

SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS. BUILDING THE GAME.



ALW

REPORT 2021/22



Professional Footballers Australia

2/55 Walsh Street, West Melbourne VIC 3003
1300 650 497 / info@pfa.net.au

www.pfa.net.au



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We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Elders past, present, and emerging throughout Australia, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, laws, and culture. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.



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SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS BUILDING THE GAME



CONTENTS

05

Executive Summary

- › Summary
- › Strategic Context

08

Employment Framework

- › CBA Overview
- › Player Payments
- › Player Analysis
- › Contracting Practices
- › Experience
- › Foreign Players
- › Match Minutes
- › Squad Profile
- › Players' Survey

20

League Assessment

- › Competitive Balance
- › Pitch Ratings
- › Scheduling
- › Workplace Standards
- › Injury Report

27

Technical Report

- › Possession & General Style
- › Shot Quality & Distribution
- › Defensive Output
- › Players' Survey

36

Player Development

- › Program Engagement
- › Career & Transition

Kathryn Gill & Beau Busch

Co-Chief Executives

The last 12 months have been incredibly challenging and transformative for society, our domestic Leagues, football in Australia and our players.

COVID-19's influence on fixturing and the health of players was significant this season, often to the detriment of the competition. However, several strategic outcomes point to a brighter future. For all the challenges the game has faced in the past two years, there is much to be hopeful about.

The separation of the professional game from Football Australia (FA) to the new administrative body, the Australian Professional Leagues (APL), is a step in a new direction, which has already produced constructive outcomes.

Under FA guidance, the foundations for the ALW were established, with collective bargaining being the catalyst for progress in recent seasons. Upon assuming control of the professional leagues, APL faced enormous challenges resulting from the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

This context is essential to honestly and objectively assess where the Australian professional game was, where it is now and where it wants to be. Therefore the 2021/22 A-League Women's Report can't be viewed in isolation; it must be viewed as a consequence of many years of decision-making and outside influences.

In the past year, a lot has happened in women's football that has reaffirmed the incredible opportunity the female game offers. Globally, the launch of Angel City FC in America made new

ground as a female-founded and led ownership group comprising A-list movie stars, legendary athletes and retired US Women's National Team players. In Barcelona, a record-breaking El Clasico saw over 91,000 people attend the Camp Nou and, in the process, created a landmark moment for women's football in Europe.

In Australia, we secured the FIFA Women's World Cup and the W-league has transformed into the A-League Women (ALW). A five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was signed which brought enhanced workplace conditions and professional standards. It was an essential step toward enshrining equality within the workplace and ensuring that players were directly involved in a yearly review of the competition design.

This report chronicles, analyses and examines the 2021/22 season. The early fruits of the CBA are visible, most notably illustrated by;

- record investment in player payments;
- 71 percent of players indicating their desire to remain in the competition;
- the positive impact of improved workplace standards on player experiences at their clubs;
- more opportunities for players following expansion; and
- the continuing critical role our domestic competitions play in developing our national team players.

On the pitch, the season itself delivered, with the addition of two extra regular season fixtures during the 2021/22 campaign, meaning that six additional points were available this season.



Sydney FC secured the highest points tally since Melbourne City FC's undefeated campaign in 2015-16. Sydney's dominance was marked by an 11-match unbeaten run from the opening round in December, meaning the competition for the Premier's Plate was fought until the final round of the season, vesting with Sydney FC.

However, Melbourne Victory would end up with the spoils, overcoming a range of challenges to emerge as Champions, the third time they have lifted the trophy in the Club's history.

From dealing with COVID, floods, and congested schedules to relocating teams interstate and overseas, the successes in the face of significant challenges demonstrated how robust and resilient the women's game is and how committed the players are within it to weather this storm and come out the other side with such ambition.

An ambition that, for the first time (with the APL's recently announced changes to the ALW competition over the next four years) provides the ALW with a clear pathway to full professionalisation with:

- an extended season window, moving to a full home and away season in 2023/24;

- the inclusion of an additional two clubs; and
- increases to the minimum wage, salary floor and cap for the remaining four years of the CBA.

These necessary steps will allow the ALW the opportunity to forge its own identity and that of the players by establishing an ALW competition that provides meaningful employment, supports and protects the players' health and wellbeing, and has the focus and drive to build a sustainable league and players' careers.

Our objective remains that football must be the career of choice for female athletes.

We all know there remains much work to be done.

Finally, in a season that required so much sacrifice from players, staff and fans, we thank you for your continued belief and commitment to Australian football. It truly is an honour to represent players that have shown such remarkable resilience and dignity in the face of enormous challenges.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- Summary
- Strategic Context

SUMMARY

For players, understanding the game of football and the industry within which they are employed is critical to building meaningful lives and careers – in Australia and abroad. Equally important is regular assessment and benchmarking – through player feedback and analysis – of our domestic competitions to ensure Australian football is progressing against its objectives and meeting the game's collective ambition of international competitiveness and success.

Since 2016, the PFA has conducted research of Australia's domestic competitions – now known as A-League Women and A-League Men – and gathered anecdotal feedback from its members for the dual purpose of supporting our players and shaping a better professional game.

Across the past six reports charting the evolution of the A-League Women's competition, the PFA has focused on four key areas of analysis and assessment, exploring the players' employment framework, conducting

a league assessment and composing a technical report and finally exploring the level of player development on and off the pitch.

This report can help paint a picture of how the average A-League Women player is remunerated, the conditions they experience within the club and on match days, the average time they spend at their club and within the competition and their perspective on scheduling, and personal experience of rival competitions.

The report is also useful for extrapolating data from across the season to explore the prevailing style of football played by teams and across the league – and how that may inform the style of play that our national teams adopt.

In order to build this report, two sources of data are provided: the PFA's A-League Women end of season survey and statistical data sourced from InStat.



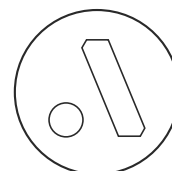
169

The number of players who responded to the 2021/22 A-League Women survey – around 76% of the playing cohort



10

The highest number of clubs in League history, following expansion of the ALW competition and with the inclusion of Wellington Phoenix



71%

The percentage of players who would like to stay and play in the A-League Women next season



228

The number of players contracted with A-League Women clubs in 2021/22



\$3.98m

The highest amount of overall player payments



3.8

The average seasons of experience, down from 4.3 last season



A-LEAGUE WOMEN SURVEY

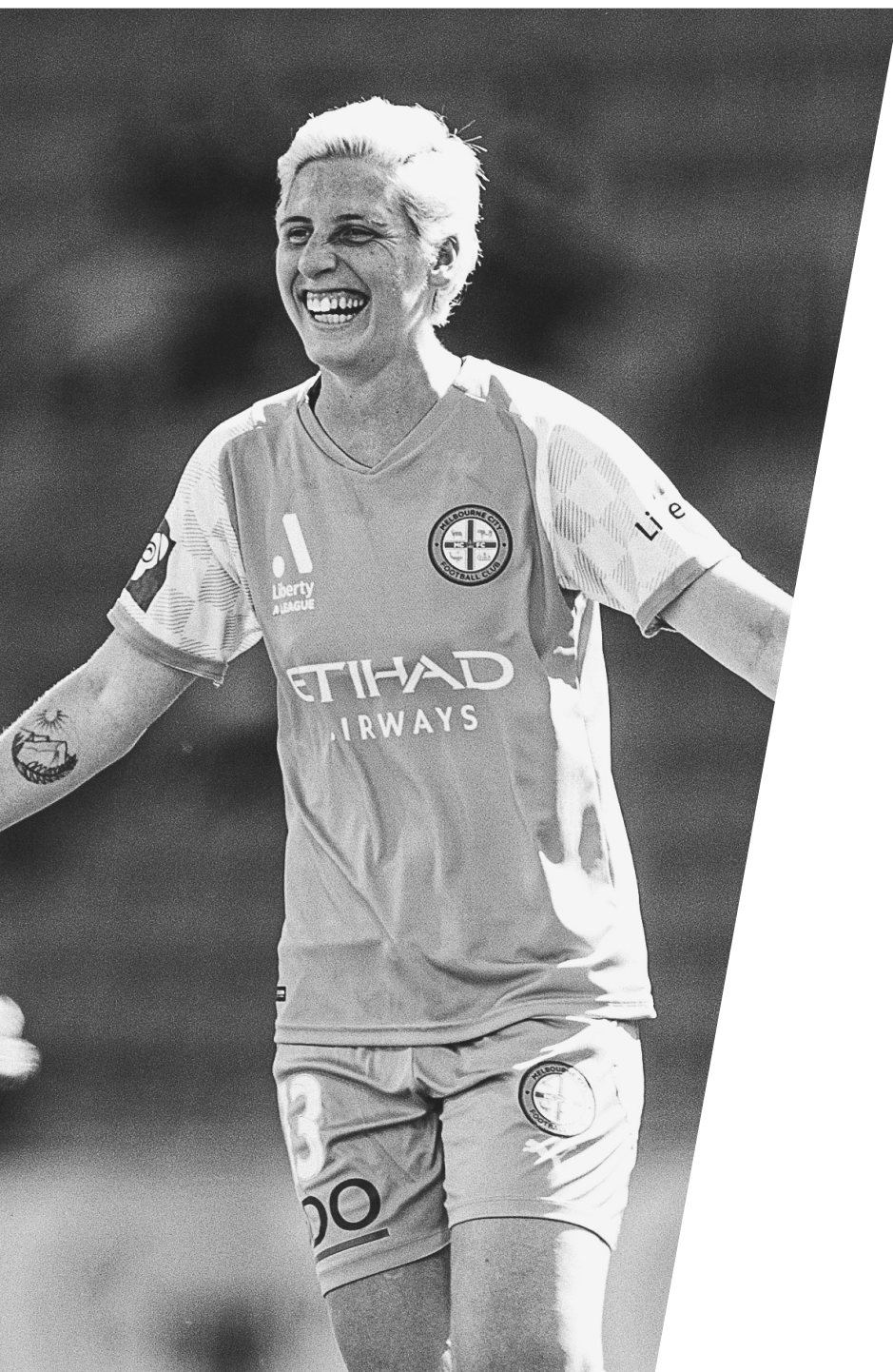
Every A-League Women player was sent a link to the online survey at the conclusion of the 2021/22 season. Between late-March and mid-April, 169 players responded to the survey, around 76% of the playing cohort.

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 A-League Women, Collective Bargaining and the PFA.

InStat[®]

STATISTICAL DATA

The PFA partners with InStat to provide performance data for sections of this report. InStat is a global sports performance analysis company, providing statistical data reports and in-depth analysis for football clubs and leagues around the world.



Despite the ongoing impact of COVID across Australia during 2021, a promising new beginning beckoned for the A-League Women in December 2021.

The season commenced under the banner of the Australian Professional Leagues, a new five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement, a new broadcast deal, a fresh new brand, a new expansion club and an extended regular season and finals series.

As most states emerged from lockdowns and vaccination rates among society and athletes reached government targets, the League relocated new club Wellington Phoenix to Wollongong to ensure the competition could commence with minimal disruption due to an ongoing travel pause across the Tasman. Introduced as the first expansion club since Melbourne City FC joined the League in 2015, Phoenix became the 10th team in the competition. Under the APL, further expansion of the competition has been earmarked with Western United and Central Coast Mariners proposed to join in future seasons.

A new CBA was signed in September 2021 to deliver economic security and stability for the clubs, the Leagues, and the players during a period of recovery post-pandemic – while considering the future growth of the competition. The CBA also delivered a commitment from the clubs and the League to improved high perfor-

mance environments, investment in player welfare and further embed gender equity. Following two seasons of COVID-19 impacted domestic football, the A-League Women re-launched with a genuine partnership between the clubs and the players to chart a path forward.

Unfortunately, the persistent impact of the pandemic across Australia provided a major disruption for the League, with a regularly changing schedule, postponements, a fixture backlog, and frequent positive cases detected among players, coaches and club staff, taking the gloss off the start of a new era for the League.

In total, 33 of 70 fixtures were rescheduled or altered last season; 18 of those were directly or indirectly from COVID (25.7%). Flooding impacted three matches and other causes impacted 12. The most disruptive period, February, saw a condensed schedule for many teams, including Melbourne Victory, who went on to qualify for finals and eventually became Champions. Within the League Assessment of this report, we explore the impact of the frenzy of football in February.

Overall, the A-League Women's season was an incredibly disrupted one, which means any major trends of assessment across the competition need to be studied and understood within the context of the impact of COVID-19.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT



EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK

- CBA Overview
- Player Payments
- Player Analysis
- Contracting Practices
- Experience
- Foreign Players
- Match Minutes
- Squad Profile
- Players' Survey

In this section we highlight the impact of the five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement on the employment conditions in the A-League Women, including player payments, contracting practices as well as match minutes played by age groups and the number and origin of foreign players within squads, and canvass the views of players through the annual Players' Survey.

Additionally, we compare the A-League Women's employment framework against five global leagues. The new five-year CBA delivered a wide variety of improvements to the working conditions of A-League Women players. The new five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement signed between the Australian Professional Leagues (APL) and the players ahead of the 2021/22 season delivered a wide variety of improvements to the working conditions of A-League Women players.

