

WIAA Officiating Survey Results

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DONOVAN GROUP
SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS



Welcome

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SURVEY OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

- As part of continuous improvement efforts, the WIAA sought feedback from both active and retired officials.
- Survey responses will help identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities in officiating, ultimately guiding efforts to enhance recruitment, retention, and overall officiating experiences.
- The Donovan Group administered the survey and collected and analyzed the data.
- The survey was open from April 7 through April 27, 2025.
- A total of **2,717 officials** responded.

Process & Methodology



- Administered using the Donovan Group's survey engine.
- Efforts were made to ensure that all eligible respondents had the opportunity to take the survey, but that no respondents took it multiple times.
- Following best practices in online research and protecting the security of the survey, internet protocol (IP) addresses were logged and each response was time stamped.
- By design, this data is not based on a scientific sample. It should be treated as qualitative data.

Review of Data

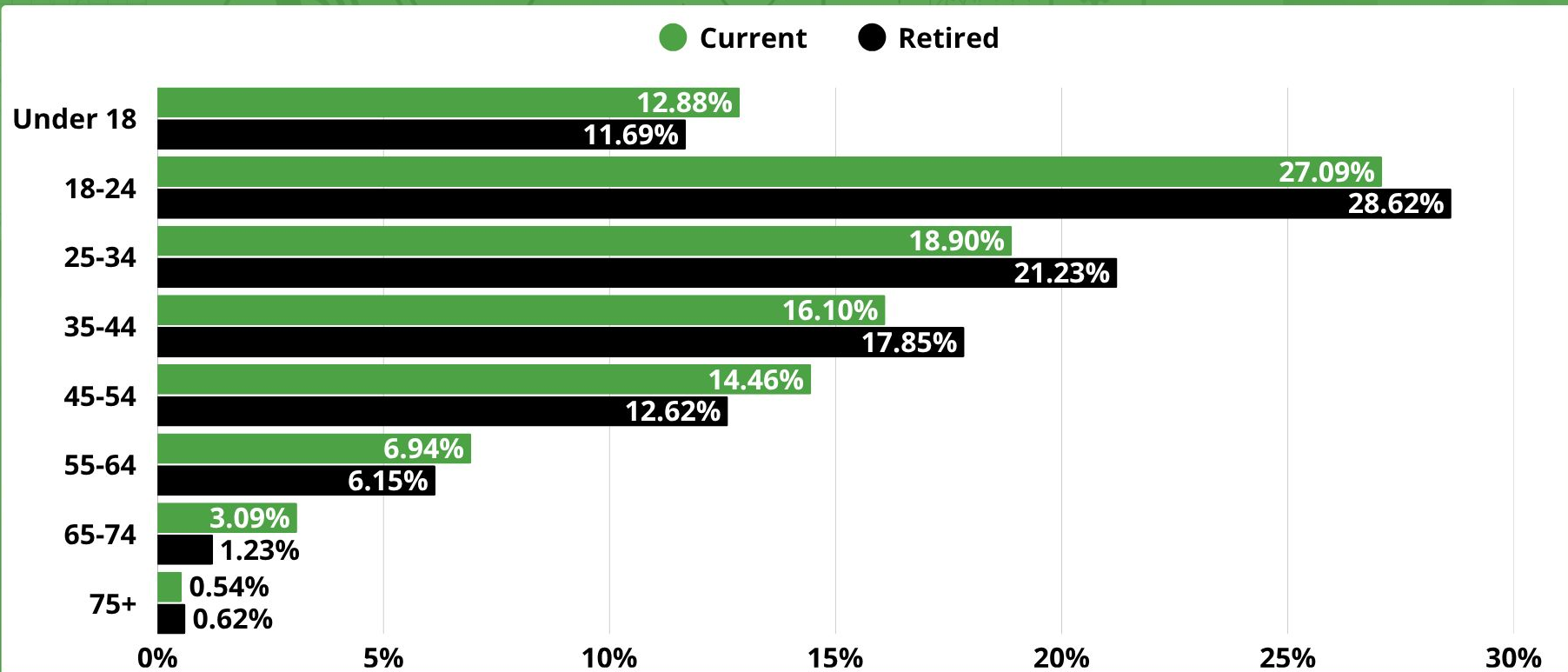
- Reviewed the draft report on May 9 with Executive Director Stephanie Hauser and Assistant Director Chad Schultz.
 - Discussed response data for each individual survey question.
- Conducted additional disaggregation
 - Gender
 - Age group
 - Years of experience officiating
 - Sport officiated



