



The state of the game

Player and club survey

A comprehensive survey to discover why people play Walking Football and how it affects their lives.

The methodology

As The WFA has grown, so has our subscriber database. Our last survey was sent to just over 4500 players, but this more recent survey was sent to over 9000 subscribers. Plus we shared it on social media.

We had around 2100 responses to the questions we posed. With the majority being from our subscribers.

The questions were a mix of yes/no, multiple choice, and questions where the respondents could compose their own answers.

Details

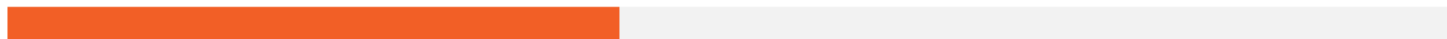
Number of responses:	2125
Responses by subscribers:	1962
Responses by non subscribers:	63

Understanding the results

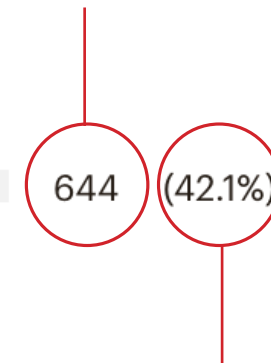
With the multiple choice questions, you'll see two figures to the right of each option.

On questions where we asked for a written opinion, we have selected a few answers at random,

Health reasons



The number of respondents who answered the question with this answer



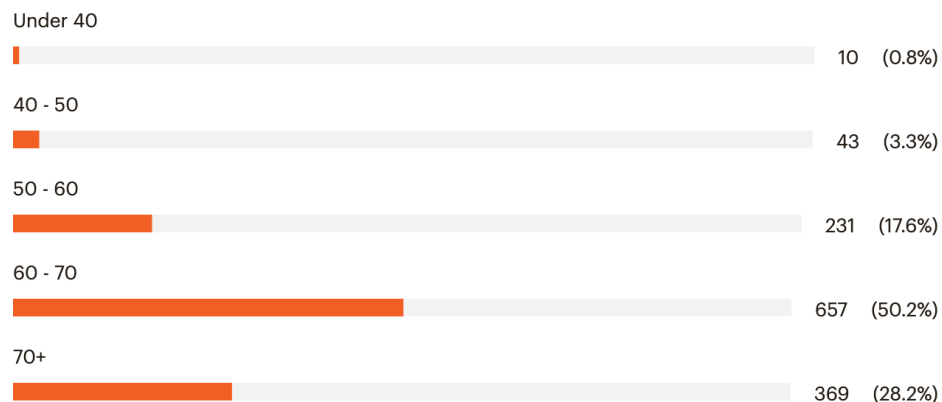
Percentage of all respondents that answered the question with this answer

Discover the results

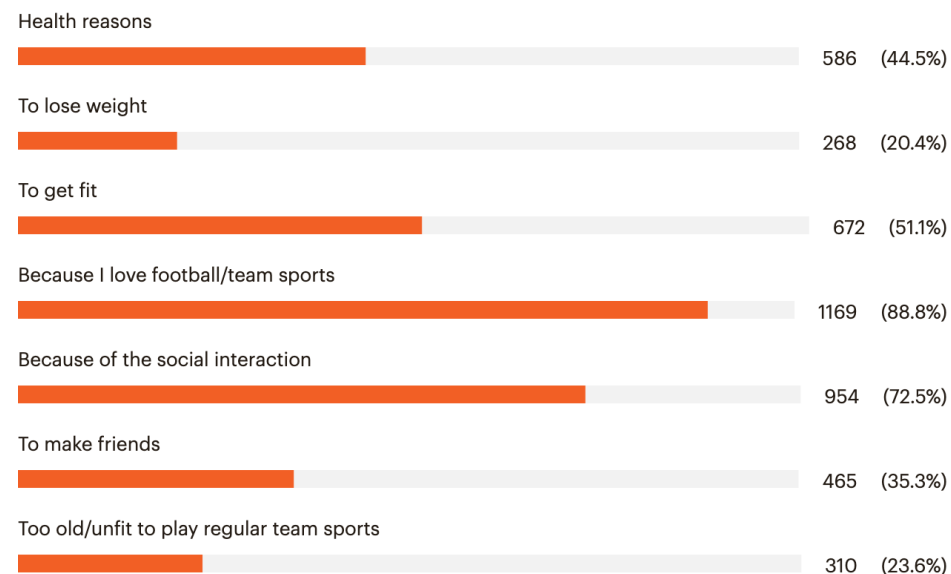
"What is your gender? We know this can be a contentious question, however it's important for us to determine how the women's game is growing. Feel free not to answer this question. "



