



ONTARIO SPORT NETWORK



**Officials Strategy
Stakeholder Engagement Report
June 2022**

Report Prepared By



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Background

Ontario Sport Network (OSN) has received funding from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to develop and deliver a comprehensive plan for a officials recruiting and retention strategy for Ontario. OSN engaged ITP Sport & Recreation to develop the strategy and Sheffe Consulting was retained to conduct five focus groups to collect feedback from officials to inform the strategy.

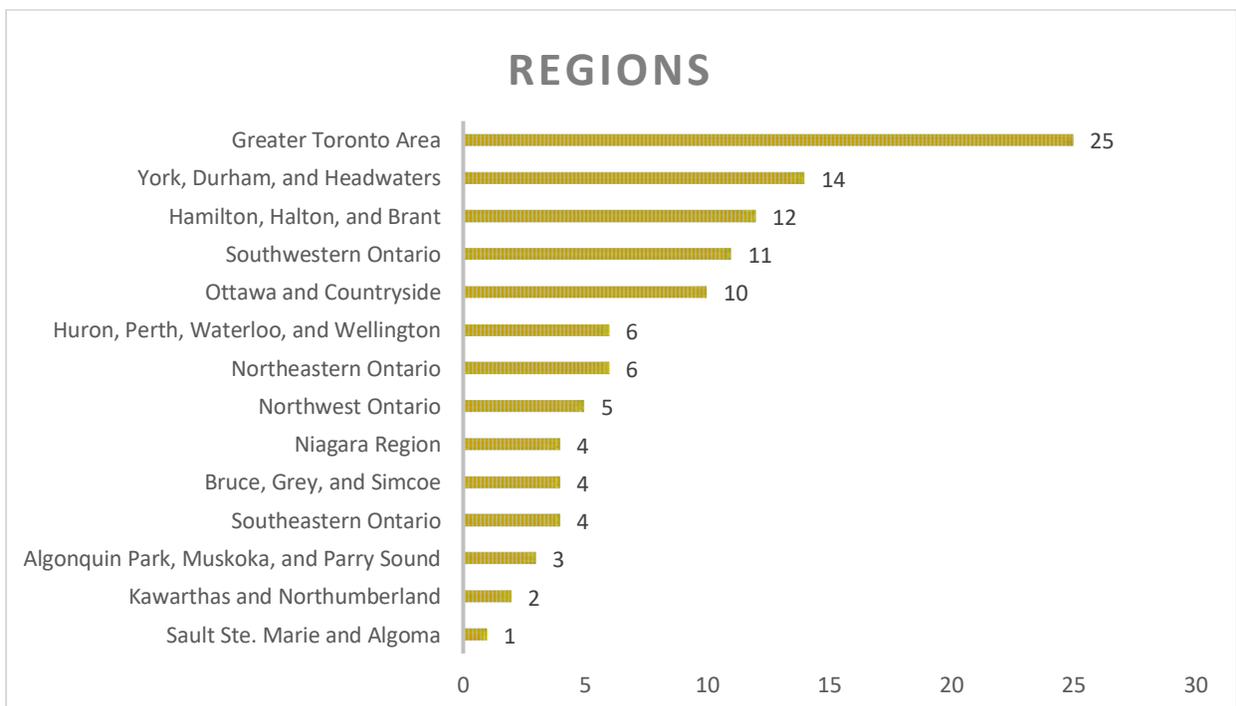
Sheffe Consulting utilized the support of 3 officials in an expert officials group who are experts in their respective sports. The three experts provided valuable suggestions for consideration which supported the development of these focus groups. Sheffe Consulting contacted provincial sport organizations (PSOs) and multi-sport organizations (MSOs) and requested their support in identifying 10 officials to participate who met a wide range of demographics, including: level of certification, experience and level of competition officiated, gender, age, geographic representation (across the province and rural/Urban/Northern), ethnic/cultural background, disability, etc. In total, 107 officials registered from 29 PSOs and MSOs and 92 officials participated in the focus groups.

Responses are presented graphically, or where questions were open ended, survey input was categorized into different themes to provide a high-level overview of the feedback received. The graphs that accompany the themed responses display the percentage distribution of survey responses based on theme. In cases where there were multiple ideas within one response, each idea was treated as a separate response and themed accordingly. Accompanying these graphs is a summary of responses, as well as key responses that are representative of each theme.

1. Demographics

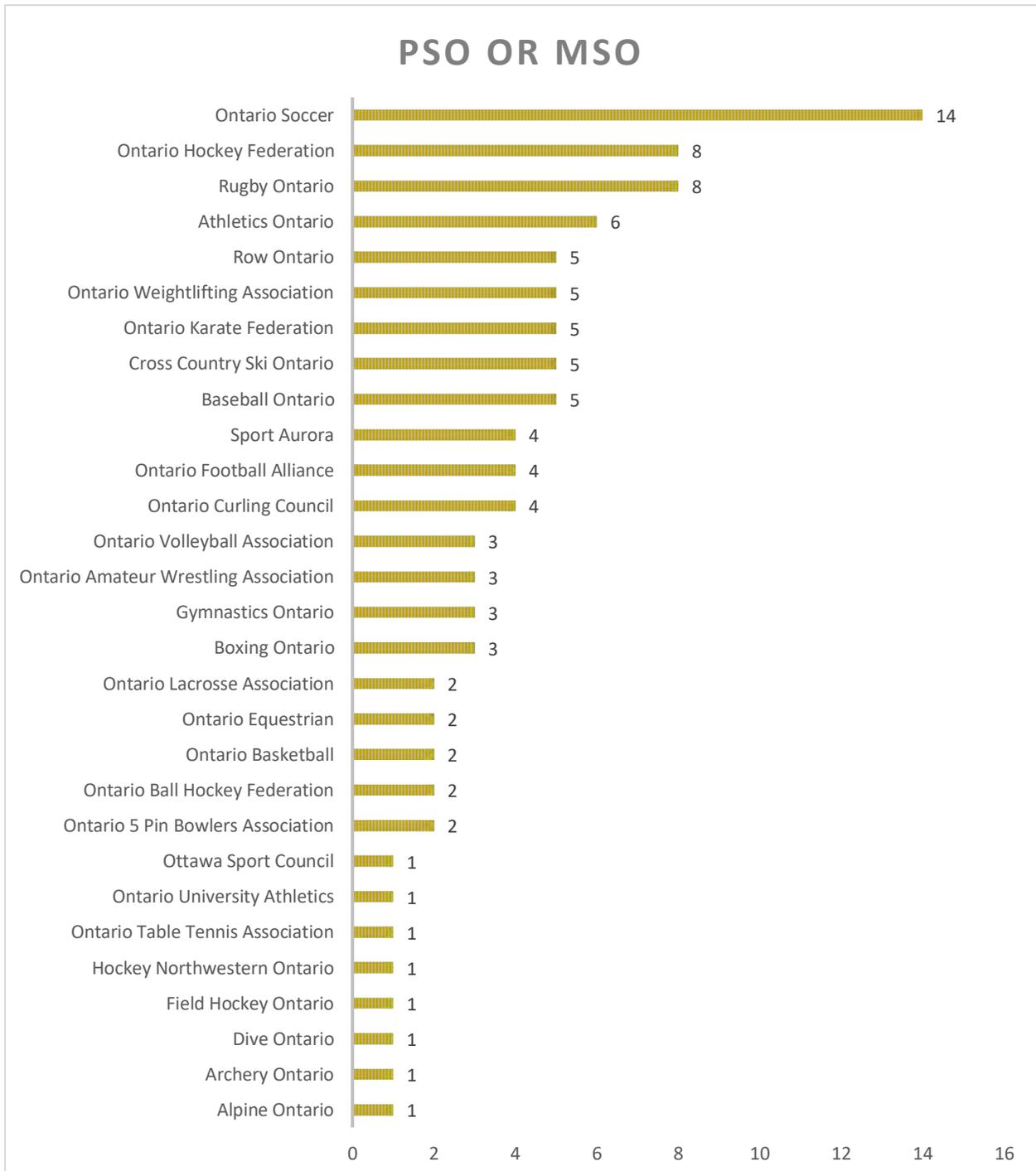
1.1 Regions

In what region of the province do you live? Refer to <https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca/regions> for boundaries of each region.



1.2 PSOs or MSOs

Select the PSO or MSO that invited you to participate.

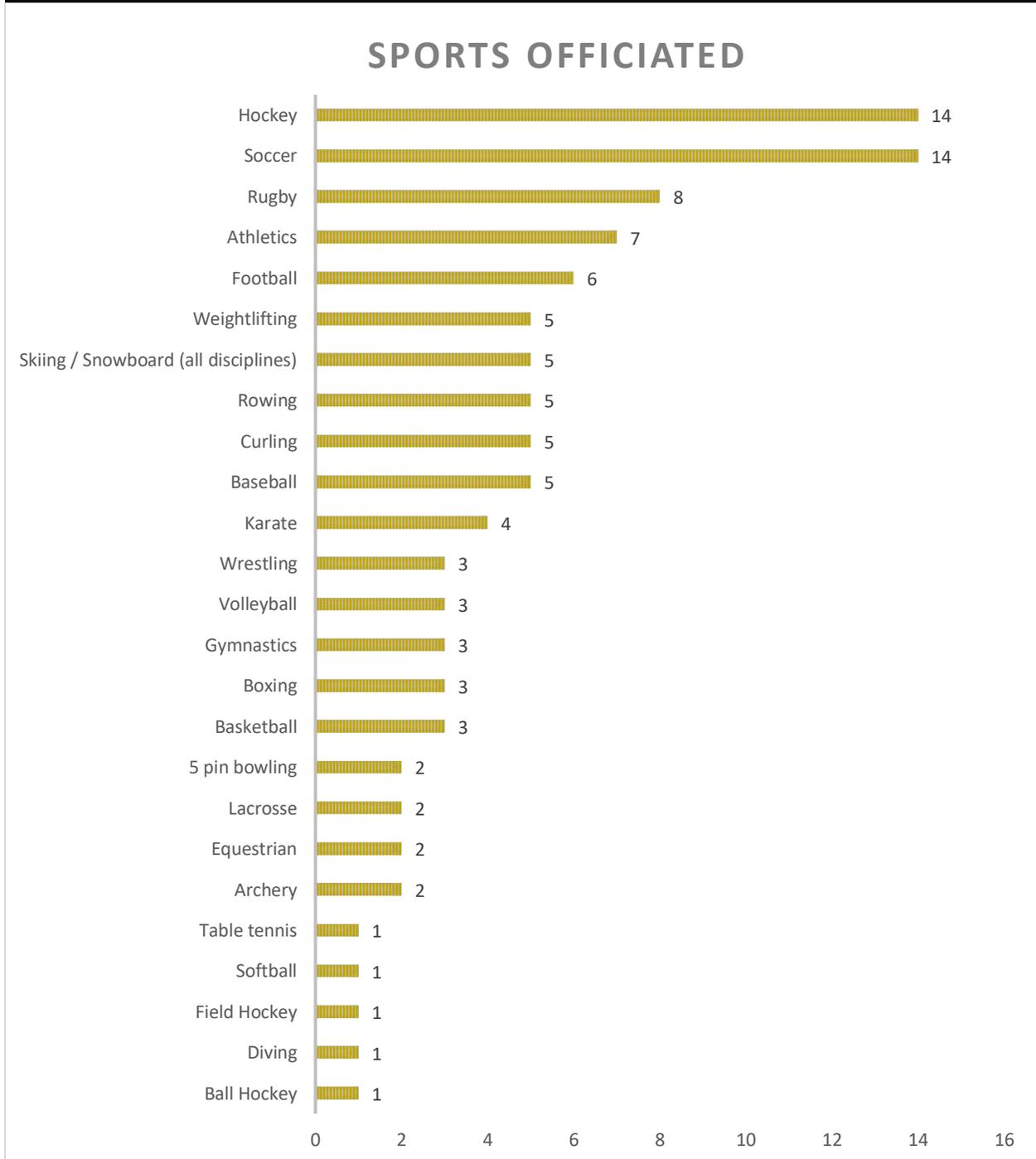


“Other” responses included:

- Variety Village
- Touch Football Ontario
- Northern Ontario Curling Association

1.3 Sports Officiated

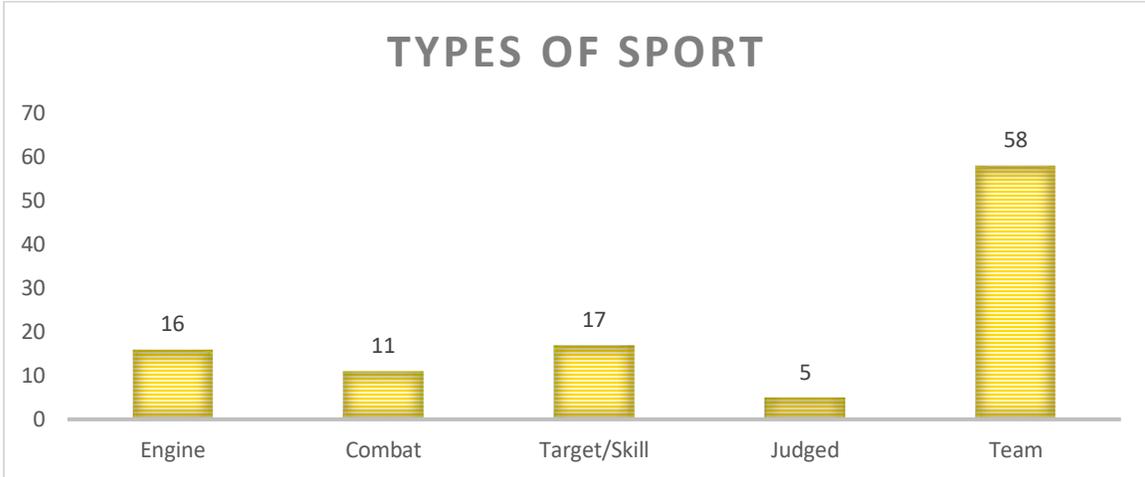
Which sport do you officiate? If you officiate more than one sport, please choose one sport that will guide the position or views of the answers you provide. Please note, para disciplines are included within each sport listed.