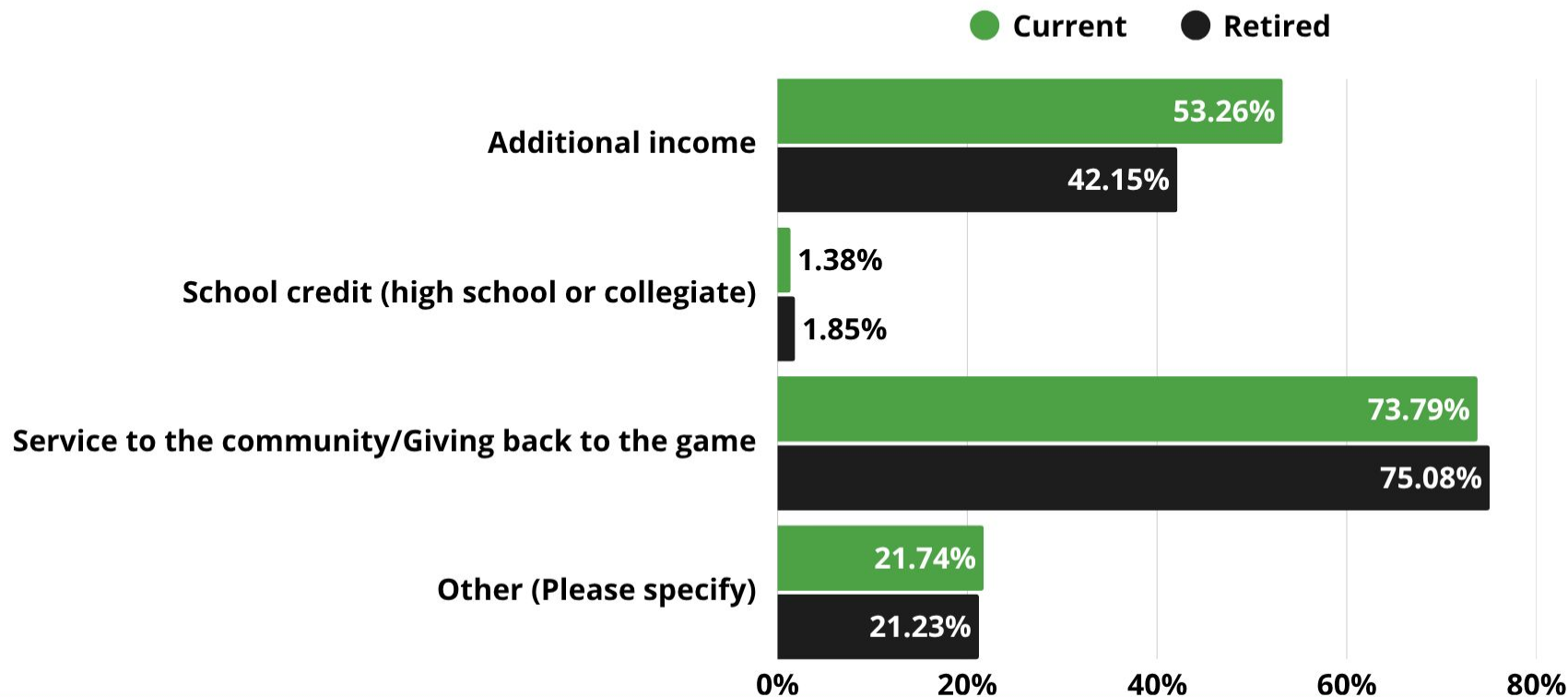
SURVEY RESULTS

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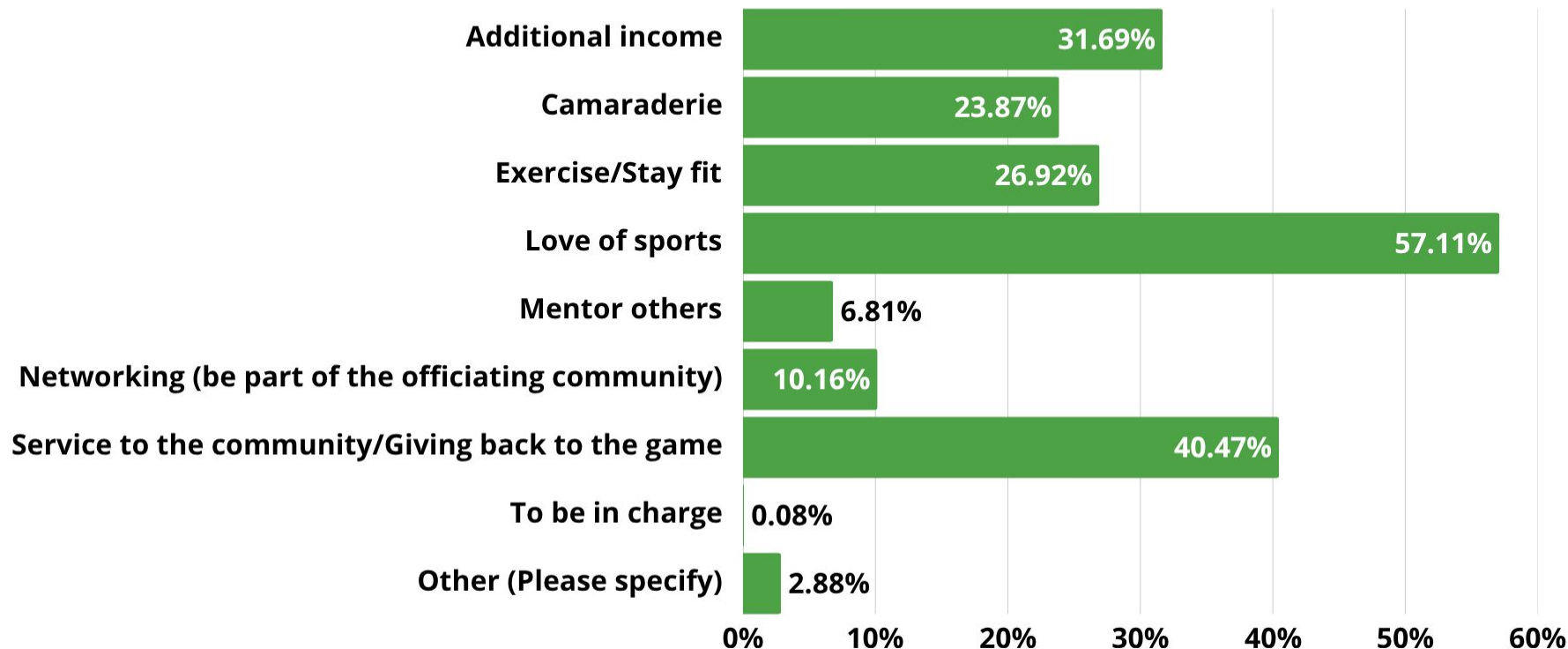
At what age did you begin officiating?



