



South Asians  
*in sports*

**dynata**<sup>1</sup>

2025 -26

# South Asians in Sports

Member Survey

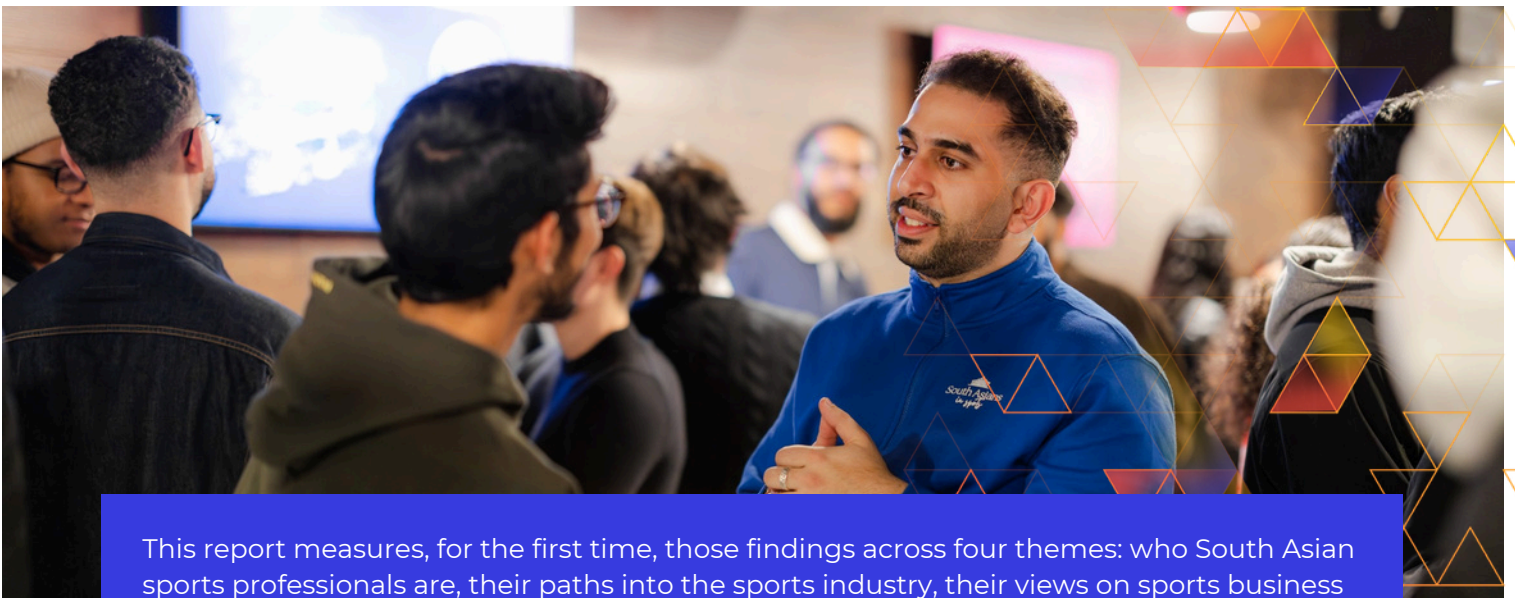


# South Asians in Sports Survey Results: **Summary**

South Asians in Sports (SAIS) is the premier network of South Asians across the global sports industry. Founded as a nonprofit 501c3 in 2017, SAIS was built on the belief that South Asians belong at every level of the sports world, from the field to the front office. Today, SAIS pursues this mission by connecting, amplifying, and advocating for the diaspora in sports. The organization provides access to resources, opportunities, networking, mentorship, and education for a community of over 1,500 members globally. Until now, data has not existed to validate one of the fastest-growing talent pools in sports.

The momentum is real. South Asian professionals are leading in major league front offices, business operations, entrepreneurship, private equity, global agencies, media companies, and technology platforms. They are breaking into roles and rooms that previous generations rarely accessed. Yet until now, no formal research has captured who these professionals are, their impact, how they built their careers, or what they believe about the future of sports. In 2026, SAIS set out to change that with its inaugural survey of South Asians working in the sports industry across North America. More than 160 sports professionals participated, spanning teams, leagues, agencies, media, and technology companies from entry-level professionals to C-suite executives.