“Other” responses included:

- Multi sport

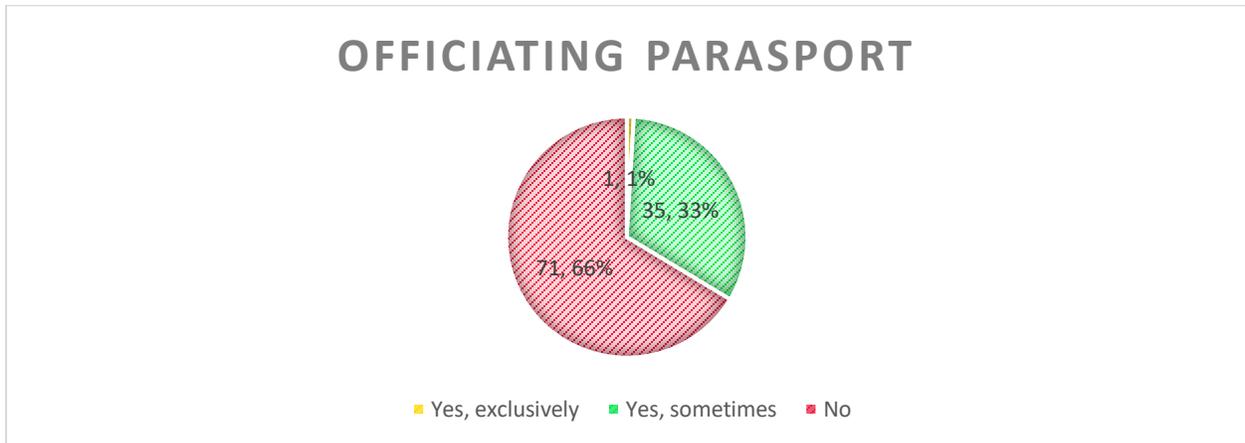
1.3 Types of Sport*



*See which sports fit into which classification at the end of the document.

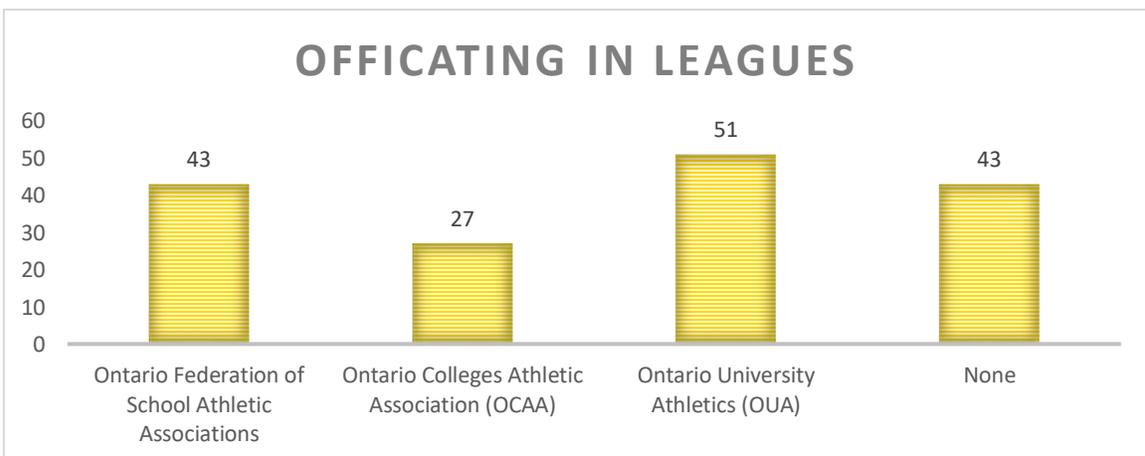
1.4 Officiating Para Sport

Do you officiate para sport?



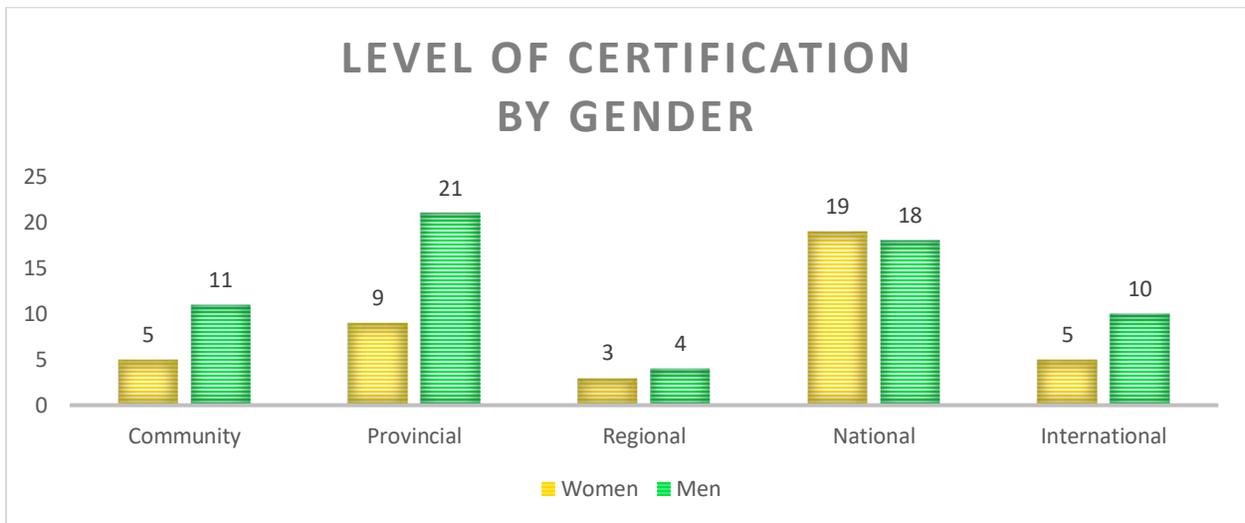
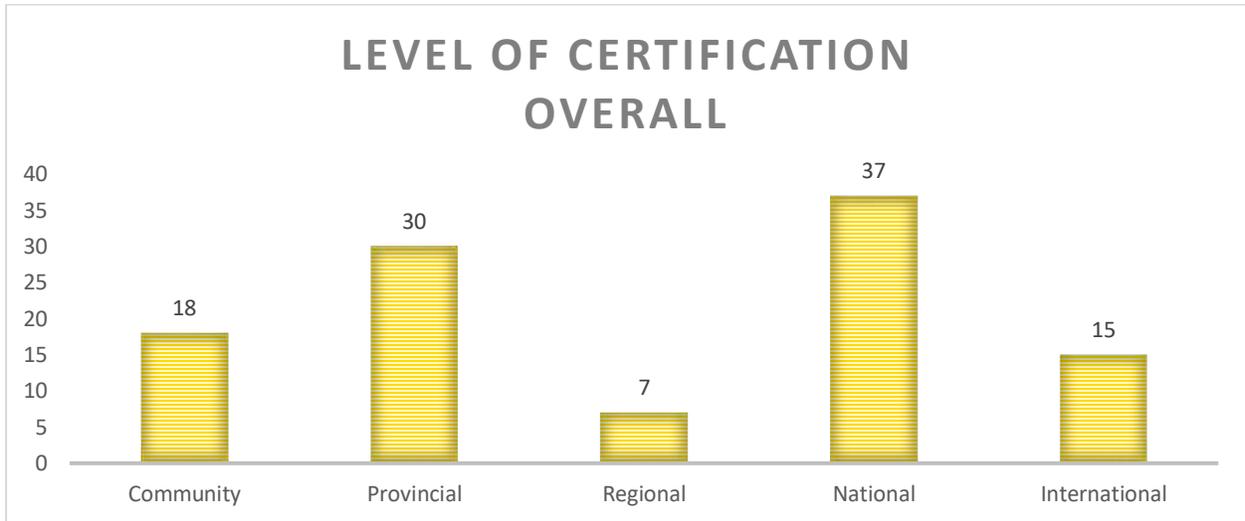
1.5 Officiating in Leagues

Do you officiate in these specific leagues? (Select all that apply).



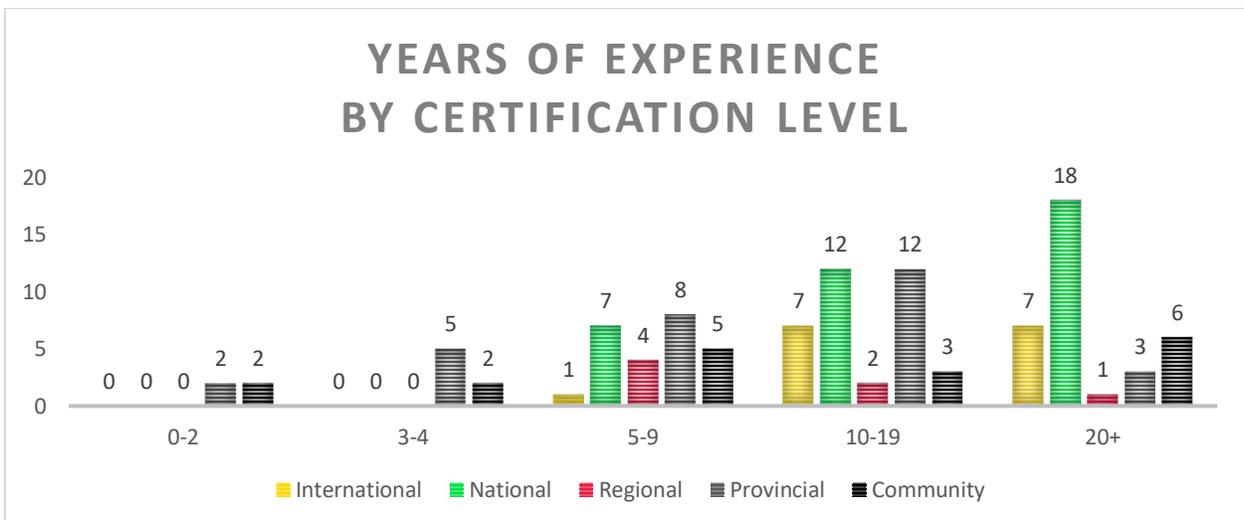
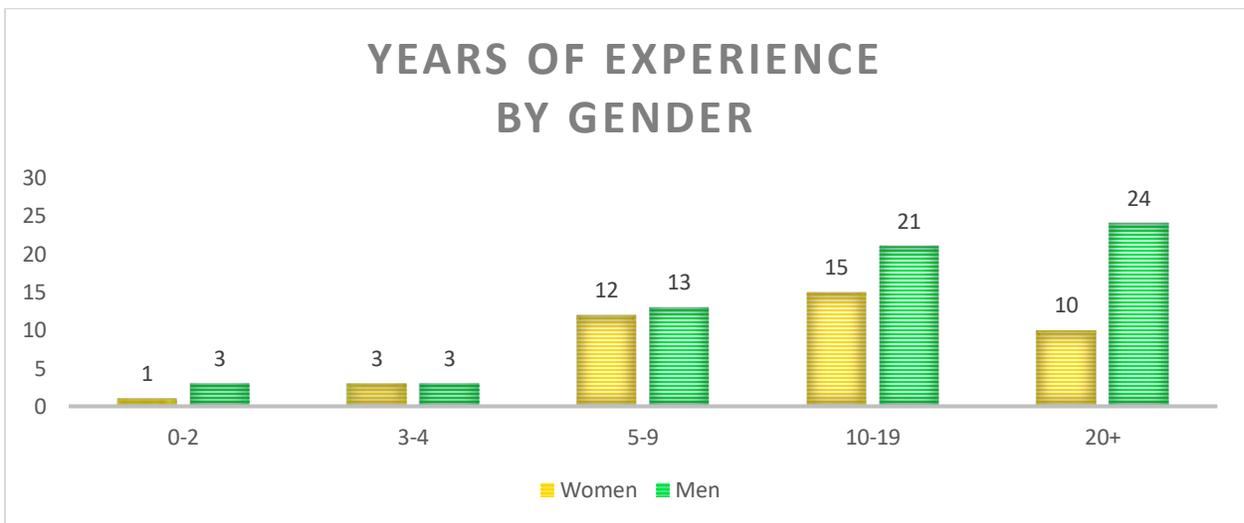
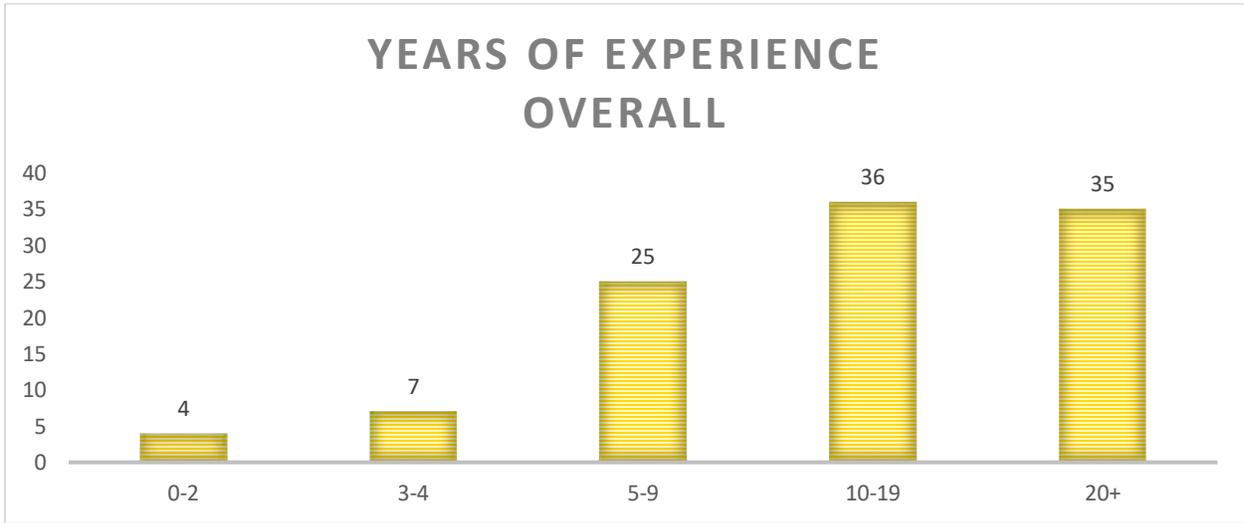
1.6 Level of Certification

At which level are you certified?



1.7 Years of Experience

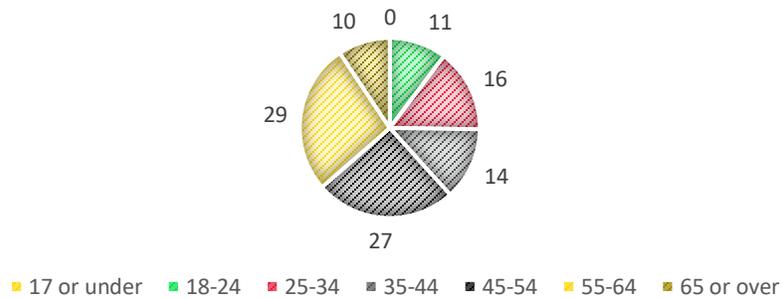
Number of years of experience?



