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Is Polymarket Just Sports Betting? 84.5% of Its Money on an NFL Sunday

Julian Holguín, Vultax Research, Tallinn

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ABSTRACT

On Sunday 27 September 2026 sports and esports took 84.5% of the dollars traded on Polymarket and 83.8% of the contracts. Over sixteen months the dollar share ran from 31% to a low of 22% and up to 46%, and NFL Sundays sat about twenty points above weekdays.

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DATA AVAILABILITY 4 tables and charts are downloadable as CSV and JSON with their sources on the page. **Calculations checked: proof record**.

LIMITATIONS **Method and limits**, below.

84.5%

Sports and esports share of Polymarket's dollars, Sunday 27 September 2026. 95% interval 83.1% to 85.8% of about $92 million; 83.8% of 176.1 million contracts across 7,683 events, 24 hours to 20:39 UTC

46%

Sports and esports share of dollars traded, April 2026. 31% in January 2025 and a low of 22% in June 2025; every fill from January 2025 to April 2026

57%

Sundays in the 2025 NFL season. Share of dollars, against about 35% to 40% from Monday to Friday; the highest day in the archive was Sunday 21 September 2025 at 73.6%

20 of 20

Largest events that were sports or esports. 13 were NFL games; together they took 39.4% of the day's volume

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The short answer

On an NFL Sunday, mostly. In the 24 hours to 20:39 UTC on Sunday 27 September 2026, sports and esports took 84.5% of the dollars traded on Polymarket (95% interval 83.1% to 85.8%) and 83.8% of the contracts, counting every event on the venue.

It is not always so. Across every fill from January 2025 to April 2026 the share of dollars ran from 31% to a low of 22% in June 2025 and up to 46%, and in the 2025 NFL season Sundays ran about twenty points above weekdays: 57% against about 35% to 40%. Read again the day after an NFL Sunday, in the 24 hours to 22:59 UTC on Monday 19 October 2026, the share was 58.0% of contracts. This is one Sunday, one Monday and a monthly series. The Sunday shows how far sport can go; the series shows how much of the money it usually is.

The page measures what is traded, not how a contract is classified in law. That question is in the courts, set out in **Is Polymarket legal in the US?** and case by case in the **prediction-market lawsuit tracker**.

One Sunday, every event counted

Every event that traded on Polymarket's international venue in the 24 hours to 20:39 UTC was counted, 7,683 of them, open or already settled. Sports took 70.6% of the volume and esports 13.2%; crypto took 10.4% and politics 3.2%. All twenty of the largest events were sports or esports, thirteen of them NFL games. The largest, Chiefs vs. Dolphins, carried 8.9 million contracts across 81 markets, and together the twenty took 39.4% of the volume. 41% of the day's volume was in events that had already settled, so a list of open markets alone misses much of it.

The venue's own volume figure counts contracts, not dollars. The 24-hour field on its public event feed, volume24hr, matched contracts traded to within 5% when checked against the venue's trade feed for 19 markets in five categories, and it summed to 176.1 million in this window. The dollar share was estimated from the trade feed for 256 markets drawn in proportion to their volume, about $92 million in all; read as dollars, the volume field would put the day's trading at about twice that. A second full count 26 minutes later gave 84.1% of contracts.

Category	Events	Share of contracts
Sports	2,746	70.6%
Esports	259	13.2%
Crypto	2,039	10.4%
Politics	1,416	3.2%
Weather and climate	365	1.2%
Economy and finance	295	0.4%
Culture	183	0.4%

