



AFLNT

Fan Feedback – 2018/19 TIO NTFL Season

Survey Report

Prepared by True North Strategic Communication
April 2019



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Executive summary

Overview

True North Strategic Communication was engaged by AFLNT to prepare a report on the findings of the Fan Feedback – 2018/19 TIO NTFL Season Survey which ran from 15 March to 28 March 2019.

AFLNT was seeking information on how football fans rated venues and facilities, patron safety, games and fixtures, as well as competition and coaching standards. Information about how fans choose to consume NTFL-related information was also collected.

Key findings

The survey was open to the public for approximately two weeks and attracted 197 respondents. Of these, 194 surveys were completed online and three were completed via hard copy and mailed to AFLNT. Survey respondents comprised those who had attended games during the 2018/19 season and identified as follows:

- NTFL members during the 2018/19 season (86)
- Attendees who prefer to pay on entry (67)
- Not currently members but open to becoming a member in the future (43).

One respondent chose to skip this question.

Some positive messages that emerged from the survey included:

- Territorians love the NTFL, with survey respondents actively engaged in the game and passionate about how it can be better.
- TIO Stadium provides a great environment for all to enjoy the game.
- Shade at venues is appreciated given the Territory heat and humidity.
- Lights on suburban ovals is openly welcomed by the majority of respondents to make the experience of playing and watching the game better.
- The game is steeped in local history with many generations of great footballers still connected across the Territory.

Overall, the level of satisfaction of TIO Stadium is high with most people feeling safe there, although there are concerns about aggressive behaviour and inappropriate language by spectators and a lack of security presence at games.

Most respondents felt that the standard of the game is generally good but there were some areas for improvement including:



Further detail on these **areas for improvement** is provided below:

Oval lighting

- Respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of introducing lights across suburban ovals to allow more night games.
- Lights would reduce the need for games to be played in the heat of the day.

Change rooms

- There is concern with the condition or size of change rooms across all suburban ovals. They need to be upgraded or increased.

Seating

- There is a lack of adequate seating, including covered seating at all ovals except TIO Stadium.

Spectator behavior

- There is concern regarding the behavior of some spectators including player and umpire verbal abuse.
- The Code of Conduct needs to be enforced better.

Scheduling

- More investment is needed in developing fixtures prior to season start, especially for Juniors.
- Women's Premier League before Men's Premier League.
- Consistent scheduling for Junior games is needed so families can plan weekends.

Cost of games

- The cost of attending games is perceived by some as high which can make it unaffordable for some families to attend.

Umpiring

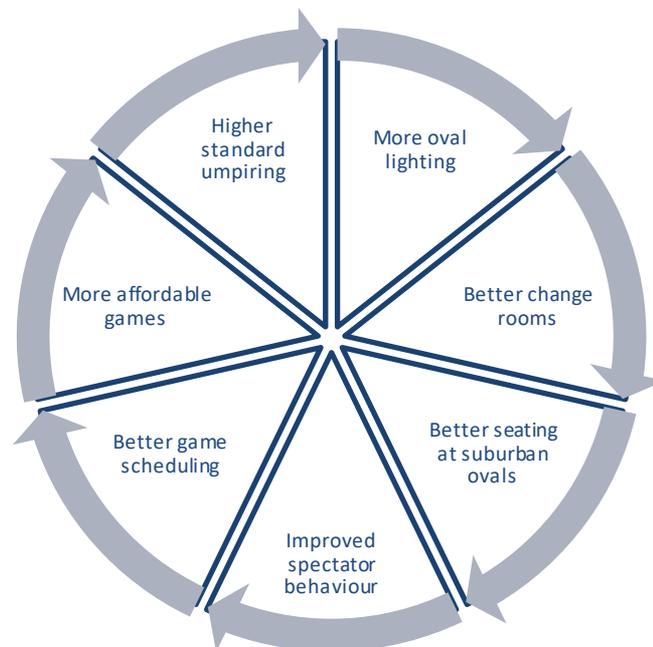
- The standard of umpiring needs to improve, there is a lack of consistency.
- Respondents felt that there needs to be an investment in umpire training and mentoring.

Recommendations

This report has been prepared after a two-week fan feedback survey on the 2018/19 NTFL season. The survey sought information on how football fans rated venues and facilities, patron safety, games and fixtures, as well as competition and coaching standards. Information about how fans choose to consume NTFL-related information was also collected.

It is recommended that the next steps are:

- AFLNT consider the feedback received from the survey, noting the following **areas for improvement**:



- AFLNT release the survey report through the media, the AFLNT website and AFLNT and NTFL social media networks to enable those who contributed to the survey or who are interested an opportunity to review the findings.

Introduction

Objectives

The purpose of the Fan Feedback – 2018/19 TIO NTFL Season Survey was to:

- measure the level of satisfaction with NTFL venues and facilities, competition and coaches
- determine patron preferences regarding games and fixtures
- capture attitudes towards patron safety
- understand preferences for consuming NTFL-related information.

