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Summary
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Sportsmith

RUGBY UNION PERFORMANCE STAFF SURVEY

A survey of strength and conditioning coaches and sports scientists working in rugby union in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, New Zealand and Australia to better understand the demographics and salaries of these practitioners.

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Hello and Welcome



Four months after the release of the British football survey, almost 1,000 people have downloaded it. Hopefully that survey has been used as a vehicle to start conversations on the topic of salaries and working conditions in football here in Britain.

The rugby union survey was undertaken during the second half of 2020. Instead of focusing just on practitioners working in Britain and Ireland, we wanted to include those working in Australia and New Zealand to allow comparisons across countries. But again, we don't want the data being presented in this survey to be used as a stick to beat the industry or the sport with. The aim of this survey is to start a conversation. It aims to put some objectivity on the often held conversations in our industry about poor salaries.

The results of this survey again highlight how young we are as an industry. 69% of those who responded to the survey were under the age of 35 and 67% of respondents had less than 10 years paid experience in the industry. Despite that, 80% of respondents held a 'lead', 'senior', 'head of' or 'other' position, Report in partnership with Setanta College highlighting that young, relatively inexperienced practitioners are holding senior positions in rugby union.

The British football survey highlighted that 57% of respondents didn't have any professional accreditation. Although this survey shows slightly more encouraging results, still only 46% held UKSCA, NSCA, ASCA, ESSA, or a combination of those.

87 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 union.

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 union across the world.

REPORT SUMMARY

- 69% of staff were under the age of 35.
- Staff in a 'Head of', Senior or Lead position accounted for three quarters of all respondents.
- The majority of staff respondents had 1-10 years total experience, with a median of 9 years.
- Almost two thirds of staff respondents had completed a masters degree as their highest academic qualification.
- Almost half of all respondents held no professional accreditation.
- The highest staff response came from England, with the entire British Isle accounting for 85%.
- The average mean salary was £44k (\$85k) and the median salary was £40k (\$77k)
- Staff working with seniors were paid approximately £23.5/ \$45.1k* more than those working with 17-18s and £9.8/ \$18.5k more than those working with 19-21s.
- Staff who were employed in rugby for longer tended to have a higher salary.
- The average (mean), staff in England were paid £46.6k/ \$89.6 compared to £45.4k/ \$87.3k, £44k/ \$84.6k, £43.3k/ \$83.2k, £43.1k/ \$82.8k and £36k/ \$69.2k in Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales and Australia respectively.
- On average, practitioners in a 'Head of' role were paid £17.4k/ \$33.4*, £30.7k/ \$59k*, £36.9k/ \$70.9k*, £35k/ \$67.3k* and £40.5k/ \$77.8k* more than practitioners in 'Senior', 'Lead', 'Assistant', 'regular' and 'other' positions.
- On average, practitioners with only a Bachelors degree were paid £35.4k/ \$68k while those with a Masters, Doctoral qualification and other post graduate qualification were paid £48.5k/ \$93.2k, £42.3k/ \$81.3k and £41.2k/ \$79.2k respectively.
- There was a large to very large, positive association# between staff respondent age and their salary. Staff who were older tended to have a higher salary.

THE STAFF

The next two pages detail the demographics of those that answered the survey. Very much like the football survey, we can see that we are a very young industry with 69% of respondents under the age of 35.

This data also mirrors the data shown in the football survey when it comes to professional accreditations. 46% of respondents do not have any accreditation. Again, does this highlight a lack of buy in to the accreditation process from both administration and practitioners? However, with that said, 36% of respondents do hold UKSCA accreditation. This is in contrast to only 13% in British senior football.

With the growing number of Masters level qualifications across the UK, especially those that are distance learning, it is no surprise that 76% of those working in rugby hold this level of qualification. This percentage is exactly the same as previously found in the British football survey. Seeing that across two sports conclusively shows that a Masters level qualification is a 'required' versus 'desirable'.

Once again we are seeing a large number of practitioners in 'lead', 'senior' or 'head of positions despite the amount of staff under the age of 35. 77% of respondents held one of those titles.

