Supporting Information

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Table S1. College football teams

BCS Teams*

Alabama	Illinois	Nebraska	Syracuse
Arizona	Indiana	North Carolina	Tennessee
Arizona State	Iowa	North Carolina State	Texas
Arkansas	Iowa State	Northwestern	Texas A&M
Auburn	Kansas	Notre Dame	Texas Tech
Baylor	Kansas State	Ohio State	UCLA†
Boston College	Kentucky	Oklahoma	USC†
California	Louisiana State	Oklahoma State	Vanderbilt
Cincinnati	Louisville	Oregon	Virginia
Clemson	Maryland	Oregon State	Virginia Tech
Colorado	Miami (Florida)	Penn State	Wake Forest
Connecticut†	Michigan	Pittsburgh	Washington
Duke	Michigan State	Purdue	Washington State
Florida	Minnesota	Rutgers	West Virginia
Florida State	Mississippi	South Carolina	Wisconsin
Georgia	Mississippi State	South Florida†	
Georgia Tech	Missouri	Stanford	

Championship teams‡

Alabama	Georgia	Michigan State	Penn State
Clemson	Georgia Tech	Nebraska	Pittsburgh
Colorado	Louisiana State	Notre Dame	Tennessee
Florida	Miami (Florida)	Ohio State	Texas
Florida State	Michigan	Oklahoma	USC+

High-attendance teams§

Alabama	Georgia	Notre Dame	Tennessee
Auburn	Louisiana State	Ohio State	Texas
Clemson	Michigan	Oklahoma	Texas A&M
Florida	Michigan State	Penn State	Wisconsin
Florida State	Nebraska	South Carolina	USC+

*Of the 119 Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) college teams, we consider the 66 Bowl Championship Series (BCS) eligible teams. Division I FBS football does not have a formal tournament to determine an undisputed national champion. Instead, FBS schools play in a series of postseason bowl games, culminating in the BCS National Championship Game, which attempts to crown a single national champion.

†The school was excluded from the dataset for the following reasons: (1) more than one BCS school is in the same county or (2) the school was admitted into the BCS very recently.

‡Schools that have won an Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI) or USA Today Coaches' Poll national championship since 1964.

§The 20 Division I football teams with an average attendance rate that exceeded 70,000 per game from 1998 to 2008 are classified as attendance leaders. See http://www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?key=/ncaa/ncaa/sports+and+championship/general+information/ stats/football/attendance/index.html. Our results are not sensitive to having 20 high-attendance teams. Results are similar if we shrink or expand our list.

Table S2. Impact of college football outcomes on change in incumbent vote share

	Loss before election (1)	Win before election (2)	Impact (3)
Panel A: week of election			
All major teams (n = 1,632)	−2.77	−1.97	0.81
	(0.49)	(0.45)	[1.39]
High-attendance teams (n = 483)	−4.41	−1.47	2.94**
	(1.30)	(0.77)	[2.13]
Championship teams (n = 471)	−4.99	−1.85	3.14*
	(1.52)	(0.73)	[2.04]
Panel B: 1 wk before election			
All major teams (n = 1,632)	−2.97	−1.84	1.13*
	(0.45)	(0.48)	[1.70]
High-attendance teams (n = 483)	−4.53	−1.44	3.09**
	(1.11)	(0.82)	[2.13]
Championship teams (n = 471)	−4.43	−1.87	2.56*
	(1.08)	(0.84)	[1.77]

	2 losses before election (1)	1 win and 1 loss before election (2)	2 wins before election (3)	Impact (4)
Panel C: all games in 10 days before election				
All major teams (n = 1,632)	−3.36	−2.17	−1.74	0.80**
	(0.58)	(0.55)	(0.58)	[2.34]
High-attendance teams (n = 483)	−6.13	−3.25	−0.84	2.58***
	(1.85)	(1.12)	(0.92)	[2.98]
Championship teams (n = 471)	−5.93	−3.64	−1.36	2.28**
	(1.88)	(1.24)	(0.87)	[2.43]

Mean changes in incumbent vote shares and SEs (in parentheses) are reported. The impact and t-statistic (in brackets) for the null hypothesis of equality in means are reported in rightmost columns. Impact estimates are corrected for clustering at the county level.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S3. Effect of football game outcomes on incumbent party vote share