1.8 Age Group

What is your age group?

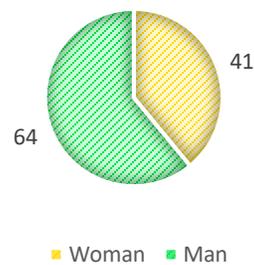
AGE GROUPS



1.9 Gender Identity

How do you identify your gender?

GENDER IDENTITY



1.10 Indigenous Identity

Do you identify as an Indigenous person in Canada, such as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit?

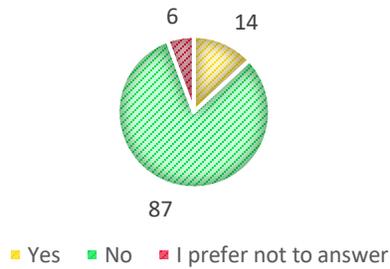
INDIGENOUS IDENTITY



1.11 Person of Colour Identity

Do you identify as a person of colour?

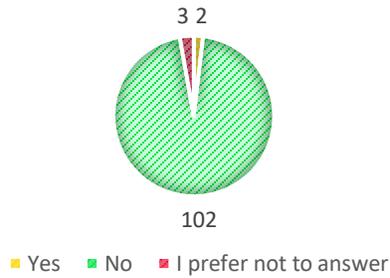
PERSON OF COLOUR IDENTITY



1.12 Newcomer Identity

Do you identify as a newcomer to Canada (an immigrant or refugee who has lived in Canada for less than 5 years)?

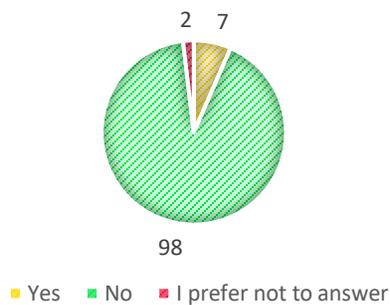
NEWCOMER IDENTITY



1.13 Person with a Disability Identity

Do you identify as a person with a disability?

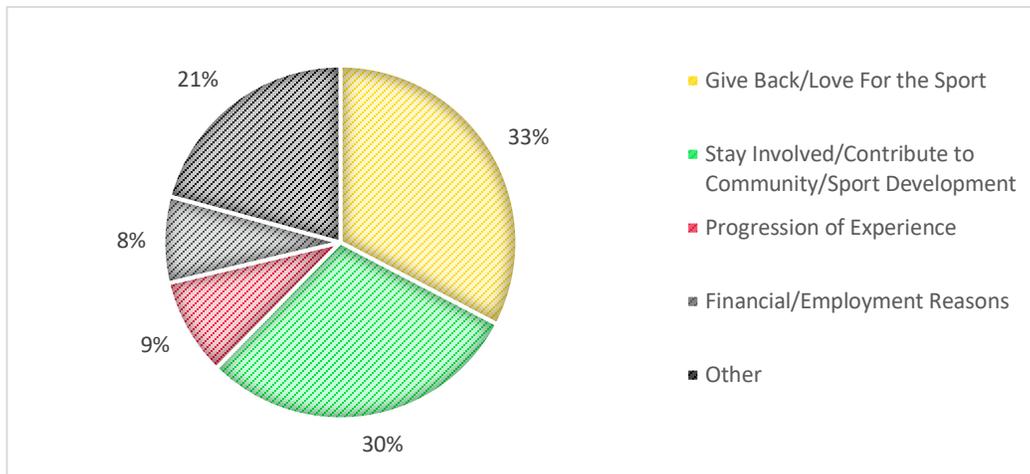
PERSON WITH A DISABILITY IDENTITY



2. Reasons for Officiating

2.1 Why You Became an Official

Why did you become an official?



Give Back/Love for the Sport

Give Back/Love for the Sport was most frequently mentioned by survey participants. They discussed their passion and love for various sports, and their desire to give back to the sport that they loved playing.

“To give back to the sport I grew up playing after all it has provided for me.”

Stay Involved/Contribute to Community/Sport Development

Stay Involved/Contribute to Community/Sport Development included comments related to participants wanting to stay involved in their sports after they had finished playing in them. They also spoke about wanting to contribute to the development of these sports in their communities.

“I wanted to stay involved in the sport and find a way to contribute to the sport’s development.”

Progression of Experience

Progression of Experience included comments related to participants progressing from roles such as Athlete/Coach to Official. Multiple participants mentioned that this seemed like a natural progression or a way to use their experience.

“I was an athlete in gymnastics, which seemed a natural progression from athlete to referee.”

Financial/Employment Reasons

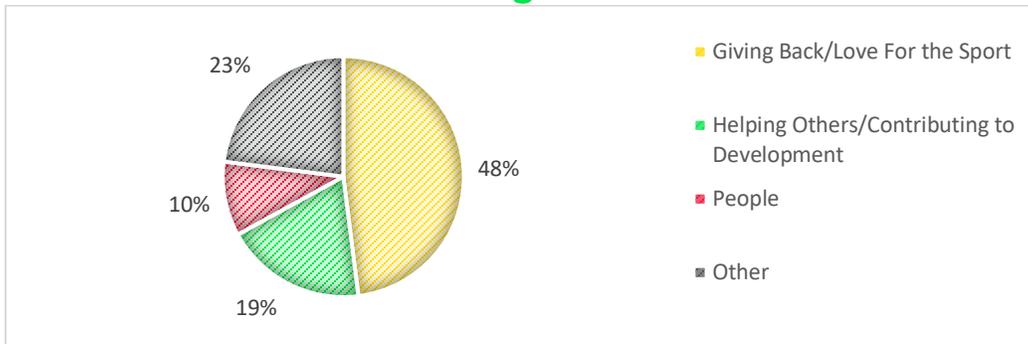
For the broad theme of what we are labelling Financial/Employment Reasons, participants spoke about needing additional income or job/volunteer experience.

“To help fund the rising costs of being an Active International Athlete.”

Other

Other (21%) included 22 ideas, which can be divided into the following topics: learn more about the sport (6), representation and advocacy (6), help athletes (5), and enjoyment (5).

2.2 What Do You Love About Being an Official?



Giving Back/Love for the Sport

Giving Back/Love for the Sport was most frequently mentioned by focus group attendees. Multiple individuals from all focus groups mentioned ideas related to this theme. They discussed the importance of staying involved in a sport that they love, giving back to the sport community, and sharing their love of the sport with others.

Helping Others/Contributing to Development

Helping Others/Contributing to Development included comments related to providing opportunities for other people to enjoy the sport, contributing to the development of athletes/officials/the sport, and supporting others' love for the sport. All focus groups mentioned ideas related to this theme.

People

All focus groups identified ideas related to People. This theme included comments related to camaraderie/community/teamwork, meeting new people, and working with or learning from others.

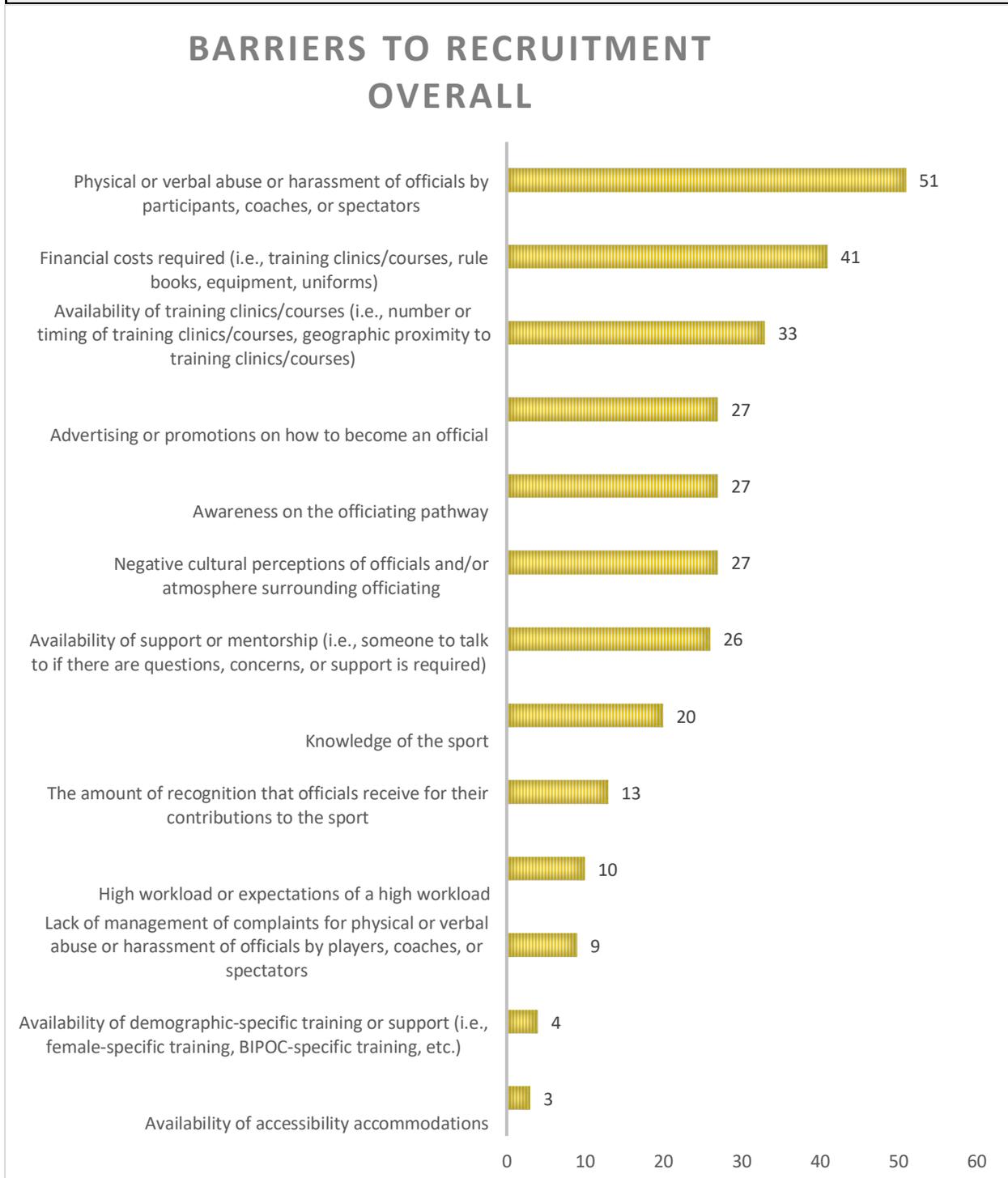
Other

Other included ideas which can be divided into the following topics: fitness, front row seat, travel, challenge, pay, and miscellaneous.

3. Recruitment

3.1 Barriers to Recruitment

In your opinion, what are the largest barriers (choose up to 3) to the recruitment of officials in your sport?

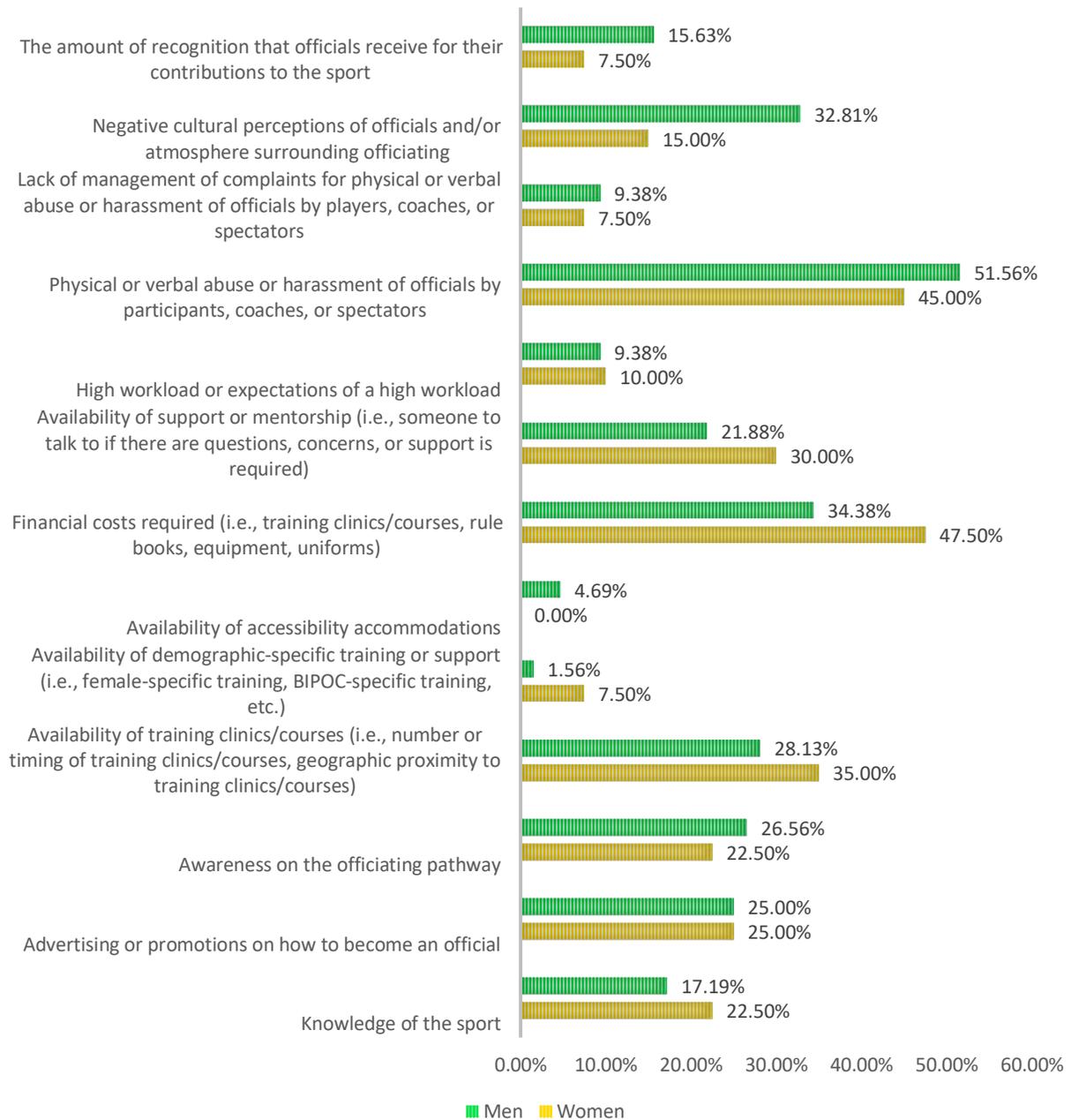


“Other” responses included comments related to:

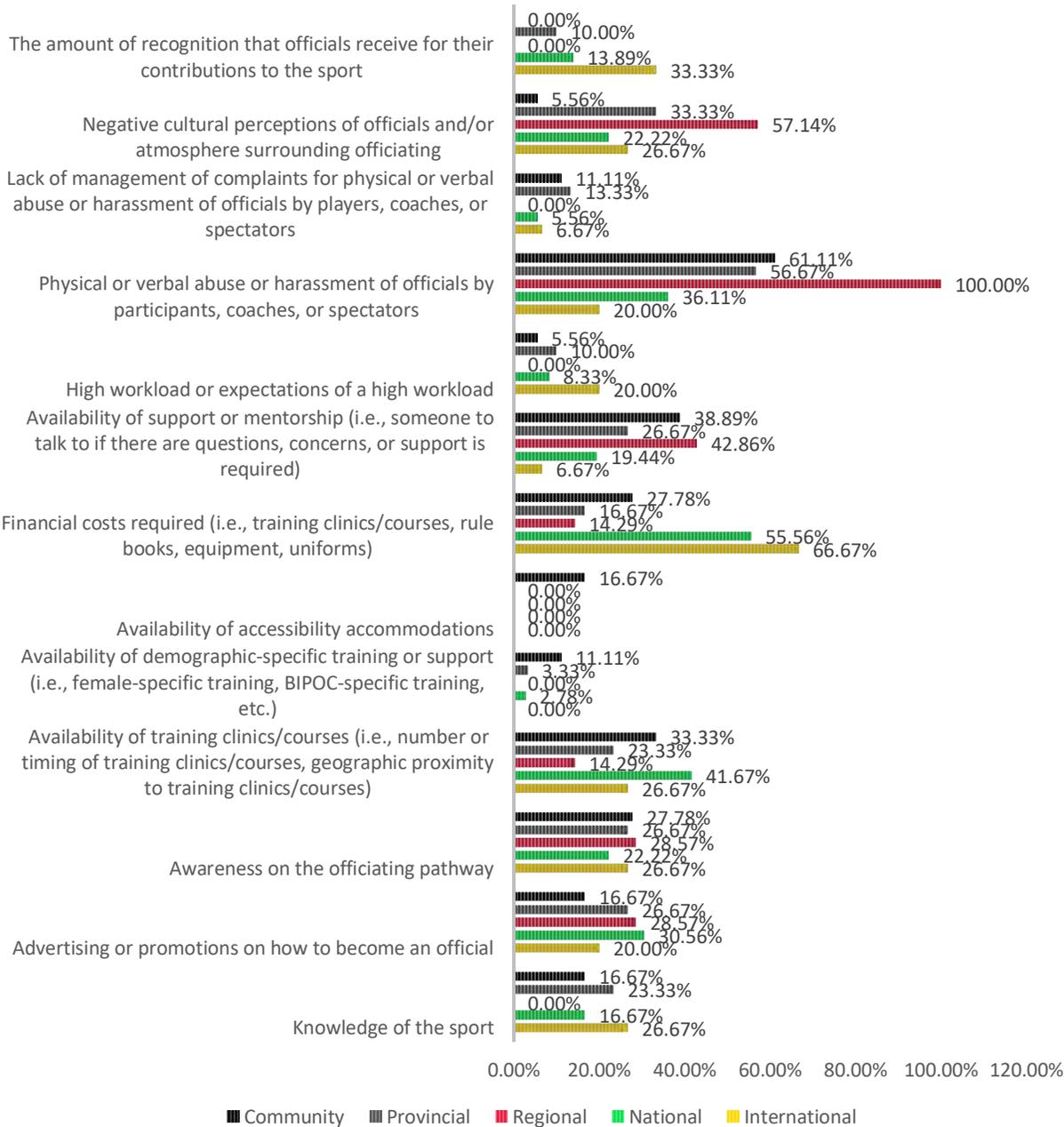
- Time commitment (3)
- Compensation (3)
- High travel costs
- Training limitations/locations

- Attitudes/approaches of senior officials (2)
- Accessibility of sport facilities
- Dealing with volunteers
- Desire – rare mindset

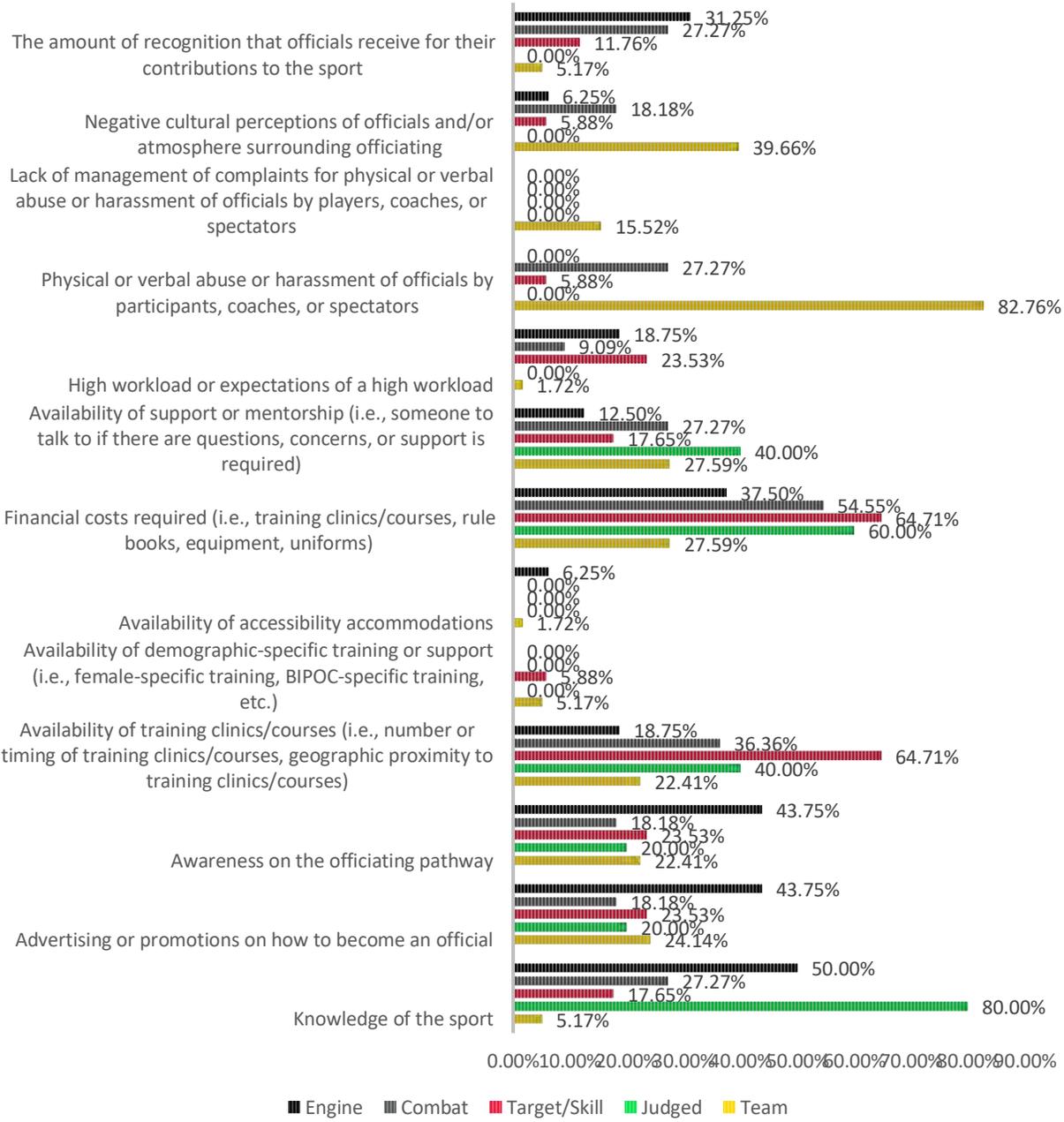
BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT BY GENDER



BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT BY CERTIFICATION LEVEL

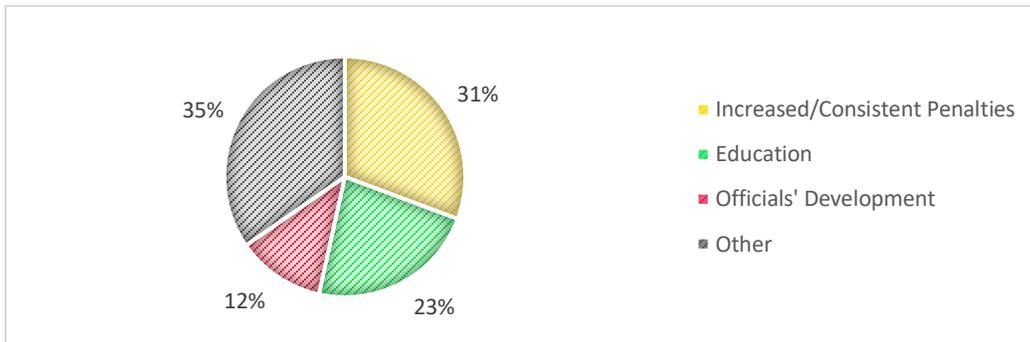


BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT BY TYPE OF SPORT



3.2 Solutions to Address the Barriers of Recruitment

3.2.1 Abuse or Harassment of Officials & Lack of Management of Complaints of Abuse or Harassment



Increased/Consistent Penalties

All focus groups identified ideas related to Increased/Consistent Penalties. Attendees mentioned ideas relating to creating frameworks or 'terms of reference' for consequences of behaviours, increasing fines, and consistently applying penalties.

Education

Education included comments from two focus groups. They mentioned education for team officials, spectators, parents, players, and coaches.

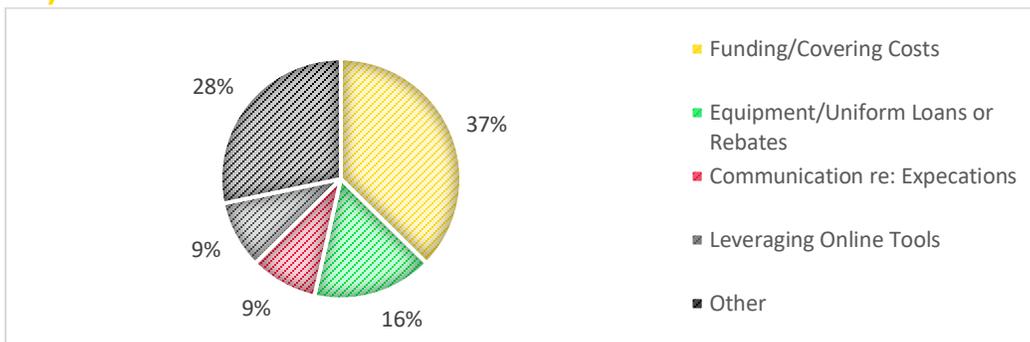
Officials' Development

Three focus groups identified ideas related to Officials' Development. This theme included comments related to mentorship for officials, True Sport, and developing strong officiating skills.

Other

Other included ideas which can be divided into the following topics: advertising information, publicizing suspension information, and miscellaneous.

3.2.2 Financial Costs Required (Clinics/Courses, Rule books, Equipment, Uniforms)



Funding/Covering Costs

All focus groups identified ideas related to Funding/Covering Costs. Attendees mentioned funding specifically for new officials who are starting out. They also mentioned fundraising/government support and funding for travel, courses/clinics, tournaments, etc.

Equipment/Uniform Loans or Rebates

Equipment/Uniform Loans or Rebates included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned having equipment for female umpires, lowering equipment costs, and having a rebate program for uniforms.

Communication re: Expectations

Two focus groups identified ideas related to Communication re: Expectations. They mentioned the need for communication to new event hosts about expectations, and a code of expectations for officials.

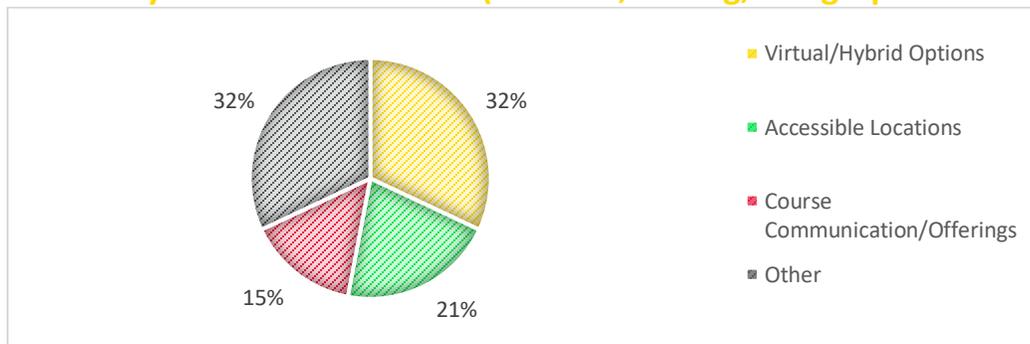
Leveraging Online Tools

Leveraging Online Tools included comments from two focus groups. They mentioned using virtual learning for training courses and having online copies of manuals/rule books.

Other

Other included ideas which can be divided into the following topics: consistent pay, eliminating unpaid time, and miscellaneous.

3.2.3 Availability of Clinics & Courses (Number, Timing, Geographic Proximity)



Virtual/Hybrid Options

All focus groups identified ideas related to Virtual/Hybrid Options. Attendees from all focus groups mentioned using virtual learning tools to offer online/hybrid courses to improve access, particularly in areas where distance is challenging such as Northern Ontario.

Accessible Locations

Accessible Locations included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned needing recreation infrastructure in transit accessible locations and challenges with transportation to clinics.

