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Summary
version

Sportsmith

RUGBY LEAGUE PERFORMANCE STAFF SURVEY

A survey of strength and conditioning coaches and sports scientists working in rugby league in England and Australia to better understand the demographics and salaries of these practitioners.

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Hello and Welcome



Since the start of 2021, we have released two surveys; one looking at British football and one looking at rugby union. The third in the series will look at the salaries, experience levels, ages, education levels of those working in rugby league.

The next comment is one that is placed firmly in each report. 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.

This survey, given that rugby league is played predominantly in England and Australia, focused on only those two countries.

This survey again highlights how young we are as an employee body in the industry. 66% of those working in rugby league were under the age of 35. This is very similar to rugby union (69%) and British football (78%). This leads to only 25% having worked for more than 10 years in a similar role across any sport.

Interestingly and uniquely to rugby league, only 18 % of respondents didn't have a professional accreditation. This differs to rugby union (46%) and British football (57%). Why are practitioners in rugby league gaining accreditation versus the other two sports?

44 practitioners filled in the questionnaire which was distributed to those who work as a strength and conditioning coach or sports scientist in senior and academy rugby league.

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

- The majority of staff respondents were 26-30 years old, with a mean age of 33 years.
- Staff in a 'Head of', 'Senior' or 'Lead' position accounted for two thirds of all respondents.
- The majority of staff respondents had 1-10 years total experience, with a median of 7 years.
- Experience ranged from 1 to 27 years.
- The majority of staff respondents had 1-10 years rugby experience, with a median of 6 years.
- Almost three quarters of staff respondents had completed a masters degree as their highest academic qualification.
- The average mean salary was £44k (\$85k) and the median salary was £40k (\$77k)
- Almost two thirds of staff were accredited with the ASCA, while nearly 20% held no professional accreditation. 24% held multiple accreditations.
- Staff respondents were exclusively from Australia (~60%) and England (~40%).
- Over three quarters of staff respondents worked with senior players.
- 59% of respondents were paid above £41,000 (~\$78,800).
- There was a large to very large, positive association between staff respondent age and their salary.
- On average, staff respondents from Australia were paid approximately £37.5/ \$72.1 K more than those from England.*
- On average, staff working with seniors and 1 9-2ls were paid approximately £33.1/ \$63.6 K* and £43.8/ \$84.2 K more than those working with 1 7-1 8s.

THE STAFF

The next two pages detail the demographics of those that answered the survey. Results in this report align with the British football and rugby union survey in that they highlight what a young workforce we have in our industry. One reason for that is that we are a young industry and graduates only started coming out of universities 10-15 years ago. However, could it also be that given the stresses and strains of the job, few last past the age of 35?

One big surprise in this report is the number of respondents who have professional accreditation. Given the fact that 53% of respondents had ASCA accreditation suggests that the ASCA is a highly regarded in Australia as opposed to the UKSCA in England. Could this also be to do with the salary bandings which the ASCA have put in place for their members?

Only 18% of practitioners put a halt on their education at undergraduate level. 82% had a Masters degree, post graduate qualification or doctorate. This again aligns with rugby union (76%) and British football (76%) and re-emphasises the need for those wanting to get into the industry that a Masters level Report in partnership with Setanta College Sprutsmith qualification is needed.