Methodology

AFLNT developed the fan feedback survey using the online platform *Survey Monkey*. The survey was promoted in the NT News, Mix 104.9, ABC radio, AFLNT website, Twitter channels and on the NTFL Facebook page. The survey ran from 15 March to 28 March 2019.

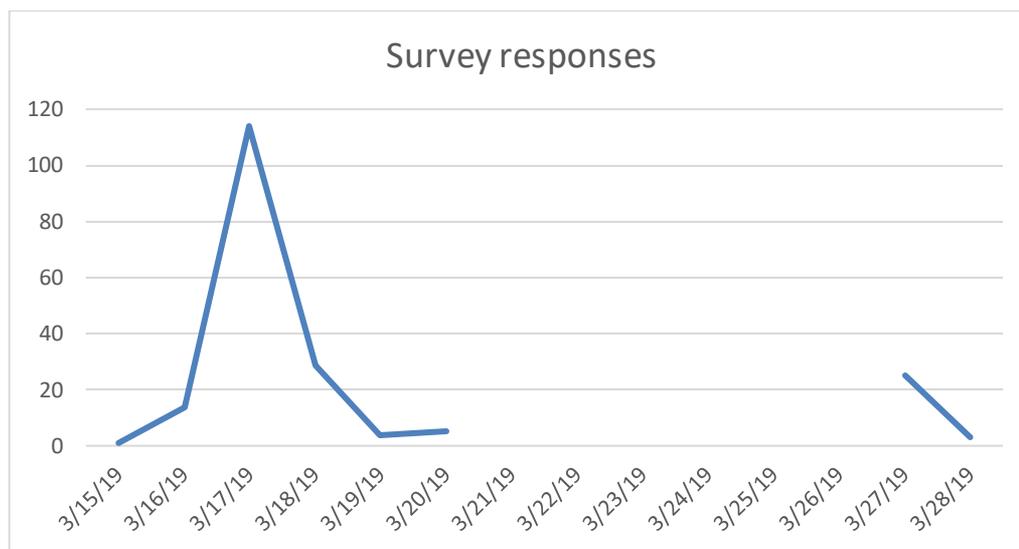


Figure 1: The graph shows the survey response rate over the survey period.

Most responses were recorded on 17 March (114) and 18 March (29) in correlation with the publication of the survey in the NT News on 16 March 2019 and the social media post via NTFL/AFLNT channels. The latter resulted in a high volume of direct link clicks to survey monkey with the post being shared 22 times. Another 25 responses were recorded on 27 March 2019 which coincided with a social media push on the NTFL Facebook page and AFLNT Twitter account – reminding people that the survey was shortly closing.

Results in summary

NTFL Venues

Overall respondents showed a preference for TIO Stadium over other venues due to its seating / viewing points, location, atmosphere and parking.

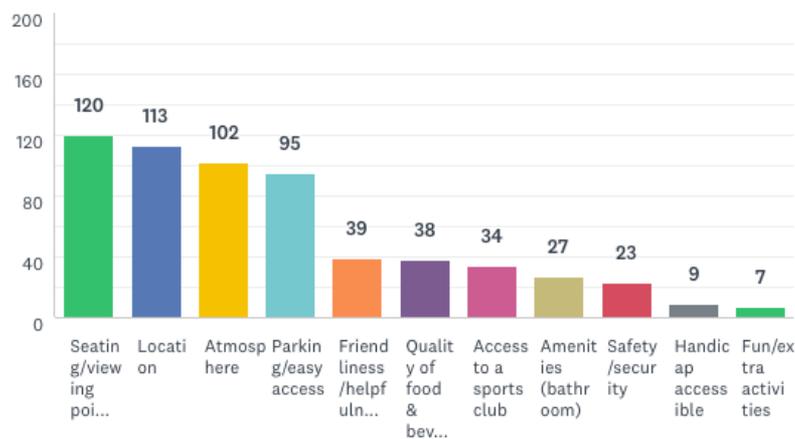
At other suburban venues, most respondents said the facilities were fair but there were opportunities for improvements to change rooms, seating, shaded areas and lighting.

Respondents were asked to nominate their favourite venue to watch NTFL. TIO Stadium was the highest ranked venue with 102 respondents preferring it over other options. This was followed by Gardens Oval (33) and Asbuild Oval (23).

The majority of respondents selected seating / viewing points (120) as the reason behind their choice of venue. Location ranked second (113), followed by atmosphere (102) and parking (95).

Why did you pick this venue as your favourite to watch NTFL? Pick as many reasons that apply.

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



Respondents then ranked the facilities at suburban ovals (excluding TIO Stadium) according to a rating scale of **poor**, **fair**, **good**, **great**, **excellent**. Facilities were mostly ranked **fair** (77), **good** (63) and **great** (34).