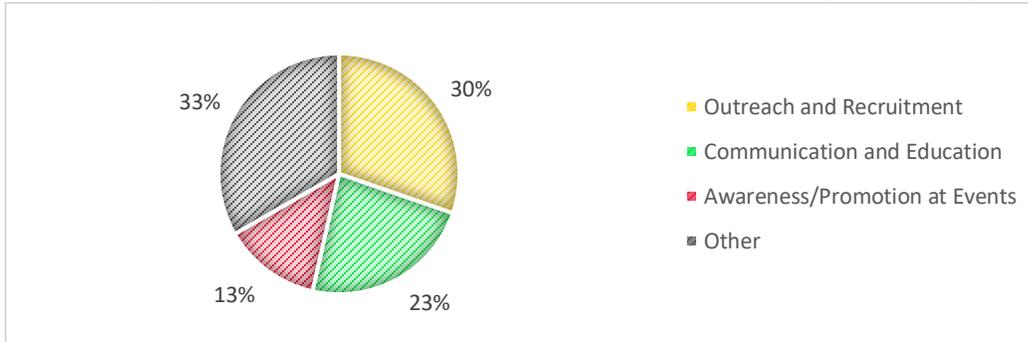
Course Communication/Offerings

One focus group identified ideas related to Course Communication/Offerings. They mentioned needing more course information/notification, and an increase in the number of course offerings.

Other

Other included ideas which can be divided into the following topics: pre-season/mid-season clinics, positions for mid-level officials, and miscellaneous.

3.2.4 Advertising/Promotions & Awareness of the Officiating Pathway



Outreach and Recruitment

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Outreach and Recruitment. Focus group attendees mentioned developing a club recruiting approach, getting clubs to “buy into” recruitment and using incentives, and creating regional approaches for attracting and developing officials.

Communication and Education

Communication and Education included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned having a clear definition of the pathway, communicating the need for new officials, and increasing the awareness and education of what is involved with being an official.

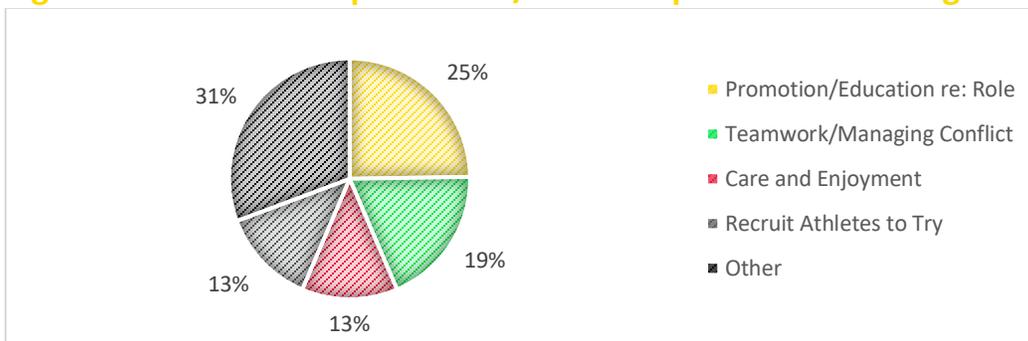
Awareness/Promotion at Events

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Awareness/Promotion at Events. They mentioned promoting officiating at different events, competitions, and post-secondary club days.

Other

Other included ideas which can be divided into the following topics: financial incentives/reduced costs, mentorship, frequency of promotion, and miscellaneous.

3.2.5 Negative Cultural Perceptions and/or Atmosphere Surrounding Officials



Promotion/Education re: Role

Two focus groups identified ideas related to Promotion/Education re: Role. Focus group attendees mentioned the importance of promoting and educating others on the role of officials, and helping athletes understand how officials have come to their roles – often, former athletes with a good understanding of the sport.

Teamwork/Managing Conflict

Teamwork/Managing Conflict included comments from two focus groups. They mentioned having multiple officials working together to support each other, having a bank of “set responses” to

parents/coaches/athletes to mitigate conflicts, and having an environment for officials that is isolated from athletes post-game.

Care and Enjoyment

One focus group identified ideas related to Care and Enjoyment. They mentioned bringing a personal connection to the job and highlighting how officials make the sport more enjoyable for athletes.

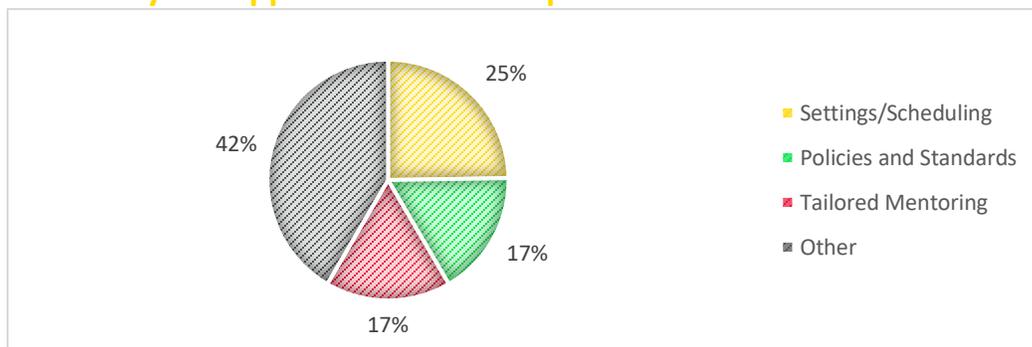
Recruit Athletes to Try

Recruit Athletes to Try included ideas from two focus groups, related to having athletes try out officiating and introducing it as an alternative to coaching.

Other

Other involved miscellaneous ideas including but not limited to professional attire/expectations and mitigating biases in sports that are judged.

3.2.6 Availability of Support or Mentorship



Settings/Scheduling

One focus group identified ideas related to Settings/Scheduling. Focus group attendees mentioned using settings that allow for active guidance to support the practicing and acquisition of skills, having longer clinics, and using purposeful scheduling to facilitate mentorship opportunities.

Policies and Standards

Policies and Standards included comments from one focus group. They mentioned establishing criteria and standards for mentorship and implementing annual certifications.

Tailored Mentoring

One focus group identified ideas related to Tailored Mentoring. They mentioned offering tailored mentoring depending on the level of game and officials.

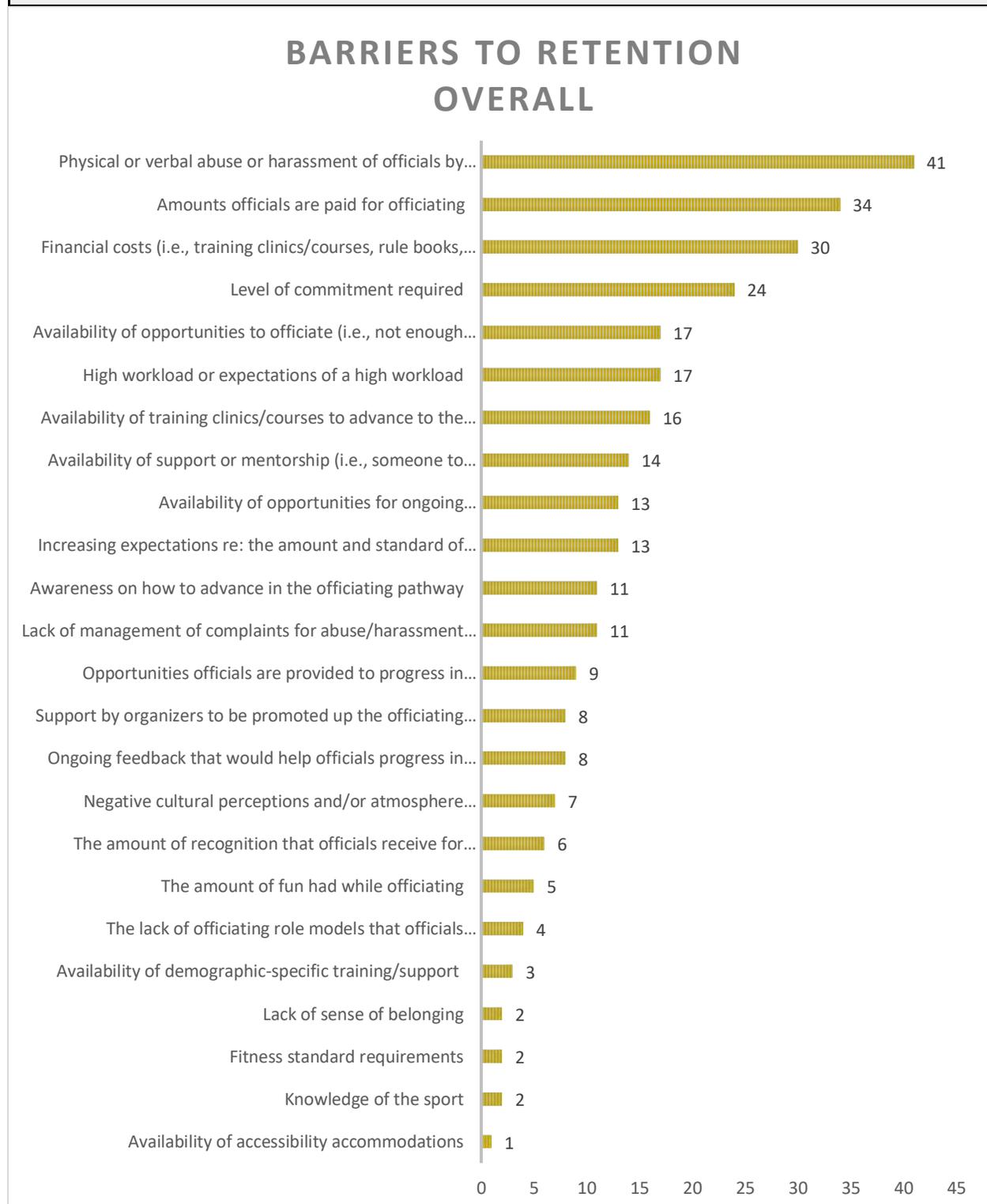
Other

Other involved miscellaneous ideas including but not limited to developing supportive networks/communities, recruiting mentors, and offering compensation.

4. Retention

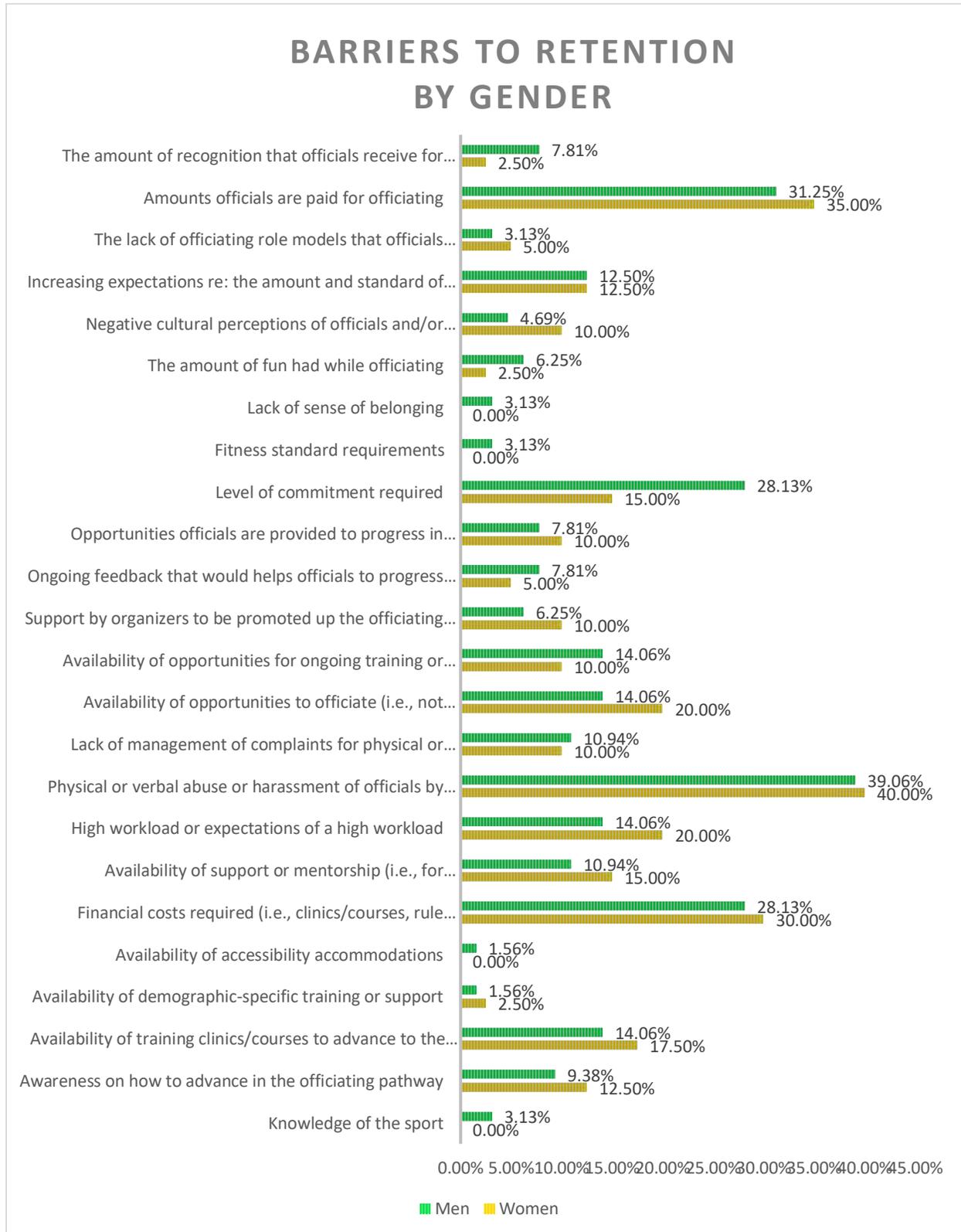
4.1 Barriers to Retention

In your opinion, what are the largest barriers (choose up to 3) to the retention of officials in your sport? In other words, what are the largest factors (choose up to 3) that drive officials to quit in your sport?

