

# THE IMPACT PANEL

Spring 2025



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CENTER FOR WELLBEING,  
WELFARE AND HAPPINESS

# What is the Impact Panel?

**The Center for Wellbeing, Welfare and Happiness at the Stockholm School of Economics, in collaboration with the Swedish Hockey League (SHL), has established a panel with the purpose of studying and learning from the experiences of ice hockey supporters. Both the sport itself and the community surrounding it may, in various ways, influence individuals' quality of life across Sweden.**

The panel will examine participants' experiences of supporting their team, attending games in arenas, following matches through different media channels, and engaging in these activities together with fellow supporters in their local communities as well as nationwide.

It is well established that sports fandom is a highly engaging phenomenon, and for many individuals, their favorite team represents one of the most significant aspects of their lives. The SHL comprises 14 teams located across Sweden, from Skåne in the south to Norrbotten in the north, each playing 52 games during the regular season between September and March. The Impact Panel in spring 2025 will provide unique insights into the ways in which sports fandom contributes to individuals' quality of life

We are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of how sports fandom influences people's happiness and wellbeing, how supporters are affected by their team's successes, and how significant the sense of community with fellow supporters is. The panel will be continuously developed over the coming seasons with new members, questions, and perspectives in order to enhance our analyses.

**In the spring of 2025, we posed questions to the panel the day after a regular-season game. In the coming seasons, we will expand this collaboration with the aim of establishing a globally unique panel, through which we will follow SHL teams and their supporters across all games in both the regular season and the playoffs.**



# Who are the panel members?

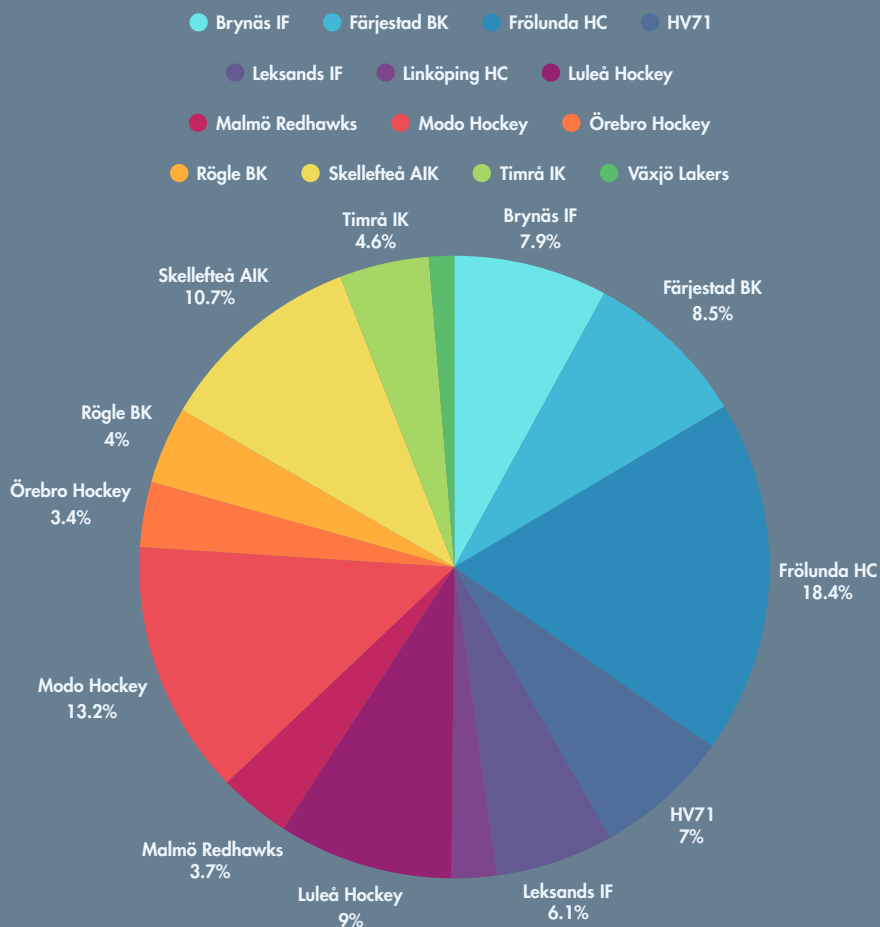
With the support of the SHL and Upplevelseinstitutet, we established a panel during spring 2025, which today comprises approximately 1,500 active members. The panel has been recruited through the SHL clubs' own channels and consists of ice hockey supporters of all 14 SHL teams during the 2024–2025 season.