	Week of election		1 wk before	
	1	2	3	4
Football team win before the election	1.12**	1.05**	1.70***	1.47***
	(0.48)	(0.53)	(0.57)	(0.59)
Incumbent's previous vote percentage	0.43***	0.50***	0.43***	0.50***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
President	−3.97***	−3.20***	−3.99***	−3.17***
	(0.65)	(0.75)	(0.66)	(0.76)
Governor	−2.64***	−3.47***	−2.67***	−3.47***
	(0.62)	(0.7)	(0.62)	(0.71)
% black in the county	−0.002	−0.05	−0.01	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.04)	(0.12)
% high school graduates	−0.15	−0.003	−0.12	0.09
	(0.41)	(0.67)	(0.40)	(0.70)
Farms per capita	73.17	72.22	68.92	63.06
	(48.26)	(89.92)	(44.49)	(88.52)
Unemployment rate	0.06	0.01	0.05	−0.01
	(0.11)	(0.22)	(0.11)	(0.21)
Per-capita income	−0.50	−2.81**	−0.60	−2.79**
	(0.66)	(1.31)	(0.64)	(1.38)
Log population	0.34	2.12	0.35	1.99
	(0.28)	(2.24)	(0.26)	(2.22)
Constant	27.26***	16.43	27.17***	17.12
	(5.89)	(28.41)	(5.71)	(28.13)
Year fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes
County fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.19	0.33	0.19	0.33

n = 1,632 for all regressions. Dependent variable is vote for the incumbent party. Regression SEs, corrected for clustering at the county level, are in parentheses. Senator is the excluded category for the office.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S4. Effect of football game outcomes on voter turnout

	Total population		Voting age population	
	1	2	3	4
Total football team wins in 2 wk before the election	−0.53	−0.05	−0.88	−0.21
	(0.41)	(0.21)	(0.54)	(0.28)
Incumbent's previous vote percentage	−0.02*	−0.01	−0.03	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
President	5.15***	0.86***	9.12***	1.30***
	(0.24)	(0.16)	(0.36)	(0.22)
Governor	−2.48***	0.46***	−3.22***	0.62***
	(0.63)	(0.15)	(0.87)	(0.22)
% black in the county	−0.12**	0.03	−0.17***	0.06
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
% high school graduates	4.84***	2.51***	5.95***	1.72**
	(0.91)	(0.65)	(1.21)	(0.8)
Farms per capita	16.03	−57.97	149.43*	−15.01
	(63.26)	(7.88)	(83.43)	(89.2)
Unemployment rate	−0.00	0.00	0.24	0.00
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.26)
Per-capita income	−0.40	−0.95	1.78	4.79**
	(1.33)	(1.72)	(1.60)	(2.24)
Log population	1.71***	3.29	2.68***	6.08*
	(0.66)	(2.37)	(0.86)	(3.11)
Constant	1.34	−7.74	4.14	−33.38
	(7.89)	(26.72)	(1.44)	(35.81)
Year fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes
County fixed effects?	No	Yes	N0	Yes
R^2	0.362	0.746	0.427	0.753

n = 1,632 for all regressions. Dependent variable is number of voters divided by total population and voting age population. Regression SEs, corrected for clustering at the county level, are in parentheses. Senator is the excluded category for the office.

*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S5. Heterogeneity by level of fan support

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total football team wins in 2 wk before the election	0.70*	0.64	0.92**	0.66	−0.29	−0.32
	(0.37)	(0.42)	(0.39)	(0.43)	(0.52)	(0.53)
Incumbent's previous vote percentage	0.43***	0.50***	0.43***	0.50***	0.50***	0.50***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
President	−3.97***	−3.18***	−3.95***	−3.18***	−3.18***	−3.18***
	(0.66)	(0.76)	(0.66)	(0.76)	(0.77)	(0.77)
Governor	−2.66***	−3.49***	−2.69***	−3.49***	−3.48***	−3.48***
	(0.62)	(0.71)	(0.62)	(0.70)	(0.72)	(0.72)
% black in the county	−0.002	−0.05	−0.009	−0.06	−0.05	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.04)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)
% high school graduates	−0.15	−0.01	−0.24	−0.05	0.03	0.03
	(0.40)	(0.67)	(0.42)	(0.68)	(0.67)	(0.67)
Farms per capita	71.44*	52.75	56.31	45.60	46.60	46.60
	(42.92)	(81.33)	(44.72)	(83.02)	(83.56)	(83.56)
Unemployment rate	0.03	−0.01	0.02	−0.07	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.11)	(0.21)	(0.11)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Per-capita income	−0.61	−2.93**	−0.56	−2.99**	−3.26**	−3.26**
	(0.65)	(1.32)	(0.65)	(1.34)	(1.36)	(1.36)
Log population	0.36	1.73	0.30	1.70	1.90	1.90
	(0.29)	(2.26)	(0.28)	(2.25)	(2.30)	(2.30)
High-attendance team × total football team wins	1.77**	1.78**	——	——	1.60*	2.92***
	(0.85)	(0.78)			(0.83)	(1.09)
Championship team × total football team wins	——	——	1.47*	1.64*	——	——
			(0.89)	(0.83)		
Public school × total football team wins	——	——	——	——	1.12	1.15
					(0.72)	(0.73)
Public school × high attendance team × total football team wins	——	——	——	——	——	−1.33
						(1.47)
Year fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
County fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.195	0.336	0.195	0.336	0.337	0.337

