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Research · 2026

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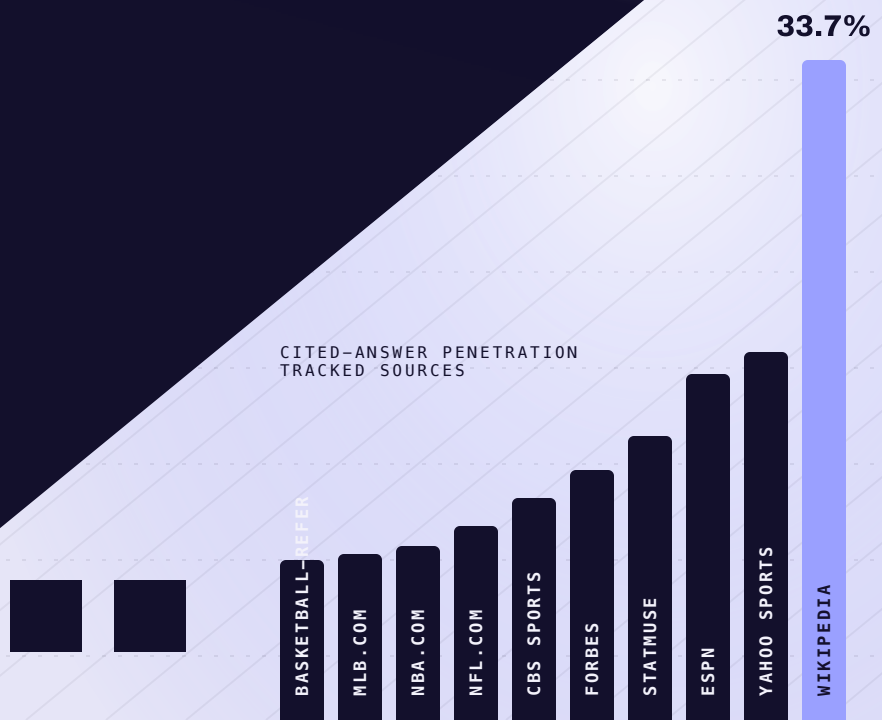
SPORTS RETRIEVAL INDEX 2.0

Which sports sources AI engines cite
288 AI answers · October 30, 2026

Measured :
October 30, 2026
24 questions × 3 runs · 288 AI answers

Engines :
ChatGPT · Claude · Gemini · Perplexity
plus 71 Google AI Overviews

Prepared by :
5W Public Relations
5wpr.com



AT A GLANCE

Wikipedia leads. Yahoo Sports is second.

Wikipedia: 95/282 (33.7%; 95% interval 28.4–39.4%). Yahoo Sports: 53/282 (18.8%; 95% interval 14.7–23.8%). The most-cited untracked site, foxsports.com, was cited in 37 answers.

> Version 2. This version replaces the first version of this study, first published July 20, 2026. It uses measured counts, so the two versions are not comparable.

288
AI answers analyzed across ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity

33.7%
of 282 grounded answers cited Wikipedia (95/282)

19
tracked sources cited at least once (of 20)

100%
of Google searches showed an AI Overview (71 of 71)

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KEY FINDINGS

01 What the data shows

MOST CITED TRACKED SOURCES

95/282 (33.7%)

Wikipedia leads this measured set. Wikipedia: 95/282 (33.7%; 95% interval 28.4–39.4%). Yahoo Sports: 53/282 (18.8%; 95% interval 14.7–23.8%). The ranking covers tracked sources only. Untracked cited domains include foxsports.com (37 answers), si.com (32 answers), statista.com (20 answers), reddit.com (18 answers), visualcapitalist.com (16 answers), youtube.com (16 answers), directv.com (15 answers), nbcsports.com (15 answers), sportingnews.com (15 answers), yardbarker.com (14 answers).

NAMED FIRST

59/288 (20.5%)

ESPN was the first source named in 59 of 288 answers, more than any other tracked source. Its average first position was 1.6. Wikipedia was named first in 5 of 288.

GEMINI SKEW

15/72 (20.8%)

Gemini named StatMuse in 15 of 72 answers. The other engines named it in 2 to 6 of 72.