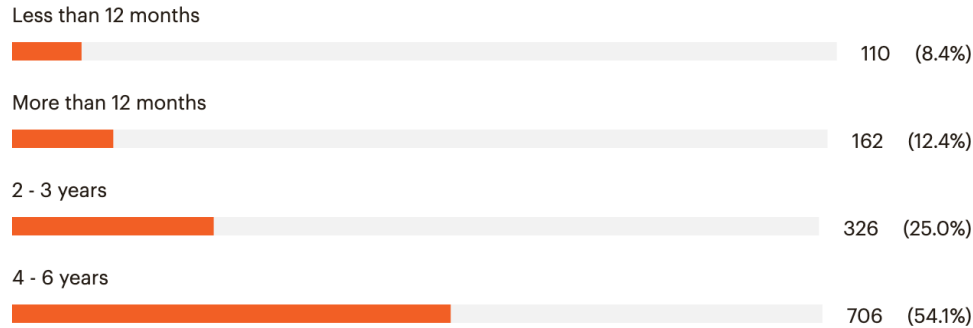
"What age bracket are you?"



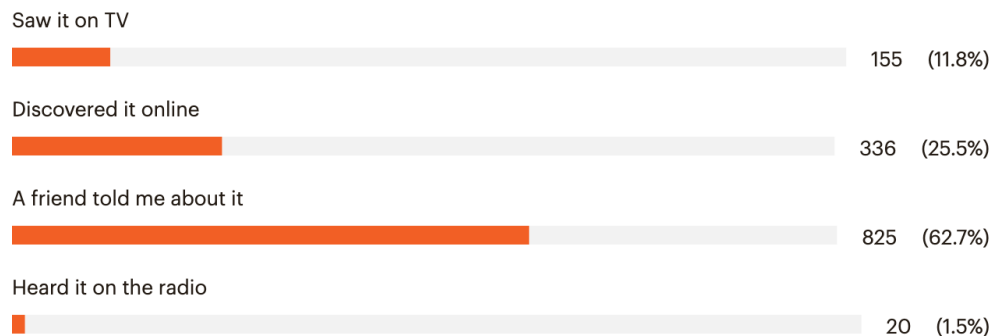
"Why do you play Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)"



"How long have you been playing?"



"How did you discover Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)"



"What do you love most about playing Walking Football?"

"I love the game itself. Having played women's football in my youth and then stepping back due to family commitments, I never dreamed that I would be playing again in my mid-fifties."

"love the chance to play competitive football again. plying in a friendly, fun and just enough edge to make the whole experience enjoyable."

"After having several joint replacements I was told I'd never play football again, WF has given me that chance. I love the banter, playing tournaments but most importantly the fact it's non contact. "

"Always loved playing, great to still be playing, great bunch of lads and tournaments are an extra special day."

“Allows me to play football at an age I thought I never would. Also have made lots of new friends.”

“Anyone can play regardless of ability. Welcoming environment. Walking football provides a great platform for active participation, inclusion, and fun.”

“As an ex county league player who had to retire due to a serious injury I love it because of the people I play with, a sense of freedom & fun”

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“Being 70+ now it is an unbelievable way to make friends , be active and enjoy the sport I love.”

“Being part of a team, mixing with like minded people of varying ages and different walks of life, still being able to compete at 79 years old. ”

“Camaraderie , enjoyment, banter”

“Competitiveness of the football, reliving my past love of football, great banter and making new friends ”

“Even though I am old, I can still participate in a game I love. The camaraderie amongst the members is great.”

“Everything is social , fitness, rules that protect and help even older player hopefully playing longer by reducing physical injury that could put pay to them playing on, which is good for all and mental well being as I hope to play for many years as possible to come.”

"How would you put a stop to running in matches?"

"Each game should ideally have a referee. I think it would be beneficial to have a selection of videos demonstrating players deemed to be running and also players not actually running but where others might think they are."

"I don't think we'll ever achieve this 100% of the time, up to ref to clamp down at beginning of training session or game."

"This happens week in week out and more so off the ball running, particularly in tournaments. It's always going to be tough to stop. Maybe two refs per game, one to ref one to ref off the ball running. Surely there must be some tech that can help, boots light up or the ref gets a vibration on a watch when the person when someone is running."

"Have to admit I'm guilty of jogging at times as the enthusiasm to get to the ball takes over. At our club we are fortunate to have volunteer refs covering majority of games in our sessions which provides the necessary discipline to curtail running."

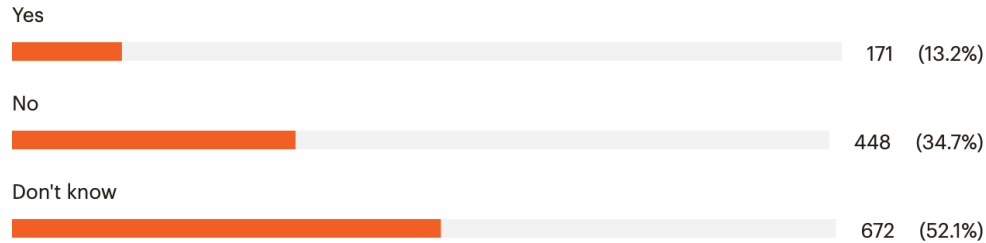
"It's very hard when you have played the game when younger. I get pulled up for being too quick at times but I don't mean to. It's certainly difficult when lots of referees give different decisions."