n = 1,632 for all regressions. Dependent variable is vote for the incumbent party. Regression SEs, corrected for clustering at the county level, are in parentheses. Senator is the excluded category for the office. Indicators for championship and high attendance teams are included in columns 1 and 3, respectively. Those coefficients and the constant for the regression are not reported.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S6. Placebo tests

	1 wk after		2 wk after		2 wk before	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Football team win	0.46	0.43	−0.05	−0.11	0.50	0.15
	(0.55)	(0.53)	(0.60)	(0.51)	(0.49)	(0.44)
Incumbent's previous vote percentage	0.44***	0.51***	0.45***	0.51***	0.43***	0.49***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)
President	−4.02***	−3.27***	−4.00***	−3.26***	−4.23***	−3.68***
	(0.63)	(0.67)	(0.63)	(0.66)	(0.57)	(0.63)
Governor	−2.29***	−3.25***	−2.28***	−3.24***	−2.89***	−3.68***
	(0.72)	(0.78)	(0.72)	(0.78)	(0.62)	(0.66)
% black in the county	0.02	−0.01	0.01	−0.02	0.00	−0.07
	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.05)	(0.15)
% high school graduates	0.22	−0.04	0.19	−0.08	−0.29	−0.25
	(0.36)	(0.60)	(0.36)	(0.61)	(−0.39)	(−0.62)
Farms per capita	41.59	5.46	39.01	51.13	59.25	95.28
	(61.24)	(117.00)	(6.85)	(117.45)	(51.55)	(102.15)
Unemployment rate	−0.03	−0.04	−0.04	−0.03	0.07	−0.10
	(0.13)	(0.23)	(0.13)	(0.24)	(0.11)	(0.19)
Per-capita income	0.49	−1.26	0.48	−1.30	0.05	−1.68
	(0.60)	(1.02)	(0.61)	(1.04)	(0.61)	(1.08)
Log population	0.15	3.52*	0.13	3.67*	0.14	1.32
	(0.28)	(1.88)	(0.27)	(1.94)	(0.27)	(2.05)
Constant	26.49***	−6.96	26.99***	−8.35	29.50***	28.59
	(5.59)	(25.41)	(5.56)	(25.90)	(6.07)	(26.15)
Year fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
County fixed effects?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.20	0.34	0.20	0.34	0.19	0.34
N	1,659	1,659	1,659	1,659	1,792	1,792

Dependent variable is vote for the incumbent party. Regression SEs, corrected for clustering at the county level, are in parentheses. Senator is the excluded category for the office.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S7. Isolating the surprise component of college football outcomes

	1	2	3	4	5
Total football team wins in 2 wk before the election	1.17*** (0.34)	1.10*** (0.37)	1.62*** (0.58)	——	——
Incumbent's previous vote percentage	0.43*** (0.06)	0.50*** (0.06)	0.63*** (0.07)	0.63*** (0.07)	0.63*** (0.07)
President	−3.99*** (0.66)	−3.19*** (0.76)	−3.97*** (1.12)	−3.93*** (1.13)	−3.94*** (1.18)
Governor	−2.67*** (0.62)	−3.48*** (0.70)	−2.86*** (0.98)	−2.86*** (0.98)	−2.86*** (1.03)
% black in the county	−0.002 (0.04)	−0.05 (0.12)	0.26** (0.11)	0.25** (0.11)	0.25** (0.11)
% high school graduates	−0.10 (0.40)	−0.03 (0.69)	1.00 (1.84)	1.47 (1.81)	1.43 (1.89)
Farms per capita	74.53* (44.71)	65.19 (86.83)	443.26 (339.22)	408.69 (34.88)	408.35 (355.18)
Unemployment rate	0.05 (0.11)	0.01 (0.21)	−0.30 (0.49)	−0.25 (0.50)	−0.26 (0.53)
Per-capita income	−0.58 (0.64)	−2.75** (1.37)	−0.66 (2.93)	−0.18 (2.82)	−0.14 (2.98)
Log population	0.36 (0.27)	2.07 (2.2)	1.05 (6.57)	8.61 (6.38)	8.63 (6.68)
Expected no. of wins	——	——	−0.15 (1.31)	——	——
Wins − expected no. of wins	——	——	——	1.61*** (0.58)	2.22 (1.84)
(Wins − expected no. of wins) × public school	——	——	——	——	−0.71 (1.91)
Constant	26.64*** (5.82)	15.71 (27.90)	−106.20 (79.78)	−87.64 (77.31)	−87.90 (8.80)
Year fixed effects?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County fixed effects?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.19	0.34	0.39	0.39	0.39
N	1,632	1,632	838	838	838

