

Sportsmith

*
Summary
version

MLS PERFORMANCE STAFF SURVEY

A survey of strength and conditioning coaches and sports scientists working in Major League Soccer (MLS) to better understand the demographics and salaries of these practitioners.

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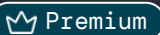
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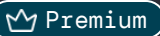
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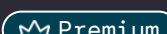
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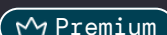
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Hello and Welcome



This Major League Soccer (MLS) report is the forth report in this series after we dived into the salaries and working conditions of strength and conditioning coaches and sports scientists in British senior men's football, rugby league and rugby union.

These reports are not meant as a way to beat the industry or to share negativity. They are intended to put some objectivity to the often held conversations around salaries and working conditions for those working in sports performance.

Already these reports are being used effectively by practitioners who are having their salaries reviewed by their clubs and need a benchmark from which to work.

The results of this survey suggest that the practitioner population in the MLS is the youngest we have come across. No practitioner was over the age of 41 and 61% are below the age of 32. Is this because of the demands placed on practitioners in the MLS? Travel demands are significantly more than leagues in Europe due to the distance between team geographically.

One slightly upsetting fact is that only 3% or practitioners in the MLS are women. However, this is similar to the 2.8% in British men's senior football. Is this something that needs to be addressed?

The median salary in the MLS was found to be \$75k (£55.5k) which is more than in the English Premier League (\$67.4k / £50k), rugby league (\$53.9k / £40k) and rugby union (\$53.9k / £40k).

70 practitioners filled in the questionnaire which was distributed to those who work as a strength and conditioning coach or sports scientist in MLS clubs.

This report would not have been possible without the knowledge and expertise of Dr. Shaun McLaren

I hope this information leads to increased transparency within our industry and makes its way out of the echo chamber and into the hands of those who can help the welfare of practitioners in rugby league across the world.

REPORT SUMMARY

- Only 3% of respondents were female.
- 1% of respondents were aged above 40 with 45% of respondents below 30 years of age.
- The average (mean) age of a practitioner in the MLS is 32 years of age.
- 80% of respondents held a Masters or Doctoral degree as their highest level of education.
- 65% of respondents had undertaken 2 or more internships before their first paid role.
- 61% of respondents had 5 years or less experience in professional football.
- 49% of respondents had 5 years or less experience in professional or collegiate sport.
- Of the 77 respondents, 67% worked with senior players.
- 51% of practitioners had a 'head of' job title.
- The average mean salary was \$78.1k (£57.7k) and the median salary was \$75k (£55.5k).
- Only 13% of respondents didn't hold an internationally recognised accreditation.
- Only 7% gained their current role from applying via a publicly available job advert. Others got their job from 'recommendation (no publicly available job advert', 'promotion', 'recruiter' or 'hired after an internship'.
- Over three quarters of staff respondents worked with senior players.
- On average (mean), those with a Bachelors degree as their highest level of education were paid \$67.3k (£49.5k) compared to those that had a Masters and Doctoral degree who on average were paid \$75.6k (£55.9k) and \$133k (£98.4k), respectively.
- On average (mean), 'Assistants' were paid \$47.7k (£29.6k). That is compared to 'Regular', 'Lead', 'Senior', 'Head of' and 'Director of' who were paid \$55.5k (£41k), \$40.5k (£30.1k), \$80k (£59.2k), \$82.3k (£60.9k) and \$119k (£88k), respectively.

THE STAFF

The next two pages detail the demographics of those that answered the survey. Information on practitioner age, gender, job title, number of internships, education, years experience and accreditations is all detailed here.

A statistic that stands out in this report is the number of internships conducted by staff before they achieve a paid role. 38% had undertaken 3 or more internships which is in contrast to British senior men's football which demonstrated that only 14% had undertaken 3 or more internships.

A familiar story and one that plays out in this MLS report also is that the vast majority of practitioners now have a Masters degree or higher as their highest level of education. 80% fit into this category which is similar to rugby union (76%), rugby league (82%), and British men's senior football (76%).

If the message hasn't been crystal clear, it definitely is now. If you want to work in professional sport, a Masters degree is a must.

Another stand out within this report is the number of practitioners that have a 'head of' job title. Job titles are a contentious topic at the best of times but does everyone being a 'head of' cause confusion as to what responsibility a practitioner actually holds? Is this good for an industry that often publicly talks about an identity crisis?

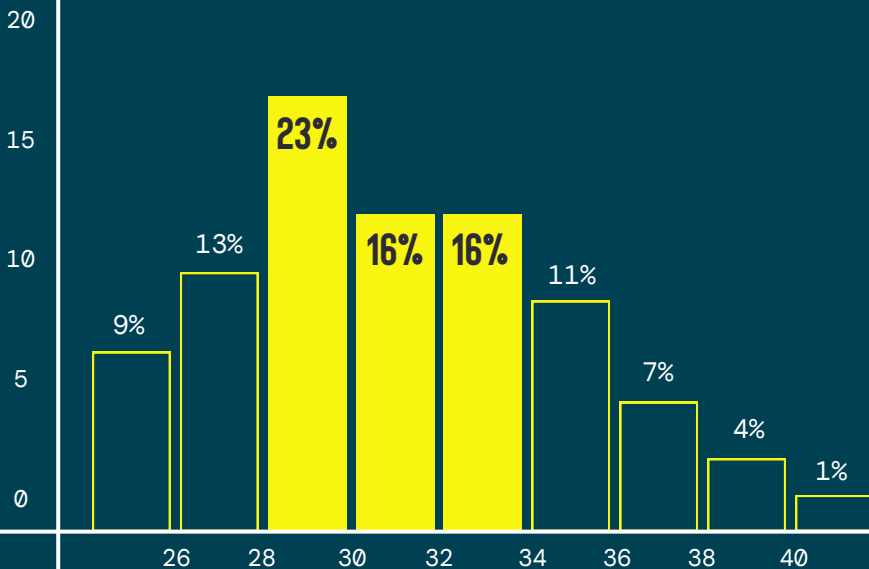


83%

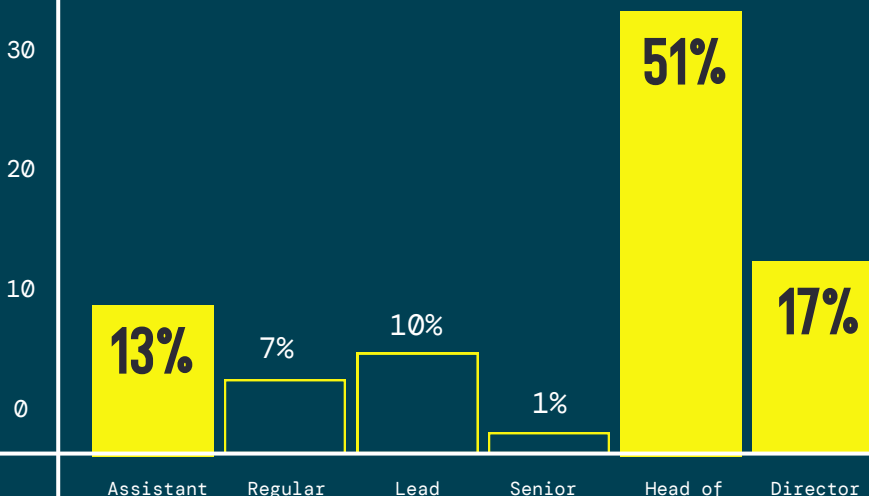
of respondents held a Masters degree or post graduate qualification

Number of Respondents

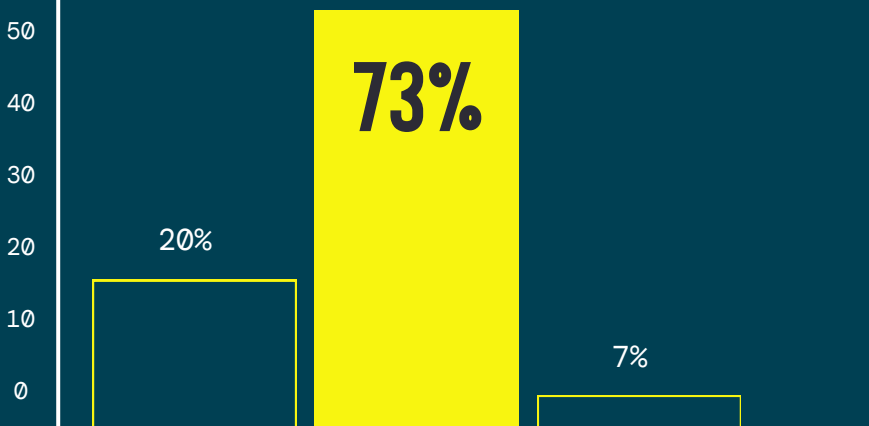
Practitioner Age



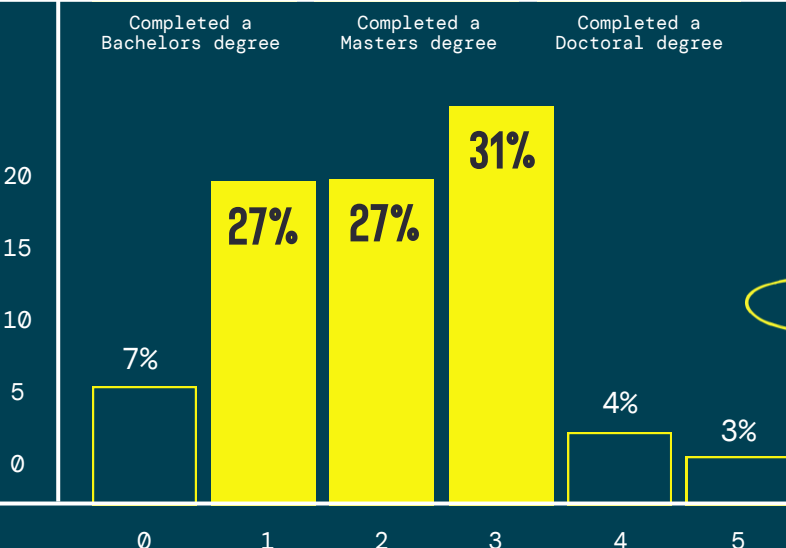
Job Title

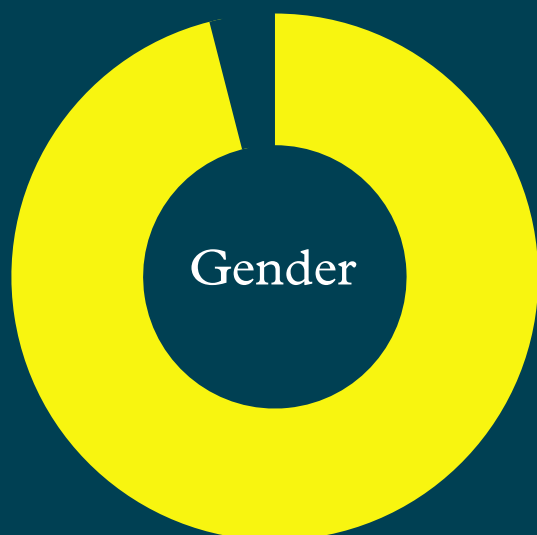


Education



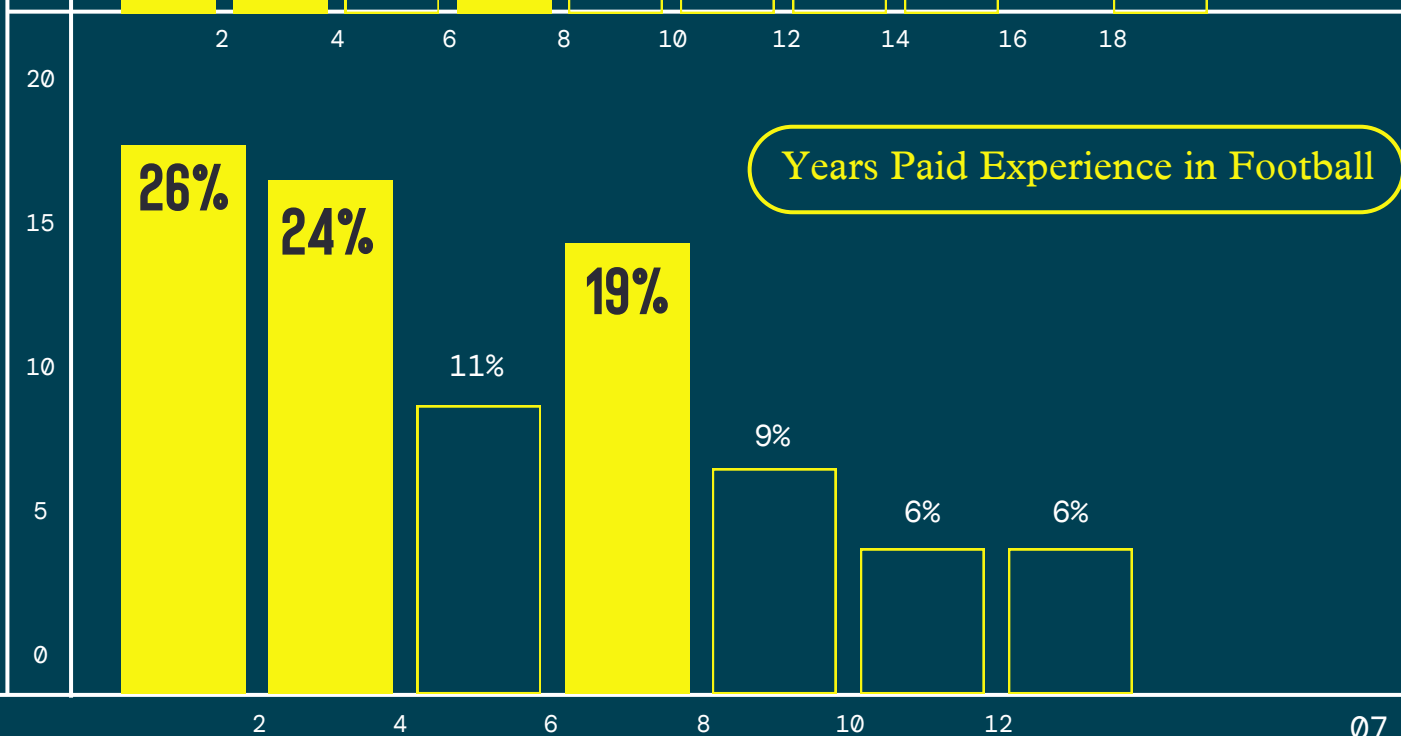
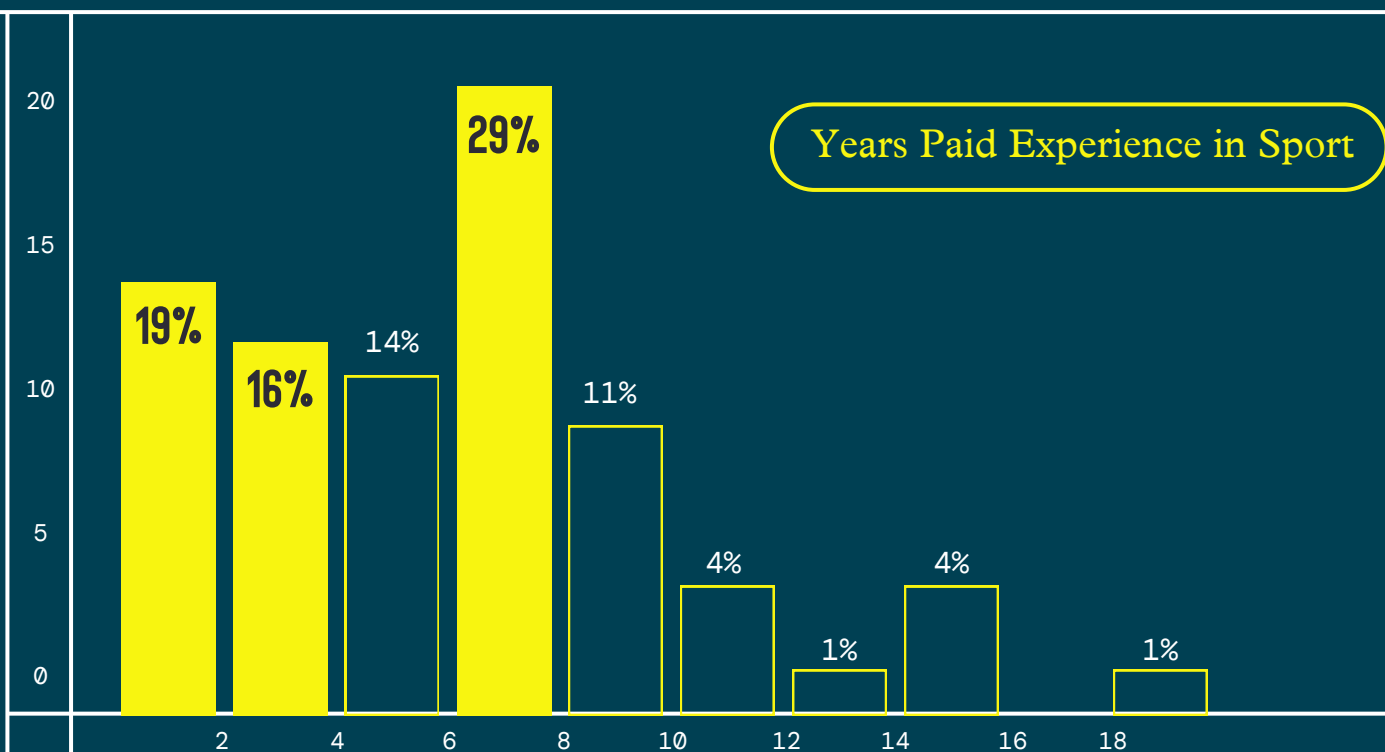
Internships Prior to Paid Role



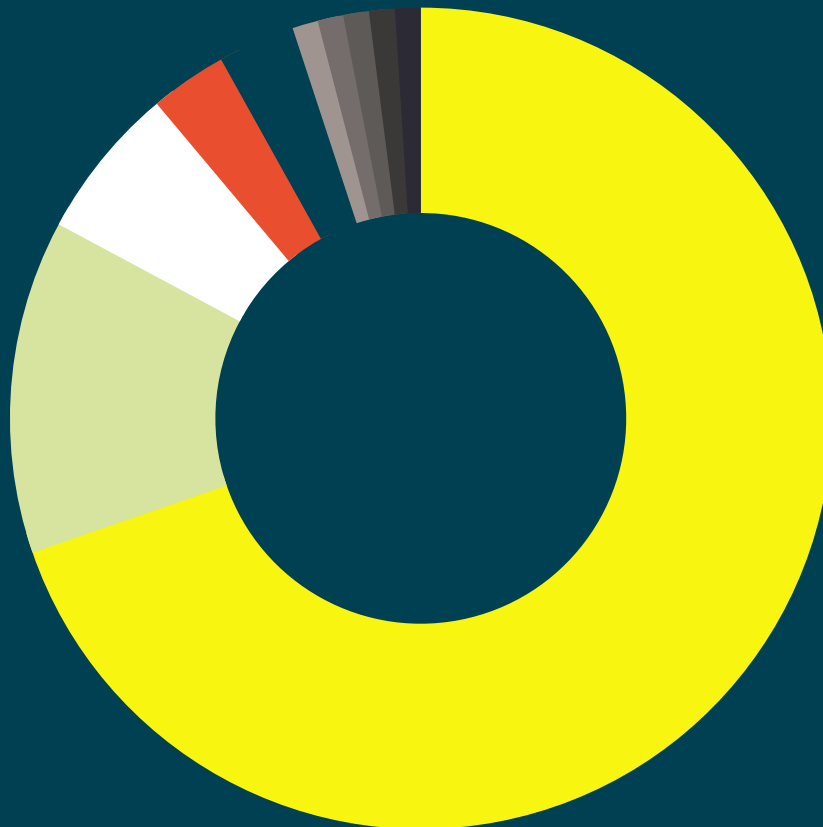


■ 97% Male
■ 3% Female

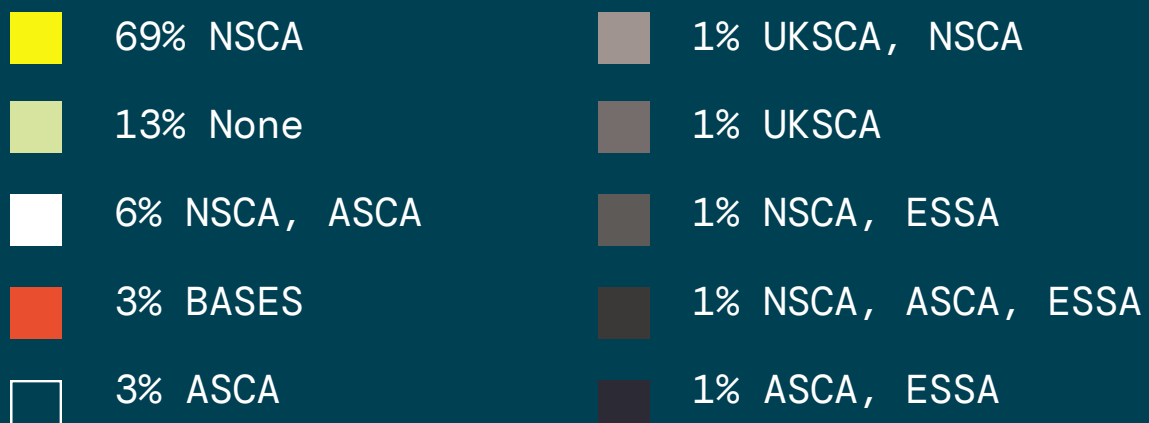
Number of Respondents



Accreditation



Accreditations Held



THE CLUB

This section of the report shows where the practitioners who responded to the survey are working within an organisation. Is is in the academy with 16 year old players, 17-8 year old players, 19-21 year old players, or senior players.

Due to the presumed number of staff within backroom teams in the MLS, we decided to collect all practitioner data within one report. Unlike the English leagues, the academy system doesn't seem to be as established and this may be reflected in the fact that only 33% of respondents worked in an academy setting within their club.



67%

**of respondents work
with senior players**

THE CLUB

No. of Respondents

40

30

20

10

0

67%

13%

14%

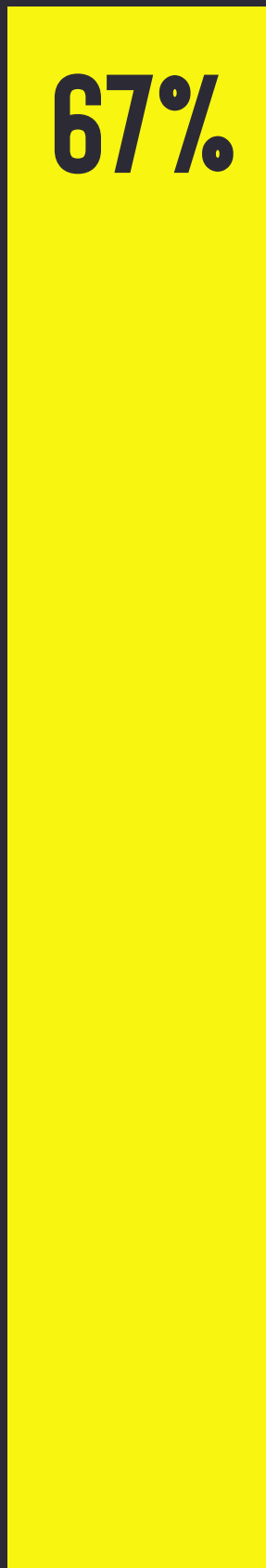
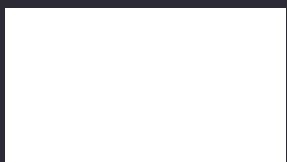
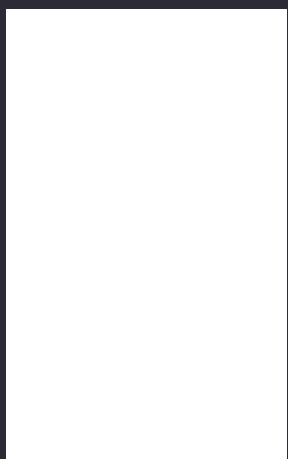
6%

16 and below

17 -18

19 - 21

Seniors



EMPLOYMENT METHOD

This is one of the most contentious parts of the report. Nepotism (a form of favoritism which is granted to relatives and friends in various fields) is often a word that is thrown at the world of sports performance. And sadly it may raise its ugly head again due to the numbers presented in on the next page.

"Its not what you know, its who you know" is a phrase which is banded around and based on the fact that 59% of roles were gained based on 'recommendations', you can see why.

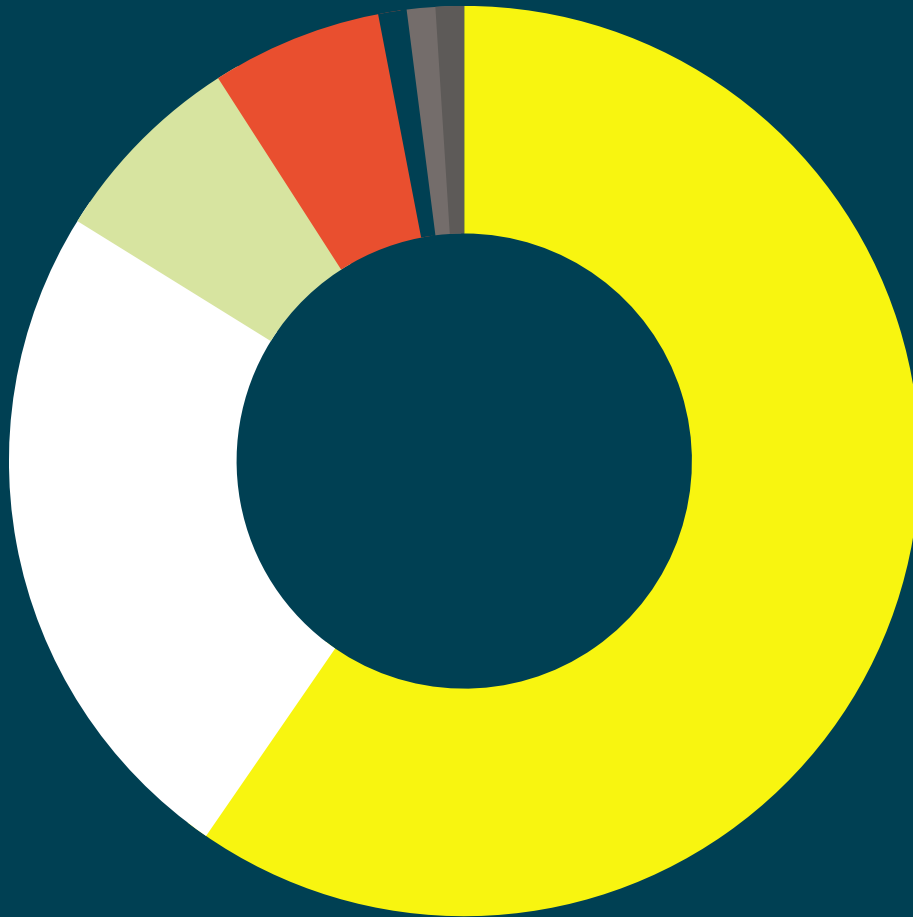
A method of gaining employment that is on the rise is 'headhunted / recruiter'. This is especially the case for 'head of' and 'director of' positions. Companies like Elite Performance Partners (EPP) and Sportsology are becoming big players in the market. It happens in other industries and it was only a matter of time before it started happening in our industry.



59%

of respondents got their
current role via a
recommendation

Employment Method



How job was attained

-  59% Recommendation (no publicly available job advert)
-  24% Promotion from within the same organisation
-  7% Applying via publicly available job advert
-  6% Recruitment company/ Headhunted
-  1 % Seeking for employment opportunities
-  1 % Position was posted online but recruited by Head S&C
-  1 % Hired after internship

THE SALARY

Presented on the coming pages is the salary information for respondents in the MLS. Page 11 gives an overview of all salaries before bonuses. Then pages 12-17 detail salaries based on practitioner age, title, amount of experience, level of education and player age.

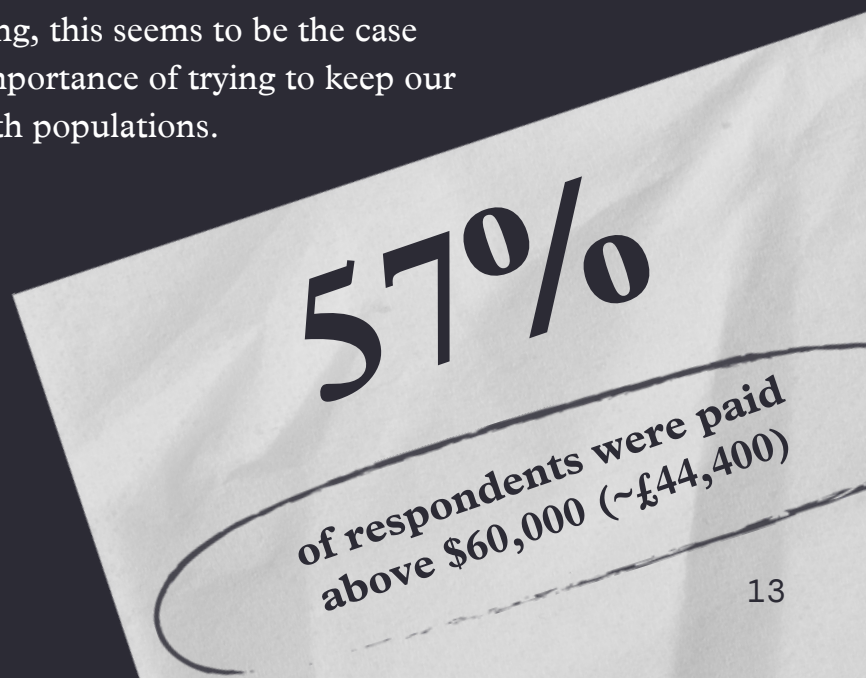
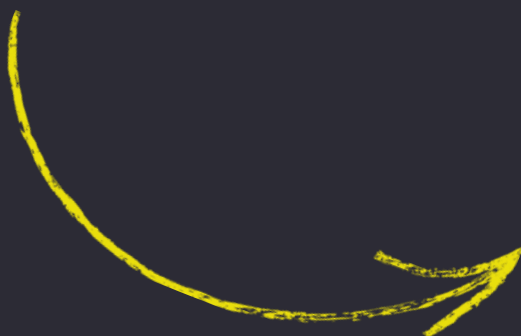
On a basic level, the average (median) salary of \$75k (£55.5k) in the MLS fares considerably well compared to that in rugby union (\$53.9k / £40k), rugby league (\$53.9k / £40k) and British senior men's football (\$47.1k / £35k).

Interestingly, and as detailed on page 14, practitioners with a Masters degree averaged \$75.6k (£56k) in the MLS compared to \$56.6k (£42k) in British senior men's football.

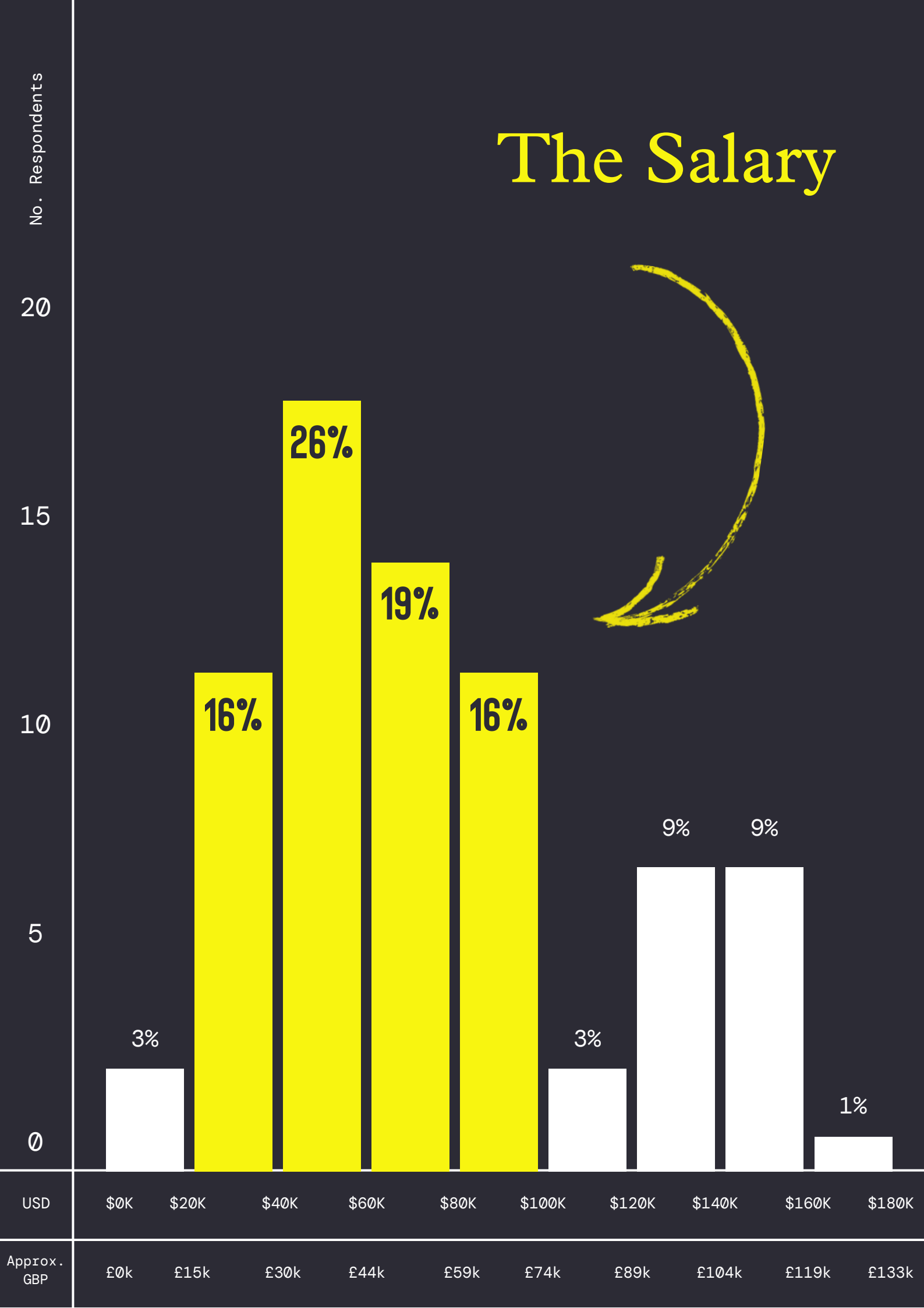
Patience once again is highlighted as salary has a positive association with practitioner age. As you get older, you tend to get paid more. This isn't news to anyone but showing the data to young or aspiring coaches may help to curb unrealistic expectations.

This is also the case with practitioner experience. The more experienced you are, typically, the more you get paid.

And finally, there is a natural salary progression as you work with older and older players. Right or wrong, this seems to be the case across all sports despite the known importance of trying to keep our best youth coaches working with youth populations.



The Salary



SALARY BY PRACTITIONER AGE

There was a large, positive association# between staff respondent age and their salary. Staff who were older staff tended to have a higher salary.

£78.1k



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