OWN-SITE CITATIONS

95/282 (33.7%)

Wikipedia's own domains were cited in 95 of 282 grounded answers, more than any other tracked source. Yahoo Sports followed at 53 of 282. 1 of 20 tracked sources had 0 of 282.

AIO TRIGGER

71/71 (100%)

Google AI Overviews appeared on 71 of 71 searches (CI 94.9–100%).

AIO LEADER

21/71 (29.6%)

ESPN was the source named most often in AI Overviews, at 21 of 71, followed by Wikipedia at 18 of 71 (25.4%). In the four-engine set, ESPN was named in 50 of 288 answers (17.7%).

TOP DOMAIN

53/282 (18.8%)

en.wikipedia.org was cited in 53 of 282 grounded four-engine answers, with 93 of 1,908 citations (4.9%). espn.com came second with 75 citations in 39 answers (13.8%).

THE LEADERBOARD

02 Tracked sources by cited-answer penetration

Ranking of tracked sources by citation penetration across 282 grounded answers; not textual mentions.

	BRAND	RATE	NAMED IN
1	Wikipedia	33.7%	95/282
2	Yahoo Sports	18.8%	53/282
3	ESPN	17.7%	50/282
4	StatMuse	14.5%	41/282
5	Forbes	12.8%	36/282
6	CBS Sports	11.3%	32/282
7	NFL.com	9.9%	28/282
8	NBA.com	8.9%	25/282
9	MLB.com	8.5%	24/282
10	Basketball-Reference	8.2%	23/282
11	Pro-Football-Reference	6.7%	19/282
12	Baseball-Reference	5.3%	15/282
13	FanGraphs	4.3%	12/282
14	The Athletic	4.3%	12/282
15	Bleacher Report	3.9%	11/282

02 THE LEADERBOARD

The full list

Tracked platforms only. Text mention and first-mention data remain separate in the evidence.

#	TRACKED SOURCE	CITED ANSWERS	CITATION PENETRATION	95% INTERVAL	FIRST MENTION	OWN-DOMAIN CITATION	CITATION SHARE
1	Wikipedia	95/282	33.7%	28.4–39.4%	3	33.7% (95/282)	7.1%
2	Yahoo Sports	53/282	18.8%	14.7–23.8%	3.2	18.8% (53/282)	3.8%
3	ESPN	50/282	17.7%	13.7–22.6%	1.6	17.7% (50/282)	5%
4	StatMuse	41/282	14.5%	10.9–19.1%	3	14.5% (41/282)	3.1%
5	Forbes	36/282	12.8%	9.4–17.2%	2.2	12.8% (36/282)	3.7%
6	CBS Sports	32/282	11.3%	8.2–15.6%	2.8	11.3% (32/282)	1.7%
7	NFL.com	28/282	9.9%	7–14%	1.7	9.9% (28/282)	2.5%
8	NBA.com	25/282	8.9%	6.1–12.8%	1.2	8.9% (25/282)	1.8%
9	MLB.com	24/282	8.5%	5.8–12.4%	2.5	8.5% (24/282)	3%
10	Basketball-Reference	23/282	8.2%	5.5–11.9%	1.9	8.2% (23/282)	1.4%
11	Pro-Football-Reference	19/282	6.7%	4.4–10.3%	2	6.7% (19/282)	1%
12	Baseball-Reference	15/282	5.3%	3.2–8.6%	1.3	5.3% (15/282)	1.1%
13	FanGraphs	12/282	4.3%	2.5–7.3%	3.3	4.3% (12/282)	0.8%
14	The Athletic	12/282	4.3%	2.5–7.3%	3.3	4.3% (12/282)	0.6%
15	Bleacher Report	11/282	3.9%	2.2–6.8%	3.7	3.9% (11/282)	0.6%
16	Sports Business Journal	11/282	3.9%	2.2–6.8%	1.1	3.9% (11/282)	0.8%
17	Sportico	9/282	3.2%	1.7–6%	2	3.2% (9/282)	0.6%
18	Front Office Sports	6/282	2.1%	1–4.6%	2.9	2.1% (6/282)	0.3%
19	Spotrac	6/282	2.1%	1–4.6%	1.5	2.1% (6/282)	0.3%
20	Hockey-Reference	0/282	0%	0–1.3%	4.5	0% (0/282)	0%

02 UNTRACKED SOURCES

Top untracked domains beside the tracked ranking

The ranking covers tracked sources only. Untracked cited domains include foxsports.com (37 answers), si.com (32 answers), statista.com (20 answers), reddit.com (18 answers), visualcapitalist.com (16 answers), youtube.com (16 answers), directv.com (15 answers), nbcsports.com (15 answers), sportingnews.com (15 answers), yardbarker.com (14 answers).