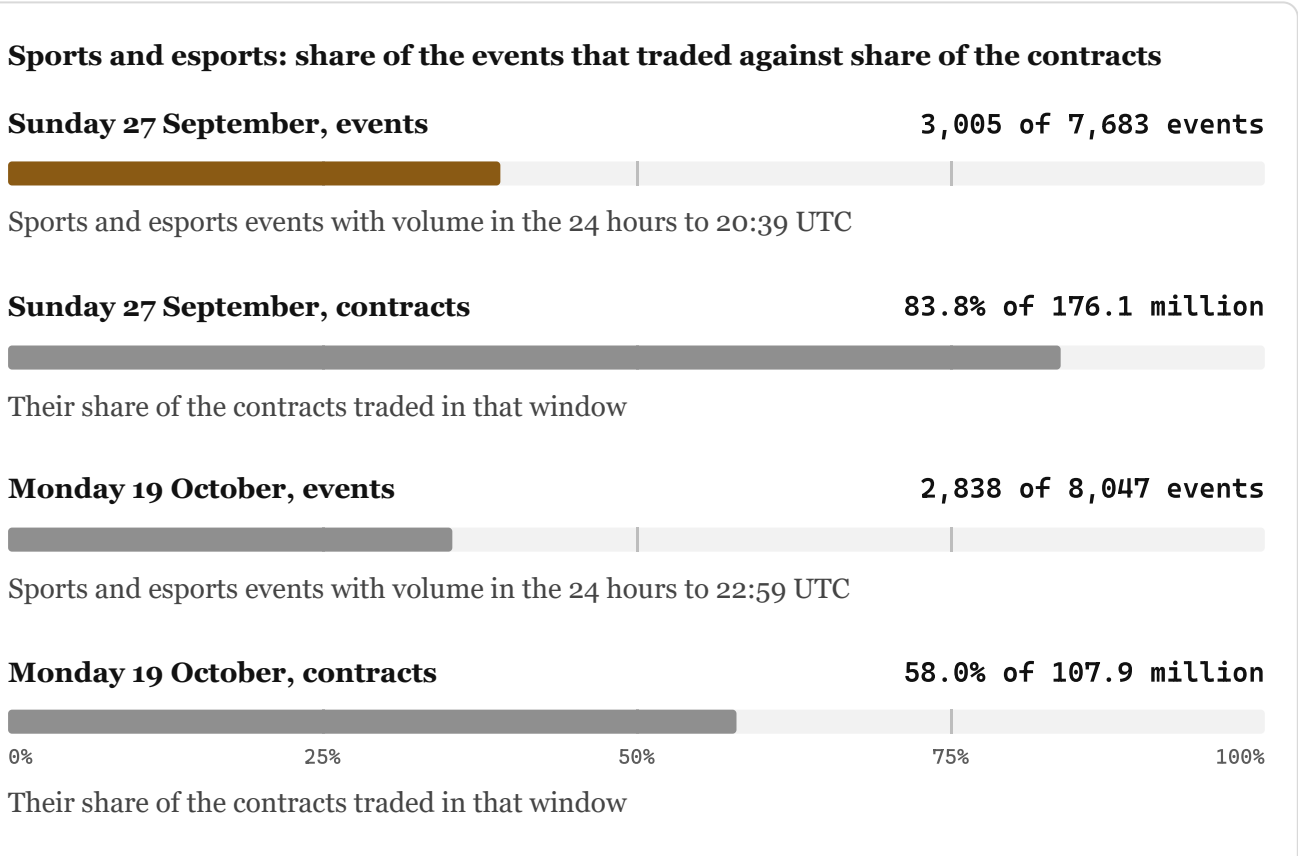
Category	Events	Share of contracts
Geopolitics	136	0.3%
Science and technology	214	0.2%
Other	30	0.03%

Polymarket's international venue, every event with volume in the 24 hours to 20:39 UTC on Sunday 27 September 2026, counted once under the venue's own category tags. Polymarket US is a separate exchange and is not counted.

What is listed and what is traded

The same Sunday reads differently by the count of events. Sports and esports were 3,005 of the 7,683 events that traded, 39.1%, and took 83.8% of the contracts. Crypto was 26.5% of the events and 10.4% of the contracts; politics and geopolitics, 20.2% of the events and 3.5% of the contracts.

Most of what Polymarket lists is not sport. Most of what it trades on a weekend is. A game is a short, busy market: it opens a few days ahead, trades hardest during play and settles within hours. A political or crypto market can stay open for months while trading a little each day.



Polymarket's international venue, every event with volume in each 24-hour window, counted once under the venue's tags. The volume field counts contracts.

Sixteen months of the mix

Across 714.7 million fills, the step up came with the 2025 NFL season: 38% of dollars in August, 47% in September. Politics moved the other way, from 46% in January 2025 to 27% in April 2026, and crypto took most of what sport and politics did not.

The archive counts dollars and ends on 28 April 2026; the September count is contracts, with a dollar estimate beside it. Inside the archive the two units disagree by more than twenty points in the first two months of 2025, and by six points at most from March 2025 on.

Sports and esports share of dollars traded on Polymarket, by month

Every fill in the archive, January 2025 to April 2026; politics and geopolitics shown for comparison.