South Asian refers to individuals with ethnic, cultural, or familial roots in the eight countries of the Indian subcontinent and surrounding region, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, a region that represents approximately 25% of the world's population. It is also important to recognize that many Indo-Caribbean individuals maintain a strong sense of South Asian identity, reflecting the diasporic migration of South Asian communities to the Caribbean beginning in the 19th century.

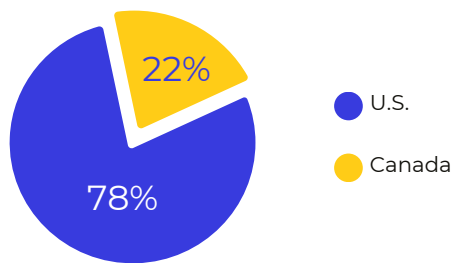


This report measures, for the first time, those findings across four themes: who South Asian sports professionals are, their paths into the sports industry, their views on sports business trends, and their participation in sports. For SAIS, this research is both a milestone and a starting point for the community it serves.

# Who are South Asians in Sports?

## OVER 160 PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY

While this survey captures responses from 160 members, it's just a snapshot — the SAIS community is much larger, with over 1,500 known working professionals and growing monthly.



Spread across age ranges:



\*Does not add up to 100%



# 62%

Have an advanced degree with representation across 100+ colleges & universities spanning U.S., Canada, Europe, India, and Australia.

Most common undergraduate colleges and universities include Columbia, Northwestern, UPenn, Rutgers, York University, and University of Toronto.



### WHAT WAS THEIR PATH TO THE SPORT INDUSTRY?



Sport Management/Kinesiology is gaining in popularity as a college major.

### WHERE DO YOU WORK?

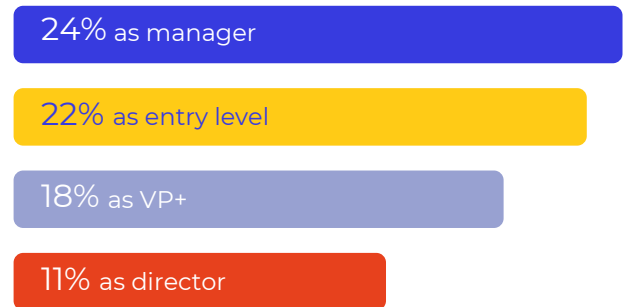


\*Does not add to 100%

There is representation across major leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, MLS, PGA, USTA, Premier League, NWSL, and teams (NFL, NBA, WNBA, MLS, MLB).



### SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS ARE PRESENT FROM ENTRY LEVEL TO THE C-SUITE WITH:



- Entry level roles primarily work at Teams, Agencies, and Financial Services.
- Senior professionals more likely to work at League, Media, and Tech.
- Females account for 30% of South Asians in Sports, but only 13% of VP+.



**SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS SPAN NUMEROUS FUNCTIONS:**



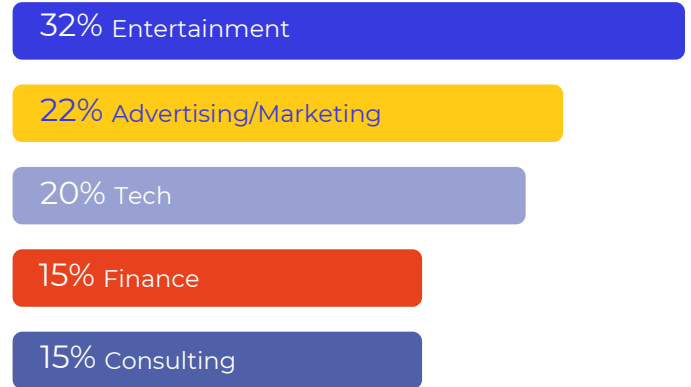
- Senior stakeholders hold more Strategy & Operations and BizDev roles.
- Junior stakeholders are in more Event Mgmt, Sponsorship, and Marketing.