"Club bans after every 20 blue cards. The punishment has to be severe. Referees have to be instructed that running is to be eliminated from the game."

"In competition games use two referees per game. I believe only good hard line refereeing will put a stop to running."

"3 running offences per team = penalty to opposition."

"Would your club be interested in over 40s age group for men at a national level?"



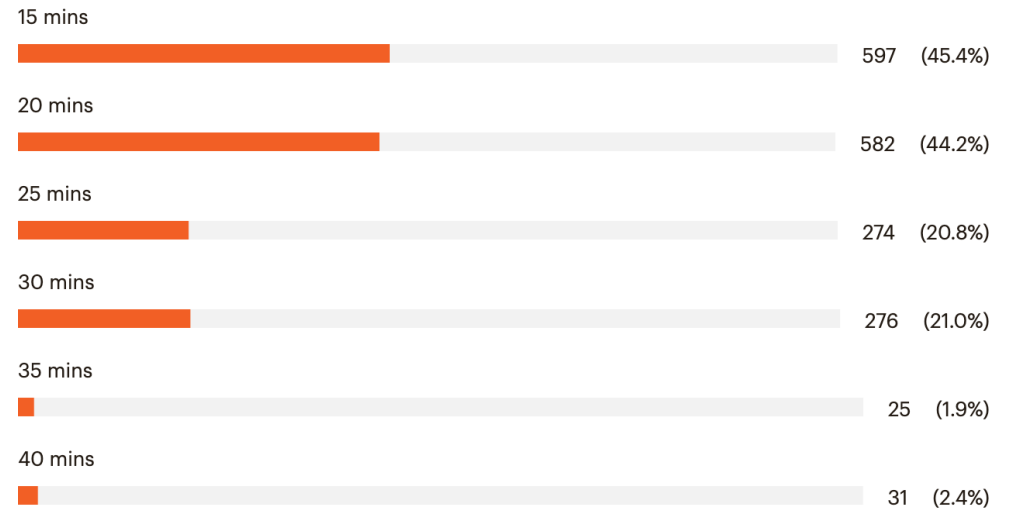
"Would you like to see a 'Shield' type sub-tournament to the National Cup for teams that lose in the first round?"



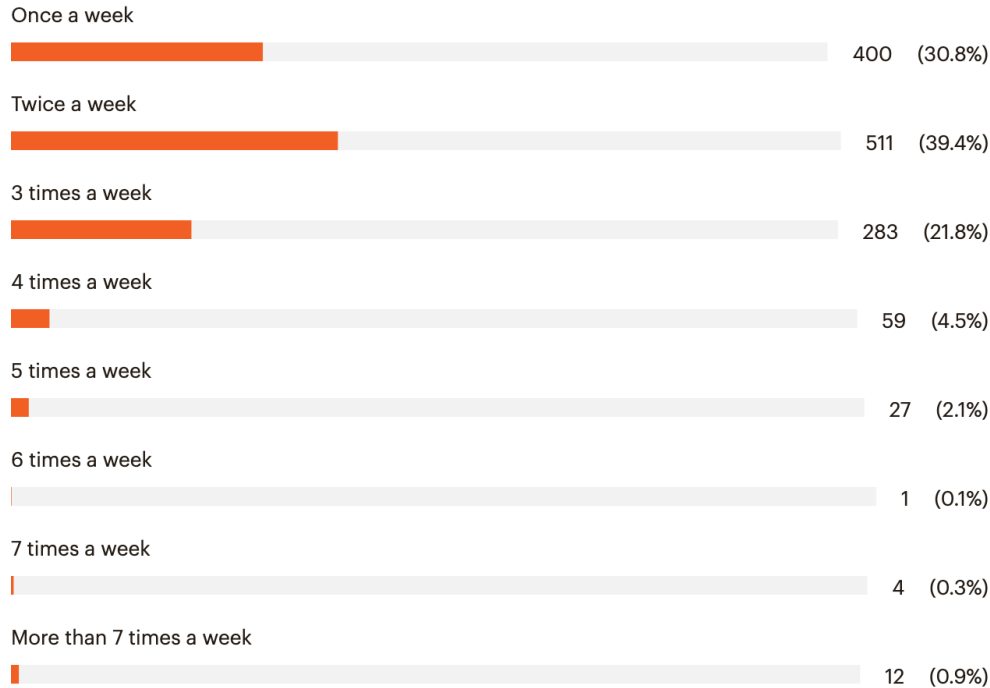
"Do you think there should be regional and national leagues run by The WFA?"