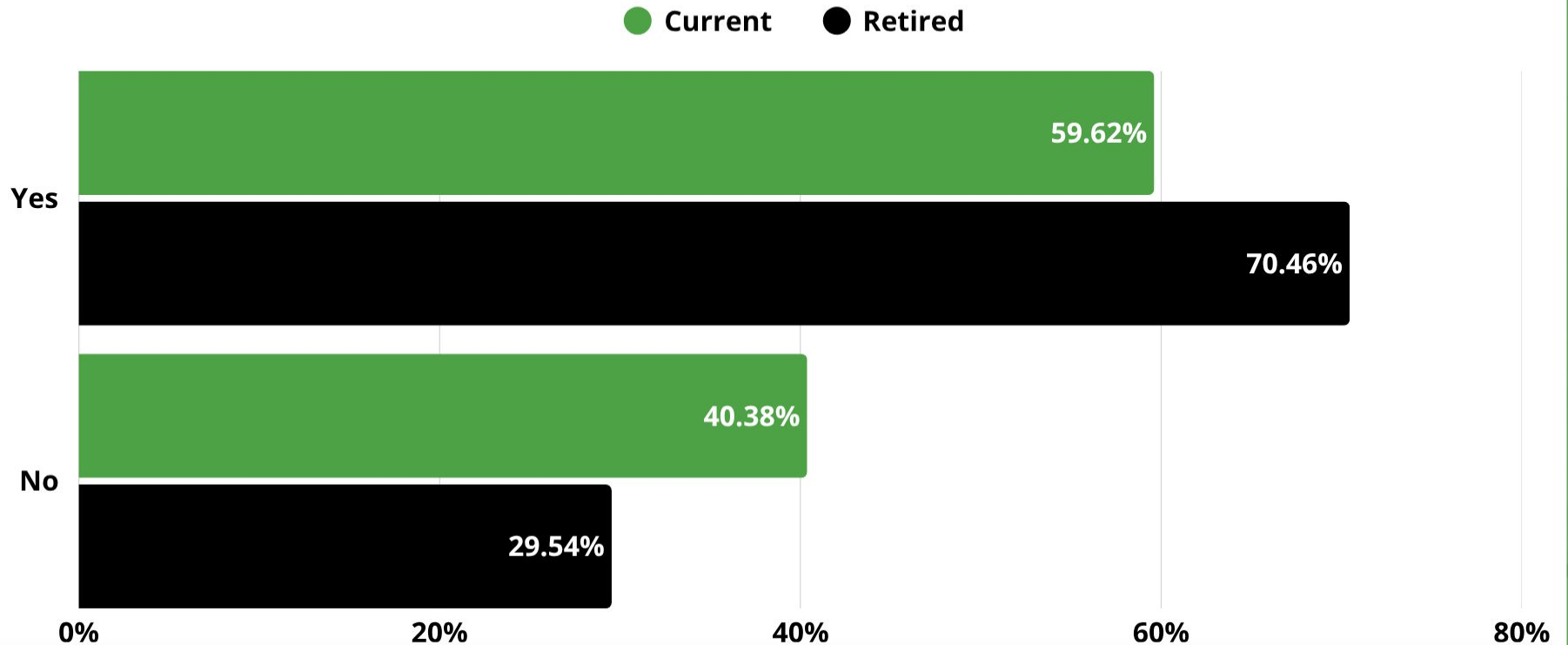
5 Why did you start officiating? Check all that apply.



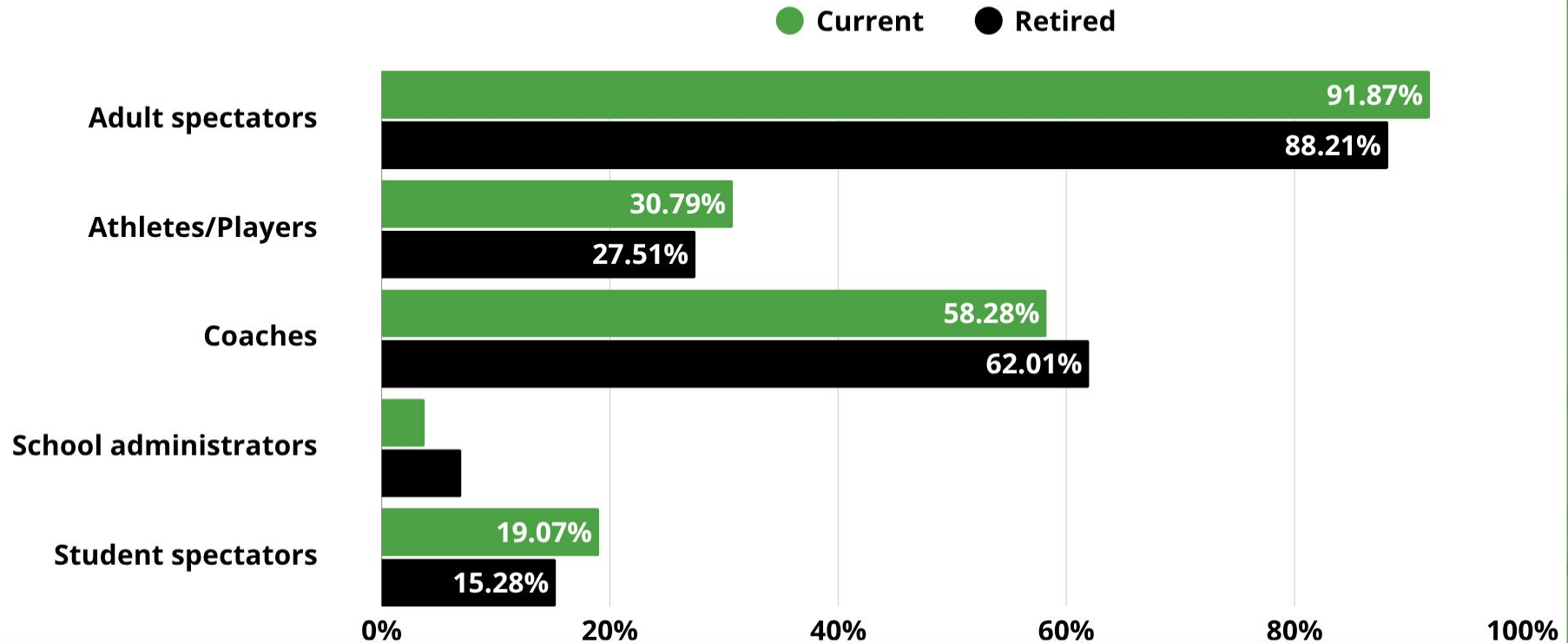
12 Why do you continue to officiate? Select your top two (2) reasons.



