



SPORT INTEGRITY
AUSTRALIA

Hear me play

Youth perceptions of safety in sport

2025 SURVEY RESULTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the outstanding contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to sport in Australia and celebrate the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.



Artwork by Chern'ee Sutton

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children and young people can thrive in sporting environments that are safe, fair and supportive. They can form great friendships, while developing physical, emotional and social skills.

To deliver these positive sporting experiences, and to keep young people safe from harm, it's essential that sporting organisations seek and listen to their perspectives. Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) is proud to launch this study to amplify the voices of children and young people in Australian sport – **Hear me play: Youth perceptions of safety in sport.**

The study will run for 5 years, and this report details the findings of the first annual survey conducted in 2025. More than 1,000 young people between the ages of 12–18 participated in the inaugural survey, which explores themes such as:

- How safe and happy children and young people feel in sport
- Their main motivations for participating in sport
- Barriers and reasons for not participating in sport
- The prevalence and impact of inappropriate behaviours
- The influence of parents/carers.

This study brings to life The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which highlight the importance of giving children and young people a voice.

Principle 2 states:

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

In addition to the data, this report also features the voices of young people throughout. Look out for these direct quotes and ideas as young people share their insights for safer and more inclusive sporting environments.

Sport is something I feel good when I do it. It gives me joy.

Be stricter on bullying and abuse.

IDEA



Have more leagues that focus on playing for fun/fitness – it's always so competitive.

THIS REPORT COVERS 4 KEY FINDINGS

Key finding 1

The vast majority of young people feel safe and happy in sport.

More than 9-in-10 young people participating in sport enjoy it, have fun and feel safe. For the most part, sport is a joyful experience.



This is an endorsement that Australia's collective child safeguarding efforts are having a positive impact and should continue to be prioritised for ongoing improvement.

Key finding 2

Friendship, fitness and fun are 3 main motivators for participation.

Friendship, being active and healthy, and having fun are 3 clear priorities of young people in sport. Maintaining this fun is critical to keeping young people participating in sport. Participation rates fall from age 15 onwards, and fading fun is the main reason young people give for dropping out. This may assist sports with designing flexible programs, balancing demands for more social and competitive sport offerings.

Key finding 3

The more that young people are exposed to negative experiences in sport, the more likely they are to accept these situations as OK.

Most young people (92%) are willing to report or tell someone about inappropriate behaviour they see or experience in sport. However, data indicates the more that young participants are exposed to negative experiences, the more likely they are to tolerate these behaviours as just a 'normal' part of sport culture.

Children can be exposed to negative behaviours from a number of sources, including parents, spectators, peers, coaches and others. This shows the importance of preventing exposure to inappropriate behaviours, helping children and young people understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, as well as supporting them to speak up, and listening when they do.

Key finding 4

Encouragement from parents positively influences how safe and happy young people feel in sport.

Interestingly, more young people (56%) started in their main sport by their own choice, rather than the influence of their parents (40%). But data shows parents/carers are very influential in their child's ongoing sporting experiences. Young people report that encouragement from parents helps them feel safer, happier and more confident in sport.

Parents are also the trusted people children are most likely to confide in if they need support in sport. This reaffirms the importance of sports proactively engaging with families, helping them to better understand integrity policies, practices and values, so they are in the best position to support their child's positive participation in sport.

WHAT'S NEXT

The 2025 survey provides a baseline understanding. The aim is to expand the study over coming years and track progress. SIA will continue to share findings with Australian sport and strategic partners to ensure there is a collaborative approach to strengthening child safeguarding. This research will continue to inform and build on SIA's child safeguarding efforts, including education and communication programs, policy

development and direct support to sports and participants. You can find out more about SIA's child safeguarding work on page 5 of this report.

The aim is that this study can inform actions that will lead to more children and young people being able to reap the benefits of safer, happier, more inclusive sport environments.

HOW THE SURVEY WORKS

This study follows guidelines in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research. The project was approved by the AIS Ethics Committee in May 2025.

SIA engaged market research company OmniPoll to conduct the survey. Participants were drawn from online consumer panels managed by I-Link, OmniPoll's online partner for this project. Permission from parents and carers was requested for all participants aged under 18.

In this research, the focus was on how children and young people did, or did not, engage in sport. Sport was defined as: activities/sports that are formally arranged by a club, an association, a school or other organisation. Some data, therefore, may relate to a broader definition of organised sport than those only coordinated through National Sporting Organisations or State Sporting Organisations e.g. participation in private swim and dance schools.

Any child between 12–18 was able to participate, regardless of whether they participated in sport or not. This was to ensure the survey also captured the views of Australian children and young people who opted not to engage in sport.

To get a representative sample of the Australian youth population aged 12–18, the survey population was balanced by age and gender as well as spread across states and territories.

*Please note, throughout the report some totals may not equal 100%. This is due to rounding.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT

SIA works with sports to create safe, supportive sporting environments for children and young people.

Child safeguarding promotes the happiness and wellbeing of young people in sport, as well as protecting them from abuse and harm. SIA embeds child safeguarding in sport as a priority through the following.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

SIA works with National Sporting Organisations to embed consistent child safeguarding policies across all recognised Australian sports, including through the National Integrity Framework (NIF) and the Sport Integrity Policy Standards. This ensures sport safeguarding policies are underpinned by evidence-based best practice, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and state and territory child protection legislation.

RESOURCING AND SUPPORT

SIA's Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program provides tailored action plans for sports to improve their child safeguarding practices, as well as funding to support safeguarding initiatives.

SIA funds national integrity manager roles across many sports. SIA's dedicated Child Safeguarding team provides expert advice and direct support to sports.

SIA's Youth Athlete Reference Group was formed in 2025 to bring young people's input and perspective on SIA initiatives.

EDUCATION

SIA provides child safeguarding education to sport and participants through face-to-face, free online eLearning, webinars, resources and more.

SIA's popular Do's and Don'ts: Children and Young People Safe Practices guide provides practical and easy-to-follow advice, and is supported by a range of other checklists and guidance materials.

Safeguarding Children in Sport Induction is one of the many free and accessible eLearning courses available to everyone in sport at online platform SIA Edge.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND REPORTING

Sporting organisations who adopt the NIF have access to SIA's independent complaint handling service, meaning child safeguarding matters are investigated independently from sport. In addition, SIA has strong existing relationships with Australian law enforcement agencies, meaning referrals about potential criminal conduct from any sport are seamless.