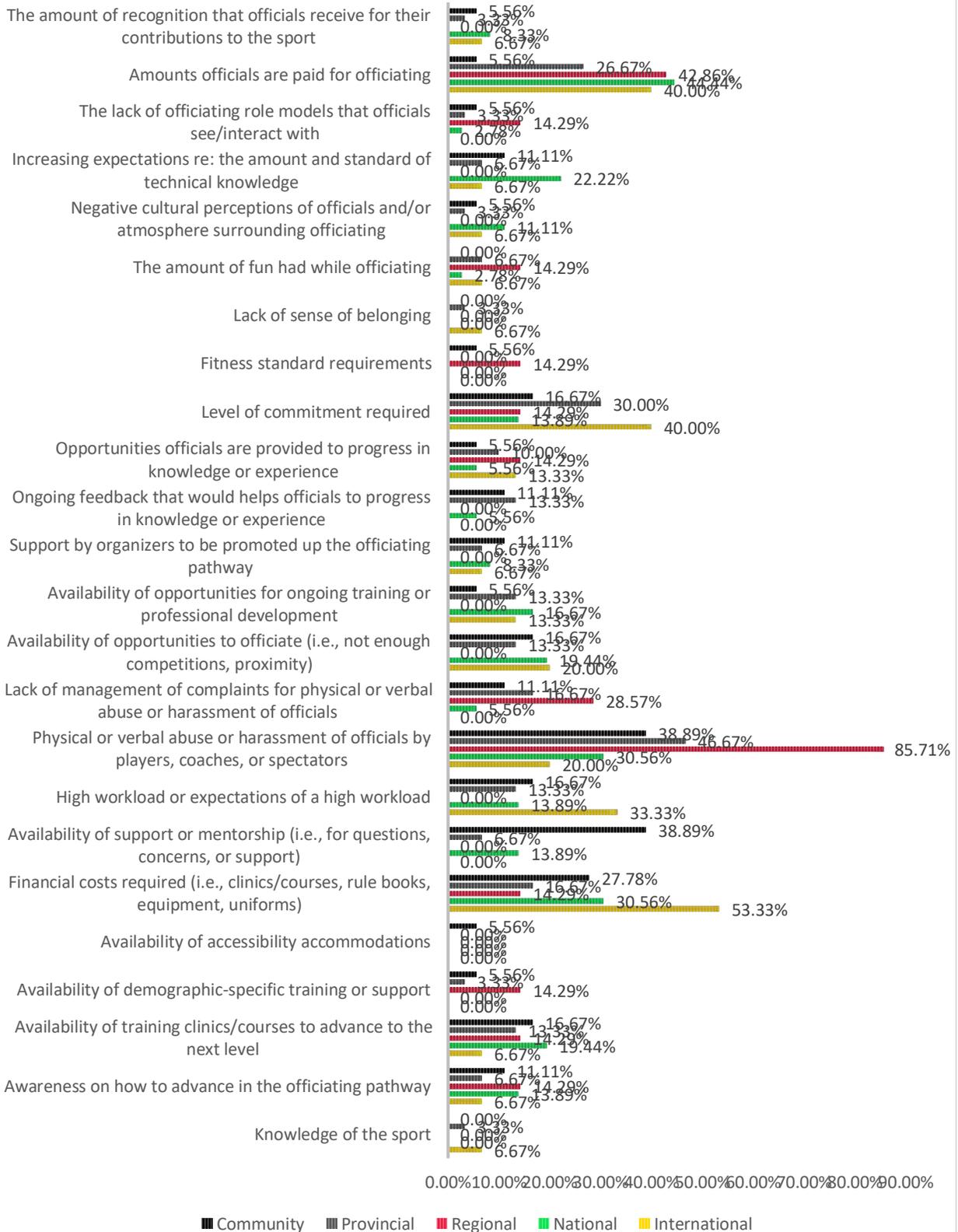


“Other” responses included comments related to:

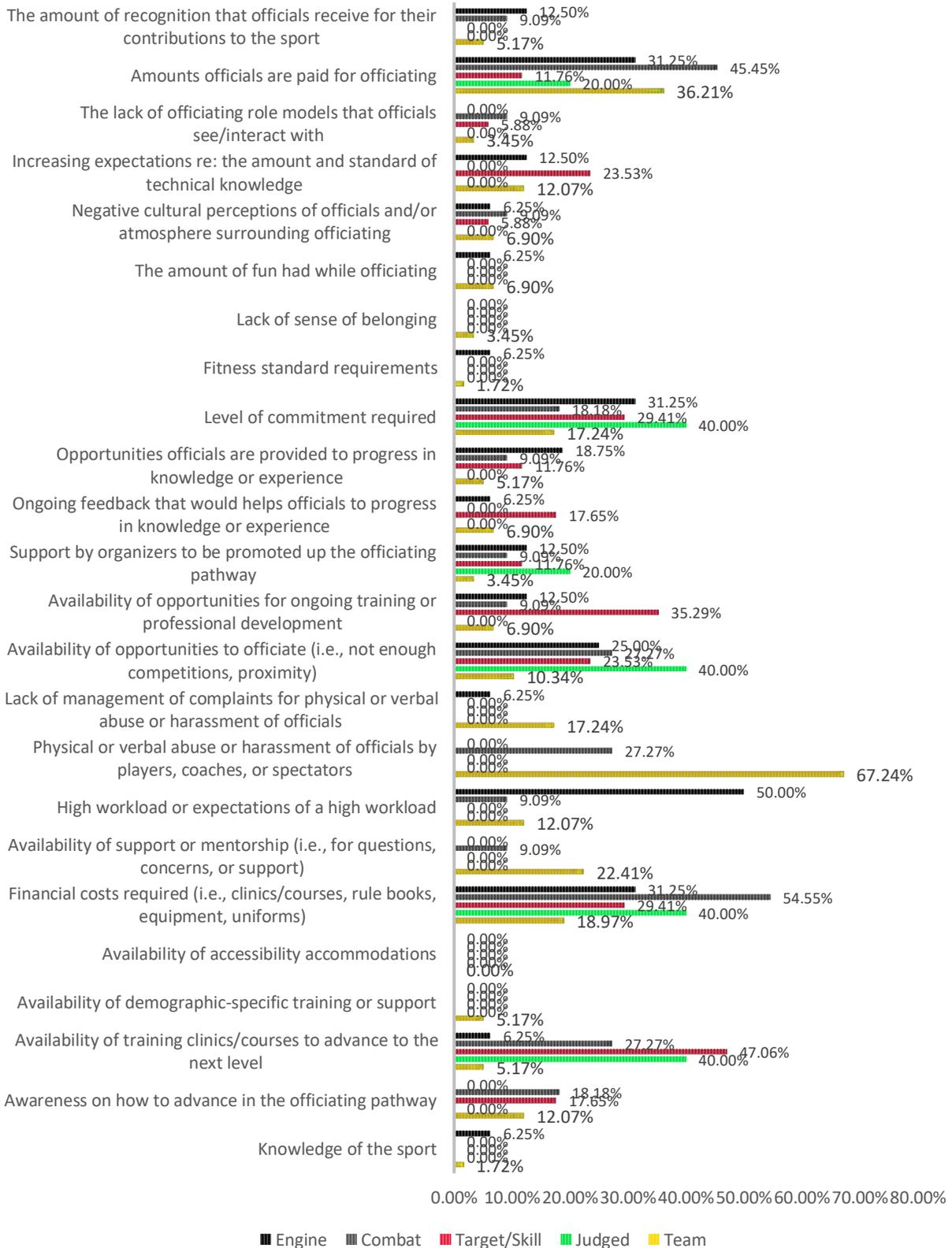
- Time commitment (2)
- Attitudes of senior officials
- Transportation barriers
- Abuse
- Lack of specific training
- Lack of consistency of expectations re: allowing individuals to advance



BARRIERS TO RETENTION BY CERTIFICATION LEVEL

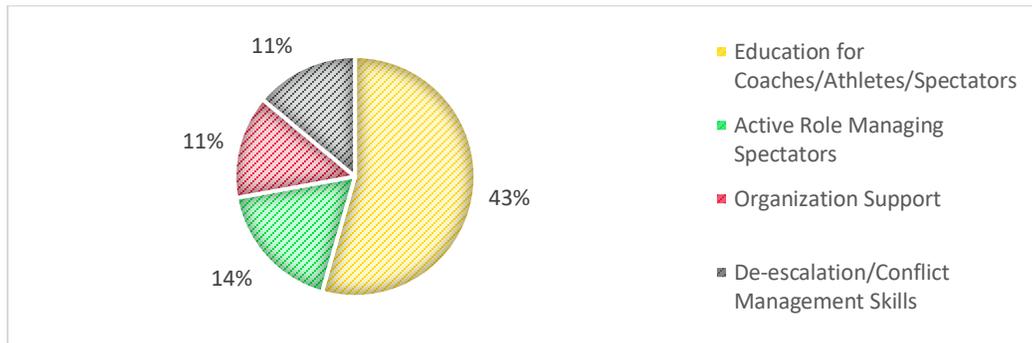


BARRIERS TO RETENTION BY TYPE OF SPORT



4.2 Solutions to Address the Barriers of Retention

4.2.1 Abuse or Harassment of Officials & Lack of Management of Complaints of Abuse or Harassment



Education for Coaches/Athletes/Spectators

All focus groups identified ideas related to Education for Coaches/Athletes/Spectators. Focus group attendees mentioned hosting training sessions for all participants, having signed policies, posting educational signs around facilities, and promoting an understanding of the role of officials.

Active Role Managing Spectators

Teamwork/Managing Conflict included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned officials and convenors being actively involved in managing spectators and putting controls in place to handle abusive spectators such as ejecting them from the property.

Organization Support

Three focus groups identified ideas related to Organization Support. They mentioned having support to back up officials and upholding organizations' rules.

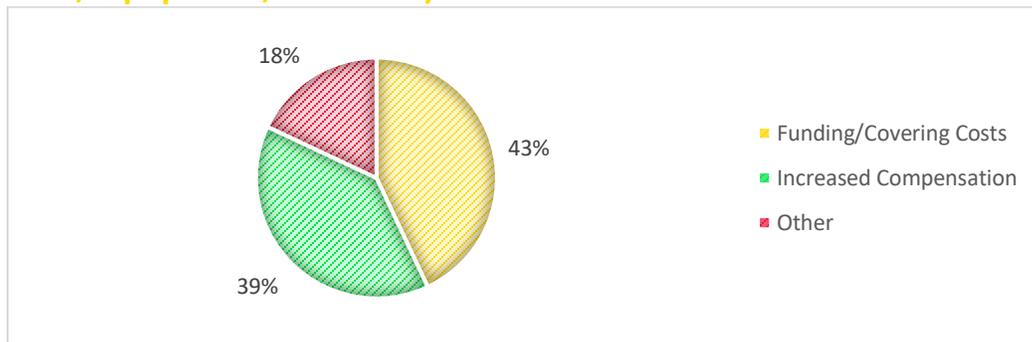
De-escalation/Conflict Management Skills

De-escalation/Conflict Management Skills included ideas from four focus groups related to teaching officials de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution skills in training that are specific to dealing with abuse.

Other

Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: mentorship/age differences and miscellaneous.

4.2.2 Amounts Officials are Paid & Financial Costs Required (Clinics/Courses, Rule Books, Equipment, Uniforms)



Funding/Covering Costs

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Funding/Covering Costs. Focus group attendees mentioned covering some of the costs of equipment, registration fees, travel, uniforms, and training. They suggested looking into government funding, sponsorships, and increased ticket price for ticketed events.

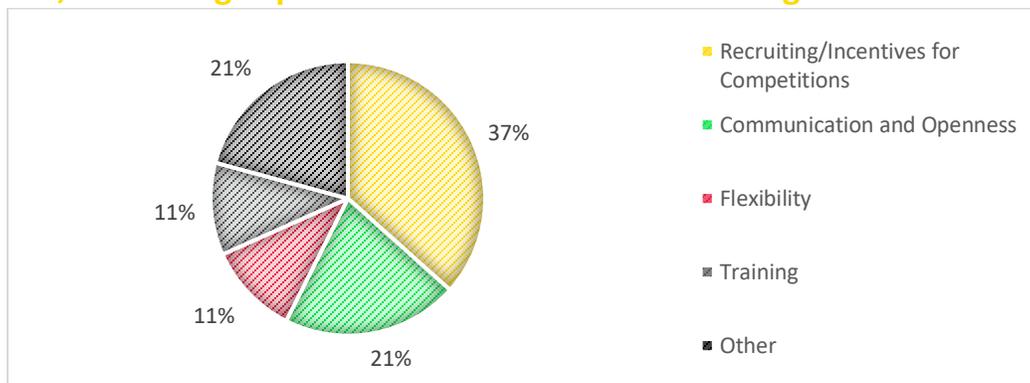
Increased Compensation

Increased Compensation included comments from all focus groups. They discussed increasing the honorarium or pay for officials in general and mentioned adjusting for inflation and the cost of living. They also mentioned making the rate of pay more lucrative relative to other part-time job opportunities.

Other

Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: leveraging online tools and miscellaneous.

4.2.3 Level of Commitment Required, High Workload or Expectations of a High Workload, Increasing Expectations on Technical Knowledge



Recruiting/Incentives for Competitions

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Recruiting/Incentives for Competitions. Focus group attendees mentioned providing incentives to encourage officials to sign up for competitions, recruiting athletes/coaches/retirees or people who do shift work, and doing clinics with teams which helps with advertising officiating.

Communication and Openness

Communication and Openness included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned having consistent and timely communication regarding assignments, explaining mentorship opportunities, and letting new officials know that it's okay to decline games or make mistakes.

Flexibility

One focus group identified ideas related to Flexibility. They mentioned shortening seasons or flexibility in choosing the number of days of competitions.

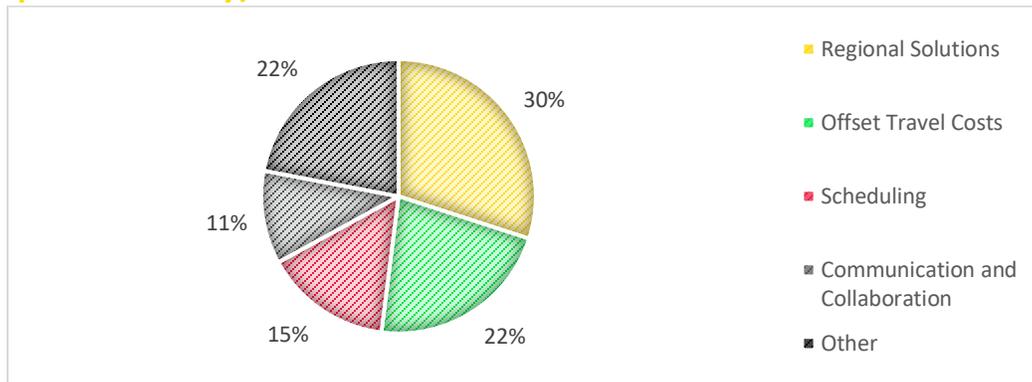
Training

Training included ideas from one focus group, related to covering costs of initial training and limiting the requirements of training upkeep.

Other

Other involved miscellaneous ideas including but not limited to having more positive feedback, focusing on continuous learning, and sponsoring officials.

4.2.4 Availability of Opportunities to Officiate (Not Enough Competitions, Geographic Proximity)



Regional Solutions

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Regional Solutions. Focus group attendees mentioned assigning a chair to each region to staff events with officials from the region, assigning one seat per competition for Northern/Eastern officials, limited opportunities in Northern Ontario, and creating a central system for officials to be selected for events across Ontario.