**COMMON PATHS FOR BREAKING INTO THE SPORT INDUSTRY:**



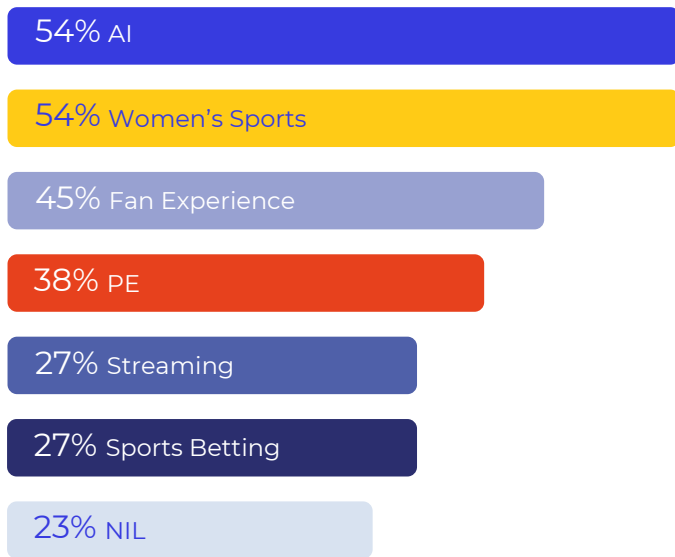
Professional Degrees were most helpful in breaking into Agencies and Media companies vs. Teams and Leagues.

**BEFORE THEY BROKE INTO SPORTS, THEY WORKED ACROSS MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES:**

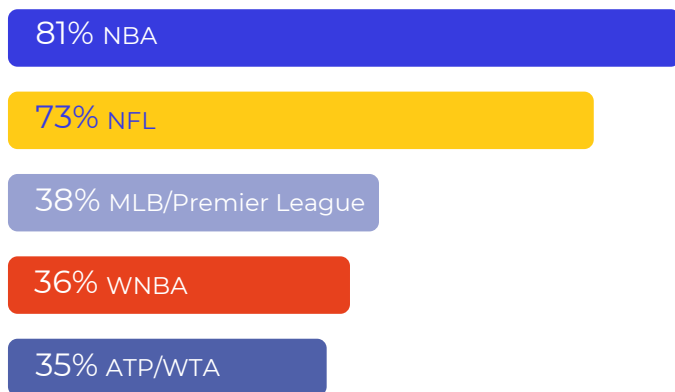


# Views on the Sports Business Industry

## TRENDING SPORTS BUSINESS TOPICS



## THE MOST POPULAR SPORTS TO WATCH FOR SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS:

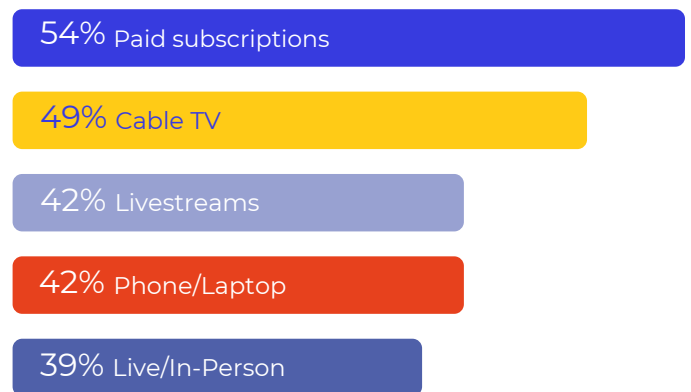


NBA & NFL are most watched with Gen X consuming both at the highest rate; Gen X also watches ATP/WTA and Golf at the highest rate.



\*MLB and Premier League both received 38% of responses and are combined here for simplicity

## VIEWING PLATFORMS VARY ACROSS:



- Cable TV is almost on par with subscriptions services and live streaming, with 50%+ of Gen Z & Gen X watching sports on Cable.
- Gen Z consume sports live at the highest rate followed by Gen X.