Critically, at a time when standards, conditions and pay could have dropped significantly due to a reduction in club and league revenues from the impact of COVID, the players and the league committed to significantly enhanced high performance standards and increases to the minimum wage across the course of the agreement.

While the CBA provides a level of security and certainty for clubs and players – many of whom rely on additional work for a secondary income – the annual survey results show that additional financial incentives and security will help them build longevity in their careers.



Term: 5 Year Agreement (2021 - 2026)

Aligned with five year broadcast agreement between APL and ViacomCBS and Network 10



New Minimum Workplace and Performance Standards

Under the CBA, the clubs are required to meet the minimum workplace and performance standards



Player Payments and Exemptions

Minimum player payments to increase from \$315,000 to \$485,000 between 2021 – 2023. Two 'Marquee Players' whose salaries are excluded from the salary cap



Guaranteed Player Development Funding

Commencing at \$700,000, and increasing by \$50,000 for first three seasons to \$800,000



Review Trigger

To ensure players continue to receive a fair share of the professional game's revenues, the key financial aspects of the CBA are subject to an annual review trigger

Minimum Wage

- **Removal of the youth minimum wage to return to a singular minimum wage**
- **Year 1: \$16,344 based on a 23-week A-League Women contract**
- **Year 2: \$20,608 based on a 29-week A-League Women contract**
- **Year 3: \$25,000 based on a 35-week A-League Women contract**
- **Year 4 & 5: Subject to the review trigger. Regardless, 3% increase to the minimum wage**

Note:

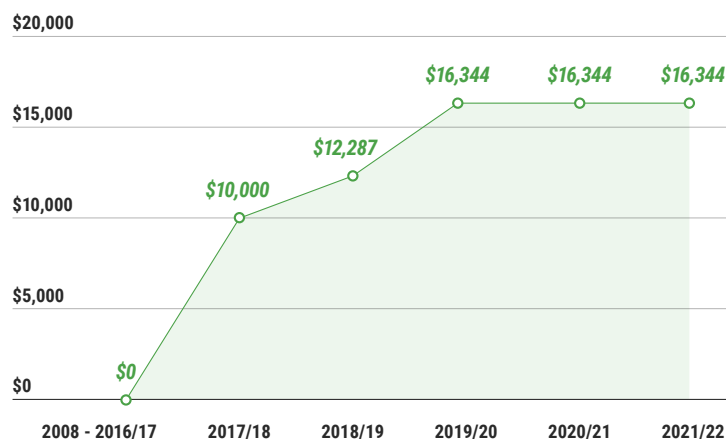
The A-League Women minimum remuneration will be reviewed annually if there are significant changes to competition design, such as the inclusion of new teams and an extended season. The minimum remuneration will increase on a pro-rata basis if the A-League Women season length is extended.

PLAYER PAYMENTS

Since a minimum wage was introduced into the competition in 2017/18, it has increased year-on-year. During the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons, the minimum wage was preserved at \$16,344 – considering the impact of COVID on club revenues. The youth minimum wage was removed to ensure a singular minimum wage.

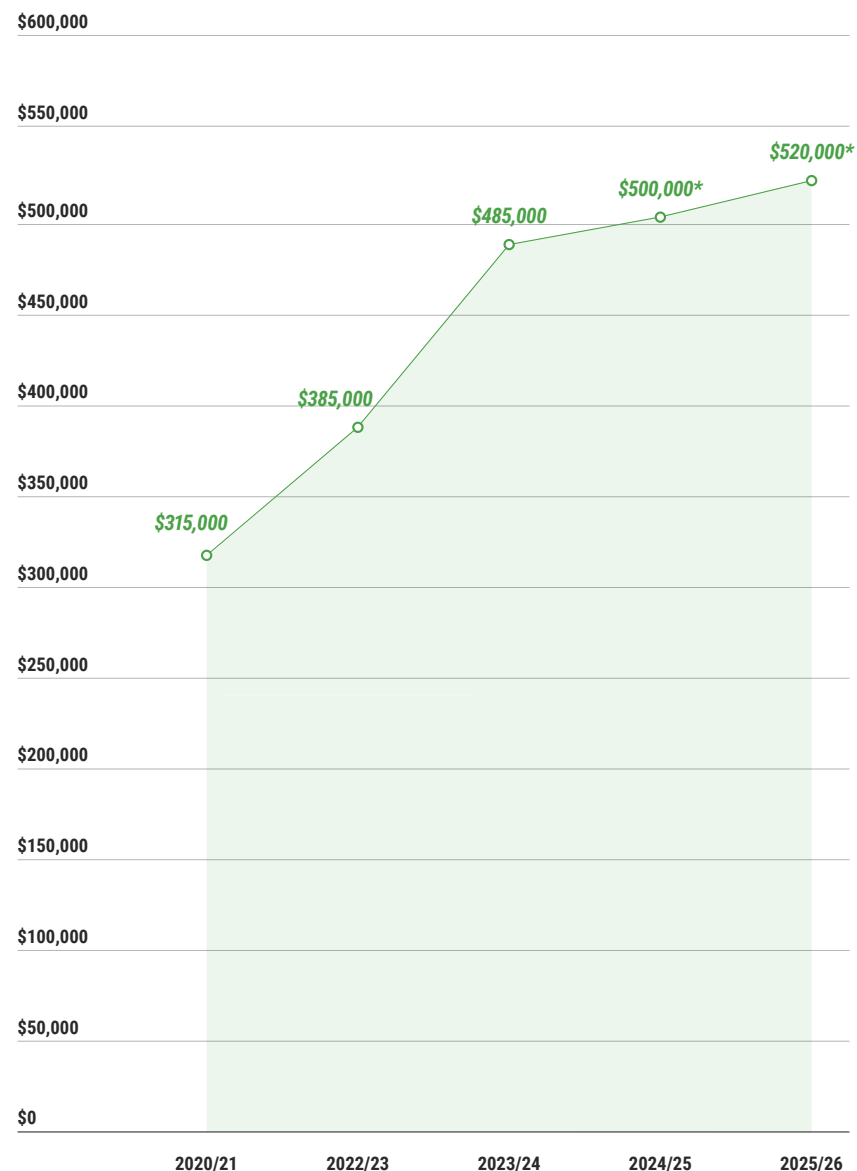
While the growth of the women's game globally – and in Europe in particular – elicits direct comparisons to player earnings and necessitates immediate local investment, the CBA aims to deliver this in partnership with the players in an incremental and sustainable process as the League gradually grows.

MINIMUM WAGE GROWTH



Positively, the amount invested on squads in the ALW was the highest ever in competition history. This indicates that while concerns remain around viable investment in the competition, the clubs have maintained a commitment to increase expenditure on their squads. With the CBA implementing a minimum player payment spend of \$350,000 this season (salary floor), clubs averaged almost \$400,000, representing over \$4m on player wages this season.

MINIMUM PLAYER PAYMENT INCREASES UNDER NEW CBA



* Subject to the review trigger

PLAYER ANALYSIS



218

Total number of players contracted



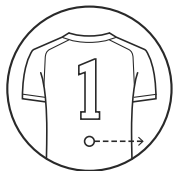
228

Total number of players in squads



216

Total number of players used

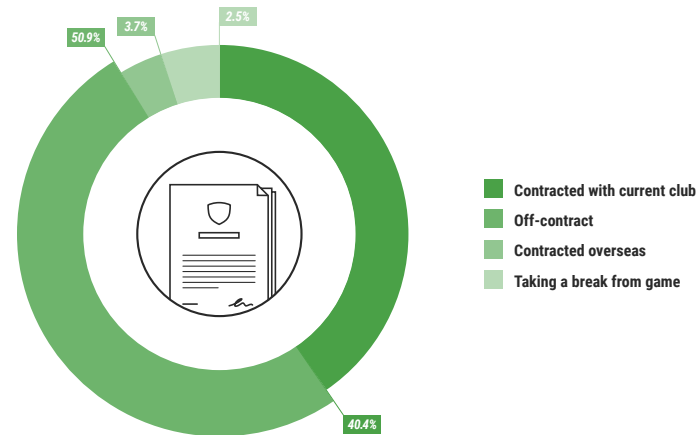


61%

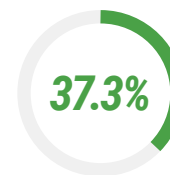
Percentage of players in the first year at their club

CONTRACTING PRACTICES

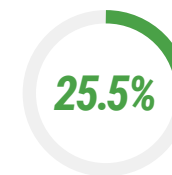
CONTRACT TYPE



AGENTS



of players have an agent

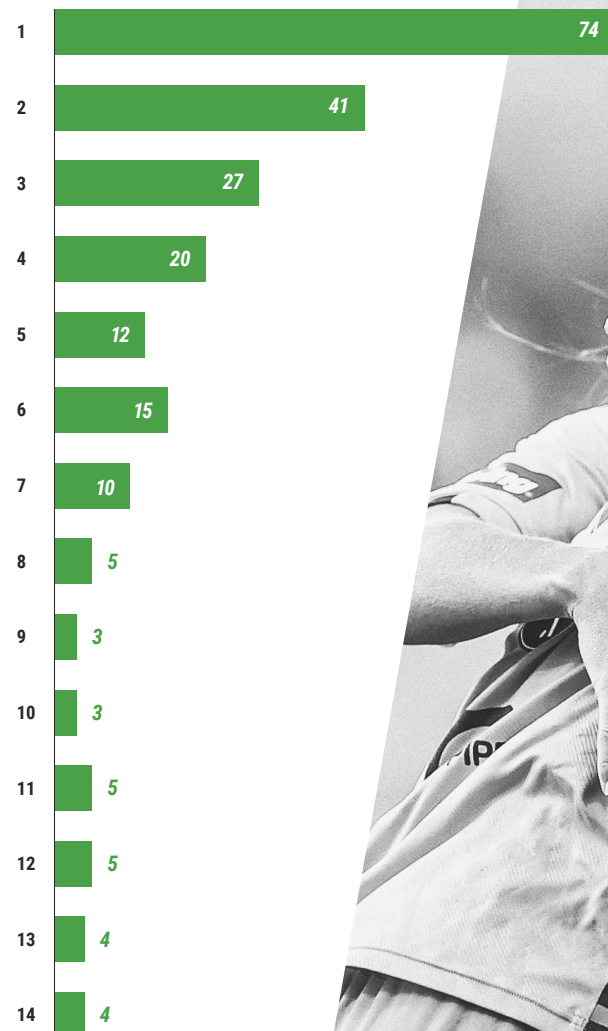


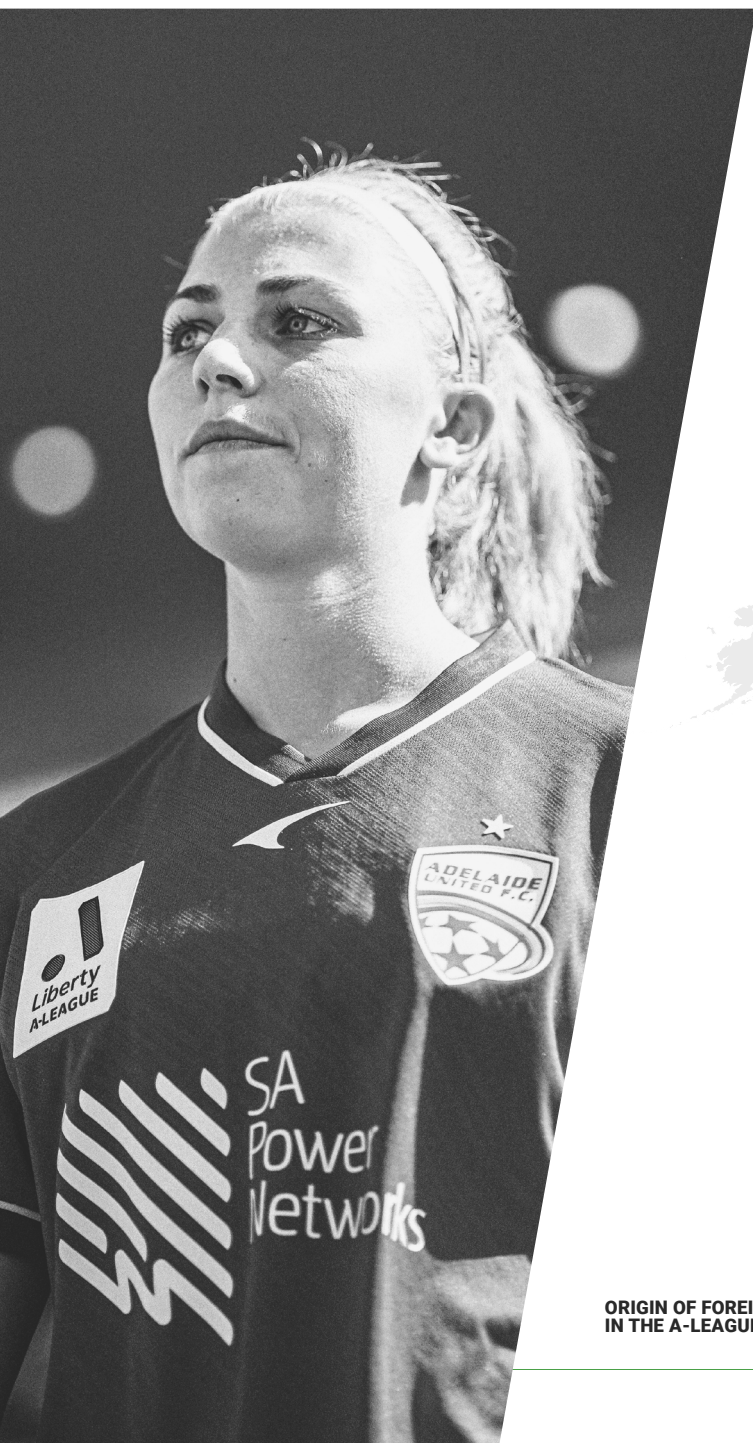
of players used an agent to negotiate their current ALW contract

EXPERIENCE

In all, 228 players were contracted with ALW clubs in 2021/22, with an average 3.8 seasons of experience, down from 4.3 last season 2020/21.