How do you rate the facilities at suburban ovals (any ground except TIO Stadium) when you attend as a player or spectator?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0

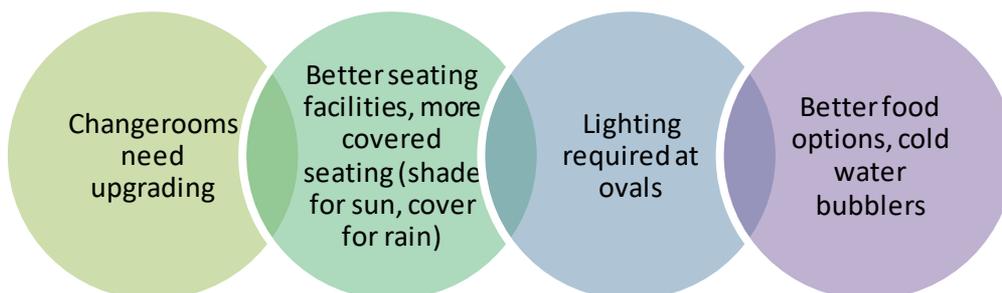


	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT	EXCELLENT	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	10.2% 20	39.1% 77	32.0% 63	17.3% 34	1.5% 3	0.0% 0	197	2.51

Issues and opportunities for improvement at suburban ovals

The survey included an open-ended question asking respondents to detail the biggest issue or opportunity for improvement at the suburban oval they visited most. Of the 197 survey respondents, 142 provided a response to this question.

The following themes emerged from the question:



Most comments related to Nightcliff and Gardens ovals. Where respondents failed to nominate an oval, the most common issues or opportunities identified were in relation to seating, shade, parking and facilities in general. The introduction of food trucks was also raised as an opportunity.

Some notable comments are as follows:

Nightcliff oval

- *Lights and grandstand at Nightcliff home ground.*
- *Better seating. Better change rooms for opposition.*
- *The standard of the change rooms at Nightcliff and Gardens is not acceptable to a competition of this quality.*
- *Better seating at Nightcliff oval.*
- *Lights, electronic scoreboard, seating options around the ground.*
- *Grand stand facilities at Nightcliff oval.*

Gardens oval

- *Change rooms for oval 2 at Gardens oval.*
- *Build a level 2 on the club house and provide an excellent air-conditioned viewing platform.*
- *Extra change rooms and upgrade existing change rooms at Gardens oval.*
- *Gardens #2 - shaded weatherproof seating, timekeeper facilities.*
- *Gardens needs lights so we can play more juniors in the evening.*
- *Gardens oval toilets, more change rooms, more clubrooms.*
- *Gardens oval 2 needs lights and change rooms need air conditioning and more change rooms or team rooms.*
- *Gardens / PSMC - need more change rooms or upgrades players change rooms.*
- *To have lights at the Gardens oval so more games can be played there at night time so young children don't have to play in the heat every week.*

Norbuilt oval

- *Needs funding to improve and update the facilities. We have no lights for evening/night games and our facilities are outdated, due to all funding obviously being taken by TIO stadium.*
- *Change room sizes are an issue. Norbuilt and Tracy are great ovals and great for the clubs to host games and after functions. Giving them Saturday home games. Not Sundays. Can help build the clubs culture and spectators.*
- *Fred's pass, more seating area.*
- *I think the player amenities and spectator seating at Norbuilt oval could be improved. Better food at all the grounds would also be ideal.*
- *Light towers at Norbuilt oval for afternoon / evening games.*
- *Norbuilt needs lights to cater for the huge numbers of AFL participants - including girls.*
- *Adequate change room and bathroom facilities and ACCESS for women in particular, leaves a lot to be desired at Fred's Pass.*

Asbuild oval

- *Needs more toilets and shade on the grassed areas.*
- *Playground for younger children.*

- *Infrastructure - shade especially at Palmerston over players bench.*
- *Palmerston oval more seating and more trees around the facility.*
- *Asbuilt oval seating is positioned wrong. Districts seating isn't high enough to see.*
- *Access to the oval and taps for water at Asbuilt are unreasonable. Shade and a hose wouldn't go astray!*

Tracy Village oval

- *Tracy village ground and viewing.*
- *Sheltered areas not enough when raining the shade cloths need to be replaced.*
- *Needs to have more shaded seating areas around the oval.*
- *Tracy village oval doesn't have many seats.*
- *The change rooms at Tracy Village, Asbuilt are below standard and need some work. Only time they were clean was when we played before anyone else.*

TIO Stadium

Respondents were asked a series of questions specifically relating to TIO Stadium. Overall, respondents said their experiences at the stadium were good, with 'fair' food options and 'good' drink options. Most respondents agreed TIO Stadium was a safe environment to watch football however concerns were raised about aggressive behaviour, inappropriate language from spectators, abuse and a lack of security presence.

When asked to rank their overall experience at the stadium according to a rating scale of **poor, fair, good, great, excellent** the majority of respondents nominated **good** (84), **great** (48) and **fair** (41).