### HOW DO SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS GET SPORTS BUSINESS NEWS



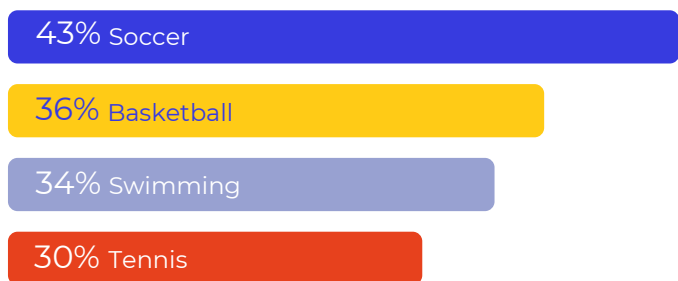
Gen Z is most likely to get their sports business news on Social Media while Millennials and Gen X favor sports publications

## South Asians in Sports background playing sports - **past, present, and future**

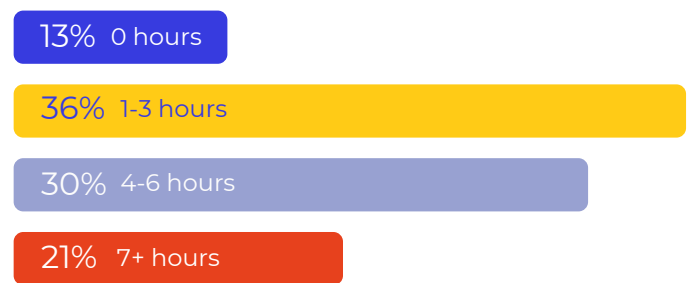
- South Asians in Sports competed at the collegiate level with 34% playing sport in college with Tennis, Cricket, and Soccer being the most common.
- As adults, South Asians in Sports have a 90% participation rate in recreational sports with 98% Gen X playing sports as adults. **Basketball, tennis, pickleball, soccer are most common sports played.** For the 32% of South Asians in Sports that have children, 89% have their children in sports across
- Soccer, Basketball, Swimming, Tennis, and others (all > 30%).

### 32% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE CHILDREN

Of those **89%** have their children in sports and play the following:



### TIME SPENT FOR CHILDREN'S SPORTS



- 28% of parents say they are either likely or very likely to pursue D1, Olympic, or Professional sports for their child.
- 36% of parents say they are either likely or very likely to pursue D2, D3, or club sports for their children.

# Testimonials

**Name:** Jay Adya, Managing Partner  
**Title:** Managing Partner, Elysian Park Ventures

“Outside of the obvious (rising team values, women’s sports, etc), I think one of the biggest forthcoming trends is the financialization of sports - an explosion of trading volume in sports-related categories, with financial markets now adopting sports as an asset class (Goldman and JPMC have dedicated sports desks), growing global PE interest, and increasing platforms geared towards sports based outcomes (prediction markets, but there are others). **The world is now more transactional and sports is the perfect industry to benefit from it.**”

**Name:** Megha Parekh  
**Title:** Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, Jacksonville Jaguars  
Crisis Counselor, Crisis Text Line

“My background has fundamentally shaped both how I approach my work and how I define success. As the child of immigrants, I was raised with a deep appreciation for opportunity, discipline, and resilience. There was an understanding early on that nothing would be handed to me—preparation, consistency, and work ethic were non-negotiable. That mindset has been invaluable in an industry like sports, which is highly competitive and fast-moving. It’s helped me stay grounded, navigate high-pressure situations, and remain focused on long-term impact. My love of sports and music comes in part from the fact that it **provides a shared culture that allows people from different backgrounds to come together.**”

**Name:** Sheel Tyle  
**Title:** Owner & Alternate Governor, Portland Trail Blazers

“One of the clearest trends in sports is internationalization. Talent pipelines are more global, fan bases are more global, and the commercial future of leagues and teams is more global. The organizations that will win are the ones that understand **sports is no longer a domestic business with occasional international reach — it is a global business at its core.**”

“What I see in the NBA is a deeper internationalization of the league. You see it in the talent, where global players are increasingly among the game’s defining stars. You see it in the audience, with fandom becoming more international every year. And you see it in the business, where **future growth will come from thinking globally, not just domestically.**”



# Conclusion

This study provides a clear and data-backed view into the composition, career pathways, and perspectives of South Asians working across the North American sports industry. Several consistent themes emerge.

## SOUTH ASIANS REPRESENT A HIGHLY EDUCATED, STRATEGICALLY POSITIONED SPORTS WORKFORCE

South Asians in sports are disproportionately well educated, with nearly two-thirds holding advanced degrees and representation spanning more than 100 colleges and universities globally. They are concentrated in major sports hubs, most notably New York City and Toronto, and are embedded across teams, leagues, agencies, media, technology, and financial services.

Their functional footprint skews toward **strategy, operations, marketing, and business development**, particularly at senior levels, reinforcing the role South Asians increasingly play in shaping commercial, operational, and analytical decision-making across the sports ecosystem.



## ENTRY INTO SPORTS IS ACCESSIBLE EARLY BUT ADVANCEMENT REQUIRES TIME, EXPERIENCE, AND NETWORKS

The data shows that the most common entry point into the sports industry is at the entry-level or manager stage, typically through internships, online applications, or professional degrees. However, progression beyond the manager level becomes meaningfully more difficult without:

- **Extended tenure in sports** (10+ years is typical for director and VP+ roles).
- **Prior experience in adjacent industries** such as entertainment, consulting, or finance.
- **Strong referral networks**, which become the dominant pathway into senior leadership roles.

## GENDER REPRESENTATION NARROWS SHARPLY AT SENIOR LEVELS

While women account for **30% of South Asians in sports overall**, they comprise only **13% of VP+ roles**, underscoring a compounding representation gap at senior levels. This mirrors broader industry patterns and suggests that diversity gains at entry and mid-career levels are not yet translating into executive leadership at the same pace.

## SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS ARE DEEPLY ENGAGED AS PROFESSIONALS AND PARTICIPANTS

Respondents are not only working in sports; they are deeply immersed in sports as fans and participants.

- The NBA and NFL dominate viewership across generations.
- Basketball is both the most watched and most played sport.
- Recreational participation is extremely high (90% overall), and nearly all Gen X respondents report playing sports as adults.
- Among parents, sports participation for children is nearly universal, with meaningful time and financial investment.



This high level of engagement reinforces the authenticity and lived experience South Asians bring to the sports business.

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES REFLECT BOTH INNOVATION AND PRAGMATISM

AI and Women's Sports emerged as the top trends across all seniority levels, signaling a shared belief in where long-term value and disruption lie. However, generational differences are notable:

- **Early-career professionals** are more bullish on emerging revenue categories such as sports betting.
- **Senior leaders** are more focused on private equity, investment dynamics, and structural change.

This split reflects differences in responsibility, exposure, and proximity to capital decisions and suggests an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue within organizations.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SPORTS INDUSTRY

Collectively, these findings point to several outcomes worth emphasizing:

- South Asians are not a niche presence in sports, they are a growing, influential talent base embedded across nearly every sector of the industry.
- The industry benefits from their strategic, analytical, and cross-industry skill sets, particularly at moments of technological and business transformation.
- Structural barriers around advancement, referrals, and leadership representation still shape who rises to the top.
- Diversity in background, career path, and perspective is a competitive asset.

### ABOUT DYNATA

Dynata is the world's largest first-party data company, powering actionable insights that shape global business decision-making at scale. Learn more at [dynata.com](https://dynata.com).

### ABOUT SOUTH ASIANS IN SPORTS

South Asians in Sports (SAIS) is the premier network for South Asian professionals across the sports industry: connecting, amplifying, and advocating for a community that spans the field, the front office, and everywhere in between. Founded in 2017, SAIS is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that provides the networking, mentorship, education, visibility, and community professionals need to build thriving careers in sports. Learn more at [sainsports.com](https://sainsports.com).

### JOIN SAIS

If this report resonated with you, there's a 1500+ member community waiting. South Asians in Sports (SAIS) exists precisely for and because of the professionals documented in these pages. Our organization is volunteer led with a leadership team, board of directors and a powerful coalition of successful South Asians helping each other thrive in the world of sports. Join at [sainsports.com](https://sainsports.com)

### DONATE

Research like this doesn't happen without collaboration and your support. If you believe South Asian professionals deserve to be seen, counted, and connected, consider making a donation to SAIS at [sainsports.com/donate](https://sainsports.com/donate). Contributions go directly toward funding programs, scholarships, in-person opportunities and future research like this. Visit [sainsports.com/donate](https://sainsports.com/donate)



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