For more on child safeguarding in sport, including advice on reporting, visit sportintegrity.gov.au/safeguarding



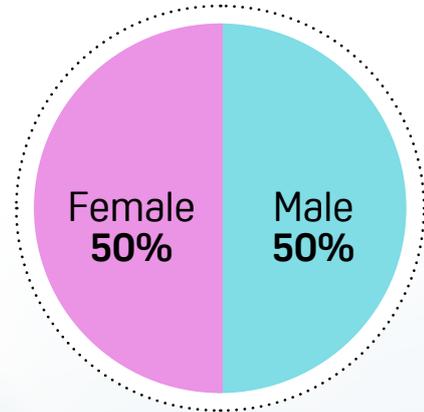
ABOUT THE YOUNG PARTICIPANTS WHO TOOK PART

1,054

young people

Ages: 12–18
(14.3% in every age)

Gender identity*



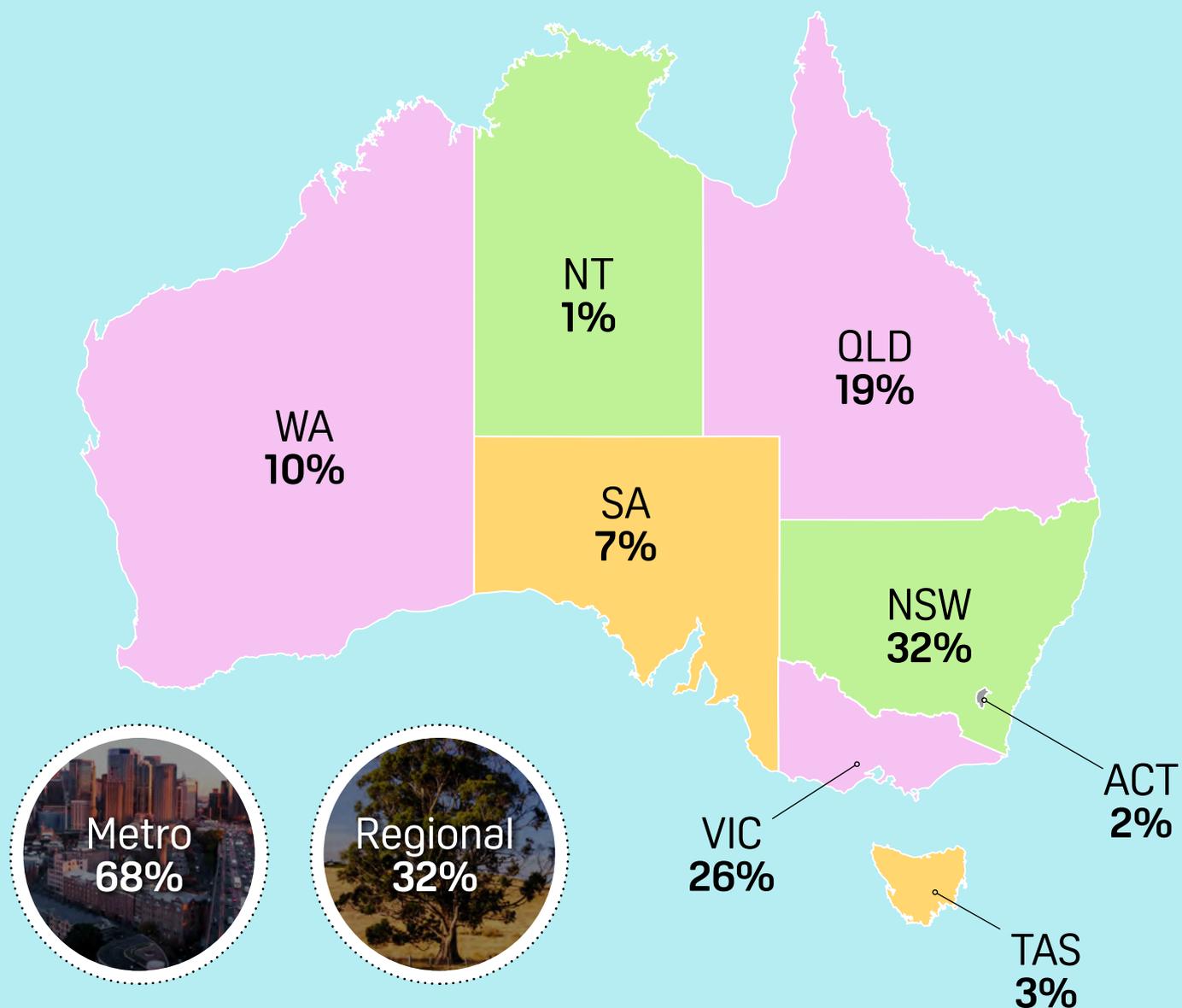
**3 people identified as non-binary*

Participation in past 12 months

- 76%** current participants (Male 81%, Female 71%)
- 4%** non-playing participants (Male 3%, Female 4%)
- 12%** lapsed/ex-participants (Male 10%, Female 10%)
- 8%** never participated (Male 6%, Female 10%)



Location of survey participants



Education

- 59%** public school
- 33%** private and/or religious school
- 2%** no longer at school
- 6%** prefer not to say

Culture & background

- 9%** identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 87%** born in Australia
- 15%** non-English speaking background
- 6%** identified as having a disability

HOW THEY PARTICIPATE IN SPORT

How it starts

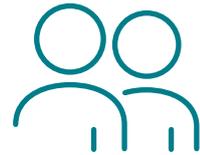
Average starting age
(for their main sport relevant to this survey)



Who first chose their main sport?

56%
themselves

40%
parents



When they participate

2.4 sessions
per week

2.9 hours
per week

14 is peak participation age

Participation is mainly through:

73%
club/
association

21%
education
body

What they play

70%
play team sports
80% of males | 60% of females



26%
play individual sports
17% of males | 36% of females



Current participants in the past 12 months
by sport and gender identity *Male n=427 Female n=373*



49% Football

- 28% Basketball
- 20% Cricket
- 15% Tennis
- 12% Australian Rules Football
- 11% Swimming
- 10% Rugby league/touch football
- 6% Athletics
- 5% Rugby Union
- 4% Volleyball
- 4% Martial Arts
- 3% Badminton
- 3% Baseball/softball



33% Netball

- 26% Football
- 16% Swimming
- 13% Basketball
- 12% Tennis
- 8% Dance
- 7% Athletics
- 6% Volleyball
- 6% Cricket
- 5% Rugby league/touch football
- 5% Gymnastics
- 4% Martial Arts
- 3% Australian Rules Football



NON-PLAYING PARTICIPANTS

1-in-5

young people also participate in non-playing roles, such as scorers, referees, coaches and assistants.



21%

are non-playing participants currently.

37%

have been at some stage.

These roles include:

- **44% officials**
(e.g. referee, umpire, judge, scorer, timekeeper)
- **26% coaching, assistants**
- **25% team manager, first aid, grounds maintenance, canteen, announcer**
- **14% other**

Note: for the answers above respondents could hold multiple roles.

Non-participants

- **8% have never participated in organised sport (10% females, 6% males).**
- **78% of these young people have no regrets about not participating in organised sport.**

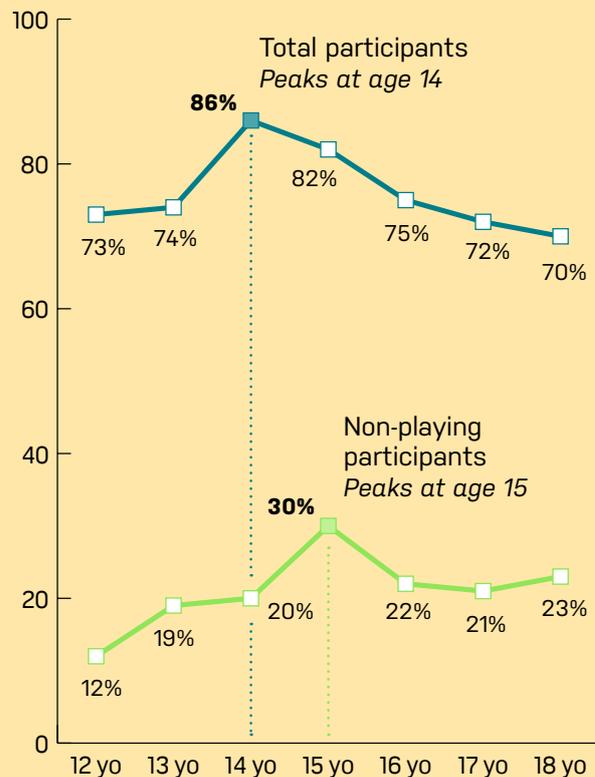
Sport keeps you fit if you play, if you watch it excites you. It makes you feel like you're part of the sporting family.

It is a good way to have fun and meet people and make connections.

Sport participation falls in later teenage years.

For non-playing participants:
Half stopped because of "lack of time/have to study or work".
12% stopped because they experienced abuse/lack of respect by other young athletes or adults, including spectators, parents or coaches.

Current participation in playing/ non-playing roles by age



MOST YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY IN SPORT



More than
9-in-10
current participants
greatly enjoy
sport, have fun
and feel safe.

93% feel safe always/
most of the time

91% have fun always/
most of the time

93% love sport/like it a lot

Males are more likely to have fun always (40%) and love their sport (63%).

Females are slightly more likely to always feel safe (59%).

Team participants respond with more love for their sport (61%), while participants in individual sports are more likely to say they feel safe always (63%).

I like the fun part of [sport]. I get to forget most of the things that worry me.

Sense of belonging.

I like playing against other clubs and meeting different people. It's fun and helps me be fitter and improve. We are a great club and look after each other.

It's fun and anyone can have a go.

I love spending time with my teammates and working together to achieve something.

How young participants feel in sport

Current participants rated their sporting experiences. To interpret this data, look at this first set of graphs reporting on safety:

- **57%** of all current participants feel safe all the time and **36%** of all current participants feel safe most of the time.
- This data is also broken down by responses from male participants, female participants, participants in team sports and participants in individual sports. This pattern is repeated in all the graphs.



- All current participants*
- Males
- Females
- Team sport
- Individual sport

Current participants n=801

FRIENDSHIP, FITNESS AND FUN WIN

Young people were asked, unprompted: what is it about sport that you like? Three key themes stood out: **friendship, fitness** and **fun**.

What is it about sport that you like?

Friendship

(be with friends/
make friends) **34%**

Staying fit

(be active/healthy) **27%**

- Being part of a team **14%**
- Challenging myself to improve **11%**
- Winning and achieving **10%**
- Competing **10%**
- I love my sport **9%**
- Escaping school/home/screen, being outdoors **5%**
- Building self-confidence, feeling stronger **4%**
- The 'feel good after' **3%**
- Sportsmanship/bringing people together **3%**

Current participants n=801

It's fun!
21%

[Sport] enables me to mix with friends and make new ones while having fun and keeping fit.

It trains my body and mind to be fit and ready to face challenges and gives me a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Get to see friends in a fun environment.

Being part of a team and having something fun to look forward to each week.



BENEFITS OF SPORT

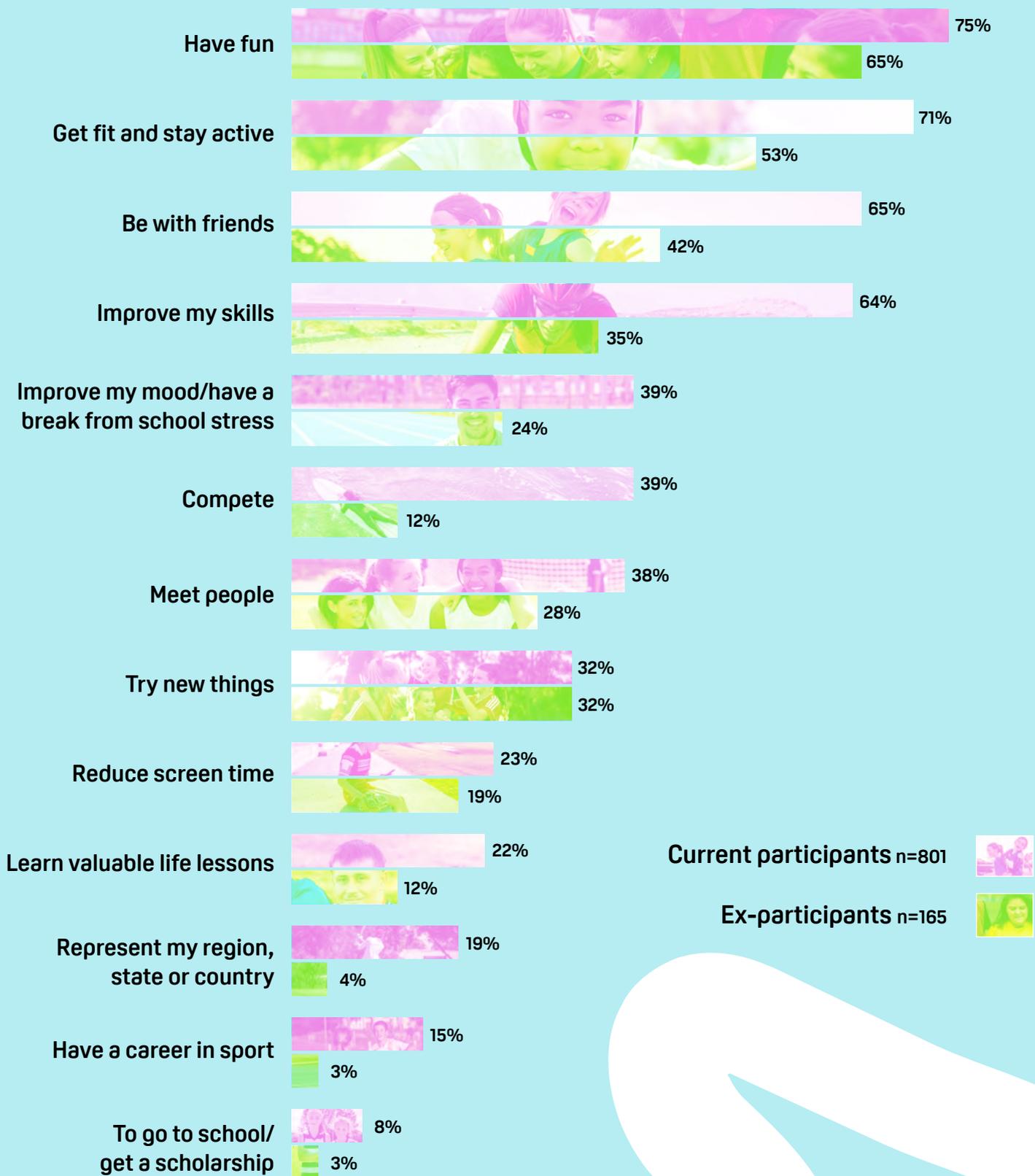
The majority of young people identified fun, fitness and friendship as the top 3 benefits of sport. The other big benefit is improving skills.