How do you rate your overall experience at TIO Stadium when you attend as a player or spectator?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0

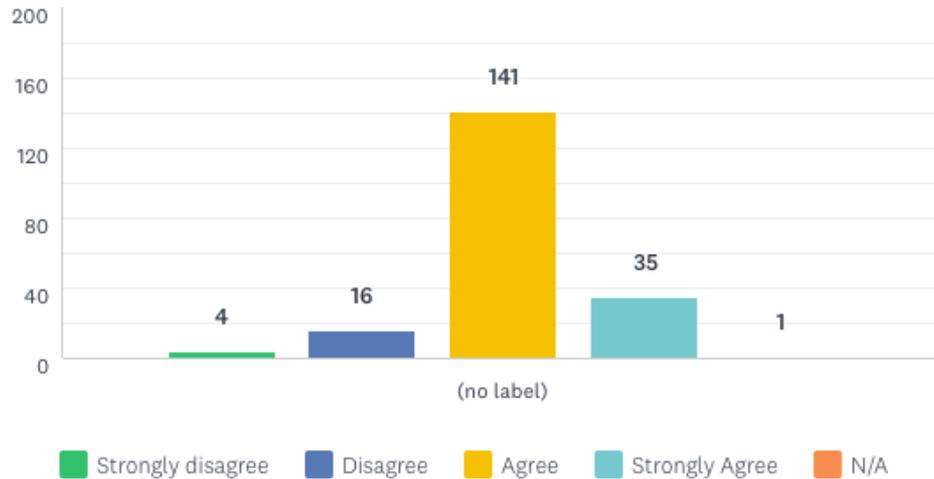


Most respondents ranked the food options at TIO Stadium as **fair** (89), **good** (51) and **poor** (38). With the drink/bar options rated **good** (68), **fair** (54) and **poor** (31).

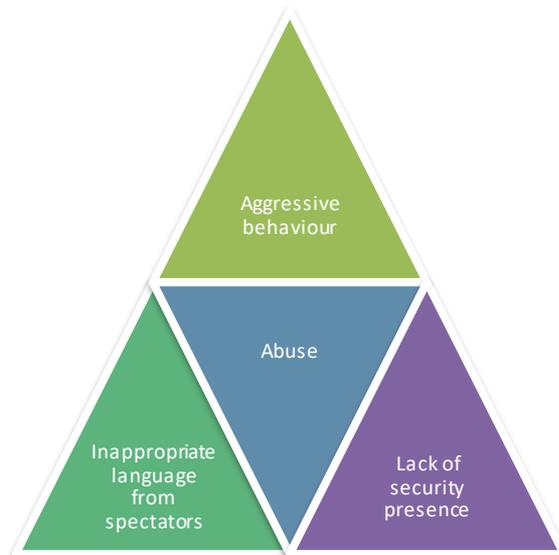
When asked to rank whether TIO Stadium was a safe environment to watch the football according to a rating scale of **strongly disagree**, **disagree**, **agree**, **strongly agree**, most respondents selected **agree** (141) or **strongly agree** (35). Sixteen respondents selected disagree and four respondents selected strongly disagree.

TIO Stadium offers a safe environment to come and watch footy?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



Where concerns were raised, they related to:



Some notable comments were as follows:

- Abuse can be heard from the stadium when either playing or umpiring. This needs to be stamped out to make the venue more family friendly.
- Crowd behaviour - code of conduct is not consistently applied.
- Dislike the young generation disrespecting the local elders. Dislike changing the traditional ends of teams because (it is) part of (the) reason why young ones get cheeky. The old people didn't enjoy having to swap ends.
- Disruptive & abusive patrons need closer monitoring, don't see security during junior games etc.
- I have seen a number of fights occur inside the stadium and in the car park.
- Spectators can be very aggressive which makes me uncomfortable.
- The culture of positive and constructive criticism is out the door. Disgraced by all spectators from all clubs. All need to be held accountable for actions and verbal abuse.

Games and fixtures

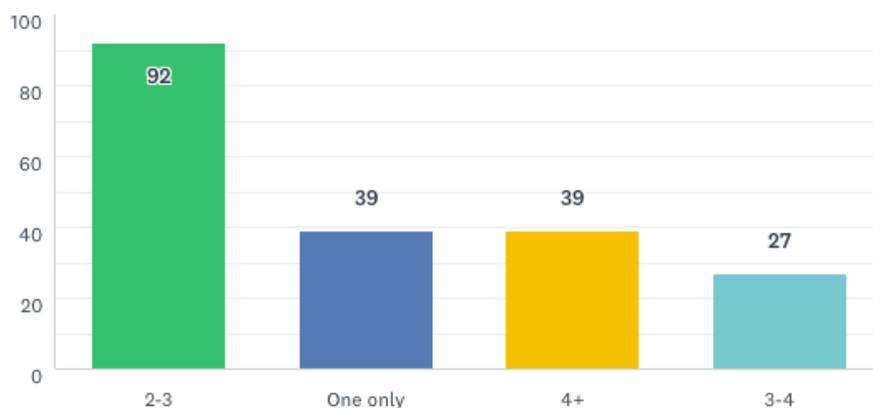
Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to NTFL games and fixtures. Most respondents attended Men's Premier League games but watched an average of two to three games per weekend. Respondents expressed a preference for watching Men's Premier League games at TIO Stadium on a Saturday night and said the standard of the games attended was mostly 'good'. Most respondents felt the standard of coaching for games they played in or their children played in was 'excellent'.