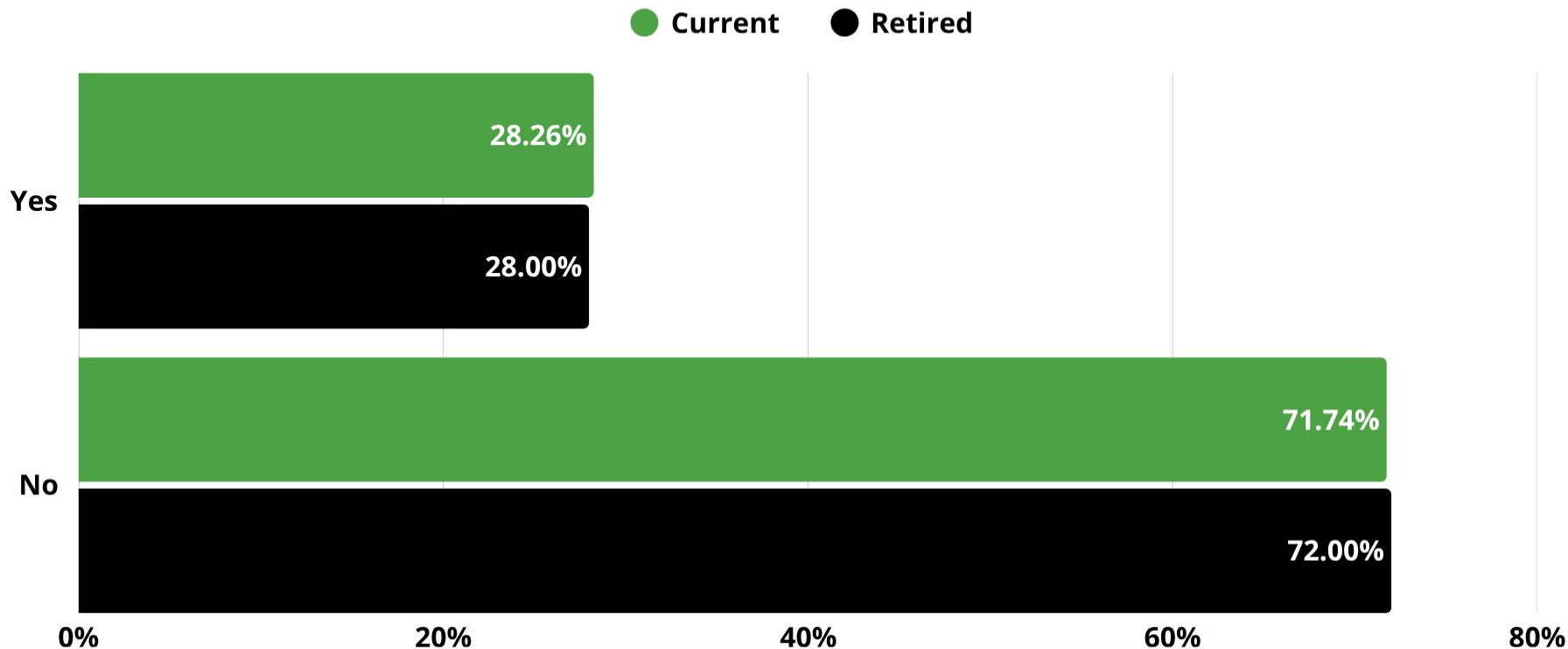
14 In your opinion, is there a problem with poor sportsmanship?