DOMAIN	CITED ANSWERS	PENETRATION	CITATION SHARE
foxsports.com	37/282	13.1%	2.4%
si.com	32/282	11.3%	2.1%
statista.com	20/282	7.1%	1.2%
reddit.com	18/282	6.4%	0.9%
visualcapitalist.com	16/282	5.7%	0.8%
youtube.com	16/282	5.7%	0.8%
directv.com	15/282	5.3%	0.8%
nbcsports.com	15/282	5.3%	0.8%
sportingnews.com	15/282	5.3%	1.6%
yardbarker.com	14/282	5.0%	0.7%
draftsharks.com	12/282	4.3%	0.9%
nytimes.com	12/282	4.3%	0.6%
sportspro.com	12/282	4.3%	0.6%
theanalyst.com	12/282	4.3%	0.6%
mlssoccer.com	11/282	3.9%	1.2%
bleachernation.com	10/282	3.5%	0.7%
spglobal.com	10/282	3.5%	0.6%
aol.com	9/282	3.2%	0.8%
fantasypros.com	9/282	3.2%	0.8%
footballguys.com	9/282	3.2%	0.5%

02 TEXT MENTIONS

Secondary measure: text mentions

Answers naming each tracked source in text, out of 288 four-engine answers. This is secondary; the main ranking above is citation penetration of grounded answers.

#	TRACKED SOURCE	NAMED ANSWERS	APPEARANCE RATE	NAMED FIRST
1	**ESPN**	76/288	26.4%	59
2	**Forbes**	33/288	11.5%	23
3	**CBS Sports**	30/288	10.4%	1
4	**Baseball-Reference**	29/288	10.1%	21
5	**The Athletic**	28/288	9.7%	3
6	**Basketball-Reference**	27/288	9.4%	11
7	**StatMuse**	26/288	9.0%	4
8	**Pro-Football-Reference**	24/288	8.3%	11
9	**Sportico**	23/288	8.0%	0
10	**FanGraphs**	20/288	6.9%	4
11	**NFL.com**	17/288	5.9%	14
12	**Wikipedia**	17/288	5.9%	5
13	**Yahoo Sports**	17/288	5.9%	3
14	**NBA.com**	16/288	5.6%	13
15	**Bleacher Report**	15/288	5.2%	0
16	**MLB.com**	15/288	5.2%	8
17	**Sports Business Journal**	14/288	4.9%	12
18	**Front Office Sports**	12/288	4.2%	0
19	**Hockey-Reference**	10/288	3.5%	0
20	**Spotrac**	4/288	1.4%	2

PROFILES

03 The top eight, side by side

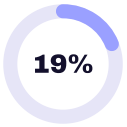


RANK 1

Wikipedia

Cited in 95/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 28.4–39.4%

3	33.7%	7.1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (95/282)	citation share



RANK 2

Yahoo Sports

Cited in 53/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 14.7–23.8%

3.2	18.8%	3.8%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (53/282)	citation share

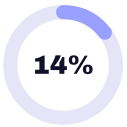


RANK 3

ESPN

Cited in 50/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 13.7–22.6%

1.6	17.7%	5%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (50/282)	citation share

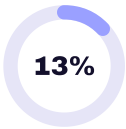


RANK 4

StatMuse

Cited in 41/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 10.9–19.1%

3	14.5%	3.1%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (41/282)	citation share



RANK 5

Forbes

Cited in 36/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 9.4–17.2%

2.2	12.8%	3.7%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (36/282)	citation share



