



# THE 2019/20 PFA W-LEAGUE REPORT



# SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS BUILDING THE GAME



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# FOREWORD

by Kathryn Gill

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Coronavirus has changed the world and transformed football.

The pandemic has been the greatest ever jolt to the modern football industry and will continue to place grave strain on the sport. The football economy will not miraculously rebound, as if operating in isolation from the rest of commerce and the community.

Its lasting effects will be difficult to measure, but the game's reaction will be long remembered.

In simple terms, there are two ways to approach our game's recovery. The first is to use this crisis as an opportunity to create a better football industry. The second is simple and rank opportunism, capitalising on a catastrophe.

Sadly, football's reaction has been the latter. Even at the sport's top level, clubs like Liverpool FC retreated from their "one club" campaign as their women's team was relegated, while the English FA abandoned their entire women's league.

Australia has not fared much better. Club owners within the A-League immediately defaulted to self-interest by moving to shift the burden of COVID-19 on to the players by standing them down without pay and effectively shutting down all football operations. This was done unilaterally and without working with the players to help cooperatively manage what was an awful situation for everybody involved in the sport.

Against this context, we cannot allow opportunism to condemn the progress of the W-League and women's football more generally.

If our belief in women's football is legitimate then there is incredible capacity to use this crisis as an opportunity to build a better business. Coupled with the transformational opportunity co-hosting the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup presents, there is a responsibility to reform the game for the better.

If we choose this path, we will need creativity,

resilience, a long-term commitment to the role of women within football but more importantly we will need to continue to challenge the notion that women's football cannot stand equally alongside men's football.

As players, we need to ensure that our voice remains front and centre and that the momentum that players have built through the W-League doesn't regress. We need to ensure that the long fight to build dignified and valued careers continues.

In compiling this report, there is a significant opportunity now for the W-League to more sharply define its purpose.

Is the W-League a world-leading development pathway designed to catapult our most talented players into the international market?

Recent trends might suggest as much. Several Matildas have secured high-profile moves to huge European and English clubs in the W-League off-season, which challenges the notion of the W-League wishing to directly compete as one of the globally elite footballing leagues.

The option still exists for the W-League and NWSL to work collaboratively to provide a calendar year of football and a partnership that serves both our international and domestic game, but changes to the industries may restrict a mutually-beneficial agreement.

Whichever vision is most compelling and logical for the future of the W-League will require single-minded focus.

Finally, looking forward to the 2020/21 W-League season, I note that the Women's leagues in France, England, Spain and Italy were cancelled whilst Norway hangs in the balance. The NWSL has contracted its 7-month long season into a month-long tournament, concluding late July.

The uncertainty facing the women's game globally is an opportunity for the W-League and

we could bring the W-League season forward to accommodate space in the domestic global football calendar. As a strategic move, this would offer both domestic and international players contract security, greater cohesion, protect the health and wellbeing of players in a country that is tracking well in relation to COVID safety and showcase globally and locally the incredible talent that we can attract to the W-League.

These decisions around the future are anchored in some of the revealing trends and insights from last season's competition.

This report provides context regarding the powerful regional footprint that characterises women's football, the growing attraction of European powerhouse clubs to Australian players and our ongoing capacity to pursue partnerships with the NWSL, with the findings indicating:

- 40% of the 2019/20 Australian born W-League players were developed in regional areas (Players raised in Newcastle are classified as regional players), more than the national population of 29%;
- New South Wales developed the most 2019/20 W-League players, with over 31%, followed by Queensland at just under 15%;
- Australian players are now targeting Europe as their preferred foreign destination, with 93% of foreign-based players now in Europe, up from 39% this time last year;
- fewer Australians are playing in the NWSL, with only 2 contracted in 2020, down from 14 in 2019.

There is no doubt that the progress of the W-League, which has ebbed and flowed and spiked in recent times will be tested by the contracting football economy.

The question for our game is whether we respond to that by demonstrating ingenuity to ensure that our commitment to women's football isn't compromised, or will we default to opportunism.

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# W-LEAGUE SURVEY

## Methodology



Where this symbol appears, you will see data and quotes from our major annual survey of W-League players. Every W-League player was sent a link to the online survey at the conclusion of the 2019/20 season. Between late-March and mid-April, a record 130 players responded to the survey, almost 75% of the playing cohort.

The survey covered a broad range of areas impacting a player's career, from their contract, to work and study outside of football, transition-readiness, assessments of their club, the W-League, Collective Bargaining and the PFA.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



130

Number of players who responded to the 2019/20 survey - nearly 75% of the W-League playing cohort



197

Number of players contracted with W-League clubs in 2019/20, with an average 4.2 seasons of experience



40%

Percentage of Australian-born W-League players developed in regional areas\*

\*Players raised in Newcastle are classified as regional players



93%

Percentage of foreign-based Australian based players now\* based in Europe. Up from 39% in 2019

\*As of 10 July 2020



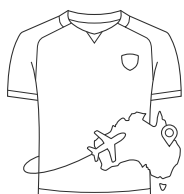
2

Number of Australians contracted in the NWSL, down from 14 in 2019



24

Number of Australians who have played in the NWSL since 2013, all of whom have represented Australia, averaging 65 caps between them



82

Number of Americans who have played in the W-League since 2012/13, with only 19 having appeared for the US Women's National Team



\$411,821

The average spent on total player payments per club, up 13% from last season

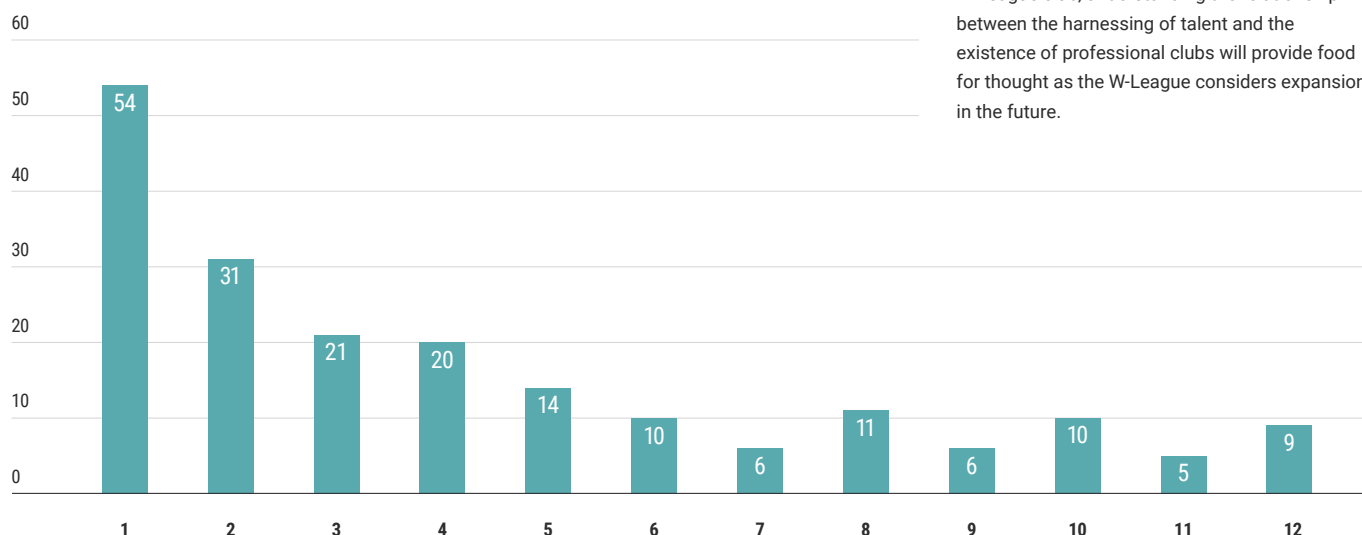


# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

## W-League: The Numbers

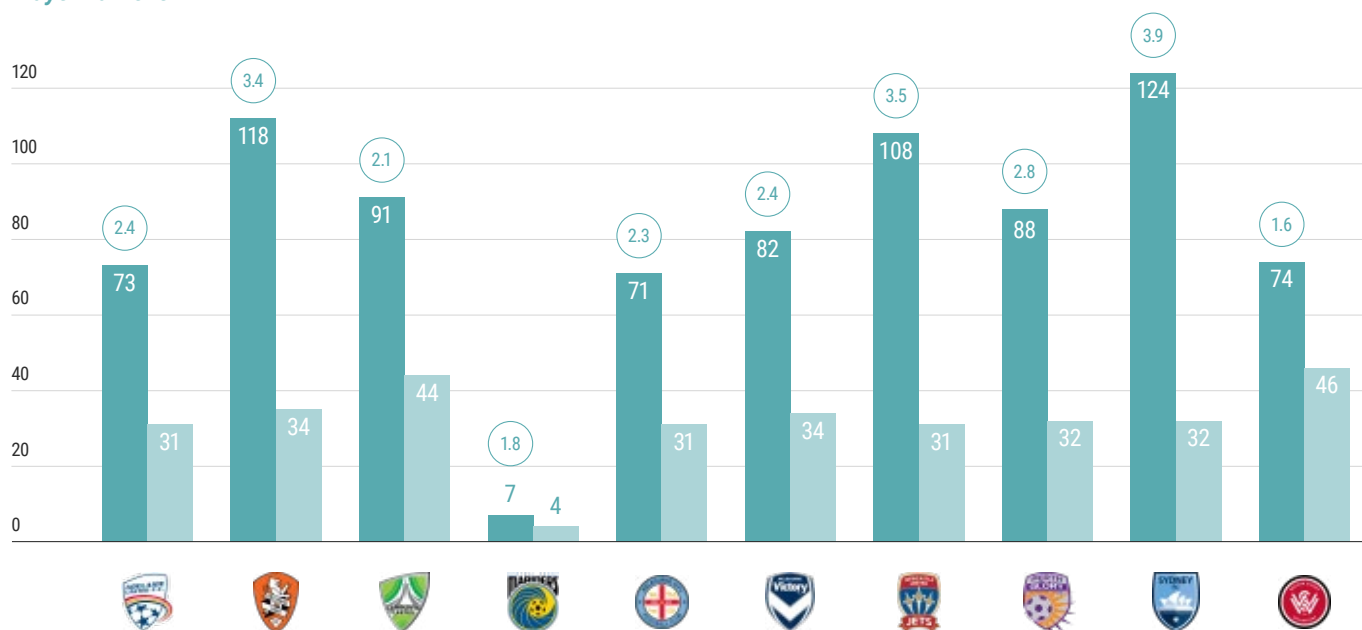
To gain a better understanding of the talent pool involved in the W-League, the PFA explored the depth of experience, club background and member federation distribution in both a metropolitan and regional context. With over 80% of players developed in Australia and only two states and territories not represented by a W-League club, understanding the relationship between the harnessing of talent and the existence of professional clubs will provide food for thought as the W-League considers expansion in the future.

### Experience by Number of Seasons



In all, 197 players were contracted with W-League clubs in 2019/20, with an average 4.2 seasons of experience.

### Player Turnover



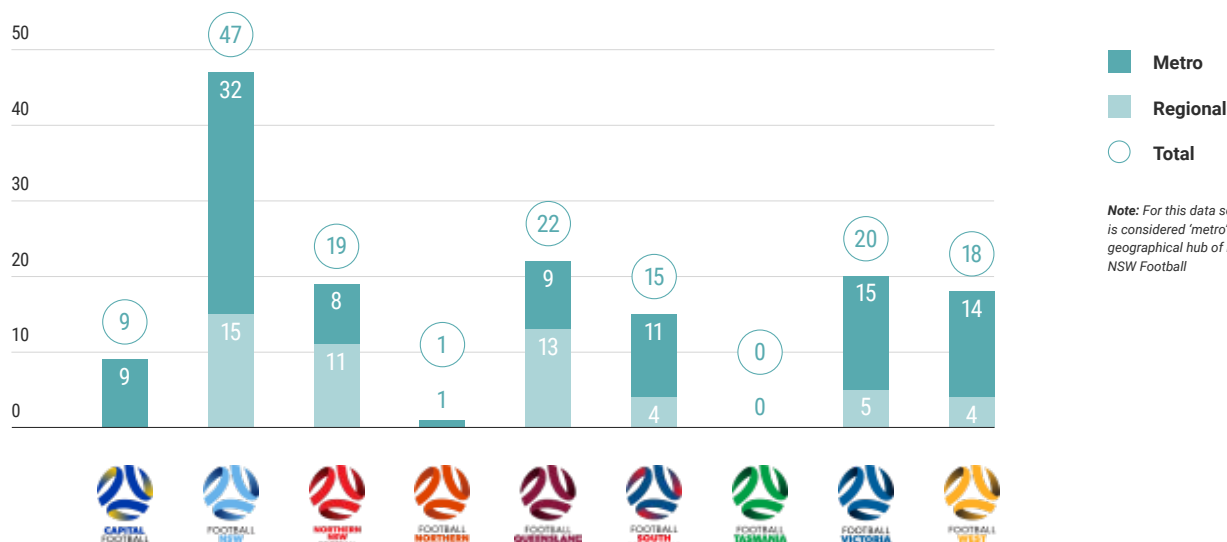
- Total Seasons
- Total Players
- Average Seasons

**Note:** Central Coast Mariners competed in the first two seasons of the competition.

Western Sydney Wanderers has been most prolific in offering a home to players, with 46 players having played at the club since its foundation in 2012. However, their season average of 1.6 indicates a significant turnover of players each

season. Sydney FC (3.9), Newcastle Jets (3.5) and Brisbane Roar (3.4) are the clubs which offer the greatest chance of building consistency with a view to long-term development.

## Member Federation Distribution



Although 160 Australian players are playing in the W-League, nine of them were born overseas before moving to Australia at a young age. They have been excluded from this analysis, which showcases a breakdown of the current W-League playing group through their member federation. New South Wales, with over 31% of participants, represents the largest talent base of W-League

players, with 32 of those 47 (68%) players hailing from Sydney's metropolitan area. Queensland is the next best biggest talent pool, with just under 15% of participants, but with almost 60% of those hailing from regional areas.

In a broader context, the regional representation in the W-League is extremely high, with 53 players,

just over 35%, being developed in a regional centre. This would be 40% if you classified those individuals raised in Newcastle as regional players. Compare this to the national population where 29% of Australians reside in regional or remote areas, and it speaks to the success that regional football clubs are having in producing top class talent.

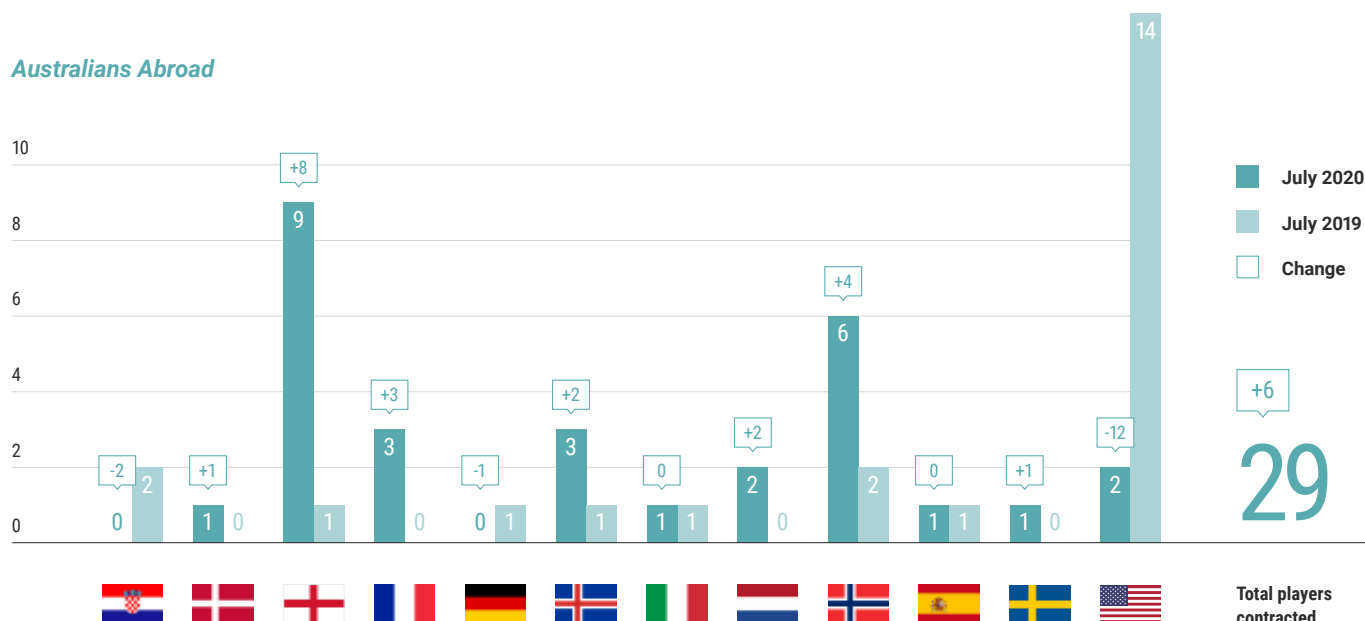
The awakening of Europe as a Women's football powerhouse, through investment, season length, brand awareness, competitive prestige and international footballing success in France 2019 has prompted a shift in Australians plying their trade overseas, with North America and the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) slowly becoming the second option. In 2019, fourteen Australians were playing in the NWSL.

That number has dwindled significantly with only two remaining contracted in the United States as the 2020 NWSL contracted to a month-long tournament owing to the impact of COVID-19.

Conversely, the number of players to leagues in Europe has increased immeasurably, with 27 players now contracted to clubs across nine different leagues in Europe. England is

the most popular destination, providing depth of competition unprecedented for our leading professional footballers. Australia's European contingent now comprises 93% of Australia's foreign legion, with 56% of those players committing to the European winter, likely meaning they will not return to the W-League while contracted to their clubs.

## Australians Abroad





# Americans in the W-League

The symbiotic relationship which exists between the domestic competitions in Australia and the United States has been of significant benefit to many Australian players since the NWSL was relaunched in 2013. 24 Australian players have been contracted to a NWSL club in that time, with Sam Kerr the most notable having topped the league's all-time scoring charts with 77 goals in seven seasons.

As the W-League has grown in stature, so has its patronage of foreign talent, no better illustrated by the number of American imports that have seen value in using their winter off-season to play competitively in the Australian summer. Since the 2012/13 W-League season, 82 Americans have played in the W-League, with Lauren Barnes' commitment lasting for a remarkable six seasons. In that 2013/14 campaign, at a time when the W-League comprised one less team and employed one fewer foreign spot on each playing roster, just six players from the United States

played in the competition. That number rose to as high as 25 in the 2018/19 season.

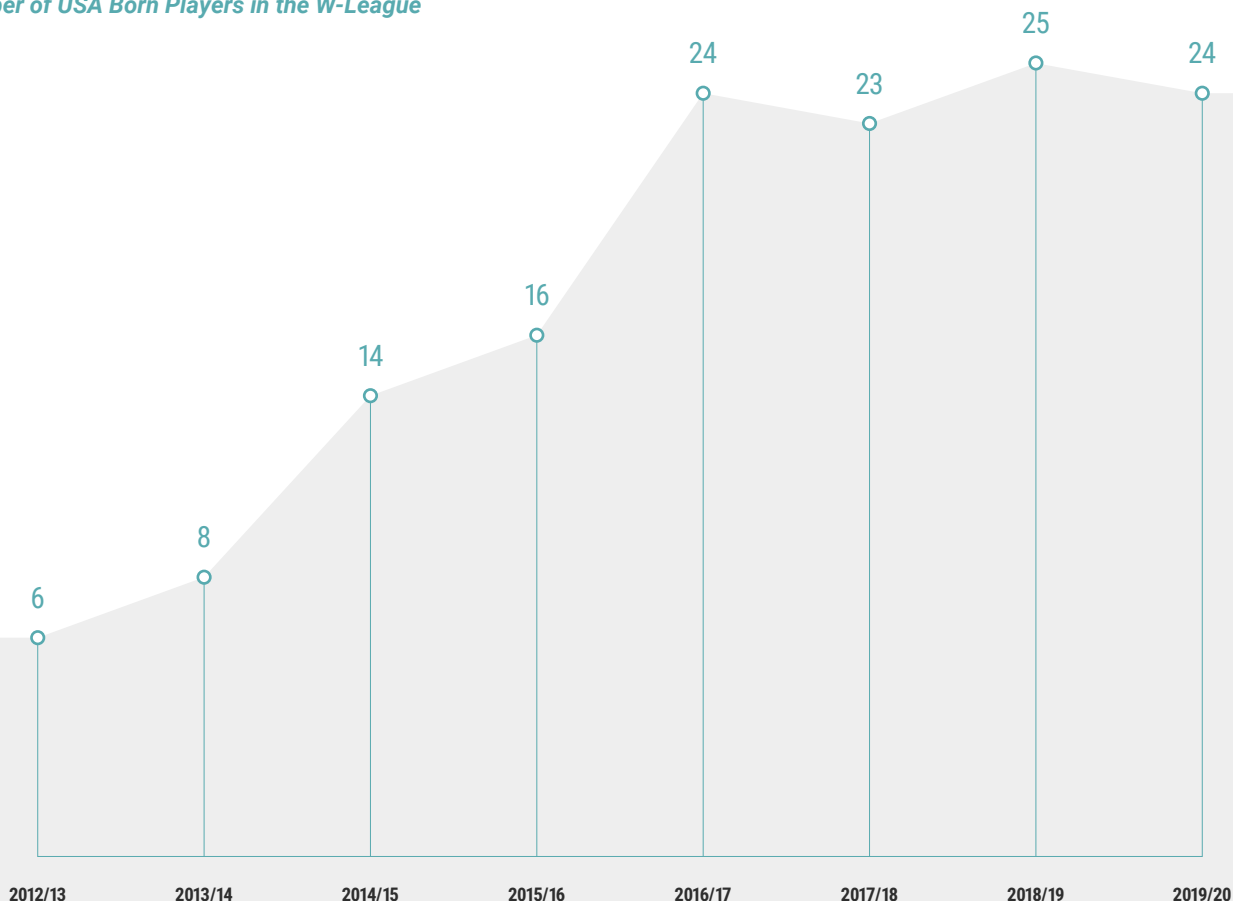
While every single Australian who has appeared in the NWSL has played for the Matildas – at an average of 65 caps per player – not every American has represented the US Women's National Team (USWNT). For context, this is due to the prescriptive criteria needed to fulfil an NWSL international roster spot.

Many of the American players arrive on Australia's shores having competed in the college system and represented the United States at a youth team level, but few, if any, arrive with any senior international pedigree. This does not discredit the quality of American players within the W-League, but highlights the role the W-League has played in bolstering opportunities to break into the extremely competitive and world-champion USWNT.

Some players have progressed to a greater level after their stint in the W-League, most notably goalkeeper Abby Dahlkemper and defender Emily Sonnett, who amassed the majority of their combined 106 caps after their respective seasons for Adelaide United and Sydney FC.

Lynn Williams and Lori Lindsey were both established internationals before their respective stints in the W-League, and while Jessica McDonald and Kristen Mewis have represented their country on more than 15 occasions, they are still to cement their spots as starting regulars with the USWNT.

Number of USA Born Players in the W-League



### American W-League Internationals

PLAYER	USWNT CAPS
Abby Dahlkemper	61
Emily Sonnett	45
Lori Lindsey	31
Lynn Williams	28
Jessica McDonald	19
Kristen Mewis	15
Taylor Smith	10
Sofia Huerta	7
Savannah McCaskill	6
Erika Tymrak, Hailie Mace	3
Ashley Hatch, Christine Nairn, Danielle Colaprico, Megan Oyster	2
Amber Brooks, Haley Hanson, Kendall Fletcher, Kristen Hamilton	1

### Number of Seasons in the W-League

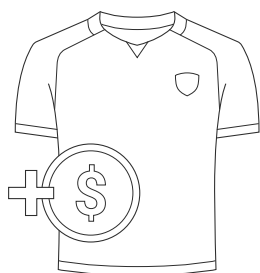
PLAYER	SEASONS
Lauren Barnes	6
Kendall Fletcher	5
Celeste Boureille, Christine Nairn, Jasmyne Spencer, Katie Stengel, Nikki Stanton, Tori Huster	4
Alyssa Mautz, Aubrey Bledsoe, Carson Pickett, Danielle Colaprico, Katie Naughton, Samantha Johnson, Sofia Huerta, Stephanie Ochs	3



# EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK



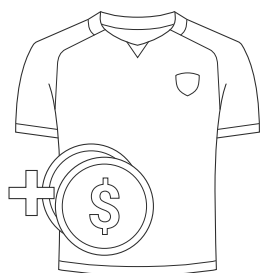
# Snapshot



\$411,821

The average spent on total player payments per club

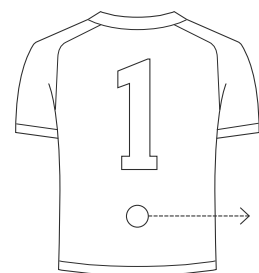
UP 13%



35%

Players surveyed who received more than W-League minimum wage

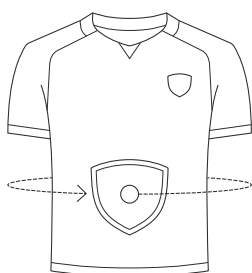
DOWN 6%



40%

Players who were in their first year at their current club

DOWN 6%



69%

Players who intend to stay at their current club next season

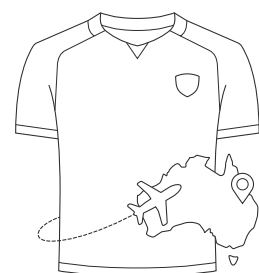
DOWN 19%



14

Players aged 17 or under who saw game time

UP 56%



37

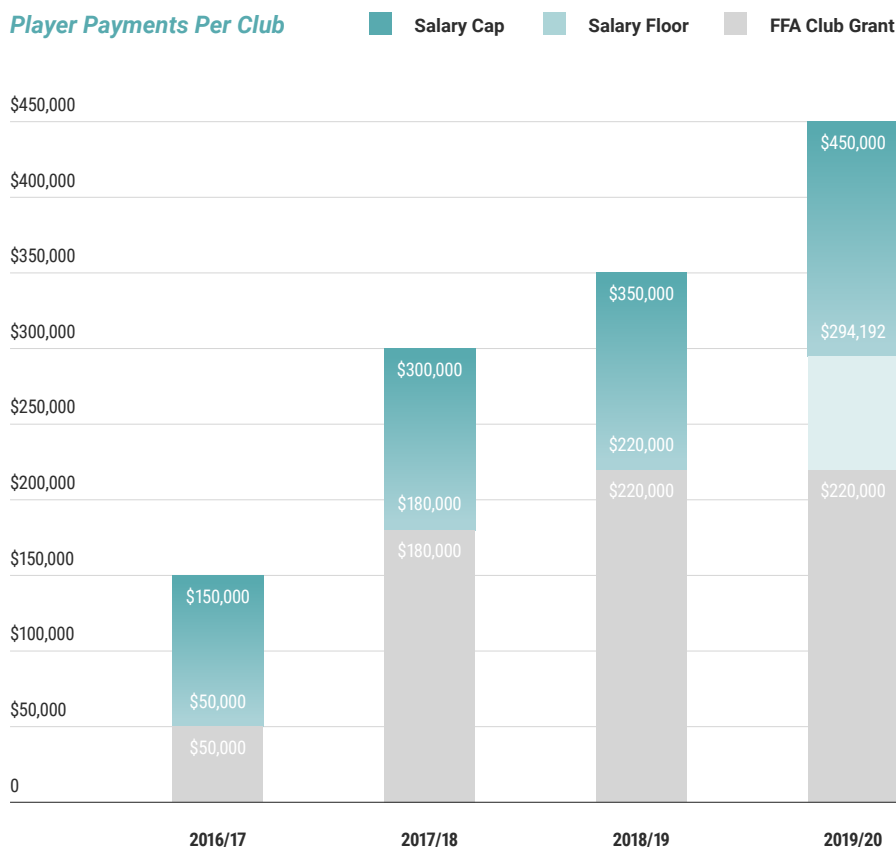
Foreign players in the 2019/20 W-League

DOWN 3

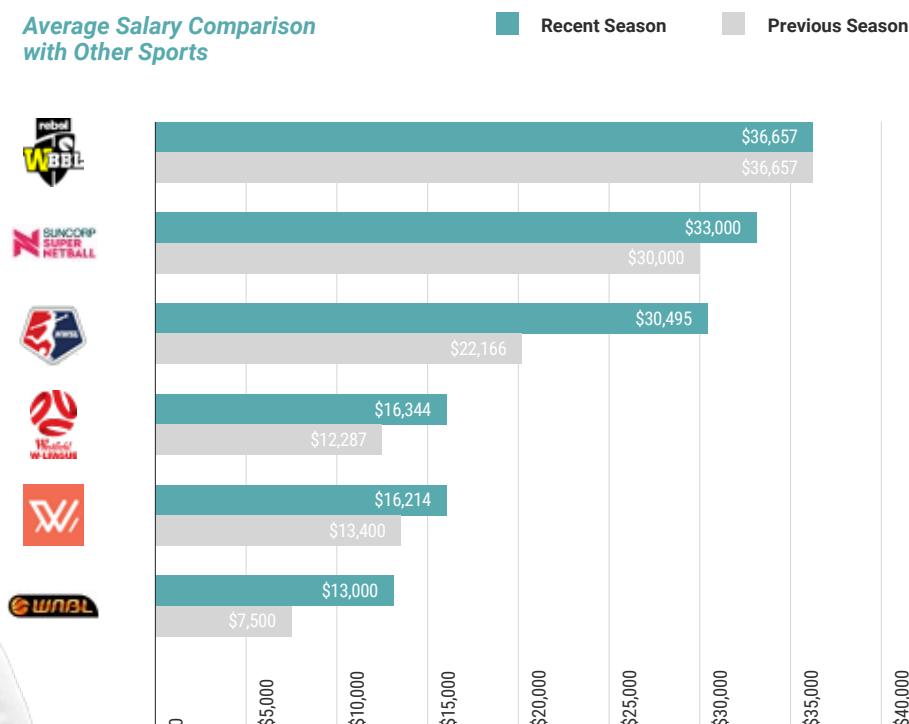
# PLAYER PAYMENTS



Player Payments Per Club



Average Salary Comparison with Other Sports



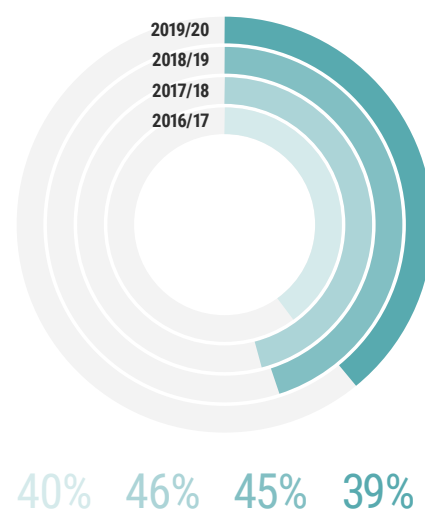
Total Player Payments rose almost 13% to an average of \$411,821 per club, up from \$365,431 last season. The minimum salary increased by over 33% from \$12,287 to \$16,344 and sees the W-League move past the AFLW in the base payment pecking order.

The year-on-year increase is consistent with the growth of women's sport both domestically and abroad. The NWSL in the United States increased its base payment by a similarly significant level, with players playing their trade across both competitions enjoying a healthy increase of 35% to their base minimum wage.



# PLAYER ANALYSIS

Percentage of Players in First Year at their Club



Total Players Contracted



197

Total Players in Squads



187

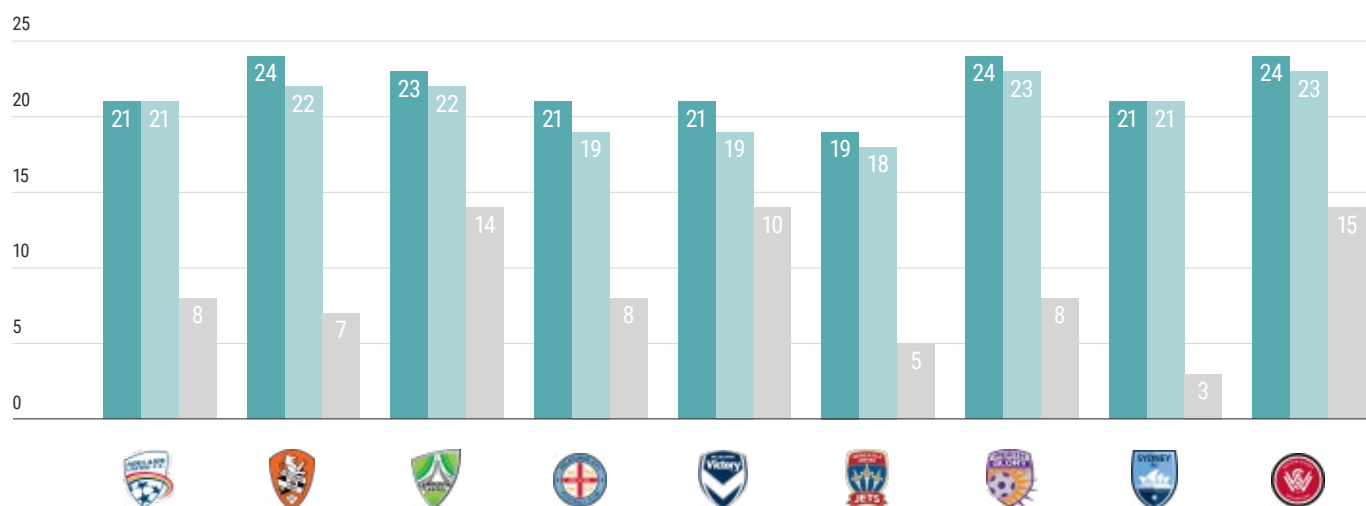
Total Players Used



176

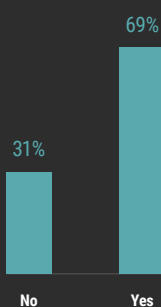
Club by Club breakdown

■ Players Contracted ■ Players Used ■ Players in First Year at Club

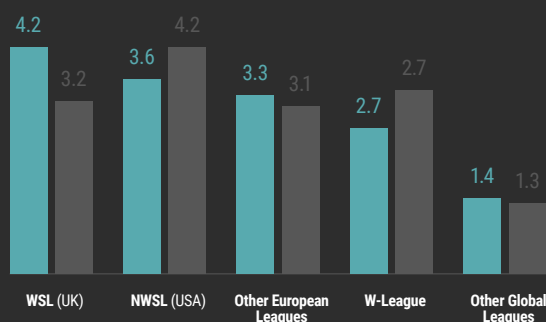


W-League Survey

Do you intend to play for your current W-League club next season?



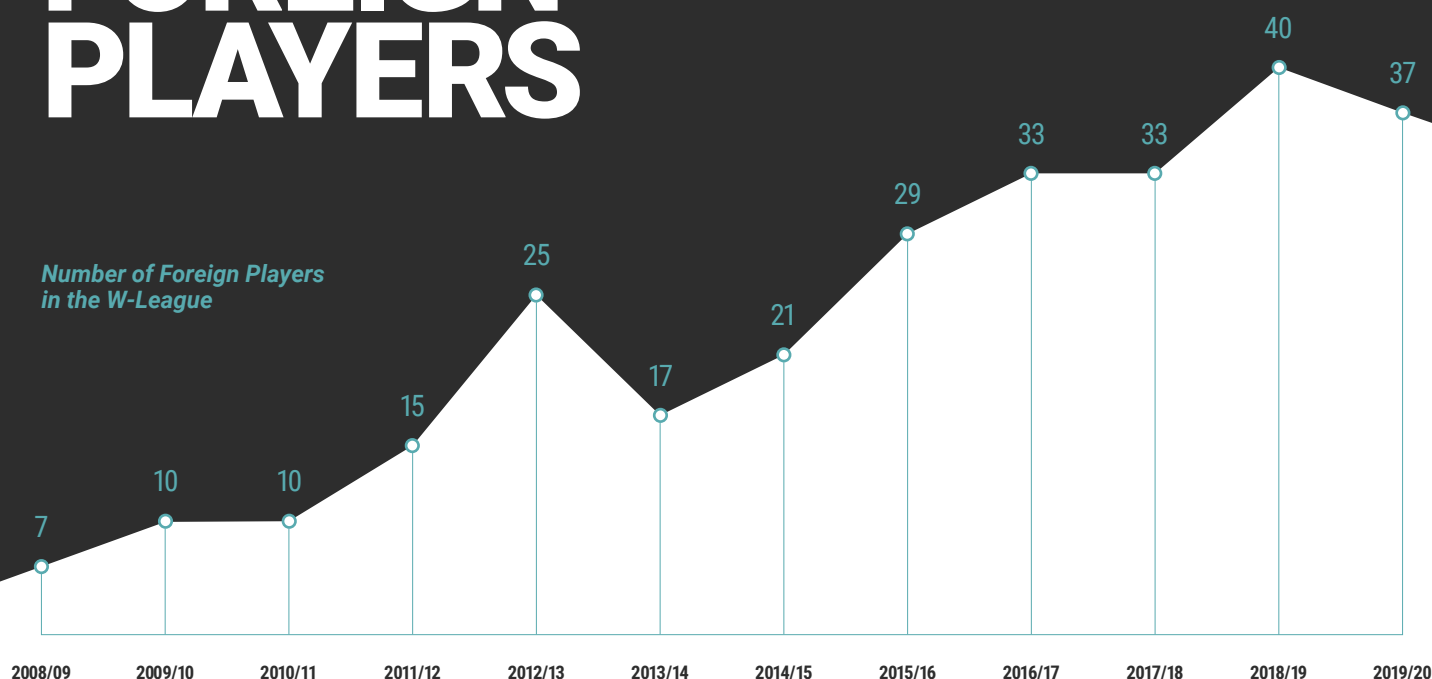
If you could play in any league in the world, rank the following leagues in order of preference (weighted score out of 5)



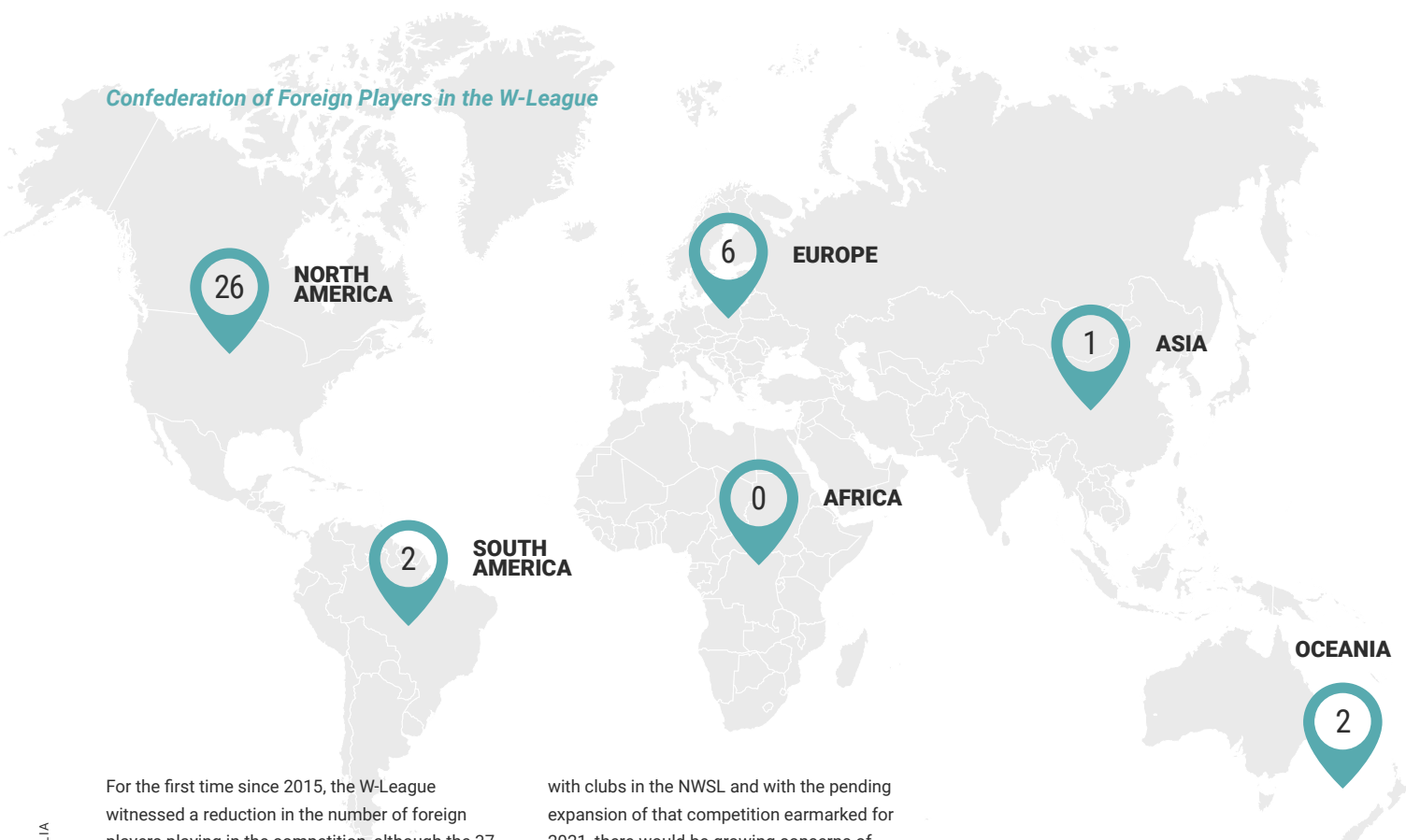
Perhaps it is the success of European teams at the 2019 FIFA World Cup (7 of the 8 quarter-finalists were UEFA nations) or the exodus of high profile Matildas to the English Women's Super League, but the flavour for a move to Europe has increased significantly over the past twelve months. Conversely, the NWSL is no longer the preferred destination for a move abroad, nor is the W-League considered as the next best alternative.

# FOREIGN PLAYERS

Number of Foreign Players in the W-League



Confederation of Foreign Players in the W-League



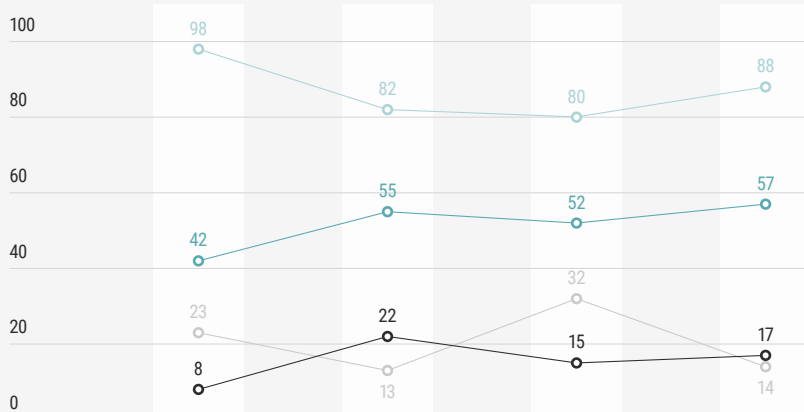
For the first time since 2015, the W-League witnessed a reduction in the number of foreign players playing in the competition, although the 37 players from 12 different nations are only bettered by the almost full quota of 40 VISA players employed in 2018-19.

American players continue to provide the bulk of imports to Australia, with 25 players spread across eight of the nine W-League clubs. The majority of these players are contracted

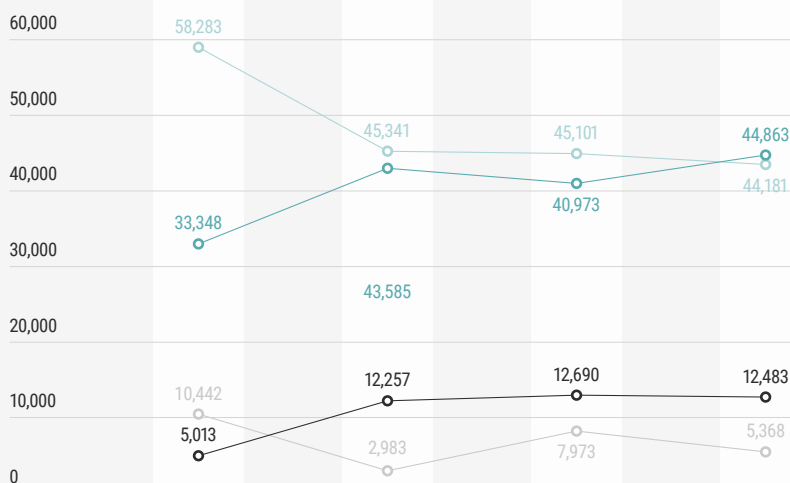
with clubs in the NWSL and with the pending expansion of that competition earmarked for 2021, there would be growing concerns of the continued representation of players in the W-League from the North American continent. Only two other nations (Brazil and New Zealand) provide multiple participants, with the majority of foreigners outside of the United States, established internationals with an average age of 27.5.

# MATCH MINUTES

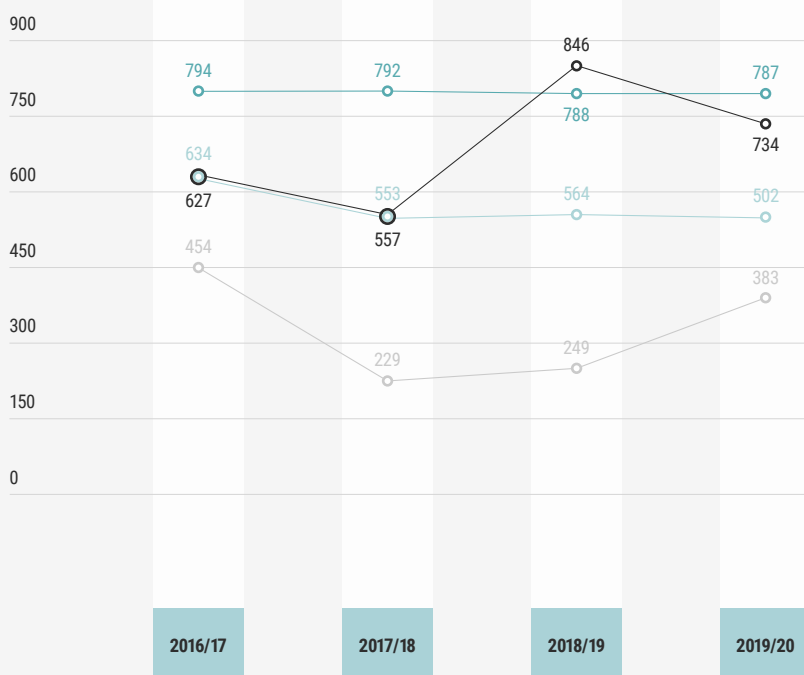
Number of Players who Made an Appearance



Total Minutes Played



Average Minutes Played



Total Players who Made an Appearance

176

Total Appearances

1,481

Average Minutes Played (Per Player)

607

Total Minutes Played

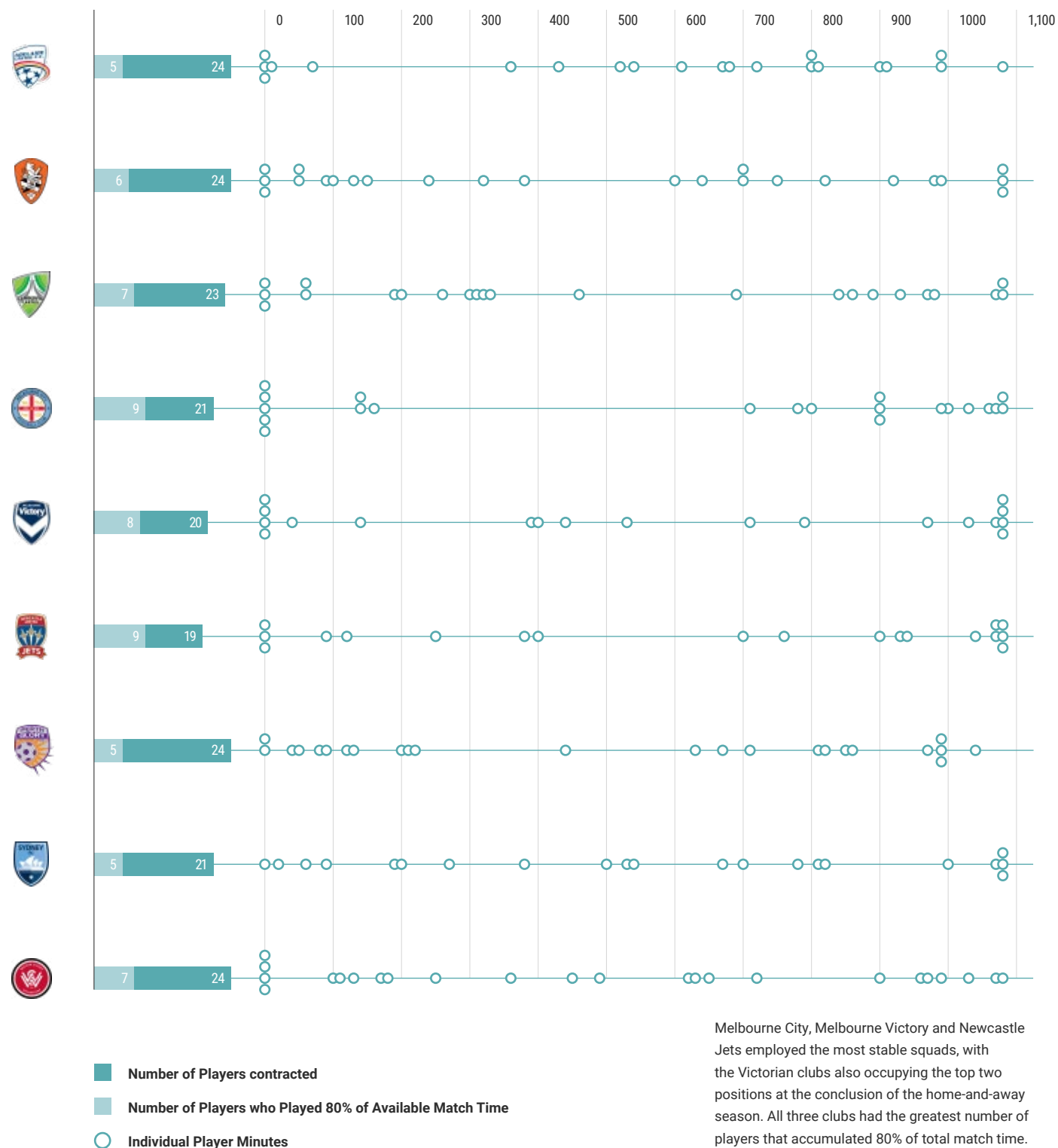
106,895

The trend towards experience continued in season 2019/20, with more players represented in every adult age category. However, the average number of minutes per player for each of these age groups has dropped, most notably in the 30+ category where players received 14% less match time. The outlier in this analysis are players aged 17 and under, who on average, were able to amass 54% more match time than players in the same category the previous season.

Significantly though, more than half the players aged 17 and under gained match minutes in comparison to the previous season. Furthermore, half of those players had already gained previous experience in the W-League. The 17-year-old debutants in 2019/20 averaged 196 minutes throughout the season (16 minutes per match), almost a third of the playing time by players in the same age bracket.

# STARTING XI STABILITY

Spread of Minutes within Each Team

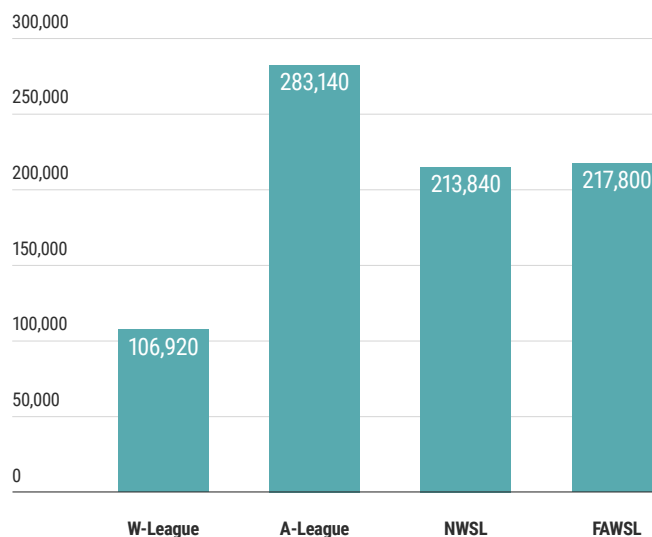


# VOLUME OF MINUTES

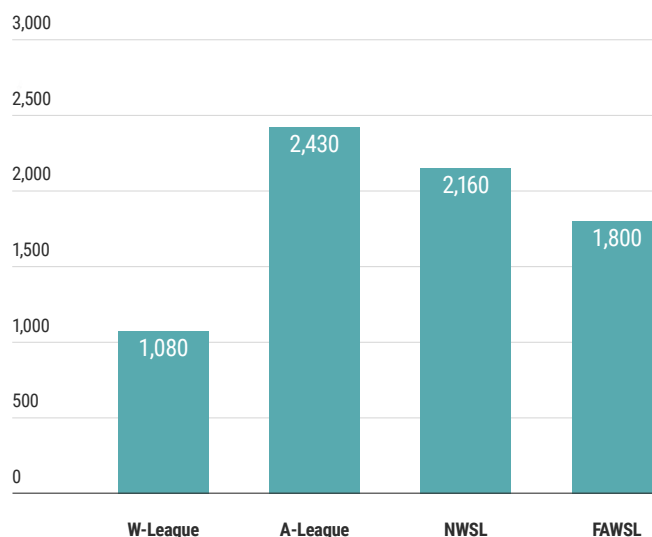


## League Comparison

*Total Minutes Available*



*Maximum Minutes available for a Single Player*



The W-League remains behind other leagues for the playing opportunities it affords both the overall playing cohort and individual players. Currently, the synergy between the W-League and NWSL is serving some players well, but the game requires a long term roadmap to create sustainable careers solely in the W-League.



# LEAGUE ASSESSMENT

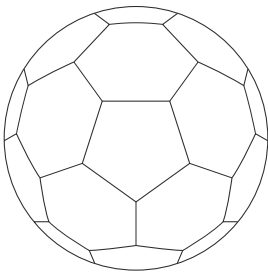


# Snapshot



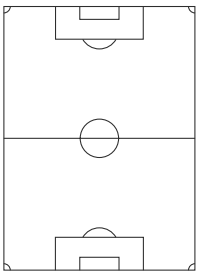
11 POINTS

*The distance between  
Premiers Melbourne City  
and second place*



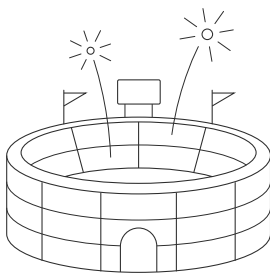
17%

*Percentage of matches won  
by four goals or more*



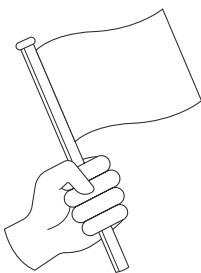
3.28/5

*Average pitch rating in  
'minor' stadia up from 3.12  
last season*



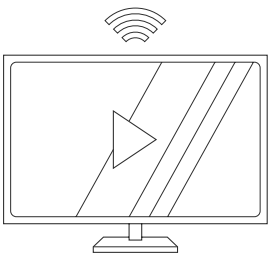
3.22/5

*Average atmosphere score  
in 'minor' stadia, compared  
with 2.67 in 'major' stadia*



1,598

*Average home and away  
attendance, around 20% of the  
average NWSL attendance*

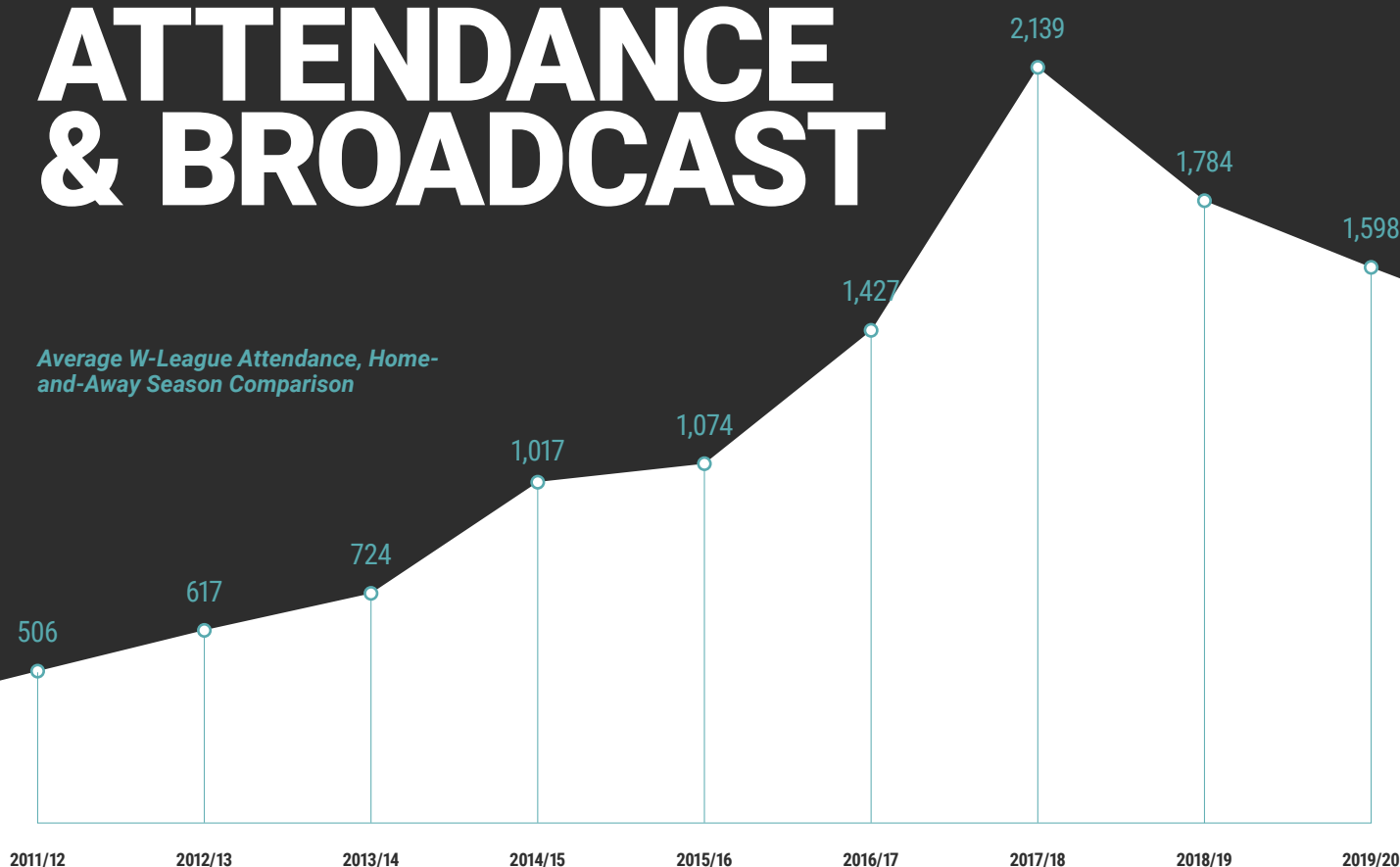


62,000

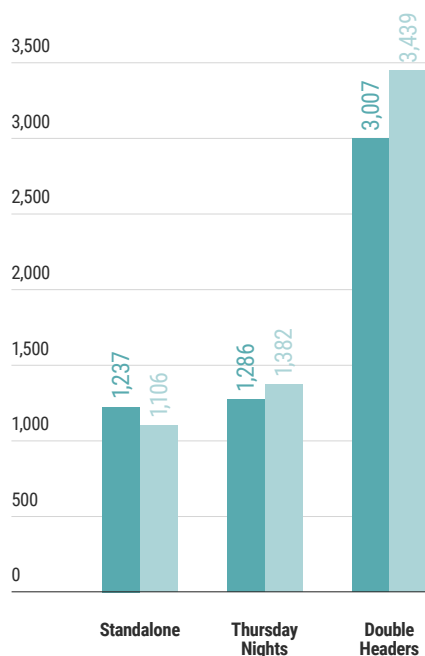
*Combined TV audience for  
the Grand Final*

# ATTENDANCE & BROADCAST

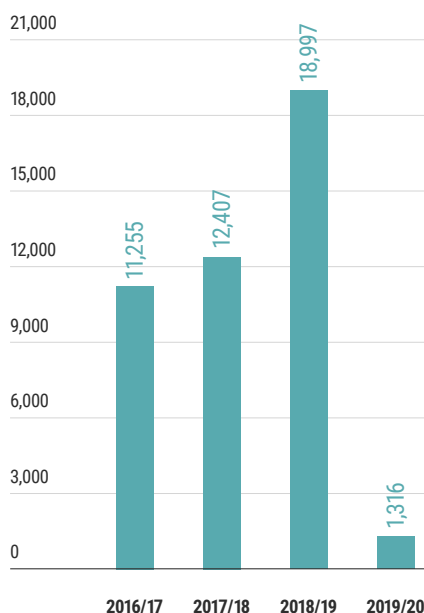
Average W-League Attendance, Home-and-Away Season Comparison



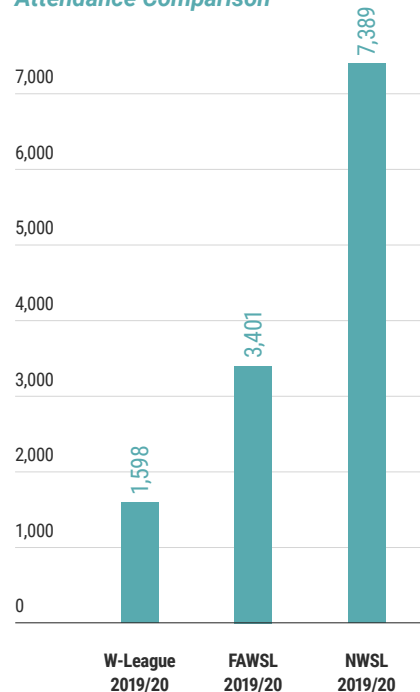
2019/20 Average Attendance



Finals Combined Attendance



Attendance Comparison



2019/20  
2018/19

Encouragingly, stand-alone W-League attendances rose slightly in 2019/20, with a 12% increase across the 43 matches which were played during the home-and-away season. While there was a marginal drop in the Thursday night fixtures (down 7%) and double-headers (down 13%), attendances were reflective of a year of consolidation.

The threat of pending restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in lower than normal attendances for the semi-finals, ultimately resulting in a Grand Final which was played behind closed doors in what proved to be an anti-climactic way to conclude the season.

# Amplifying Broadcast



62,000

Combined TV audience for the Grand Final

In most countries broadcast rights for women's football leagues and premier matches remain bundled in with pre-existing male football broadcast agreements, clouding the true value of the women's game. The below attendances at professional women's matches indicate the rapidly growing global interest in the women's game. For example, the Spain, France and US top divisions all generated over \$1.63 Million in television rights income per season through centralised broadcast contracts.

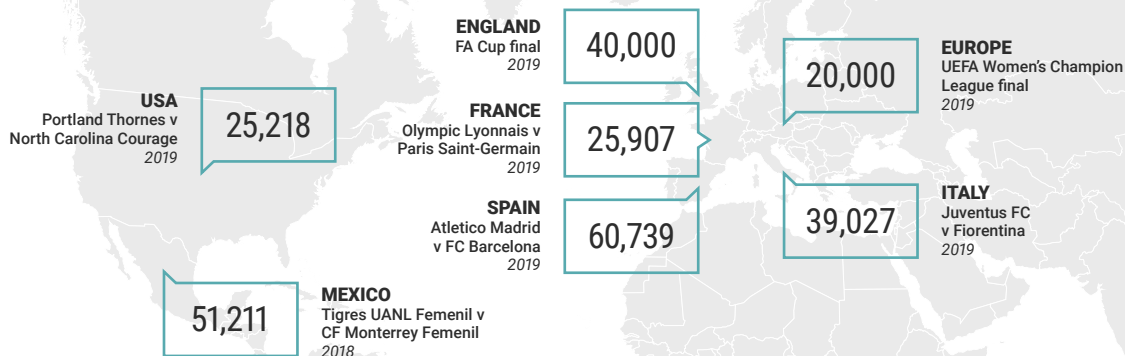
It's time we unbundled and appropriately valued the economic proposition of women's football. To do so requires the right investment structure to capitalise on the unique opportunity that platform

technology provides to grow the women's game mainstream profile.

No sport is better positioned to seize such an opportunity as football, due to its global nature (and fan base), many established women's leagues, the volume of games and iconic brand connection, all of these making the women's game a potentially lucrative latent asset waiting to be leveraged.

It should not be beyond football's realm of possibility for a streaming platform such as Twitter, Google or Netflix to purchase the rights to all major women's football leagues and premier matches as a mechanism to both commercialise and popularise the women's game on a global scale. However, this won't happen if we systemically continue to undervalue, underinvest and fail to devote the innovative and strategic thinking to the women's game that is afforded to the men's.

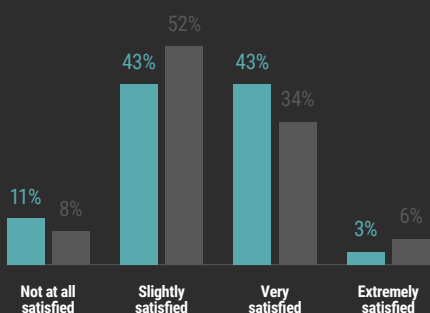
## Global Attendances



### W-League Survey

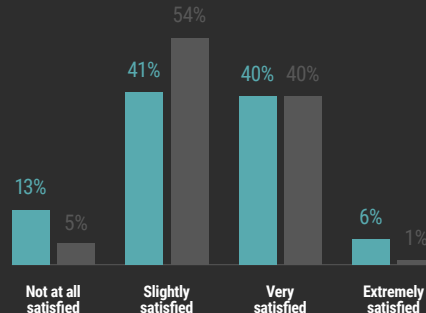
How satisfied are you with the broadcast of the W-League this season?

2019/20  
2018/19



How satisfied are you with the fixturing of the W-League this season?

2019/20  
2018/19

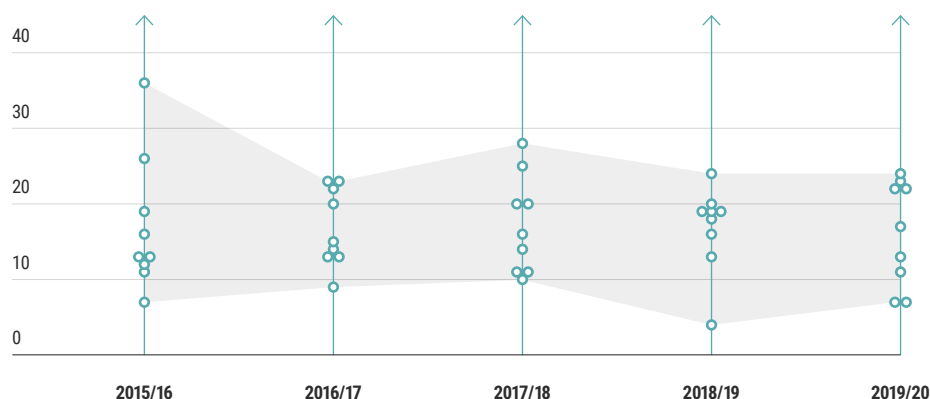


Note: Fixturing includes variables such as stand-alone games, doubleheader, kick-off times, mid-week matches, Thursday night football and match amendments/postponements.

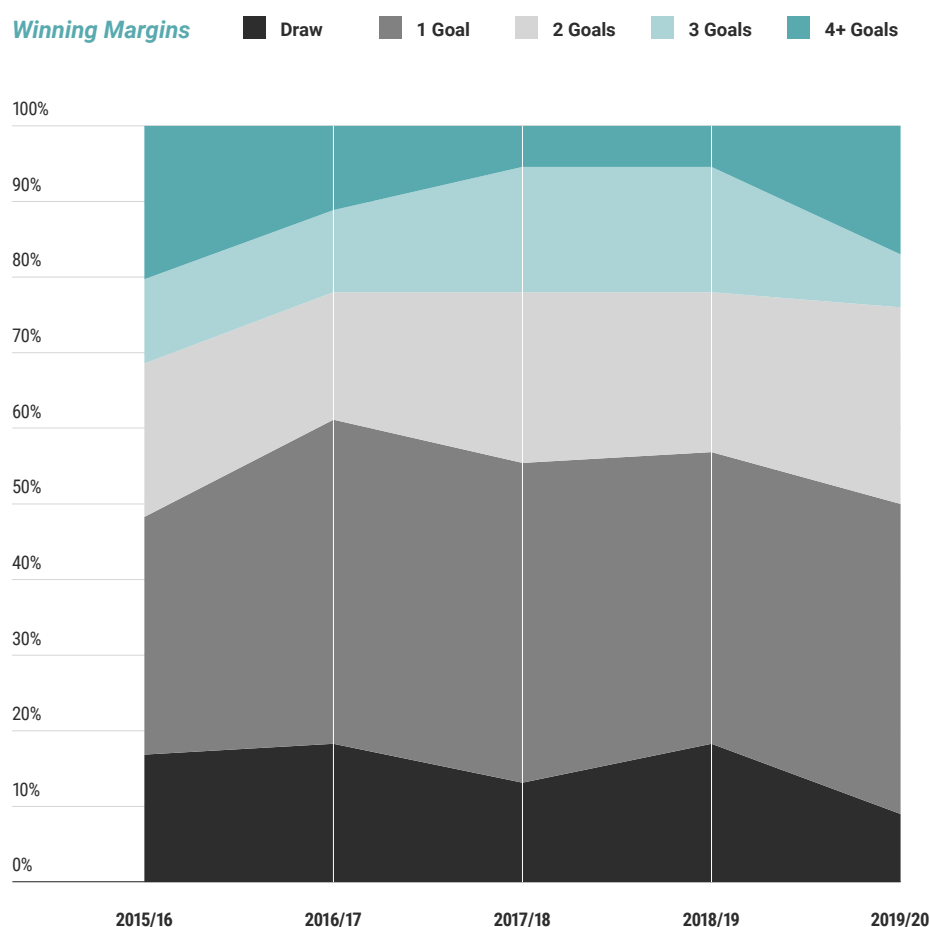
# COMPETITIVE BALANCE



Points Spread Comparison



Winning Margins



The gap between the have and have-nots appears to be getting larger, with both Melbourne and Sydney clubs a clear three games ahead of sixth-placed Canberra United in a nine-team competition played over twelve rounds. Illustrative of the performance gap is the combined losses by the five clubs finishing outside of the finals (37) was almost three-and-a-half times more than the finalists (11).

Another measure of the widening gap between the best and the rest is the number of results decided by 4 goals or more, which at 17% is a

return to the levels experienced in 2015/16. In all, half of the matches played in the W-League this season resulted in a two-goal or more deciding margin.

The key measure here though sits with the championship-winning team in Melbourne City, with a goal difference of 23; some 13 goals more than the next best performing team in Melbourne Victory. Combined with their Final Series victories against both Sydney clubs, City were on average two goals better than every team they faced throughout the season.



The PFA W-League Pitch Ratings are voted on by selected away team players after each match. Players rate the playing surface on four measures: pace, hardness, smoothness and overall quality. Pace and hardness are measured on a scale where the ideal score sits at the middle, while smoothness and overall quality are simply scored out of five.

### Pitch Ratings Key












# PITCH RATINGS

AVERAGE OVERALL QUALITY	MAJOR STADIA	MINOR STADIA
	4.18	3.28
PREVIOUS SEASON	4.17	3.12
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		<p>Marden Sports Complex</p> <p>Dolphin Stadium</p> <p>Lions Stadium</p> <p>McKellar Park</p> <p>AAMI Park</p> <p>ABD Stadium</p> <p>CB Smith Reserve</p> <p>John McEwan Reserve</p> <p>Marvel Stadium</p> <p>Epping Stadium</p> <p>Lakeside Stadium</p> <p>McDonald Jones Stadium</p> <p>No.2 Sportsground</p> <p>Dorrien Gardens</p> <p>WML Stadium</p> <p>Cromer Park</p> <p>Leichhardt Oval</p> <p>Netstrata Jubilee Stadium</p> <p>WIN Stadium</p> <p>Bankwest Stadium</p> <p>Marconi Stadium</p>
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		
<p>PACE HARDNESS SMOOTHNESS OVERALL QUALITY</p>		



# ATMOSPHERE



AVERAGE OVERALL RATING	MAJOR STADIA	MINOR STADIA
	2.67	3.22
PREVIOUS SEASON	2.52	3.06
		Marden Sports Complex 2.13
		Dolphin Stadium 3.75
		Lions Stadium 4.0
		McKellar Park 3.57
	AAMI Park 2.67	ABD Stadium 3.0
		CB Smith Reserve 1.5
		John McEwan Reserve 4.0
	Marvel Stadium 2.0	Epping Stadium 2.0
		Lakeside Stadium 2.75
	McDonald Jones Stadium 3.0	No.2 Sportsground 3.75
		Dorrien Gardens 2.25
		WML Stadium 4.0
		Cromer Park 4.0
		Leichhardt Oval 4.0
		Netstrata Jubilee Stadium 4.17
		WIN Stadium 3.0
	Bankwest Stadium 3.0	Marconi Stadium 2.8

The players' post-match surveys highlight the trade-off between playing in smaller suburban venues or the A-League team's larger stadium.

In smaller venues, crowds are generally packed in tight and fans are seated closer to the action. Players rated the atmosphere at smaller venues 3.22 out of 5 compared to 2.67 in the larger venues. Melbourne Victory bucked this trend, with their AAMI Park doubleheader matches generating better atmospheres than their fixtures at Lakeside Stadium or Epping Stadium. Encouragingly, the atmosphere at all venues was marginally better than the previous season.

However, the players rated the overall quality of pitches in larger venues on average 4.18 out of 5, far higher than the 3.28 in smaller venues, although the playing surfaces in these venues improved by 5% based on the previous season's survey.

As it stands, one aspect or another of the matchday experience is suffering depending on which venues are used.

# CLUB INTEGRATION



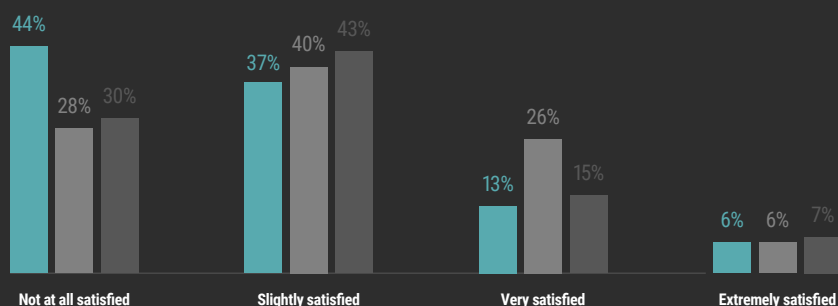
## W-League Survey

How satisfied are you with the extent that your club has integrated their W-League team with their A-League team?

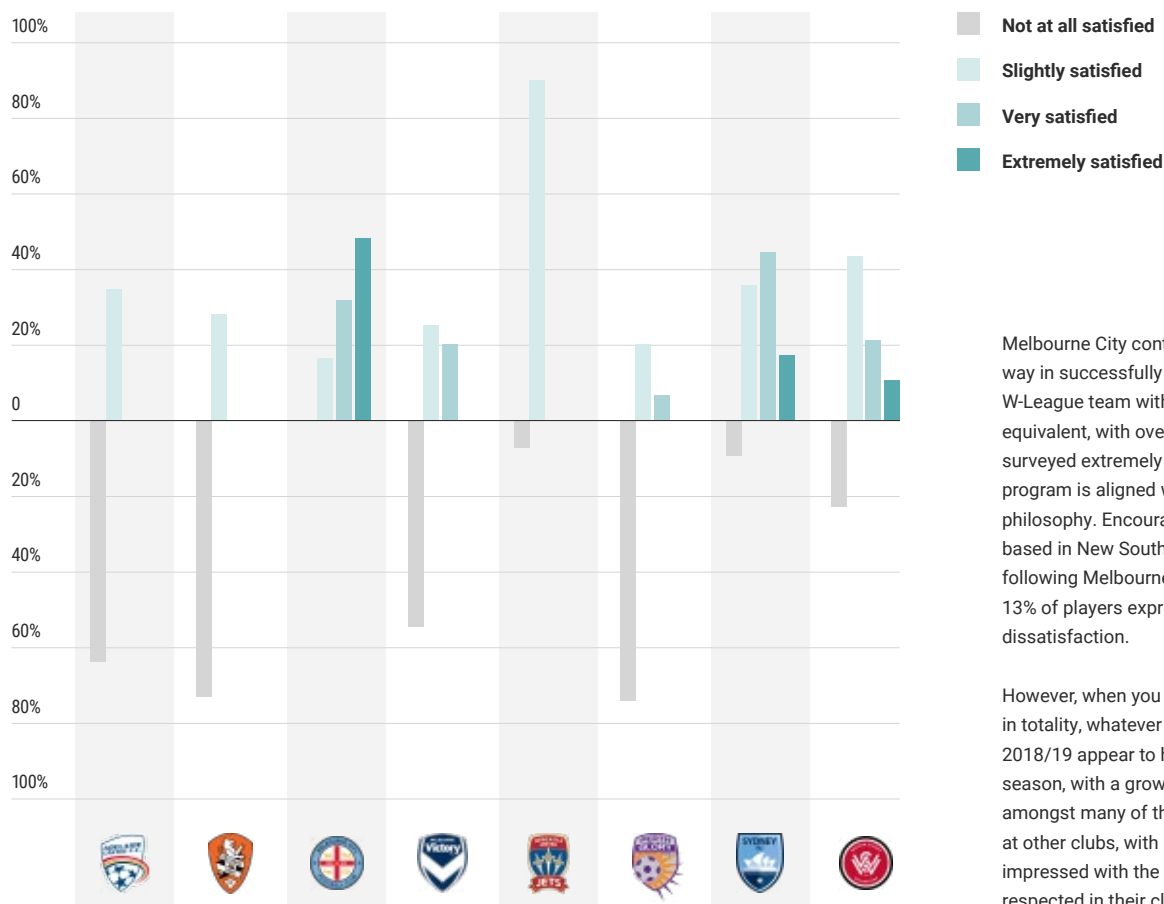
■ 2019/20

■ 2018/19

■ 2017/18



## Club by Club breakdown



Melbourne City continues to lead the way in successfully integrating their W-League team with their A-League equivalent, with over half of the players surveyed extremely satisfied with how their program is aligned with the club's overall philosophy. Encouragingly, all of the clubs based in New South Wales appear to be following Melbourne City's lead, with only 13% of players expressing any sense of dissatisfaction.

However, when you explore these figures in totality, whatever gains were made in 2018/19 appear to have been lost this season, with a growing sense of unease amongst many of the players surveyed at other clubs, with almost 65% not at all impressed with the way they are treated and respected in their club environments.

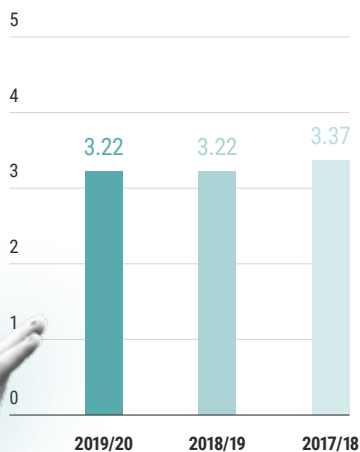
This section identifies on-field trends for the 2019/20 W-League season by benchmarking this season against the previous two W-League campaigns. Opta Sports has tracked an array of statistical information on the W-League, with this report paying particular attention to the trends found in attacking creativity, technique, possession and defending.

# TECHNICAL REPORT

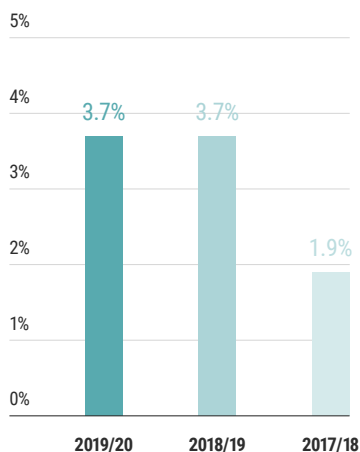


# Goals

## Goals per game

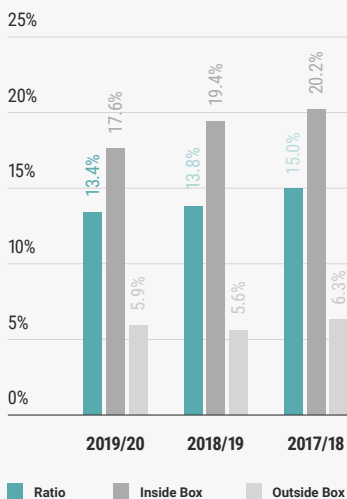


## Percentage of goalless draws

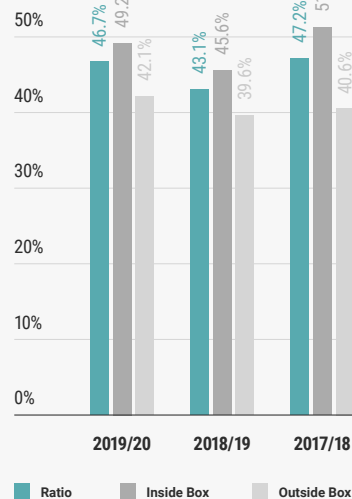


# Creation

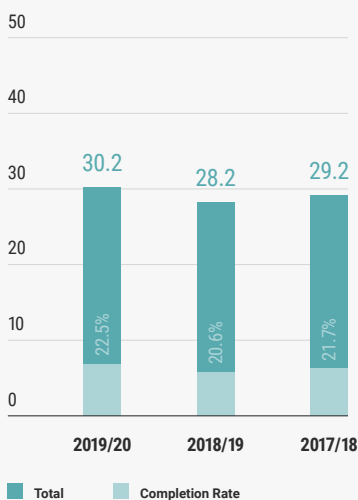
## Goals to Shots Ratio



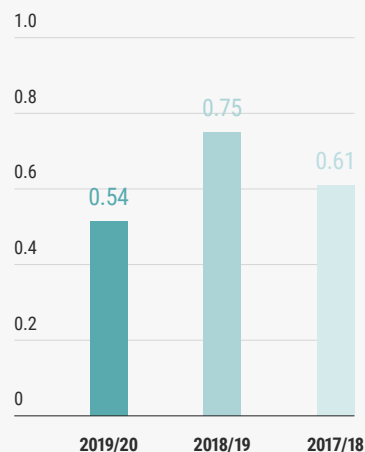
## Shooting Accuracy



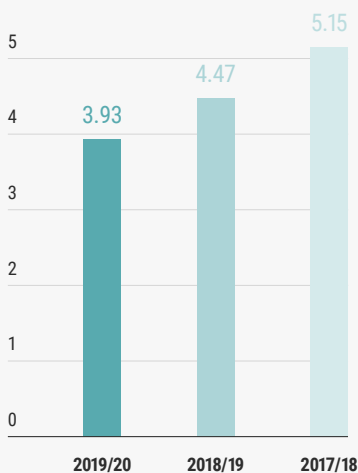
## Crosses per match



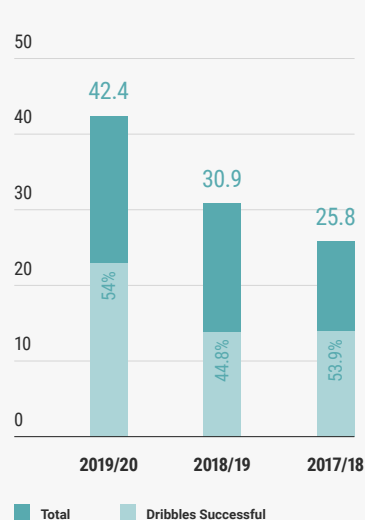
## Through balls per match



## Offsides per match

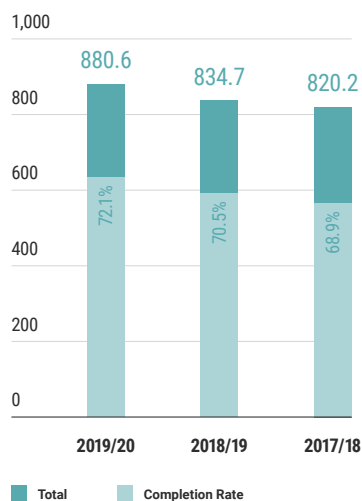


## Dribbles per match

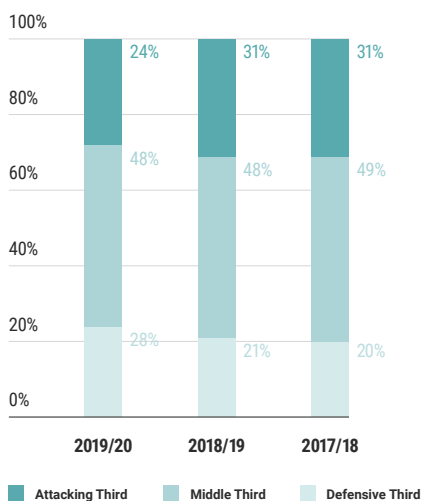


# Passing

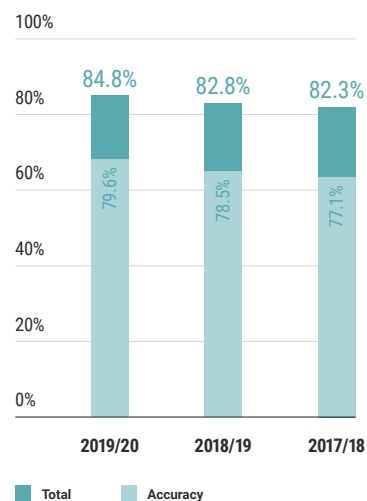
Passes per match



Percentage of passes across the pitch

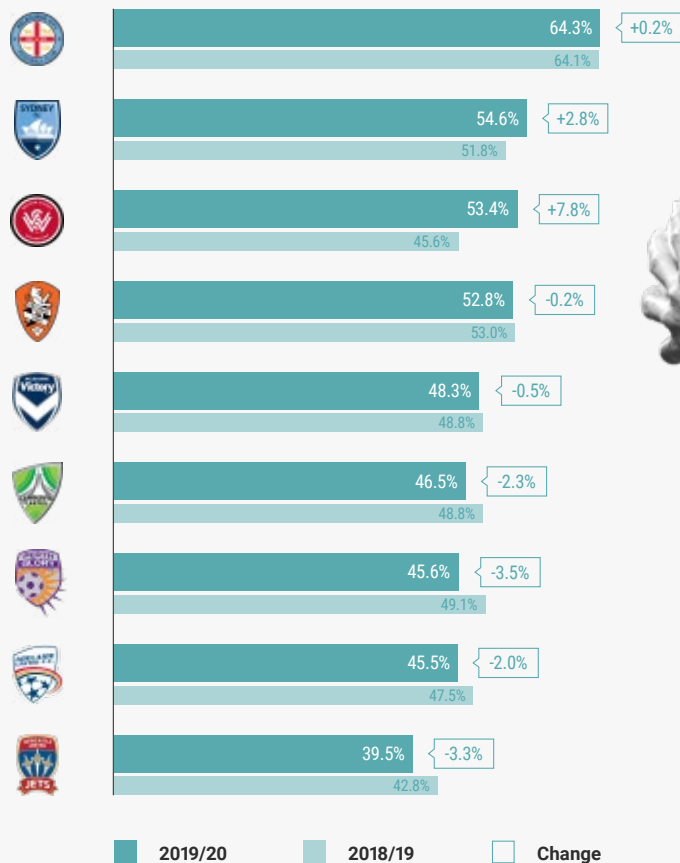


Percentage of passes short

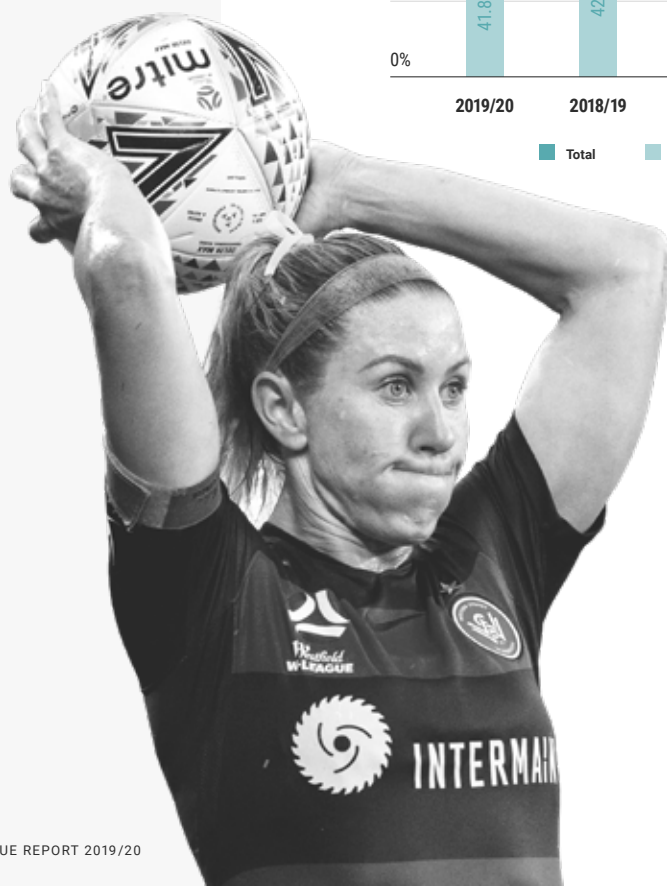
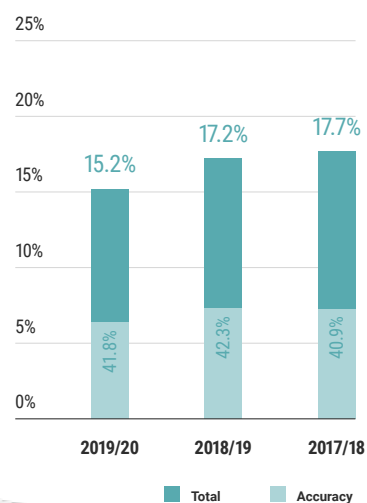


# Possession

Percentage of possession

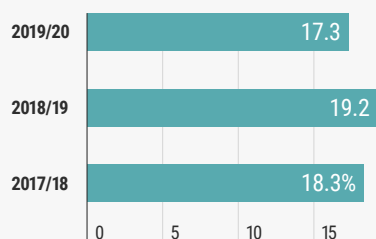


Percentage of passes long

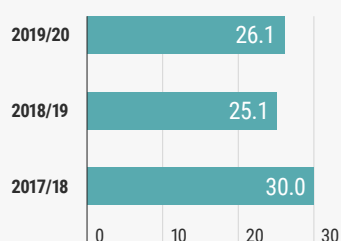


# Defending

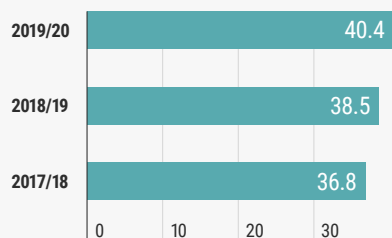
*Fouls per match*



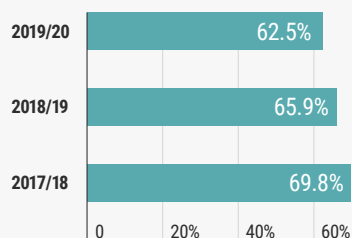
*Interceptions per match*



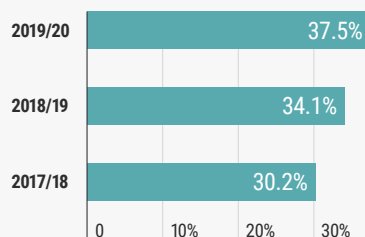
*Tackles attempted per match*



*Tackle success rate*

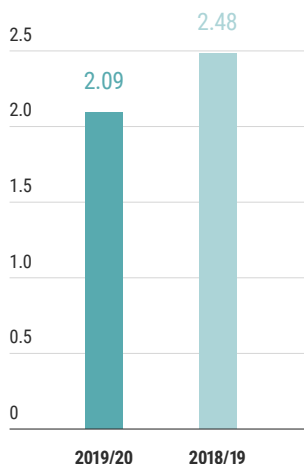


*Tackled but possession retained*

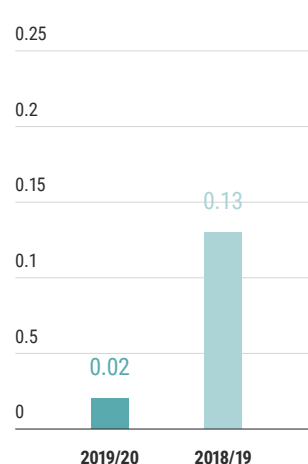


# Refereeing

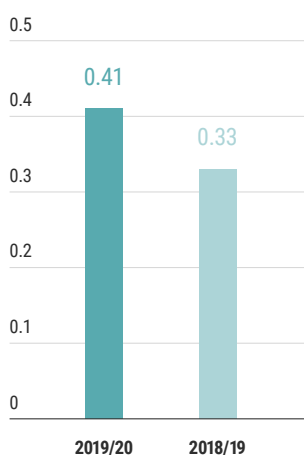
*Yellow Cards Per Match*



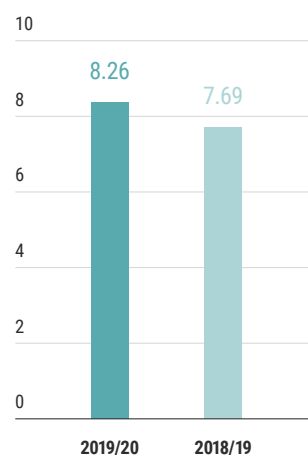
*Red Cards Per Match*



*Fouls Per Yellow Card*



*Penalties Per Match*



As part of the post-match survey, we asked selected players from the away team to rate the referee's communication, protection of player safety and decision making out of five.

## W-League Survey



Communication

★★★★★



Player Safety

★★★★★



Decision Making

★★★★★



# INJURY REPORT



## Snapshot

While there was a slight decline in the number of injuries this season (44 as opposed to 47), there was a significant reduction in the number of matches missed as a result of those injuries, declining 31 matches to 142. Whether this is a dramatic improvement (18% increase in match availability) at the rate of recovery, or simply a quirk in the nature of injuries which were incurred requires further explanation.

The PFA's methodology has not changed, but as we rely on public sources of information, there is a possibility that a significant change in the level of reporting by clubs could impact these results. There are factors which expose W-League players to a greater risk of injuries, such as heat exposure and playing and training on a wide variety of pitches, but to explain a change, we need to isolate factors which have changed since last season.

One such factor is the players' feedback through the annual survey. In 2017/18, only 10% of players described the medical support provided by their club as "below expectations". In 2018/19, this rose to 18%, but this season, it has risen to an alarming level of 31%. A common theme

among players citing concerns was the poor communication between and with medical practitioners, resulting in misdiagnosis which often led to longer periods out of the game. While the survey results do not necessarily marry up with an increase of matches missed, it is possible that an even greater improvement may have been possible if those expectations were met.

When you examine the anatomical location of each injury, the areas which have resulted in the greatest amount of time away from the game are knee and hamstring injuries, while there have been significant improvements in ankle and foot injuries. One more concussion was reported throughout the season, but a combined three matches were missed as a result of each diagnosis.

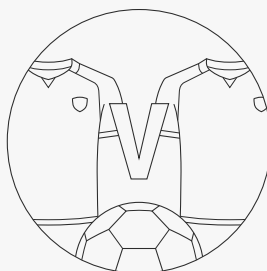
The rewards of injury minimisation are clear: The PFA's injury cost formula puts a dollar figure to the benefit of having a fit squad, or, conversely, the loss associated with games missed. Due to a combination of more injuries and higher paid players, the conservative cost of matches missed was a touch over \$230,000, almost \$70,000 less than last season's record figure.

# METHODOLOGY

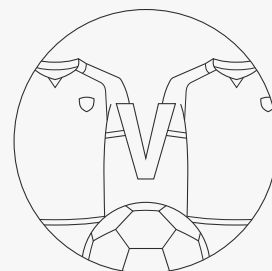


During the 2019/20 W-League season (excluding finals), the PFA collected and recorded the occurrence and location of all injuries causing players to miss matches.

The PFA Injury Report was formulated from publicly available information and private feedback, specifically through the following key sources:



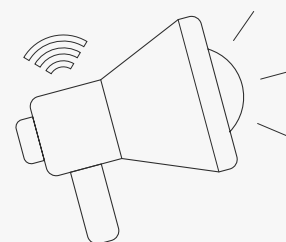
*FFA Weekly Match Previews*



*Official W-League Club Match Previews/Reviews*



*Official Websites*



*Official Media Releases*



*Direct Communication with W-League Players*

**Note:** The accuracy of the PFA W-League Injury Report's results and analysis is dependent upon the accuracy of the sources of information from which it is derived. Accordingly, the PFA does not warrant that the results are an exact and complete record of player injuries. They are, however, an accurate summation of the publicly available information provided by FFA and club sources. This report does not include injuries players received while playing for the Australian Women's National Team.

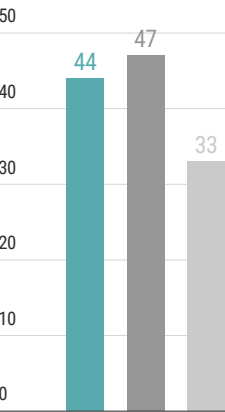
In this report, injury is defined as "any physical complaint sustained during a competitive game or training that resulted in a player being unable to take part in, at a minimum, the player's next

official W-League game." Based on the data collected about injury occurrence and related games missed, descriptive analyses were conducted.

