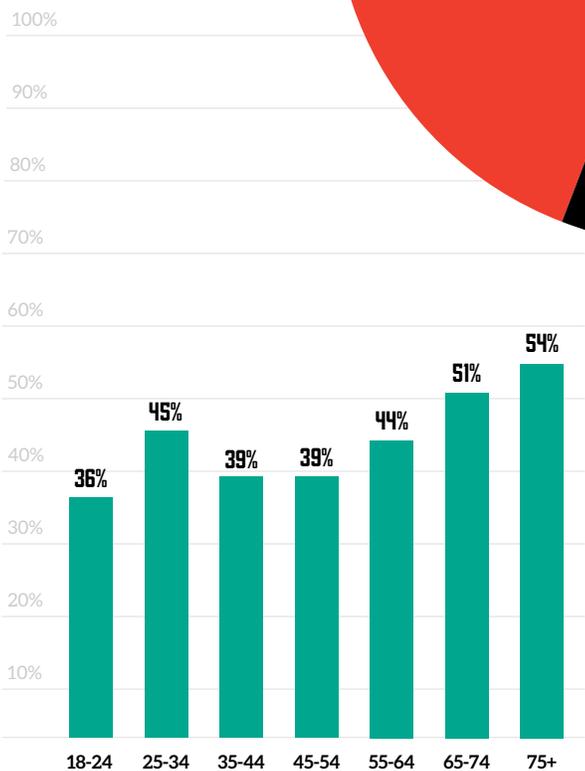
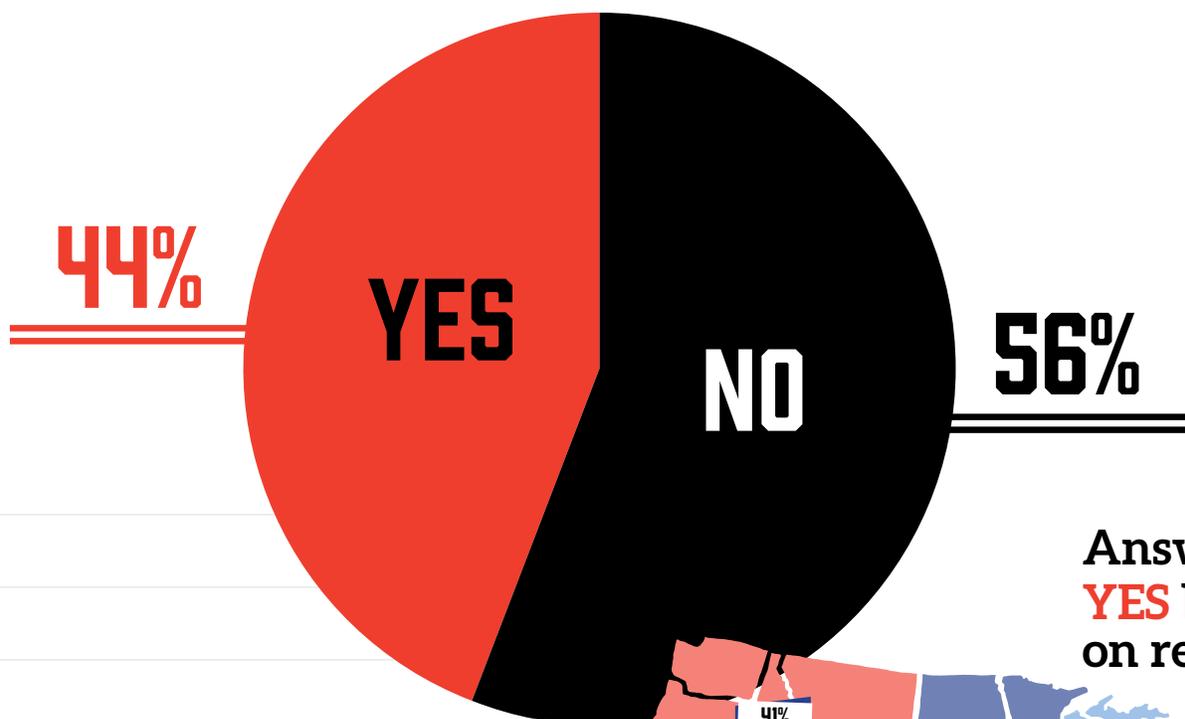
# QUESTION 09

Do you feel players wearing masks could be a hindrance or danger to their ability to play the sport as they normally would, causing possible safety issues?



# QUESTION 10

From the perspective of personal safety, are you concerned about the ability to properly satisfy CDC social distancing guidelines in the environment of an officials' locker room?



Answered YES based on age group

# RESPONSES BY STATE