When asked to nominate how often respondents sighted NTFL staff at games and venues each weekend, the majority selected **often** (63) followed by **sometimes** (61) and **all the time** (40).

The majority of respondents watched two to three games on an average weekend (92). This was followed closely by those who watched either four or more games (39) and one game only (39).

During the 2018/19 TIO NTFL season, how many games across all the divisions and venues would you watch on an average weekend?

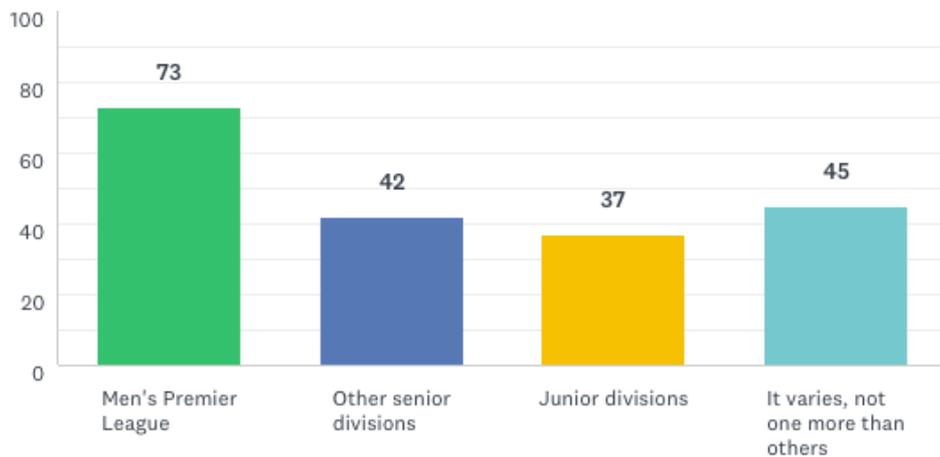
Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



Men's Premier League games were selected as the most attended (73) and more respondents watched other senior divisions (42) than junior divisions (37).

Which games do you attend the most?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0

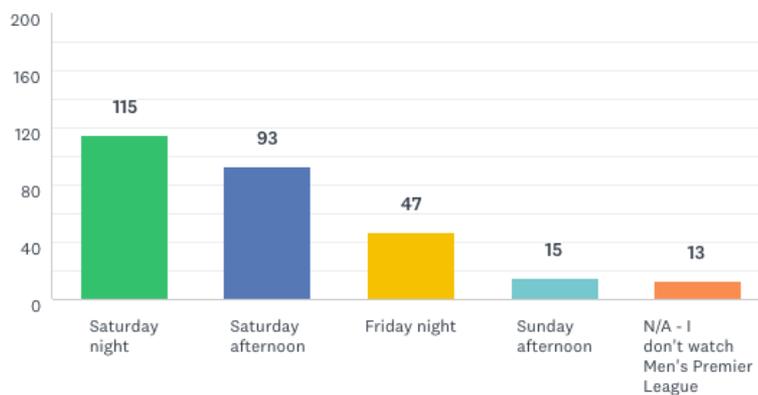


The majority of respondents rated the standard of the games they attended the most as **good** (91), **fair** (45) and **great** (41).

Respondents showed a preference for watching Men's Premier League Games at TIO Stadium on Saturday nights (115) or Saturday afternoons (93).

What times do you prefer to watch Men's Premier League games at TIO Stadium?

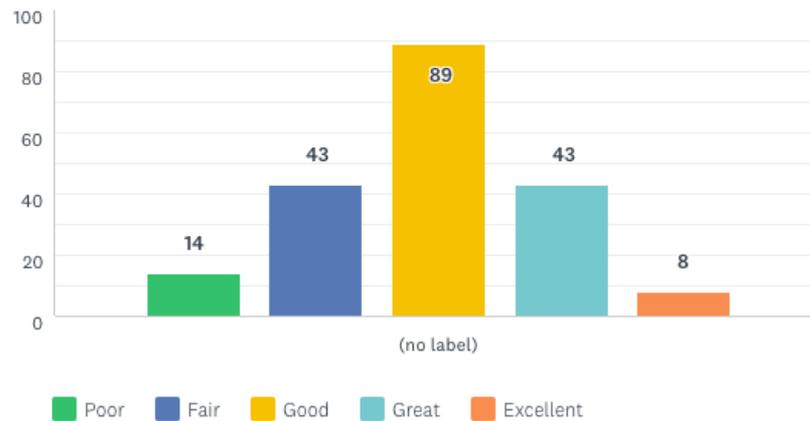
Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



When asked to consider the behaviour at the games they attended, respondents nominated **good** (89), **great** (43) and **fair** (43). Fourteen respondents said the behaviour at games was poor.

In relation to the 2018/19 season, how would you rate the behaviour at the games you attend the most (as identified in question 12)? This can refer to player, coach, club and spectator behaviour.

