

October 2023 Results

Introduction:

ConnectRef is an allocation and development company for officials. Our focus is not only to allocate officials to local community competitions, events and tournaments but also to empower the official to be the best person they can be off and on the court. Like any team they umpire, the umpire is part of the officiating team of ConnectRef.

Since COVID – 19, we have seen considerable changes within sport and the officials that umpire these games. Multiple sports have advertised a decrease in the amount of officials available. Some sports have been rostering games with a reduced team of officials allocated (eg a team of two officials reduced to one).

There is an informal, and formal pressure for rostered games to continue even when number of officials available is numerically insufficient or the level of referee available (grading or experience) is inappropriate or potentially unsafe. Some sports have been cancelling games due to lack of officials.

Since competitive sport returned in South Australia in July 2020, we have also seen a significant increase in reports of abuse towards Match Officials. We have experienced, observed, and had officials report to us, that they have walked off games or not returned to umpire due to the increase in abuse they receive. Officials have reported the extra pressures they feel to officiate more games for their local association due to the increase in participation, and the reduction in available Match Officials.

This has been a real concern for us at ConnectRef and we constantly find ourselves asking “How can we help our officials more? To understand the effects more fully on the officiating environment we decided a more formal investigation on the factors influencing officials was the best way forward.

The survey was the best platform we could find directly to ask all officials within South Australia:

- How do referees feel about the currently “state of play”?
- How do they feel about matters such as abuse, payment and support?
- What is their background in officiating?
- If applicable, why they decided to cease officiating?

We feel the results from this survey allows us to talk directly to sporting clubs, administrations and governing bodies and share these stories.

Survey Data Collation

Regarding the survey data, the questions that were proposed to officials to answer were either one of three options:

- 1) Multiple choice, or
- 2) One choice answer, or
- 3) Open written response.

For option three, we have combined the data together to supply a quick snapshot of the responses provided.

We are investigating further thematic analysis of the responses that will keep the anonymity of the respondents and provide a greater understanding of their experiences.

The data was placed into seven sub-sections with these being:

- 1) Overall Information
- 2) Questions for officials that no longer umpire
- 3) Questions for officials that currently umpire
- 4) Umpire Enjoyment
- 5) Development
- 6) Abuse
- 7) Payment

All officials were asked to complete sections 1,4,5,6 and 7 with 2 and 3 being optional depending on person completing the survey.

Pilot Project December 2023:

In early December 2023 we established a pilot project with a sporting club using the data below to inform our presentation, and interactive discussions.

The feedback and comments from the participants of the pilot project supported our beliefs that working collaboratively on the issues identified in the survey, and other Match Official Research, is the key to developing a common understanding, and appreciation, between Match Officials, Coaches, Clubs and their players and parents, which will improve the relationships that we all have in sporting environments.

From this pilot program, we are glad to announce that we have multiple clubs and associations eager for us to facilitate a program in 2024.

Summation:

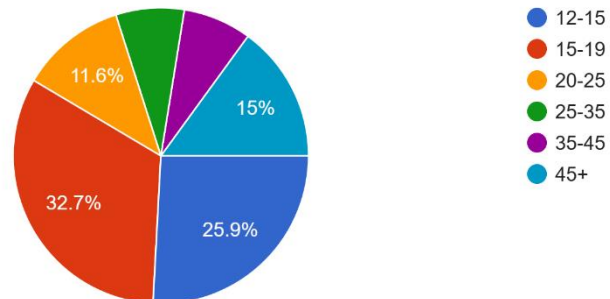
We wish to share these results not to point fingers but to collaboratively work together for all enjoy any game that we are part of.

Any questions regarding the survey or our 2024 program, please do not hesitate to contact Jarrod at Connectref via email at jarrod@connectref.com