RANK 6

CBS Sports

Cited in 32/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 8.2–15.6%

2.8	11.3%	1.7%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (32/282)	citation share

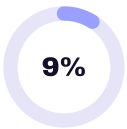


RANK 7

NFL.com

Cited in 28/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 7.0–14.0%

1.7	9.9%	2.5%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (28/282)	citation share



RANK 8

NBA.com

Cited in 25/282 grounded answers · 95% interval 6.1–12.8%

1.2	8.9%	1.8%
first-mention position	owned-domain citation (25/282)	citation share

04

HOW THE ENGINES DIFFER

Same questions, different answers

Cited-answer penetration for tracked sources, using each engine's own grounded-answer denominator.

ChatGPT

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Wikipedia	**16.7%**
NFL.com	**12.5%**
NBA.com	**12.5%**
Sports Business Journal	**11.1%**
Forbes	**9.7%**
Basketball-Reference	**9.7%**

Claude

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 66 GROUNDED

Wikipedia	**39.4%**
ESPN	**33.3%**
Yahoo Sports	**22.7%**
CBS Sports	**18.2%**
Forbes	**13.6%**
MLB.com	**13.6%**

Gemini

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Wikipedia	**54.2%**
StatMuse	**34.7%**
Forbes	**15.3%**
CBS Sports	**12.5%**
Basketball-Reference	**9.7%**
Pro-Football-Reference	**9.7%**

Perplexity

72 ASKED | 72 RETURNED | 72 GROUNDED

Yahoo Sports	**50%**
ESPN	**38.9%**
Wikipedia	**25%**
StatMuse	**16.7%**
The Athletic	**16.7%**
Forbes	**12.5%**

04 BY ENGINE

Which sources each engine cites

Up to three tracked sources cited in the most grounded answers, for each engine.

ENGINE	MOST-CITED TRACKED SOURCES (CITED ANSWERS / GROUNDED ANSWERS)
Four chat engines	Wikipedia (95/282), Yahoo Sports (53/282), ESPN (50/282)
Google AI Overviews	Wikipedia (18/71), ESPN (16/71), NBA.com (7/71)
ChatGPT	Wikipedia (12/72), NBA.com (9/72), NFL.com (9/72)
Claude	Wikipedia (26/66), ESPN (22/66), Yahoo Sports (15/66)
Gemini	Wikipedia (39/72), StatMuse (25/72), Forbes (11/72)
Perplexity	Yahoo Sports (36/72), ESPN (28/72), Wikipedia (18/72)

GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS

05 The fifth engine

AI Overview rankings below use citations to tracked source domains; they are not pooled with text-mention rankings.



TRIGGER RATE

71 of 71 successful searches showed an AI Overview. Wikipedia was cited in 18/71 overviews (25.4%). ESPN was cited in 16/71 overviews (22.5%). NBA.com was cited in 7/71 overviews (9.9%). NFL.com was cited in 6/71 overviews (8.5%).

TRACKED PLATFORM RANK IN AI OVERVIEWS (CHAT CITATION RANK IN ARROWS)

1	Wikipedia	25.4%	=	
2	ESPN	22.5%	▲	1
3	NBA.com	9.9%	▲	5
4	NFL.com	8.5%	▲	3
5	Basketball-Reference	8.5%	▲	5
6	Baseball-Reference	8.5%	▲	6
7	Yahoo Sports	7.0%	▼	5
8	Forbes	5.6%	▼	3
9	MLB.com	5.6%	=	
10	Bleacher Report	4.2%	▲	5

06 LEADERS BY QUESTION

Who each question surfaces first

Six questions, ranked by cited-domain penetration within each question's grounded answers.