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



When asked to provide a reason for the chosen rating, the following issues were raised:

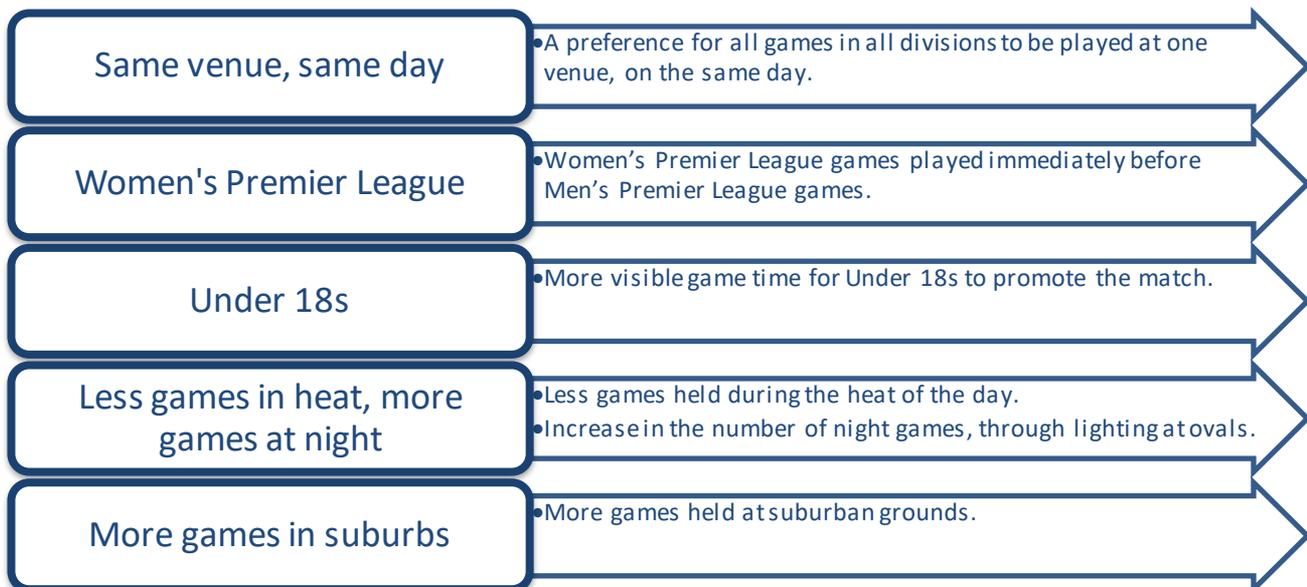


Some notable comments in relation to this question were as follows:

- Abuse and very poor management from match day officials across all levels.
- Attitude of spectators and those leading the team can be questionable at times in terms of language, feedback to officials and interaction with opposition players.
- Cranky parents abusing other spectators while security does nothing.
- I'm a life member and sit in the bar upstairs sometimes and the abuse that other life members or people in the bar yell out to umpires when they can't even hear you is ridiculous. There are teenagers around and we should set an example to them, let's cut out all abuse to anyone players, umpires, people in the crowd let's enjoy the footy.

- Attitudes are great in all areas of grades. The part that lets it down from being great is the lack of support and direction for the umpires learning. They are left to themselves and no-one directs them on some bad decisions or compliments them on great ones. A senior and junior umpire should be paired together at all times.
- Because junior games are less policed, more abuse on the field and off the field between players and spectators. Some young umpires are biased as they support their friends that are in the game.
- In a lot of the games I've played and watched the level of umpiring is shocking. If better game allocation was allowed, then this wouldn't be a problem i.e.: one 'trainee' umpire pre-game or one junior umpire pre-game or something. A lot of the games I played, the oldest umpire would be no older than 17 and couldn't control an out of hand game. Also, the boundary umpires could rarely throw a ball in. It's not great and could be improved with minor adjustments.
- Some coaches actively promote player aggression and umpires don't control these episodes.

When respondents were asked what they would like to see in the fixture for the upcoming 2019-20 season, the majority of comments were in relation to changes to match scheduling including times and venues. The following themes emerged:



Some notable comments were as follows:

- All grades vs same team as Premier League Men like back in the old days. As it's a great day to spend with family and friends leading up to the big game.
- More lights for suburban grounds and night games for all divisions.
- More night games! Games at midday are awful to play and don't draw supporters because of the heat. Div2 generally has older, less fit players and has the worst time slots when I think the fitter players would be able to handle the heat better. This season did see better time slots for women's PL than in the past.
- More senior women's games played in the evening, and more senior women's games as curtain raisers to the men's premier games. Also, the women's finals structure should be the same as the premier

men's, and the senior women's grand final should be played immediately before the premier men's. The grand finals on different weekends was the most disappointing thing about last season for me.

- Under 18 boys play Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Push under 12s and 14s to Saturday morning. Easier for parents to get their kids to games then. With some of the under 18s boys turning 18 throughout the season sometimes turning up for a Sunday game is out of the question. We should also be promoting our good under 18s talent. It allows for the talent ID to watch most the 18s game around the same time and place.