15 Who causes the most problems with poor sportsmanship? Check all that apply.



16 Are there schools or conferences where you would not officiate due to poor sportsmanship?

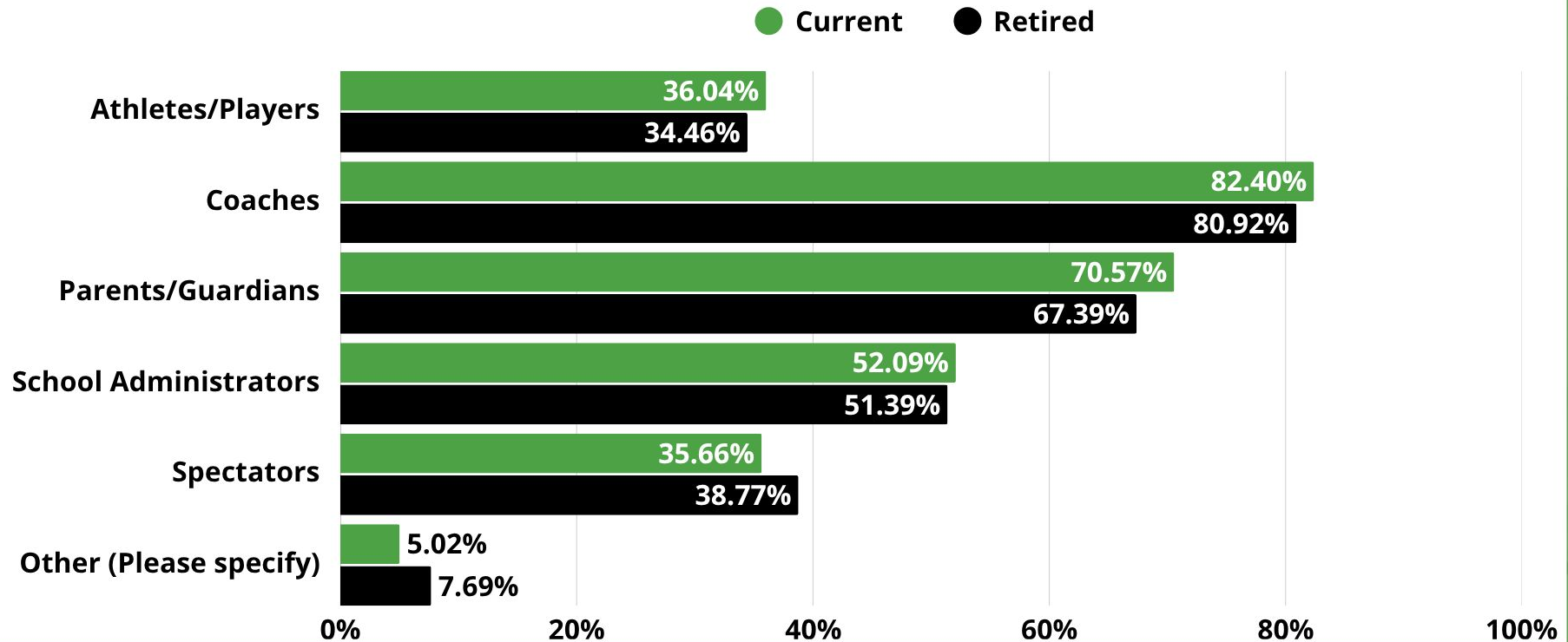


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You indicated there are schools or conferences where you won't/would not officiate due to poor sportsmanship. Please provide your rationale.

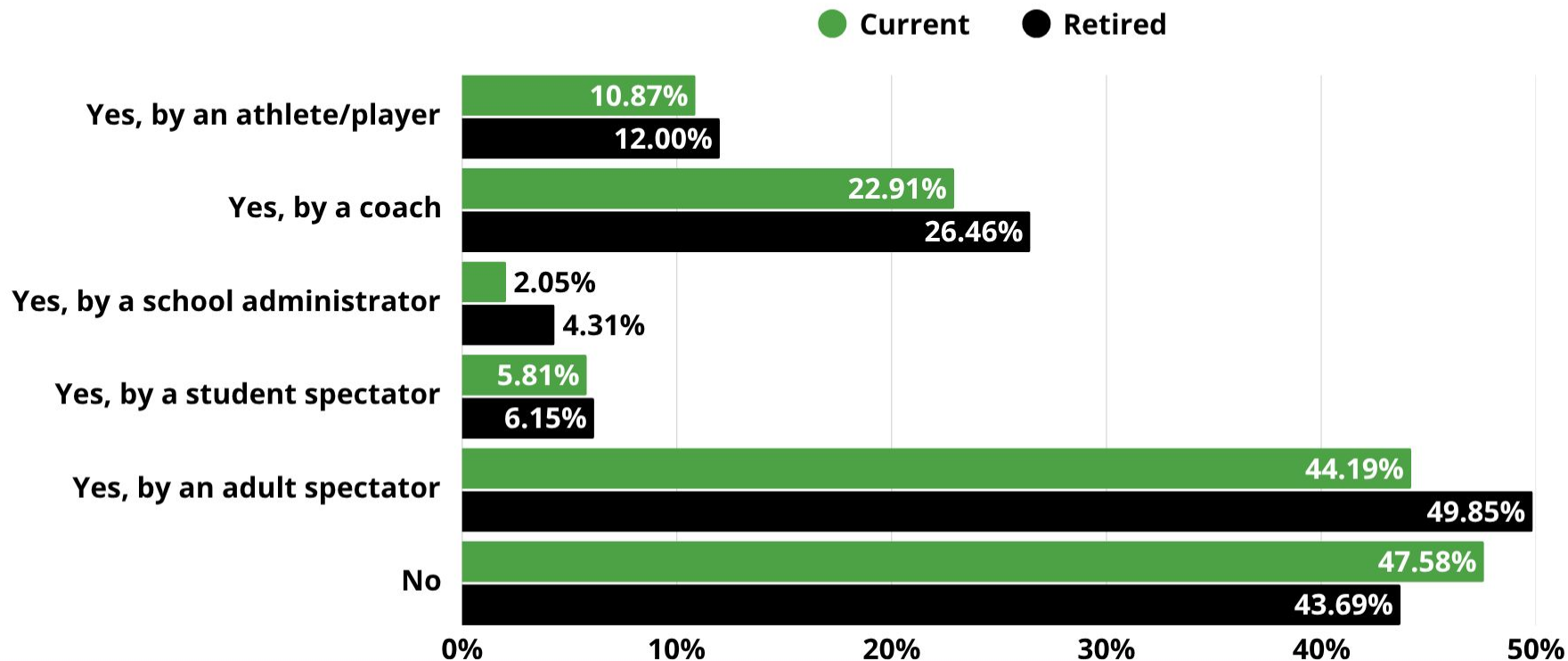
- **Hostility from coaches:** Many cited persistent confrontational behaviors from coaches (arguing, berating officials, and setting a negative tone) that trickle down to others.
- **Hostility from spectators:** Officials frequently encounter hostile environments (yelling, being followed) created by adult spectators and parents.
- **Safety concerns:** Several officials described incidents where their physical safety was compromised, such as being caught in on-field brawls, being followed after games, or feeling unsafe due to a lack of crowd control.
- **Accountability from school administration:** Many expressed frustration with administrators who fail to address poor sportsmanship or abusive behavior.
- **Sportsmanship:** Many comments highlighted a broader cultural problem in which winning is prioritized over sportsmanship, leading to environments where poor behavior and disrespect is normalized and perpetuated.

