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NEW JERSEY WEIGHS IN ON RUTGERS CONTROVERSY

Coach had to go, but behavior probably common in college sports

Two weeks ago, Rutgers University was rocked by the release of video footage showing men's basketball coach Mike Rice throwing basketballs at his players, kicking them and yelling profanities and homophobic slurs. The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* asked New Jersey residents what they thought of the fallout. Nearly all state residents say Rice needed to go, but many feel his behavior was fairly common among high profile college coaches. The poll also found that a majority agree with athletic director Tim Perneti's decision to resign and university president Robert Barchi's decision to stay.

It was the basketball shot-at-the-head heard round the world – or at least in New Jersey. More than 8-in-10 Garden State residents (82%) have heard about the issues surrounding the now-fired Rutgers basketball coach, including 50% who have heard a lot and 32% a little.

Most of those who are aware of the scandal say that it has not changed their opinion of the state university (70%), while 27% now have a more negative view and just 2% have a more positive one. Overall, 58% of all New Jerseyans have a favorable impression of Rutgers compared to just 10% who have an unfavorable one. Another 32% have no opinion. Among Rutgers alumni specifically, 77% have a favorable opinion of their *alma mater* and 15% have an unfavorable one.

Nearly every state resident who has followed the issue (93%) says that Coach Rice's behavior was unacceptable and the vast majority (82%) agree that Rutgers was right to fire him. Most (71%) say the coach's physical abuse and his verbal abuse were equally offensive, while 14% say physically hitting his players was more egregious and 7% say his use of homophobic slurs was worse.

Despite their disapproval, most New Jerseyans feel that this type of behavior is probably widespread in high profile college sports – including 15% who believe it is very common and 37% who say it is fairly common. Another 32% say this type of behavior by college coaches is not too common and 14% say it is not at all common.

As to other university officials involved in the controversy, a majority of New Jerseyans aware of recent events agree (56%) that Tim Perneti needed to resign his position as Rutgers athletic director, while 35% feel this move was not necessary. On the other hand, more (51%) say that the university's president, Robert Barchi, does not need to leave his post, compared to 36% who feel he should tender his resignation because of how he handled this situation.

“It seems that all of the moves taken by Rutgers in the aftermath of the video's release meet with general approval. There is a sizable minority, though, who feel that Perneti should have stayed and Barchi should have resigned,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The long-term impact of the Rice controversy on Rutgers' image and enrollment is unclear. Just 6% of New Jerseyans aware of the issue say that they would actively discourage a high school senior they knew from attending Rutgers.

Some of the verbal abuse uttered by Coach Rice included homosexual references. Most New Jerseyans say that the Rutgers campus is about the same as other colleges when it comes to welcoming gay and lesbian students (62%). Another 8% say Rutgers is more gay and lesbian friendly than most and 6% say it is less friendly.

Also, 44% of New Jerseyans say that Rutgers University puts the right amount of emphasis on its athletic programs, compared to 31% who say it puts too much emphasis on sports. Just 6% say it doesn't focus enough on sports and 20% have no opinion. There is little difference in this opinion between Rutgers alumni and Garden State residents who do not have a direct connection to the university.

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie generally gets positive marks for his role in dealing with the situation at the state higher education system's anchor institution. Just under half (48%) approve of the way he has handled the Rutgers situation while only 19% disapprove. The remaining 33% have no opinion on the governor's role.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 806 New Jersey adults from April 11 to 14, 2013. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Is your general impression of Rutgers University favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF RU ISSUE		
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little	Nothing
Favorable	58%	77%	73%	49%	61%	55%	57%	61%	55%	60%	62%	45%
Unfavorable	10%	15%	8%	10%	12%	9%	9%	9%	13%	15%	7%	2%
No opinion	32%	8%	19%	41%	27%	36%	34%	31%	32%	25%	31%	53%

2. How much have you read or heard about issues surrounding the Rutgers men's basketball coach – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE		
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
A lot	50%	52%	54%	49%	51%	50%	30%	54%	65%
A little	32%	37%	38%	29%	33%	32%	37%	33%	27%
Nothing at all	17%	11%	8%	22%	16%	18%	33%	13%	8%

[Questions 3 through 12 were asked of those who had heard at least a little about the issues surrounding the Rutgers men's basketball coach: moe=+/-3.7%]

3. Has this issue made you think more favorably or less favorably towards Rutgers University, or hasn't it affected your opinion?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
More favorably	2%	7%	2%	1%	3%	1%	5%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Less favorably	27%	31%	20%	29%	29%	25%	20%	25%	34%	32%	19%
Hasn't affected	70%	61%	77%	69%	68%	72%	75%	73%	64%	65%	78%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%

[Question 4 was asked of a random half-sample: moe=+/-5.2%]

4. Do you agree or disagree with the decision to fire head basketball coach Mike Rice because of this issue?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Agree	82%	79%	82%	82%	80%	83%	90%	75%	84%	86%	75%
Disagree	12%	16%	12%	12%	15%	9%	7%	17%	11%	11%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%	8%	3%	8%	5%	3%	10%

[Question 5 was asked of a random half-sample: moe=+/-5.3%]

5. Do you agree or disagree that athletic director Tim Perneti needed to resign because of this issue?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Agree	56%	60%	51%	59%	53%	59%	51%	61%	54%	58%	54%
Disagree	35%	37%	36%	33%	43%	29%	42%	35%	31%	38%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	3%	12%	8%	4%	12%	7%	4%	15%	4%	17%

6. Do you think that Rutgers president Robert Barchi should or should not resign because of how he handled this issue?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Should resign	36%	31%	30%	40%	38%	34%	33%	33%	41%	42%	26%
Should not resign	51%	64%	51%	48%	54%	48%	59%	51%	46%	50%	52%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	5%	18%	13%	8%	19%	8%	16%	13%	8%	22%

7. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Christie has handled the Rutgers basketball issue?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Approve	48%	54%	47%	48%	54%	43%	47%	51%	46%	51%	45%
Disapprove	19%	19%	16%	20%	21%	17%	19%	18%	20%	23%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	33%	27%	37%	32%	25%	40%	34%	31%	34%	26%	43%

8. Coach Rice is seen on video throwing basketballs at his players, kicking them and yelling profanities and slurs. Do you think this kind of behavior is very common, fairly common, not too common or not at all common among coaches in high profile college sports?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Very common	15%	19%	15%	14%	13%	17%	12%	17%	15%	17%	13%
Fairly common	37%	40%	37%	36%	35%	39%	42%	34%	38%	39%	33%
Not too common	32%	30%	30%	33%	37%	27%	29%	32%	33%	28%	37%
Not at all common	14%	11%	14%	15%	14%	14%	16%	15%	12%	13%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	0%	4%	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%

9. Do you think Coach Rice's behavior was acceptable or not acceptable?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Acceptable	6%	10%	8%	5%	8%	4%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%
Not acceptable	93%	90%	92%	93%	91%	94%	94%	92%	93%	94%	92%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%

10. Which part of Coach Rice's behavior was worse – physically hitting his players or yelling homosexual slurs at them – or are both equally as bad?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Physically hitting	14%	14%	14%	13%	22%	6%	22%	12%	10%	14%	13%
Homosexual slurs	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	5%	7%	7%	7%	8%	5%
Both equally	71%	67%	70%	73%	60%	82%	65%	73%	74%	71%	71%
Neither, behavior ok (Q9)	6%	10%	8%	5%	8%	4%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	0%	3%	2%	2%	0%	1%	4%	1%	4%

11. Do you think news organizations have given too much, too little or the right amount of coverage to the men's basketball situation at Rutgers?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Too much	37%	39%	39%	35%	40%	34%	30%	34%	42%	39%	32%
Too little	9%	7%	7%	10%	8%	10%	15%	9%	6%	8%	11%
Right amount	50%	46%	51%	51%	47%	53%	51%	53%	49%	50%	50%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	8%	2%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%	7%

12. After this incident, would you try to discourage a high school senior that you know well from attending Rutgers, or not?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF ISSUE	
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little
Yes	6%	7%	2%	7%	7%	5%	9%	4%	6%	7%	4%
No	92%	91%	96%	91%	92%	93%	90%	95%	92%	91%	94%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%

[The following questions were asked of everyone: moe=+/-3.5%]

13. Compared to other college campuses, do you think Rutgers is generally considered more friendly or less friendly toward gay and lesbian students, or is it about the same as other colleges?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF RU ISSUE		
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little	Nothing
More friendly	8%	27%	9%	5%	11%	6%	11%	9%	5%	10%	6%	8%
Less friendly	6%	9%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	4%
About the same	62%	56%	69%	60%	61%	62%	69%	59%	60%	60%	67%	56%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	9%	16%	30%	22%	26%	13%	27%	29%	24%	21%	32%

14. Do you think Rutgers places too much, too little, or the right amount of emphasis on its athletics program?

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF RU ISSUE		
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little	Nothing
Too much	31%	34%	34%	28%	30%	31%	23%	26%	42%	38%	27%	15%
Too little	6%	8%	6%	5%	7%	4%	9%	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%
Right amount	44%	52%	49%	41%	45%	42%	48%	49%	36%	42%	49%	39%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	5%	11%	26%	17%	22%	20%	20%	18%	14%	17%	41%

15. Have you or anyone in your immediate family ever attended Rutgers?

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF RU ISSUE		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little	Nothing
Yes, self	8%	9%	7%	12%	8%	5%	9%	9%	5%
Yes, other family member(s) only	25%	22%	27%	19%	25%	29%	26%	29%	12%
Yes, self and other	4%	5%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
No one in family	63%	63%	63%	62%	64%	63%	61%	57%	79%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%

The Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from April 11 to 14, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 806 adult residents, including 606 contacted on a landline telephone and 200 on a cell phone. Live interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
39% Dem	48% Male	28% 18-34	64% White
39% Ind	52% Female	38% 35-54	12% Black
22% Rep		34% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	RU ALUMNI IN FAMILY			GENDER		AGE			AWARE OF RU ISSUE		
		Self	Other	No one	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Lot	Little	Nothing
FULL SAMPLE												
Unweighted N	806	108	207	484	391	415	174	273	343	452	243	111
moe	3.5%	9.4%	6.8%	4.5%	5.0%	4.8%	7.4%	5.9%	5.3%	4.6%	6.3%	9.3%
AWARE OF RU SCANDAL												
Unweighted N	695	99	192	400	341	354	123	243	317	452	243	n/a
moe	3.7%	9.9%	7.1%	4.9%	5.3%	5.2%	8.8%	6.3%	5.5%	4.6%	6.3%	n/a

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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