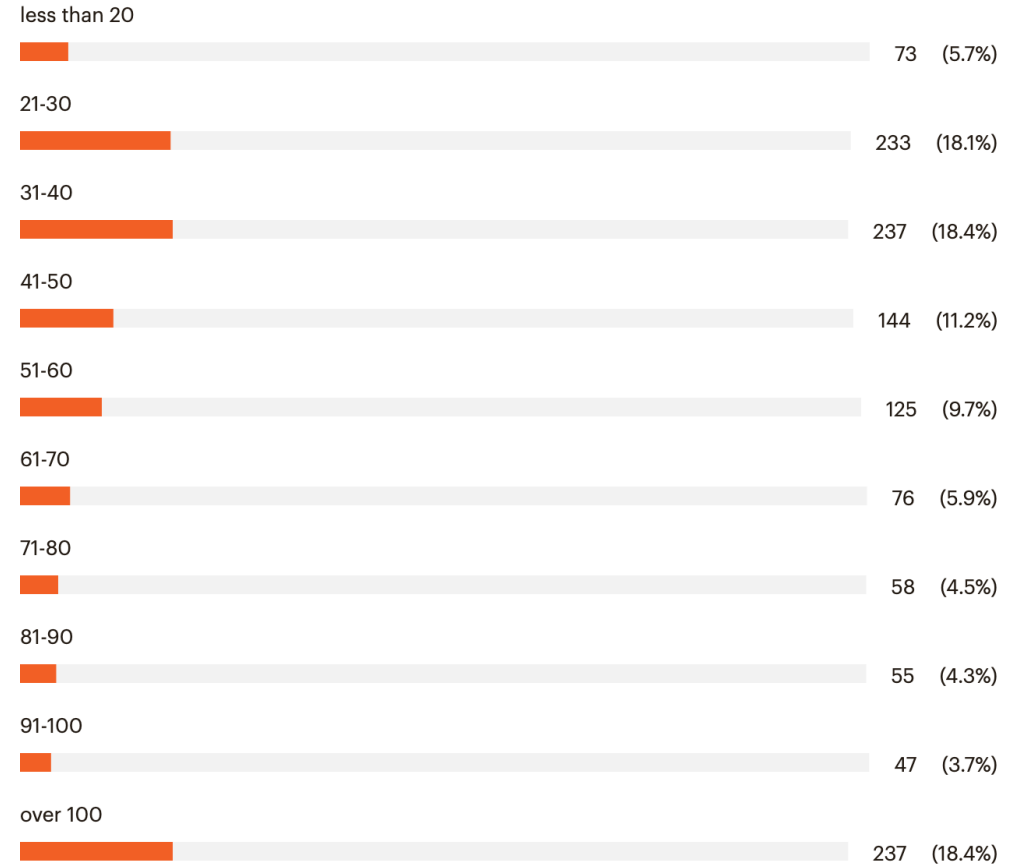
"How long in terms of minutes do you feel is appropriate for each half of a match? - You can answer multiple."



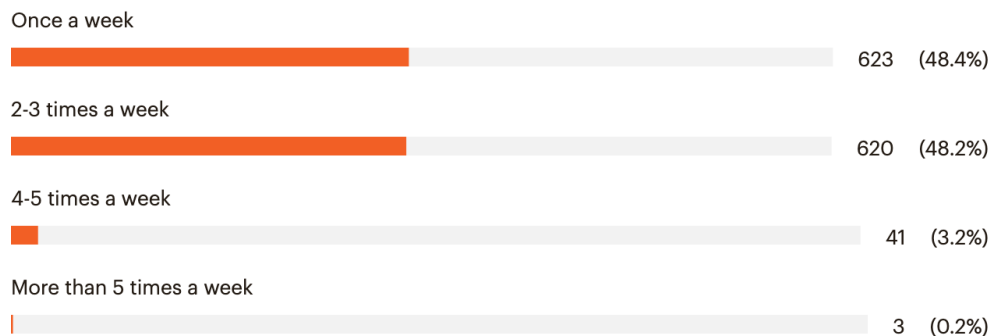
"How often does your club train/meet?"



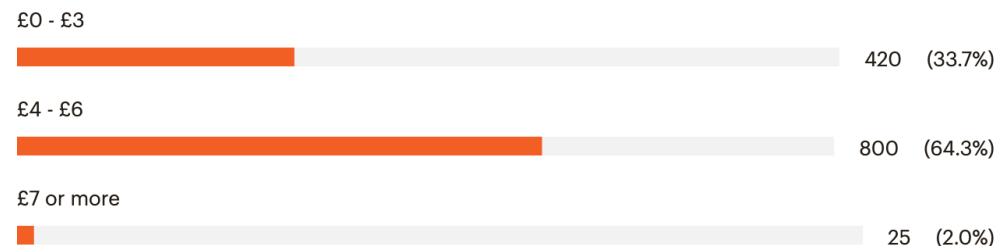
"How many members does your club have?"