18 Who is the most responsible for improving sportsmanship? Check all that apply.



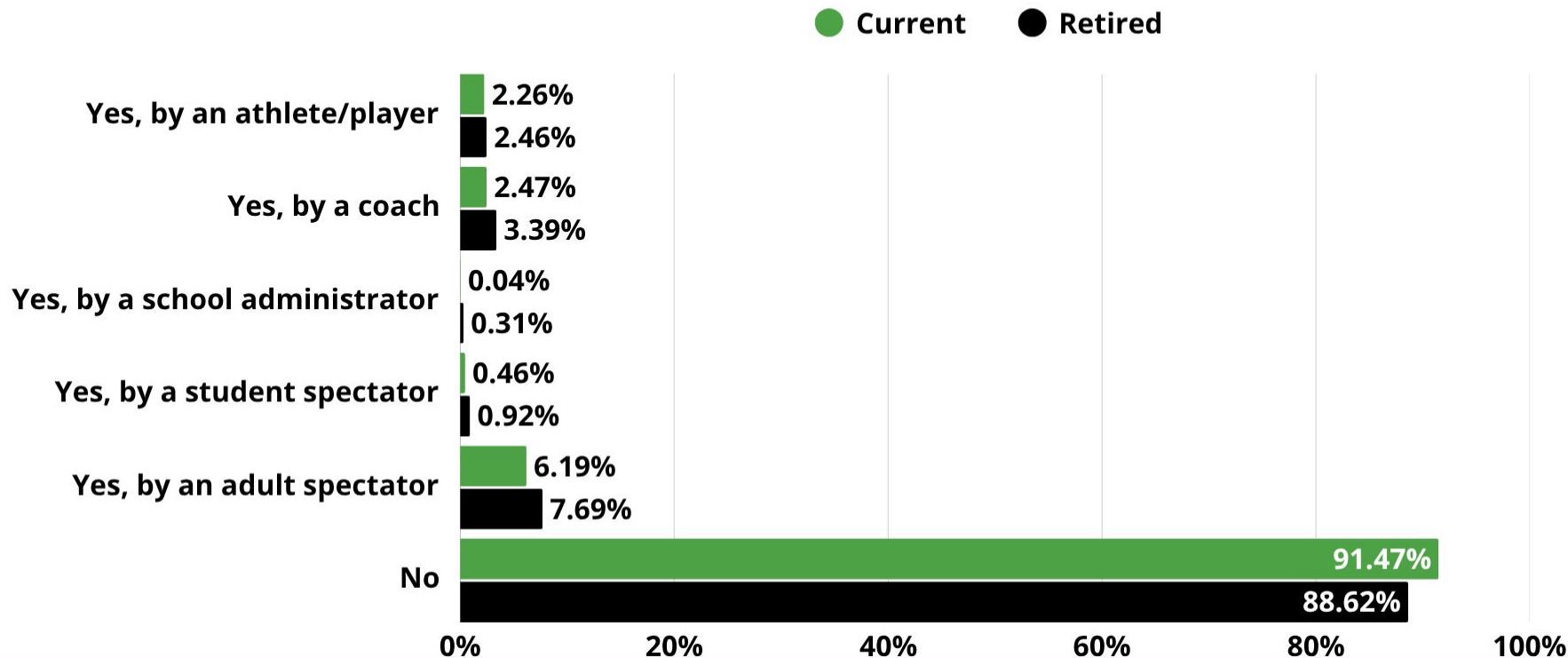
23

Have you ever been verbally assaulted/threatened before, during, or after a contest by any of the people listed below? Please check all that apply.