	N = 8032
16-84	68,1% 31,9%
Age	Men and women

We posed questions to the panel the day after games in nine rounds during the period January to March 2025. This allowed us, among other things, to link the panel's responses to the results of their favorite team's matches and to whether the game was played at home or away. To avoid participant fatigue from too many surveys in a short period, half of the panel members were included in each round.

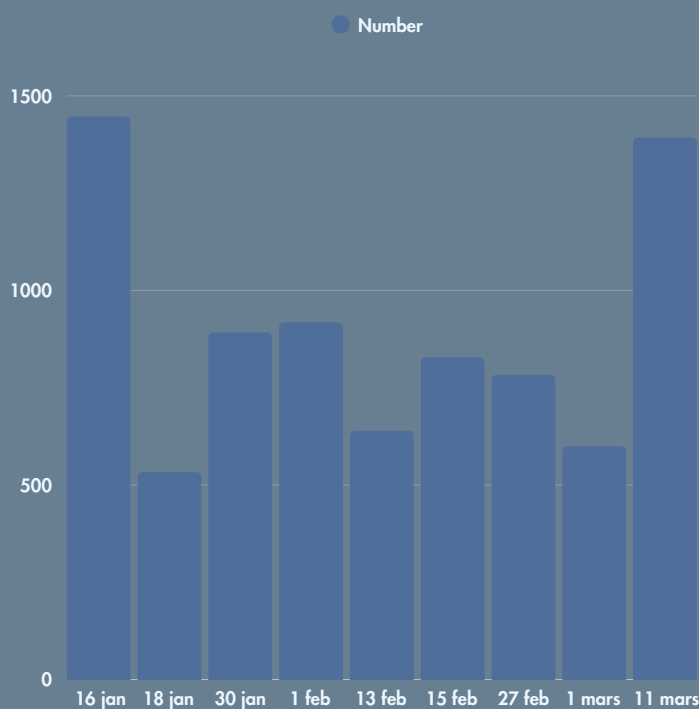
In total, we collected 8,032 responses. Panel participants ranged in age from 16 to 84 years, with an average age of 50 years among respondents. The gender distribution of responses was 68.1% men and 31.9% women.

## Clubs



The pie chart shows what SHL clubs the panel members support.

## Dates



The bar chart shows how many survey responses we received in the nine rounds included in the study. Note that at the first and last occasion, the entire panel was sent the survey

# Conclusion and future direction

## 1. The effects of ice hockey on happiness and well-being

Being a hockey supporter and following your team at the arena or live through various media has positive effects on happiness and wellbeing in supporters' lives in general. This effect seems to arise, at least in part, from active hockey fandom itself and is not entirely dependent on whether the team wins or loses. What appears to be important is experiencing the game live, preferably at the arena, together with other supporters.

## 2. The effects of the hockey game on happiness and well-being

The result of the favorite team naturally also matters. Supporters become happy from sporting success. Interestingly, happiness and wellbeing increase even more when the favorite team wins a home game. We believe that happiness is especially strong when supporters are in the majority at the arena and really feel "at home" with everything created in the local area around the event.

The results show that ice hockey provides more than just sporting value for supporters. Fandom creates engagement and community, bringing happiness, meaning, excitement, life satisfaction, and a positive outlook on the future. Above all, the study shows that the experience—particularly physical presence at the arenas—is especially important for how participants report their happiness and wellbeing.

Future data collection and analyses will build on the knowledge presented in this report. For example, we aim to deepen the understanding of the sport's role in the local community and the significance of community among the team's supporters. We also want to learn more about how wins and losses, dramatic games, and surprising results affect happiness and well-being. Extended effects beyond the sporting experience, at both individual and societal levels, are exciting to explore further.

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