Dependent variable is vote for the incumbent party. Regression SEs, corrected for clustering at the county level, are in parentheses. Senator is the excluded category for the office.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S8. Effect of college basketball victories on presidential approval

	1	2	3	4
Wins − expected no. of wins	0.15**	0.07	0.31***	0.13
	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Strong supporter	——	0.28***	——	——
		(0.10)		
(Wins − expected no. of wins) × strong supporter	——	0.29*	——	——
		(0.16)		
Experimental prime	——	——	−0.02	——
			(0.09)	
(Wins − expected no. of wins) × experimental prime	——	——	−0.31**	——
			(0.15)	
Public school	——	——	——	−0.08
				(0.10)
(Wins − expected no. of wins) × public school	——	——	——	0.04
				(0.15)
Female	0.20**	0.24**	0.21**	0.20**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Education	−0.23	−0.27	−0.24	−0.24
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
White	−0.77***	−0.75***	−0.77***	−0.78***
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Unemployed	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.12
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Republican	−2.19***	−2.21***	−2.19***	−2.19***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Age	−0.30	−0.28	−0.30	−0.30
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Constant	2.64***	2.52***	2.65***	2.70***
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.22)

Coefficients are from logistic regression; SEs are in parentheses. n = 3,040 and pseudo r^2 = 0.21 for all regressions.

*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S9. Effect of college basketball victories on presidential approval

	1	2	3	4
Two wins	0.28***	0.15	0.44***	0.21
	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Strong supporter	——	0.14	——	——
		(0.11)		
Two wins × strong supporter	——	0.41**	——	——
		(0.20)		
Experimental prime	——	——	0.06	——
			(0.11)	
Two wins × experimental prime	——	——	−0.32*	——
			(0.19)	
Public school	——	——	——	−0.12
				(0.13)
Two wins × public school	——	——	——	0.10
				(0.20)
Female	0.20**	0.24**	0.21**	0.20**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Education	−0.25	−0.28	−0.25	−0.26
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
White	−0.77***	−0.75***	−0.77***	−0.78***
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Unemployed	0.12	0.13	0.11	0.12
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Republican	−2.18***	−2.21***	−2.19***	−2.18***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Age	−0.30	−0.29	−0.30	−0.30
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Constant	2.56***	2.49***	2.53***	2.66***
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.23)

Coefficients are from logistic regression; SEs are in parentheses. n = 3,040 and pseudo r^2 = 0.21 for all regressions.
*$P < 0.10$; **$P < 0.05$; ***$P < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Table S10. Question wordings for study 2

Gender	What is your gender (female, male)?
Age	In what year were you born?
Unemployed	Which of the following best describes your current employment status (currently working, temporarily laid off, unemployed, retired, disabled, homemaker, student)?
Party identification	Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent (Republican, Democrat, Independent, other)? Would you call yourself a strong (Democrat/Republican) or a not strong (Democrat/Republican) (strong, not strong)? Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party (Republican Party, Democratic Party)?
Ethnicity	What racial or ethnic group best describes you (white, black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Asian-American, Native American, Middle Eastern, mixed race, other)?
Education	What is the highest level of education you have completed (did not graduate from high school, high school graduate, some college but no degree, 2-y college degree, 4-y college degree, postgraduate degree)?
Favorite team	Below, please find a list of the 16 teams that are currently competing in the NCAA college basketball tournament, also known as "March Madness." Of all of these teams, which one is your favorite?
Support level	How supportive are you of the [favorite team] (extremely supportive, very supportive, somewhat supportive, a little supportive, not supportive at all)?
Attention	How closely have you been following the NCAA college basketball tournament, also known as "March Madness" (extremely closely, very closely, somewhat closely, a little closely, not closely at all)?
Presidential approval	Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president (approve, disapprove)?