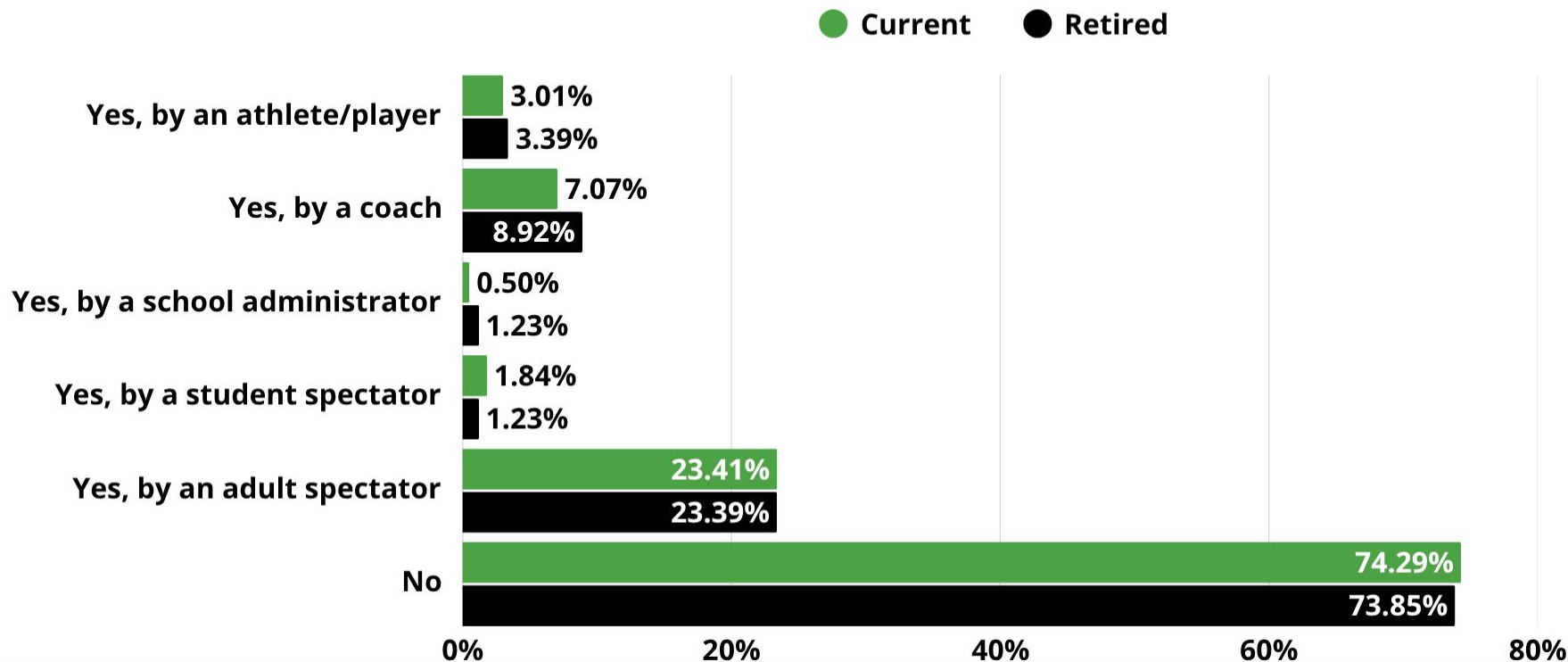
24

Have you ever been physically assaulted/threatened before, during, or after a contest by any of the people listed below? Please check all that apply.



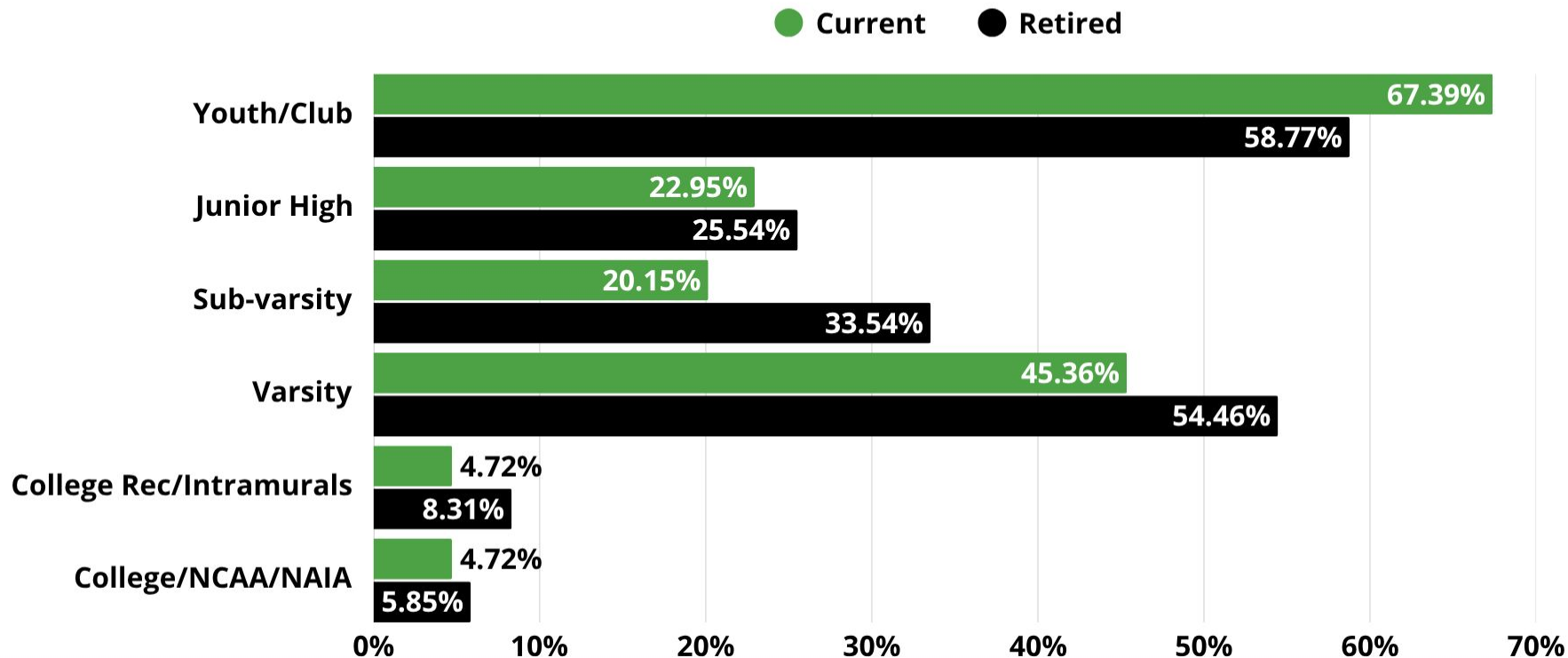
25

Have you ever felt unsafe or feared for your safety due to the behavior of any of the people listed below? Please check all that apply.



26

In your opinion, at what level(s) are sportsmanship the most difficult? Please check all that apply.