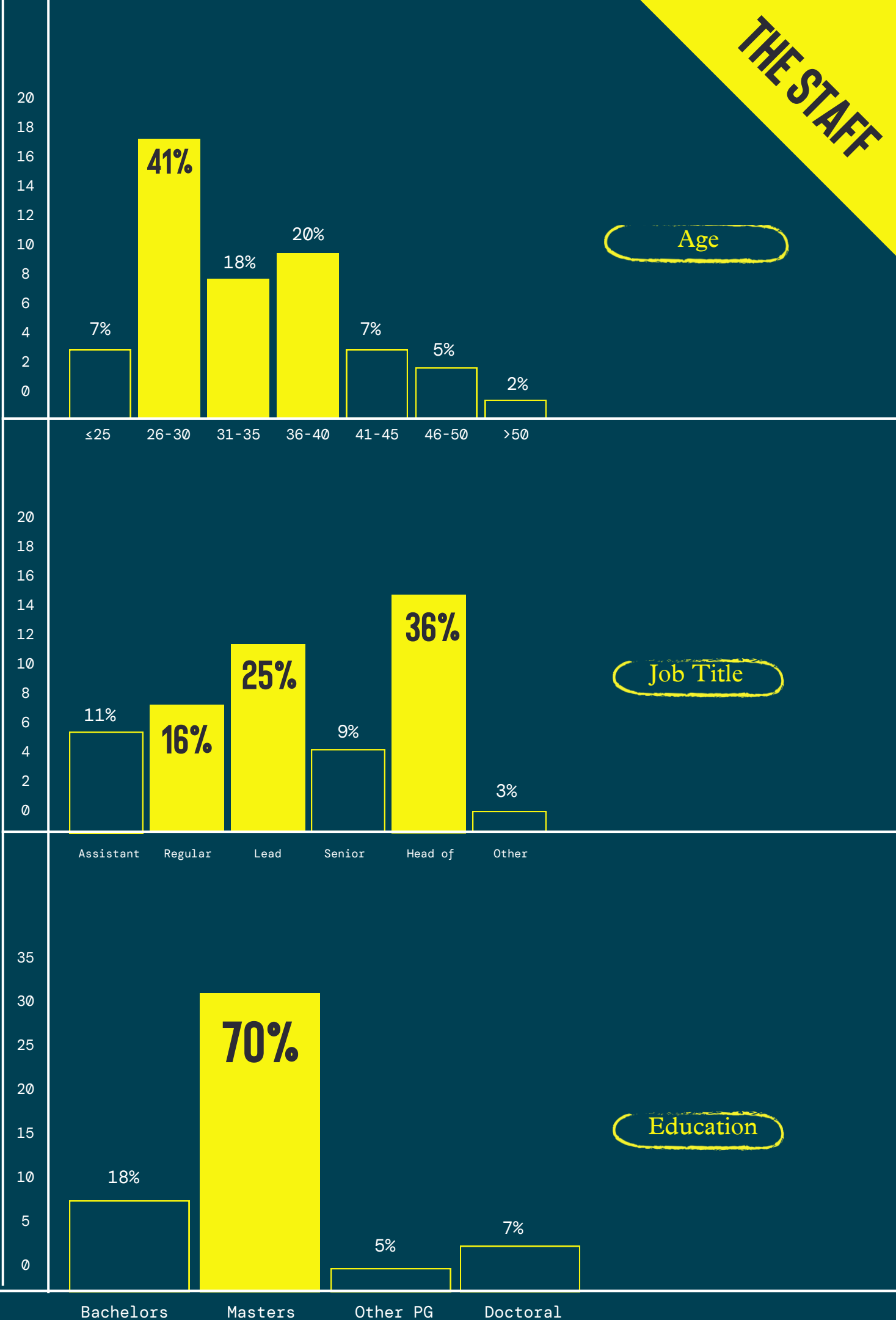
And finally, we see that in rugby league and rugby union, practitioners have more experience in sport than those working in British football. 25% of practitioners in rugby league and 34% of practitioners in rugby union had 25 years or more experience in sport while British football had only 19%.