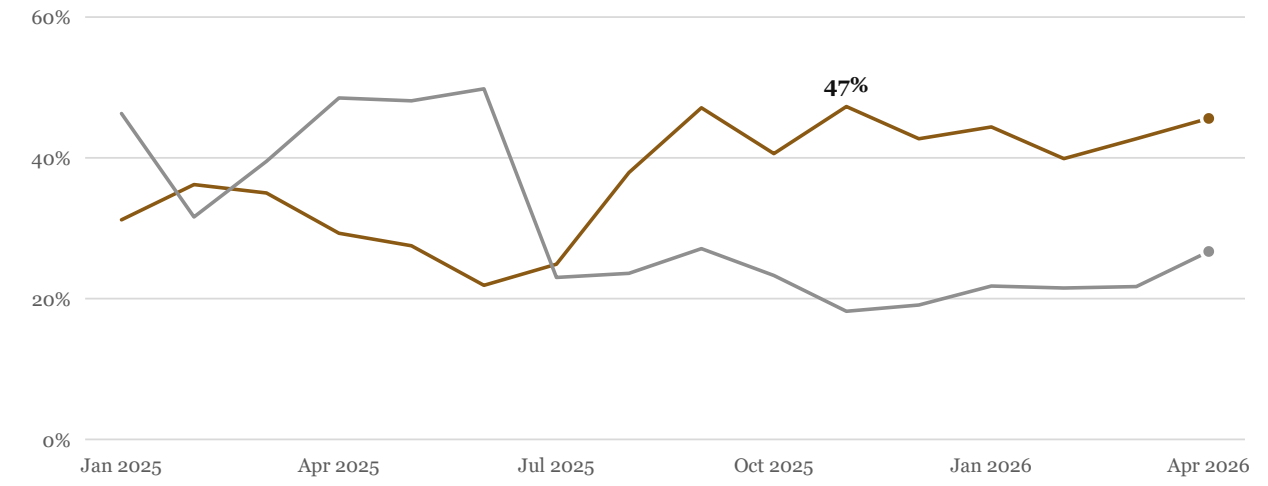


Chart: Vultax Research

▶ Show the numbers

Sundays against weekdays

The day of the week explains part of the gap between April's 46% and the 84% counted on 27 September. In the 2025 NFL season, 4 September 2025 to 8 February 2026, Saturdays, the college football day, ran almost as high as Sundays, and Monday to Friday sat at about 35% to 40%. The rest is growth: the highest day in the archive, Sunday 21 September 2025, reached 73.6%.

Sports and esports share of dollars traded, by day of the week

2025 NFL season, 4 September 2025 to 8 February 2026. Days run from 05:00 UTC, midnight in New York in winter, so a Sunday holds the whole NFL Sunday.

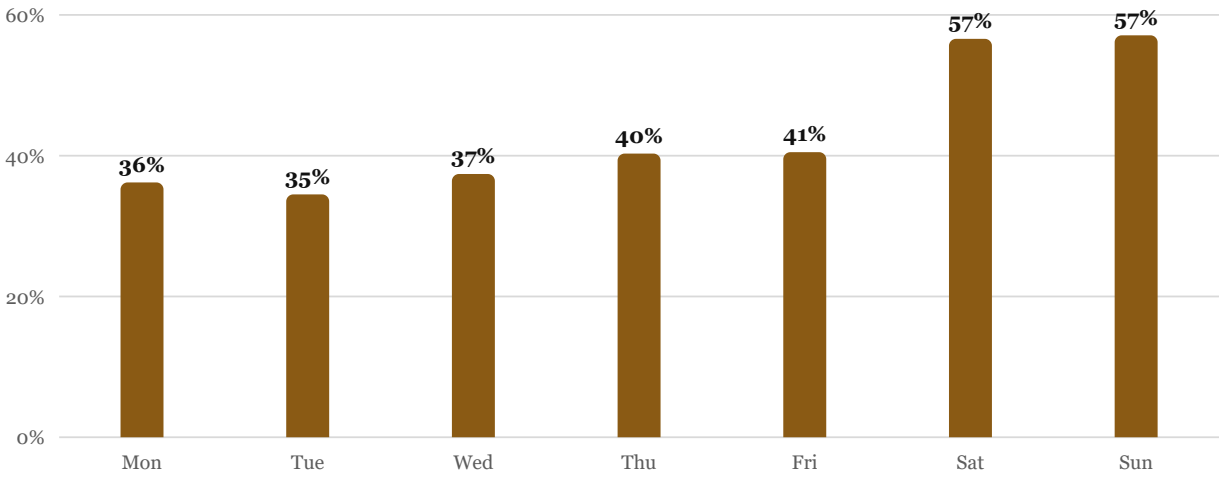


Chart: Vultax Research

▶ Show the numbers

The day after an NFL Sunday: 58.0%

To see how far the share falls off a Sunday, we read the whole feed again the same way in the 24 hours to 22:59 UTC on Monday 19 October 2026: 8,047 events and 107.9 million contracts. Sports and esports were 2,838 of those events, 35.3%, and took 58.0% of the contracts, against 83.8% on Sunday 27 September. Crypto took 19.0%, politics and geopolitics 13.9%, and economy and finance 5.6%.