Q01 · 12 GROUNDED ANSWERS

Pro-Football-Reference 100%

StatMuse	75%
Wikipedia	58.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

Q02 · 12 GROUNDED ANSWERS

Wikipedia 75%

Basketball-Reference	66.7%
StatMuse	50%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

Q03 · 12 GROUNDED ANSWERS

FanGraphs 91.7%

Baseball-Reference	33.3%
Wikipedia	33.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

Q04 · 9 GROUNDED ANSWERS

ESPN 33.3%

TIED WITH NBA.COM, STATMUSE

NBA.com	33.3%
StatMuse	33.3%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

Q05 · 12 GROUNDED ANSWERS

CBS Sports 66.7%

Wikipedia	50%
Yahoo Sports	50%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

Q06 · 12 GROUNDED ANSWERS

Wikipedia 33.3%

Sportico	25%
Sports Business Journal	25%

AI Overview shown on 3 of 3 successful searches

07

WHO THE ENGINES CITE

Most-cited domains

The four engines produced 1,908 citations in total. en.wikipedia.org was cited most often, with 93 citations (4.9%) across 53 answers. Next came espn.com (75), sports.yahoo.com (73), forbes.com (66), statmuse.com (59), mlb.com (56).

FOUR AI ENGINES · SHARE OF 282 GROUNDED ANSWERS

en.wikipedia.org	**18.8%**
sports.yahoo.com	**18.8%**
statmuse.com	**14.5%**
espn.com	**13.8%**
wikipedia.org	**13.8%**
foxsports.com	**13.1%**
forbes.com	**12.4%**
si.com	**11.3%**
cbssports.com	**11.3%**
nfl.com	**8.9%**

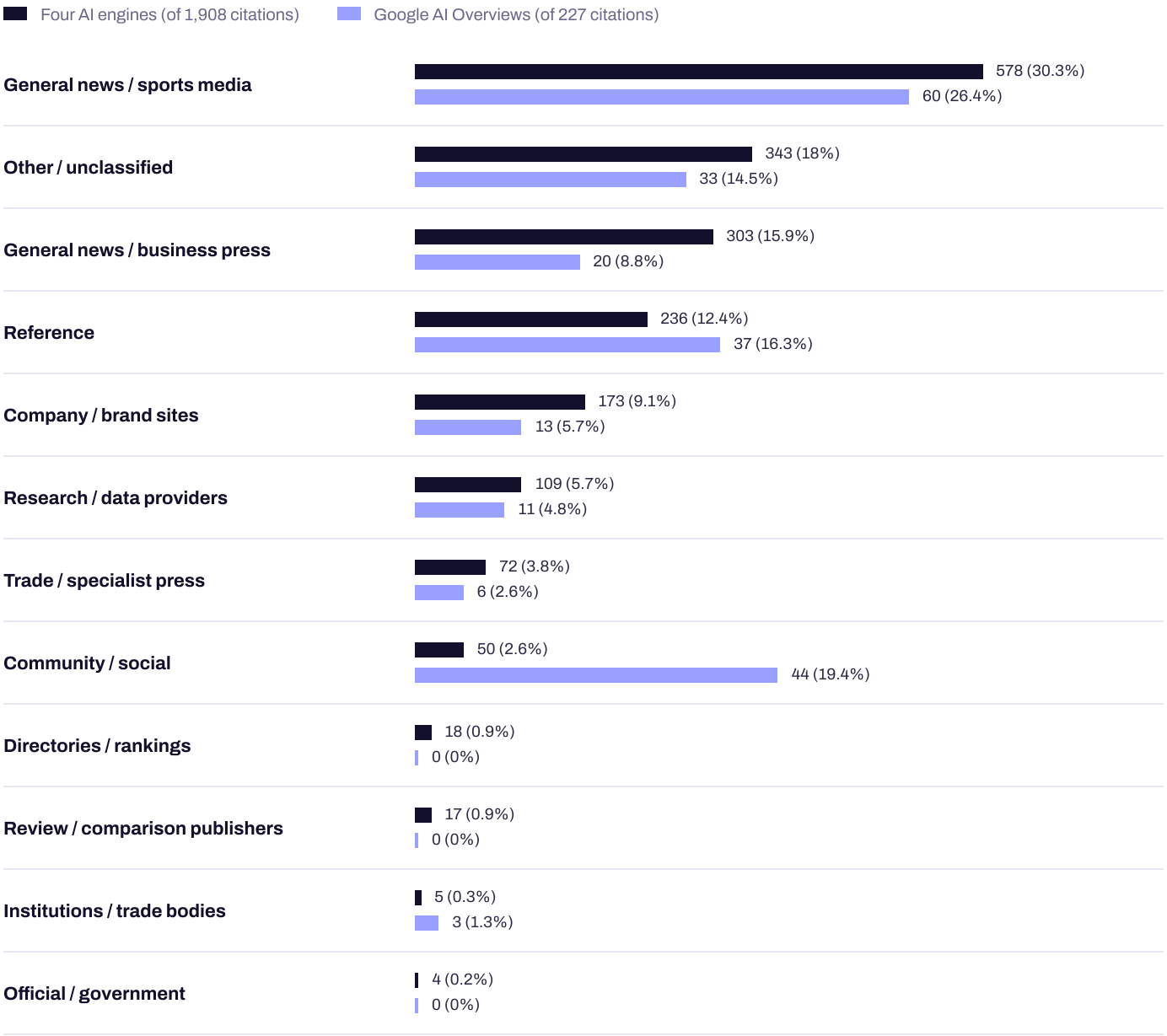
GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS · SHARE OF 71 OVERVIEWS