Interestingly, these top 4 benefits were the same among those young people currently participating and those who were ex-participants.

Having fun and being part of a team. Keeping fit and it feels good when your team does well and when you improve your skills.

[Sport] keeps me active helps me make new friends and teaches me teamwork discipline and how to stay motivated even when things get tough.





REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SPORT

Participation data in this survey shows a decline from age 15 onwards, as young people move to their later teens. The reasons for dropping out are diverse, but often relate to changes in interests, personal circumstances and poor sporting experiences.

42%

have stopped participating in at least one sport in the past 12 months.

2-in-3

of these still participate in sport – they have switched sports or cut back on the number of sports.



IDEAS

Ensure that each player is being treated fairly.

Have spectators and family members read and agree to the code of conduct.

DROP-OUT RATES IN AT LEAST ONE SPORT ARE...



higher

for those who mainly speak a language other than English at home (48%)



higher

for those with a disability (58%)



Reasons young people stop participating

Note: this data includes those who have dropped out of at least one sport in the past 12 months, but may still be a current participant in another sport | ex-participants in team sport n=246, in individual sport n=179

<p>Not enjoying it anymore/not fun</p> <p>33% team sport</p> <p>31% individual sport</p>	<p>Limiting sports to focus on</p> <p>26% team sport</p> <p>26% individual sport</p>	<p>Out of love with this sport/not interested</p> <p>22% team sport</p> <p>21% individual sport</p>
<p>Lack of time/work/study</p> <p>21% team sport</p> <p>20% individual sport</p>	<p>Focusing on non-sport activities</p> <p>19% team sport</p> <p>18% individual sport</p>	<p>Too expensive</p> <p>9% team sport</p> <p>17% individual sport</p>
<p>Friends have stopped playing</p> <p>13% team sport</p> <p>7% individual sport</p>	<p>Too hard/demanding</p> <p>8% team sport</p> <p>10% individual sport</p>	<p>Injury</p> <p>8% team sport</p> <p>5% individual sport</p>
<p>Not good enough/not playing much</p> <p>8% team sport</p> <p>6% individual sport</p>	<p>Have felt bullied</p> <p>8% team sport</p> <p>2% individual sport</p>	<p>Finished school/left the area</p> <p>4% team sport</p> <p>4% individual sport</p>
<p>Inaccessible/too far away</p> <p>2% team sport</p> <p>4% individual sport</p>	<p>Too old (age factor)</p> <p>2% team sport</p> <p>3% individual sport</p>	

It is also important to look at those young people who are

thinking about dropping out of sport.



1-in-5

of current participants (20%) are not sure if they will still be participating in their main sport in a year.

It is higher as young people age:

Females 17-18

35%

Males 17-18

23%

Maintaining fun is critical to keeping young people participating in sport. Participation rates fall from age 15 onwards, and fading fun is the main reason young people give for dropping out.

Some of the most common reasons given to explain why fun sometimes fades are:

- **Pressure to win from coaches or parents**
- **Early specialisation in one sport, leading to burnout**
- **Over-scheduling and lack of free play**
- **Negative adult attitudes and behaviours** (e.g. criticism, unrealistic expectations)
- **Lack of playing time or feeling excluded**

**I learn new things and
get out and enjoy
spending time with other
people and see everyone
is different but we are
all human.**

**I like that sport
builds confidence.**

**I like being with friends
and it encourages me
to have a social life
outside of school.**



NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH COACHES/TRAINERS

Young people were presented with 15 negative situations involving coaches/trainers and asked to select which behaviours they had witnessed in the previous 12 months.

47%

witnessed at least one of the 15 situations.

This was higher in **team sports (52%)** compared to **individual sports (35%)**.

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|----|
| ■ Being put in a position or asked to perform a task/role, they are not ready for | 23% | ■ Encouraged by the coach to cheat | 6% |
| ■ Being unfairly sidelined, not selected, not given enough coaching attention | 22% | ■ Treated badly by a coach because of race, religion, family background, language | 5% |
| ■ Encouraged to play aggressively, put others off | 20% | ■ Treated badly by a coach because of gender identity | 4% |
| ■ Coaches talking with young participants online or via text/message (*note, this could be a breach of child safeguarding policy if communication is 1-on-1 without the inclusion of parents/carers and/or outside the remit of sport.) | 16% | ■ Treated badly by a coach because of disability or learning difficulties | 4% |
| ■ Encouraged to participate while injured | 12% | ■ Coach using sexual language, inappropriate touch, taking/sharing sexual images | 4% |
| ■ Criticism, being yelled at when a youth is in a non-playing role | 12% | ■ Hitting, slapping, shoving by a coach | 2% |
| ■ Harsh physical punishments, overtraining as punishment | 10% | | |
| ■ Bullying or harassment by a coach | 7% | | |
| ■ Being criticised by a coach for body weight or body look | 6% | | |

(current participants n=801)



IDEA

Set clear conduct rules and train coaches and officials to handle issues swiftly.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH PARENTS/SPECTATORS

Young people were presented with 10 negative situations involving parents/spectators and asked to select which behaviours they had witnessed in the previous 12 months.

52%

witnessed at least one of the 10 situations.

This was higher in **team sports (57%)** compared to **individual sports (39%).**

- Spectators or other parents taking photographs without permission (*note, this could be a breach of child safeguarding policy if images are publicly shared without consent of the child and their parent/carer) **36%**
- Criticised, yelled at, called names by spectators **25%**
- A young participant in a non-playing role being criticised/yelled by spectators **20%**
- People not involved in the session/sport interfering, making participants uncomfortable **19%**
- Being encouraged to play aggressively, put others off or cheat by spectators **17%**
- People not related to your group/club/team having access to participant changing rooms when you are using them **14%**
- Spectators yelling at a player/competitor because of their race, religion or family background **9%**
- Spectators using sexual language, making sexual or harassing comments towards participants **7%**
- Spectators yelling at a participant because of gender identity **6%**
- Spectators yelling at a participant because of their disability or learning difficulties **5%**

(current participants n=801)



IDEA

Meetings with all the club to discuss what they expect of the coach, ref, players and parents.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH PEERS/TEAMMATES

Young people were presented with 15 negative situations involving peers/teammates and asked to select which behaviours they had witnessed in the previous 12 months.

