

New Research Reveals Huge Role Stadiums Play In Football Fans' Engagement With Their Favourite Team

44% Rarely or Never Attend Games, With Close To Half Saying It's Because Coming To The Home Ground On Match Day Is "Simply Too Expensive"



London, United Kingdom Jun 9, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - New consumer research reveals the critical role that football stadiums play in engaging fans with their favourite teams, with 86% saying their home ground is important in connecting supporters to the club – including 43% who consider it "absolutely vital". The **survey of 1,000 UK football fans** commissioned by [Imagineear](https://www.imagineear.com), specialists in media and technology for visitor experiences, shows that over three-quarters (77%) of supporters see their club's home ground as a key part of its identity, including a third (34%) who say that it "wouldn't be the same without it".

"The research underlines the crucial place the home football ground holds in the hearts of fans across the country, with the survey taking in the views of a broad range of supporters from all parts of the UK – representing clubs from the Premier League to The Scottish Premiership to The National League and everything in between," says **Andrew Nugee, Chief Executive Officer of Imagineear**. "Most see the team's stadium and the history around it as an essential part of the emotional connection they feel for the club."

The research shows that nearly half (48%) cite their home club's history and identity – including its roots, players, and successes over the years – as what makes them feel most connected to the club. And many see that heritage as intrinsically linked to the club's home ground. Looking at what is most important to fans about their team's stadium, the research shows:

- Over a third (37%) say a "historic, iconic ground" that reflects tradition, the club's longevity, and its connection to supporters;
- Roughly a quarter (26%) say an advanced, tech-enabled ground with state-of-the-art features such as big-screen HD TVs throughout, WiFi, and mobile connectivity;
- Just under a third (30%) want a stadium somewhere in between, marrying state-of-the-art features with elements of the club's heritage.

Most UK football fans see their team's current ground reflecting the club's history, but many also want improvements. Over a third (36%) say their stadium is in good shape and would not change it, while a similar number (35%) acknowledge that their ground has great heritage and atmosphere but feel updating is needed. The research further reveals that 11% want their current stadium demolished and replaced with a state-of-the-art facility. English Football League fans were twice as likely as Premiership fans (16% versus 7%) to want their stadium replaced from the ground up.

Matchday is not for everyone

The research shows that few fans – just 9% – go to every live match, while only 19% go regularly, and 28% attend games occasionally. What's more, 44% of football fans rarely or never attend a game, with cost being cited as the most common factor.

The research reveals that 46% of those who do not attend every game (91% of all respondents) say "It's simply too expensive" – with Premier League fans most likely to cite expenditure (50%) as the reason why they don't go to live games. Other reasons include living too far away (37%), enjoying the TV viewing experience more (26%), and not liking crowds (14%). For some, accessibility is an issue (13%), with fans of lower league teams more likely to be affected. In addition, one in twenty (5%) feel their club's stadium is not family-friendly.

Nonetheless, many fans enjoy the club's home ground by visiting it for tours on non-matchdays. The survey shows 60% of fans have taken a tour of a football stadium – a quarter (25%) within the last two years.

"Touring their team's home ground can allow supporters to take in the atmosphere while learning more about the club's past and present stars, its history, and other exciting facts about the team and the stadium itself," says Nugee. "It's a great way for fans – especially those that feel the overall cost of seeing a live match is out of reach at the moment – to feel more connected to their club and experience with family up close some of the magic of an iconic place that's part of their lives."

However, only 10% of the fans surveyed visit their home football grounds or attend onsite fan days in the offseason, indicating that people are not as personally engaged when it's summer and other activities are available. In fact, almost a fifth (17%) of fans admit they struggle to stay connected with their club during the offseason. Nevertheless, many do remain engaged via the Internet, keeping up with their team and individual players online (49%) and via social media (56%).

The survey, conducted in May 2023, was representative of UK football fans across gender, age group, region, league, team affiliation, and level of engagement – it included a mix of football supporters who identified as being "massive", "quite big" or "casual" fans.



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