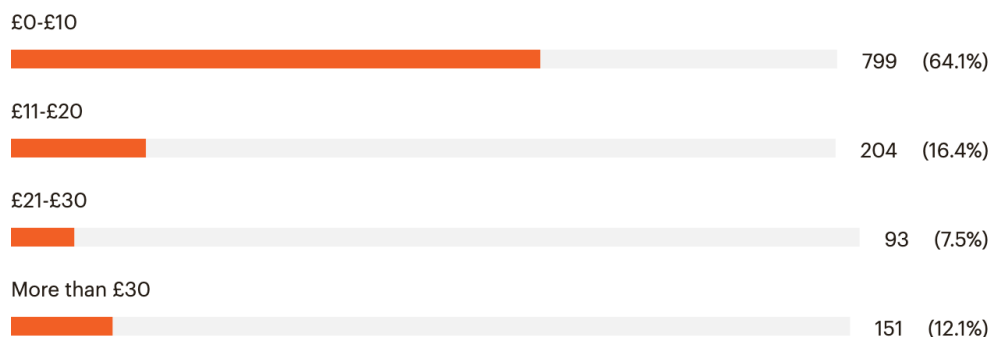
"How often do you play?"



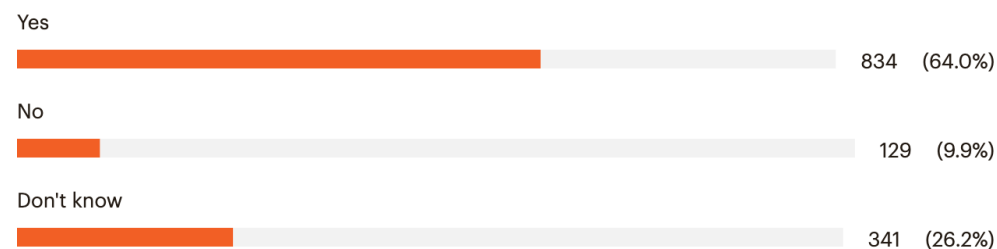
"Does your club charge subs each time you play, and if so, how much?"



"How much does annual membership to your club cost?"



"Is your club affiliated with The FA, or has it ever been?"



"Has your club ever applied for funding, and if so, where did you apply?"

"Applied to Active Essex to set up a ladies walking football team(s). Red tape proving almost impossible to gain funding from this provider."

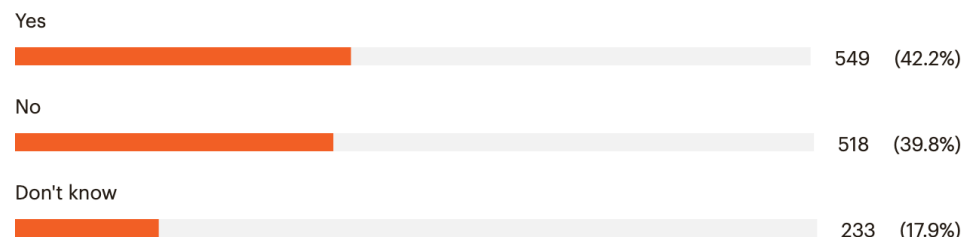
"Yes, we have obtained a grant from our local council of £500 and a local garage sponsored us by paying for our shirts."

"Yes. Multiple places with some, but little success."

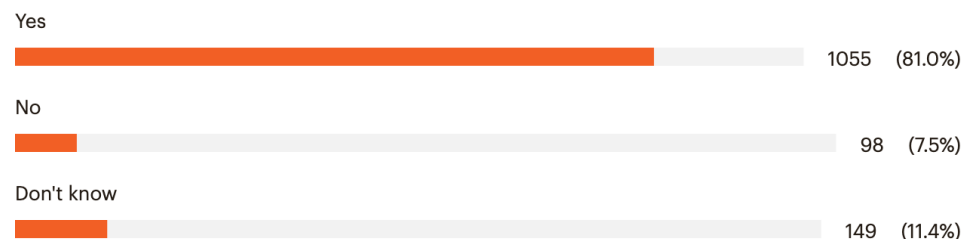
"Yes, AXA, Just Play, National Lottery."

Note: The majority of answers to this question were, "No" or "Don't know"

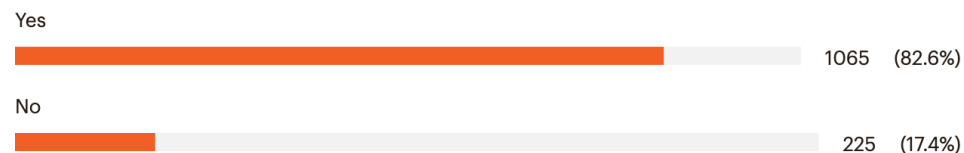
"Does your club have any sponsors?"



"Does your club have access to a Defib?"



"Are you interested in playing in tournaments?"



"Are there any rule changes you'd like to see implemented?"

"Goal-bound shot hitting keeper and going up, should be still in play to keep game live."

"That there could be more 7-aside-games - or more players on the pitch - as it becomes less tiring for an older player."

"Ball going over head height as a result of shots hitting defenders should result in a free kick to the defence."

