



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Brand Keys 2016 Sports Fan Loyalty Index Finds Patriots, Broncos, and Packers Leading Loyalty Bowl, Browns, Jaguars and Raiders Trailing**

**NEW YORK, NY September 7, 2016** – The 2016 National Football League season kicked off this week with every team planning for an Ideal season leading to Super Bowl 51. This year, the annual kickoff game felt familiar, with the Carolina Panthers opening the season in Denver tomorrow, looking for an early chance to bounce back from last year’s Super Bowl loss.

This is the first time a Super Bowl rematch kicks off an NFL season, but the 24th time [Brand Keys, Inc.](http://brandkeys.com) (brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand engagement and customer loyalty research consultancy, announces the results of its’ annual *Brand Keys 2016 Sports Fan Loyalty Index*, this round focusing on the NFL.

“All the teams have an Ideal outcome in mind and the fans have an ‘ideal’ team in mind,” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys’ founder and president. “Fans see their ideal team as the one that can better meet their very high expectations. Teams that can, *always* win the ‘Loyalty Bowl.’ There’s no trophy, but it comes with something more important – emotionally engaged fans, increased game viewership, and increased purchases of licensed merchandise.”

Here are the 2016 - 2017 season NFL teams that scored when it comes to fan loyalty, and those that didn’t. For comparative purposes, #'s in parentheses are team’s rankings for last season:

#### **Top 5**

- 1. New England Patriots (#1)**
- 2. Denver Broncos (#3)**
- 3. Green Bay Packers (#2)**
- 4. Seattle Seahawks (#3)**
- 5. San Francisco 49ers (#6)**

#### **Bottom 5**

- 32. Cleveland Browns (#30)**
- 31. Jacksonville Jaguars (#31)**
- 30. Oakland Raiders (#32)**
- 29. Washington Redskins (#29)**

## 28. Tampa Bay Buccaneers (#28)

Brand Keys' *Sports Fan Loyalty Index* was designed to help professional sports team management identify precise fan loyalty rankings in their home and national markets "with insights that enable the league and team to identify areas - particularly emotional ones - that could use some strategic brand defense," said Passikoff. "Those insights are always based upon fans' 'ideal team,' which includes values beyond win-loss ratios." *The Sports Fan Loyalty Index* provides an apples-to-apples comparison of the intensity with which fans within a team's home market support the home team versus corresponding values for the fans of the other teams or leagues in the same market.

"Everybody loves a winner but it's important to note that win-loss ratios do not entirely govern fan loyalty. Neither does game attendance figures. When it comes to emotions, and particularly emotional games like the Super Bowl, you could fill that venue fifty times over." observed Passikoff. "That said, there are other powerful and emotionally-based factors that need to be taken into account."

The percentages next to each indicate the contribution they currently make to fan loyalty and engagement:

### **History and Tradition (30%):**

Is the game and the team part of fans' and community rituals, institutions, and beliefs?

### **Fan Bonding (29%):**

Are players particularly respected and admired?

### **Pure Entertainment (21%):**

How well a team does, wins, losses sure. But even more importantly than a win-loss ratio, how entertaining is their play? On-the-field aggressive play *is* an acceptable component of this loyalty driver.

### **Authenticity (20%):**

How well they play as a team, both offense and defense. New managers, as they're seen to be responsible for the genuineness and credibility of their team, can also help lift this driver. So can a new stadium.

"All teams show up with the intention of winning. But the nature of sports fan loyalty is that overall league and team rankings correlate very highly with fans' positive behaviors toward the team and the league. And, since rankings can be influenced by how loyalty drivers are managed, it's critical that team marketers manage strategically. In particular to better meet fan expectations," said Passikoff. "You have to know what fans really expect to do that - beyond a winning season."

The Brand Keys *Sports Fan Loyalty Index* measures all teams in the four Major Leagues. The National Football League is currently rated 1st followed by Major League Baseball. The NBA ranks 3rd with the National Hockey League 4th. "Loyalty is a leading-indicator of behavior and profitability, and should be a key statistic professional sports teams should track as it tells us what fans are going to do," said Passikoff.

“It’s been said that some people think football is a matter of life and death. Depending on your level of fan loyalty, sometimes it can get much more serious than that,” noted Passikoff.

**CONTACT:**

VISIBILITY, Len Stein  
cell 914 527 3708  
[Lens@VisibilityPR.com](mailto:Lens@VisibilityPR.com)  
[www.VisibilityPR.com](http://www.VisibilityPR.com)