When asked to rate the quality of coaching for the team respondents play in or have a child playing in, respondents selected **excellent** (58), **great** (44) and **good** (35). The positive responses to this question indicate a very high regard for the quality of coaching this season. Thirty respondents selected **N/A** which can be interpreted as not having any involvement with coaching.

:How do you rate the quality of coaching for the team you play in/have a child playing in?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



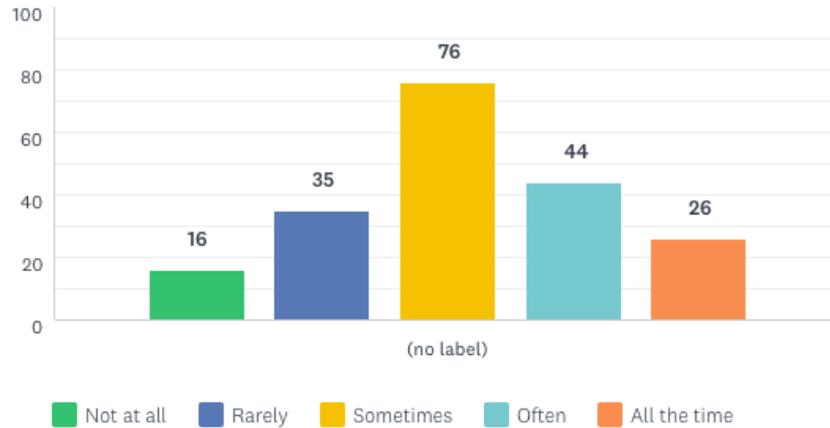
Preferences for consuming NTFL-related information

The majority of respondents said they sometimes watched NTFL games on free -to-air television or live online and preferred to consume NTFL-related content via social media.

When asked whether they watched NTFL games on free-to-air tv or live online, respondents **sometimes** (76), **often** (44) and **rarely** (35).

Do watch NTFL games on free-to-air TV or live online?

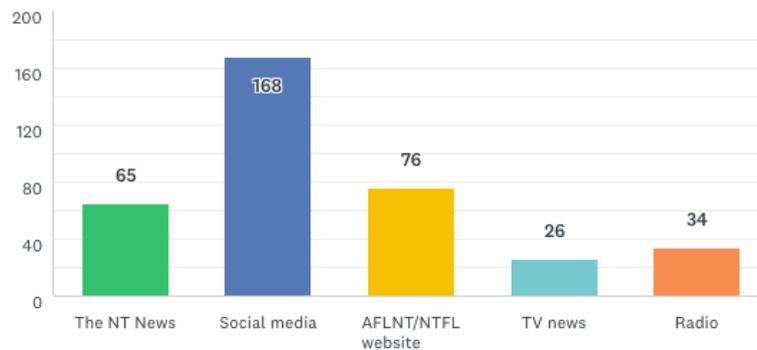
Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



Respondents showed a preference for consuming NTFL-related content via social media (168), the AFLNT website (76) and the NT News (65) when away from attending games.

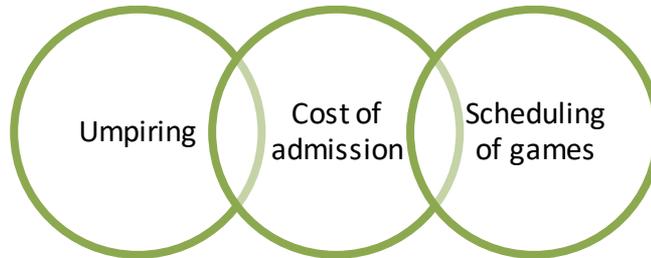
How do you prefer to interact or consume NTFL-related content, away from attending the games? Pick as many answers that apply.

Answered: 197 Skipped: 0



General comments

Respondents were asked to provide feedback about any matter relating to the NTFL season 2018/19. The following topics were commonly raised in the comments submitted:



To a lesser extent, respondents also specified a preference for **better quality and lower cost food options** at games, the **introduction of more night games** and **more visible AFLNT management**.

Umpiring

The majority of comments made were in relation to the standard of umpiring across all games. Many respondents said umpires needed mentors, were not given appropriate training or were biased.

Some notable comments were as follows:

- *AFLNT seriously needs to look at the quality of umpiring. Umpires need to be held more accountable (dropped through the grades) for poor decision making. A few poor decisions change the momentum of games and it's frustrating paying money each week to watch this.*
- *It would be beneficial to the improvement of the league to heavily invest in umpire education and skill development, as it is quite often sub-standard and has great impact on the sport we pay to come and watch. Mark Noonan is great however, and many umpires could take a leaf from his book!*
- *Please improve the umpiring mentor program. It is obviously non-existent. As an umpire for a different sport, if you want to improve the attitude toward umpires you need to invest in them. It's not fair or right when you have two young blokes with little experience attempting to umpire an 18's game without support. You are failing in your duty of care to protect the players and umpires.*
- *Umpires seem to impose themselves too much when compared to competitions I've played in down south. The flow of the games is often slowed down by inconsistent umpiring that affects the game. One game you may have one umpire letting things go (the way it should be) then when the other field umpire takes over in the other half of the field things are adjudicated in a much more sensitive manner. This is evident across all grades and creates confusion between players as to what they can and can't do.*

Cost of admission

Second to umpiring, respondents commented that the cost of attending games was too high and made it unaffordable for families to attend together.