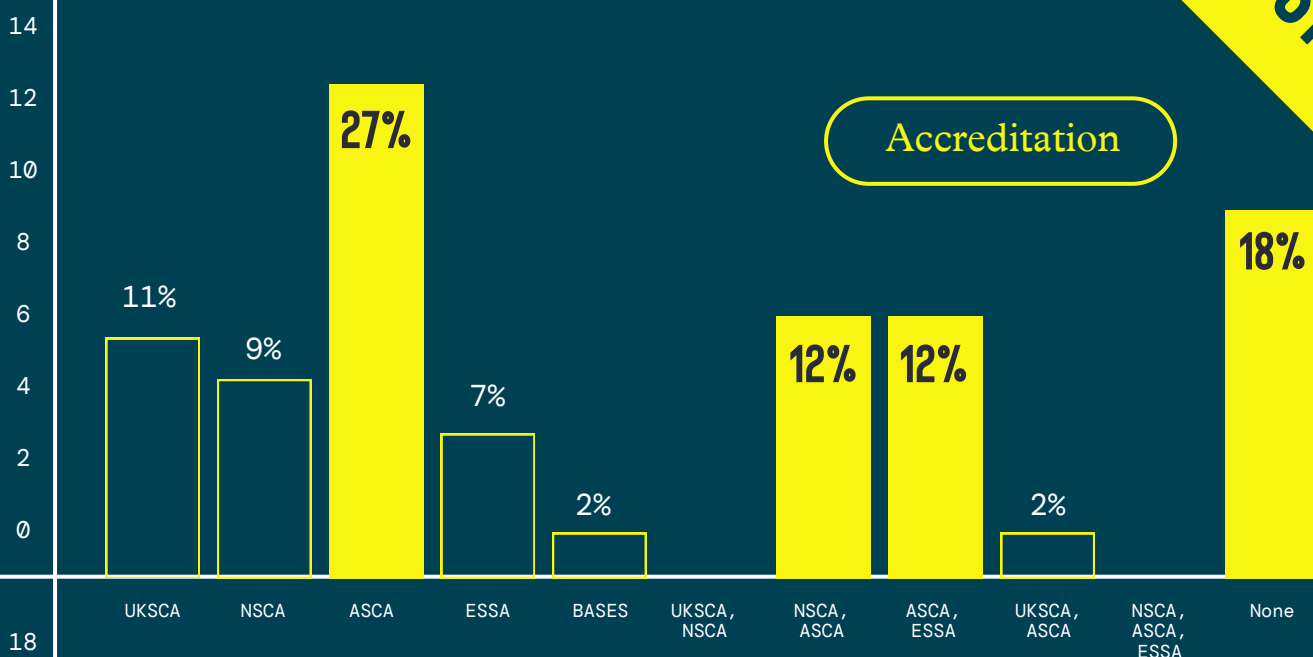
83%

of respondents held a Masters degree or post graduate qualification

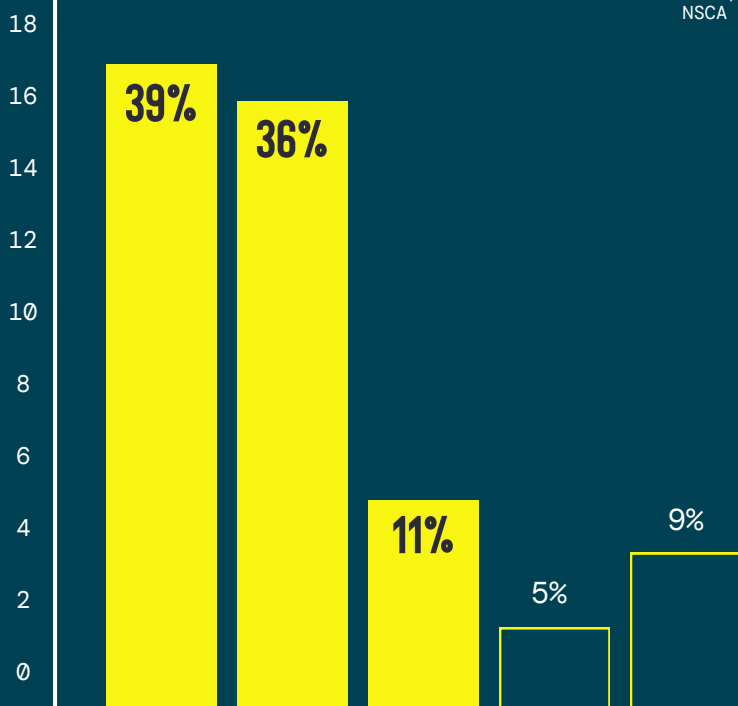
Number of Respondents



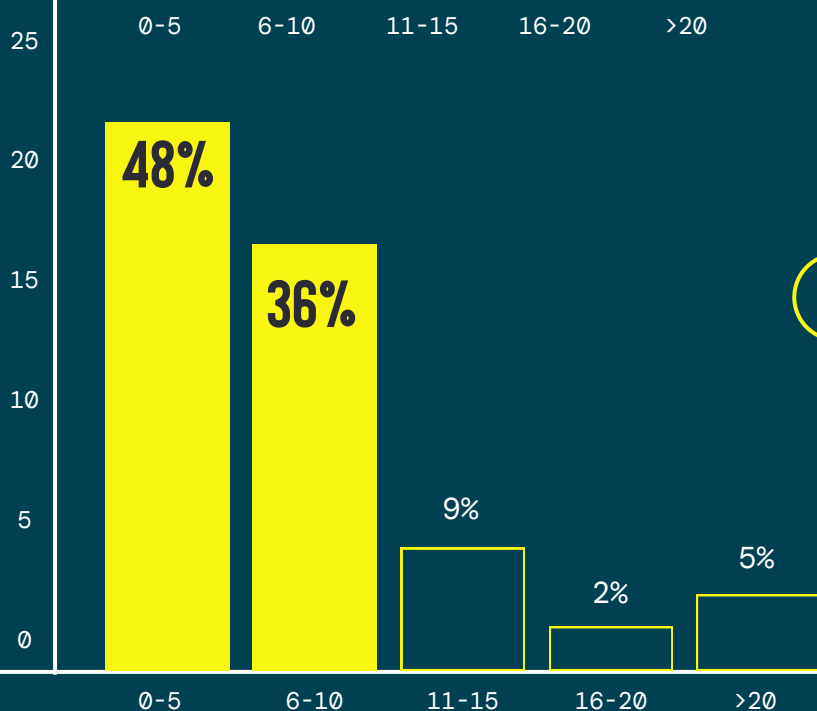
Accreditation



Years Sport Experience



Years Rugby Experience

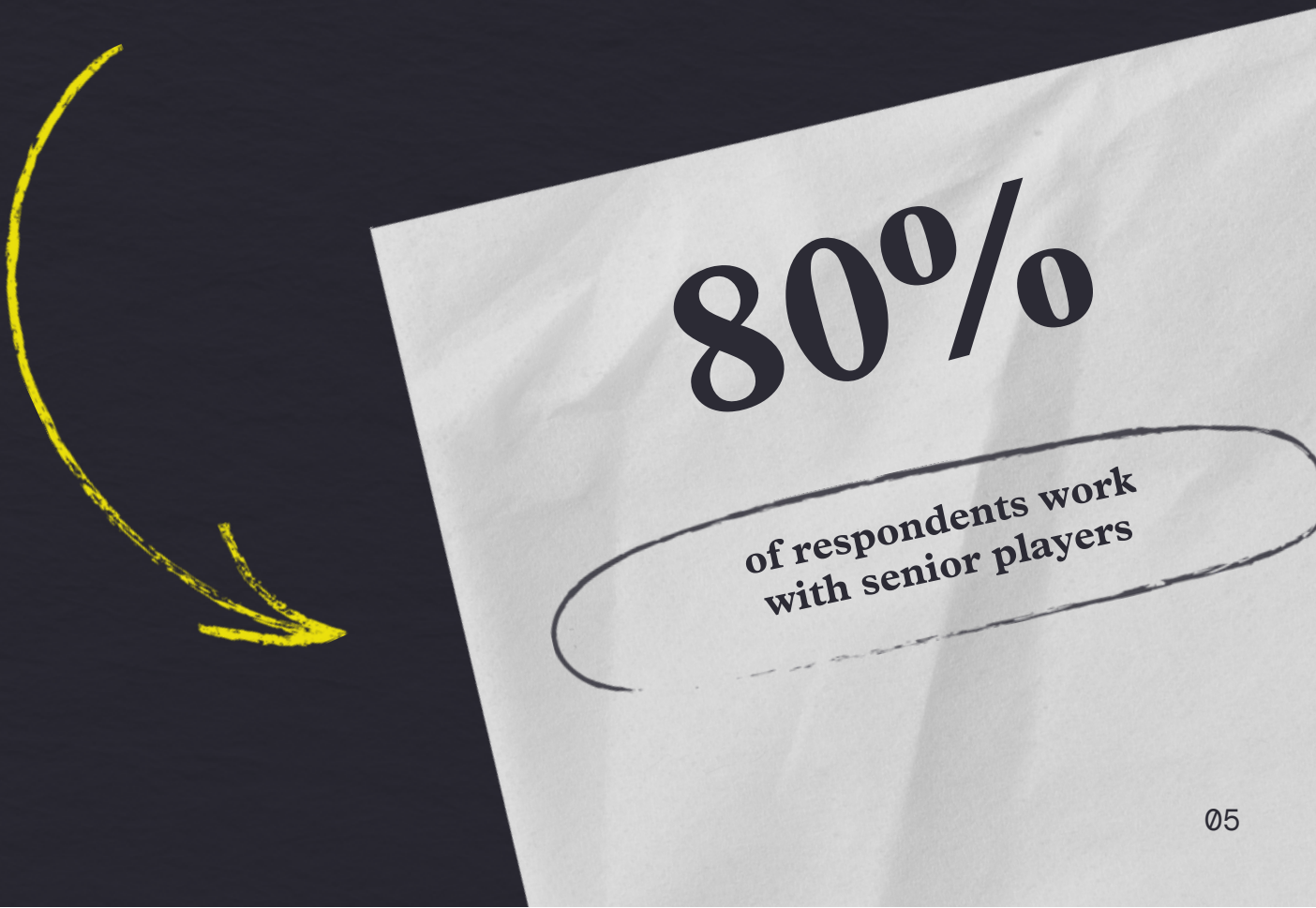


THE CLUB

The data within this survey was collected at the same time as the rugby union survey, hence there being more countries on the graph on the following page despite there being only respondents from England and Australia.

80% of those that responded to the survey worked in senior rugby league. This is in contrast to rugby union which had 70%. Is this indicative of the academy structure in rugby union being a lot more established than rugby league?

57% of all respondents were from Australia. Does this indicate that staff numbers per club are greater in Australia versus England? The remuneration later in this report may suggest that is the case due to significantly higher wages.



Country

Number of Respondents

30
25
20
15
10
5
0

43%

57%

England

Wales

Scotland

Ireland

Australia

New Zealand

Player Age

40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0

11%

9%

80%

17-18

19-21

Seniors

THE SALARY

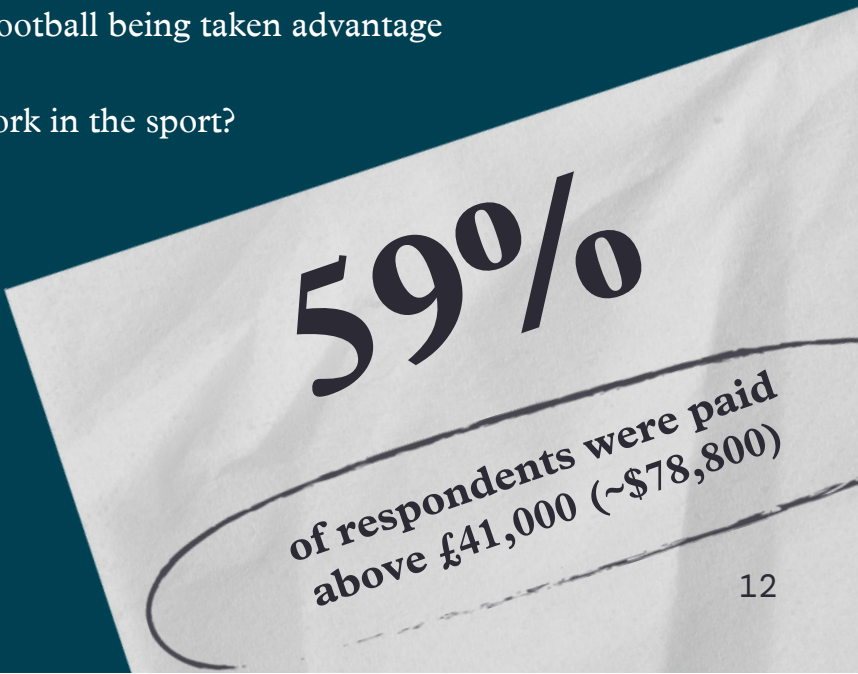
Presented on the next 7 pages are the all important salaries. Page 9 is a graph representing the salaries of everyone who took part in the survey with GBP and AUD both shown for easy comparisons. Data is then presented on salary by country of work, practitioner age, practitioner title, practitioner experience, practitioner education and player age group.

Although this is the information that many will gravitate towards, and rightly so given the discussions that go on in rugby clubs around the globe, it is important to mention that this is a snapshot of the industry.

It would have been fantastic to get enough data to be able to make deeper comparisons. However due to the fact that the numbers of roles available is low, presenting graphs to illustrate salaries for those with a 'head of title only in England, for example, wouldn't paint a solid enough picture.

The overall landscape does look a little more comfortable, than that presented in the British football survey and rugby union survey.