Section 1 – Overall information

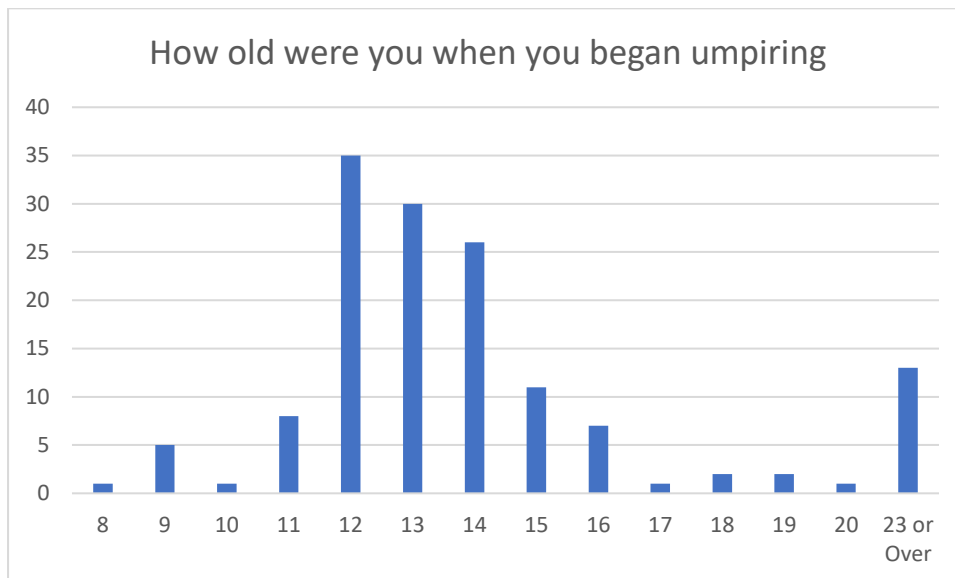
1) What is your current age?

147 responses



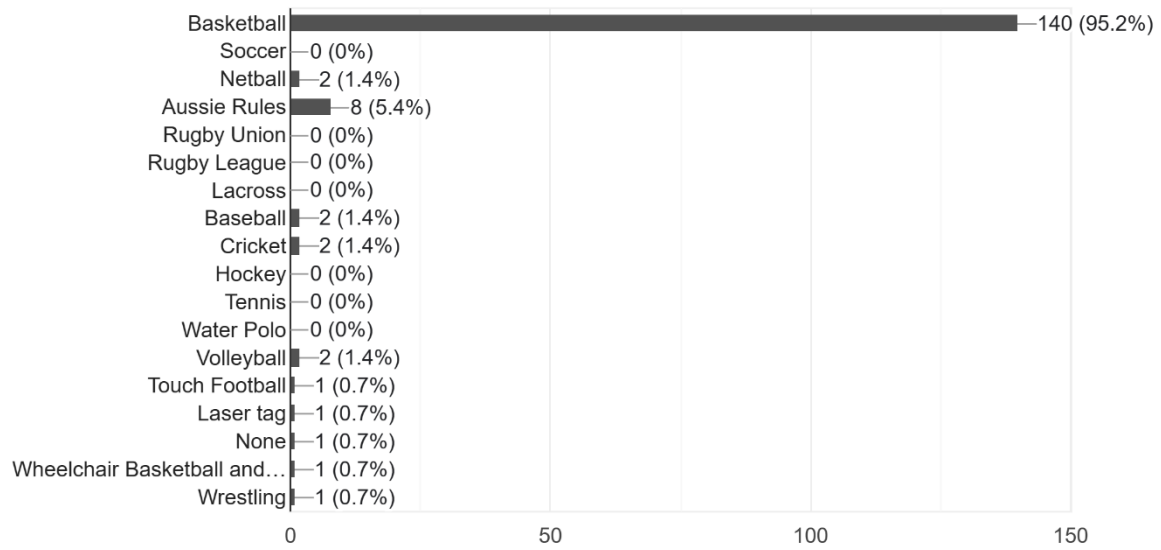
2) How old were you when you began umpiring:

147 responses (4 responses of n/a)



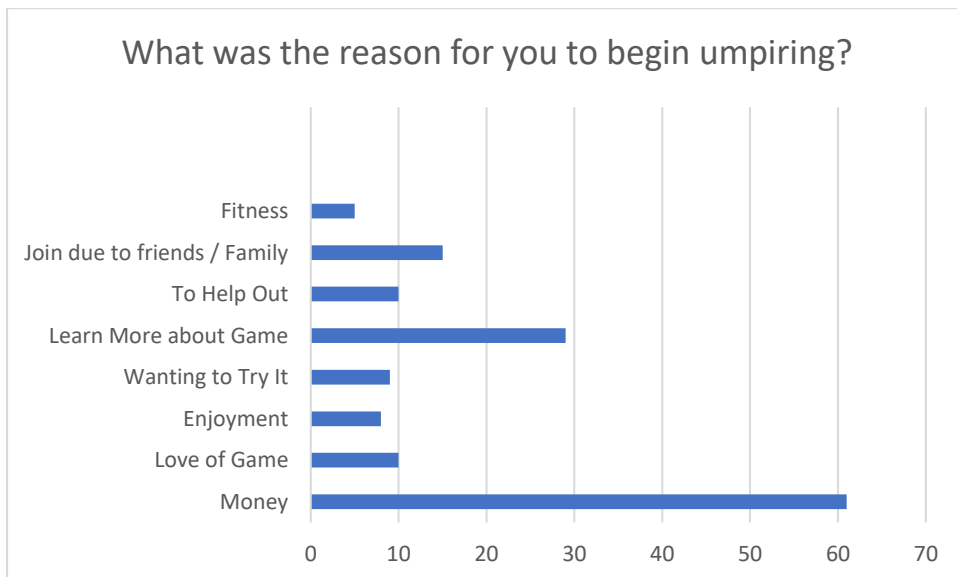
3) What sport have you or do you currently umpire