EXPERIENCE BY SEASON





31

Total number of foreign players in the ALW for season 2021/22 (up 8)

ORIGIN OF FOREIGN PLAYERS
IN THE A-LEAGUE WOMENS



FOREIGN PLAYERS

MATCH MINUTES

The steady growth of players aged 18-24 receiving appearances and game time continued during the 2021/22 season, with 58% of total minutes played occupied by this cohort. There was a slight decrease in the number of minutes played by U17 players (4%) and an increase (28% of total minutes played) in 25-29 age bracket.

Across the past three seasons, between 50-59% of total minutes were played by 18-24 year old players and in the 2021/22 season, 86% of match minutes were played by those aged 18-29. The graph below shows the visual spread of match minutes across the competition and a break-down of match minutes played by position.



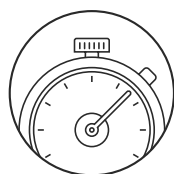
216

Total number of players who made an appearance



2,068

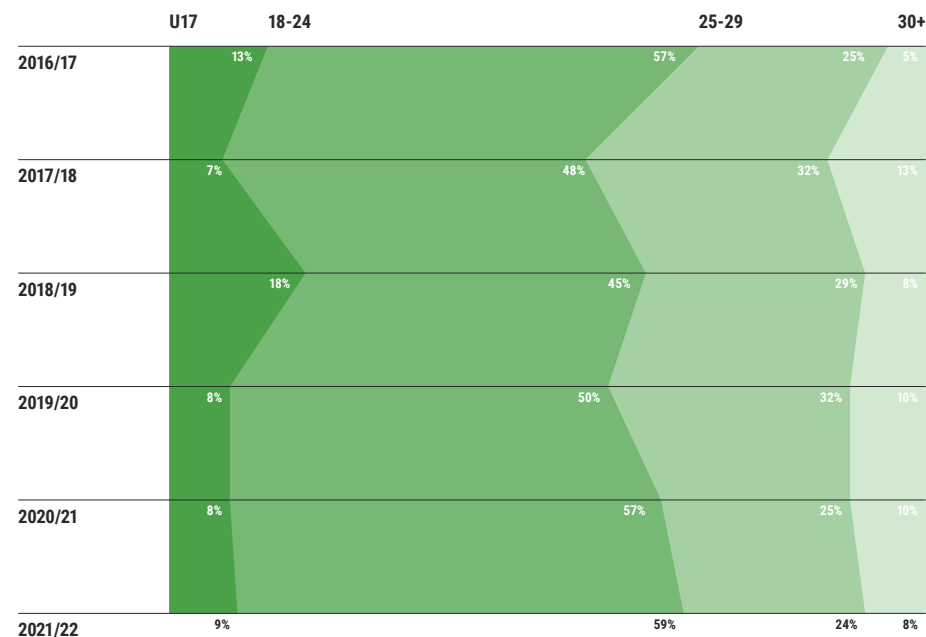
Total number of appearances



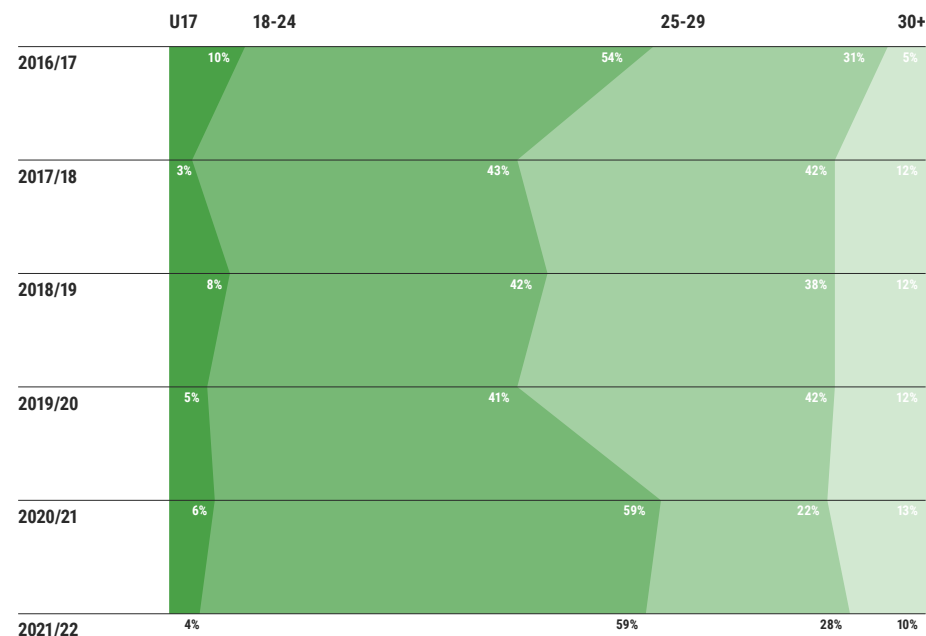
138,482

Total number of minutes played

NUMBER OF PLAYERS WHO MADE AN APPEARANCE

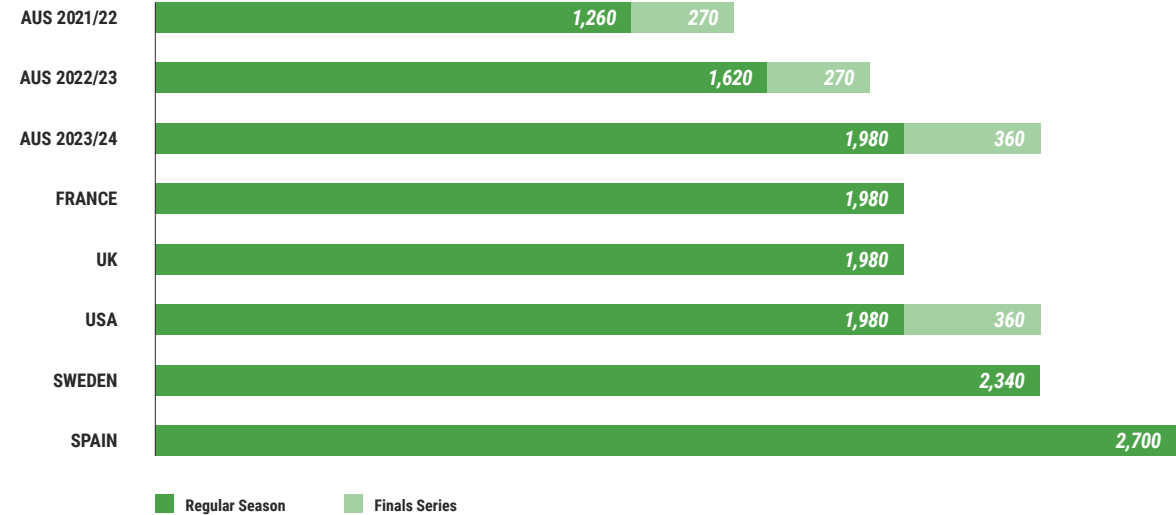


TOTAL MINUTES PLAYED



Player	Club	Age*	Minutes Played	Appearances
Emily Hodgson	Adelaide United	21	1260	14
Allyson Haran	Canberra United	25	1260	14
Emma Checker	Melbourne City	25	1260	14
Cassidy Davis	Newcastle Jets	27	1260	14
Elizabeth Eddy	Newcastle Jets	30	1260	14
Natasha Rigby	Perth Glory	28	1260	14
Charlotte Mclean	Sydney FC	21	1260	14
Mackenzie Hawkesby	Sydney FC	21	1260	14
Caitlin Cooper	Western Sydney Wanderers	33	1260	14
Annalee Grove	Adelaide United	20	1259	14

* Age at start of season



From next season, the A-League Women will offer an extra 360 regular season minutes of football, taking the total regular season minutes to 1,620. More match minutes are available to the top four teams who will qualify for a three-week finals campaign.

The 2023-24 season will provide A-League players with a total of 1,980 regular season minutes, bringing the competition in line with global benchmarks set by England’s Women’s Super League, America’s National Women’s Soccer League and France’s Division 1 Feminine.

SQUAD STABILITY

Ladder Position	Club	Players Contracted	Players Used	Players in First Year at Club	Average Age
3 (F)	Adelaide United	23	22	13	21.7
6	Brisbane Roar	22	22	18	22.3
7	Canberra United	20	20	13	23.1
2 (F)	Melbourne City	21	21	14	22.1
4 (C)	Melbourne Victory	23	22	10	23.7
8	Newcastle Jets	21	22	13	24.2
5	Perth Glory	24	23	16	23.0
1 (P)	Sydney FC	21	21	8	21.3
9	Western Sydney Wanderers	23	23	14	20.3
10	Wellington Phoenix	20	20	20	23.2

F = Qualified for Finals, C = Champions, P = Premiers

The relationship between squad stability and success was evident yet again this season. Last season, the four most stable squads in the competition were also the four finalists.

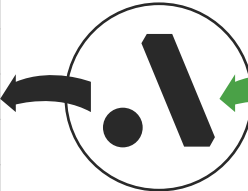
In 2021/22 Premiers Sydney FC had just eight players – the lowest in the competition – in their first year at the club, while the second most stable squad were Champions Melbourne Victory, with only 10 of their 23 contracted players new to the club at the start of the campaign.

The outlier here were Melbourne City, who finished runners up on the A-League Women's table but had 14 new faces in their squad for the 2021/22 campaign.

While there were perhaps a range of external factors around Wellington's inclusion in the competition and their competitiveness on the pitch following their relocation and late entry into the A-League Women, the wooden spooners were the least stable squad with all 20 players, obviously, in their first year at their club.

MIGRATION OF TALENT

OUT (2020/21 Season)	
Overseas	21
Retired/Time Away	8
NPL	21
Injured	4
Unknown	5
Total	59



IN (2021/22 Season)	
NPL	61
Academy	6
Overseas	16
New Zealand	13
Injury	3
Total	99

SQUAD PROFILE

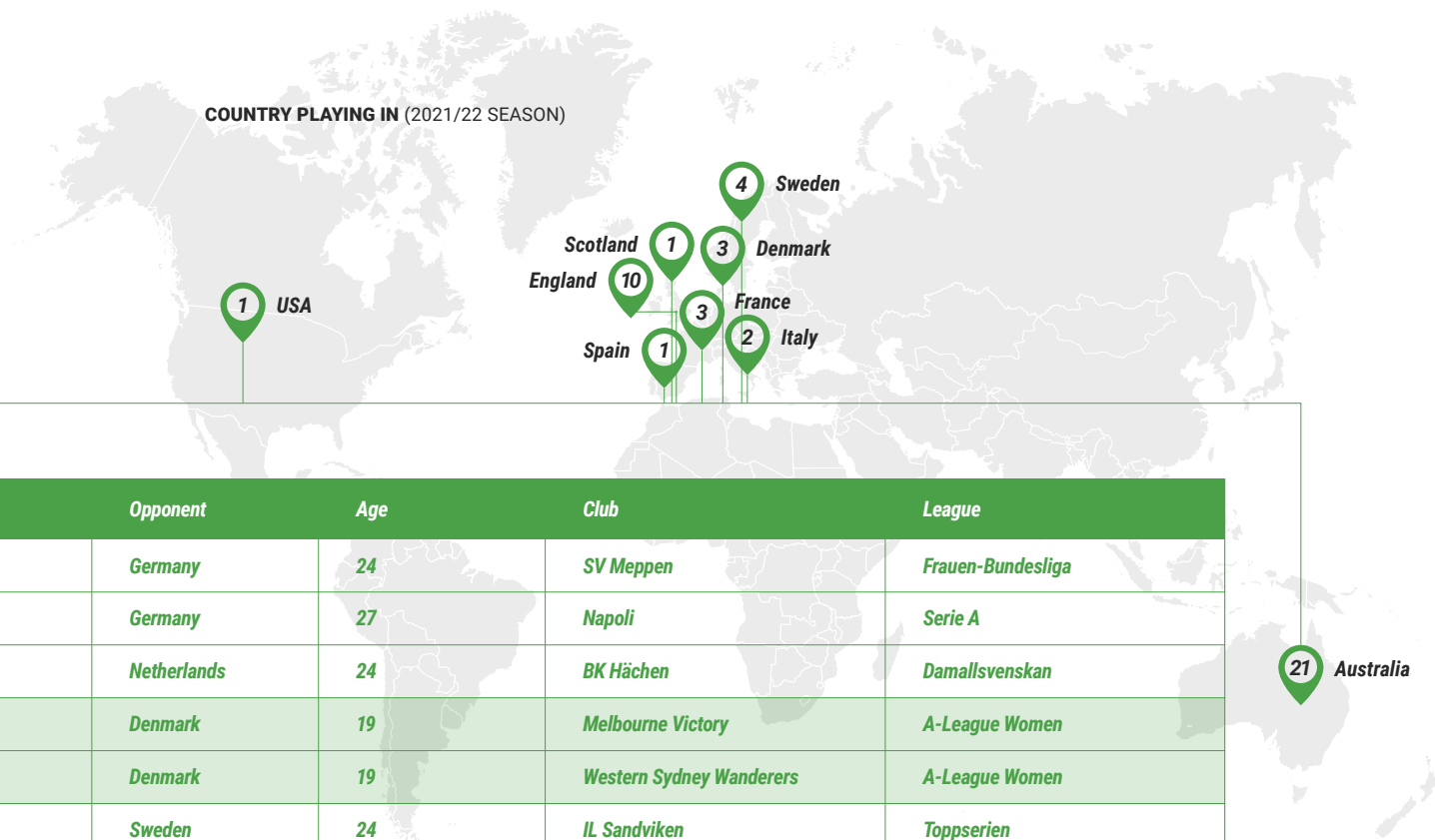
NATIONAL TEAM PRODUCTION



46

The number of players who have received a Matildas call up from January 2021

COUNTRY PLAYING IN (2021/22 SEASON)