The window still held some of the NFL. It opened at 6:59 pm in New York on Sunday, so it took in Sunday night's game, Cowboys vs. Packers, which started at 00:20 UTC on Monday and was the largest event of the window at 7.3 million contracts. Monday Night Football, Commanders vs. 49ers, was set to start at 00:15 UTC on Tuesday, after the window closed, with 2.4 million contracts already traded. All NFL events together took 10.9%. Soccer took 22.8% and tennis 14.6%; the second-largest event was the Federal Reserve's October decision, at 3.9 million.

Sixteen of the 20 largest events were sports or esports, against all 20 on the Sunday, and together the 20 took 30.4% of the contracts. Another 91 events that had closed more than a day before the read still showed 24-hour volume, 0.2 million contracts in all; they were left out.

Category	Events	Share of events	Share of contracts
Sports	2,638	32.8%	51.2%
Crypto	2,122	26.4%	19.0%

Category	Events	Share of events	Share of contracts
Politics and geopolitics	1,756	21.8%	13.9%
Esports	200	2.5%	6.9%
Economy and finance	543	6.7%	5.6%
Weather and climate	386	4.8%	2.1%
Everything else	402	5.0%	1.3%

Polymarket's international venue, every event with volume in the 24 hours to 22:59 UTC on Monday 19 October 2026, counted once: esports first, then sports, crypto, politics or geopolitics, weather, economy and finance, and the rest, by the venue's own tags. Contracts, not dollars; Polymarket US is not counted.

Gambling or trading: what the mix does not decide

State gaming regulators say a contract that pays on the result of a game is a sports wager that needs a state licence. The CFTC and the exchanges say a contract listed on a registered exchange is a swap that federal law governs. The share of volume on games does not settle that. The courts are settling it: two of three federal appeals courts have sided with the states on preliminary relief, and three petitions ask the Supreme Court to decide.

The venue counted here is Polymarket's international exchange, which is closed to U.S. users. Polymarket US is a separate CFTC-registered exchange, and **Is Polymarket legal in the US?** covers where it may offer sports contracts.

Method and limits

The count of 27 September 2026 read Polymarket's public event feed in full, ordered by 24-hour volume until the field reached zero, and counted each event once under the venue's own tags. The dollar estimate re-priced 256 markets drawn in proportion to their volume from the venue's trade feed, with the interval taken from 300 draws. The monthly and weekday figures use every fill in the Polymarket-v1 archive published by Boka Qin and Rui Yang (CC BY 4.0), January 2025 to 28 April 2026. The Monday count of 19 October 2026 read the same feed the same way and is reported in contracts only.

One Sunday in the NFL season is the high end of the week, not a typical day, and the archive ends five months before it. How deep the books are, and at what hours each sport trades, is in **Polymarket sports and esports markets**.

REFERENCES

Polymarket Gamma API — events by 24-hour volume https://gamma-api.polymarket.com/events/keyset?order=volume24hr&ascending=false&limit=100

Read in full at 20:39 UTC on 27 September 2026, until the volume field reached zero; volume24hr counts contracts; read again at 22:59 UTC on 19 October 2026

Polymarket data API — trades https://data-api.polymarket.com/trades

Dollars paid for the 256 sampled markets, and the check of the volume field against contracts traded

Boka Qin and Rui Yang — Polymarket-v1 Database (TimeSeventeen) https://huggingface.co/datasets/TimeSeventeen/Polymarket-v1

Every fill from 1 January 2025 to 28 April 2026, published under CC BY 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/); the monthly and weekday shares are Vultax calculations on it.

Vultax: Is Polymarket legal in the US? https://vultax.com/research/is-polymarket-legal-in-the-us-2026

Where sports event contracts may be offered, venue by venue

Vultax: Prediction market lawsuit tracker https://vultax.com/research/prediction-market-lawsuit-tracker

The court cases over sports and event contracts, checked against the court record

Vultax: Polymarket sports and esports markets https://vultax.com/research/polymarket-sports-and-esports-markets

Order-book depth and trading hours by sport

Selected arithmetic checked in Lean 4.35.0 https://vultax.com/datasets/research-proof-library-2026-10-25/articles/is-polymarket-just-sports-betting.md

Selected exact-rational calculations and displayed-value consistency checks, checked by Lean 4.35.0, Lean kernel replay and Nanoda. Not a proof of the underlying observations, statistical conclusions, legal claims or production code.

Per-article scope records and Lean package https://vultax.com/datasets/research-proof-library-public-2026-10-28/README.md

Historical scope records and selected Lean checks; the complete package is temporarily unavailable.

Figures describe Polymarket's international venue: one full count on 27 September 2026 and every fill from January 2025 to April 2026. They measure what was traded, not how any contract is classified in law. Nothing here is legal or financial advice.