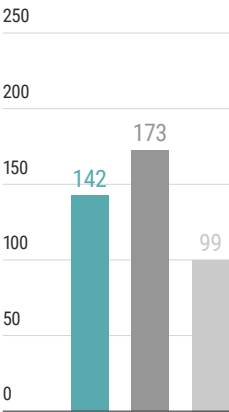
# SEASON OVERVIEW

## 2019/20 Injury Overview

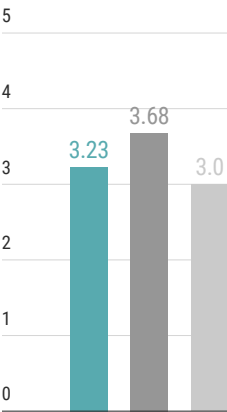
Number of Injuries



Matches Missed



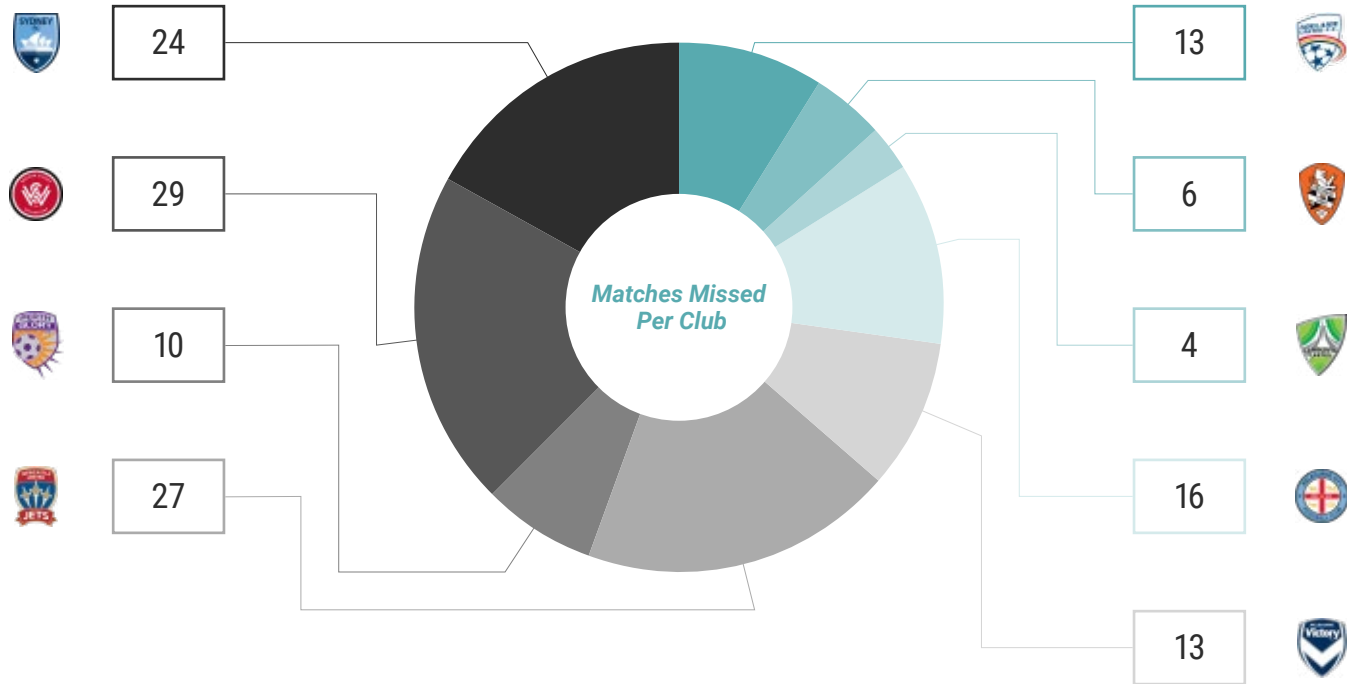
Matches Missed Per Injury



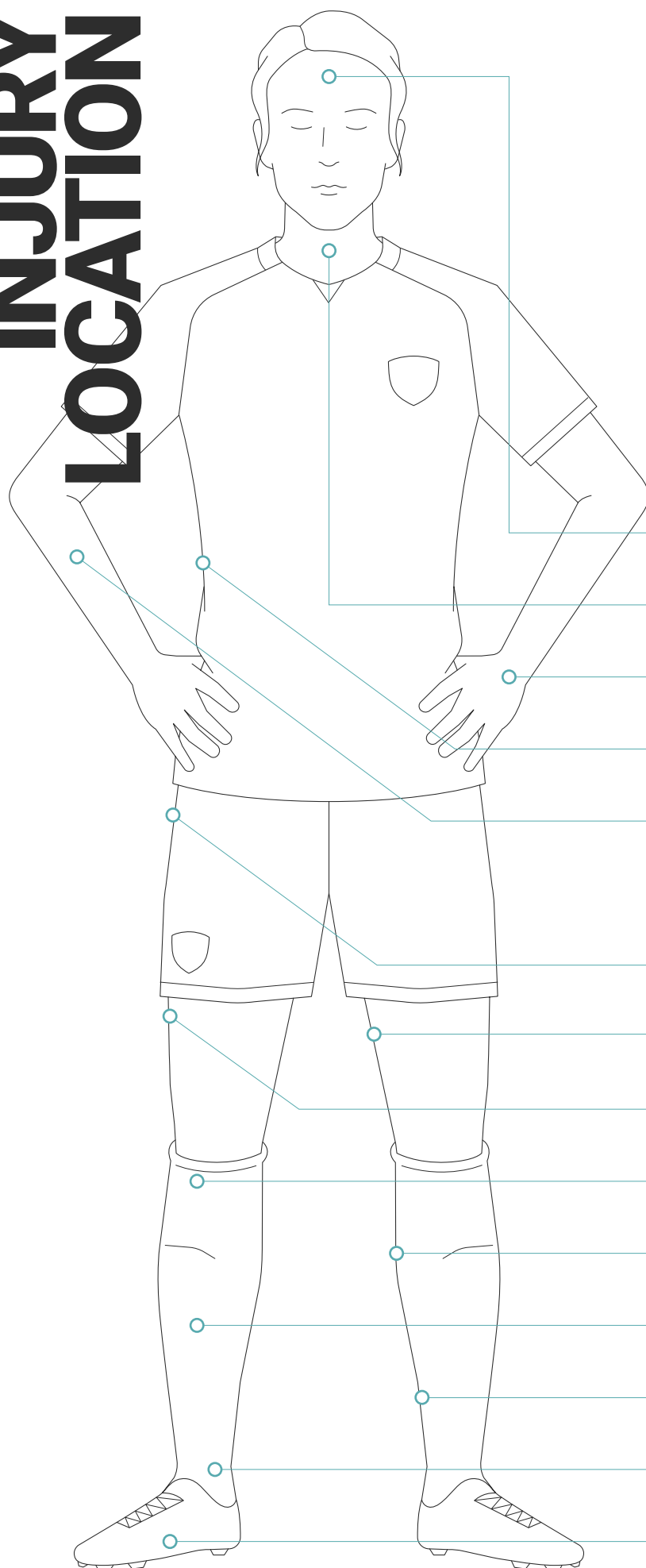
Total Cost of Injuries

\$231,987

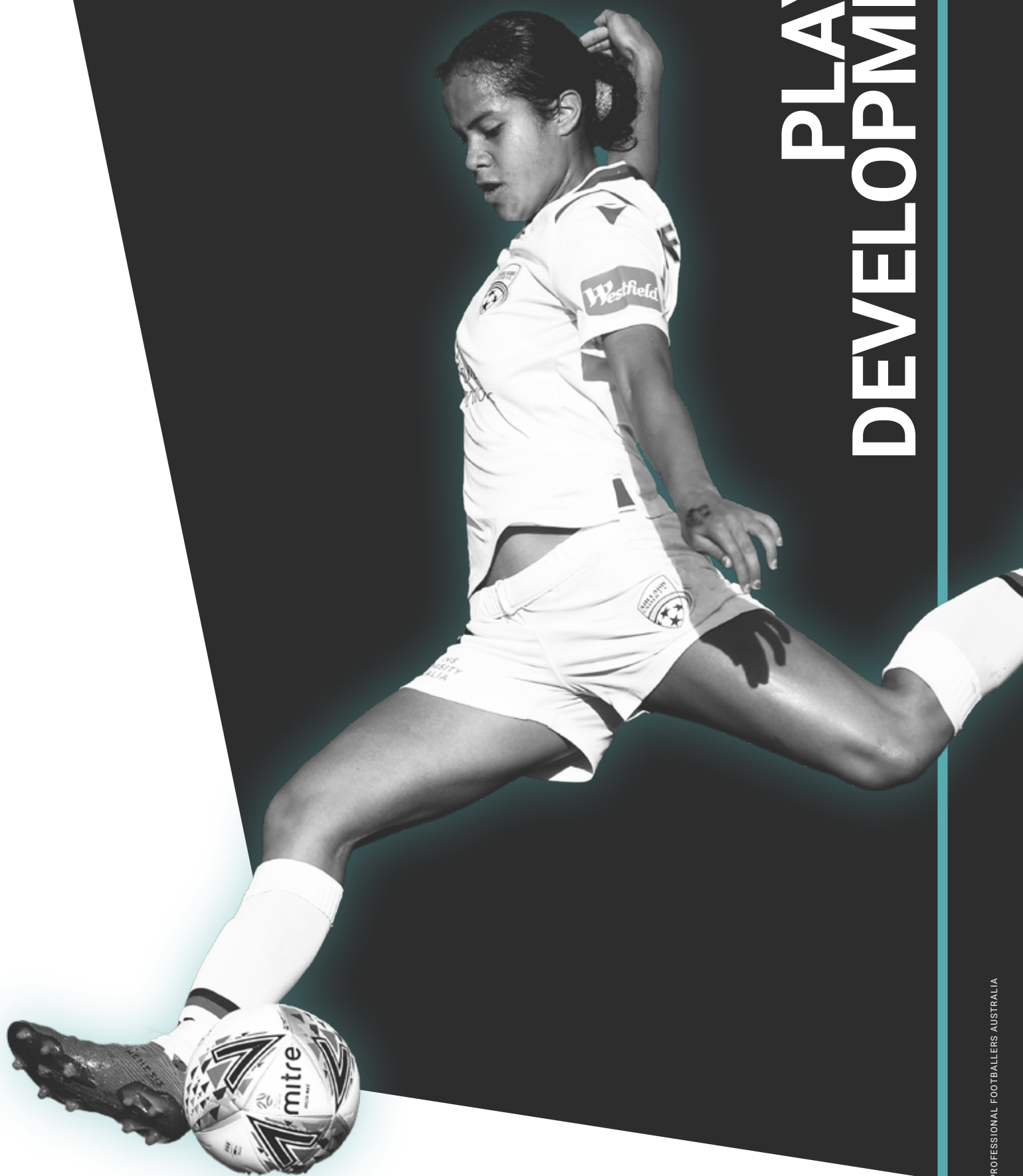
Total cost is calculated by dividing the total player payments at each club by 192 (16 players x 12 rounds) to find the average cost to that club of each match missed due to injury, then multiplying by the recorded number of matches missed. Encouragingly, this figure is almost \$70,000 less than what the PFA calculated in 2018/19.



# INJURY LOCATION



	Number of Injuries	Matches Missed	Change from 2018/19
HEAD/ CONCUSSION	2	3	-7
ILLNESS	1	1	-3
WRIST	0	0	-3
BACK	1	4	-7
ARM	0	0	-5
UNSTATED	11	18	+14
HIP	0	0	-5
HAMSTRING	4	16	+13
QUAD	2	6	+3
KNEE	12	57	+19
CALF	3	9	+3
LEG	0	0	-8
ACHILLES	0	0	-3
ANKLE	5	13	-20
FOOT	3	15	-22

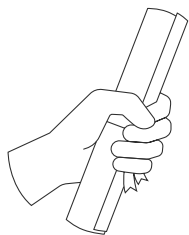


# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT



# PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

## Education Grants



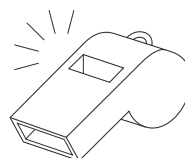
48

## Skin Cancer Checks



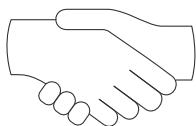
180

## Coaching Courses, C/B Licence



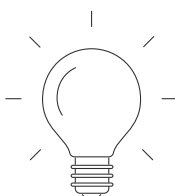
4

## Beyond the 90 Work Placements



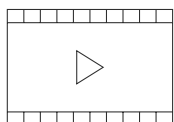
2

## Player Development Induction Program



59

## Highlights Packages



27

## Scholarships

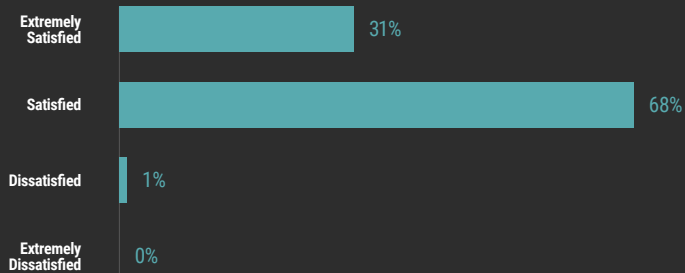


2



How satisfied are you with the performance of the PFA Player Development Program?

### W-League Survey



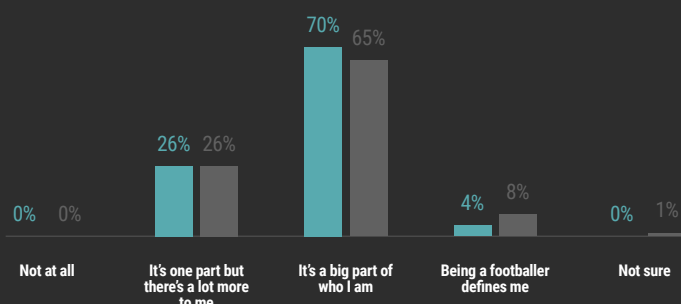
# IDENTITY & TRANSITION

## W-League Survey

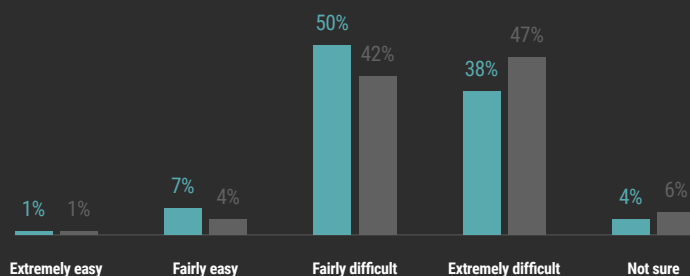


■ 2019/20  
■ 2018/19

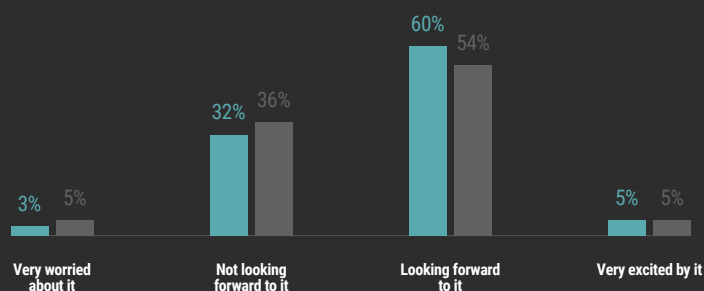
To what extent is being a footballer part of your 'personal identity'?



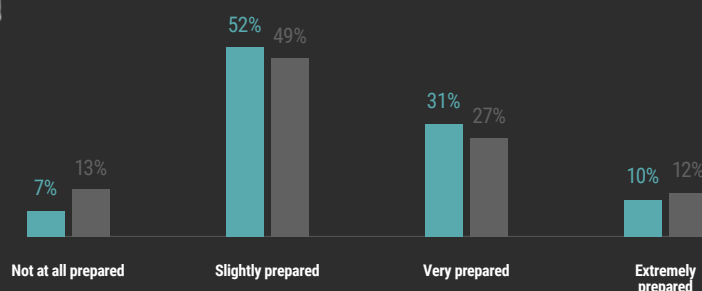
How hard would you find it to give up that identity if you stopped playing tomorrow?



What describes your general feelings about life after football?



How prepared generally do you feel for life after football?



The results of the past three W-League surveys illustrate the importance of off-field development to prepare for transition. This season witnessed a slight improvement in the number of players that held negative feelings towards life after football, although there is still a significant number that feel slightly prepared for life after football. This challenge is compounded by the fact many players' careers will end sooner than they anticipate.

It is also worth noting that while the COVID-19 outbreak and resulting economic impact was felt during the time the survey was conducted, this appeared to have minimal impact on the answers provided to these questions.

It may surprise some that W-League players have reported that football forms a larger part of their personal identity than A-League players said it did. This can be interpreted in numerous ways. On the one hand, it underscores how committed our female players are to their careers. On the other hand, it reflects the challenge all professional athletes face when those careers come to an end and personal fulfilment must be sought through other means.

**COURAGE  
WORLD CLASS  
INTELLIGENCE  
TRUST  
RESPECT**



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