

MBNA, Footballcreditcards.com & SKOPOS research:

True Passion Of British Football Fans Revealed

More than one million fans* have each travelled over 1000 miles to watch a match; Fans have missed the birth of their child to see their team play; New MBNA website helps fans feed their passion www.footballcreditcards.com

The lengths to which UK football fans will go for their beloved teams are revealed today in a poll by [MBNA](#), the largest provider of [football credit cards](#).

The findings, based on responses from over 1000 UK football fans, show the tireless efforts that followers go to and the depth of feeling and commitment that they have for their club.

No distance too far

Fans across the country are prepared to travel far and wide to support their teams. The average football fan lives 90 miles from their home team. Despite this, a third of all fans go to the match at least once a month, and one in ten goes weekly.

- Over half of all football fans, 55 per cent, have travelled over 100 miles. This equates to 11 million fans*
- Seven per cent have travelled over 500 miles
- Five per cent (the equivalent of over one million fans) have travelled 1000 miles to see their team play. This is the equivalent of a 16 hour-long journey
- Three per cent of fans who live over 200 miles from their home ground go every week to watch their team

Mark Goodwin, Aston Villa fan, told MBNA: "I have not missed a domestic game since 1980 and have only missed one game in all competitions since 1983. I have travelled all over the world to countries including Russia, Turkey, Denmark, France, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic and Austria. Last year I was on holiday in Portugal when Villa qualified for the Intertoto Cup. I immediately cut my holiday short by two days, flew back to the UK and jumped straight on another flight to Iceland to see the match."

No occasion too important

The poll reveals that true supporters will do anything to be there on match day. A third of all respondents admitted missing a significant family or personal occasion to attend a football match.

- Three per cent have missed the birth of their child to go to a football match. This equates to 600,000 wives or girlfriends giving birth while their partner watched football*
- Almost one in five, 18 per cent, have missed an important family gathering
- Ten per cent of fans have missed the wedding of a close family member or friend to see the match
- Four per cent have missed a funeral

Lee Griffin, Manchester City fan, told MBNA: "I have missed many important family occasions including my sister-in-law's fiancé's stag weekend and countless birthdays. I even bought my original Maine Road season ticket seats so that, on the very few occasions I am unable to make it to a game, I can re-create the ground in my lounge."

Note: *This is based on a universe of 20 million UK football fans

Simon Harding, Arsenal fan, told MBNA: "I promised my girlfriend when we got together that I would be prepared to miss a match for her. However, despite my promise, this year I have missed Valentine's Day and her birthday! I daren't tell her my plans for Boxing Day."

John Greaves, MBNA spokesperson said: "I don't believe there is a better example of a passionate and loyal person than a true football fan. Our new research demonstrates the great lengths fans go to every week and the emotion and energy they invest in supporting their club."

No information too much

Over three quarters of respondents talk about football at least weekly, with a similar proportion expending at least five hours of their week on football related activity. The top one per cent of fans spend over 40 hours a week watching football matches and related news. Fans turn to TV, websites, newspapers and official club websites to keep up-to-date with news on their team.

Footballcreditcards.com

MBNA commissioned the research to mark the launch of its new website for football fans, footballcreditcards.com. The site is dedicated to passionate fans across the country and provides up-to-minute news, discounted merchandise and competitions featuring exclusive match tickets.

The new site also includes details on football credit cards. MBNA offers branded cards for most of the premiership football teams in England and Scotland at no extra cost to the fan and at very competitive rates. The cards are also good for the club. Every time a purchase is made with the card, money is paid directly to the club at no extra cost to the customer. Over half a million fans have a football credit card and their card usage has resulted in a total of over £10m being paid to these football clubs over the last ten years.

Chelsea fan Caroline Hall has a [Chelsea MBNA credit card](#). She said: "I got my card because I like having the club colours on my credit card; it was an obvious choice for me. My husband

and two children are also super fans and our home is shrine to Chelsea – my son virtually lives in his Chelsea kit. Our three cats are also named after the team or players. I am certain Chelsea, Franco and Rudy also love the blues!”

Deborah Clynes has a [Liverpool MBNA credit card](#) as well as a host of memorabilia. She said: “I have a shrine to Liverpool that I keep at my sister’s house. My husband does not let me keep it at home! My shrine includes photos, pendants and a Liverpool quilt. My sister thinks I am mad, but I don’t care!”

Football pundit Steve Claridge is supporting the launch of MBNA’s [footballcreditcards.com](#). Steve played for over 20 teams in over 1000 league games in a career spanning over 25 years. He recently came out of retirement at the age of 43 to play for his former club Weymouth for free, just for the love of the game.

He said: “I have always had passion – I remember in 1984, my dad gave me a car for my 18th birthday. I loved it but I desperately wanted to watch Liverpool v Roma in the European Cup Final in Rome so I sold the car and used the money to get to the game. We won on penalties and it was all worth it, even if my dad wasn’t best pleased.”

About the research

The survey was carried out for MBNA by [SKOPOS](#) in October 2009. More than 1000 GB adult active football fans – both male and female – were surveyed.