147 responses



4) What was the reason for you to begin umpiring:

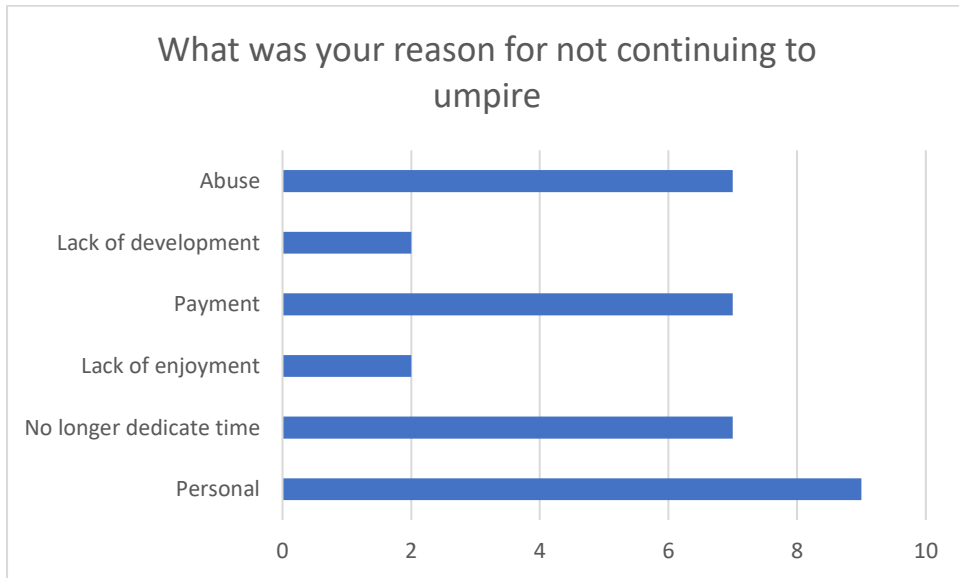
147 responses



Section 2: Previous umpires not umpiring anymore

5) What was the reason for you to stop umpiring:

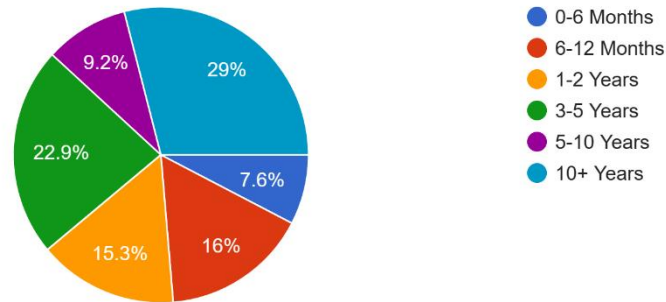
34 responses



Section 3: - Current umpires to complete.

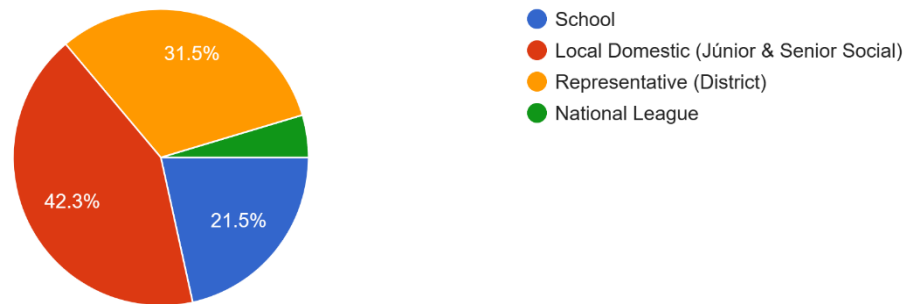
1) How long have you been umpiring for?