en.wikipedia.org	**25.4%**
espn.com	**22.5%**
facebook.com	**15.5%**
youtube.com	**12.7%**
reddit.com	**9.9%**
nba.com	**9.9%**
baseball-reference.com	**8.5%**
basketball-reference.com	**8.5%**
quora.com	**7%**
si.com	**7%**

WHO THE ENGINES CITE

08 Citation share by source type

Share of all citations by the type of site cited.



09

WHAT THE DATA SUGGESTS

How can a brand get its facts onto the sports sites AI engines cite?

These steps follow from the measured results above. They describe what the engines cited in this study and are not a guarantee of results.

STEP	WHAT THIS STUDY MEASURED
Put your facts on your own domain.	Wikipedia's own domains were cited in 33.7% of grounded answers, Yahoo Sports' in 18.8% and ESPN's in 17.7%. Wikipedia was named in only 5.9% of answers, yet its own domains were cited in 33.7%.
Keep your facts accurate on the sites engines cite.	The most-cited sites other than the tracked names' own were foxsports.com (in 13.1% of grounded answers), si.com (11.3%), statista.com (7.1%), reddit.com (6.4%) and visualcapitalist.com (5.7%). General news and sports media supplied 30.3% of citations and general news and business press 15.9%.
Check each engine separately.	Claude named ESPN in 37.5% of answers against 19.4% on Perplexity. Gemini named StatMuse in 20.8% of answers against 2.8% on ChatGPT.
Re-run the same questions every month.	Compare counts and intervals, not ranks. The 24 questions are in the appendix.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

10 What AI answers

Q1 Which tracked sources are cited most often?

Wikipedia leads this measured set. Wikipedia: 95/282 (33.7%; 95% interval 28.4–39.4%). Yahoo Sports: 53/282 (18.8%; 95% interval 14.7–23.8%). The ranking covers tracked sources only. Untracked cited domains include foxsports.com (37 answers), si.com (32 answers), statista.com (20 answers), reddit.com (18 answers), visualcapitalist.com (16 answers), youtube.com (16 answers), directv.com (15 answers), nbcsports.com (15 answers), sportingnews.com (15 answers), yardbarker.com (14 answers).

Q2 Which source is named first most often?

ESPN was the first source named in 59 of 288 answers, with an average first position of 1.6.

Q3 How often do Google AI Overviews appear for these questions?

An overview appeared on 71 of 71 searches (100%, CI 94.9–100%). Within those 71 overviews, ESPN was named most often, in 21 (29.6%).

Q4 Which sources do the engines cite?

Across 1,908 four-engine citations, en.wikipedia.org was cited most (93 citations, in 53 of 282 grounded answers), followed by espn.com (75 citations).

Q5 Do the four engines agree?

Only in part. Gemini named StatMuse in 15 of 72 answers, against 2 to 6 of 72 on the other engines. ChatGPT named Wikipedia in 12 of 72 answers, against 0 to 4 of 72 on the other engines.