Some notable comments were as follows:

- *Decrease the entrance (fee) and me and my family would go more often. I also don't appreciate having to pay so much to watch junior games.*
- *Grand final day pricing was ridiculous. There needs to be a discussion about that. \$12 is quite enough in my opinion. I know a lot of locals that didn't attend because the pricing went up.*
- *I feel the annual membership is too expensive. When you have both parents watching their child it is unfair that both should have to pay to watch their child participate, let alone not watch the game because you're running water filling up water bottles, scoring, being medic. Everything but watching. Who cares about senior or premier games. You need to watch too many games to get value. The clubs should play all their games from early morning right through the day to encourage club participation and encourage kids to look up to and aspire to be a senior player or be inspired by them. It would help clubs need less volunteers, perhaps give volunteers in the canteens etc have a rest. There are less people wanting to help for free.*

Scheduling of games

This was a topic raised in relation to all games, with respondents providing comments on the scheduling and fixtures of junior games and Women's Premier League games and night games.

Some notable comments were:

- *Junior matches in U12's and soon to be formed U10's need to be played on a full field next season - the league is doing kids in these age groups a disservice and stifling development by playing what is effectively an Auskick game. The standard of the game suffers, and kids do not learn the basics of positional play. I'd like to see game times reviewed so that more 'home and away' style fixtures are introduced so that clubs can 'own' the day/ night at their ground and clubhouse + this saves on costs / volunteers who act as support staff as there are less venues to attend. Having a consistent schedule for junior matches in U14 to U18 is needed so that families can plan their weekend - AFL is not the only sport most kids play therefore we can't be expecting them to prioritise it over other sports when the time and day changes wildly from week to week.*
- *Need to reassess the junior team structures, Xmas close down for juniors, umpire accountability and scheduling. May need to seriously look at more home and away games (8 clubs, 4 venues with 2 grounds (Nightcliff can use the school next door) so each club can play home and away as a trial, say 2 games each?? I would be happy to be a part of a group to look at this.*
- *NTFL need to sort out the fixture for juniors up front before next season. No games during school holidays, it's pretty simple. To make up games start a couple of weeks earlier. NTFL also need to sort out the extra time for finals.*
- *More investment to have fixtures completed prior to season start especially juniors after round 10 week to week doesn't help to find volunteers. Under 12s bigger playing areas. Overall more use of suburban ovals to ensure games are played together especially juniors through to seniors. More night games.*

Too much feedback to write here but this was one of the worst structured years I have witnessed in 20 years of NT footy.

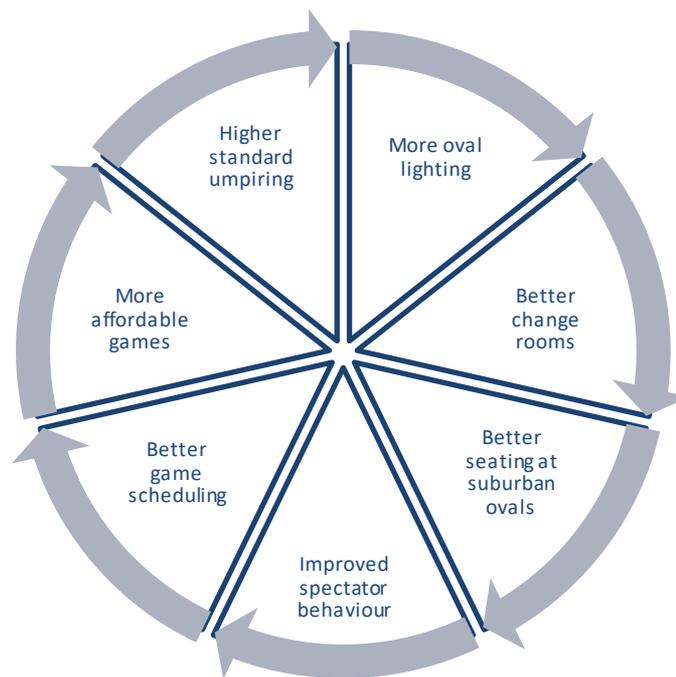
- *Please put women's timing of games at the front of your mind - they will bring spectators - they bring a much-needed family atmosphere to the game - you will see a big improvement in attendance at both games - which can only benefit participation in the future.*
- *Women's premier league play before the men's premier league.*

Recommendations

This report has been prepared after a two-week fan feedback survey on the 2018/19 NTFL season. The survey sought information on how football fans rated venues and facilities, patron safety, games and fixtures, as well as competition and coaching standards. Information about how fans choose to consume NTFL-related information was also collected.

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