131 responses



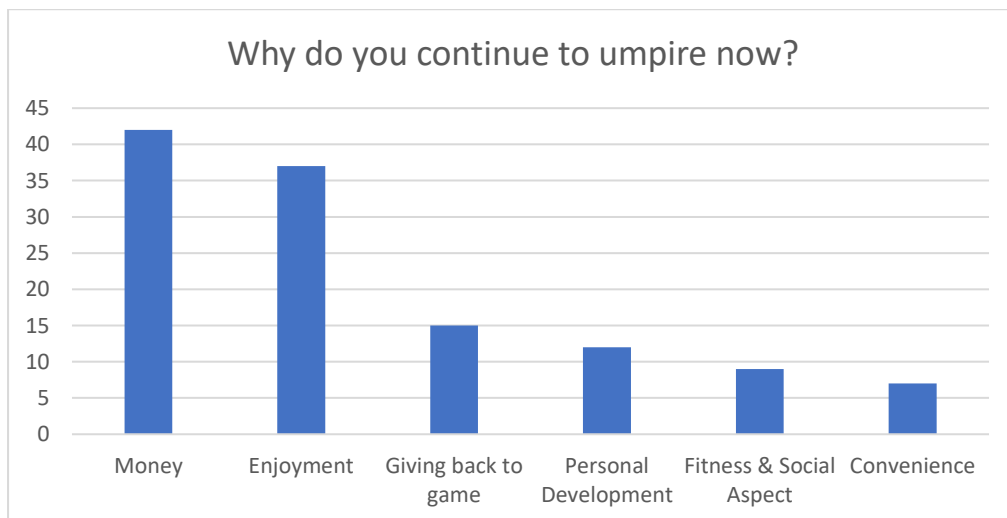
2) What level do of games do you currently umpire predominantly now?

130 responses



3) Why do you continue to umpire now?

122 Responses

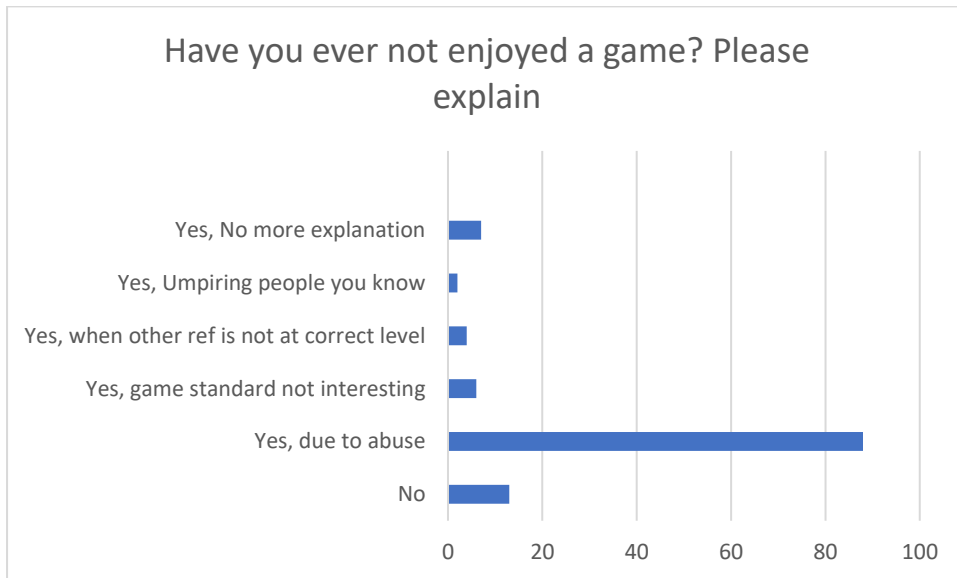


Section 4: Umpire Enjoyment:

Due to this being a written answer we won't share specifics of answer but have grouped these as best we can to show consistent responses

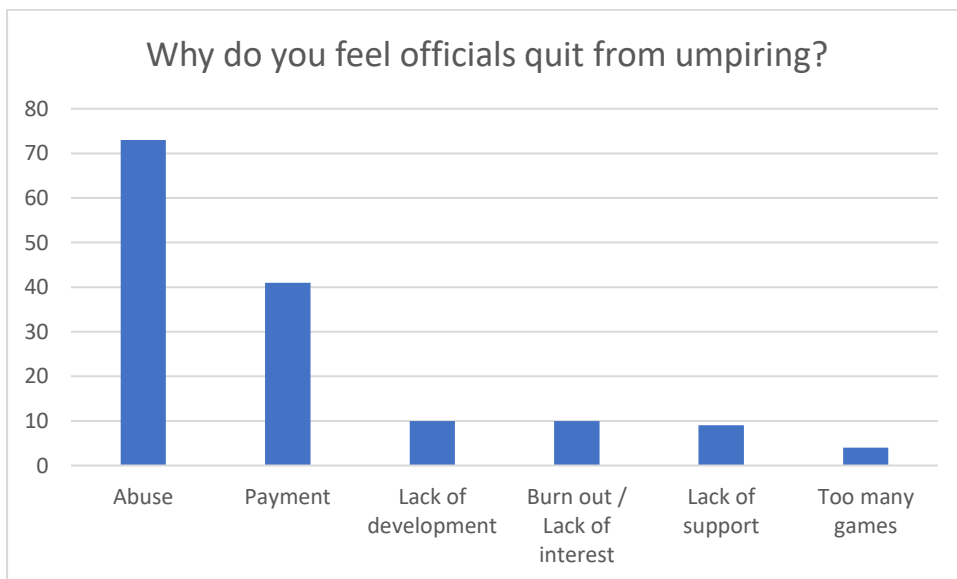
Q1: Have you ever not enjoyed a game? Please explain?