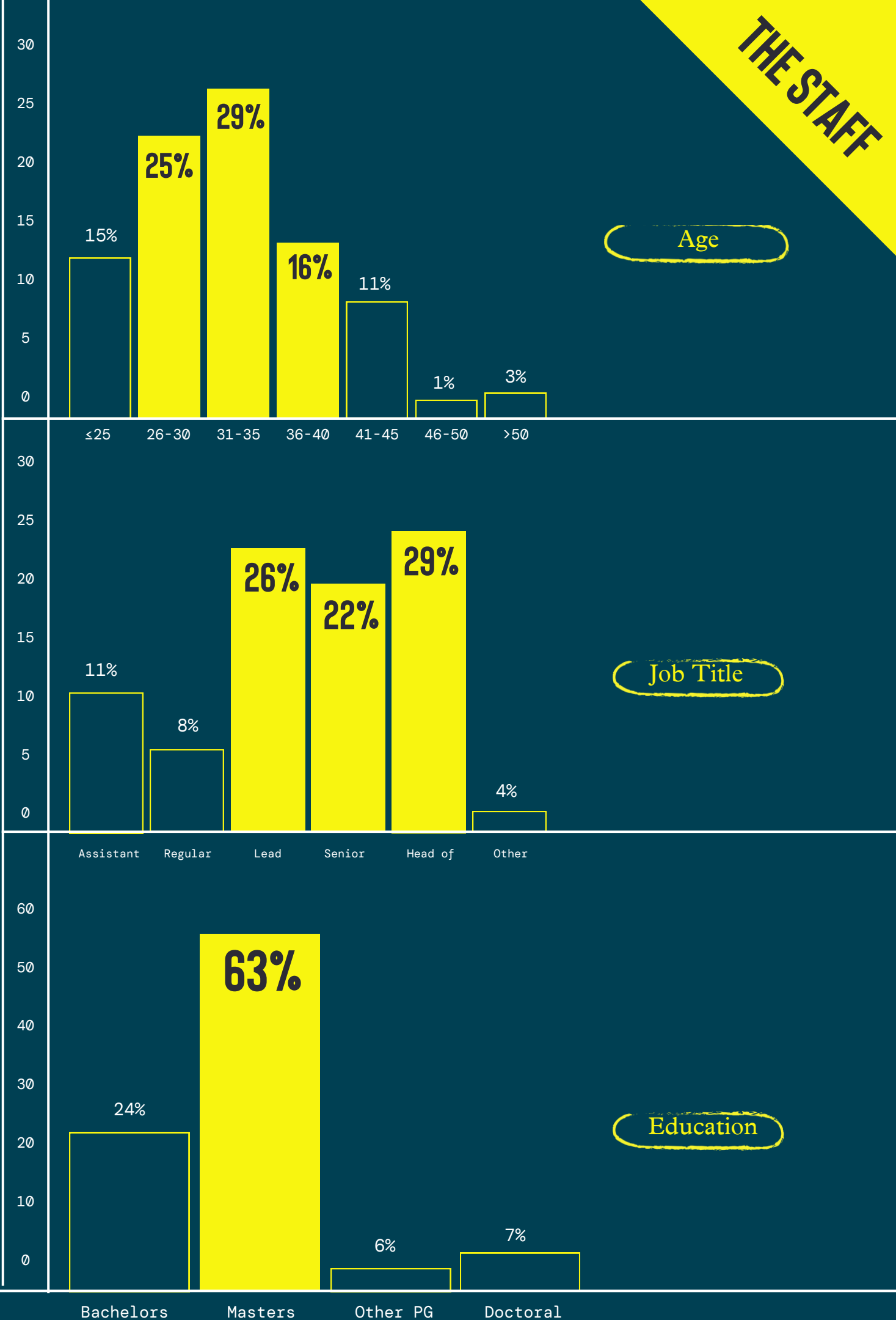
And finally, it would seem that there are a higher percentage of more experienced practitioners in rugby union compared to British football. Only 13% of staff had above 11 years experience in football when compared to 24% in rugby union.



46%

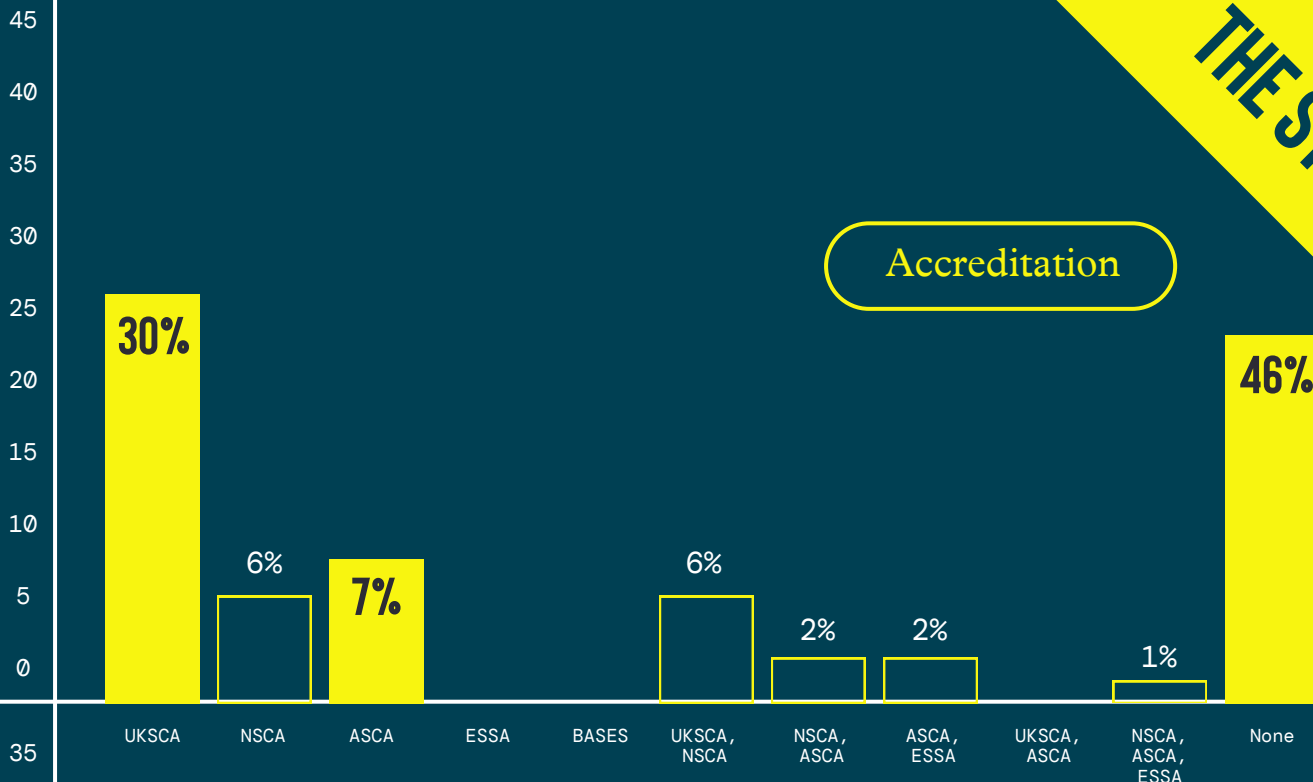
of respondents held no
professional accreditation

Number of Respondents

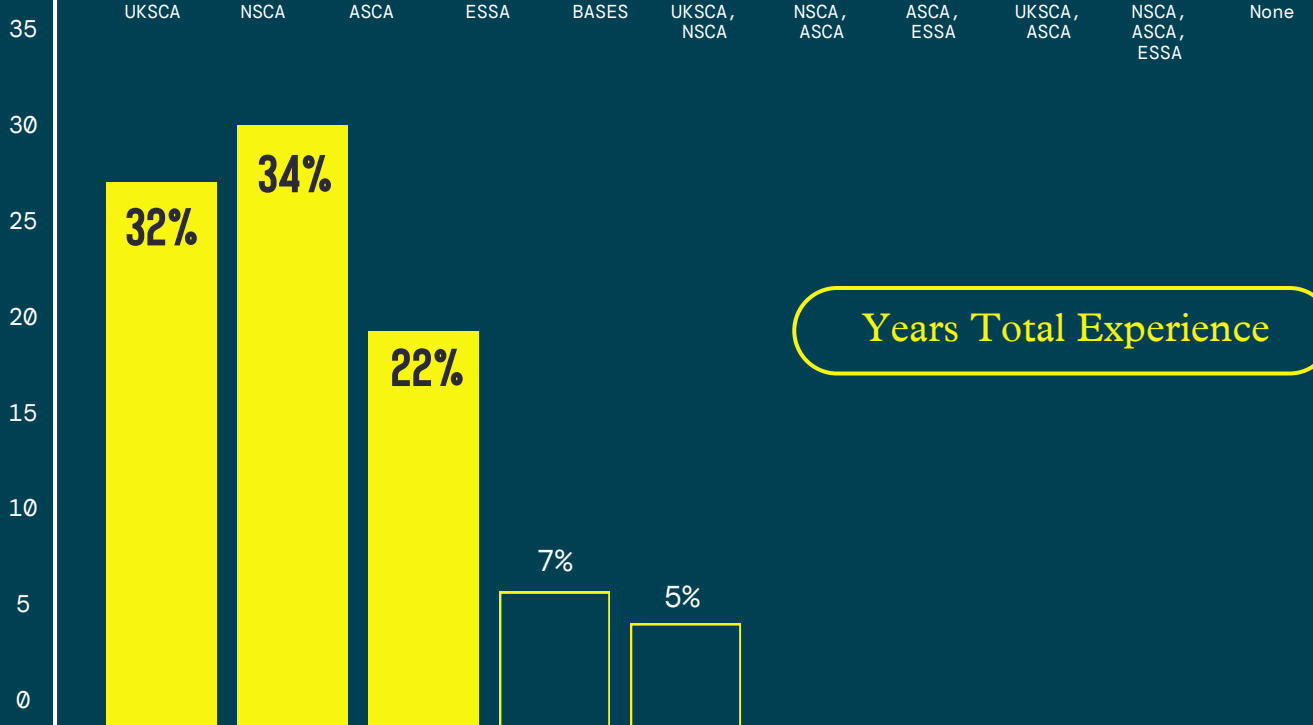


Number of Respondents

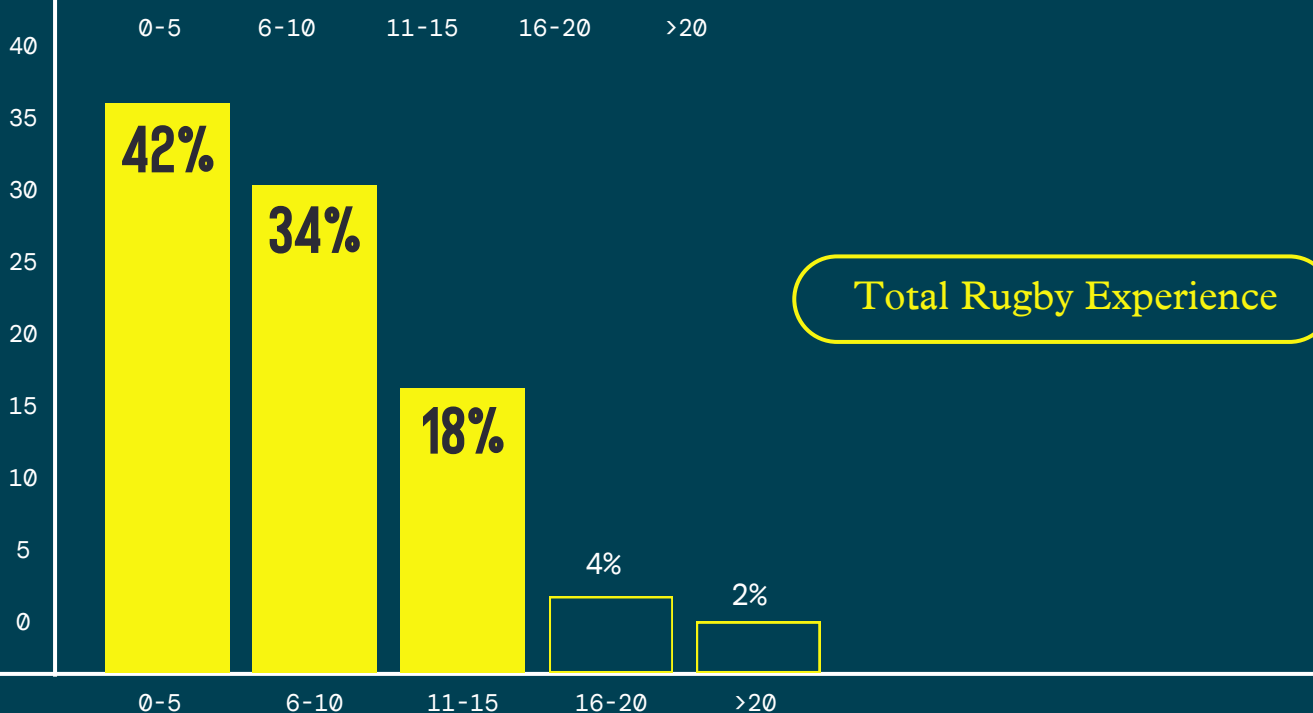
Accreditation



Years Total Experience



Total Rugby Experience

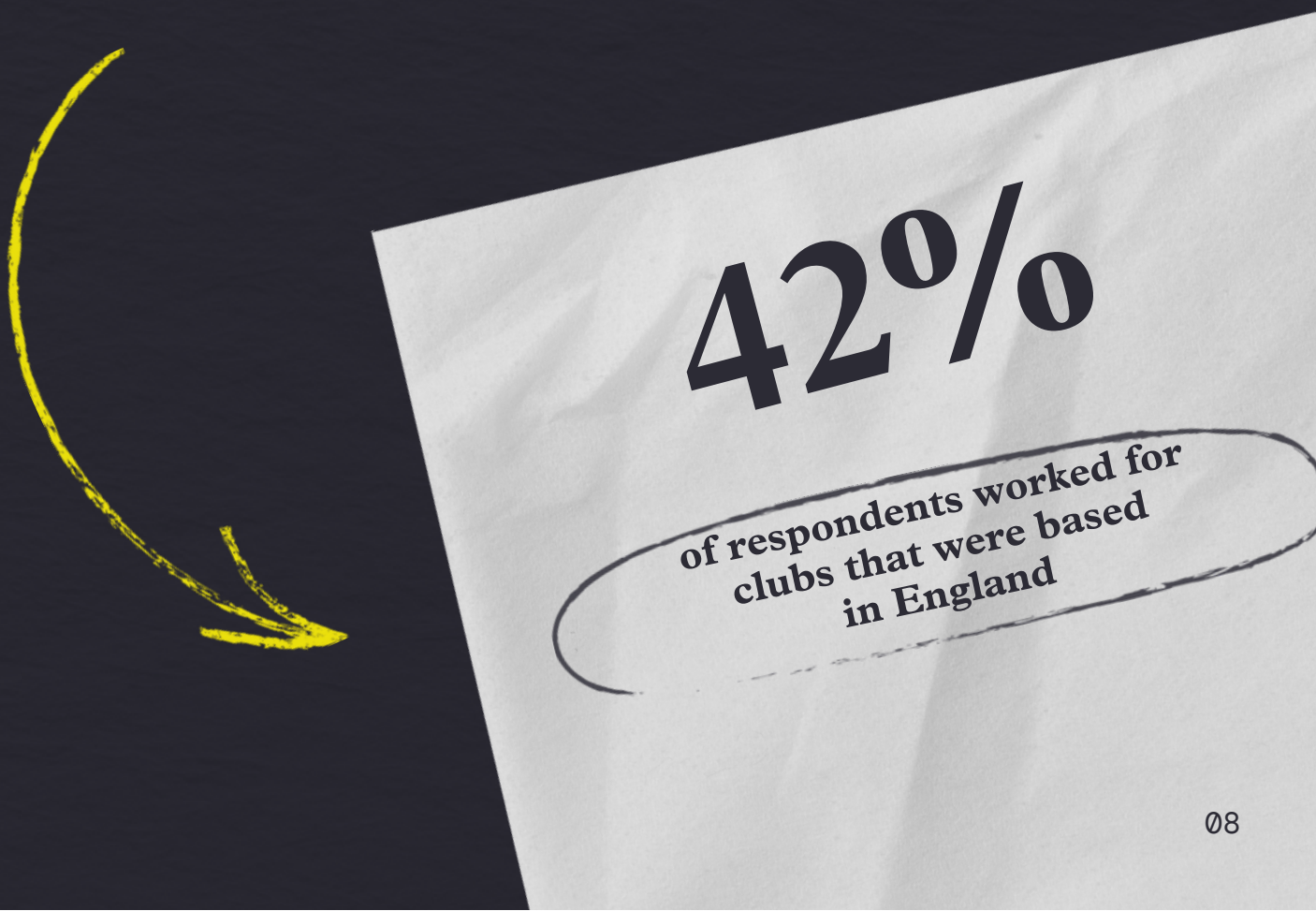


THE CLUB

The aim was to get the survey into the hands of at least one member of staff across the Guinness Premiership and Super Rugby leagues. Staff from Pro 14 clubs who were based in Ireland, Scotland and Wales were also contacted.

42% of respondents were from England, 21 % from Ireland, 9% from Australia, 8% from Wales, and 6% from New Zealand. Data from international rugby staff was not included in this report.

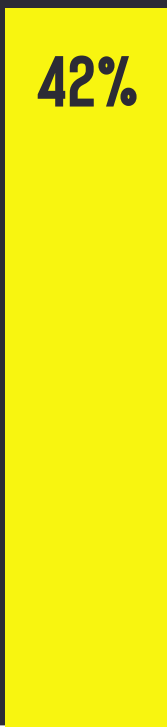
Unlike the football survey, we captured data from staff in academy environments as well as first team environments. This has led to some nice comparisons across age groups. With that said, 70% of those who responded worked with senior players, maybe highlighting the number of jobs at senior level compared to academies.



Country

Number of Respondents

40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0



England

Wales

Scotland

Ireland

Australia

New Zealand

Player Age

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0



17-18

19-21

Seniors

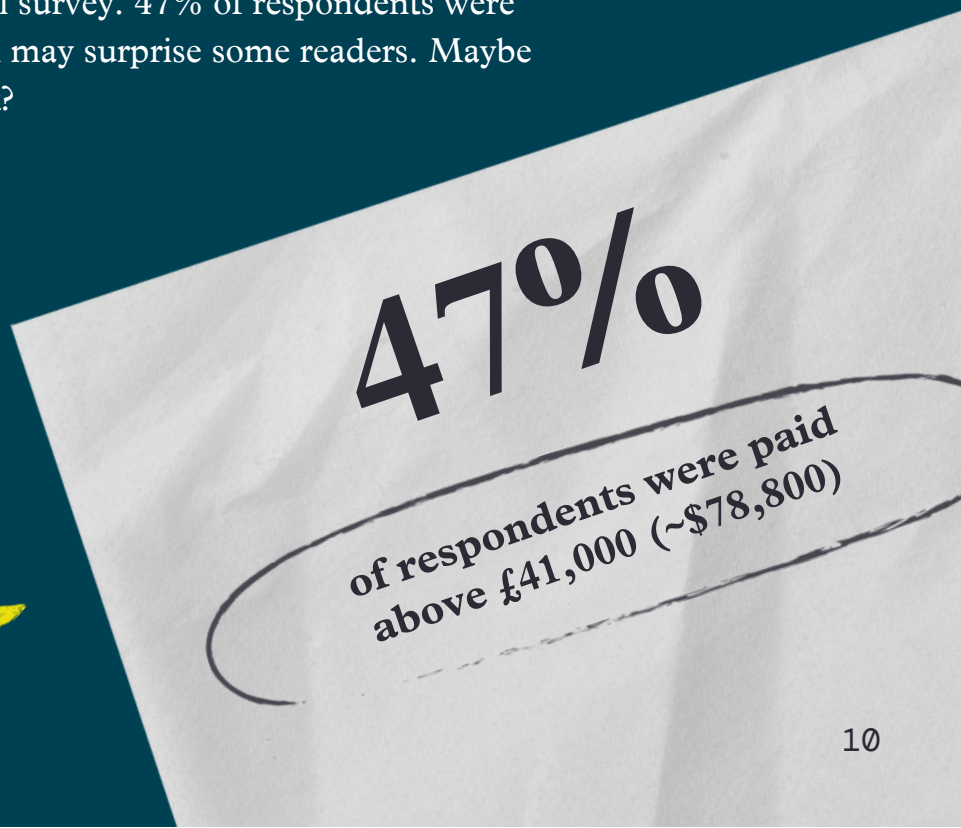
THE SALARY

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.

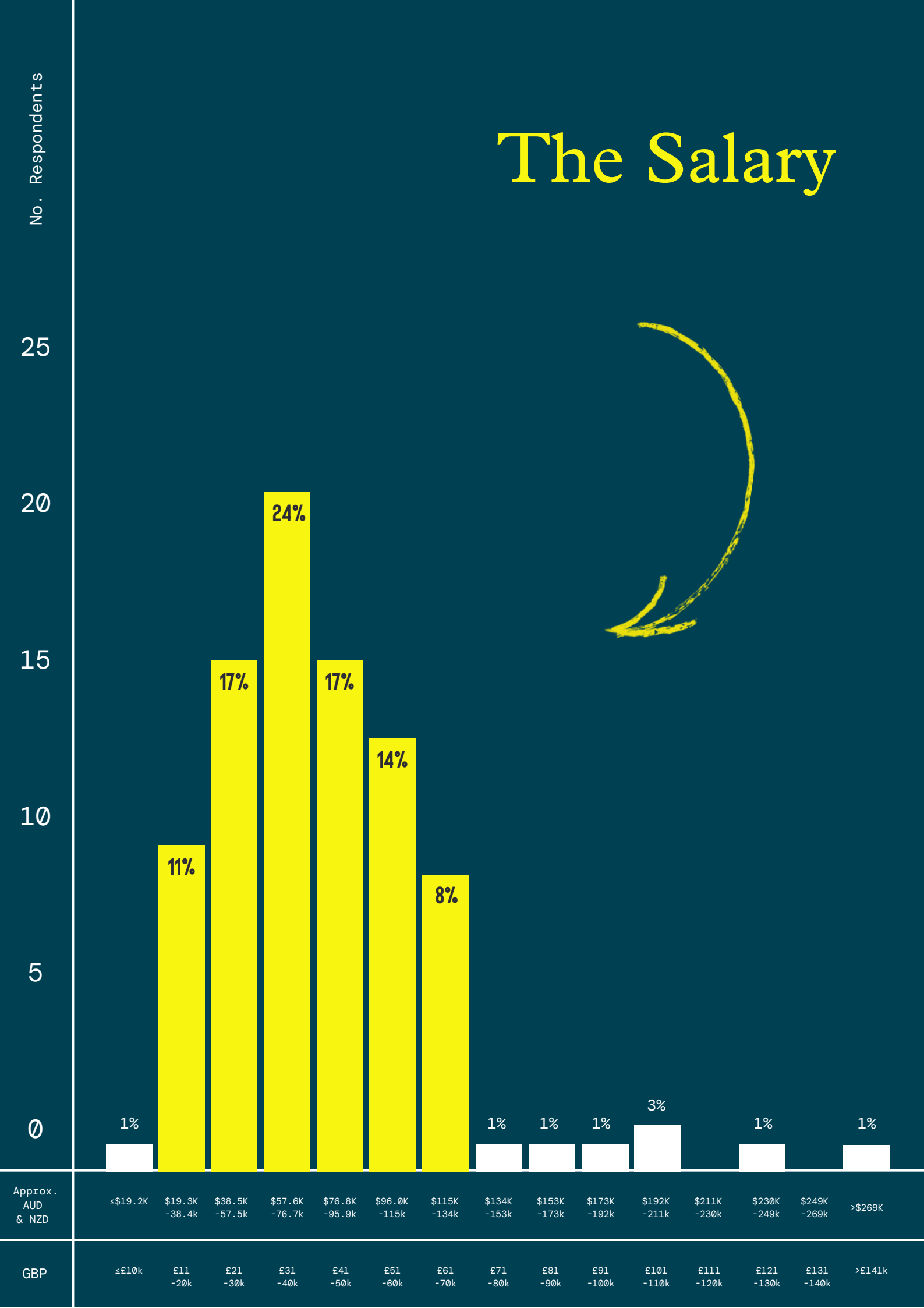
Although this is the information that many will gravitate towards, and rightly so given the discussions that go on in rugby clubs around the globe, it is important to mention that this is a snapshot of the industry.

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. 47% of respondents were paid above £41k (~\$78k) which may surprise some readers. Maybe things aren't as bad as we think?



The Salary



SALARY BY COUNTRY OF WORK

The average (mean), staff in England were paid £46.6k/ \$89.6k compared to £45.4k/ \$87.3k, £44k/ \$84.6k, £43.3k/ \$83.2k, £43.1k/ \$82.5k and £36k/ \$69.2k in Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales and Australia respectively.

£46.6k



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