

Retention in community sport: Why retention is important post COVID-19

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VICSPORT





Sport and Recreation Spatial

- Four key areas for community sport
 - Participation levels and trends
 - Influences on participation
 - Value of sport: the health benefits of participation
 - Places to play: the nexus between facilities and participation
- www.sportandrecreationsspatial.com.au

Sport Participation Research Project

- Reliable measure of sport participation in Victoria
 - Trends over time
 - Informing decision making and investments
 - Participation and facilities
- 12 state sporting associations (2011-2021)
 - Australian Football, Basketball, Cricket, Bowls, Tennis, Hockey, Gymnastics, Golf, Sailing, Netball, Swimming and Soccer
- 1 million sport participation records integrated annually
- Largest repository of sport participation data in Australia

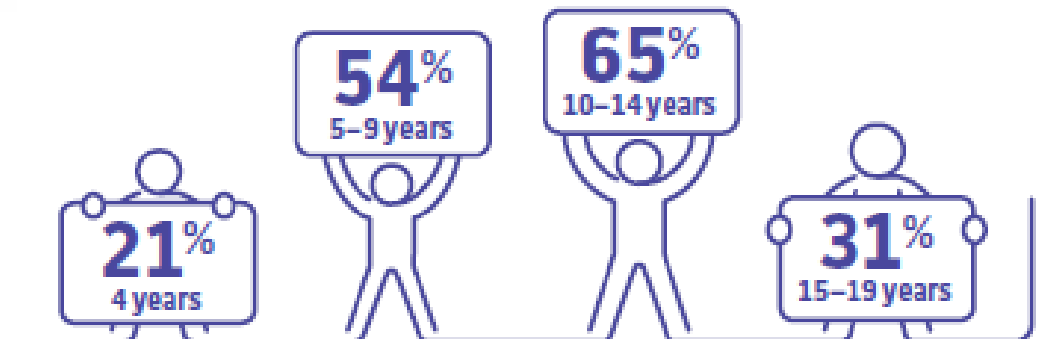
Sport policy impacting participation

- Its about increasing numbers- **MORE**
- Retention *not* a priority of sport policy and strategy
- Sport 2030
- NSO's and SSA's strategic priorities
 - *More active players*
 - *Grow junior participation*
 - *Introduce, recruit, transition and retain participants*
 - *More people playing more often*

More people of
all ages engaged
in sport and
physical activity
throughout every
stage of their life

Why retention?

- Why focus on MORE?
- Why not prioritise RETAINING players?
- Who actually strategically focuses on retention?
- Touching 'your' ball doesn't mean they are in for life
- How do people during adolescence or adulthood enter sport?
 - Important to retain children and adolescents
 - Return to sport as adults



Retention of participants

- 9 sports analysed over four years 2015-2018
- Complete data 2015 n=751,012 2018 n=846,595
- Tracked individual player sport ID
 - Continuous: all four years
 - Departure and no return
 - Intermittent: departure and return

A blurred image of a cyclist in a yellow and black jersey riding a road bike on a track. The cyclist is in a low, aerodynamic position, leaning forward. The background is a light, blurred track surface.

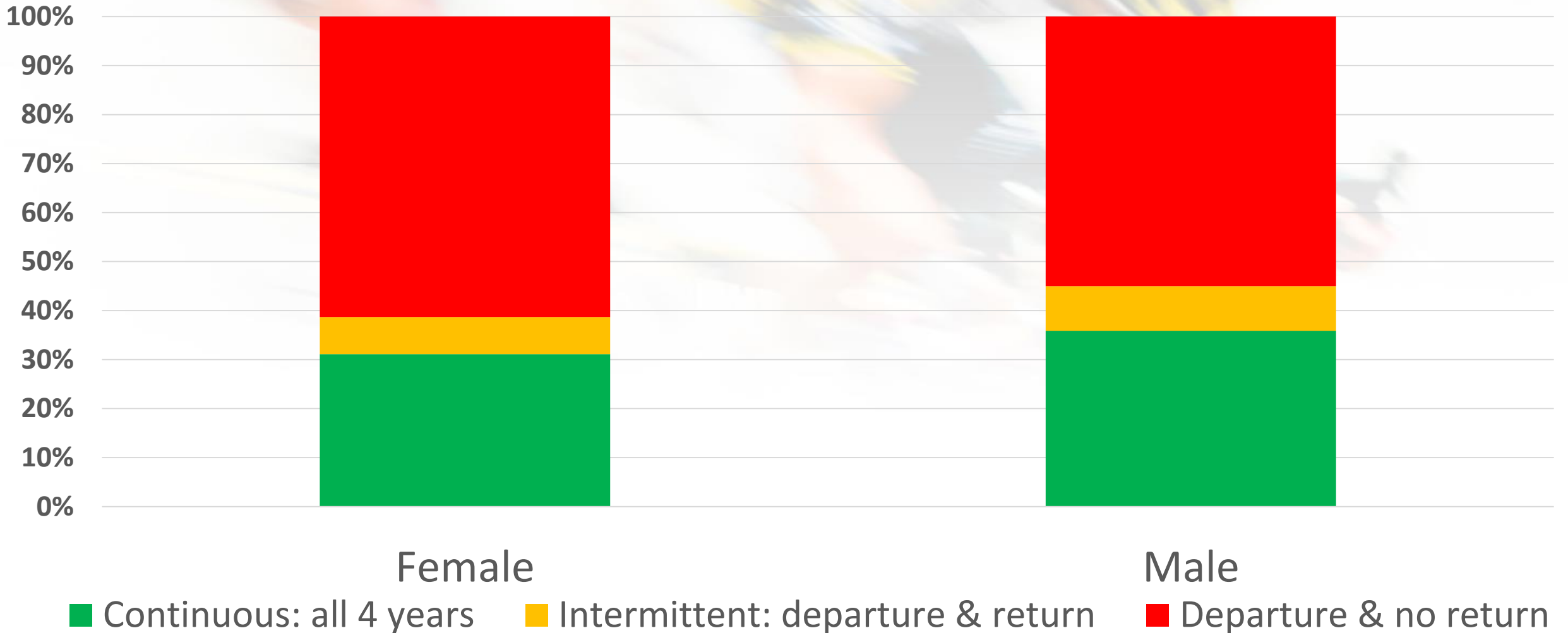
**What is the percentage of people still playing
the same sport after four years?**

Participants playing same sport for 4 years

Female: 31%

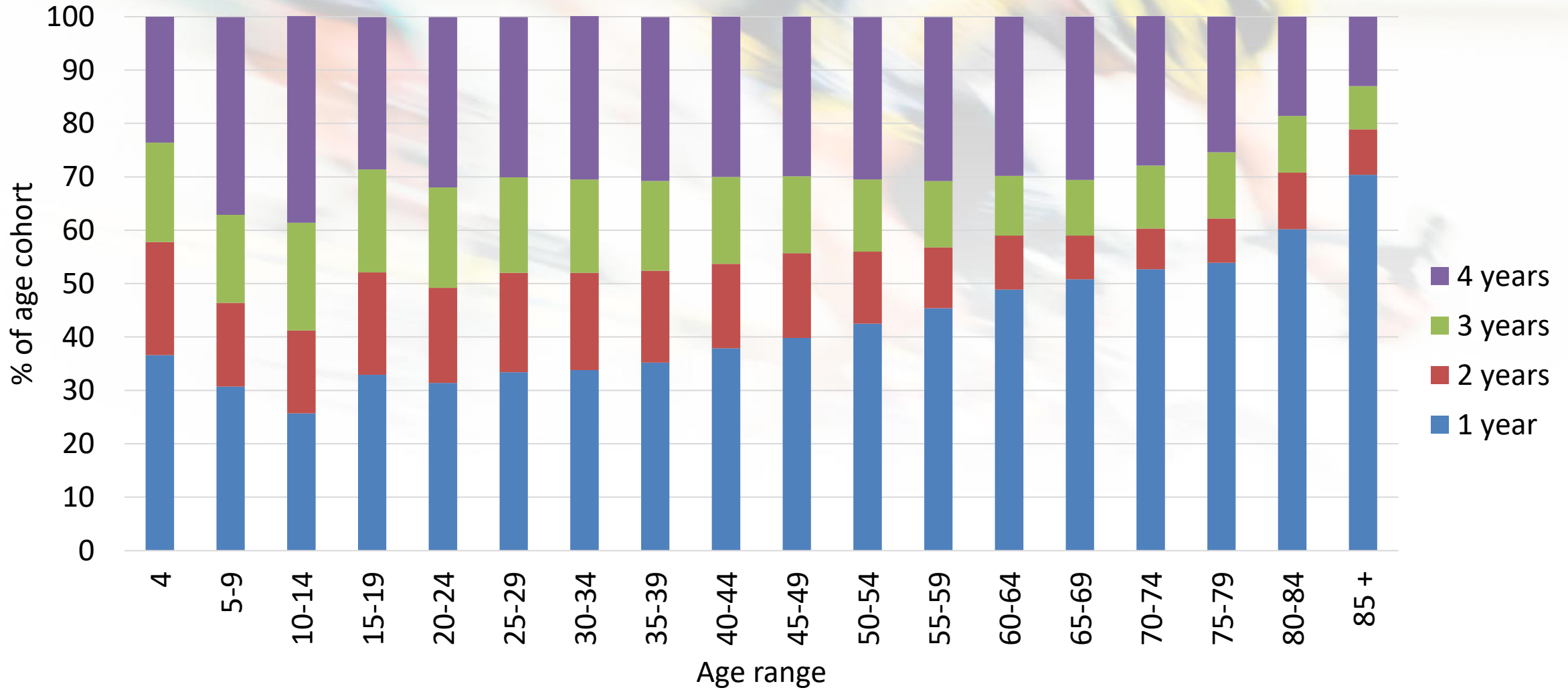
Male: 36%

Total: 34%

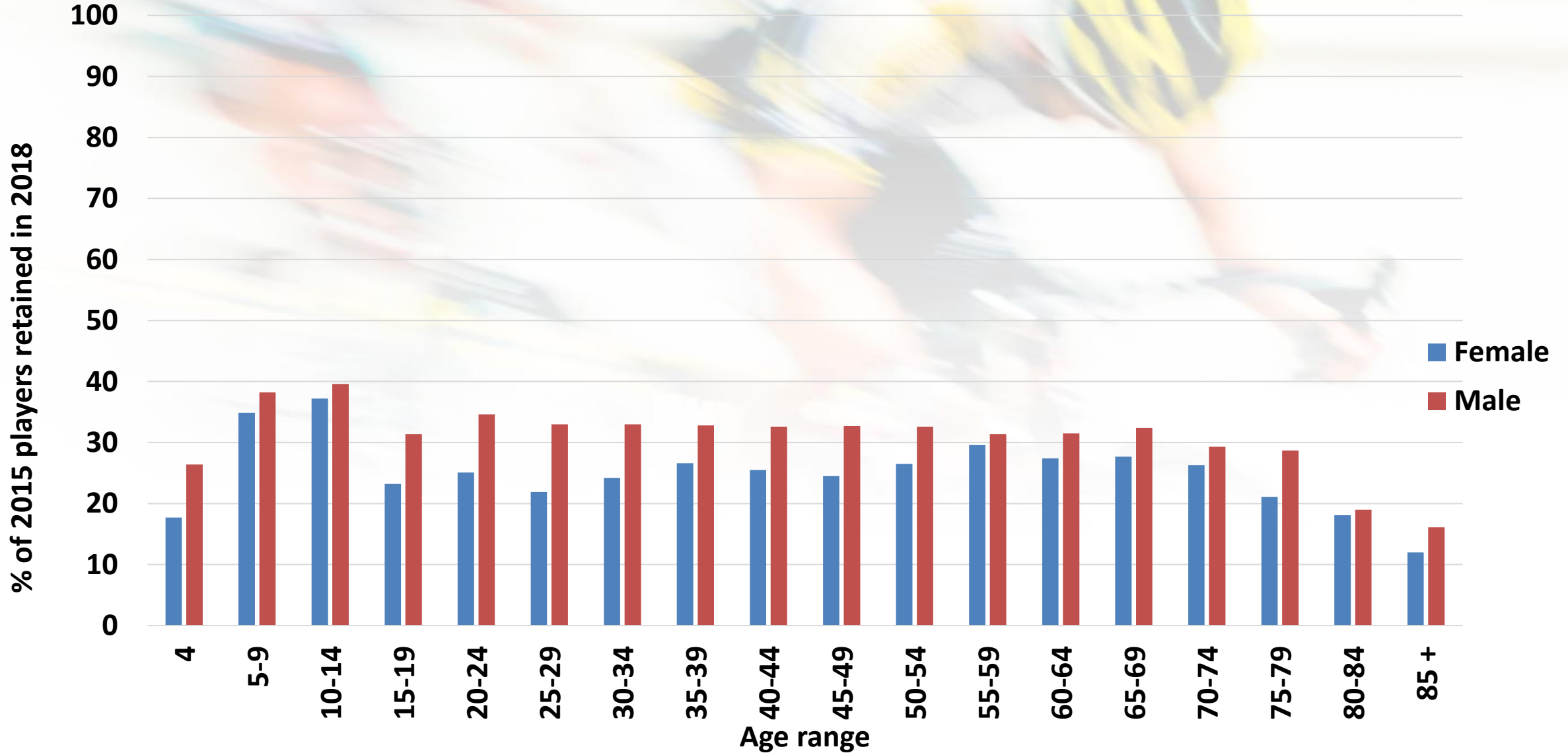


Number of years playing by age

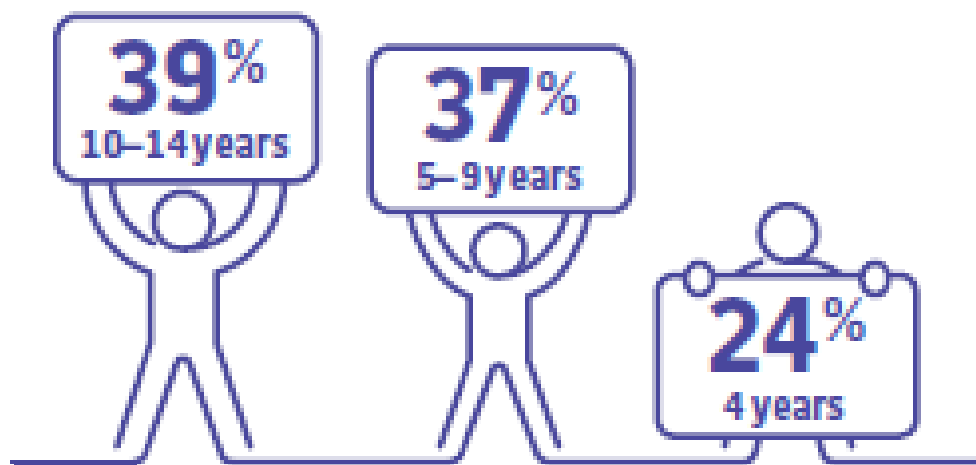
- Includes only those playing in 2015



4 year continuous participation



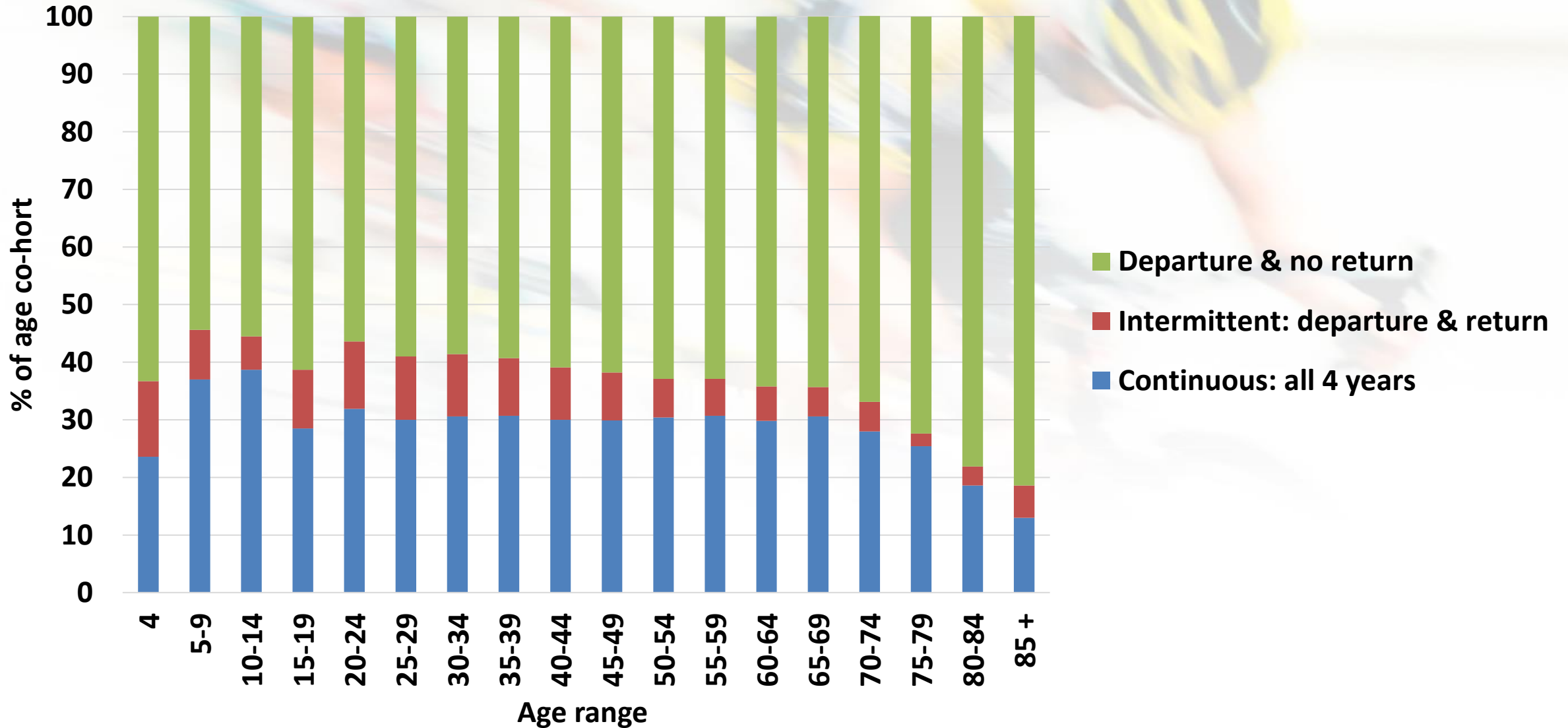
4 year retention by age and region



Highest: Gunnawarra Shire

Lowest: City of Melbourne

4 year pattern of participation by age



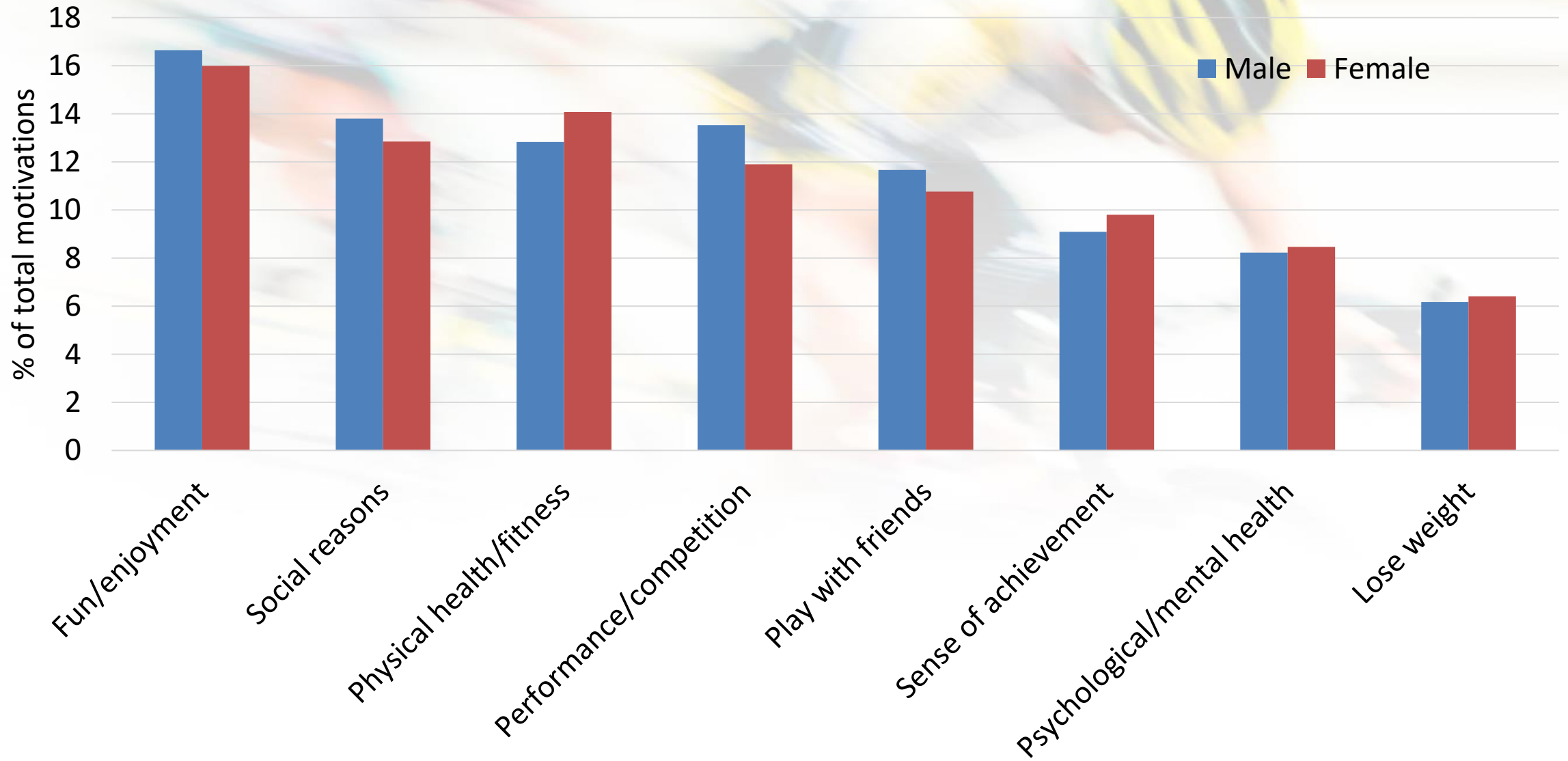
Reasons why people drop out

- **It isn't fun anymore**
 - It has to be fun and enjoyable
 - Modified sport – club competition
- **Individual**
 - Skill and competency
 - Physical literacy
 - Fun and enjoyment
 - Preference for other non-structured activities
- **Social**
 - Peer and family support
- **Competition structure/programs**
 - Length of game and season
 - Commitment to training and competition
 - Competition versus social/recreational programs
- **Club environment**
 - Welcoming and inclusive



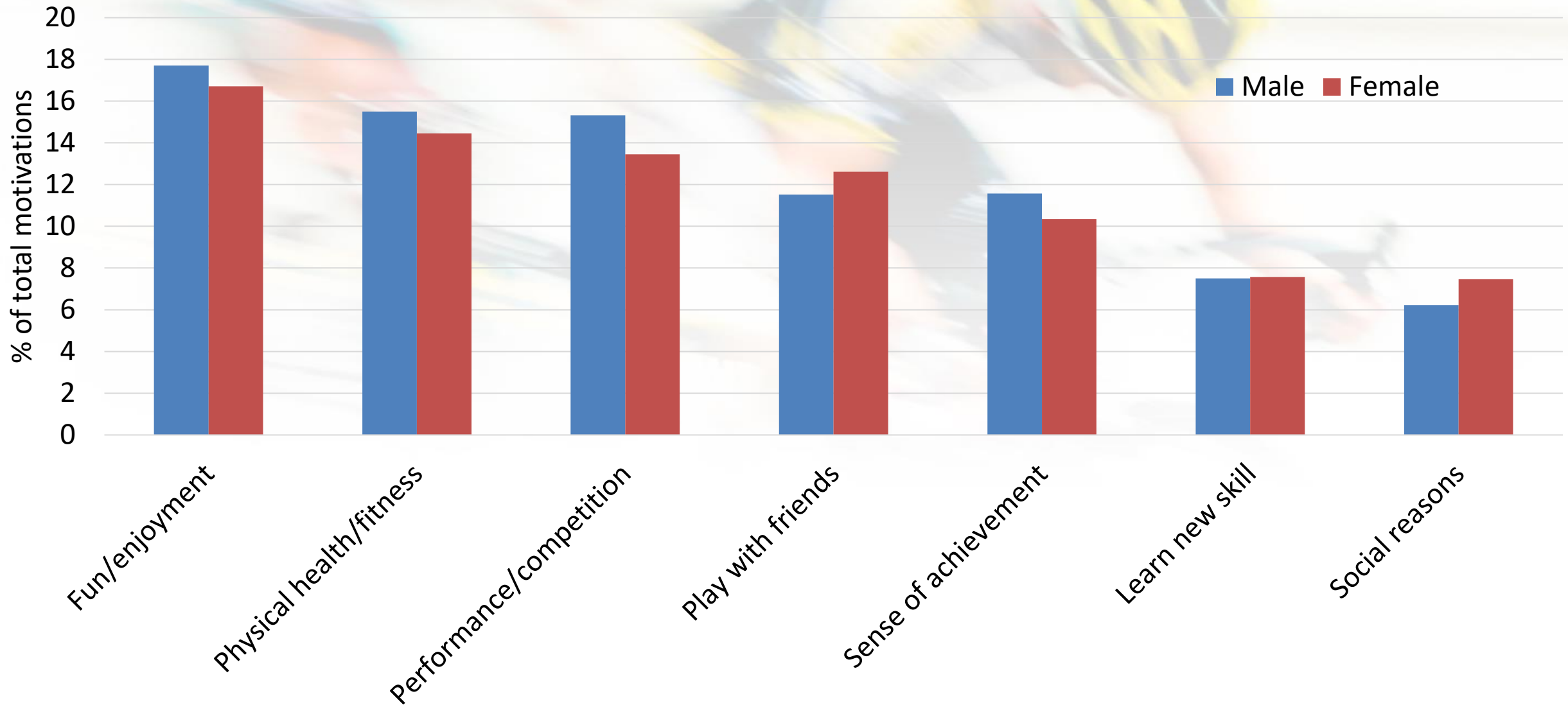
Adults motivations to play sport

n=3,854

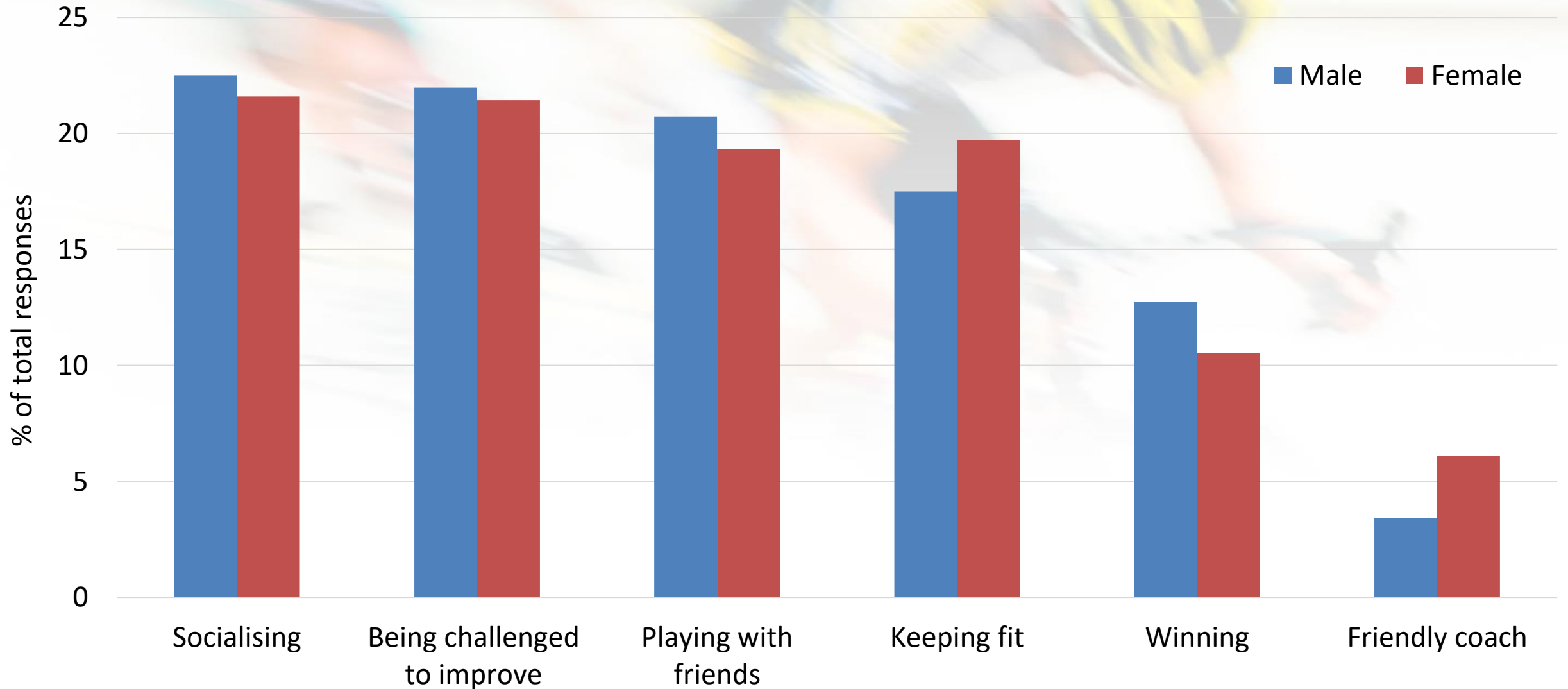


Adolescents motivations to play sport

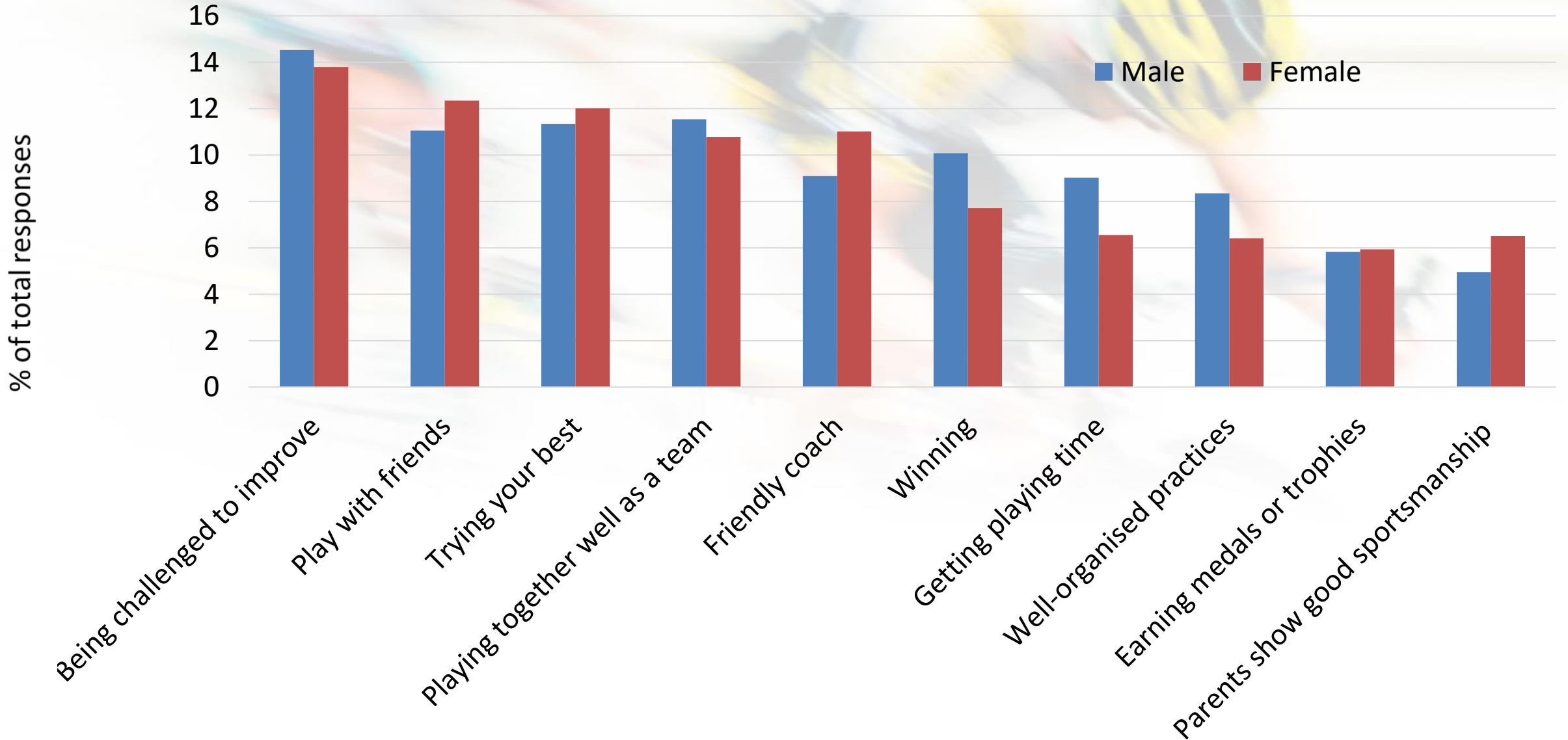
n= 534



What makes playing sport fun for adults



What makes playing sport fun for adolescents



Impact of sport on health

- Survey of sport participants, and non-sport before and during COVID-19, post-COVID (to come)
- Over 6,100 survey participants
- Importance of sport for health post-COVID



Will they return to play?

- Survey of intentions to return to playing basketball
 - Dr Meghan Casey FedUni
 - Ballarat Basketball Association
 - Players, coaches and officials (n=354 so far)
- 78% of players plan to return
- 79% of coaches and officials plan to return
 - Potential bias
- Main concerns:
 - Others not isolating if feeling unwell or COVID-19 positive
 - Second wave may shut down sport again –*and did occur*
- Majority are confident sports organisations can comply with government COVID guidelines

Some barriers to players returning

- **People transitioning into other forms of physical activity**
 - Riding, walking, running
 - Especially during adolescence when main drop-off in sport occurs
 - Cheaper options
 - Less commitment, less structure
- **Concerns about health**
 - Contact sports versus those where physical distancing is easier
 - Health professionals
 - Older adults or those with health conditions
- **Cost**
 - Australian Sports Foundation COVID-19 survey report
 - People prioritising their children, especially mothers
 - Children playing one sport instead of multiple
 - How minimise cost burden



Post-COVID-19

- **Retention now important more than ever**
 - Easier to retain, rather than get new members/clients
 - For volunteers and participants
 - Ability to field teams and keep clubs viable
 - Some clubs will close
 - Female competitions and new programs
 - Sector level approaches- media campaigns, advocacy etc
 - Work collectively as a sector
 - Plenty of people don't play sport, so the pool of potential is very large
 - Many people transition across sports
- **Measure retention**
 - Simple measure of sport or clubs 'success' – not total numbers, nor premierships
 - Good governance, club environment, coaching etc.
 - Our research team measuring who comes back, who doesn't, and why

Stay connected and make it fun

- People can't play sport during COVID-19, so need to reengage them
- Social media
- Posts and online meetings
- Updating members of what is happening
- Flexible membership options
- Connecting people/players/friends and making it fun
 - Join a club because you know someone
- Asking people what they would like
 - Challenges
 - Team zoom chats
- Rokewood-Corindhaps football training video
 - Intended for small group of footballers and netballers
 - Farm fit versus gym fit

Value proposition

- During COVID-19, exercise one of only four reasons to leave home
 - Government recognising importance of physical activity as public health priority
 - Sport in good position to claim fundamental place in society
- Remember why people play
- What are your sports/clubs values?
- Community sport
 - Its not about winning, medals or trophies
 - Fun, socialising and playing with friends
 - Organised but not competitive focus for everyone
 - **Connecting individuals and communities**
 - *For active, connected and healthier individuals, families and communities*

The 'new' importance of community sport

- **Fun**
- **Social connectedness**
 - *“I’m here if you need”*
 - *“Its my men’s shed, we get together as mates and talk”*
 - *“I miss my friends”*
 - *No school, no work, no sport*
 - *Children and adolescents enjoyed returning to school*
- **Health: social, mental and physical**
- **Important for individuals, families, volunteers and community**
 - What you do really matters

Further Information

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Panel Questions and Q&A

- **Lisa Hasker** - CEO, Vicsport (MC)
- **Professor Rochelle Eime** - Victoria University & Federation University
- **Professor Hans Westerbeek** - Victoria University
- **Emma Staples** - Head of Participation, Community Development and Diversity, Cricket Victoria
- **Angela Banbury** - General Manager Netball Development, Netball Victoria

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Thank You

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