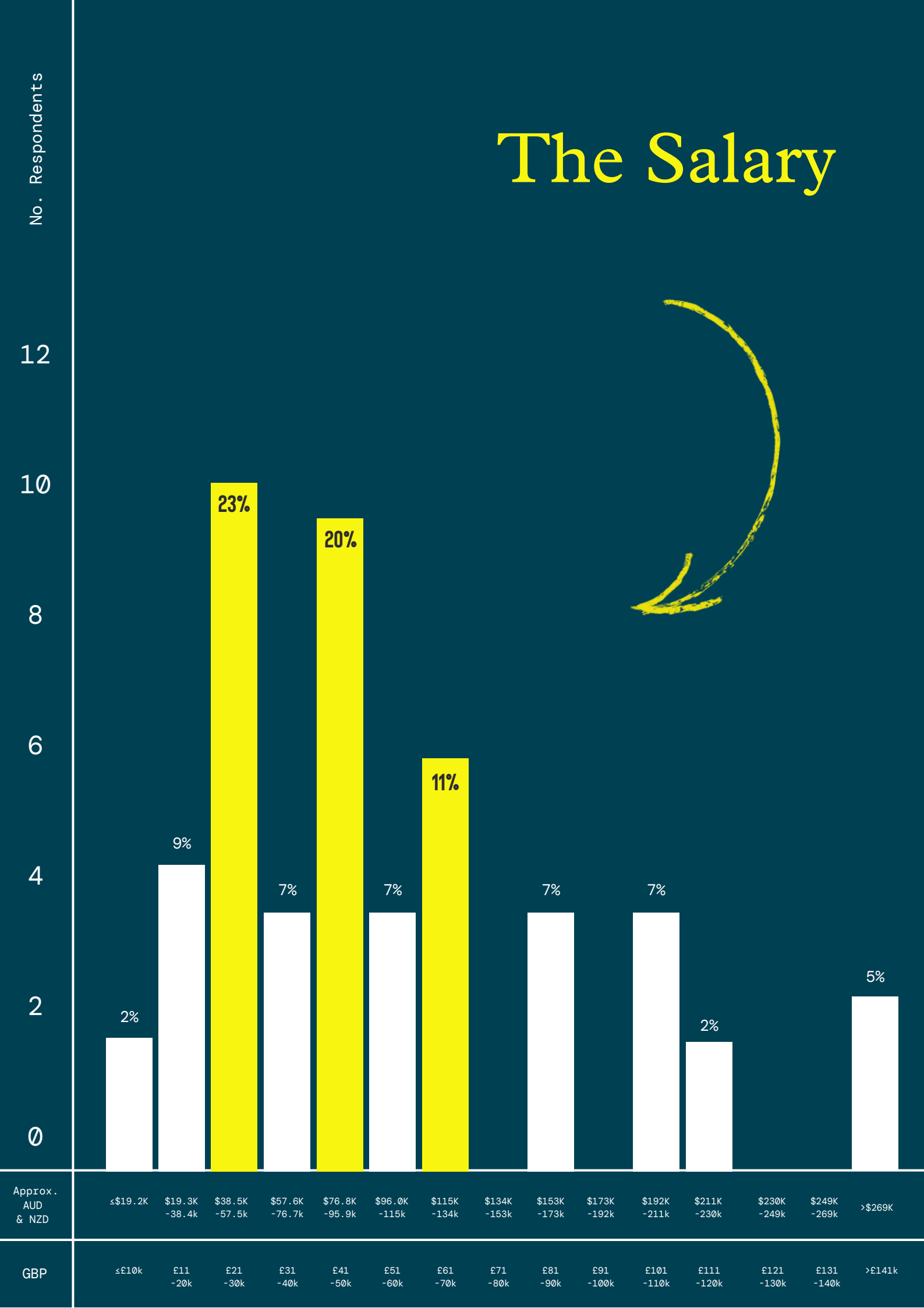
59% of respondents were paid above £41k (~\$78k) which may surprise some readers. That is compared to 47% in rugby union and 34% in British football. Are those in football being taken advantage of because of the perceived honour to work in the sport?



59%

of respondents were paid
above £41,000 (~\$78,800)

The Salary



SALARY BY COUNTRY OF WORK

On average, staff respondents from Australia were paid approximately £37.5/ \$72.1 K more than those working in England.*

£32.1k



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