147 Responses



2) Why do you feel that officials quit from umpiring?

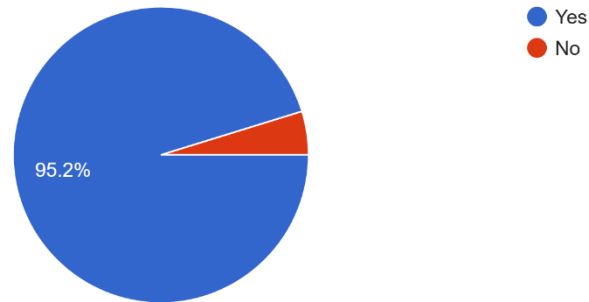
147 Responses



Section 5: Development

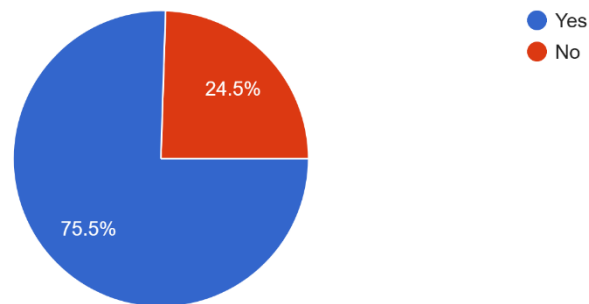
1) Do you understand the process to develop as a referee in your association

147 responses



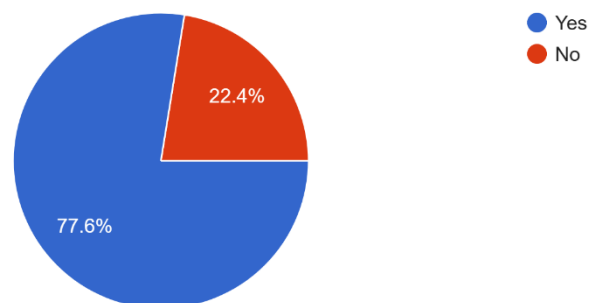
2) Do you feel your association promotes upcoming courses and development options that can help your umpiring?

147 responses



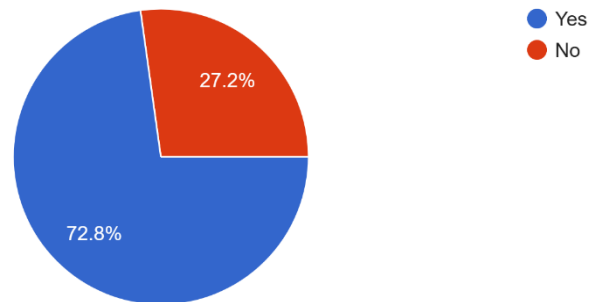
3) Do you feel you have adequate support by fellow officials and supervisors

147 responses



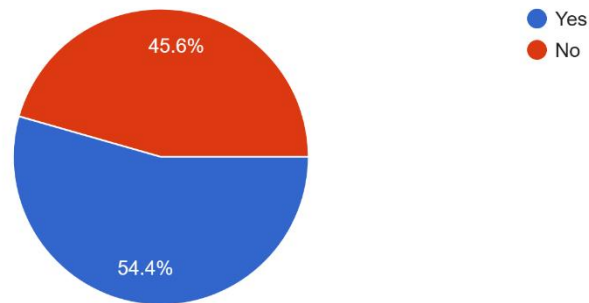
4) Do you feel the association has an interest in your development?

147 responses



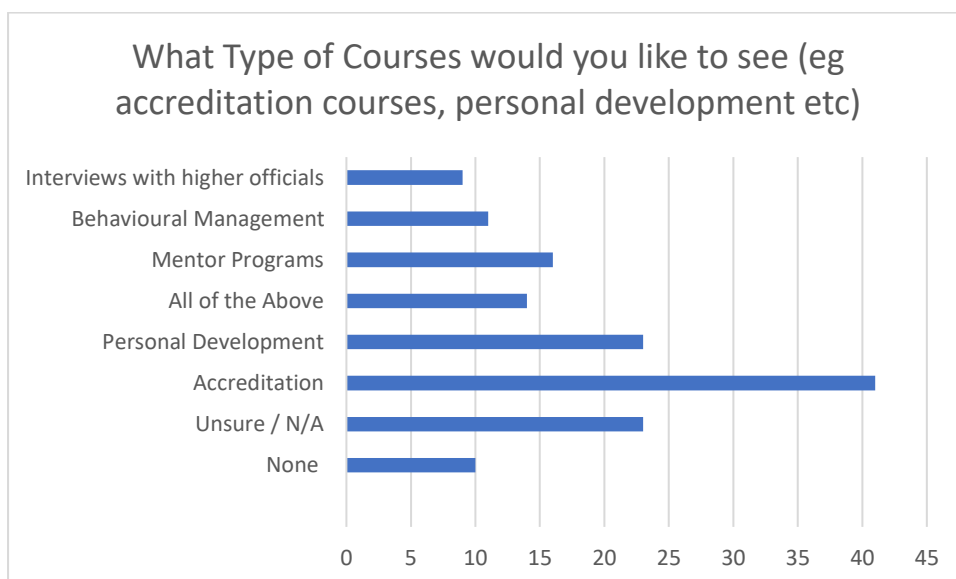
5) Do you feel you require more training within your role?

147 responses



6) What type of courses would you like to see (accreditation, personal development courses etc)

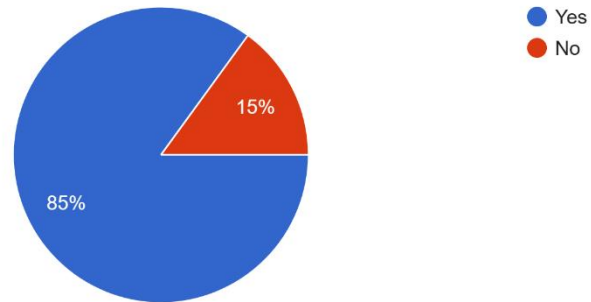
147 Responses



Section 6: Abuse

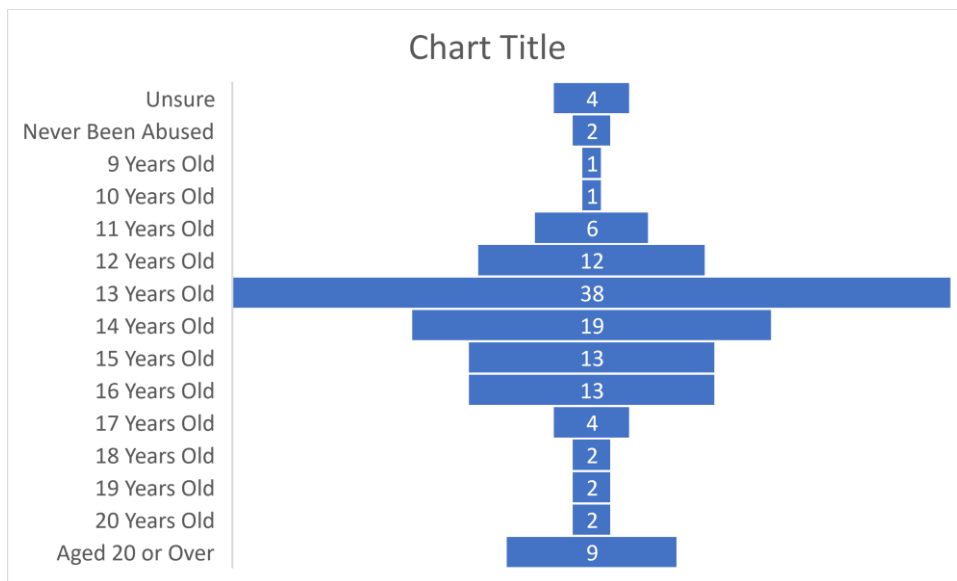
1) Have you ever been abused while umpiring?

147 responses



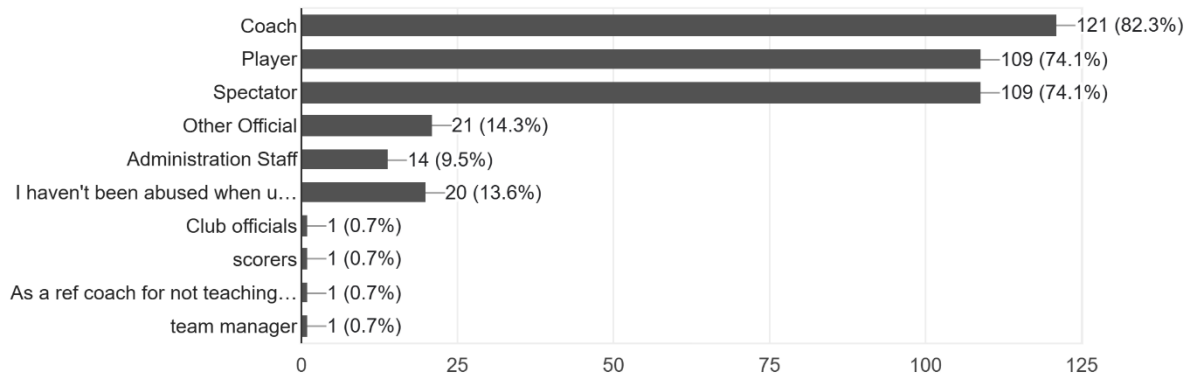
2) How old were you when you were first abused while umpiring?

128 responses



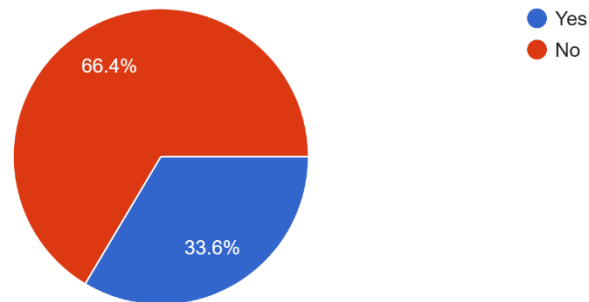
3) Have you received abuse by someone when umpiring? Select all applicable

147 responses



4) Has this abuse ever resulted in yourself stepping off the game, crying or not continuing your shift that day as an umpire?

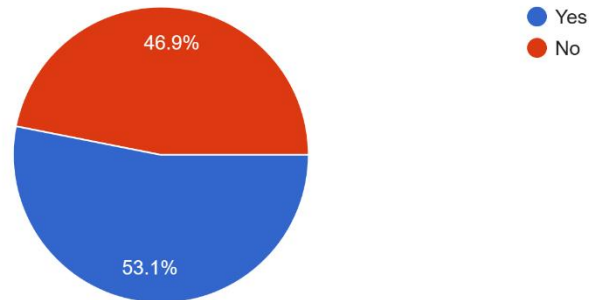
146 responses



Section 7: Payment

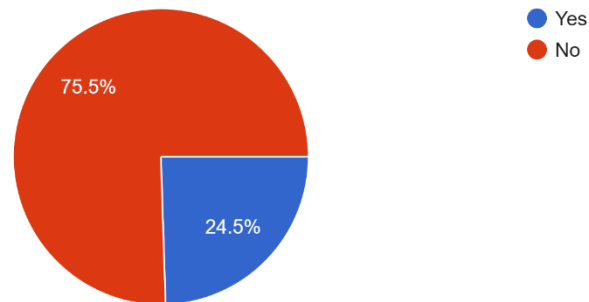
1) Is umpiring your primary source of income?

145 responses



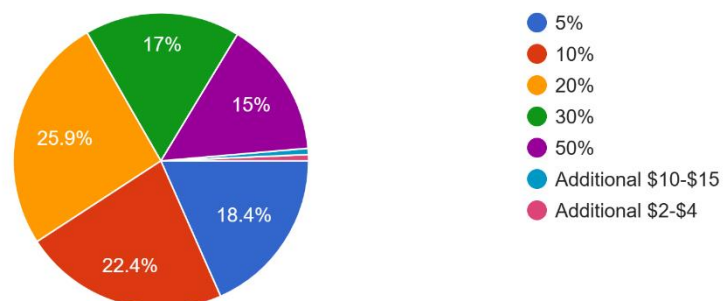
2) Within the association you do most of your umpiring, do you feel the pay is adequate for what you do?

147 responses



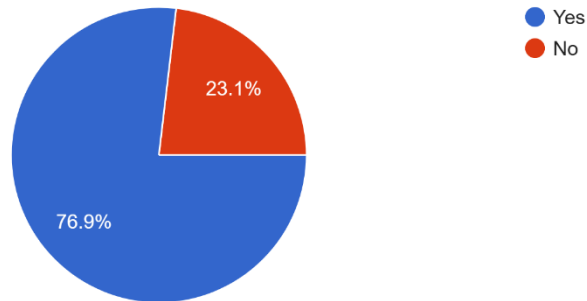
3) If no, how much additional income should you receive per game?