MATILDAS DEBUTS: 1ST JAN 2021 TO PRESENT

Player	Debut	Opponent	Age	Club	League
Beatrice Goad	10/4/21	Germany	24	SV Meppen	Frauen-Bundesliga
Alexandra Huynh	10/4/21	Germany	27	Napoli	Serie A
Dylan Holmes	13/4/21	Netherlands	24	BK Häcken	Damallsvenskan
Kyra Cooney-Cross	10/6/21	Denmark	19	Melbourne Victory	A-League Women
Courtney Nevin	10/6/21	Denmark	19	Western Sydney Wanderers	A-League Women
Teagan Micah	15/6/21	Sweden	24	IL Sandviken	Toppserien
Angela Beard	21/9/21	Ireland	24	Fortuna Hjørring	Elitedivisionen
Charlotte Grant	21/9/21	Ireland	20	FC Rosengård	Damallsvenskan
Clare Wheeler	21/9/21	Ireland	24	Fortuna Hjørring	Elitedivisionen
Bryleeh Henry	23/10/21	Brazil	18	Western Sydney Wanderers	A-League Women
Remy Siemsen	23/10/21	Brazil	22	Sydney FC	A-League Women
Jessika Nash	27/11/21	USA	17	Sydney FC	A-League Women
Holly McNamara	21/1/22	Indonesia	19	Melbourne City FC	A-League Women
Cortnee Vine	24/1/22	Philippines	24	Sydney FC	A-League Women
Taylor Ray	26/06/22	Spain	21	Sydney FC	A-League Women
Jamilla Rankin	26/06/22	Spain	19	Brisbane Roar	A-League Women

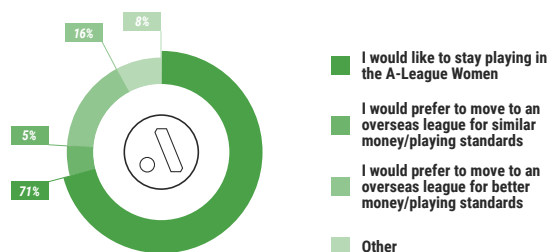
A-League Women players

PLAYERS' SURVEY

Complementing the analysis of the A-League Women's competition is feedback from the players on their employment. From direct questions and anecdotal feedback, three key themes emerged: 1) players continue to balance football commitments with other forms of employment, 2) remuneration is a key factor to securing career longevity, and 3) scheduling this season provided additional challenges for players.

In June, the Australian Professional Leagues confirmed the expansion of the A-League Women's competition, with a 50% increase in the minimum wage across the next two seasons providing players with more financial incentive and certainty to remain in the ALW.

WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PREFERENCE TOWARDS THE NEXT A-LEAGUE WOMEN SEASON?



59.5%

reported their financial situation as 'somewhat secure', while 26.1% reported it as 'somewhat insecure'



56.5%

of players said the main reason why they would leave the game early was financial reasons

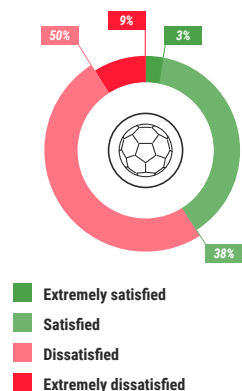


95.7%

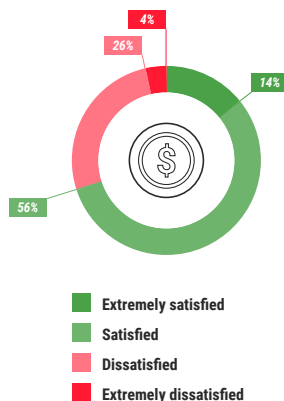
said the main factor to prolong their football career would be earning more money from the game



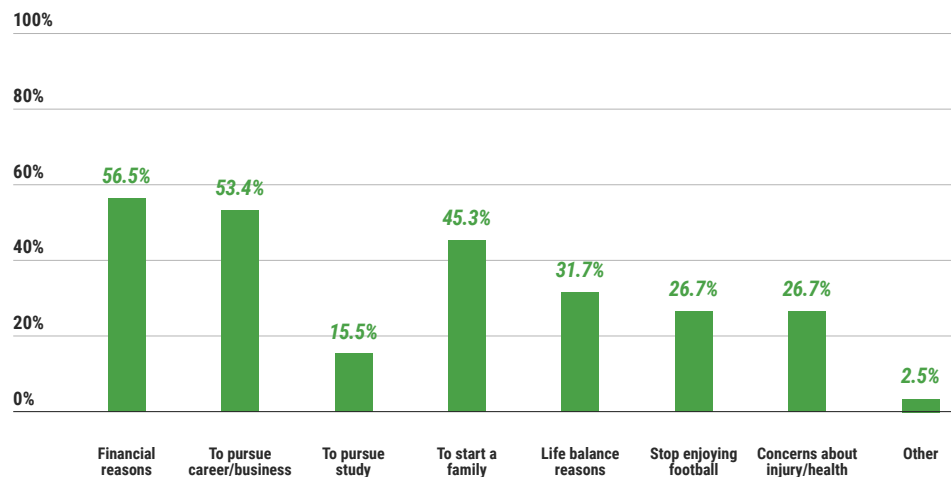
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CURRENT BALANCE BETWEEN FOOTBALL/WORK/STUDY/LIFE?



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION



WHAT REASONS MIGHT YOU LEAVE THE GAME EARLIER THAN YOU OTHERWISE MIGHT HAVE? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



“ Go overseas and then return for next season here

“ I would like to play for both an overseas club during the off season and in the A-League

“ I'd like to come back for my offseason

“ I would love to play another season in the A-League and then play a season at home (USA)

“ I would like to move overseas and play. If I can't [get a contract overseas] then I would like to play in the A-League again



LEAGUE ASSESSMENT

Within the League Assessment, we explore the competitive balance across the season, winning margins within games and an assessment of the players' match day workplace – the football pitch – via our pitch ratings survey results and their working environments within their clubs.

The objective is to provide a picture of the competition as well as benchmark this season against previous and future seasons.

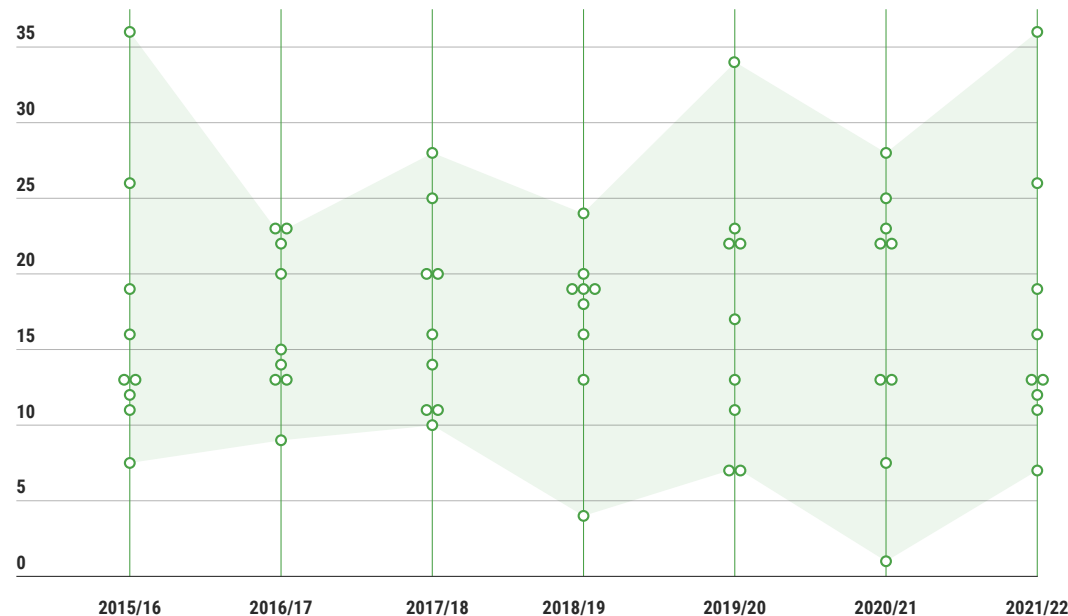
Note: In previous reports we have included an analysis of attendance and atmosphere within the League Assessment. Given the impact of COVID-19 on attendances and atmosphere, we have removed these from this season's assessment.

- ▶ *Competitive Balance*
- ▶ *Pitch Ratings*
- ▶ *Scheduling*
- ▶ *Workplace Standards*
- ▶ *Injury Report*



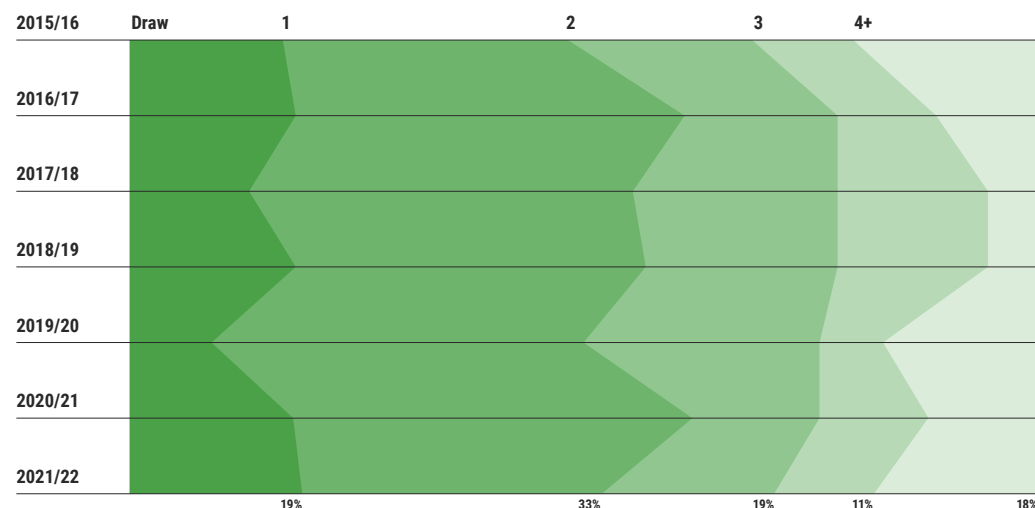
COMPETITIVE BALANCE

POINTS SPREAD COMPARISON



With two additional regular season fixtures during the 2021/22 campaign, six additional points were available this season. Sydney FC secured the highest points tally since Melbourne City FC's undefeated campaign in 2015-16 – in which City won every match and finished on 36 points. Sydney's dominance was marked by an 11-match unbeaten run from the opening round in December until they lost their first match to their closest contender, City, which meant the competition for the Premiers Plate was fought until the final round of the season. Perth Glory narrowly missed out to Victory (24 points each) on a finals berth due to an inferior goal difference, while at the opposite end of the ladder, Western Sydney and Wellington completed their seasons with only 7 points each and thus a gap of 28 points was established between the Premiers and wooden spooners.

WINNING MARGINS



The majority (33%) of matches finished with a margin of one goal, indicating strong competitiveness within matches, while 19% were either draws or decided by two goal margin. 18% resulted in 4+ goal blowouts; a trend that has increased marginally in the past season.

PITCH RATINGS

The PFA A-League Women 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 quality is critical to a players' performance, their safety and welfare and ensuring the highest possible on-pitch product. With 21 different venues utilised throughout the season, there remains an opportunity for the A-League Women to provide less transient fixturing for certain clubs. For example, Western Sydney Wanderers played their home matches at four separate locations; Blacktown Football Park, CommBank Stadium, Marconi Stadium and Wanderers Football Park. By securing a 'home' for teams at specific venues, such as Adelaide United and Canberra United, who had Coopers Stadium and Viking Park to call home, respectively, there are opportunities for A-League Women's teams to bed themselves within their communities.

AAMI Park	 	★★★★★	4.2
Blacktown Football Park		★★★★★	3.4
Central Coast Stadium	 	★★★★★	4.6
City Vista Recreation		★★★★★	3.5
CommBank Stadium		★★★★★	4.0
Coopers Stadium		★★★★★	3.8
John Ilhan Memorial Reserve		★★★★★	2.0
Jubilee Stadium		★★★★★	3.9
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex		★★★★★	4.0
Leichhardt Oval		★★★★★	3.0
Macedonia Park		★★★★★	2.5
Marconi Stadium		★★★★★	3.5
Marden Sports Complex		★★★★★	3.0
McDonald Jones Stadium		★★★★★	4.8
Moreton Daily Stadium		★★★★★	4.2
No. 2 Sportsground		★★★★★	5.0
Perry Park		★★★★★	4.0
UTAS Stadium		★★★★★	5.0
Viking Park		★★★★★	3.5
Wanderers Football Park		★★★★★	4.0
WIN Stadium		★★★★★	4.7

The A-League Women's schedule was severely impacted by two factors during the 2021/22 campaign: COVID-19 and inclement weather at the tail-end of the season.

For Melbourne Victory, half the season (or seven of their 14 matches) were condensed into 24 days in February. Canberra United, Adelaide United, Western Sydney Wanderers and Wellington Phoenix had five matches within the month. Roar had the fewest number of matches, with three rescheduled during February. The average days between matches for Victory were 3.7. The average for all teams was 5.59 days.

This provided significant logistical challenges for players, particularly those juggling commitments outside of playing. This, however, is unlikely to be a recurring feature of the A-Leagues

next season. While there is always potential for fixture disruption caused by unforeseen events and weather impact, Government restrictions and their effect on the A-Leagues has been unparalleled across the past three seasons.

Overall, the players understood the challenges the competition faced in ensuring all teams could complete the campaign and that the APL was faced with circumstances beyond their control, but provided the following feedback on the scheduling this season.

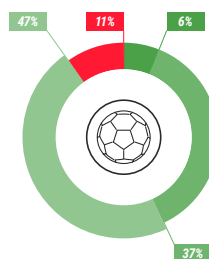
FEBRUARY MATCH SCHEDULING

Team	Number of Matches in February	Average Days Between Matches
Adelaide United	5	5.5
Brisbane Roar	3	5.5
Canberra United	4	6.7
Melbourne City	4	6.0
Melbourne Victory	7	3.7
Necastle Jets	5	5.3
Perth Glory	5	5.5
Sydney FC	4	4.7
Wellington Phoenix	5	7.7
Western Sydney Wanderers	5	5.3
Total	47	5.59

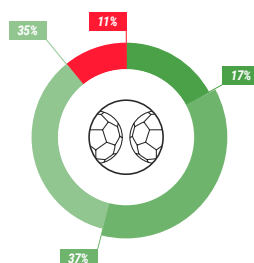


HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FIXTURING OF THE A-LEAGUE WOMEN THIS SEASON?

STAND-ALONE MATCHES



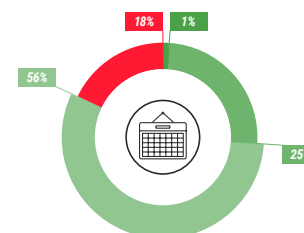
DOUBLE HEADERS



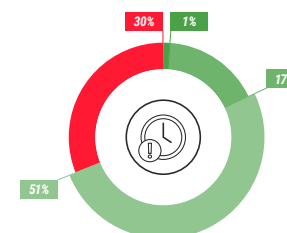
KICK-OFF TIMES



MID-WEEK MATCHES



MATCH AMENDMENTS/ POSTPONEMENTS



■ Extremely satisfied
 ■ Very satisfied
 ■ Slightly satisfied
 ■ Not at all satisfied

Through the CBA, the clubs and the PFA committed to delivering improved workplace and high-performance standards. This included minimum staffing at training and match days, as well as the presence of medical staff at home and away matches.

High Performance Staffing



Training:

- Minimum: physio, strength and conditioning coach and operations resource (e.g. team manager or kit/equipment manager), in addition to coaching staff
- Doctor on call for access by players as required and available at least once a week
- Same minimum standard applies to a club's Men's and Women's teams

Home Match Day:

- Minimum: head coach, assistant coach, physio, strength and conditioning coach and team manager

Away Match Day:

- Minimum: head coach, assistant coach, physio and team manager

Player Workload



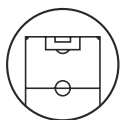
- Development of a Match Scheduling Policy

Medical Standards



- Minimum Medical Standards must be agreed with the PFA prior to the start of each season

Training Venue Standards



Changerooms:

- Close proximity to training pitch
- Clean and functioning
- Regular access guaranteed
- Appropriate space to accommodate the squad

Gym:

- Regular access for team and individuals
- Gym fully equipped to meet the needs of a high performance team

Training Pitch:

- Close proximity to changerooms
- Full sized, marked and meets FIFA minimum standards

Recovery:

- Accessible for team and individual use

Player Lounge:

- Private space for players at daily training environment
- Access to microwave and fridge

Travel and Accommodation



Accommodation:

- Minimum 4 star unless unavailable or commercially unreasonable
- Team room must be available

Travel:

- No match-day flights unless mutually agreed with players or directed by club or APL due to COVID-19

Airport Parking:

- For away matches, club to provide either airport parking or reasonable alternate arrangements for transit to airport - both of which must be free of charge, unless a player opts out of what arrangement the club has implemented

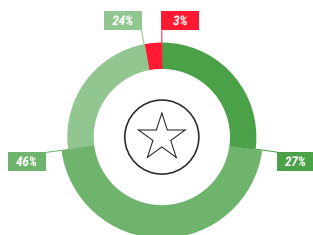
Food & Hydration:

- Meals provided by club whilst player away from home
- Meals of a nutritional standard appropriate for high performance team



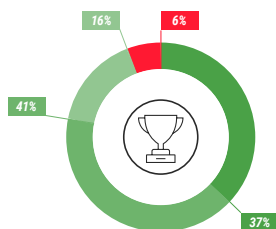
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE WORKPLACE STANDARDS AT YOUR CLUB?

PROFESSIONALISM

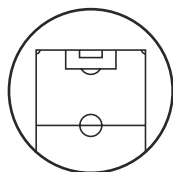


- Highly professional
- Mostly professional
- Somewhat professional
- Not at all professional

CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT



- Excellent
- Good
- Okay
- Poor



41%

said a better quality training pitch would provide a better training environment



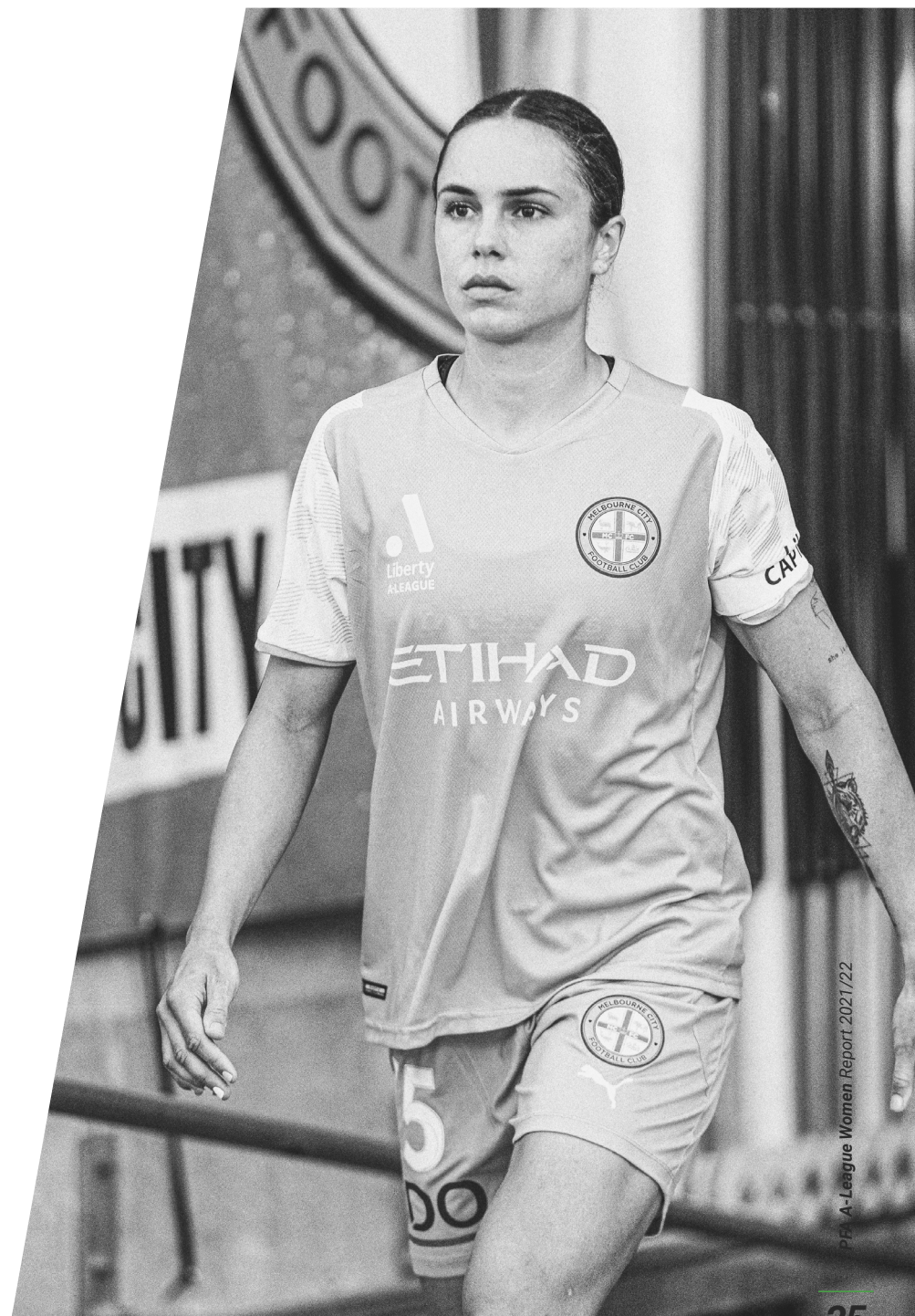
39%

said there should be a greater focus on psychology within clubs



89%

would recommend their club to other players





INJURY REPORT

The PFA's injury report was established in 2005 and has been a fundamental tool in the PFA's efforts to ensure the health and safety of our members through the monitoring and occurrence of injury. The injury report played a significant role in forming the foundations for the implementation in 2011 of the Minimum Medical Standards in the A-League Men, which have been incorporated into the A-Leagues Collective Bargaining Agreements since 2015.

Previously, the PFA Injury Report was formulated from publicly available information, private player feedback and weekly club match previews,, official media releases and direct communication with A-League players.

The accuracy of the PFA A-League Injury Report's results and analysis is dependent upon the accuracy of the sources of information from which it is derived. During the 2021/22 season, there were no weekly match previews listing the availability of players. However, due to the progress of medical standards – and a commitment to all clubs to deliver minimum workplace and performance standards – the PFA can continue to hold clubs to a high-level of compliance when it comes to standards at training grounds and on pitch.



TECHNICAL REPORT

In previous versions of the A-League Women technical report, the PFA has compared statistical data across a selection of female leagues to identify any similarities or differences in style or competitiveness to benchmark the A-League Women against.

For the 2021/22 season, the focus has been on defining the prevailing style of play within the League, according to an analysis of the data as well as feedback from the players.

- Possession & General Style
- Shot Quality and Distribution
- Defensive Output
- Players' Survey
- Players' Survey: League Comparisons

Intensity and speed is a conscious focus point in the A-League Women, according to player feedback on training methods, match preparation and interpretation of game style.

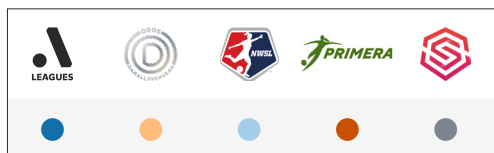
While it can be represented in several ways on the pitch, one of the most distinct reflections is the volume of possessions across the competition, in comparison to other global leagues.

The significantly higher average quantity of possessions and shorter average possession time across the A-League Women's this season distinctly reveals how transition-heavy the competition is.

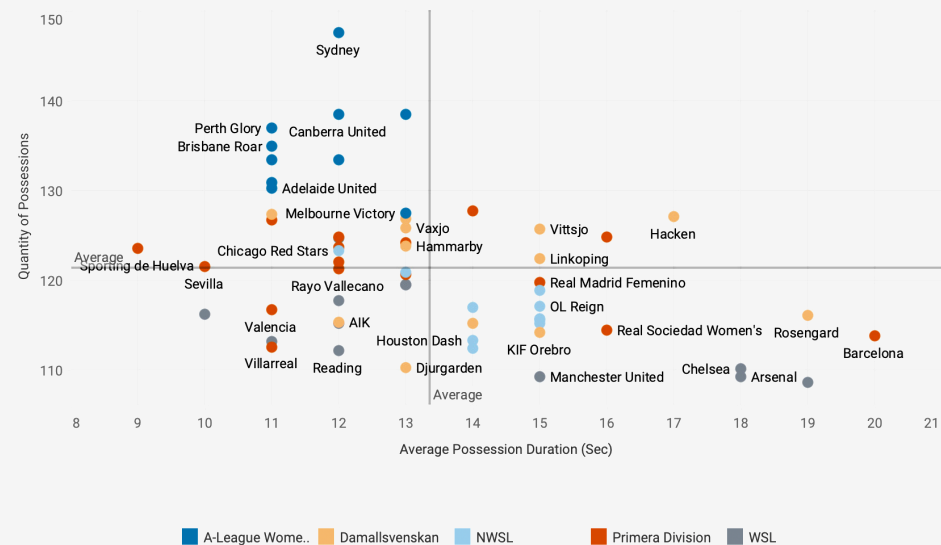
This is evidenced by the cluster of blue dots that represent the A-League Women teams in the top-left corner of Graph 1. These can be compared against teams who more effectively maintain and hold possession for longer duration, such as FC Barcelona, Arsenal, Rosengard and Chelsea.

While competitions such as the Primera Division Femenina in Spain can be much more unequal in terms of playing level and approach, the clustering of A-League Women teams here can also reveal how reliance on the individual supersedes collective functioning in possession.

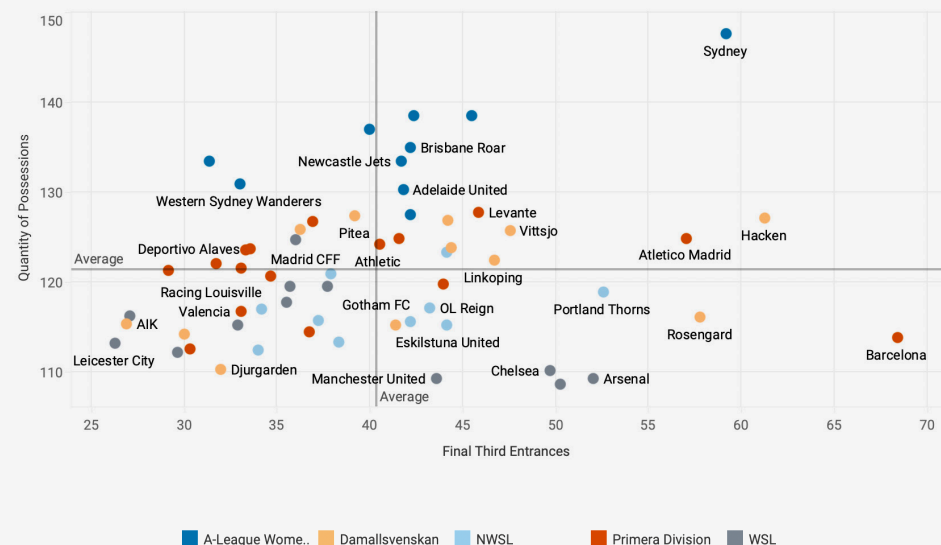
It serves as the context to several inter-connected factors, including eventual shot volume and quality, to defensive output, to the kind of player profiles that receive more or less scope.



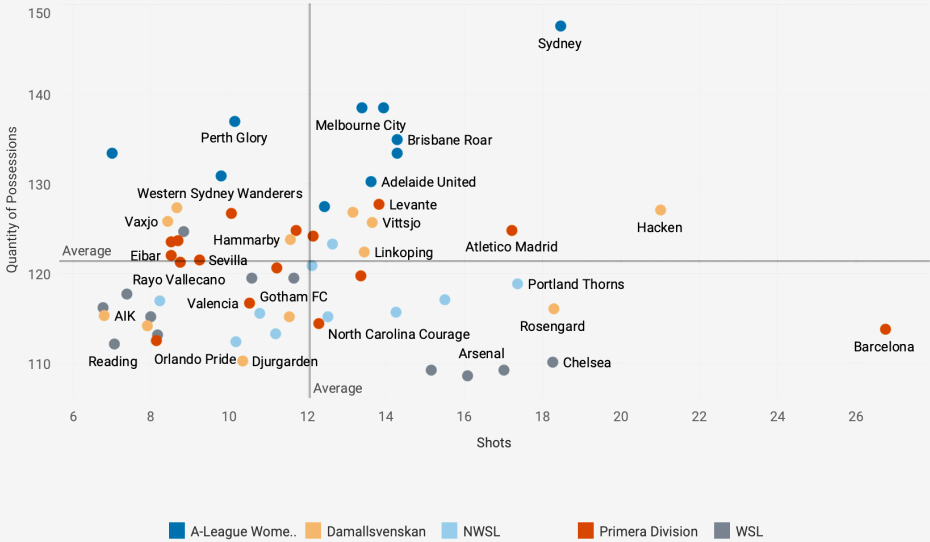
GRAPH 1



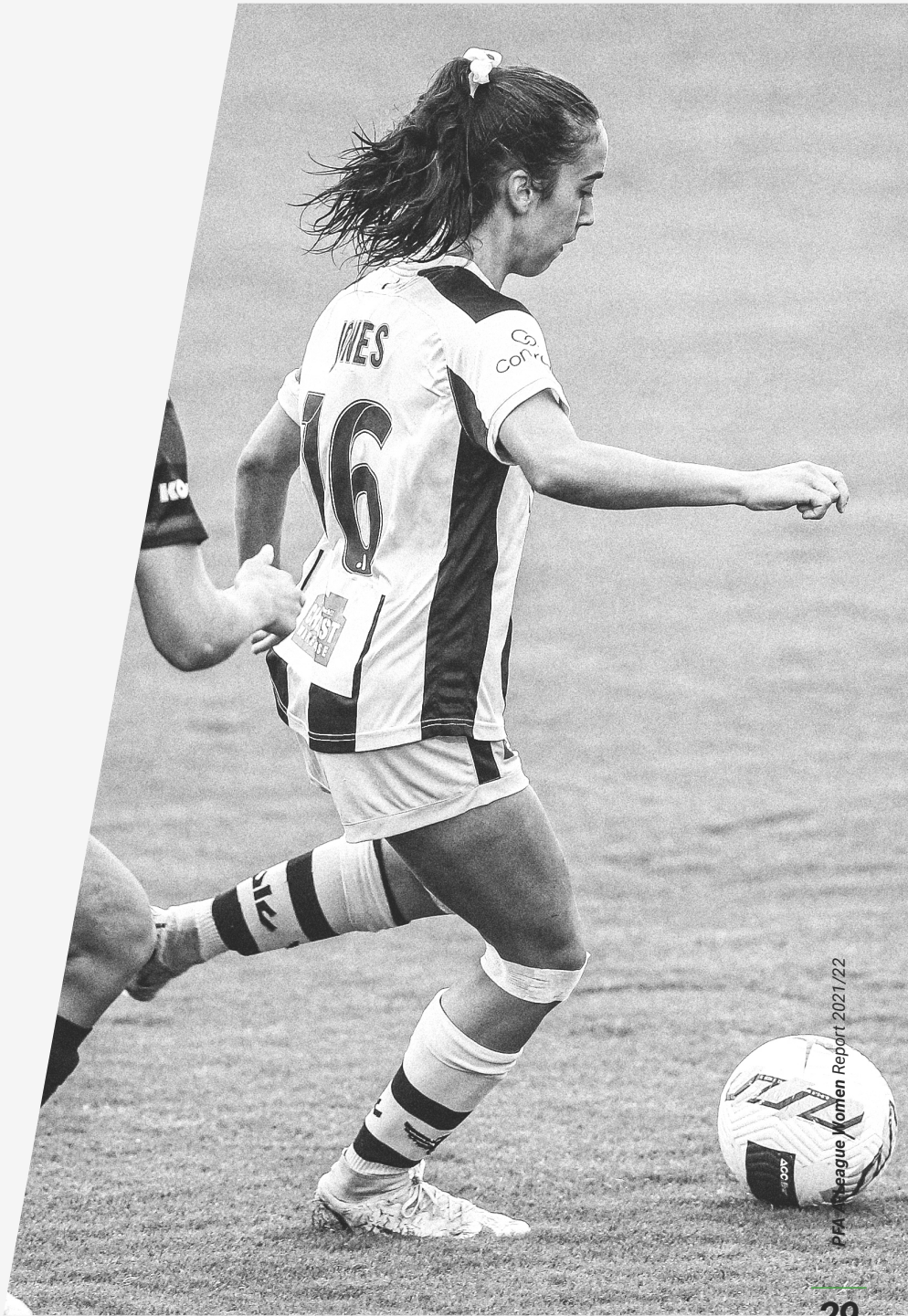
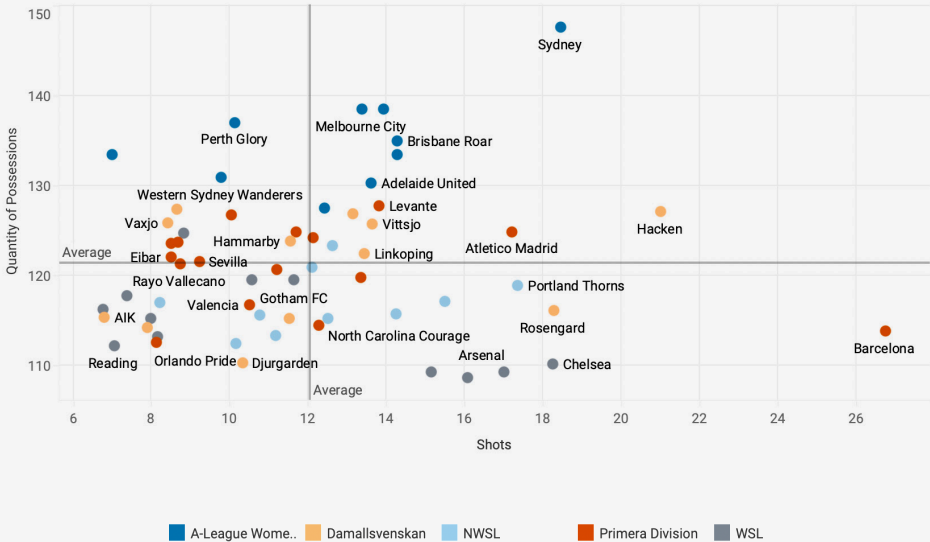
GRAPH 2



POSSESSION AND SHOT VOLUME (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



PASS/DRIBBLE DISTRIBUTION (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



SHOT QUALITY & DISTRIBUTION

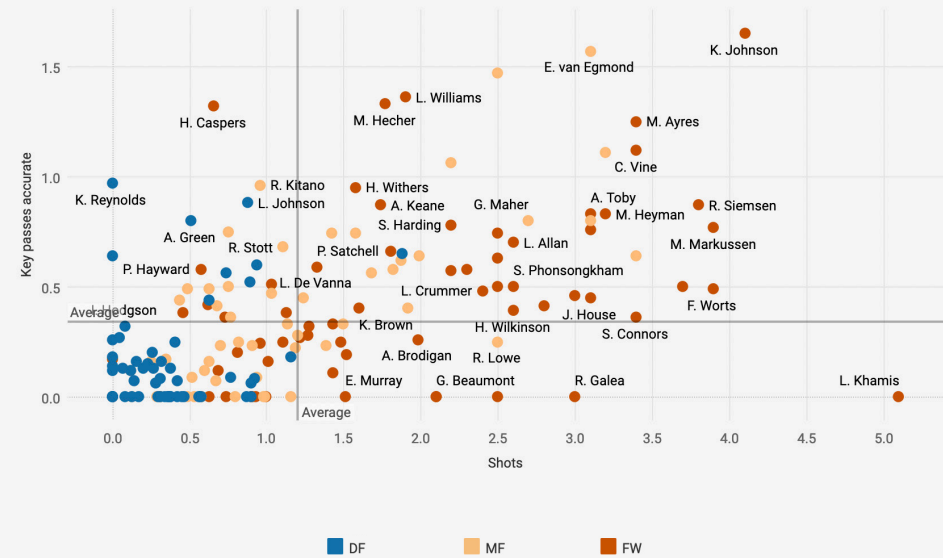
It is important to note that while clubs like FC Barcelona are outliers in such comparisons, the volume of possession across the A-League Women creates a discussion between the qualitative and quantitative.

Melbourne City are an illuminative individual case in this context. While they were the only team in the A-League Women to average over 30 minutes of possession per match, only one in ten attacks against a set defence equated to a shot.

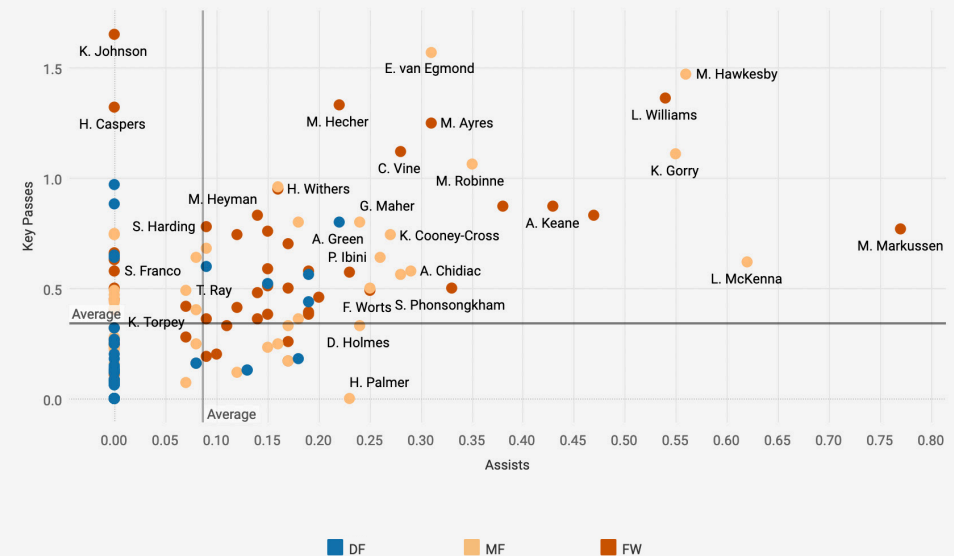
While they also had an above average shot quantity (13.38) compared to teams in other leagues, the average shot quality (0.12 xGps) was still below this average in sample data.

Meanwhile, more clustering of A-League Women teams in volume and efficiency of shots from counter-attacking scenarios reinforces the player feedback on collective style (see the next section on players' feedback). The highly disparate nature of shots from dead-ball scenarios (corners, free kicks, throw ins) across the sample data can be put down to several factors, among those preparation and scheming, as well as individual quality of delivery and realisation.

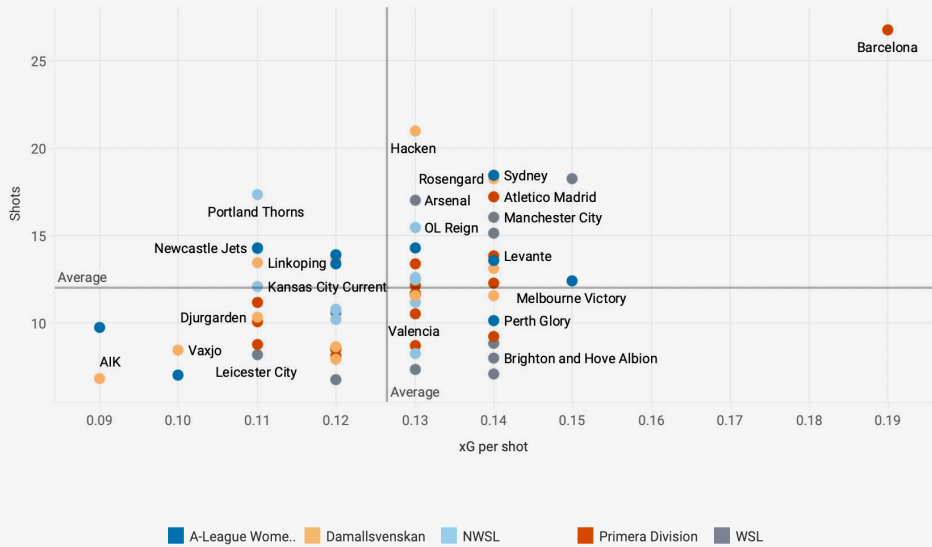
SHOT/KEY PASS DISTRIBUTION



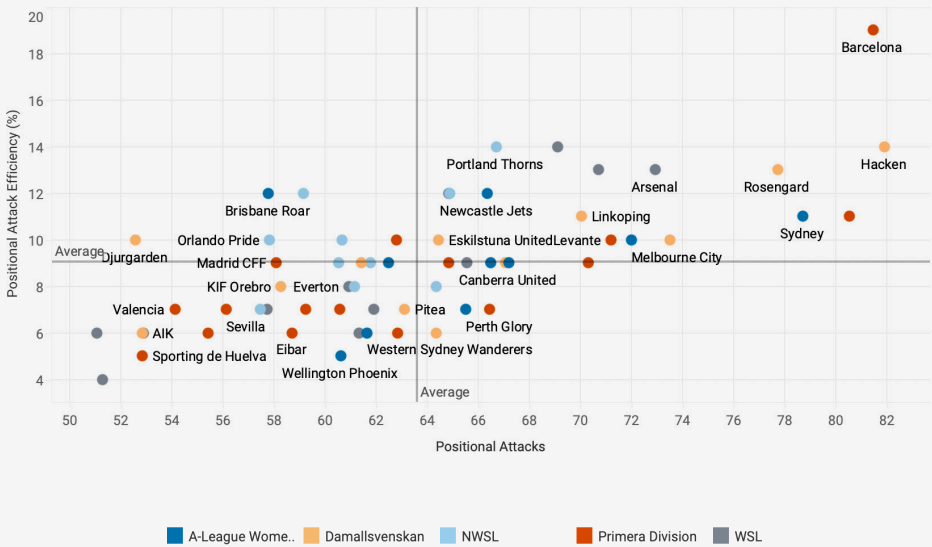
KEY PASS/ASSIST DISTRIBUTION



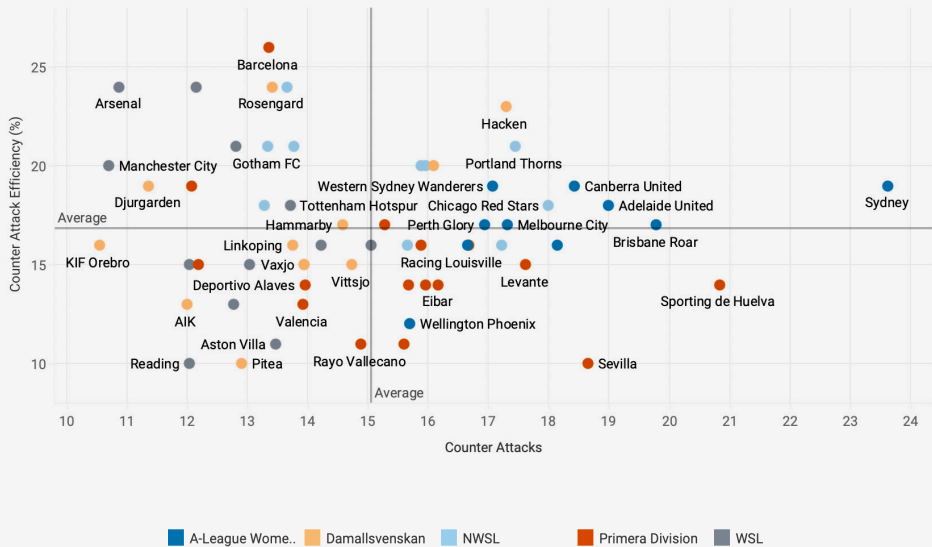
SHOT VOLUME AND EFFICIENCY (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



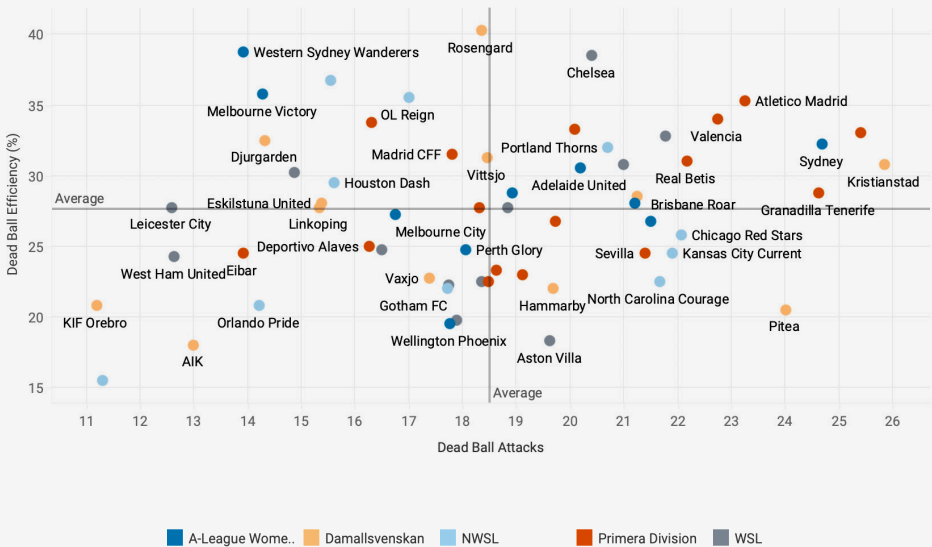
POSITIONAL ATTACK (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



COUNTER ATTACK (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



DEAD BALL (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



DEFENSIVE OUTPUT

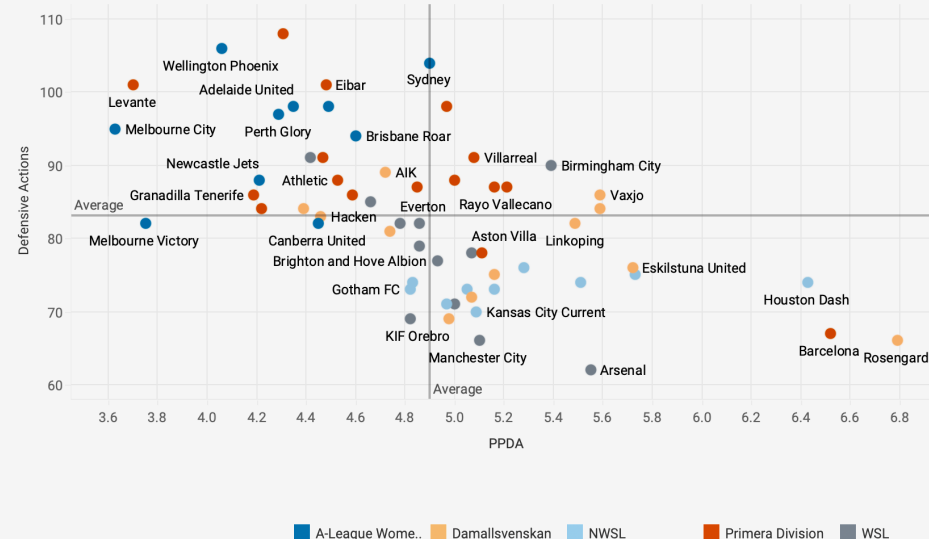
Among the sample data, every team in the A-League Women this season is above the average of 4.902 for passes per defensive action.

Every team in the A-League Women is also above the average among sample data for defensive actions, with the exception of Melbourne Victory and Canberra United (both at 82).

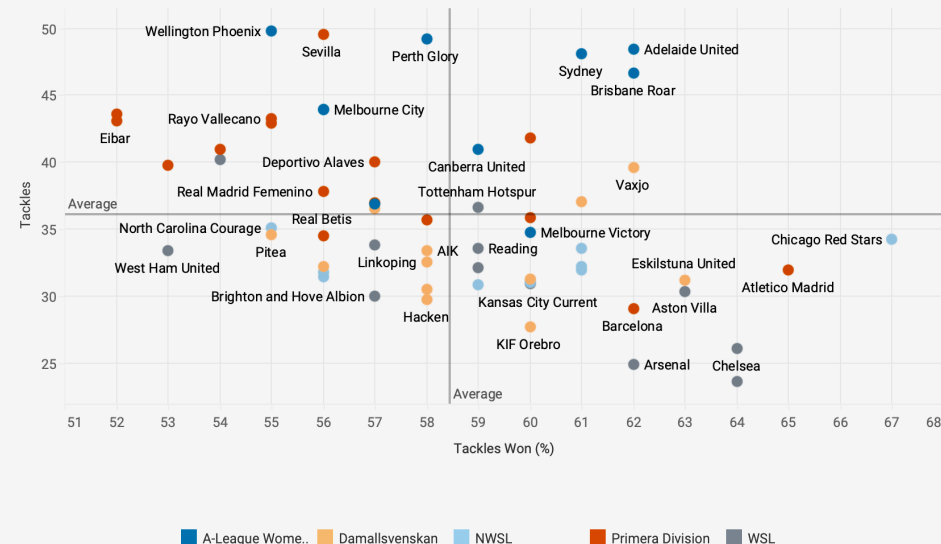
In relation to aspects of playing style and shot quality, it further reinforces the volatile nature of women's football in Australia on a domestic level.

While this is a positive aspect to that primary desire for intensity and speed, at the expense of other player characteristics, this phase of the game in the A-League Women also represents a chicken and egg argument – how much of that is a consequence of defensive scheming and awareness, and how much is a consequence of the absence of collective functioning and transition-heavy style in possession?