"I would prefer the rules to be closer to the rules of football. There are a lot of unnecessary additions eg no direct free kicks and can't score direct from a corner etc. This complicates the game for both players and referees, especially for new players, and they serve no purpose in the game. The rules regarding walking, head height and minimal contact are all that is necessary to make the game safe."

"I think the rules are OK; it's the lack of consistency of implementation by referees that sometimes causes problems."

"Penalties should be given for any offence that is remotely stopping a goal scoring opportunity."

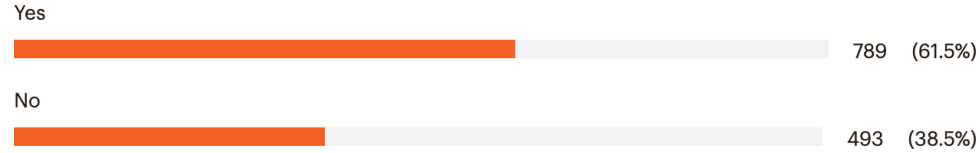
"No 'overhead' free kick for rebounds off players. No immediate stopping of play if a player is on the ground unless they are injured or play the ball from the ground. Only DELIBERATE entry in the keepers area should be penalised."

"Yes 4 infringements - a penalty! "

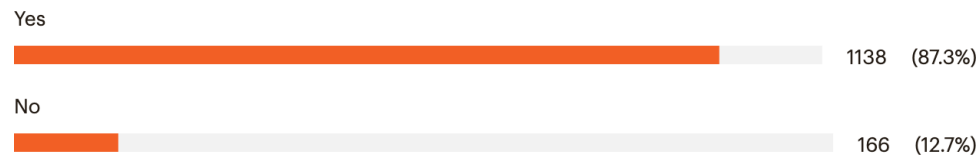
"Automatic penalty if argue with ref. "

"The penalty awarded when a defender is in the area seems harsh. Better for a free kick which could be direct. "

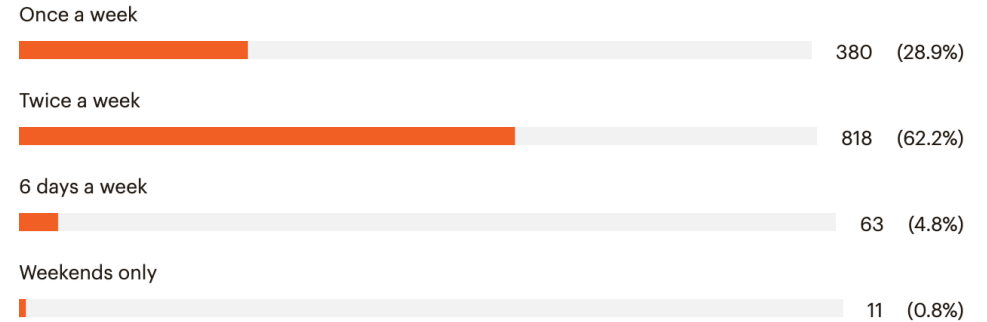
"Would you be interested at playing at a higher level, such as regional or higher?"



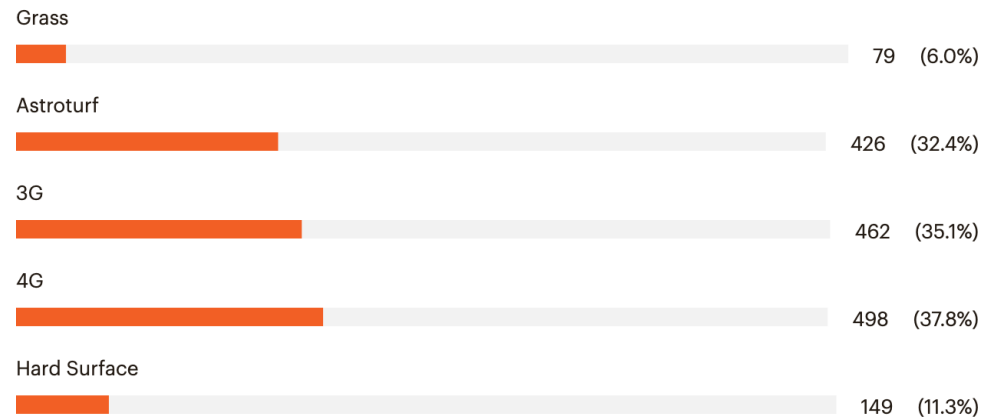
"Would you be comfortable paying in a mixed gender game?"



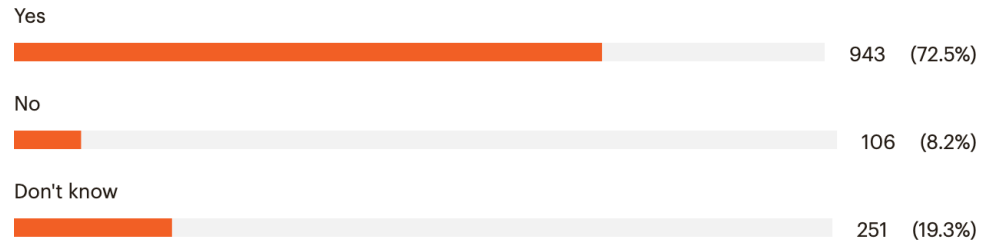
"How often does your club run sessions?"