147 responses



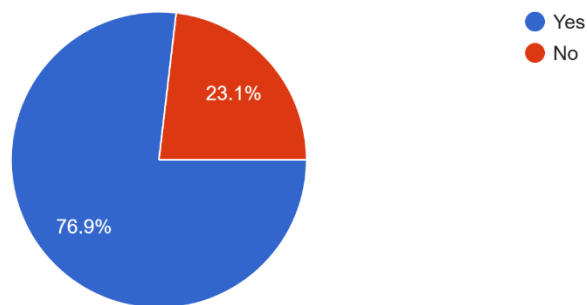
4) Would you like the ability to be able to be reimbursed (or claim) for out of pocket expenses like courses, uniforms, petrol to venue?

147 responses



5) Would you like to see umpiring be a casual / part time job?

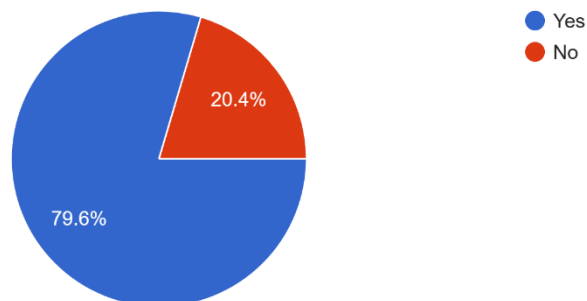
147 responses



Section 6: Assignments in your Association:

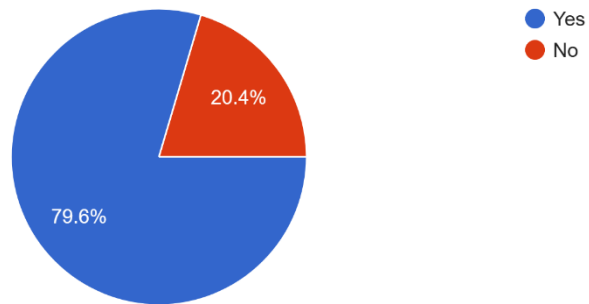
1) Do you feel the current assignors processes when rostering you to be clear?

147 responses



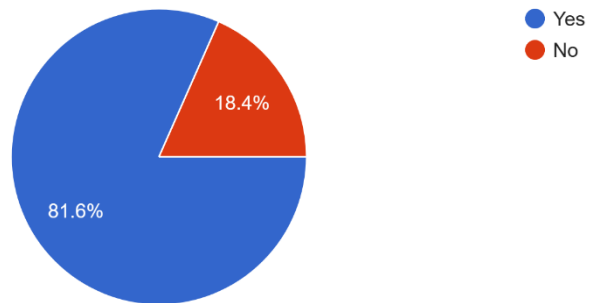
2) Do you feel that the assignor is fair in their allocations?

147 responses



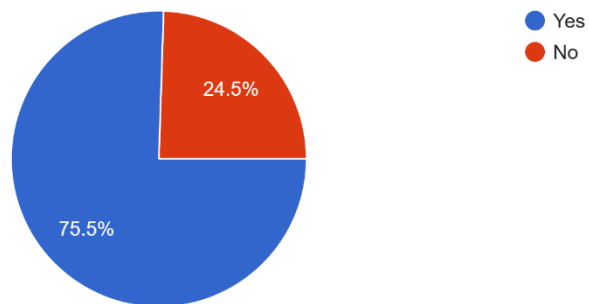
3) Do you feel you can talk to your association about your concerns / goals

147 responses



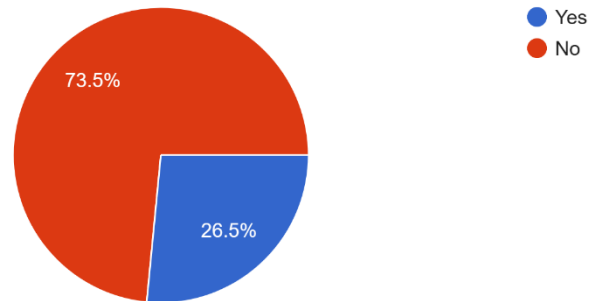
4) Do you feel your association has an interest in your concerns?

147 responses



5) Do you feel that you have not been assigned to a game due to issues with the assignor (ie / don't like you or something you did previously?)

147 responses



6) Do you feel supported by your current organisation when umpiring?

147 responses