METHODOLOGY

11 How this study was measured

24	×	3	×	4	=	288	+	71
questions		runs each		AI engines		answers		Google searches · 71 AI Overviews

24 questions asked three times on each of ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity, measured October 30, 2026. United States, English; Google retrieval uses desktop results. Models: gpt-5-mini, claude-sonnet-5-5, gemini-3.6-flash only, sonar-pro. Google AI Overviews come from DataForSEO, not inferred chat answers. Appearance counts returned text, including ungrounded answers; citation rates use grounded answers. Longer overlapping names suppress shorter ones; First mention is the earliest eligible name order. Own-domain rates include declared domains and subdomains; shared parent scopes may count for multiple names and cannot be summed as unique citations.

ENGINE	MODEL IDS CALLED	ASKED	RETURNED	GROUNDED
ChatGPT	gpt-5-mini	72	72	72
Claude	claude-sonnet-5-5	72	72	66
Gemini	gemini-3.6-flash	72	72	72
Perplexity	sonar-pro	72	72	72
Google AI Overviews	DataForSEO Google SERP (live, advanced)	71	71 shown	71

Own-domain citations count a domain plus all its subdomains, with the same rule in every table.

METRIC DEFINITIONS

- Citation penetration: grounded answers citing tracked source domains ÷ grounded answers, with Wilson 95% intervals. Text mentions remain separate in the evidence.
- First mention: average order in which the tracked name first appears (1 = first).
- Own-domain citation: grounded answers citing the tracked name's domains ÷ grounded answers.
- Citation share: citations to the tracked name's domains ÷ all citations.

LIMITATIONS

- Only 20 tracked sources are ranked; results are not an exhaustive market ranking.
- 359 of 360 planned results were returned. 1 AI Overview lookup was excluded after at most three total attempts.
- 71 successful Google searches: 71 overviews shown; 0 without an overview. Failures are excluded, not scored as zero.
- 6 chat answers had no search sources and are left out of the citation figures.
- Removing 2 Core questions naming tracked subjects leaves 261 eligible answers. The top two are Wikipedia (91/261) and Yahoo Sports (53/261); their order does not change.
- Unverified own domains are not available, never zero or guessed. Source types use Company / brand sites only for verified official organisations; other unresolved sites are Other / unclassified.
- Wilson 95% intervals are descriptive; overlapping leading intervals do not establish a sole leader. Measurements do not endorse medical, legal, financial or product claims.
- Citation-style sub-report. The Michael Jordan or LeBron James and Mike Trout questions name people, not tracked sources; they are flagged and the limits note says whether the top sources change without them. League words (NFL, NBA, MLB) are not counted as mentions of the league sites.
- The ranking covers tracked sources only. Untracked cited domains include foxsports.com (37 answers), si.com (32 answers), statista.com (20 answers), reddit.com (18 answers), visualcapitalist.com (16 answers), youtube.com (16 answers), directv.com (15 answers), nbcsports.com (15 answers), sportingnews.com (15 answers), yardbarker.com (14 answers).
- Answers came from each engine's API (model IDs above); the consumer apps can answer differently.

APPENDIX

12 The 24 questions

Questions marked "Core question" are the original study questions, asked word for word. The others are added neutral questions.

#	QUESTION	GROUP	SOURCE
01	Who are the NFL's all-time passing leaders?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
02	Who has the most career assists in NBA history?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
03	What is Mike Trout's career WAR?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
04	Who is better, Michael Jordan or LeBron James?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
05	What are the current NBA standings?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
06	How much are NFL media-rights deals worth?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
07	Which sports teams are the most valuable?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
08	What is the NBA salary cap this season?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
09	What are the best sources for sports business news?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
10	What are the best sites for sports statistics?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	CORE QUESTION
11	Who has the most home runs in MLB history?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
12	Who has the most career points in NBA history?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
13	Which teams have won the most Super Bowls?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
14	What are the current MLB standings?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
15	Who leads the NFL in rushing yards this season?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
16	Who has scored the most goals in Premier League history?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
17	What are the current NFL standings?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
18	Who are the highest-paid athletes in the world?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
19	How much are NBA media-rights deals worth?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
20	Which sports leagues earn the most revenue?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
21	What is the NFL salary cap this season?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
22	Who are the best players in MLS?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
23	What are the best sports news websites?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION
24	What are the best sites for fantasy football advice?	Sports Sources Index 2.0	ADDED QUESTION

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