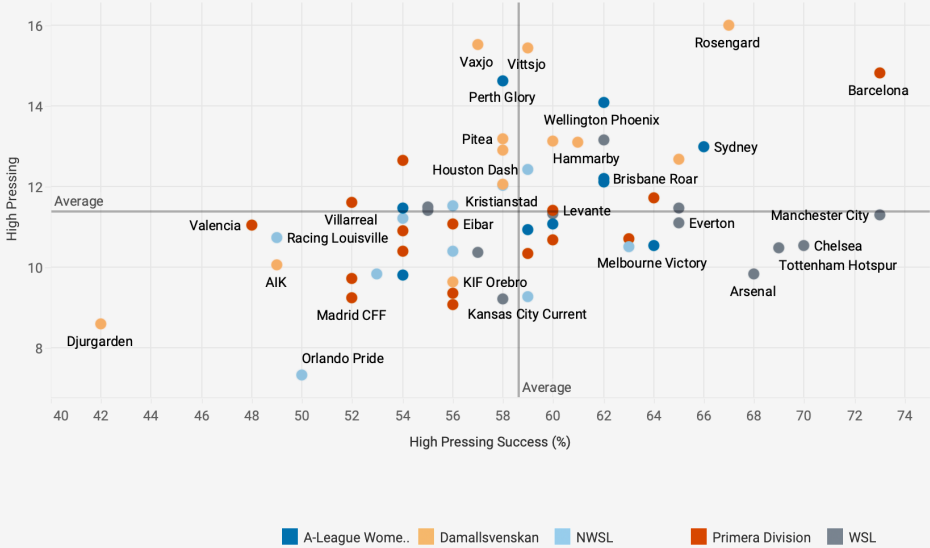
DEFENSIVE OUTPUT (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



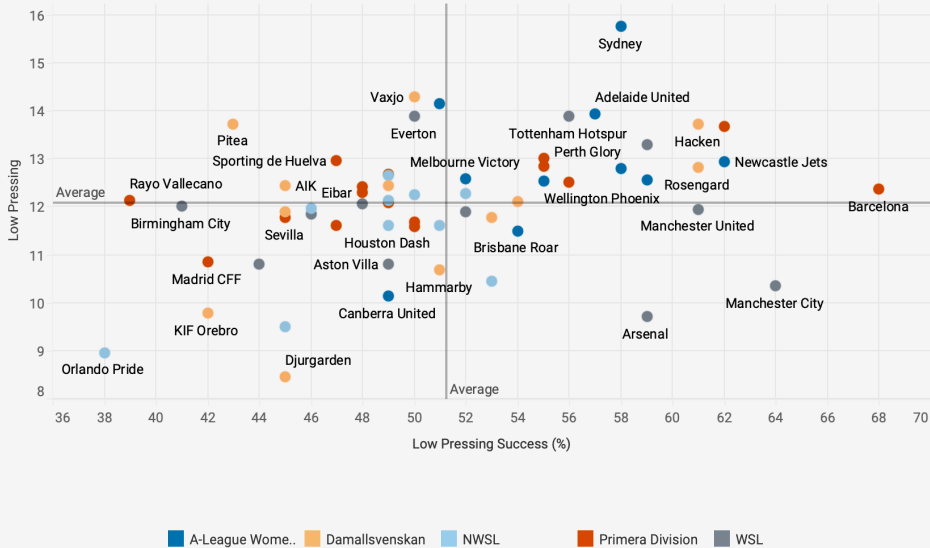
TACKLE VOLUME AND EFFICIENCY



HIGH PRESSING (LEAGUE COMPARISON)



LOW PRESSING



PLAYERS' SURVEY

In addition to the technical analysis of the competition, we asked players in the annual survey to use three words to define the football (style of play) across the A-League Women.

The three most common phrases were transitional or transition (32 occurrences), physical (28), and tactical (11). The common theme

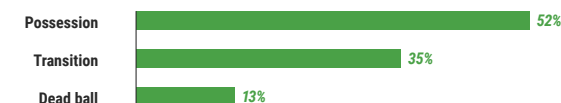
of transition was further reinforced by similar terminology – including direct, counter attacking, high speed, high press/pressure, long ball and forward football – confirming the players' perspective that the A-League Women's football is predominantly a highly transitional style.



While players acknowledged that the predominant style of play was transitional, the players also provided feedback to suggest possession-based gameplay scenarios, as practiced in training, would produce more effective defensive and attacking outcomes, and an acknowledgement that keeping possession would help generate and restrict goal-scoring opportunities:

- “ We learnt to have a possession-based style of play to then create chances from ”
- “ We practised keeping the ball ”
- “ We have learnt to be patient with the ball and play through the midfield to wait for the 'right time' to make a play on goal ”
- “ Playing possession with less direct play; we had more technical than fast players ”
- “ When we had possession of the ball and relaxed, we were really effective in moving forward and creating opportunities ”

IN WHICH GAME PHASE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR TEAM WAS MOST EFFECTIVE IN GENERATING AND RESTRICTING GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITIES?



LEAGUE COMPARISONS

The players' survey also provided the opportunity to collective qualitative feedback on how the A-League Women's competition compares to other domestic competition (WNPL) and overseas leagues they have experienced. Universally, A-League Women is a significant step up from local NPL competitions across Australia and New Zealand, according to the players' responses, in regard to match play, professionalism, pay and conditions.

While the standard of overseas leagues often rated higher than A-League Women within feedback, the A-League Women presents a more even competition with less disparity across the teams in some overseas leagues, providing a better competitive balance across matches.

“Comparing to the NPLW, the ALW is an incredible standard. The technical and tactical ability of players is far greater, players' attitudes and willingness to do what it takes for the team don't compare. ALW is just a better standard in all aspects.

COMPARISON WITH NPL

- “ More intense
- “ Much better quality than NPL
- “ Better technical and intensity than NPL
- “ More professional than NPL
- “ Considerably better than NZ domestic leagues
- “ More intense and fast paced
- “ High demands and expectations set by a professional environment
- “ This is the only professional league I have played in, but in terms of NPLW, the A-League is much better

COMPARISON WITH OVERSEAS

- “ Compares better to the Icelandic Pepsi league because all teams are competitive
- “ Equal to the NCAA college system in the US
- “ A-League Women's standard is higher across the board than the Icelandic League
- “ Top teams in France better than A-League women's but there's bigger disparity from top to bottom; A-League women's has more depth
- “ Australian players are always more physically dominant but it's obvious to see in the league the players that are technical because they stand out. In Europe, there is just an expectation and greater emphasis on individual training (Player who had played in Serie A and Denmark)
- “ The Swedish League (Damallsvenskan) is a much better league technically
- “ The League seems to be going through a rebuilding phase of talent at the moment, so it is a bit lower right now. Will lead to positives down the track and is a great opportunity for young talented players to develop for the league and national team (Player who played in the NWSL and in Japan)
- “ The other leagues I've played in (Spain, Japan) focus a lot on keeping the ball and having possession for majority of the game whereas here it's a lot more physical and transition based. There's a good standard here but I think the focus is more on fitness and high speed metres instead of developing footballers
- “ Equal to Denmark below Sweden, same as Italy below Germany or England



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

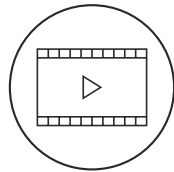
- Program Engagement
- Career & Transition

PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT



80

Number of education grants provided



30

Number of highlight packages provided



65

Number of players who attended the PFA Concussion Workshop



135

Number of players who attended the PFA Pre-season Presentation



65

Number of players who attended the PFA Red Button App Workshop



3

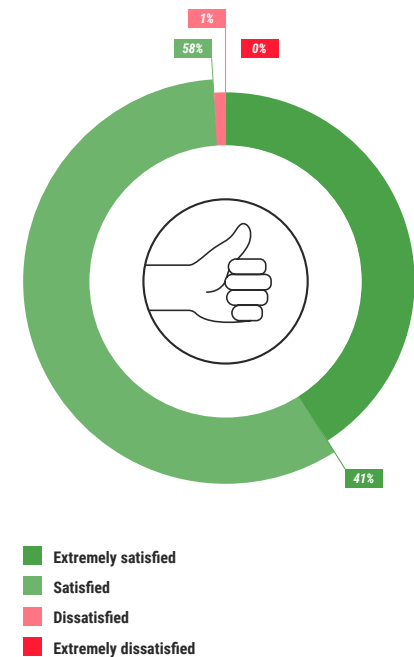
Number of players who attended PFA & Deloitte Skills Training Program Placements



84

Number of players who attended the PFA Wellbeing Workshop

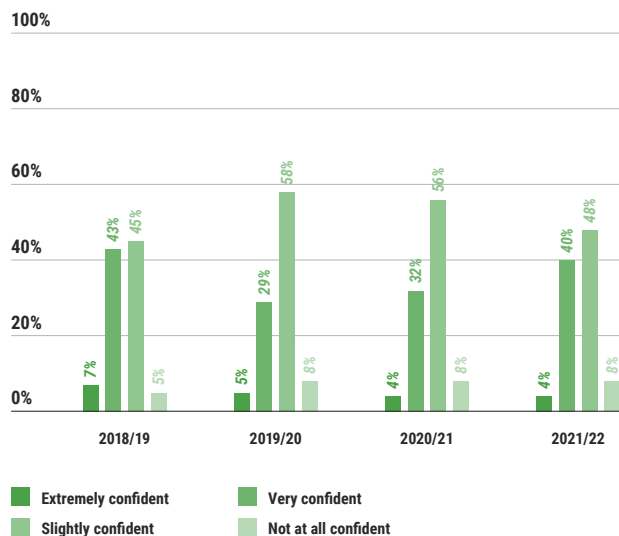
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SATISFACTION



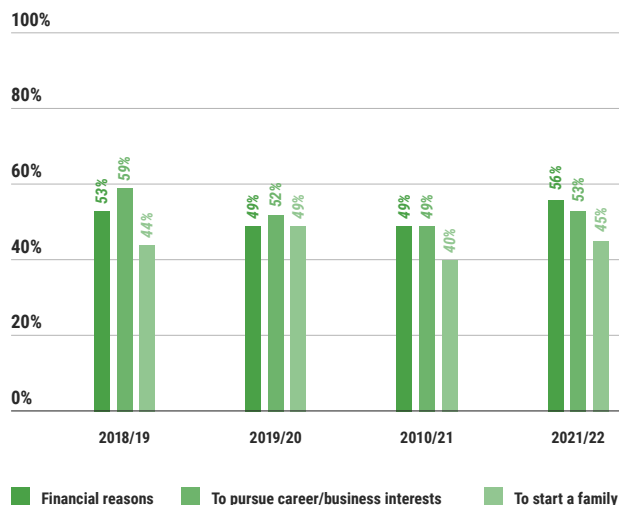
CAREER & TRANSITION



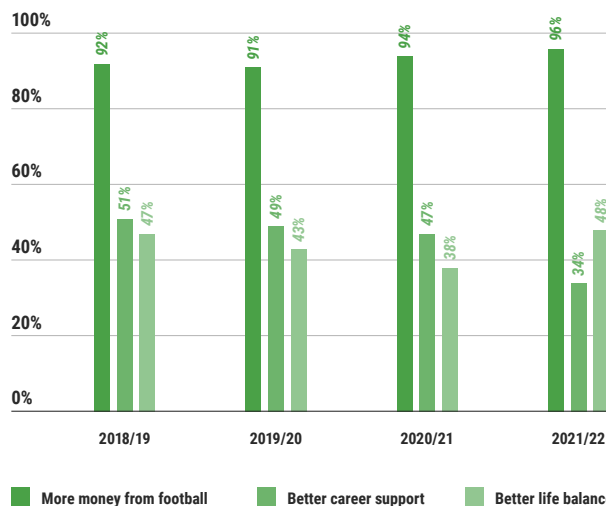
HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF/YOUR CONTROL OVER YOUR FOOTBALL CAREER?



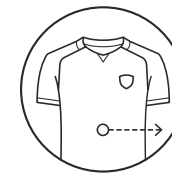
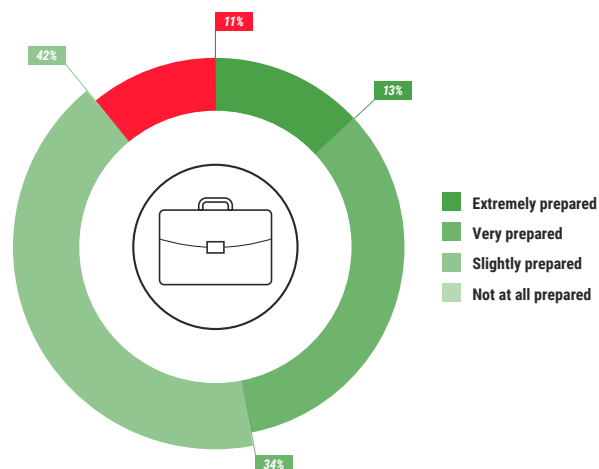
WHAT REASONS MIGHT YOU LEAVE THE GAME EARLIER THAN YOU OTHERWISE MIGHT HAVE?



WHAT FACTORS WOULD ASSIST IN PROLONGING YOUR FOOTBALL CAREER?



IN GENERAL, HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL TO PURSUE A CAREER AFTER FOOTBALL?



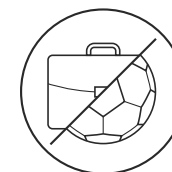
47.8%

are slightly confident about the direction of their football career. 39.8% are very confident



55.9%

are somewhat secure with their financial situation. 26.1% are somewhat insecure



50.0%

of players said they were slightly satisfied with their football, work, life balance. 9% said they were not satisfied

COURAGE
WORLD CLASS
INTELLIGENCE
TRUST
RESPECT



Professional Footballers Australia
2/55 Walsh Street West Melbourne VIC 3003
1300 650 497 / info@pfa.net.au
www.pfa.net.au