43%

witnessed at least one of the 15 situations.

This was higher in **team sports (48%)** compared to **individual sports (30%)**.

■ Coldness, being ignored by peers/teammates, feeling left out of the team	20%	■ Being criticised by peers/teammates for body weight or body look	10%
■ Aggressive play, putting others off, cheating by peers/teammates	15%	■ Being treated badly by peers/teammates because of their race, religion, family background or language	8%
■ Constant criticism, teasing, yelling, name-calling by peers/teammates	14%	■ Being sent threatening messages online by peers/teammates	6%
■ Mean comments online by peers/teammates about sporting performance	13%	■ Being treated badly by peers/teammates because of their disability or learning difficulties	5%
■ Criticism, being yelled at by young participants when a youth is in a non-playing role	12%	■ Being treated badly by peers/teammates because of their gender identity	4%
■ Pressured by peers/teammates to participate while injured	11%	■ Peers/teammates using sexual language, inappropriate touch, taking/sharing sexual images	4%
■ Hitting, shoving, kicking, punching etc by peers/teammates	11%		
■ Peers/teammates sharing revealing/unflattering pics online	11%		
■ Being forced by peers/teammates to do things they didn't want to do, in order to be part of the group (sometimes called initiation or hazing)	11%		

(current participants n=801)



Almost **9-in-10** young people (88%) agree that peers and teammates in their club/sport are fair and respectful of each other.

However, there are negative experiences.

39%

claim most young people in their sport only care about winning/success.

27%

claim bullying happens often with children and young people in their sport.



IDEAS

Find ways to encourage and reward good behaviours.

Get the big kids to show the younger ones how to play.

RECOGNISING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

The majority of young athletes view bullying, verbal abuse, and poor sportsmanship as clearly unacceptable and show a willingness to call out these behaviours. But they do need support and guidance on what behaviours are acceptable or not in sport.

For each of the 40 negative situations detailed earlier, young participants were also asked: **Do you think it is acceptable or not?**

The options to answer were:

- Acceptable
- Not acceptable, but it's part of the sport
- Not acceptable
- Not sure/prefer not to say

A key insight from the data is evident when you combine the responses of young participants who rated the 40 negative situations as either 'acceptable' or 'not acceptable, but it's part of the sport'.

By combining these 2 responses, it shows situations that some young people may deem as tolerable – or OK. This is because they may accept them as part of sport culture.

By this definition of OK, half of the 40 negative situations were rated as "OK" by at least 10% of current participants.



IDEA

The club should organise a 'Do and Don't' workshop every year for the kids and make them understand what is acceptable and what is not.



Current participants who consider the following situations OK

(that is, answered “acceptable” or “not great, but part of the sport”)

	Acceptable	Not great, but part of sport	Total (OK)
■ Being put in a position or asked to perform a task/role, by the coach, they are not ready for	7%	39%	46%
■ Spectators or other parents taking photographs without permission (<i>*note, this could be a breach of child safeguarding policy if images are publicly shared without consent of the child and their parent/carer</i>)	10%	32%	42%
■ Coaches talking with young participants online or via text/message (<i>*note, this could be a breach of child safeguarding policy if communication is 1-on-1 without the inclusion of parents/carers and/or outside the remit of sport.</i>)	22%	17%	39%
■ Encouraged by the coach to play aggressively, put others off	7%	26%	33%
■ Being unfairly sidelined, not selected or not given enough attention from the coach	4%	26%	30%
■ Criticised, yelled at, called names by spectators	3%	16%	18%
■ Encouraged by the coach to participate while injured (the coach minimises/downplays/ignores injuries)	5%	13%	18%
■ A young participant in a non-playing role being criticised or yelled at by spectators	2%	13%	15%
■ Pressured to participate while injured by peers/teammates	1%	14%	15%
■ Harsh physical punishments, overtraining as punishment by a coach	5%	10%	15%
■ Criticism, being yelled at by coaches when a youth is in a non-playing role	4%	11%	15%
■ People not related to your group/club/team having access to participant changing rooms when you are using them	4%	11%	15%
■ People not involved in the session/sport interfering, making participants uncomfortable	2%	13%	15%
■ Being encouraged to play aggressively, put others off or cheat by spectators	3%	12%	15%
■ Coldness, being ignored by peers/teammates, feeling left out of the team	1%	13%	14%
■ Being criticised by a coach for body weight or body look	3%	9%	12%
■ Mean comments online by peers/teammates about sporting performance	2%	10%	12%
■ Aggressive play, putting others off, cheating by peers/teammates	2%	9%	11%
■ Peers/teammates sharing revealing/unflattering pics online of someone doing sport	2%	8%	10%
■ Being forced by peers/teammates to do things they didn't want to do, in order to be part of the group (sometimes called initiation or hazing)	2%	8%	10%

(current participants n=801)

RISK OF NORMALISING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

The more often young participants are exposed to negative experiences, the more likely they are to accept potentially inappropriate behaviours as OK and just part of sport.

While 92% of young people state they would report or tell someone if they witness or experience inappropriate behaviour in sport, the risk is they may not report if they are not supported to identify what inappropriate behaviour is.

Let's look at an example of a negative situation: **Being criticised by a coach for body weight or body look**

86%
of young people
had not witnessed this
behaviour in the past year
(and 8% weren't sure), but only 9% of
those considered this situation to be OK.

6%
of young people
did witness this
behaviour in the past year,
and 33% (1-in-3) considered this
situation to be OK.

This same trend was seen across each of the 40 negative situations that were presented to young people. It shows the risk that young people may normalise negative behaviours if they witness them from authority figures in sport.



[I like] feeling part of a team, the adrenalin rush I get [from sport].

I can express myself [through sport].

Current participants who consider the following situations OK

(differentiated by if they witnessed the behaviour or not)

	NOT WITNESSED, but rated as OK by young people	WITNESSED, but rated as OK by young people	Difference
■ Spectators or other parents taking photographs without permission	25%	73%	48%
■ Coaches talking with young participants online or via text/message	30%	76%	46%
■ Pressured to participate while injured by peers/teammates	10%	54%	44%
■ Harsh physical punishments, overtraining as punishment by a coach	9%	49%	40%
■ Being put in a position or asked to perform a task/role, by the coach, they are not ready for	37%	77%	40%
■ People not related to your group/club/team having access to participant changing rooms when you are using them	9%	47%	38%
■ Discrimination: Young participant being treated badly by peers/teammates because of their race, religion, family background, gender	3%	40%	37%
■ Encouraged by the coach to play aggressively, put others off	26%	62%	36%
■ Mean comments online by peers/teammates about sporting performance	7%	40%	33%
■ Being forced by peers/teammates to do things they didn't want to do, in order to be part of the group (sometimes called initiation or hazing)	6%	39%	33%
■ Encouraged by the coach to participate while injured (the coach minimises / downplays / ignores injuries)	13%	45%	32%
■ Being unfairly sidelined, not selected or not given enough attention from the coach	23%	54%	31%
■ Criticism, being yelled at by coaches when a youth is in a non-playing role	5%	35%	30%
■ Discrimination: Young participant being treated badly by a coach because of their race, religion, family background, their gender	5%	35%	30%
■ Aggressive play, putting others off, cheating by peers/teammates	6%	35%	29%
■ Peers/teammates sharing revealing/unflattering pics online of someone doing sport	7%	36%	29%
■ Coldness, being ignored by peers/teammates, feeling left out of the team	8%	35%	27%
■ Being encouraged to play aggressively, put others off or cheat by spectators	10%	36%	26%
■ Discrimination: Spectators yelling at a player/competitor because of the participant's race, religion or family background gender	5%	30%	25%
■ Being criticised by a coach for body weight or body look	9%	33%	24%
■ Criticised, yelled at, called names by spectators	11%	35%	24%
■ A young participant in a non-playing role being criticised or yelled at by spectators	11%	32%	21%
■ People not involved in the session/sport interfering, making participants uncomfortable	10%	30%	20%

(current participants n=801)

REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

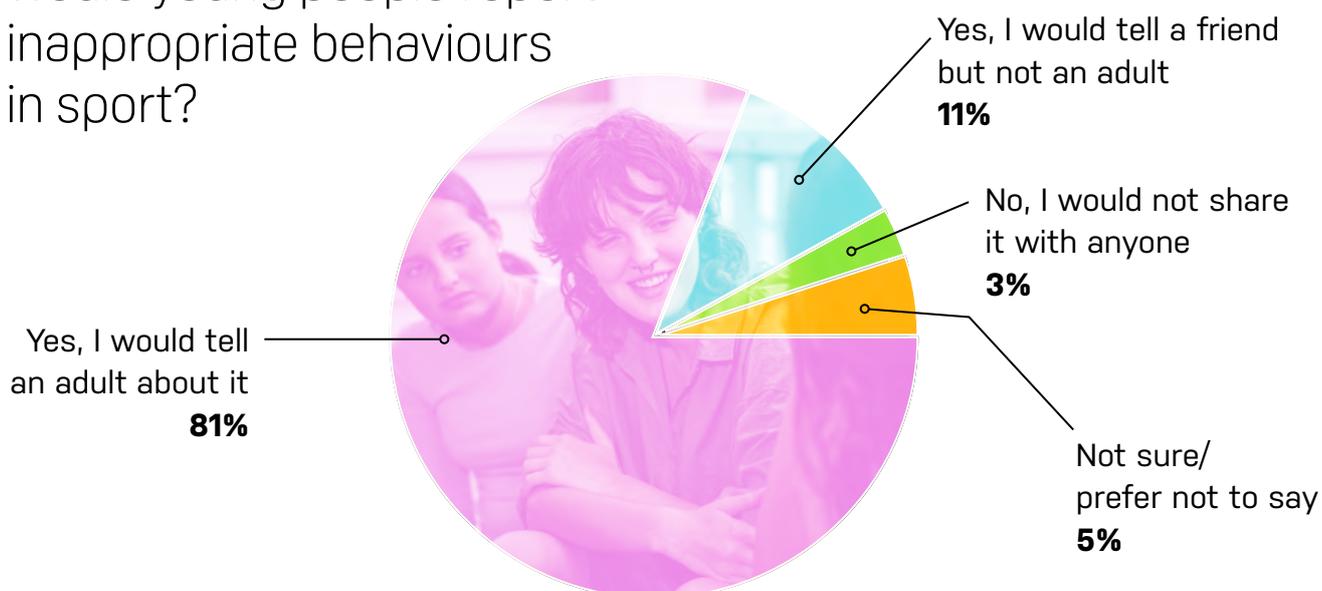
Young people state, overwhelmingly, they would report or tell someone if they witness or experience inappropriate behaviour in sport. They're most likely to confide in a trusted adult. Parents and coaches are by far the trusted adults most young people would confide in.

92%

would call out inappropriate behaviour

81% of those would tell a trusted adult

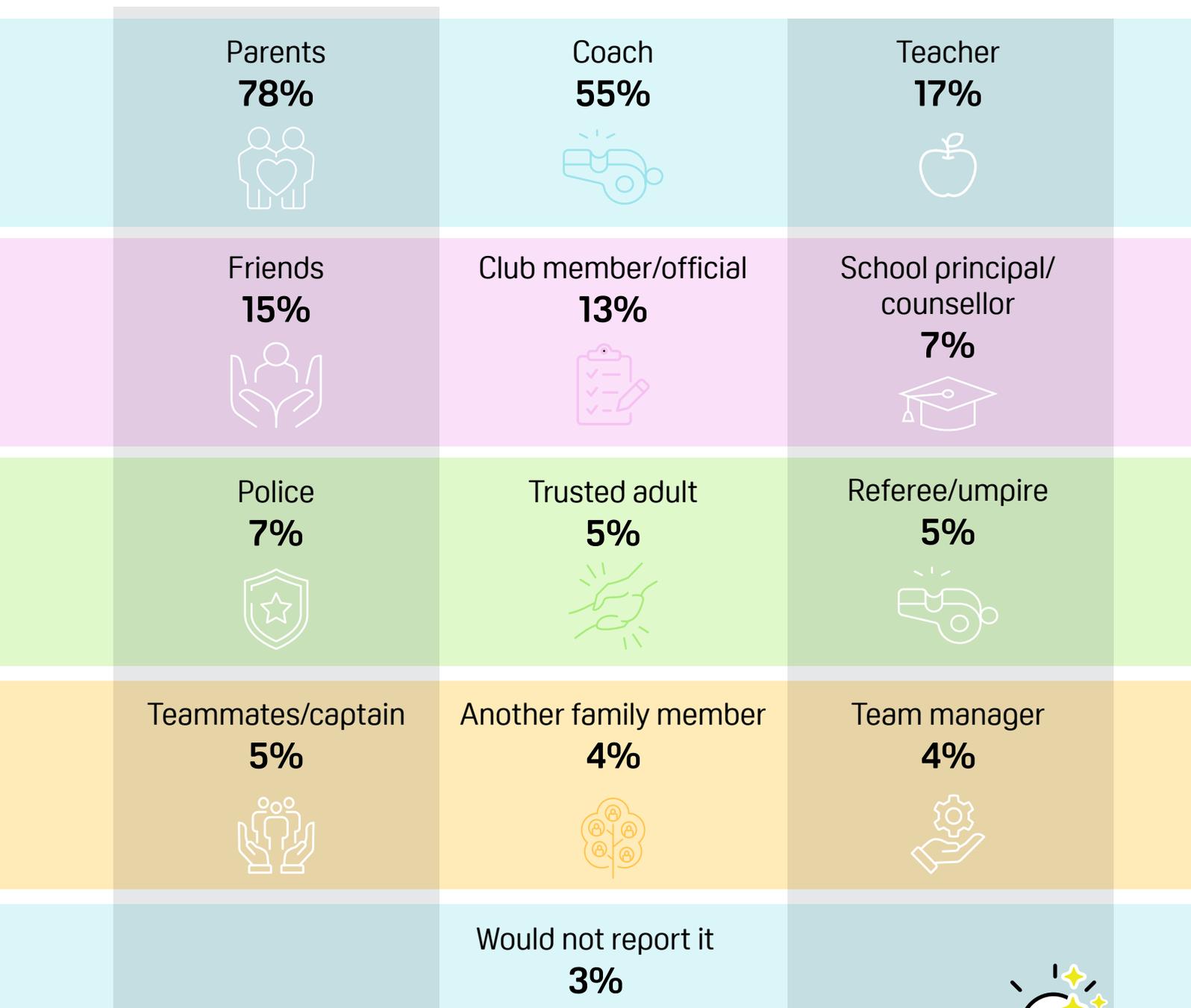
Would young people report inappropriate behaviours in sport?



(current and ex-participants n=966)

Who young people would report inappropriate behaviour to

(current and ex-participants n=966)



IDEAS

Advertising on social media, TV and radio showing that it's not acceptable and who to contact.

Create a reporting app.

YOUTH IDEAS TO PREVENT NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Young people were asked for ideas to prevent negative experiences in sport.

Three key themes emerged:

- **Consequences for doing the wrong thing**
- **Reporting inappropriate behaviour**
- **Education, including to the broader sporting community.**

IDEAS TO PREVENT NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES IN SPORT

(current and ex-participants n=966)

Ban people with bad behaviour, hard punishment	10%	More open conversation (within teams/clubs, with parents)	4%
Report it, talk about it	10%	Communication and advertising	2%
Education	8%	Less focus on winning, more emphasis on fun	2%
Be nice to each other	7%	A dedicated person/solution	2%
Code of conduct, develop rules	6%	Better training for coaches	6%
		No yelling from sidelines	1%

Note: answers also included: can't say or not sure (27%); nothing 9%; and other (8%).

IDEAS



A signed code of conduct by both coaches and teams and spectators should be enforced – people specifically agreeing to not displaying particular behaviours.

Warning system for people who break the rules.

More crowd control around the field.



YOUTH IDEAS TO CREATE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

The main theme for creating more positive experiences in sport was shifting the focus from competition and more towards fun, fairness and support.

IDEAS TO CREATE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN SPORT

(current and ex-participants n=966)

More fun, less competitive	Celebrate all achievements
10%	7%
More encouragement/support	Be more inclusive
9%	7%
Be fair and kind	Lead by example
9%	3%
More education/communication in the club	Create more positive/open environments
7%	3%
More positive adults/trained coaches	Stricter rules/punishments
7%	2%
	Make sport more affordable
	1%

Note: answers also included: can't say or not sure (12%); nothing 17%; and other (7%).



IDEAS

Reward people who behave in an acceptable way to encourage them and others instead of punishing people for bad behaviour.

Have representatives for players who stand up for them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Parents and carers play a crucial role in shaping their child's sporting experience. Their support can help determine how safe and happy young people feel in sport.

SPORT RESEARCH OFTEN REFERS TO 5 TYPES OF SPORTING PARENTS/CARERS

CRITICISM PARENTS

Telling their child what they did wrong.

INSTRUCTION PARENTS

Telling their child what to do and how to do it.

PRAISE PARENTS

Encouraging their child.

QUIET PARENTS

Never or rarely comment on sport.

ABSENT PARENTS

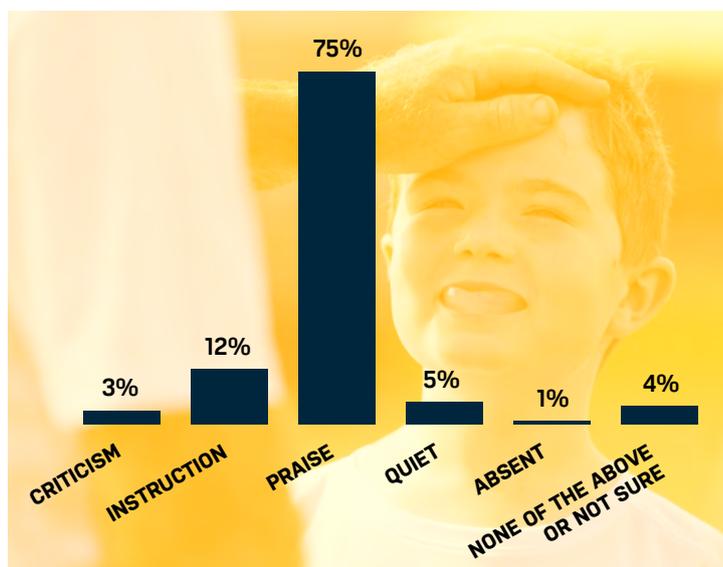
Not attending or showing interest.

3-in-4

young people (75%) in Australian sport feel supported by Praise Parents.

What type of sporting parent do you have?

(current participants n=801)



The power of praise

Young people report that the support of Praise Parents makes a positive difference on their sporting experiences, helping them feel safer, happier and more confident.

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL	Praise Parents (n=603)	Criticism + Instruction Parents (n=127)
Always/most of the time feel safe in sport	98%	82%
Always/most of the time have fun in sport	96%	80%
Love/like a lot their sport	97%	84%
Always/most of the time feel included	71%	49%
Always/most of the time motivated to participate	69%	50%
Always/most of the time getting better at sport	57%	39%
Always/most of the time enjoying time with others	78%	61%
Always/most of the time excited	60%	45%
Always/most of the time comfortable around their coach	73%	59%
Always/most of the time comfortable being themselves	62%	49%
Always/most of the time confident in their ability	56%	45%
Always/most of the time proud of achievement/s	61%	51%
YOUNG PEOPLE WITH PRAISE PARENTS ALSO FEEL LESS PRESSURE IN SPORT	Praise Parents (n=603)	Criticism + Instruction Parents (n=127)
Always/most of the time frustrated	7%	16%
Always/most of the time worried about being hurt	6%	15%
Always/most of the time worried they will be teased	7%	16%
Always/most of the time nervous about performing	14%	29%



IDEAS

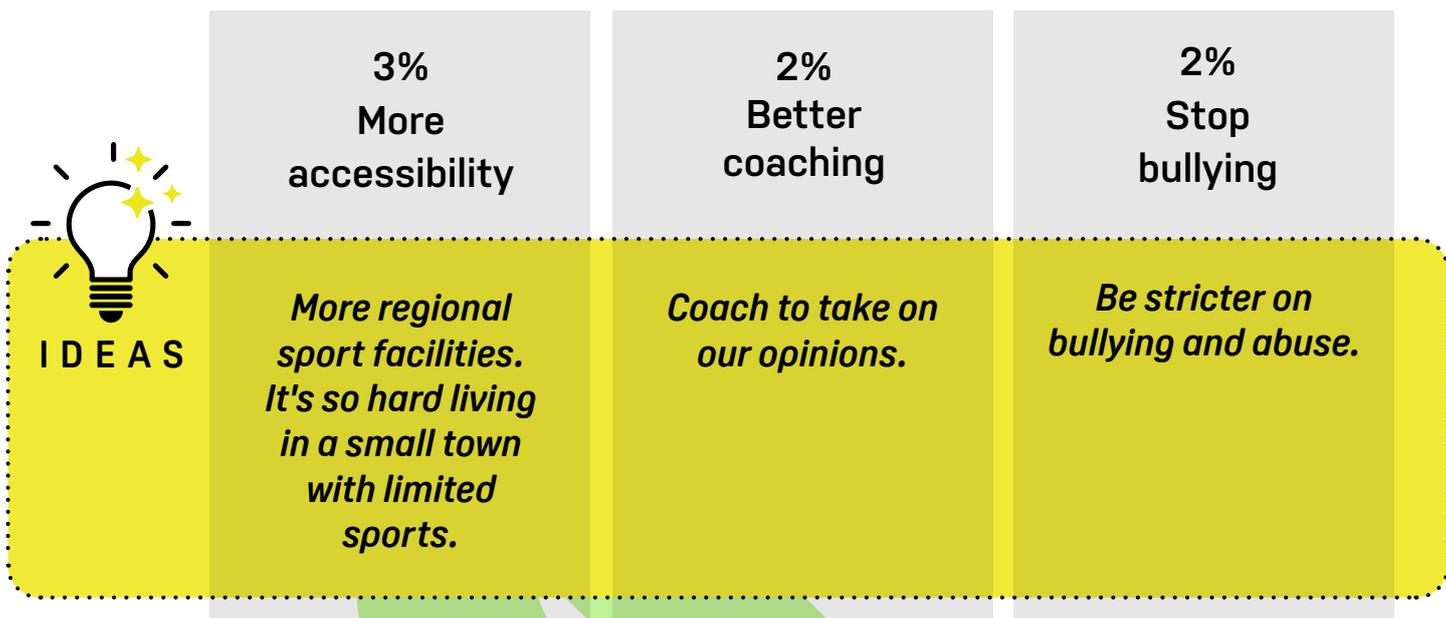
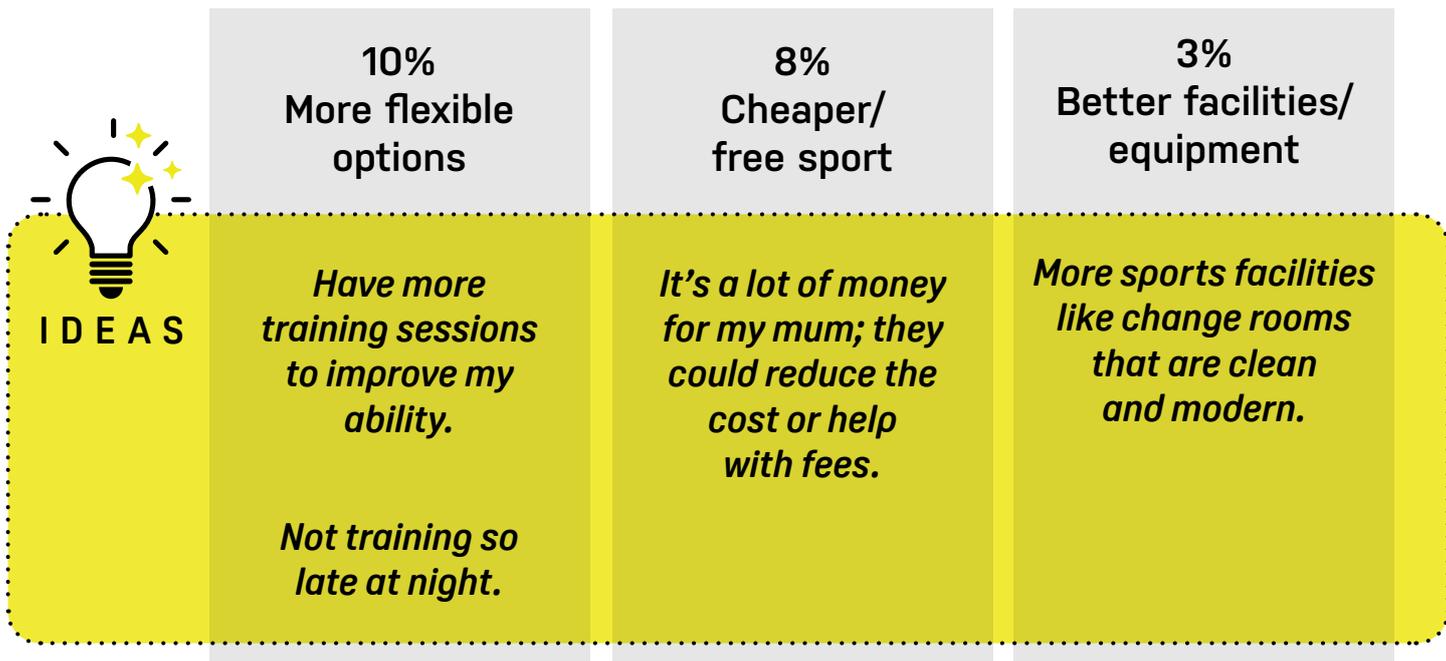
Remind parents that it's not their child vs the world.

Cheaper fees: it costs a lot to play so parents get angry easily.



WHAT COULD YOUR SPORT DO TO MAKE THINGS BETTER?

Asked what their sport could do to make things better for them, fun and friendships again feature among the responses. But more words came forward too – flexibility, fees, facilities and fairness.





I D E A S

2%
Better behaviour
from parents

*Parents not
screaming at me
when I make a
mistake.*

2%
More opportunities
at higher levels

*More
opportunities
around to play at
state level.*

3%
More social/fun
activities

*Offer more
fun group
activities around
the sport.*

4%
More fun, less
competitive

2%
Being fairer

2%
More friends
playing

2%
Better
organisation







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