"What surface do you normally play on?"



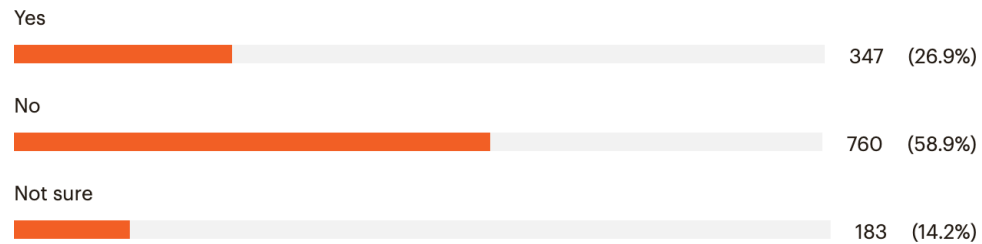
"Is your club affiliated to the WFA?"



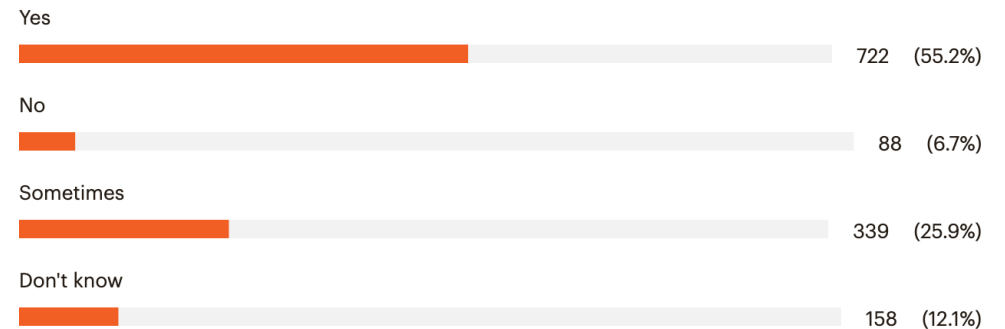
"Do you play the three touch rule?"



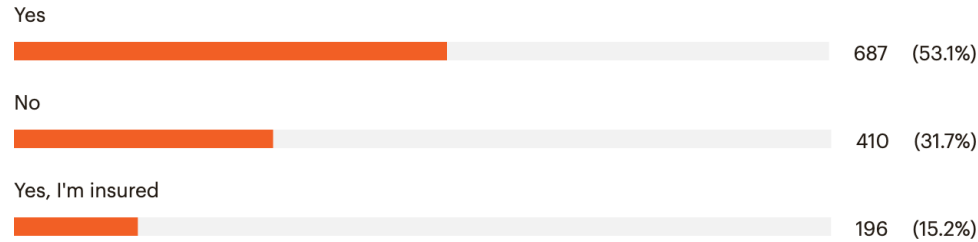
"Are you interested in a referee course?"



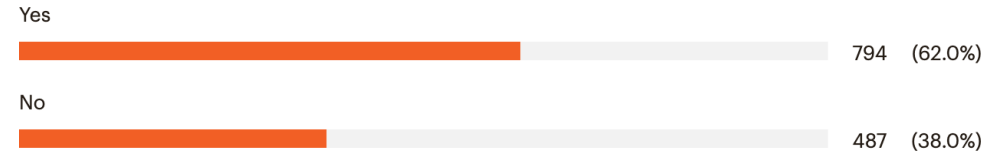
"Does your club play WFA rules?"



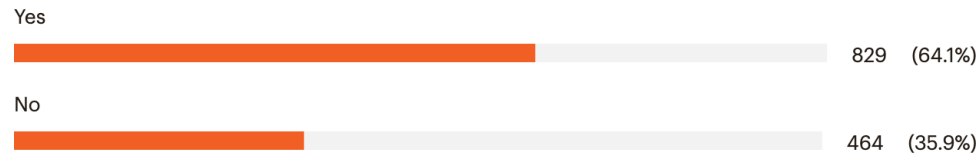
"Are you aware of the WFA Personal Accident Insurance scheme?"



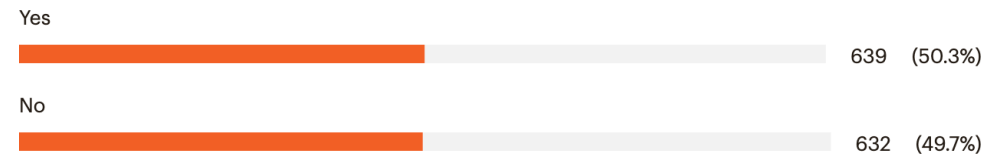
"Would you say that the WFA has succeeded in maintaining the sport as a non-contact sport?"