Offset Travel Costs

Offset Travel Costs included comments from all focus groups. They mentioned needing funding for travel costs, allowing officials to use team transport/car pools, and creating a fund to bring officials from Northern/Eastern Ontario to larger events.

Scheduling

One focus group identified ideas related to Scheduling. They mentioned that scheduling conflicts are forcing officials to choose between playing or officiating in their sport and that limitations in scheduling are preventing officials from moving to higher positions.

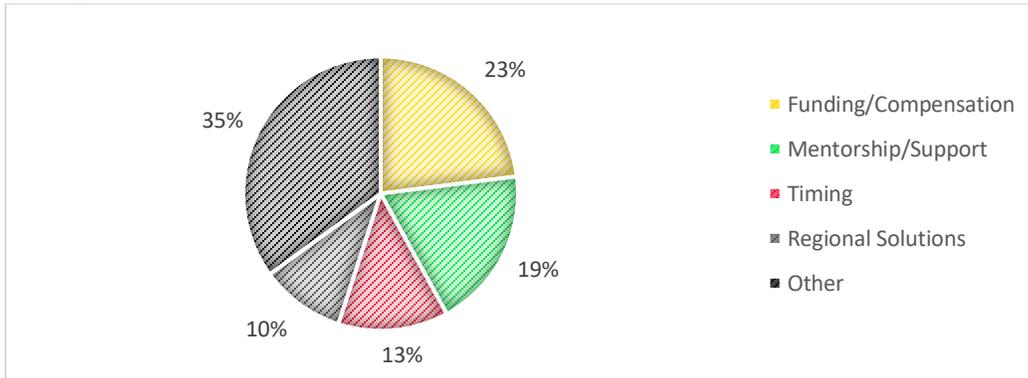
Communication and Collaboration

Communication and Collaboration included ideas from two focus groups related to collaborating with other provinces and senior officials not allowing opportunities for progression.

Other

Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: school sports, developing officials, and miscellaneous.

4.2.5 Availability of Opportunities to Progress (Training Courses, Support & Mentorship, Ongoing Training or Professional Development, Awareness on How to Advance)



Funding/Compensation

Three focus groups identified ideas related to Funding/Compensation. Focus group attendees suggested offering funding for training and travel. They discussed the costs to be an official including taking time off work and the high costs of entry to become an official.

Mentorship/Support

Mentorship/Support included comments from four focus groups. They mentioned needing frequent and consistent mentorship, needing more mentors in general, and providing better support to new officials. They also suggested mentorship opportunities with national/professional officials and involving mentors in decisions on promotions.

Timing

Two focus groups identified ideas related to Timing. They suggested offering more education/training opportunities in the off-season and having monthly intake courses. They also discussed allowing officials to progress faster.

Regional Solutions

Regional Solutions included ideas from two focus groups related to recruiting more experienced officials to outlying areas for training, finding space for clinics, and using e-learning to provide opportunities for officials in remote areas.

Other

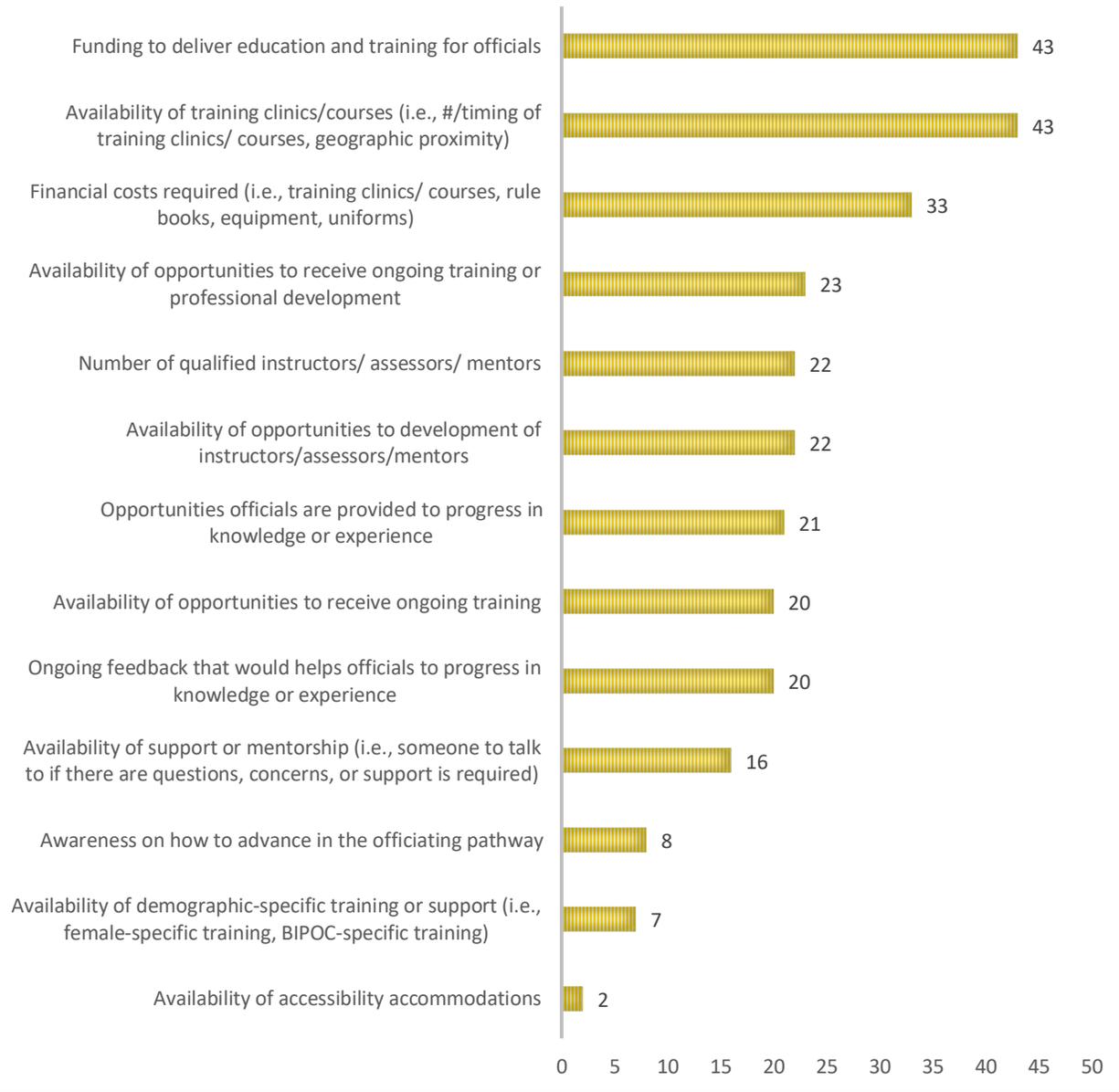
Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: programs/pathways, transparency, more opportunities, and miscellaneous.

5. Education & Training

5.1 Barriers to Education and Training

In your opinion, what are the largest barriers (choose up to 3) to education and training for officials in your sport?

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING OVERALL



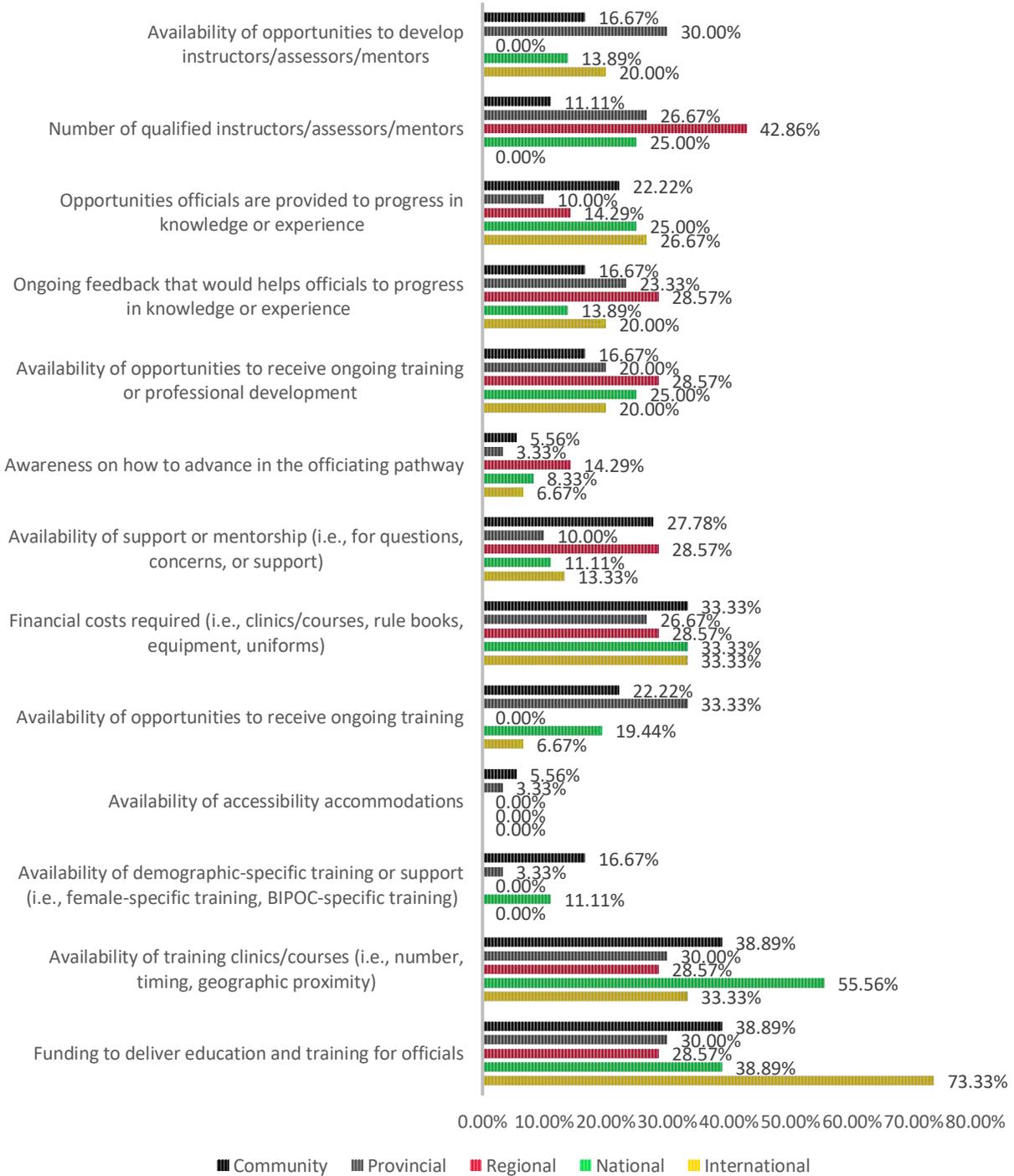
“Other” responses included comments related to:

- Accelerating the upgrading process (2)
- Time (2)
- Marketing to target audience then training them
- Identifying Officials to progress
- Availability of competitions to progress
- Mentors’ preferential treatment

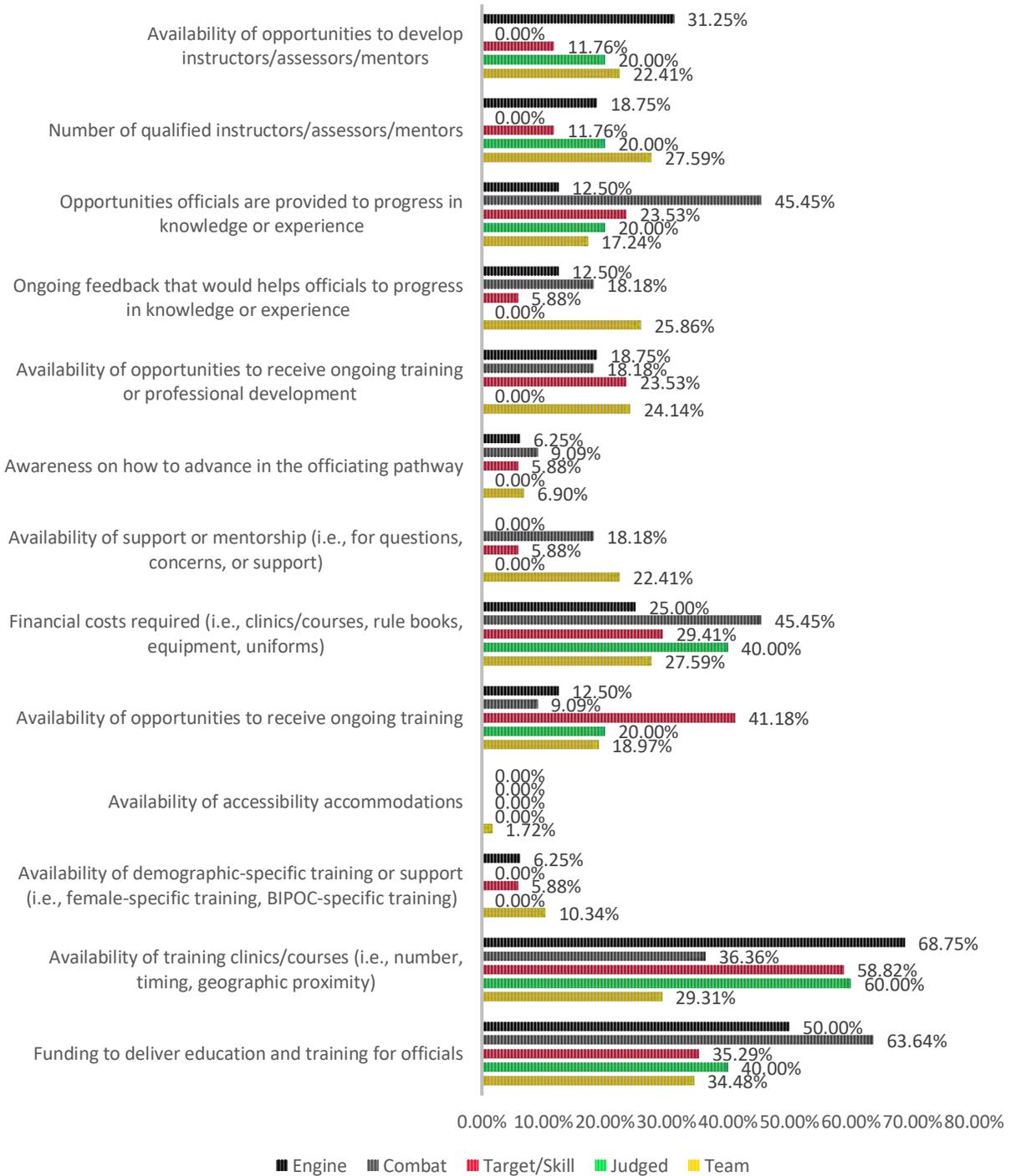
BARRIERS TO EDUCATION & TRAINING BY GENDER



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION & TRAINING BY CERTIFICATION LEVEL



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION & TRAINING BY LEVEL OF SPORT



5.2 Solutions to Address the Barriers of Education & Training

5.2.1 Funding to Deliver Education & Training

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 4 responses

Shared Training Materials (50%)

One focus group discussed: sharing training materials/certification tests within official groups of the same sport and having national training sessions for sports to decrease costs.