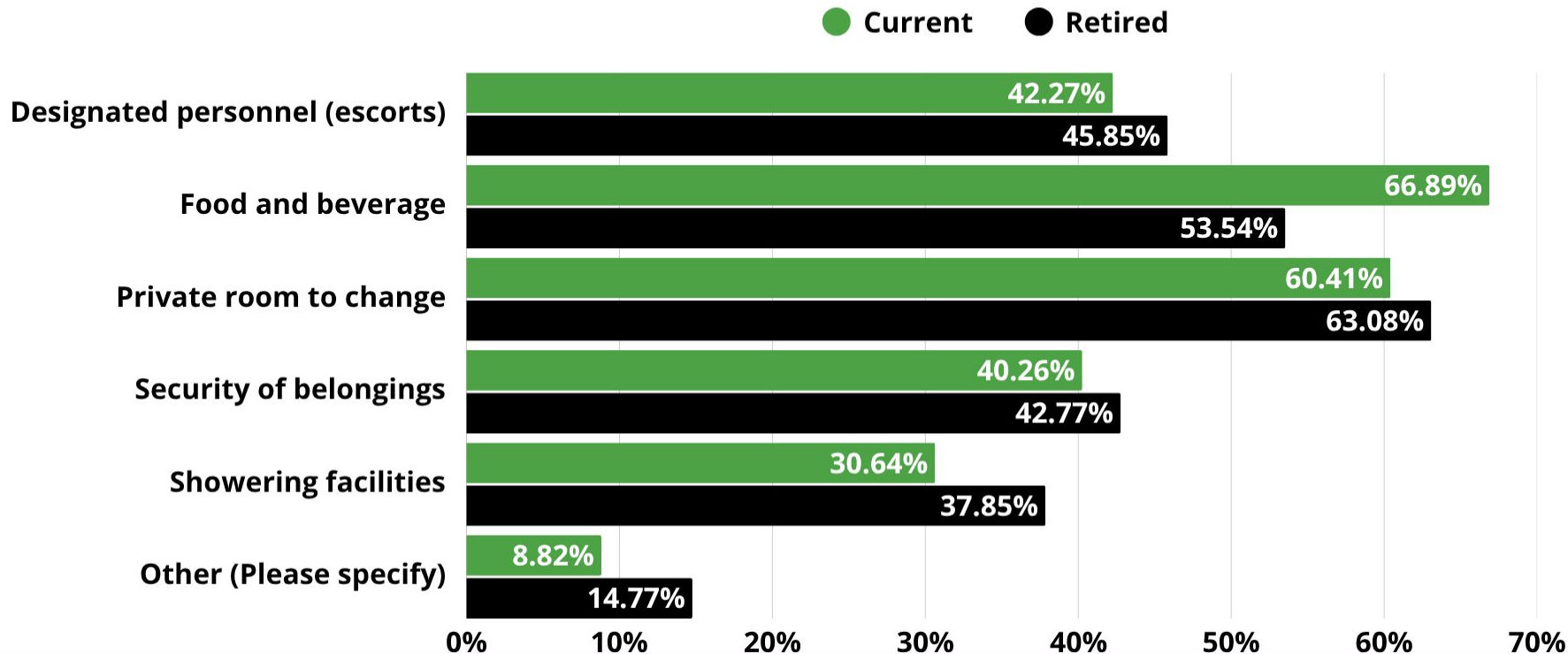


30 What does it mean to be a WIAA official?

- **Giving back:** Many expressed that a primary motivation is to give back and provide opportunities for young athletes, contributing to their development and ensuring they can participate.
- **Ensuring fairness and safety:** Officials emphasize the importance of enforcing rules, maintaining fair play, and creating a safe environment for athletes.
- **Being role models:** Officials recognize that they serve as role models for young athletes, coaches, and spectators. They strive to exhibit professionalism, sportsmanship, and leadership, hoping to influence those they interact with positively.
- **Community and camaraderie:** Officiating is often seen as a way to connect with the community and build relationships with fellow officials, coaches, and school personnel.
- **Personal growth and enjoyment:** Many find personal satisfaction, enjoyment, and the chance to continue being part of the game they love.

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What are the top amenities you have appreciated on-site?



40 What improvements would you suggest to the WIAA to enhance communication with officials?

- **Digital platform:** Many officials desire a centralized platform (e.g., mobile app or website) that integrates all necessary functions (e.g., scheduling, rules, updates, communication) and is easy to use.
- **Enhanced communication:** Officials want consistent communication, including timely notifications of game changes/cancellations, rule updates, and tournament assignments.
- **Enhanced transparency and feedback:** Many comments emphasized the need for transparency in assigning games (especially playoff games) and evaluating officials (e.g., more constructive feedback).
- **Emphasis on sport-specific communication:** Many believe communication and training should be sports-specific (e.g., rule interpretations and updates).
- **Focus on support and respect:** Officials want to feel valued and supported, including acknowledging their years of service, providing support in dealing with misconduct, and ensuring their safety.

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What improvements would you suggest to conference commissioners to enhance communication with officials?

- **Communication improvements:** Many comments requested improved methods and frequency of communication, including using multiple communication channels (e.g., text, email, app, phone calls) and sending timely reminders and updates.
- **Comprehensive platform:** Many officials expressed frustration with various platforms and would like one standardized platform or system.
- **Providing clear and detailed information:** Officials want clear, detailed information about game assignments (e.g., times, locations, special instructions), with better communication of expectations, rules, and feedback.
- **Enhanced transparency and fairness:** Officials want more transparency in the assignment process, clear criteria for assigning games, and opportunities to provide feedback.
- **Improved responsiveness:** Many comments emphasize the importance of timely responses, more accessibility, and support to address issues promptly and effectively.

Next Steps

- WIAA staff has received additional reports with data disaggregated by:
 - Gender
 - Age group
 - Years of experience officiating
 - Sport officiated
- Evaluate frequency of future data collection from officials via survey or other means



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Thank You!

Questions?