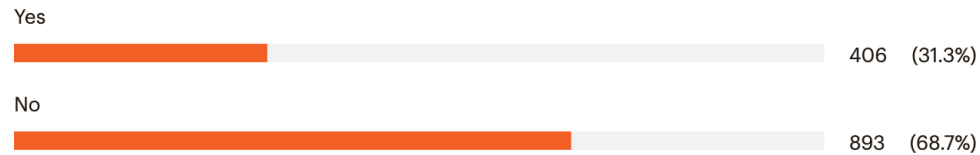
"Are you aware of the WFA's award- winning work with Walking Football and Impairment, including people living with Parkinsons and cancer?"



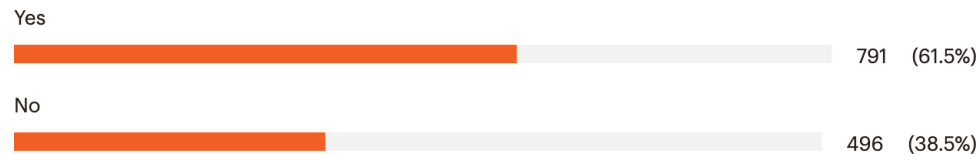
"Do you consider that progress has been made to reduce the non-walking problem?"



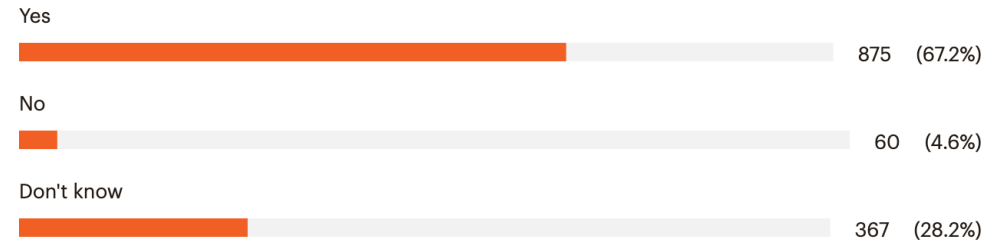
"Are you aware that there will be 6 WFA England teams (3 women and 3 men in the different age groups) playing in the next FIWFA World Nations Cup in Spain next October?"



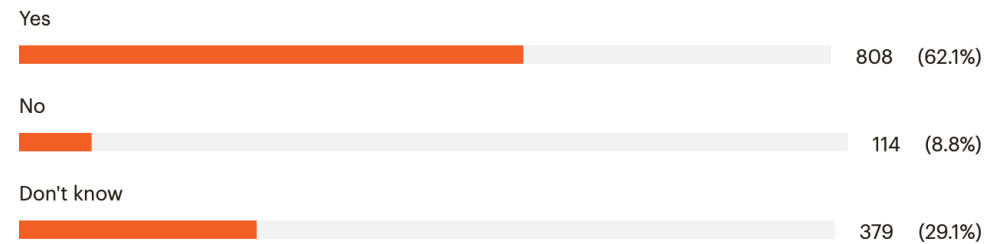
"Would you be interested in seeing this tournament either as a spectator or on a live stream?"



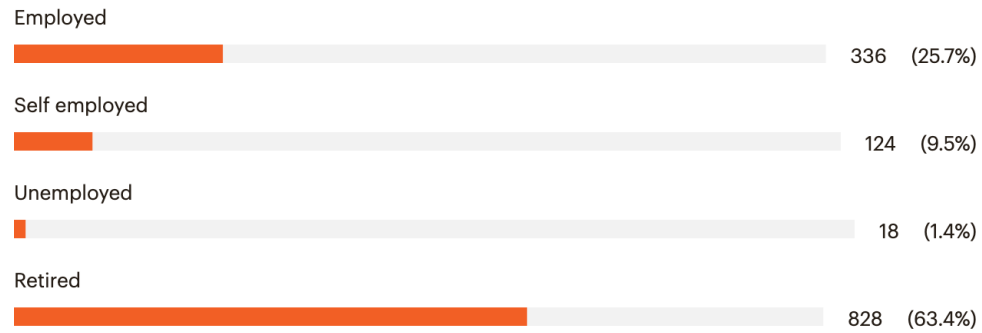
"Do you have members who are DEFIB trained?"



"Do you aim to have a first aider at all your sessions?"



"What is your employment status?"



"Does your club pro-actively try to address local inequalities (ie special rates for the unemployed etc)?"



Summary

We think the exercise was very worthwhile and yielded some results we expected and some we didn't.

The most important thing was that almost unanimously the responses were a positive and so Walking Football and The WFA are doing something right.

We will continue to develop the sport for the benefit of the thousands of people for whom playing Walking Football is the highlight of their week...and of course, for those players for whom it has been life changing.

Thanks again for your participation.

