

# NON-LEAGUE DAY FAN SURVEY

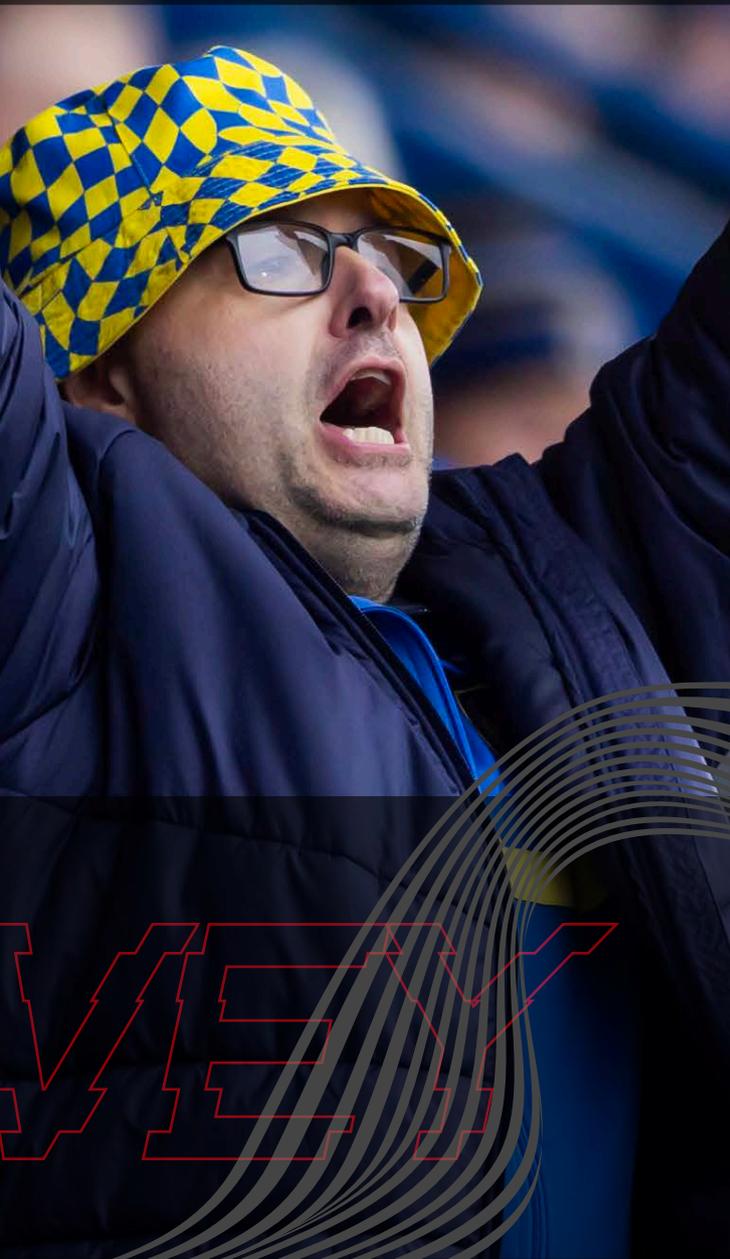
On 28th March, non-league day celebrates the passion, community, and authenticity of football outside the top tiers, offering fans a chance to reconnect with the game beyond the bright lights.

In an era shaped by shifting priorities in the professional game, non-league day serves as a timely reminder of football's roots and the vital role supporters play at every level.

With LiveScore's mission to **Fuel Fans' Passion for Sport**, we want to encourage all fans in the UK to engage with non-league day 2026.

This report showcases survey results gathered from LiveScore users, capturing the views of both non-league supporters and fans of professional clubs, highlighting a shared appreciation for the grassroots game, alongside differing perspectives on motivations and perceptions.

The findings shine a light on what draws fans to non-league football, the barriers that might exist, and the opportunities to strengthen its appeal. They underline the importance of preserving the fan experience at all levels, while reinforcing the unique role non-league clubs play in sustaining the spirit and community of the game.



# METHODOLOGY

The LiveScore Non-League Day Fan Survey captures the views of **over 2,000 UK football fans** including professional club fans only, non-league and lower-league fans, and those who have dual-support across levels.

The survey aims to identify the key factors attracting or repelling fans from non-league football, different behaviours between fan groups, and fan motivations across levels as interesting insight and context for fans this non-league day.

The data was gathered in March 2026.

**Note:** For the purposes of sharing the survey results, professional club fans relate to fans of Football League and Premier League clubs. LiveScore acknowledges a number of non-league clubs are professional.

2,000  
UK  
FOOTBALL  
FANS



# THE ATTRACTION OF NON-LEAGUE

**69%** OF THOSE ATTENDING A  
PRO LEAGUE GAME CARE  
MOST ABOUT THE OUTCOME



**23%** THAT DROPS TO LESS  
THAN A QUARTER OF  
**THE** NON-LEAGUE FANS

Money talks. And professional football fans may be attracted by the cheaper gate prices when considering whether or not to attend non-league. After all, our data shows **9/10 non-league fans say it's good value for money.**

The attraction of non-league runs far deeper, however. For instance, ranked 2nd is 'The Social' where all your family and friends can attend. At elite level, accessing one ticket can prove challenging (**44%** of professional fans in our survey cited ticket availability as the main reason they don't attend games), let alone enough for all the people you care about to attend.

## 1 THE ATMOSPHERE

A buzz from the sidelines week in, week out

## 2 THE SOCIAL

All your friends and family can attend

## 3 CONVENIENCE

It's local and easy to get to

## 4 THE COMMUNITY

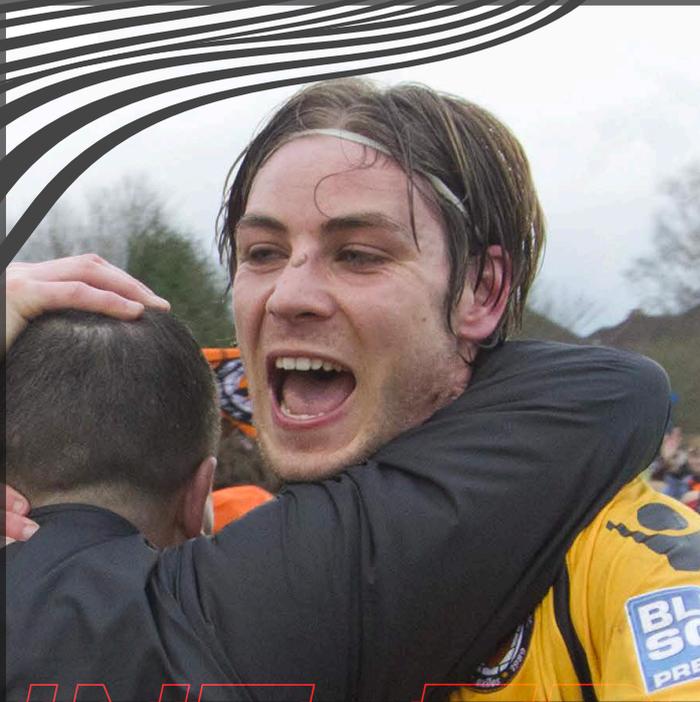
It's more than just the football, it's the strong sense of being connected to your local area

## 5 THE AFFORDABILITY

Important, but not the main attraction!

## 6 BEING CLOSE TO THE ACTION

No watching ants on the pitch from the back of the top tier!



# HEADLINE TREND

**AHEAD OF THE AFFORDABILITY,  
IT'S THE UNIQUE ATMOSPHERES,  
CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITIES AND  
BEING ABLE TO GO WITH PEOPLE  
YOU CARE ABOUT THAT  
SETS NON-LEAGUE APART.**

Importantly, the appeal of non-league goes well beyond affordability – while good value for money is widely recognised, it is not the primary driver. Instead, the strongest pull factors centre on atmosphere, social connection, and community. The matchday experience is positioned as something shared and inclusive, where attending with friends and family is easy and accessible. This reflects a broader shift in what many fans are seeking from live sport: not just elite competition, but meaningful, social experiences.

# FAMILY VS COMMUNITY

**49% OF PROFESSIONAL CLUB FANS SUPPORT THEIR TEAM BASED ON FAMILY TIES, THIS DROPS TO JUST 13% FOR NON-LEAGUE FANS.**

**Why do fans support who they support?**

Is it about following your local club, supporting the family team, following who your friends support? Or is about style of play and identity matching?

The truth is it can be one, all, or a mix of the above plus a multitude of other reasons. But are there any clear themes which help define the thinking of fans at non-league?

**82% OF PRO CLUB FANS HAVE SUPPORTED THEIR CLUB SINCE CHILDHOOD**

**45% THIS FIGURE DROPS TO LESS THAN HALF FOR NON-LEAGUE FANS**



**42% OF NON-LEAGUE FANS EXPRESSED A STRONG FEELING OF CONNECTION TO THEIR LOCAL AREA**

**THIS DROPS TO JUST 20% FOR PRO CLUB SUPPORTING FANS.**

HEADLINE TRENDS

**PROFESSIONAL CLUB FANDOM IS FAMILY TIED. NON-LEAGUE FANDOM IS PLACE AND COMMUNITY.**

**PROFESSIONAL CLUB FANDOM IS INHERITED. NON-LEAGUE FANDOM IS OFTEN CONSIDERED AND BASED ON INFORMED DECISION-MAKING.**

Professional club support continues to be shaped heavily by heritage. For many fans, allegiance is inherited rather than chosen, passed down through generations and embedded from childhood. This creates a powerful sense of identity, but one that is often less tied to geography and day-to-day community. In contrast, **non-league support tells a different story** - one that is more deliberate and locally grounded. Fans are more likely to choose their club based on a genuine connection to the place, reflecting a conscious decision to engage with football at a level where they feel directly involved.

**AND  
IT'S  
LIVE!**

What does watching it 'live' really mean? Sky Sports will tell you it's 'live' from the sofa, but surely the pure meaning of the word is watching the action in the flesh. With access to tickets increasingly challenging at the top level of the game, **a big factor favouring non-league attendance is accessibility** for in-person attendance.

**79%** OF PROFESSIONAL CLUB FANS USUALLY WATCH THEIR TEAM VIA TV OR STREAMING



**25%** THIS FIGURE DROPS TO A QUARTER OF NON-LEAGUE FANS

Meanwhile, **73%** of non-league fans regularly attend fixtures in-person, a **5%** rise on professional club fans.

**25%**

# PROFESSIONAL CLUB FANS ALSO ENGAGE WITH THEIR CLUBS BEHIND A SCREEN MORE SO THAN NON-LEAGUE FANS

Professional Fans

Non-League Fans

62%

LIVE SCORE APPS

43%

27%

RADIO

14%

44%

WATCHING HIGHLIGHTS

20%

HEADLINE TREND

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL IS A SCREEN SPORT, WITH SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE SCORE APPS BEING PROMINENT CHANNELS.

**NON-LEAGUE IS A GROUND SPORT.**

This distinction carries through into how fans experience the game. At the professional level, football has increasingly become a digital-first product. **The majority of fans now engage via screens** - whether through live broadcasts, highlights, or second-screen experiences like live score apps. While this has expanded access and globalised fandom, it has also created distance between supporters and the live, physical experience of the game.

Non-league football, by contrast, remains rooted in matchday attendance. The data shows that fans are far more likely to watch games in person, reinforcing the idea that **non-league is not just about football as content, but football as an experience**. The ability to attend regularly, stand close to the pitch, and feel part of the action creates a level of immersion that is increasingly difficult to access at the top end of the game.

# THE 3PM BLACKOUT DOES IT HELP?

The long-standing **3pm live broadcast blackout**, in place in the UK since the 1960s, is facing renewed scrutiny, with increasing debate over its relevance in today's game.

Originally introduced to prevent televised matches from discouraging in-person attendance, a leading case for the rule remaining now seems to be the protection of lower and non-league attendances. In modern football, a Premier League 3pm kick off, especially among the top teams, has become increasingly rare - while the previous section shows the modern fan consumes football far beyond just live viewing.

So where do the fans of both professional and non-league clubs stand?

ONLY

38%

OF NON-LEAGUE  
FANS FEEL THE  
3PM BLACKOUT  
PROTECTS  
NON-LEAGUE  
ATTENDANCES

**27%** OF PROFESSIONAL CLUB  
FANS THINK THE 3PM  
BLACKOUT IS PROTECTING  
NON-LEAGUE ATTENDANCE

## HEADLINE TREND

**MOST FANS DOUBT THE 3PM  
BLACKOUT IS ACTUALLY PROTECTING  
NON-LEAGUE ATTENDANCE**

The 3pm blackout, once a cornerstone policy to safeguard matchday attendances, is **losing credibility in the eyes of all fans**. Data shows that the majority of both professional and non-league supporters doubt its effectiveness in protecting lower-tier and non-league attendances, suggesting the rule may now be more tradition than practical tool.

As football continues to evolve, with top-tier matches becoming less frequent at the traditional slot and viewing options multiplying, **the blackout's relevance appears increasingly limited**, raising questions about whether it still serves the fans it was designed to protect.

# THE MATCHGOING GATEWAY

For generations, going to matches has been at the heart of football fandom. But for many supporters today, particularly at the top end of the pyramid, the ability to attend in person is becoming increasingly difficult.

As habits evolve and access to televised matches becomes more central to how people follow the game, the question is *whether long-standing rules like the 3pm blackout still serve their original purpose*, or risk leaving modern fans behind.

**55%** OF PROFESSIONAL  
FOOTBALL CLUB  
FANS SAY THEY'D BE  
OPEN TO ATTENDING  
NON-LEAGUE GAMES

**40%** YET 4 IN 10 CAN'T  
NAME THEIR LOCAL  
NON-LEAGUE CLUB

26%

**26% OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUB FANS SAY THEY DON'T FEEL CONNECTED TO NON-LEAGUE, BUT THE BIGGEST DRIVER FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDANCE AT A NON-LEAGUE GAME IS INVITATION BY A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER.**

## HEADLINE TREND

**THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY. OUR SURVEY SHOWS A CURIOSITY AND WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE EXISTS. THERE'S A VISIBILITY GAP, RATHER THAN A LACK OF INTEREST.**

This is where the role of existing non-league supporters becomes especially important. The data suggests that **personal invitation is the single biggest driver** of first-time attendance. In this sense, growth in non-league football is not solely dependent on marketing or structural change, but on social behaviours – friends bringing friends, families attending together, and communities extending invitations.

# THE OPPORTUNITY

Across the findings, a clear picture emerges of two distinct but overlapping football cultures in the UK – one rooted in tradition, scale and global reach, and the other defined by proximity, authenticity and community.

Taken together, the findings point to a complementary relationship rather than a competitive one. **Professional football and non-league football serve different needs** within the modern fan ecosystem. One delivers scale, spectacle and tradition; the other offers connection, accessibility and authenticity.

Non-league day presents a unique moment to bridge that gap – not by asking fans to choose between levels, but by encouraging them to experience both. In doing so, it reinforces the idea that the future of football lies not just in its global appeal, but in the strength and sustainability of its grassroots foundations.

With over half of professional club fans open to attending, the potential to grow the non-league game is undeniable. By championing its unique strengths and empowering existing fans to bring others along, non-league day 2026 can act as a powerful catalyst, **reconnecting supporters with the heart of the game** and ensuring the future of football remains as vibrant at the grassroots as it is at the top.

FUEL  
FANS'  
PASSION  
FOR  
SPORT

