



Professional
Footballers Australia



THE 2016/17 PFA A-LEAGUE REPORT



Supporting the Players
Building the Game

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Welcome to the inaugural A-League Report prepared by the PFA

Any analysis of the 2016/17 season must pay tribute to what Sydney FC achieved. Whatever threads we can pull from the season, it is hard not to admire the team that was brilliantly led by Alex Brosque, inspired by Milos Ninkovic and marshalled by Danny Vukovic and, not to be biased, PFA President Alex Wilkinson.

As always, the players delivered a gripping Grand Final in front of a sell-out crowd before record television ratings. The afternoon was a fitting tribute to two exceptional teams and clubs.

At the PFA, our brief is to look beyond the great spectacle and performances and make sure the foundations upon which players are building their careers are solid. It is our job to make sure that, whilst the players are on centre stage, we are looking ahead to ensure the sport is moving in the right direction. It is this responsibility that motivates and underpins the 2016/17 PFA A-League Report.

This report shows us there are challenges in a number of areas;

- The trend of player churn continues to have a significantly negative impact on players and, in many instances, their families. More than 50% of players are coming off contract each year, dictating a

constant state of change and transition. This environment of anxiety is counter-productive to the players, the clubs and the industry. The global nature of football ensures it will always be fluid. However, that every A-League club used more players over a 5-year cycle than the world's biggest clubs – who play more than double the matches – shows the current employment framework and the salary cap that sits at the heart of it, is simply not working.

- The resistance to flexible match scheduling continues to be a concern. Whilst we have seen steps in the right direction, the players and Australian football continues to be diminished when A-League matches are played on international breaks and clubs competing at the continental level are not given appropriate recovery time. Each sport in Australia is building a 12-month calendar, it's time for the A-League to build a calendar that drives football – not one that is reverse engineered around other sports.
- Pitch quality continues to regress; yet we all know that a quality surface is fundamental to performance. To see 30% of our showpiece stadia rated by the players across the season as averaging less than 3 out of 5 should not be tolerated by the sport.

Many of these challenges can be solved through a sensible discussion while others need a long-term plan with a host of groups working together.

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement expires in two seasons – we need to ensure that when the next opportunity to re-design the competition is available, the players' voice is heard and we can influence those areas that are fundamental to pursuing a career as a footballer: the right to an employment framework that creates a positive career path; safe and equitable match scheduling; and performance standards on match days and at training that allows players to maximise their development as footballers.

All the best for season 2017/18.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Wilkinson'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

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EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK



EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK SNAPSHOT

53%

of A-League players were coming off contract over the course of the season

44%

of A-League contracted players were in their first year at their club

34%

of players coming off contract were under 22

2.4

is the average number of seasons players had been at their club

4.7%

of match minutes were played by debutants. (Higher than all of the 'Big 5' European leagues)

9.2%

of match minutes were played by players under 21

3

clubs have won nine of the A-League's 12 Premierships.

68.49

is the average number of matches of each coach's reign

25.9%

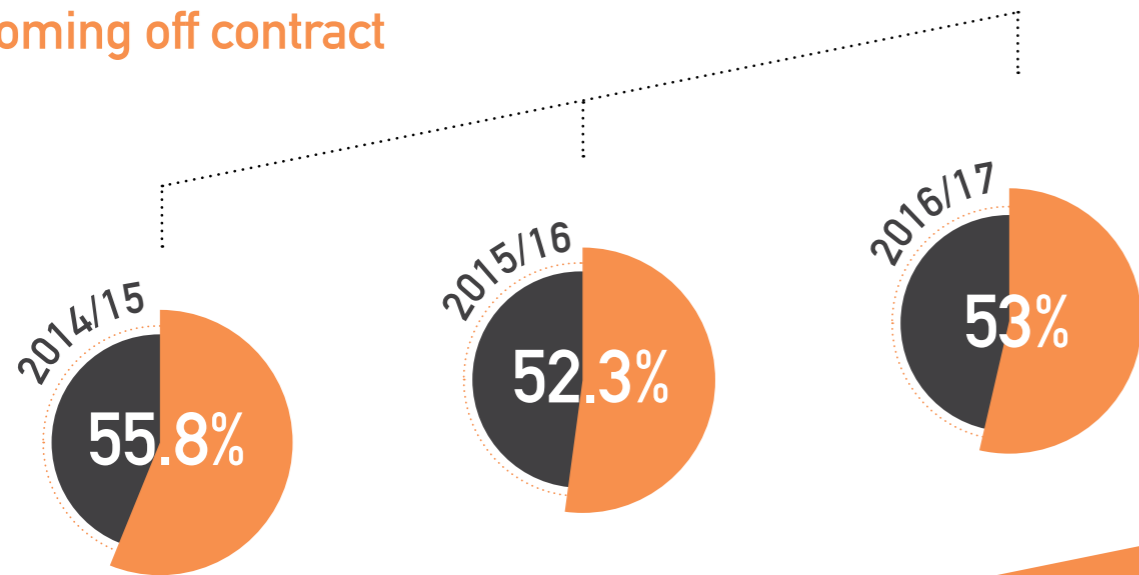
of match minutes were played by foreign players



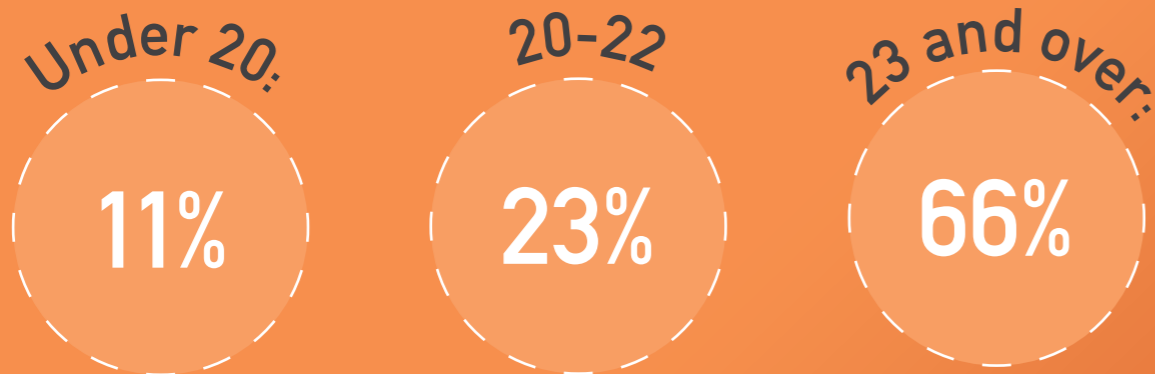
THE A-LEAGUE IS ONE OF THE MOST VOLATILE LABOUR MARKETS IN WORLD FOOTBALL

EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK PLAYER CHURN

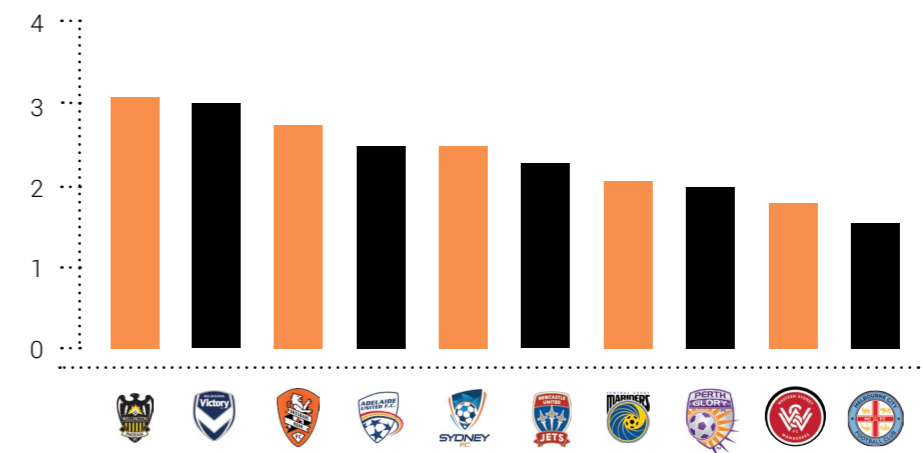
% OF PLAYERS
coming off contract



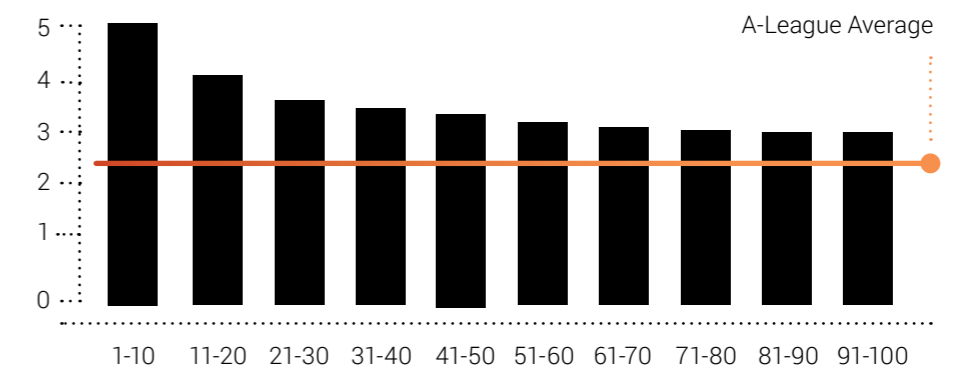
Ages of players coming off contract at the conclusion of the 2016/17 Season:



AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEASONS
at the club of the 2016/17 playing squad



NUMBER OF CONSECUTIVE SEASONS AT CURRENT CLUB
An International Comparison



Stability of 100 UEFA Clubs from Most Stable to Least (1-10 being the top ten most stable clubs).
Source: CIES Football Observatory

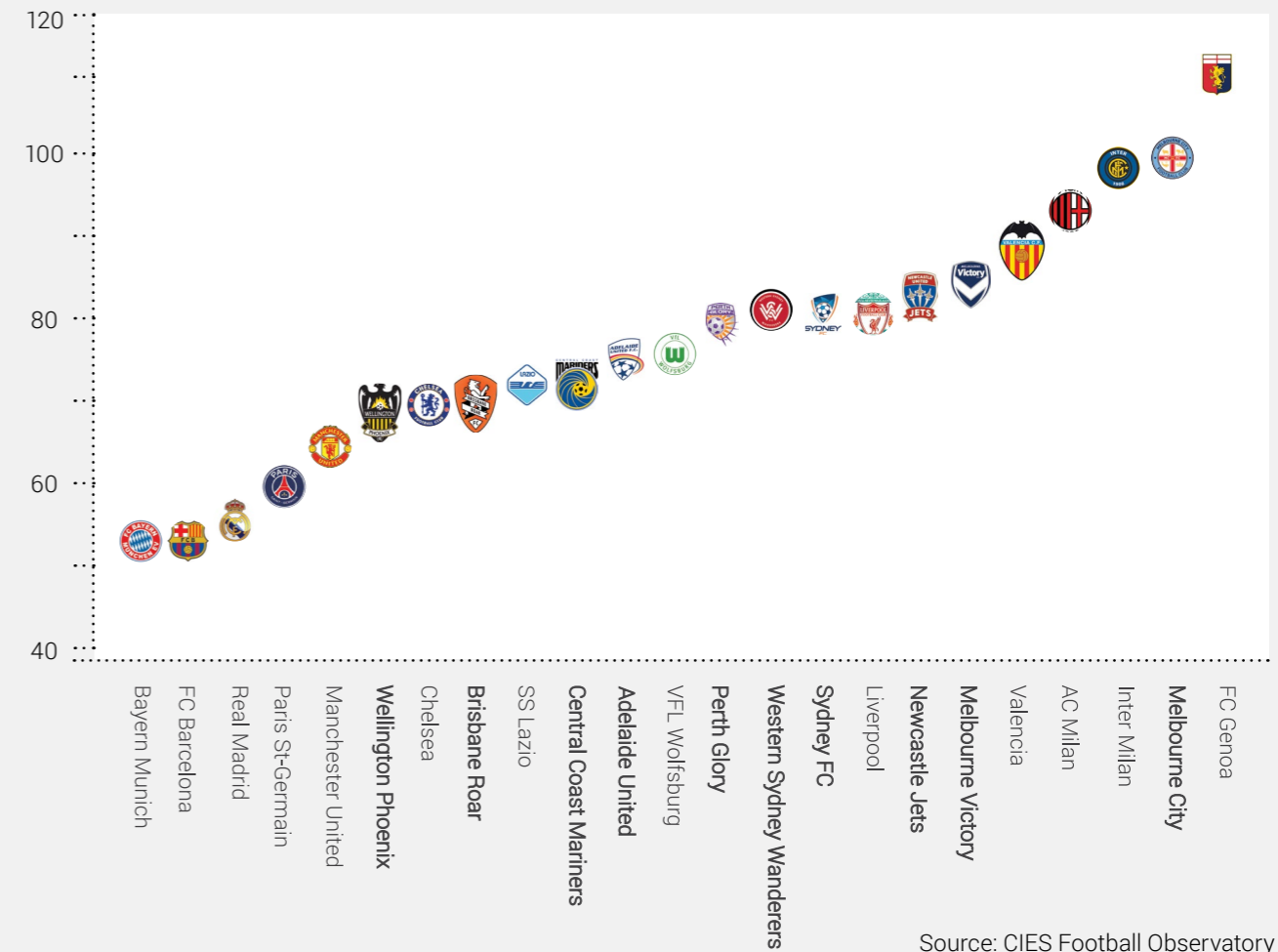


**THE A-LEAGUE
CONTINUES TO TRACK
POORLY ON CONSISTENT
EMPLOYMENT AT
INDIVIDUAL CLUBS**

PLAYERS USED PER CLUB The 2016/17 Season

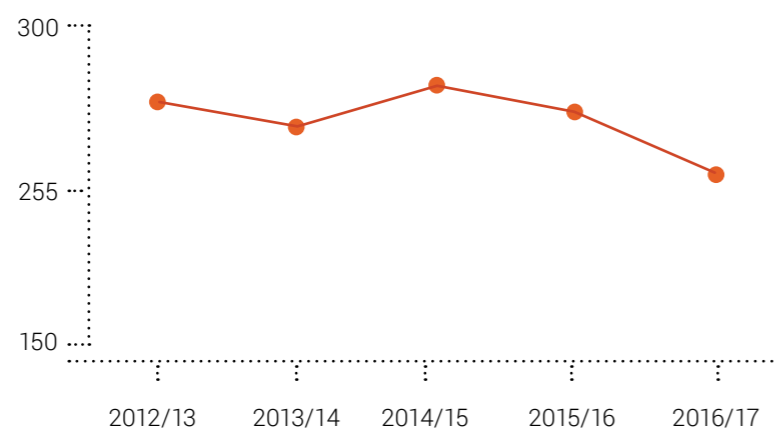


NUMBER OF PLAYERS USED IN LEAGUE MATCHES An international comparison for the past five seasons



Source: CIES Football Observatory

THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS used in each of the last five seasons



English Premier League, Ligue 1, Serie A and La Liga clubs play ten additional league matches when compared to A-League clubs with the Bundesliga season seeing teams play an additional seven. All five of these leagues also have bigger permitted squad sizes in their respective domestic competitions.

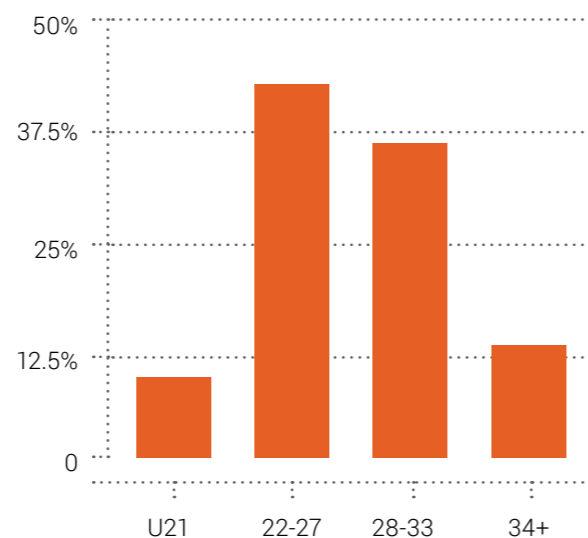


EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK MATCH MINUTES

MATCH MINUTES played by age 2016/17

AGE	# WHO MADE AN APPEARANCE	TOTAL MINUTES PLAYED	TOTAL APPEARANCES
U21	57	23,715	440
22-27	87	107,318	1,530
28-33	66	92,385	1,207
34+	23	34,018	420
TOTAL	233	257,436	3,597

% OF MATCH MINUTES played by age group

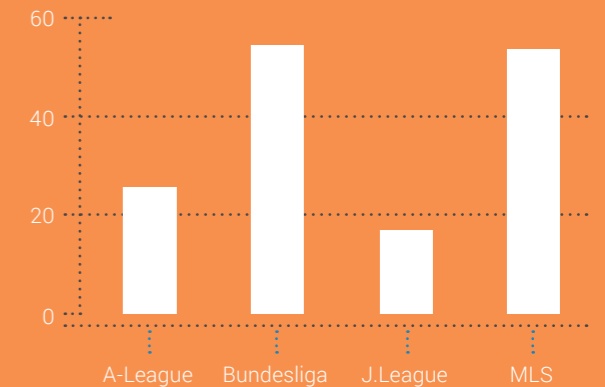


Dylan McGowan (Adelaide United) was the only player to play in every minute of the regular A-League season (2,430). Six other players played in all 27 matches: Ben Garuccio (Adelaide), Alex Wilkinson and Bobo (Sydney FC), Connor Pain (Central Coast Mariners) and Leigh Broxham (Melbourne Victory).

AVERAGE AGE of players used

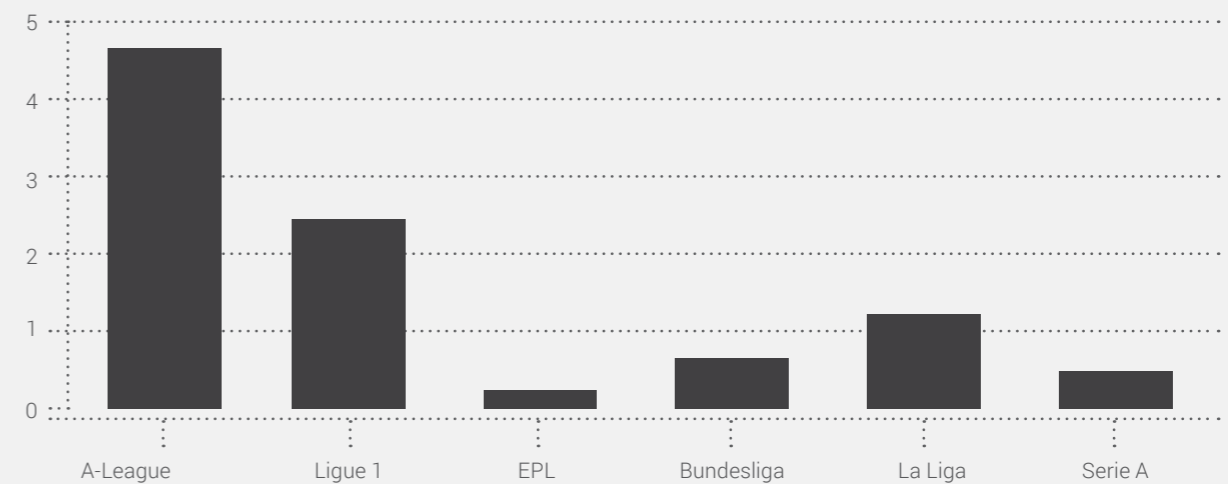


% OF MINUTES by foreign players



The A-League's regulations fall between the J.League's 3+1 rule and the Bundesliga's open model. MLS shares 160 international slots among its 20 clubs.

% MATCH MINUTES PLAYED by debutants in the 2016/17 Season An International Comparison

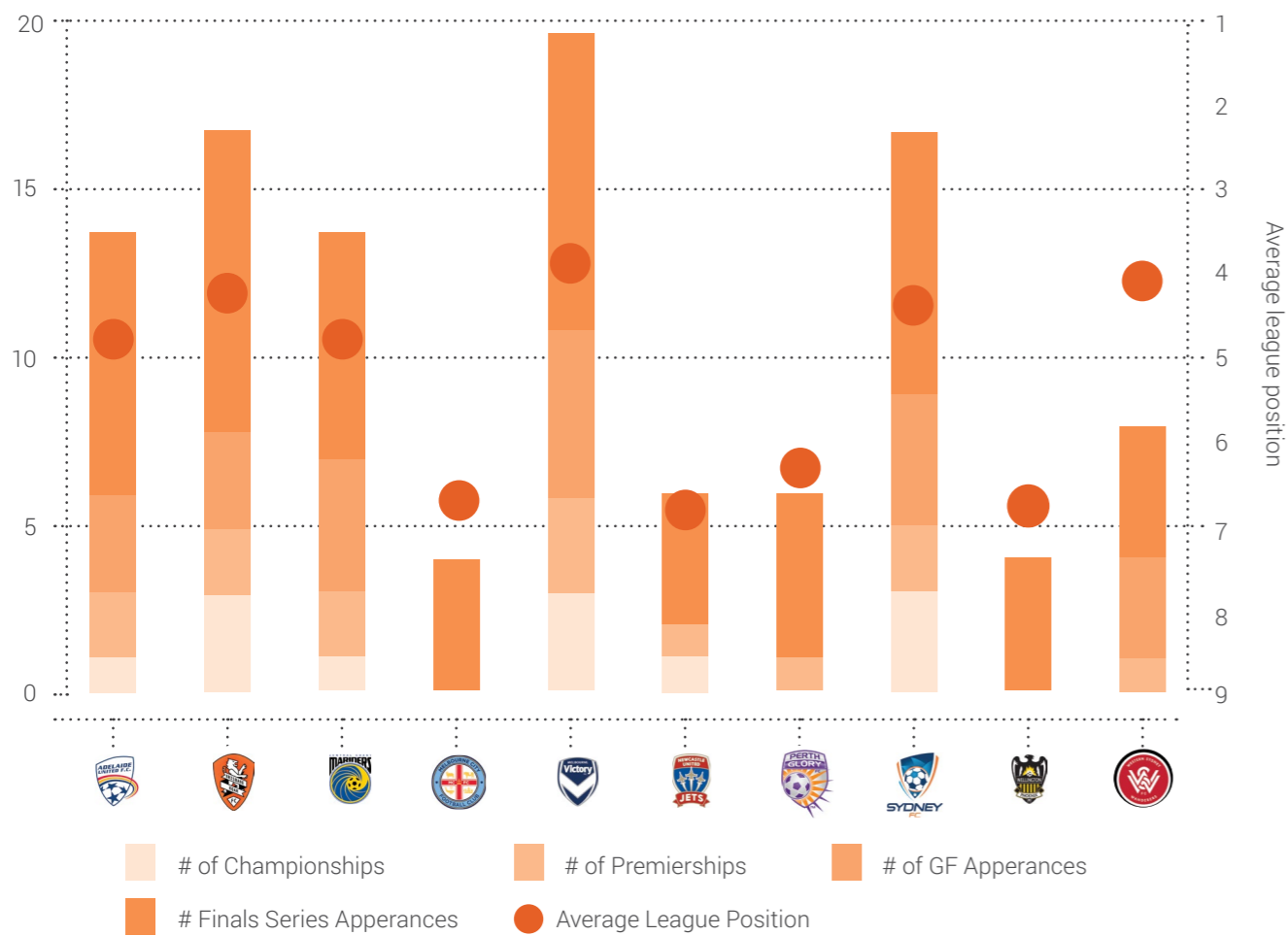


*135 A-League Matches, 220 EPL Matches, 220 Serie A Matches, 220 La Liga Matches, 220 Ligue 1 Matches, 162 Bundesliga Matches were used for the calculation

EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK COMPETITIVENESS



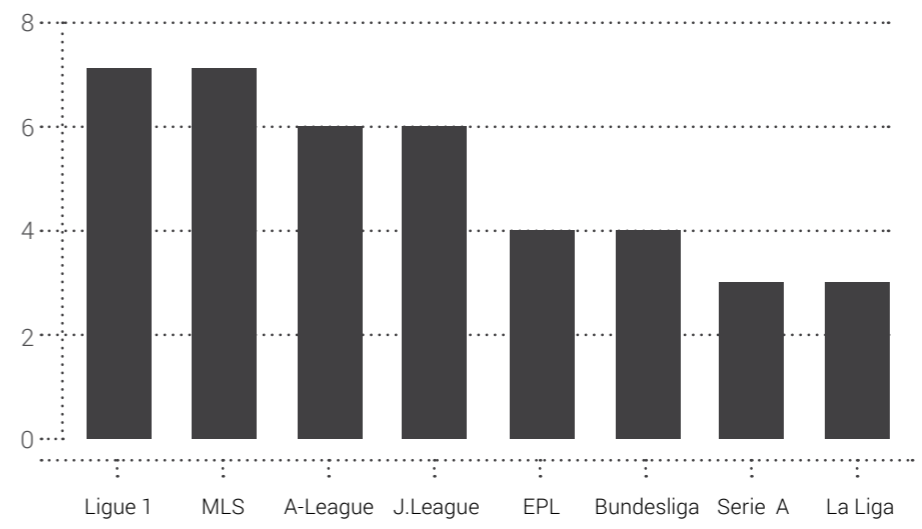
PERFORMANCE RECORD



Three clubs have won nine out of the 12 Premierships in the A-League era. Those clubs have qualified for the Grand Final 12 times out of a possible 24 places.

NUMBER OF PREMIERS

An international comparison for the past 12 seasons



Only the A-League and the MLS competitions operate a salary cap.

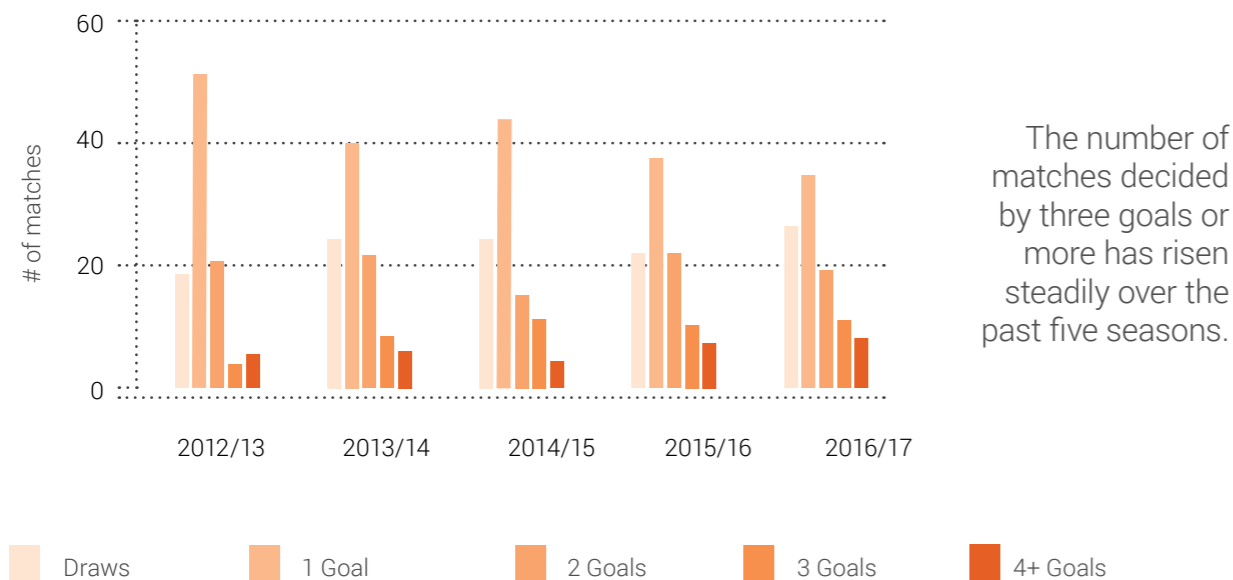
Note: Premiers classified as the League / Regular Season winners. For the MLS this was the Supporters Shield



EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK COMPETITIVENESS

MATCH COMPETITIVENESS

Goal deficits



MATCH COMPETITIVENESS

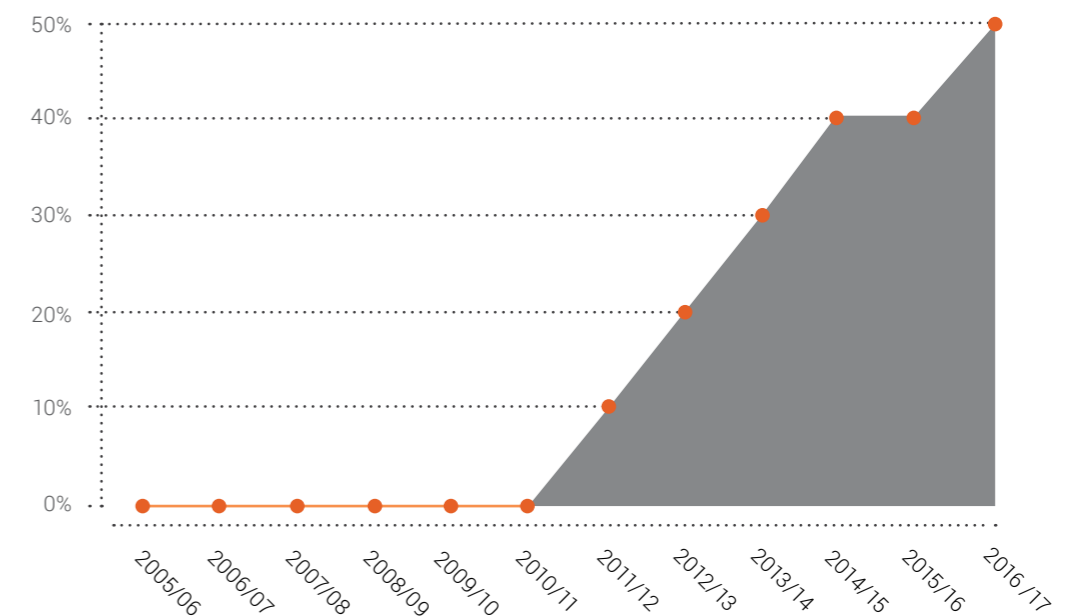
An International Comparison 2012 - 2017

LEAGUE	% OF DRAWS	% DECIDED BY 1 GOAL	% DECIDED BY 2 GOALS	% DECIDED BY 3 GOALS	% DECIDED BY 4+ GOALS
A-LEAGUE	23.3%	41.8%	19.8%	8.9%	6.2%
BUNDESLIGA	24.2%	34.4%	23.9%	10.9%	6.6%
J.LEAGUE	23.9%	43.9%	19.7%	7.9%	4.6%
MLS	25.8%	40.7%	20.6%	9.1%	3.8%

Note: The Bundesliga and the J.League competitions do not operate salary caps.

EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK FOREIGN OWNERSHIP

% OF FULL FOREIGN OWNERSHIP of A-League Clubs



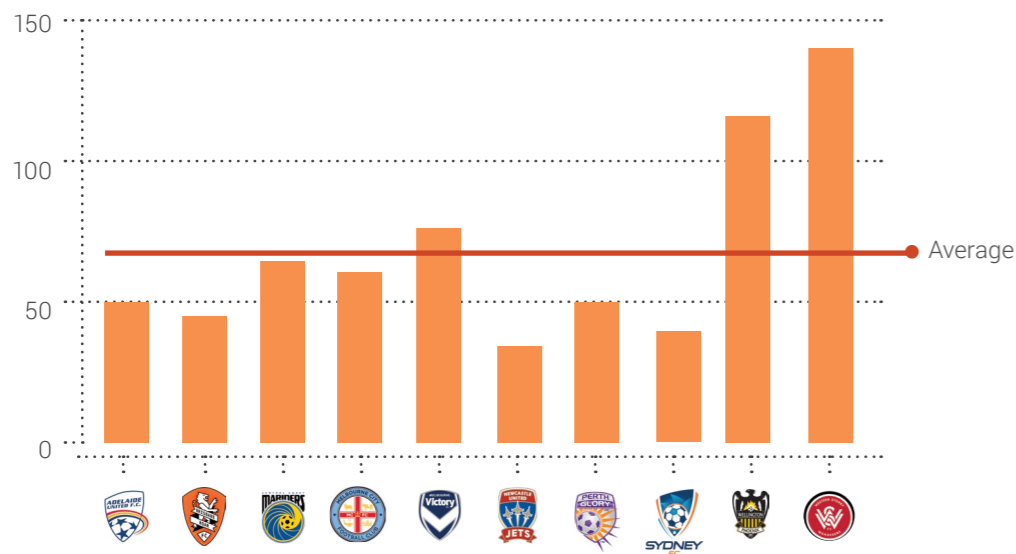
The increase in foreign investment in the A-League has coincided with increasing foreign investment in the major European leagues, with 57% of clubs in England's top two divisions now foreign-owned



EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK COACHING STABILITY

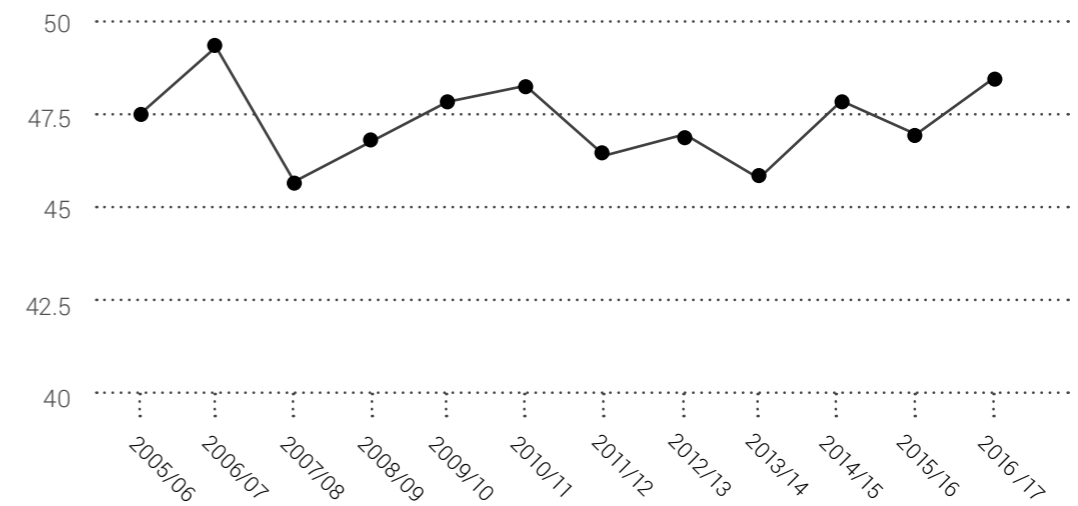


AVERAGE NUMBER OF MATCHES
in the head coaching role



Note: Does not include caretaker coaches

AVERAGE AGE
of A-League coaches





MATCH SCHEDULING

MATCH SCHEDULING SNAPSHOT



39 matches were missed by A-League players due to international call-ups during FIFA breaks



Brisbane Roar were afforded less rest between matches during their participation in the 2017 AFC Champions League (ACL) than J.League clubs participating in the ACL



6.86 days was the average break between matches during the 2016/17 Season



From Round 1 of the 2016/17 Season until the 2017 Grand Final, A-League clubs participated in an average of 30.3 matches. This included FFA Cup and AFC Champions League matches



On five occasions Brisbane Roar had three days or less between matches



Maximum match time* for an A-League player is 2,430 minutes. J.League and Bundesliga players can play 3,060 minutes

*Regular season only

MATCH SCHEDULING & INTERNATIONAL BREAKS

MATCH SCHEDULING INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

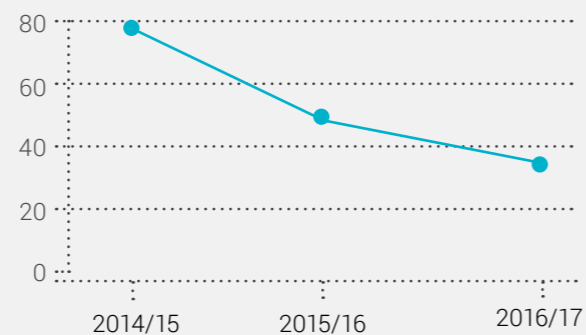
NUMBER OF A-LEAGUE MATCHES MISSED due to international call-ups during FIFA international breaks



Teams	Season	Matches
 10	2016/17	135
 18	2016/17	306
 18	2016 2 stages	306
 20 2 conferences	2016	340

Note: Finals/Play-offs were excluded.

THE NUMBER OF MATCHES MISSED due to international call-ups during FIFA international breaks over the past three seasons













MAXIMUM (REGULAR SEASON) MATCH TIME AVAILABLE FOR AN A-LEAGUE PLAYER IS 2,430 MINUTES
J.LEAGUE AND BUNDESLIGA PLAYERS CAN PLAY 3,060 MINUTES

MATCH SCHEDULING SCHEDULING & RECOVERY

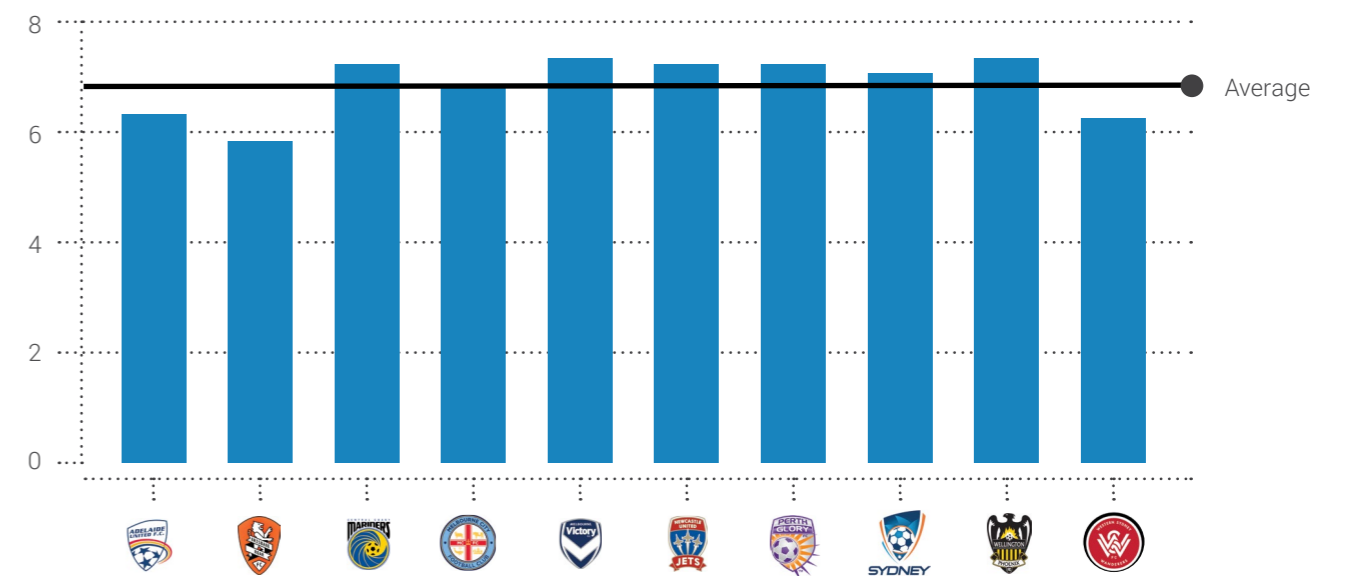
NUMBER OF REST DAYS BETWEEN MATCHES

includes A-League, FFA Cup and AFC Champions League matches

CLUB	# OF MATCHES (RD1 - GF)	# OF 3 DAY BREAKS	# OF 4 DAY BREAKS	# OF 5 DAY BREAKS	# OF HOME MATCHES	# OF AWAY MATCHES
	31	1	4	6	15	16
	36	5	4	7	18	18
	27	1	1	3	12	15
	30	3	2	0	15	15
	32	1	2	4	16	16
	27	0	1	3	14	13
	29	1	1	4	15	14
	31	1	4	0	17	14
	27	1	2	2	15	12
	33	3	4	3	15	18

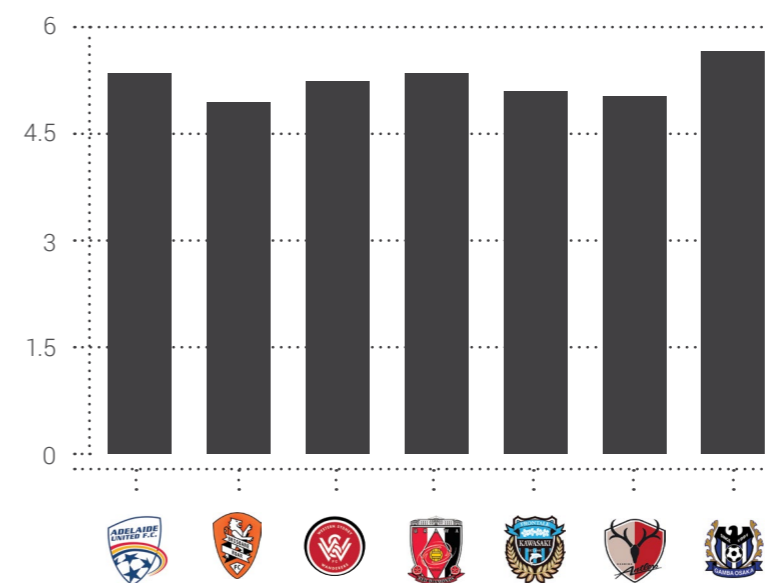
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS BETWEEN MATCHES

includes A-League, FFA Cup and AFC Champions League matches



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Average number of days between domestic league and group stage AFC Champions League matches: J.League v A-League participants



Brisbane Roar were afforded on average less rest between matches during their participation in the 2017 AFC Champions League than their Japanese counterparts



PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SNAPSHOT

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS



653 matches missed due to injury



2.4 players missing due to injury on average each match per club



10.4% decrease in the total cost of injuries compared to the 2015/16 Season



65.3 matches missed through injury on average per club



The A-League averaged **3.03 goals** per match (Higher than the MLS, J.League and Bundesliga)



2.42% decrease in the number of matches missed through injury compared to the 2015/16 Season



Melbourne City were the A-League's most dominant team in terms of ball possession, averaging **56.9% per match**

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS A-LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT

GOALS

BENCHMARKING THE A-LEAGUE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LEAGUES

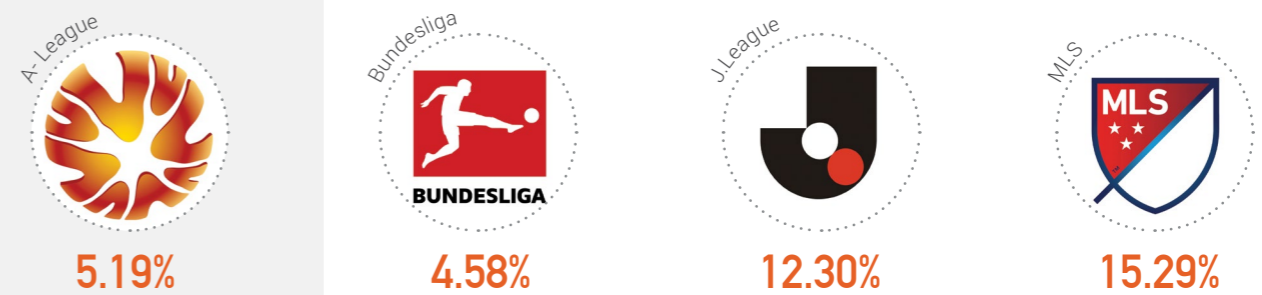
Data supplied by Opta



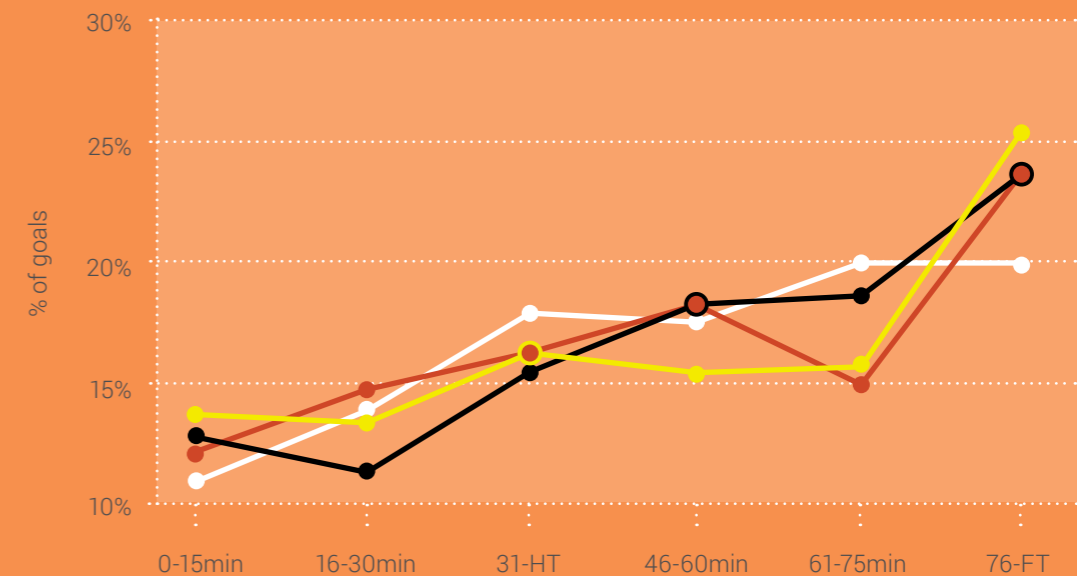
GOALS PER MATCH



% OF GOALLESS DRAWS



Scoring breakdown



○ A-LEAGUE ● BUNDESLIGA ● J.LEAGUE ● MLS



PERFORMANCE STANDARDS A-LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT

CREATION

Shot Conversion

A-League:

Bundesliga: 11.5%

J.League: 10.2%

MLS: 10.7%

11.8%

Shots on Target

A-League:

Bundesliga: 35.4%

J.League: 32.7%

MLS: 34.6%

36%

Shots per Match

A-League:

Bundesliga: 25.0

J.League: 25.7

MLS: 26.4

25.6

Shots from Outside the Box

A-League:

Bundesliga: 38.5%

J.League: 42.6%

MLS: 38.9%

39.5%

Goals from Set Pieces

A-League:

Bundesliga: 30.1%

J.League: 27.2%

MLS: 30.3%

29.1%

Crosses per Match

A-League:

Bundesliga: 27.4

J.League: 29.1

MLS: 35.1

28.6

PASSING AND POSSESSION



Total passes per match

A-League: 890.9

Bundesliga: 896.0

J.League: 934.2

MLS: 835.0



Passes completed

A-League: 75.8%

Bundesliga: 76.7%

J.League: 80.6%

MLS: 77.7%



Passes long

A-League: 13.9%

Bundesliga: 15.2%

J.League: 14.4%

MLS: 16.6%



Passes forward

A-League: 37.9%

Bundesliga: 37.4%

J.League: 38.7%

MLS: 37.1%



Passes in attacking half

A-League: 53.0%

Bundesliga: 54.2%

J.League: 61.4%

MLS: 61.7%

AVERAGE POSSESSION RANKINGS

Top 2 possession teams:



FC Bayern: **69.1%**



Dortmund: **61.8%**



Kawasaki Frontale: **61.3%**



Urawa Reds: **60.8%**



Melbourne City: **56.9%**



Columbus Crew: **55.1%**



Sporting Kansas City: **54.9%**



Brisbane Roar: **53.0%**

Top 2 placed teams:



FC Bayern: **69.1%**



Kawasaki Frontale: **61.3%**



Urawa Reds: **60.8%**



RB Leipzig: **52.7%**



Melbourne Victory: **50.9%**



Sydney FC: **49.6%**



Colorado Rapids: **49.4%**



FC Dallas: **48.6%**

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS A-LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT

DEFENDING AND MATCH STYLES



Tackles per match

A-League: 36.8

Bundesliga: 37.5

J.League: 29.6

MLS: 36.4



Fouls per match

A-League: 30.0

Bundesliga: 28.1

J.League: 25.3

MLS: 24.6



Offsides per match

A-League: 4.7

Bundesliga: 4.6

J.League: 4.6

MLS: 4.0



Interceptions per match

A-League: 35.5

Bundesliga: 41.2

J.League: 35.7

MLS: 34.9

REFEREEING

Penalties per 100 matches

A-League: 40

Bundesliga: 32

J.League: 20

MLS: 32

Fouls per yellow card

A-League: 6.9

Bundesliga: 7.7

J.League: 9.4

MLS: 7.4

Yellows per match

A-League: 4.4

Bundesliga: 3.7

J.League: 2.7

MLS: 3.3

Reds per match

A-League: 0.21

Bundesliga: 0.18

J.League: 0.07

MLS: 0.21



PERFORMANCE STANDARDS A-LEAGUE INJURY REPORT

ABOUT THE INJURY REPORT

Established in 2005, and now in its 11th edition, the PFA A-League Injury Report is a fundamental tool in the PFA's efforts to ensure the health and safety of its members through the constant monitoring of the occurrence of injury. The information contained within this report describes the latest trends of injury occurrence in the A-League and identifies potential injury patterns. The findings of the report are utilised to inform the PFA's discussions with the game's stakeholders regarding the measures and regulations necessary to ensure the health and safety of the players.

The report played a significant role in forming the foundations for the implementation in 2011 of the Minimum Medical Standards, which are incorporated into the A-League Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the PFA and Football Federation Australia (FFA).




METHODOLOGY

During the 2016/17 A-League Season, the PFA collected and recorded the occurrence of all injuries causing players to miss matches.

The PFA A-League Injury Report was formulated from publicly available injury data accessible through the following key sources:

 FFA weekly Ins and Outs

 Official A-League match previews/reviews

 Official media releases

 Official websites


 Player feedback

During the 2016/17 A-League Season (excluding the A-League Finals Series, Asian Champions League and FFA Cup), the PFA monitored all players (N = 298) of all clubs.

The collection of the data included:

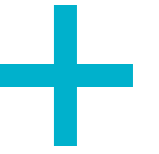
 Number of injuries

 Injury location

 Official games missed due to injury

In this report, injury is defined as "any physical complaint sustained during a competitive game or training that resulted in a player being unable to take part in, at a minimum, the player's next official A-League game." Based on the data collected about injury occurrence and related games missed, descriptive analyses were conducted.





METHODOLOGY

In order to calculate the cost of injury, the following formula was used:

$$\text{Cost of Injury} = \left(\frac{\text{Player Payments}}{\text{A-League Matches}} \times \text{Players on Team Sheet} \right)$$

2016-17 A-League Salary Cap + Flexibilities A-League Regular Season = 27 Matches # of Players on Team Sheet = 16

This formula is designed to estimate costs on a conservative basis and it does not include:



the cost of marquee payments and replacement players



the A-League Finals Series, AFC Champions League and FFA Cup



the cost of medical care and treatment to injured players

Important Note: 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. Accordingly, the PFA does not warrant that the results are an exact and complete record of player injuries. They are, however, an accurate summation of the publicly available information provided by FFA and club sources.

2016/17 A-LEAGUE INJURY SNAPSHOT



\$3,930,093

THE TOTAL COST OF INJURIES FOR THE 2016/17 SEASON



130

INJURIES



653

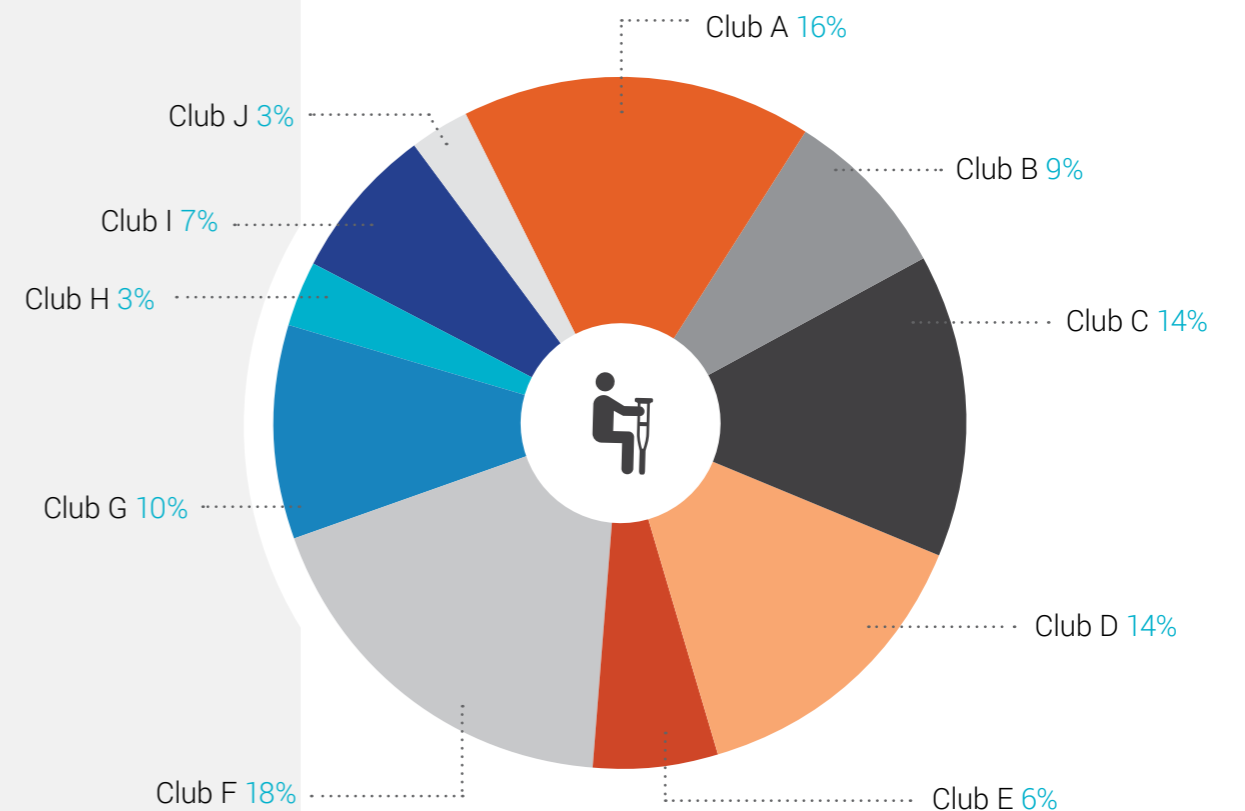
MATCHES MISSED DUE TO INJURY



5.02

AVERAGE MATCHES MISSED PER INJURY

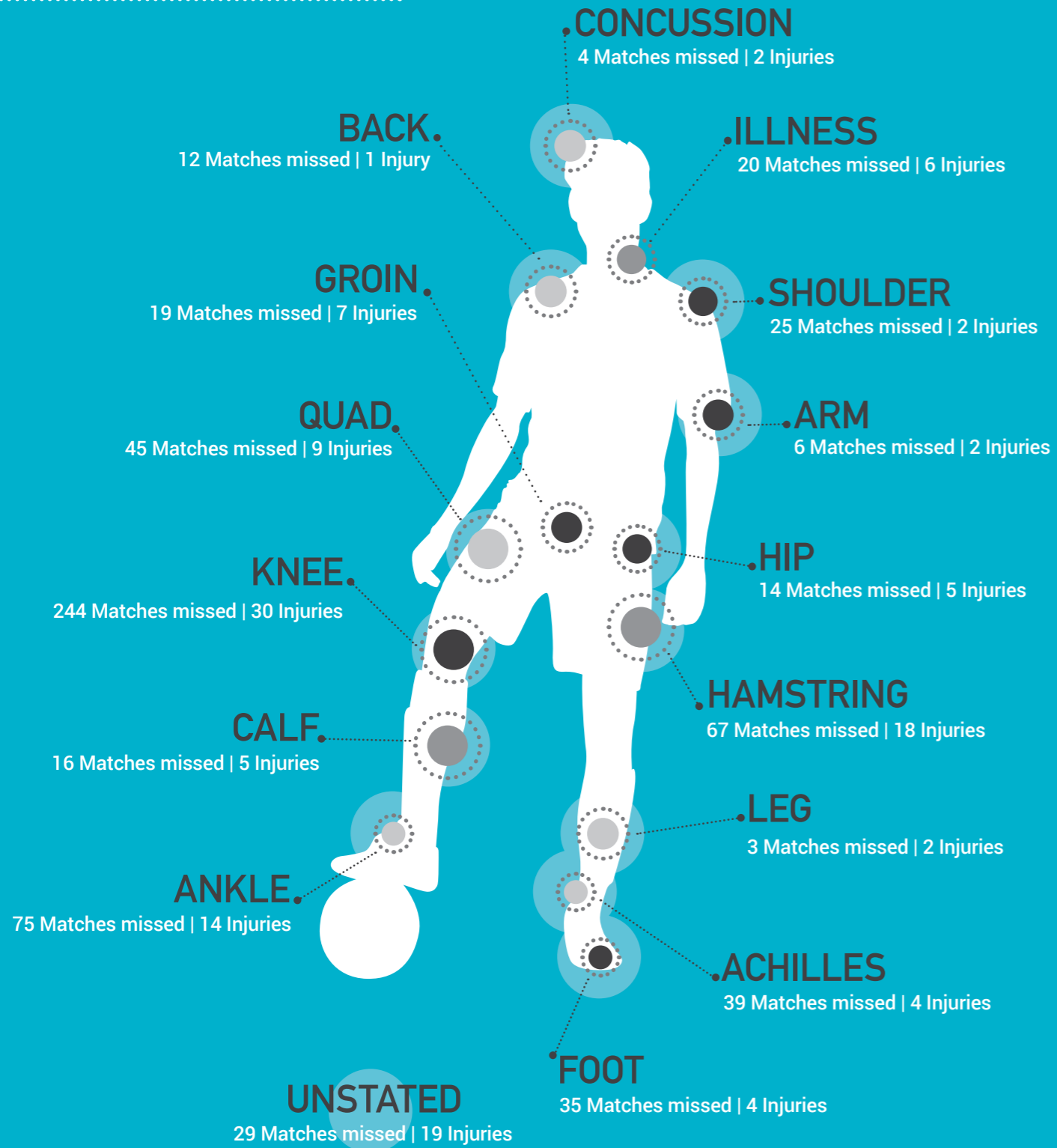
Club-by-club breakdown of matches missed through injury



LOCATION OF INJURIES

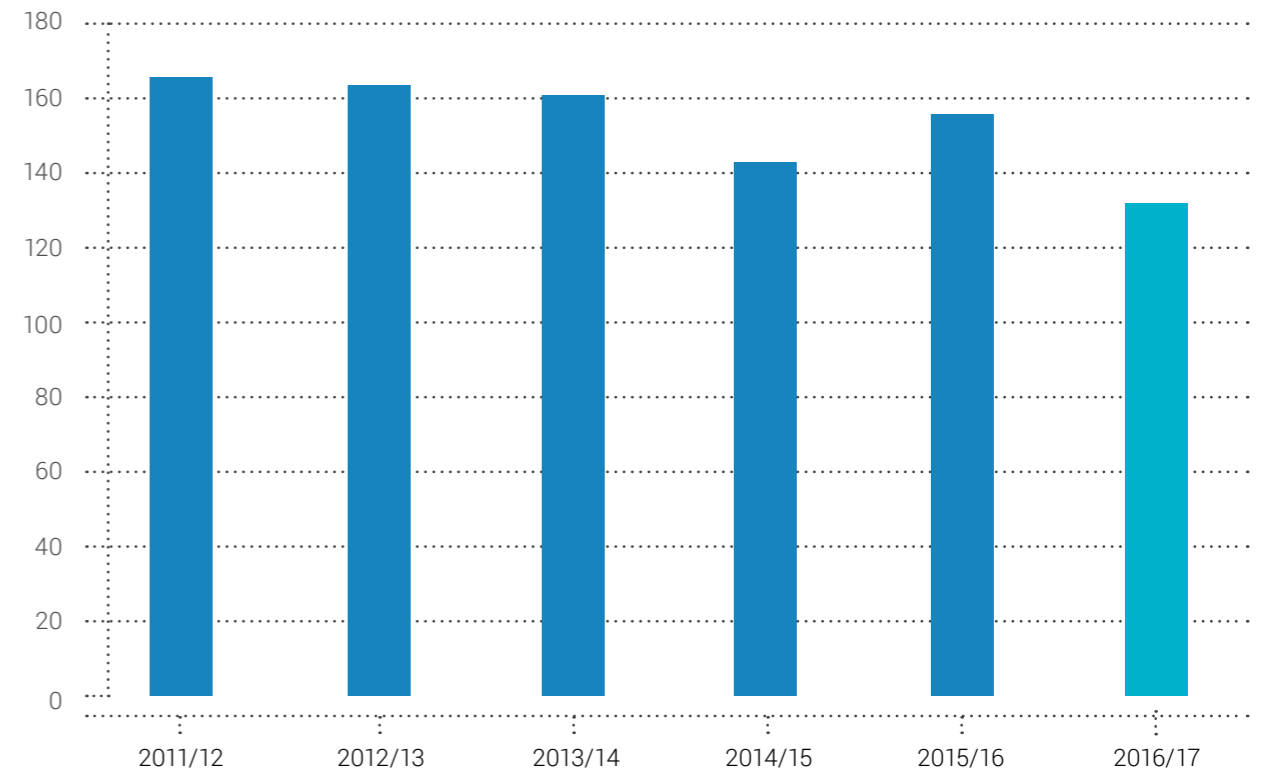
TOTAL

130 Injuries | 653 Matches missed

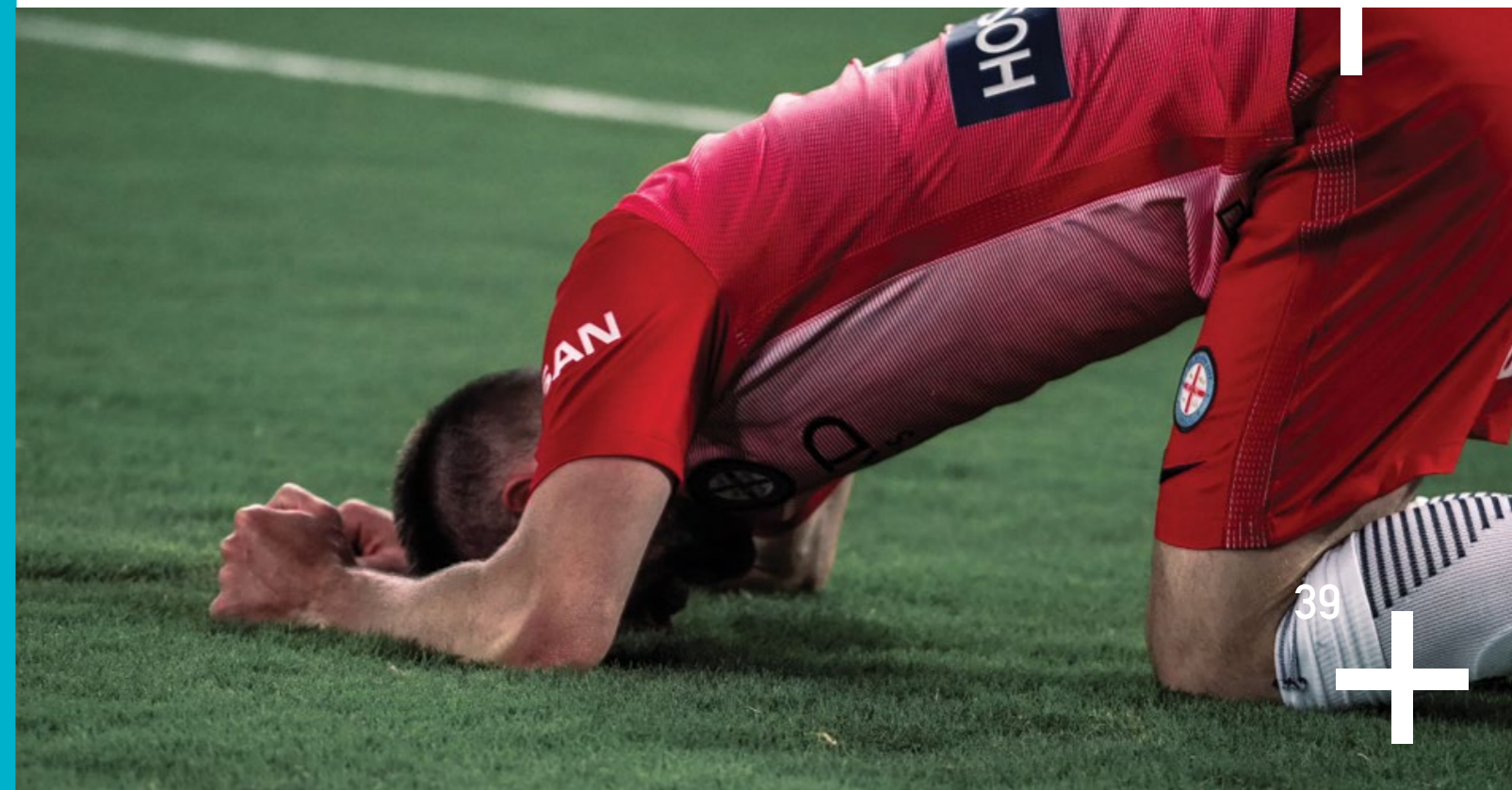


NUMBER OF INJURIES

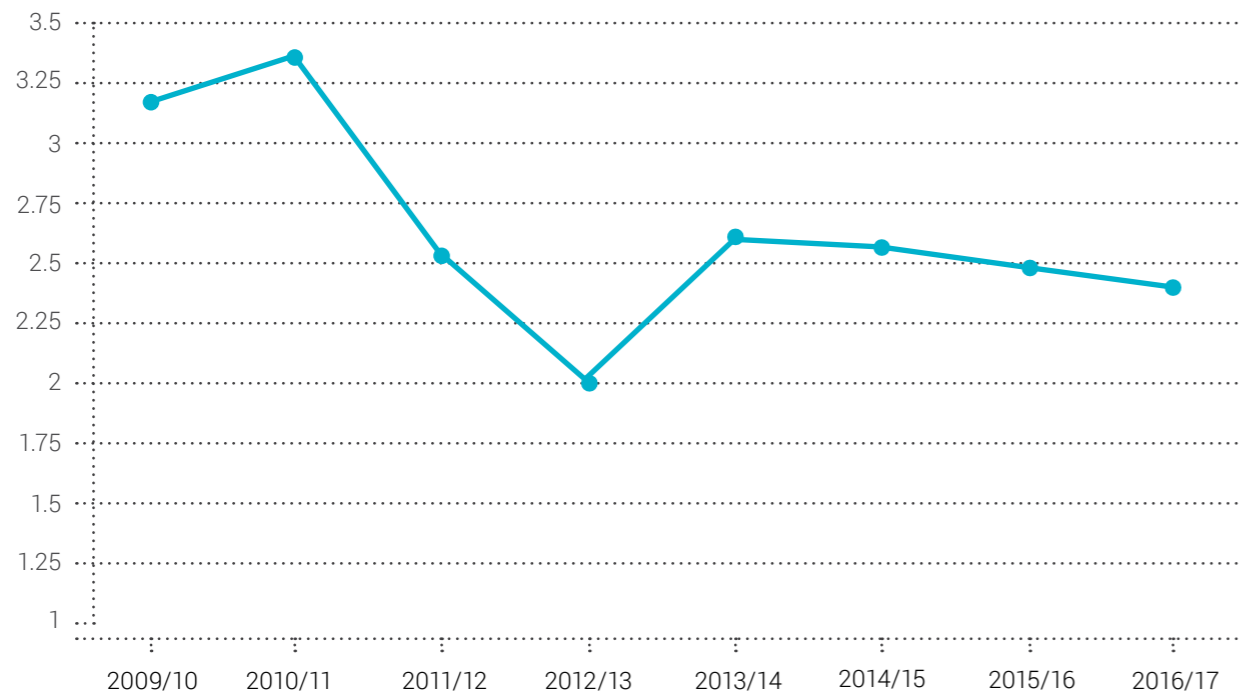
Comparison to previous seasons



Note: Minimum Medical Standards were introduced at the end of the 2010/11 A-League Season. Calculations based on a 27 match season.



AVERAGE NUMBER OF PLAYERS unavailable each match per club due to injury



PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PFA A-LEAGUE STADIUM RATINGS



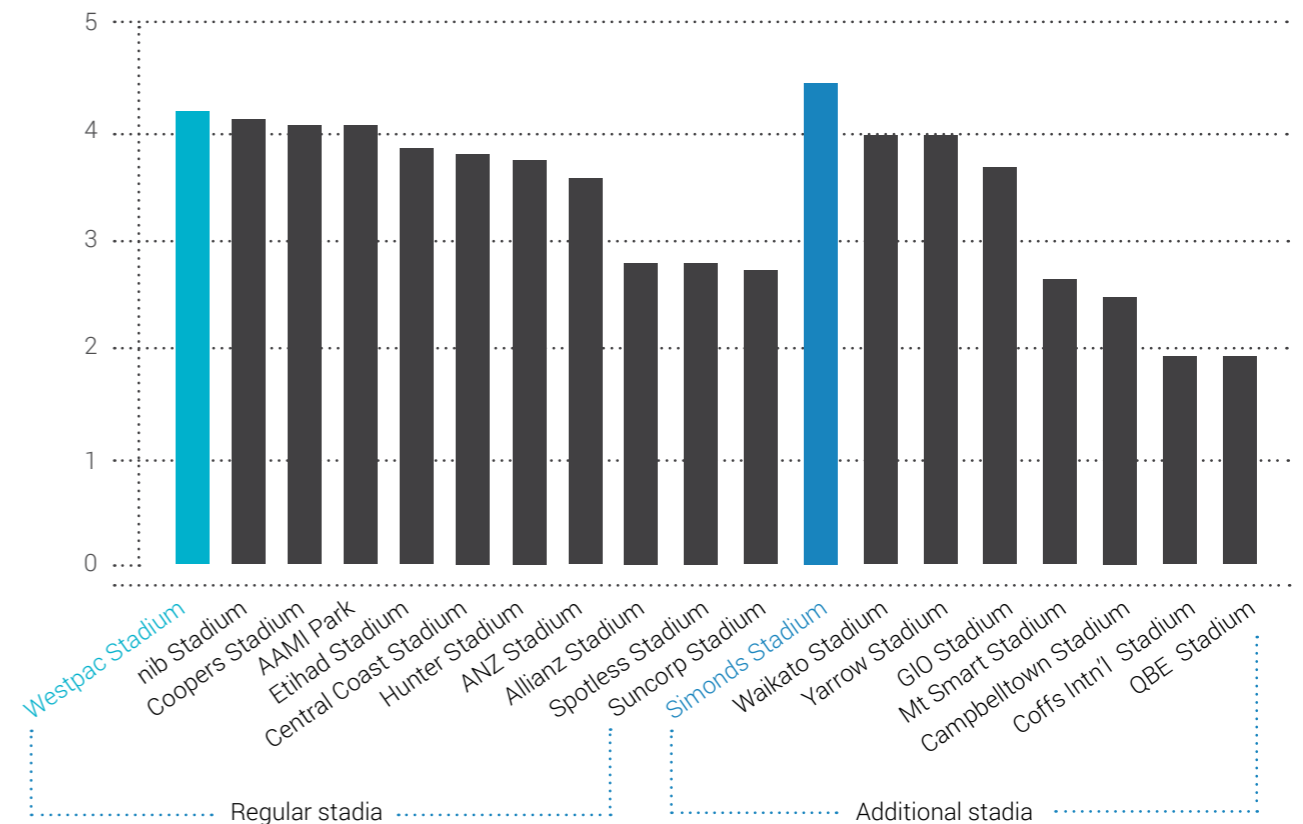
ABOUT THE PFA A-LEAGUE STADIUM RATINGS



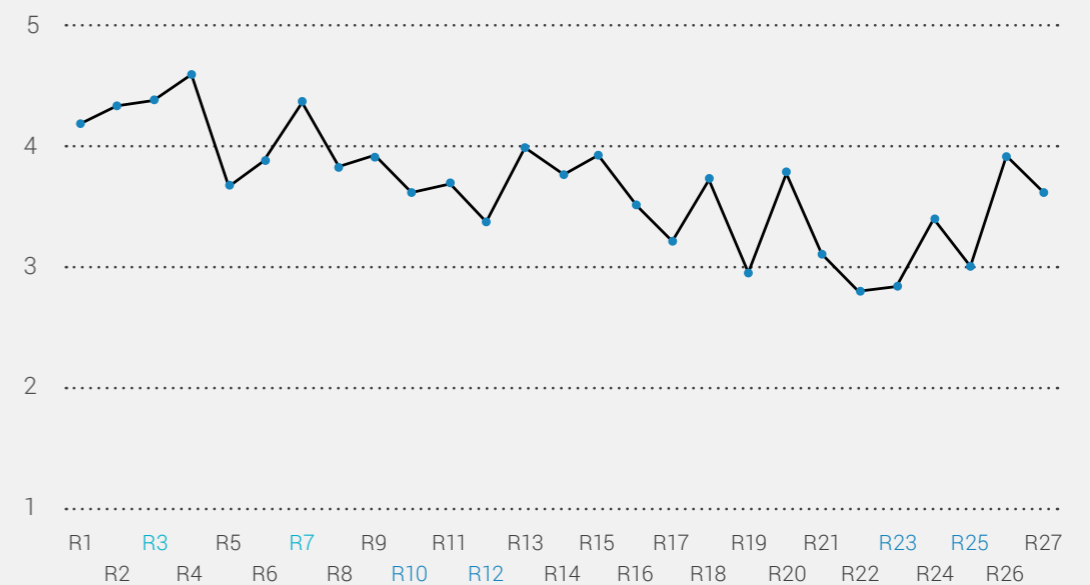
In 2009 the PFA introduced the PFA A-League Stadium Ratings System. Designed to measure the quality of football pitches across the A-League, it measures four key criteria of the playing surface: overall quality, hardness, pace and smoothness. Additionally, it recognises fans as a key pillar for the growth of the A-League.

The PFA A-League Stadium Ratings are voted on by selected players at the end of each match, who rate each criteria from one to five, with five being the highest.

AVERAGE OVERALL RATING BY STADIUM - PITCH during 2016/17 as at Round 27



WEEKLY AVERAGE PITCH RATING 2016/17

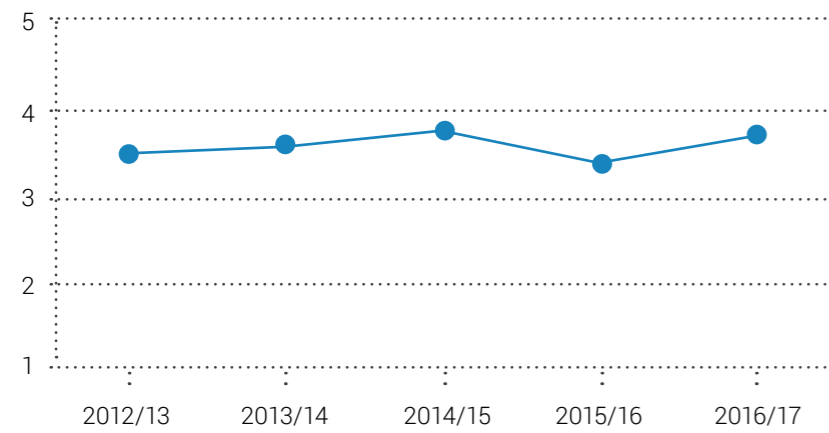


R3 Coopers Stadium rating: 5
R7 nib Stadium rating: 5
R10 & R12 Suncorp Stadium rating: 1
R23 & R25 Allianz Stadium rating: 1

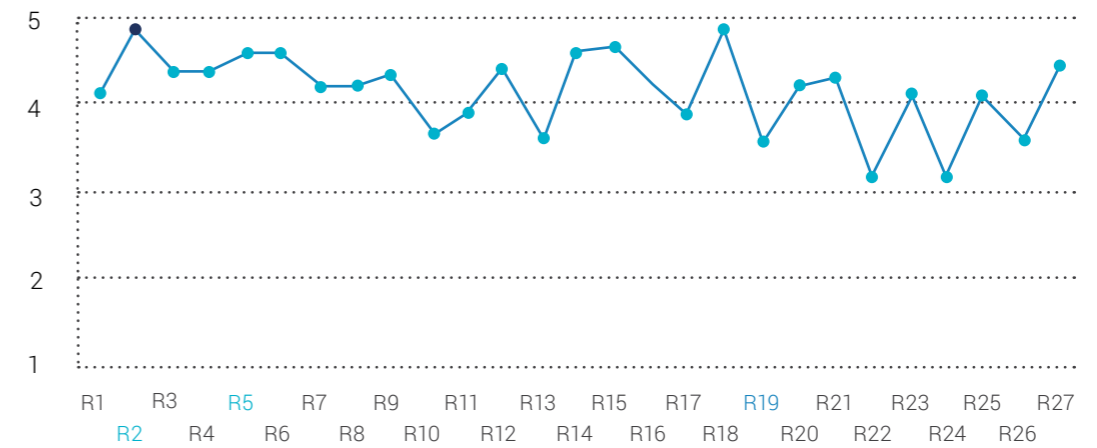


OVERALL AVERAGE - PITCH

Season by season comparison



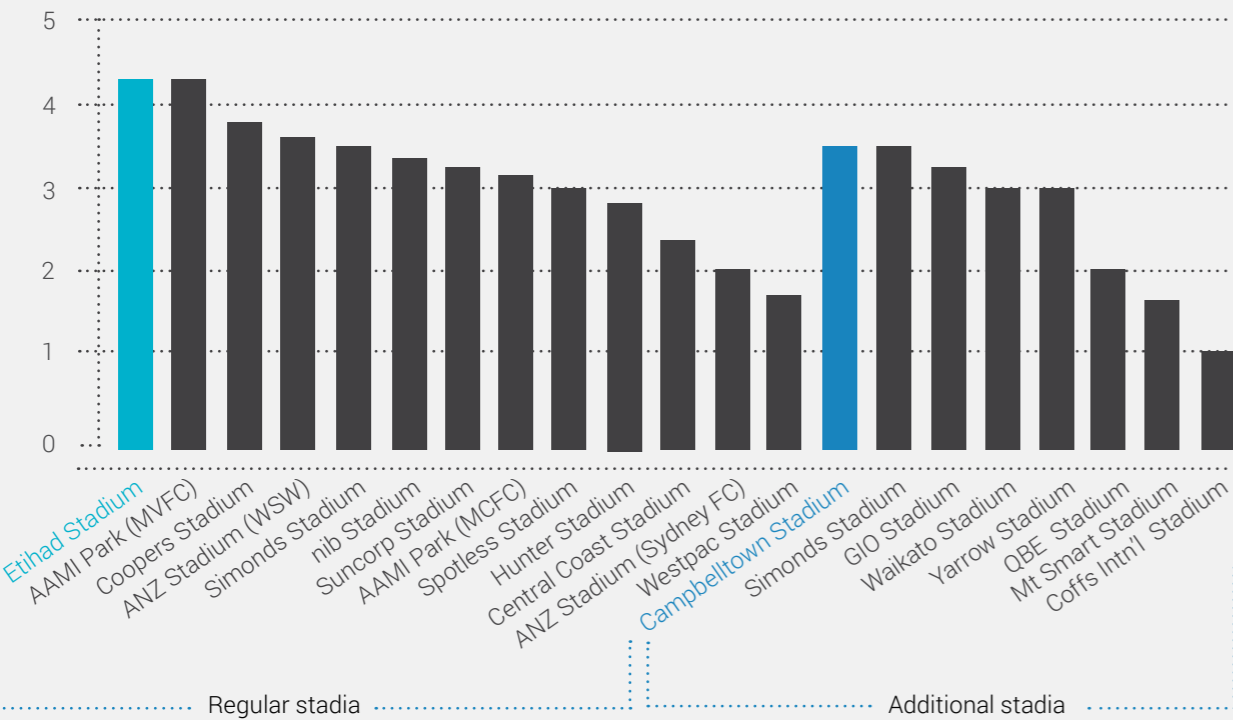
WEEKLY AVERAGE ATMOSPHERE RATING



R2 Melbourne Derby R5 Etihad Stadium rating: 5 R19 ANZ Stadium Rating: 2

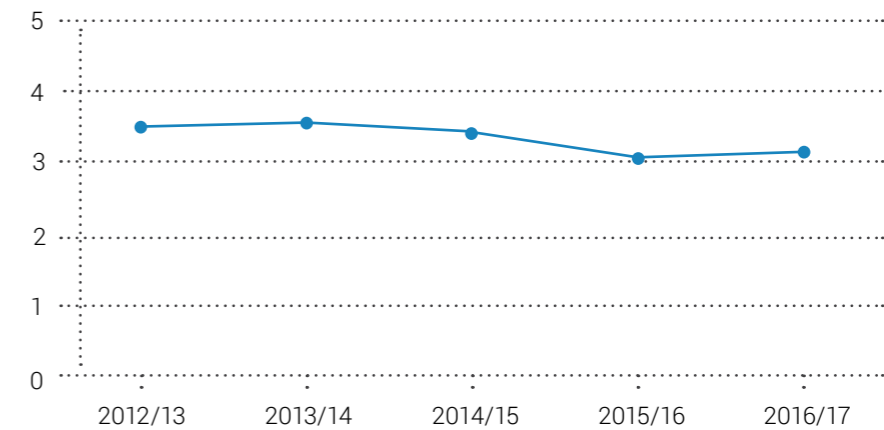
ATMOSPHERE RATING

Overall average 2016/17



ATMOSPHERE RATING

Season by season comparison



COURAGE
WORLD CLASS
INTELLIGENCE
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RESPECT



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