Other (50%)

Other ideas were related to miscellaneous topics including: training the trainers to be able to teach different types of learners and raising awareness around funding.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)	Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)
<p>Total: 11 responses</p> <p>Grants/Funding (27%) Three focus groups discussed: funding for equipment such as provincial grants, and a potential registration refund.</p> <p>Skill/Compensation Levels (18%) One focus group mentioned: tailoring content to the level of newer officials and increasing compensation for mentors working a lower grade game.</p> <p>Training Courses (18%) One focus group discussed: having an Introduction to Officiating course and cross-functional trainings.</p> <p>Other (36%) Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: having an officials database, focusing on accessibility, and creating an association.</p>	<p>Total: 7 responses</p> <p>Plan for Travel (29%) One focus group discussed: the distances to travel and how they increase with higher levels.</p> <p>Training Refreshers (29%) Two focus groups discussed: having yearly recertifications/refreshers and ensuring the right people are doing ongoing training.</p> <p>In-Person vs Virtual (29%) Two focus groups shared ideas related to this theme, with one person saying there is a need for clinics to have an in-person environment, and another person suggesting virtual training.</p> <p>Provincial Incentives (14%) One focus group had an idea was related to provincial incentives for people giving their time to sports.</p>

5.2.2 Availability of Clinics & Courses (Number, Timing, Geographic Proximity)

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 2 responses

Increased Offerings (50%)

One focus group discussed increasing the number of clinics to increase the number of officials.

Hybrid Courses (50%)

Another focus group mentioned using virtual tools for sharing knowledge and in-person sessions for technical skills.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)	Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)
<p>Total: 16 responses</p> <p>Recruitment (25%) One focus group discussed: identifying potential new officials including parents, former athletes, and University varsity</p>	<p>Total: 8 responses</p> <p>Mentorship and Communication (38%)</p>

athletes. Someone suggested making club registration contingent on hosting a clinic/officials etc.

Partner with Schools (19%)

Two focus groups mentioned: introducing officiating in schools and linking officiating courses with a high-school credit.

Facilities (13%)

One focus group discussed: needing increased access to space for clinics and needing newer infrastructure in urban centres.

Availability (13%)

Two focus groups shared: more opportunities are needed, including year-round courses.

Other (31%)

Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: sponsorships, electronic tools, relevancy of training to new officials, post-event debriefing, and having regional chairpersons.

Two focus groups discussed: increasing numbers of mentors, informal training for people to discuss experiences, and having high-level officials discuss their path.

Accessibility/Availability (29%)

One focus group discussed: offering clinics year-round, and having accessible sites on transit lines.

Other (38%)

Other suggestions involved miscellaneous topics including: standardizing training across regions, creating an officials' development fund, and designating regional clinicians.

5.2.3 Financial Costs Required (Clinics/Courses, Rule Books, Equipment, Uniforms)

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 2 responses

Equipment Rebate (50%)

One focus group suggested having a rebate program for needed equipment.

Online Training (50%)

One focus group mentioned using online training for the first level.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)

Total: 4 responses

Provide Equipment (50%)

One focus group discussed: the provincial organization or the association providing equipment.

Clinic Fees Reimbursement (25%)

One focus group mentioned: reimbursing officials for the cost of clinics if they commit to officiate a certain number of games.

Shadowing Opportunities (25%)

One focus group discussed: providing a free opportunity to interested people to shadow officials.

Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)

Total: 6 responses

Funding/Offset Costs (50%)

One focus group discussed: educating the PSO of costs, budgeting requests from PSO to fund clinics, and covering costs for training and equipment.

Course/Competition Access (33%)

One focus group discussed: using online learning for courses and improved access to out-of-region competitions.

Governing Body (17%)

One focus group suggested: having a governing body for officials across all sports to multiply the messaging in recruitment/retention.

5.2.4 Availability of Opportunities to Receive Ongoing Training or Professional Development

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 3 responses

Online Options (33%)

One focus group suggested online clinics offered for all sports for individuals in rural areas.

Age Restrictions (33%)

One focus group mentioned re-evaluating age restrictions for officiating and advancing.

Increase Instructors (33%)

One focus group mentioned increasing the number of course instructors and mentors.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)	Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)
<p>Total: 5 responses</p> <p>Mentorship/Support (40%) Two focus groups discussed: providing guidance to new officials and mentoring/motivating new officials.</p> <p>Tools for Training (40%) One focus group mentioned: rule books and clinics.</p> <p>Difficulty Level (20%) One focus group discussed: having new officials work at events with increasing difficulty levels.</p>	<p>Total: 12 responses</p> <p>Mentorship/Support (33%) Two focus groups discussed: mentorship/supervision programs open to all officials, and reviewing recorded games to receive feedback.</p> <p>Accessibility (33%) Two focus groups discussed: geographical locations of clinics, possible use of virtual reality technology, and sharing the pathways.</p> <p>Monthly Refreshers (17%) Two focus groups suggested: having monthly refreshers/training using video sessions or newsletters.</p> <p>Other (17%) Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: scheduling of games/events and funding for travel.</p>

5.2.5 Number of Qualified Instructors/Assessors/Mentors & Opportunities to Develop Them

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 2 responses

Recruitment (50%)

One focus group suggested needing to recruit more people and decrease the over-reliance on “people at the top of the pyramid”.

Event Support for Evaluators (50%)

One focus group mentioned offering support for evaluators to get to events, to accelerate officials moving along the pathway.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)	Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)
<p>Total: 11 responses</p> <p>Mentorship/Support (36%)</p>	<p>Total: 12 responses</p> <p>Mentorship/Support (58%)</p>

Three focus groups discussed: using practical shadow experiences for training, and supporting elite officials with becoming “elite” supervisors/instructors.

Recruitment (27%)

Two focus groups mentioned: needing to increase capacity, get new officials trained, and ensuring individuals who complete introductory clinics complete their training.

Online Training (18%)

Two focus groups discussed: improving accessibility of online training and moving introductory modules online.

Other (18%)

Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: recruiting older officials to act as regional chairs and training new officials broadly (select specialty later).

Three focus groups discussed: training on how to mentor/supervise, having officials who are 1 level higher mentoring the officials trying to attain that level, recruiting more mentors, and mentoring in small groups.

Succession Planning (17%)

Two focus groups discussed: incorporating succession planning and identifying gaps in roles.

Other (25%)

Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: sports working collaboratively to complete initial training, consistent evaluation materials, and using tournaments as training time.

5.2.6 Support to Advance (Opportunities to Progress Knowledge, Assignments, Ongoing Feedback, Availability of Support or Mentorship)

Overall Comments (% of responses)

Total: 5 responses

Recruitment (60%)

Two focus groups suggested: recruiting more officials – increases meaningful conversation between officials and enhances people’s ability to learn and grow within the sport

Hybrid Learning (20%)

One focus group mentioned offering online clinics paired with in-person training

Communication and Transparency (20%)

One focus group mentioned making the pathway for officials readily available online.

Initial Training & Education (% of responses)

Total: 17 responses

Mentorship (29%)

Three focus groups discussed: compensating mentors/supervisors so they attend additional games, receiving documented feedback, and pairing new officials with a mentor during first few games.

Communication and Transparency (24%)

Two focus groups mentioned: clear communication of opportunities and pathways, as well as equal dissemination of information to rural areas.

Recruitment (18%)

Two focus groups discussed: improving accessibility of online training and moving introductory modules online.

Ongoing/Advancing Education & Training (% of responses)

Total: 22 responses

Mentorship/Support (36%)

Three focus groups discussed: creating a new wave of mentors with different perspectives, opportunities for shadowing at larger competitions, and having meetings to review rules and interesting plays.

Communication and Transparency (27%)

Three focus groups discussed: having better communication, consistent updates, and outlining a clear progression pathway.

Use of Technology (14%)

Two focus groups suggested: using virtual training, virtual reality, and videography at all matches

Access to Assignments (9%)

Practical/Hybrid Learning (12%)

One focus group suggested: providing core information virtually or offer a quick classroom session followed by a field session.

Other (18%)

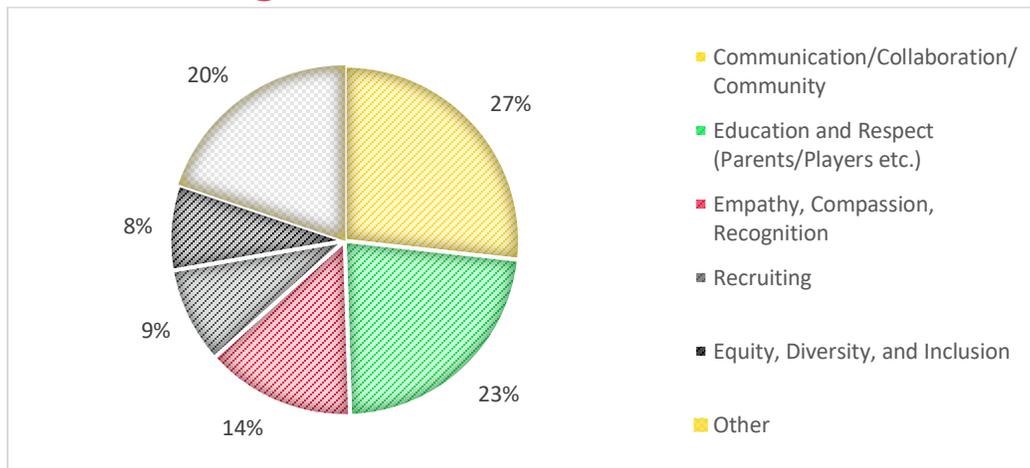
Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: having more competitions and sharing successes to build confidence.

One focus group discussed: needing access to key assignments to progress and linking more experienced officials with higher-level games.

Other (14%)

Other ideas involved miscellaneous topics including: education for athletes/coaches/spectators, better database, and discussion time at competitions.

6. Culture Change

**Communication/Collaboration/Community**

All focus groups identified ideas related to Communication/Collaboration/Community. Focus group attendees discussed supporting mentorship, building a community through social events, having open lines of communication with opportunities to debrief, and eliminating the “us vs them” culture.

Education and Respect (Parents/Players etc.)

Education and Respect included comments from all focus groups. They mentioned providing training on mutual respect, educating involved parties on the role/expertise/importance of officials, and hosting rule clinics with teams or coaches.

Empathy, Compassion, and Recognition

Four focus groups identified ideas related to Empathy, Compassion, and Recognition. They highlighted the importance of having empathy for each other, avoiding assumptions, practicing acceptance, and recognizing officials for their important role.

Recruiting

Recruiting included ideas from all focus groups related to recruiting people from outside traditional recruitment pools, recruiting in areas where representation is lower, and training athletes and coaches to be officials.

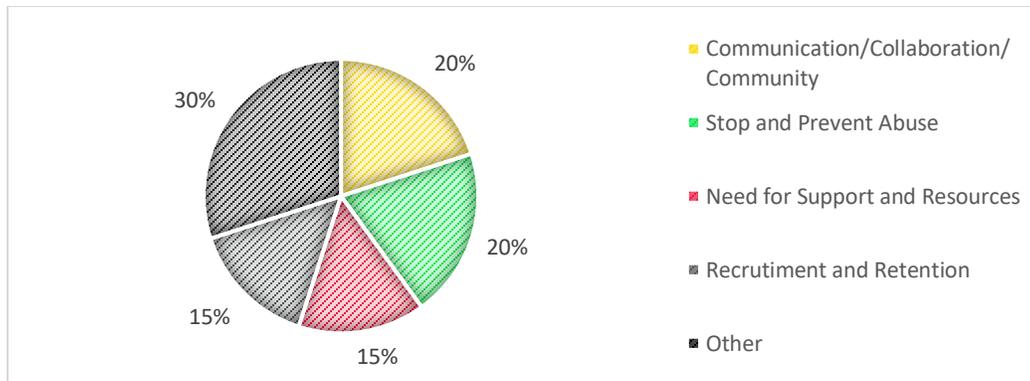
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion included comments from three focus groups. They mentioned mandatory training on equity/diversity/inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for men and women, and creating a safe space for participants.

Other

Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: higher consequences for abuse, positivity, conflict management education, policies and procedures, and miscellaneous.

7. Other Comments



Communication/Collaboration/Community

All focus groups identified ideas related to Communication/Collaboration/Community. Focus group attendees shared that sport is a powerful connector, there is a need to develop a community of practice to support officials, and information sharing needs to continue.

Stop and Prevent Abuse

Stop and Prevent Abuse included comments from four focus groups. They mentioned the importance of education for players/coaches/parents and the need for stop the abuse that is occurring by holding people accountable for their actions.

Need for Support and Resources

Three focus groups identified ideas related to Need for Support and Resources. They highlighted the importance of receiving support and resources to allow sports to continue, including funding from the Government or professional associations.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and Retention included ideas from three focus groups related to best practices for engagement and retention, incentives to become an official, and the need to recruit more officials to compensate for the ones who left during the pandemic.

Other

Other involved ideas which can be divided into the following topics: equity/diversity/inclusion, training and development, and miscellaneous.

7.1 Sport Classification – Adapted from Own the Podium’s Sport Classification

Engine: athletics, canoe-kayak, cross country, cycling, para powerlifting, speed skating, swimming, triathlon, weightlifting, rowing

Combat: boxing, grappling, jiu-jitsu, judo, karate, kickboxing, muay thai, taekwondo, wrestling

Target/Skill: alpine, archery, badminton, biathlon, bobsleigh, boccia, cerebral palsy sports, climbing, curling, equestrian, fencing, freestyle, golf, lawn bowls, luge, modern pentathlon, 5 pin bowling, sailing, shooting sports, skeleton, skiing/snowboard, table tennis, tennis, waterskiing/wakeboarding

Judged: artistic swimming, breaking, diving, figure skating, gymnastics, para dance sport, surfing

Team: ball hockey, baseball, basketball, cricket, field hockey, football, goalball, handball, hockey, lacrosse, rugby, softball, soccer, volleyball, water polo, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby