

SEPTEMBER 2022

FEELING

THE STRAIN

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL INJURY INDEX

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Sport & Entertainment

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Introduction

HOWDEN SPORT &
ENTERTAINMENT ARE
DELIGHTED TO PRESENT
**THE 2021/22 EUROPEAN
FOOTBALL INJURY INDEX**

SEPTEMBER 2022





Welcome to the second edition of the Howden European Football Injury Index as we analyse the effect of injuries on the 98 teams across the top five European leagues throughout the 2021/22 season.

This report analyses the first full season of European football since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst it is clear that Covid-19 remains a threat to clubs, we can see that there have been a number of other forces at play – fixture congestion and overall player workload, particularly among the younger generation, are evident.

Throughout the report, we offer possible explanations for the various anomalies in the data by referring to specific incidents and providing context in each case.

Whilst we see similar overriding trends in terms of both injury cost and count, we are also able to identify other external factors, such as the impact of international competition. We offer a possible hypothesis on the effect of the inaugural winter World Cup.

Duncan Fraser

Duncan Fraser
Global Practice Leader

James Burrows

James Burrows
Head of Sport

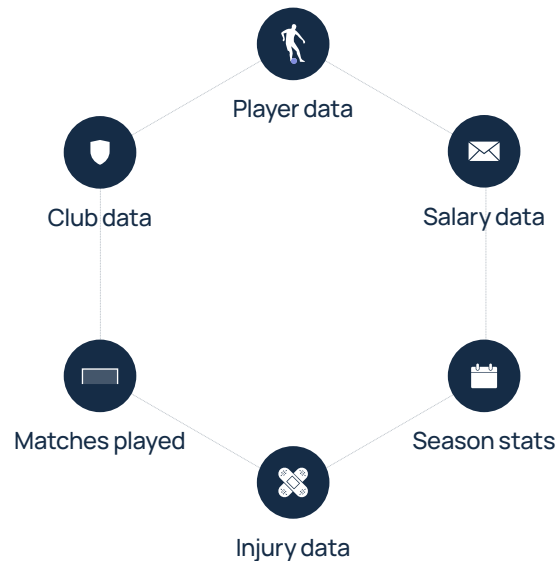
Methodology

Data collection

Highlights

- In-depth club specific analysis from collected data.
- Salary data was provided by Sporting Intelligence.
- Player injury data was provided by XML Sports Feeds.

Data from Sporting Intelligence and Sports Feeds



Data cleaning and categorization

Highlights

- Sub-dividing injuries based on the type, severity and overall impact on cost.
- Identifying what constitutes a soft tissue injury and analysing possible influencing factors.

1 Data cleansing

2 Secondary research for data clarification and correction

3 Identify patterns and trends

4 Data categorisation

Player

Injury

Caveats and assumptions

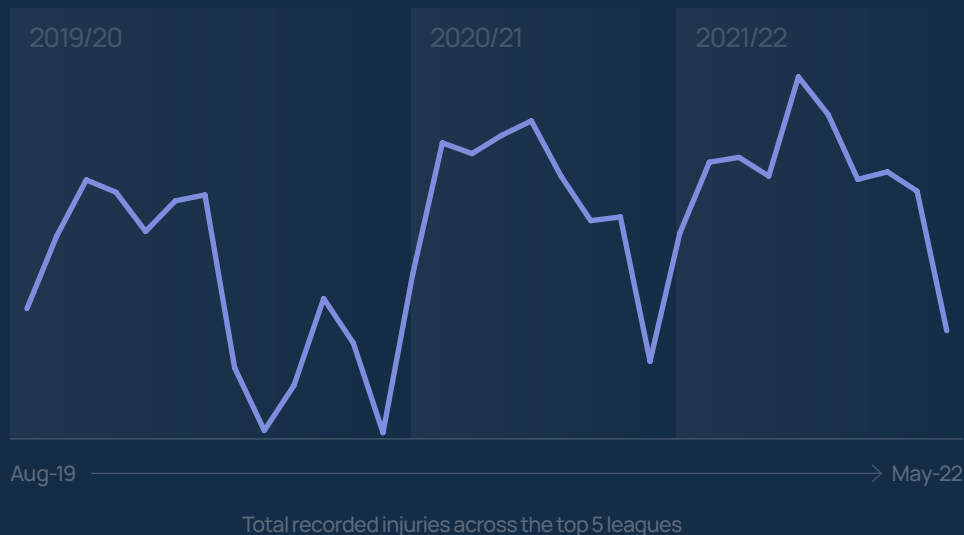
- Player injury details are collated for the full 2021/22 season.
- Injury cost is calculated by multiplying the cost per day of a player by the number of days they were unavailable because of an injury.
- For figures in euros, we have used a conversion rate of €1.19 = £1.
- For monthly injury count, the injury has been counted in the month in which it occurred/started. For example, Player A was injured from January to February during the season, his injury is reported in the figures for January.
- Any injury that resulted in the absence of a player for more than one day has been considered.
- Injury cost only includes the base salary of the injured player and not additional costs associated with treatment/rehab or bonuses.
- Player salary data has been provided by Sporting Intelligence and this has been used to calculate injury cost.
- The length of time that a player is paid whilst under contract will vary from league to league, for the sake of comparison we have assumed that all clubs pay all injured players wages in full.
- The total injury figures for each league include players who tested positive for Covid-19 or suffered other illnesses during the season.
- Covid-19 and Illnesses are included as stand-alone categories in the injury analysis sections.
- Clubs and leagues adopted different testing regimes, so in some cases a player may have been tested twice/three times for the same case, and the figures should be seen in this light.
- Covid-19 cases were only recorded when the name of the player was confirmed publicly, this enables us to assign each positive test to the individual player and club.
- So as to avoid any duplication, confirmed cases are not recorded where the player in question was already absent due to another injury.

Benchmarking Report

Key takeaways

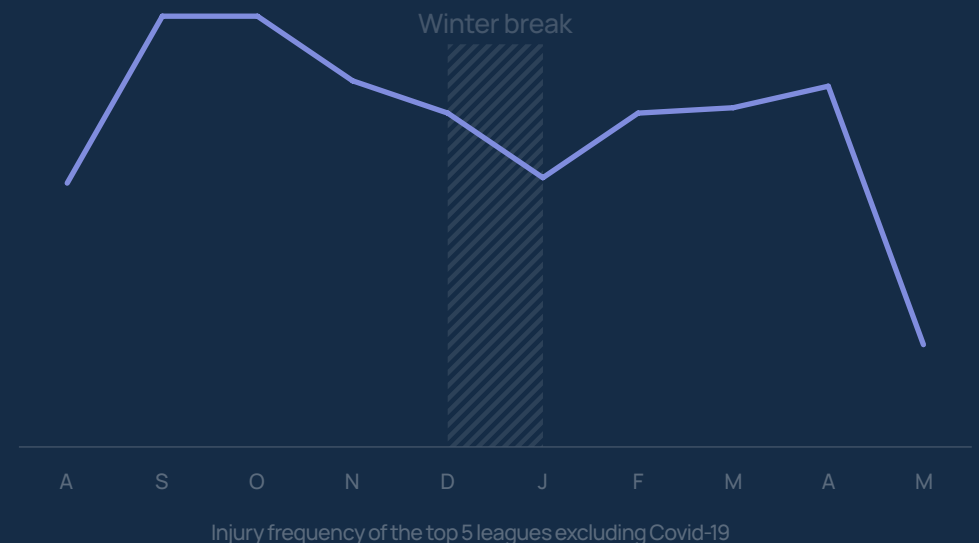
Total injuries hit 4810 over the course of last season – representing a 20% increase on the 2020/2021 season.

- This points to a concerning trend across Europe as all leagues saw an increase in injury rates.
- Liverpool competed on all fronts but 'only' suffered from 80 injuries, the second most in England but will this have an impact on the upcoming season?
- The English Premier League experienced the most injuries with Chelsea top of that particular table (97).
- Real Madrid recorded the highest number of absences at 114.



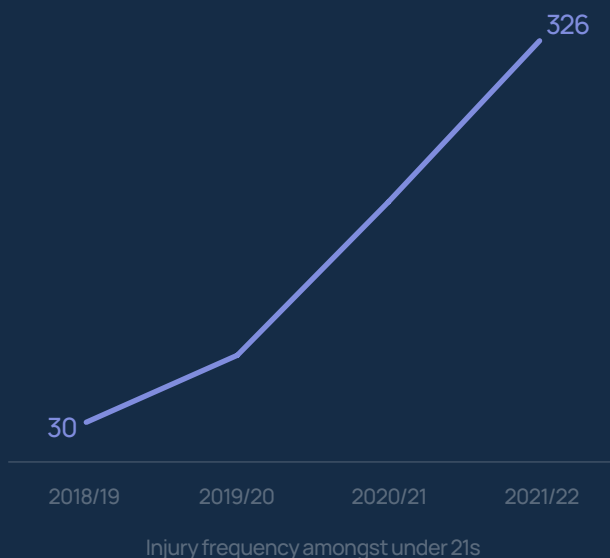
The winter break had a positive effect when we look at non Covid-19 injuries, but overall rates of absence quickly returned to previous levels from February onwards.

- As expected, non Covid-19 related absences dropped during the breaks across the leagues (411 in December to 352 in January).
- These types of injury rose by 57 instances in February (409), returning to levels recorded before the winter break.
- Rates of absence in fact worsened in Ligue 1 during the winter break (46 in December 2021, 65 in January 2022 and 73 in February 2022).



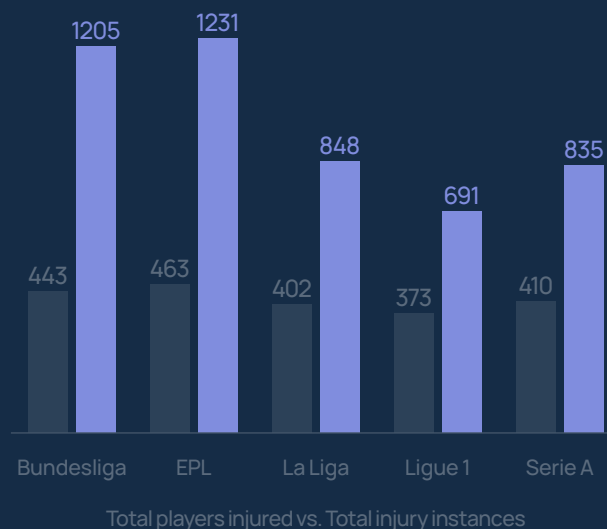
There was a significant increase in under 21 injuries across Europe's top five leagues.

- This increase has endured over the last four years as clubs are seemingly becoming more reliant on the younger generation.
- There were 30 under 21 injuries in 2018/19 compared to 326 in 2021/22.



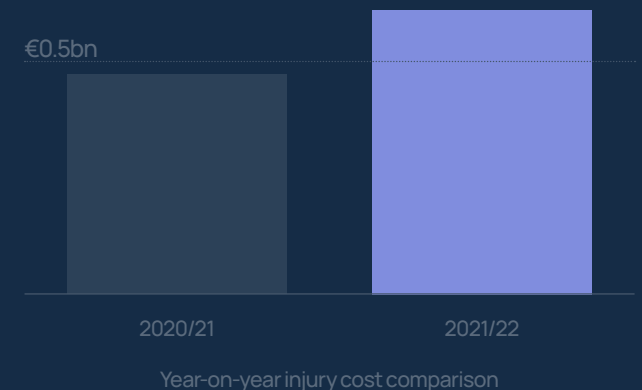
Recurring injuries became a worrying theme. Of the 4810 injuries recorded, 2091 players were affected at an average of 2.3 per player.

- Perhaps unsurprisingly, players over 30 suffered the most recurring injuries, recording an average of 2.5 injuries.
- Overall, it was forwards that suffered the most recurring injuries out of all positions (2.34 per player).



The 2021/22 season was the first season to record an injury cost of over half a billion Euros (€610.75m).

- This represents a 29% increase on the previous season (€472.61m).
- This was not necessarily down to wage inflation as injuries increased by a similar rate.
- Injuries cost English Premier League clubs €219.64m.
- Paris Saint Germain (PSG) recorded the highest injury cost (€40.73m), Real Madrid 2nd (€40.41m), Barcelona 3rd (€33.23m).



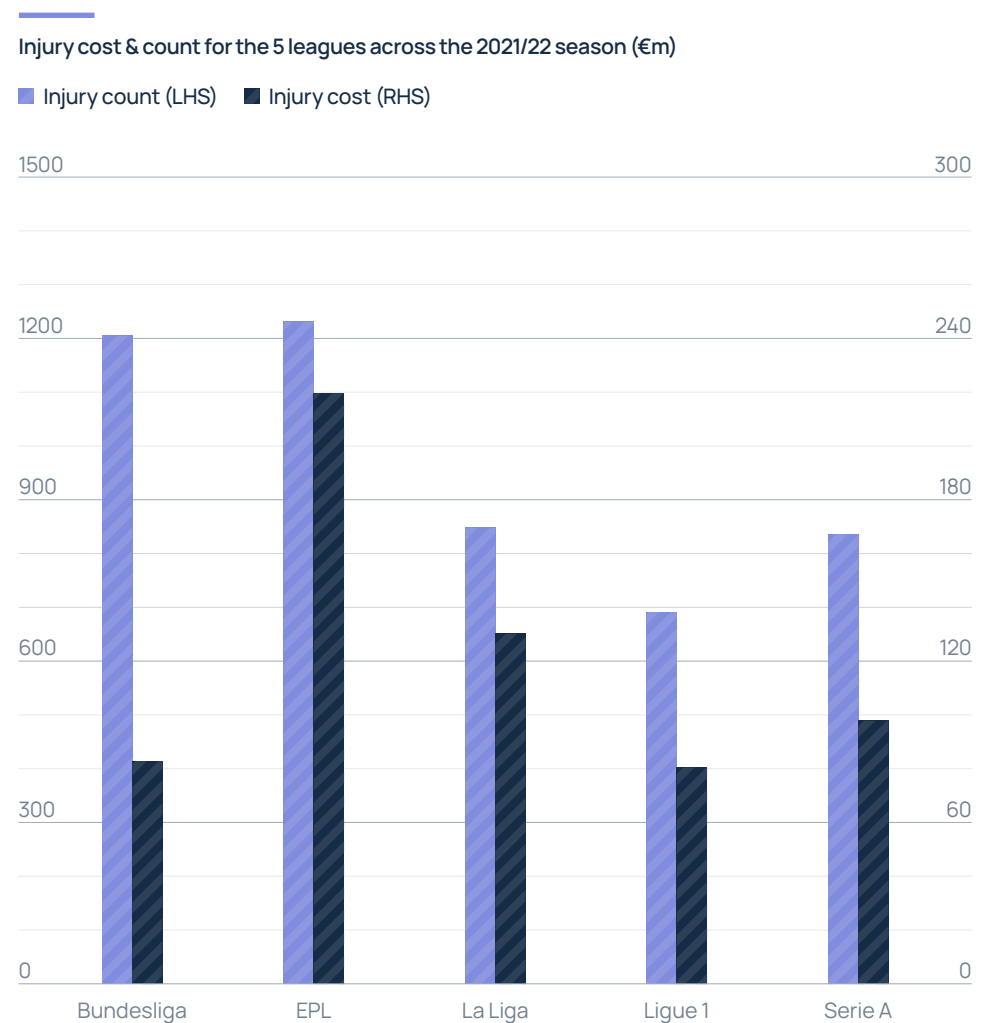
Injury cost & count

The rise in injuries rates will be a cause for concern for clubs around Europe but it begs the question, what can be done to help curb this increasing problem?

The 4810 injuries suffered by clubs in the top five European leagues further adds to the debate around fixture congestion and the need for calendar adjustments. Also consider the fact that we have the 2022 World Cup in Qatar taking place mid-season, which represents an additional challenge in terms of managing player workloads and squad rotation.

English Premier League clubs suffered the most with 1231 injuries in total, a full 540 more than the lowest recorded in Ligue 1 (691). Perhaps the most surprising observation is that the Bundesliga were only 26 injuries off 'top spot' despite the fact that there are two fewer teams in this division.

In terms of cost, English clubs also paid out the most in salaries, €219.64m. This figure is just short of €100m greater than the average total injury cost across the five leagues (€122.15m). In second place was La Liga with €130.12m paid out to injured players.



Leagues at a glance



Bundesliga

20/21

21/22

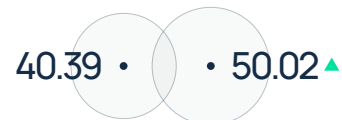
Total injury instances



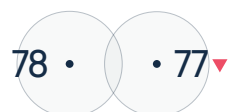
Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points of league winners



English Premier League

20/21

21/22

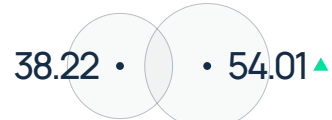
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points of league winners



La Liga

20/21

21/22

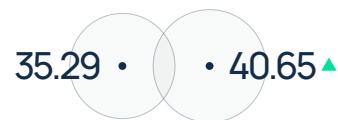
Total injury instances



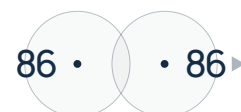
Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points of league winners

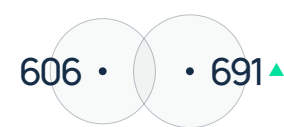


Ligue 1

20/21

21/22

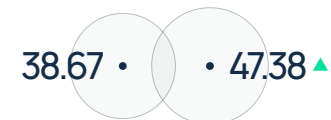
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points of league winners

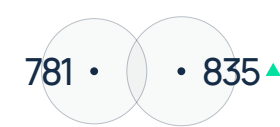


Serie A

20/21

21/22

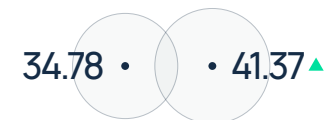
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points of league winners



The Covid-19 impact

The impact of Covid-19 on clubs worsened compared to the previous 2020/21 season. Only Serie A recorded a decline in Covid-19 cases.

In what was the first full season since the start of the pandemic, there were still a number of games across Europe that were postponed due to the virus.

In the English Premier League, nine out of 10 league fixtures were cancelled on the weekend of 18th/19th December. Clubs in both Italy and Germany were forced to reduce capacity at matches under new government legislation and some French clubs were forced to cancel games due to various training ground outbreaks.

It is also important to note that following the events of last season, league officials across Europe introduced new rules, which enabled clubs to apply for the postponement of matches if the number of cases at a club reached a certain threshold.

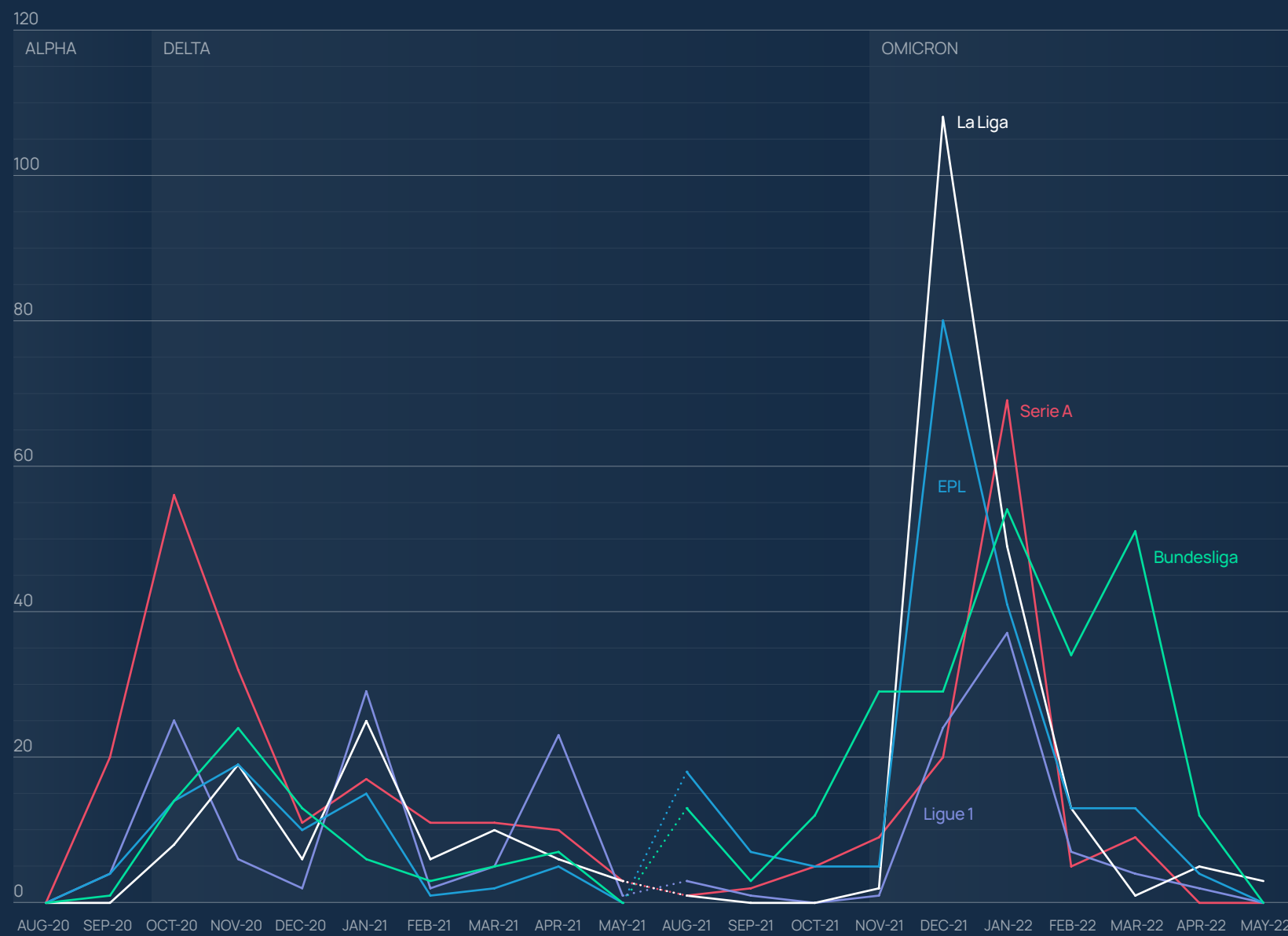
In France for example, the relegation clash between Lorient and Dijon was postponed due to a severe outbreak in the Lorient squad where more than 10 players recorded positive tests.

“

ULTIMATELY FOOTBALL IS NOT LIKE ANOTHER JOB — YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE PHYSICALLY TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER A CERTAIN LEVEL TO THE GAME AND YOU CAN'T DO THAT IF YOU ARE PLAYING TOO MANY GAMES.

MAHETA MOLANGO
PFA CHIEF EXECUTIVE (VIA BBC SPORT)

Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by league



Top 5 clubs by league

Unsurprisingly PSG topped the table in terms of injury cost once again, paying out €40.73m to injured players. Real Madrid suffered the worst rate of injury with 114 recorded instances. These also came at the second highest cost of €40.41m.

If we consider the overall cost data across all five leagues, it is interesting to see that Chelsea (€29.89m) are the only English side to feature in the top five. Despite being the richest league in the world, this perhaps demonstrates that the riches are more evenly spread in England.

Both Spanish superpowers, Real Madrid (€40.41m) and Barcelona (€33.23m), feature in the top three with only PSG spending more on injuries. With this in mind, the combined injury cost of the top five in La Liga is the highest in Europe (€99.44m).

The top five clubs in the Bundesliga recorded the highest combined injury figure (379), almost double that of the top five in France (209). However, the top five in Ligue 1 did in fact register higher injury costs (€57m).

An analysis of the champions in each of the five leagues offers an interesting insight. Bayern Munich (97), Real Madrid (114) and PSG (91) all recorded the most injuries during the season yet still claimed their respective titles. This points to the significant squad depths at these clubs which enabled them to overcome league-leading injury rates.

“

I'D EXPECT TO SEE A LOT HIGHER INJURY RATE IN TEAMS LIKE BURNLEY AND SHEFFIELD UNITED BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT USED TO PERFORMING ON A WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY FIXTURE BASIS.

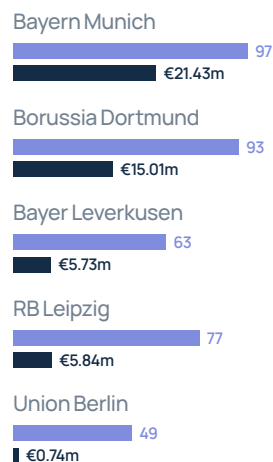
LIAM ANDERSON

FORMER LIVERPOOL FIRST-TEAM SPORTS SCIENTIST (VIA MAIL ONLINE)



Bundesliga

Bayern Munich overcame 97 injuries, beating rivals Borussia Dortmund to the title for the 10th consecutive season. It was a season to remember for Union Berlin who profited from a low injury rate (49) at a total cost of €740,000. RB Leipzig suffered 14 more injuries than Bayer Leverkusen, proving crucial as they finished fourth and third respectively.



■ Injury count ■ Injury cost



English Premier League

Liverpool's long season took its toll (80, €20.23m) as they fell short in the title race to Manchester City (67, €16.35m). Tottenham recorded the lowest injury cost (€8.43m) of the top five as they pipped North London rivals Arsenal to 4th place.



La Liga

Real Betis suffered the lowest injury count (29) of the top five, which helped secure their fifth-place finish. Conversely, Real Madrid (114, €40.41m) suffered the most yet still triumphed at the end of the season. City rivals Atlético Madrid registered just under a third of Real's injury cost but could only manage a third-place finish.



Ligue 1

PSG recorded more injuries (91) than Marseille (23), Rennes (23) and Nice (25) combined en route to the title. Monaco (47) were the only club to come close to the eventual champions. If we combine the costs of injury of the second to fifth place sides, it still comes to just under half (€16.27m) that of PSG (€40.73m).



Serie A

Lazio profited from the second lowest injury total (32) in the top half to finish fifth. Napoli suffered almost double (71) yet still finished higher. Inter recorded half the injury cost (€6.09m) compared to Napoli (€11.78m). Juventus paid out most in salaries (€22.60m) and suffered the worst injury rate (88) on their way to finishing fourth.

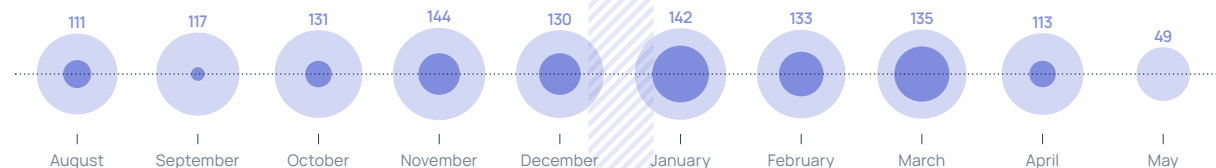


Injuries by month

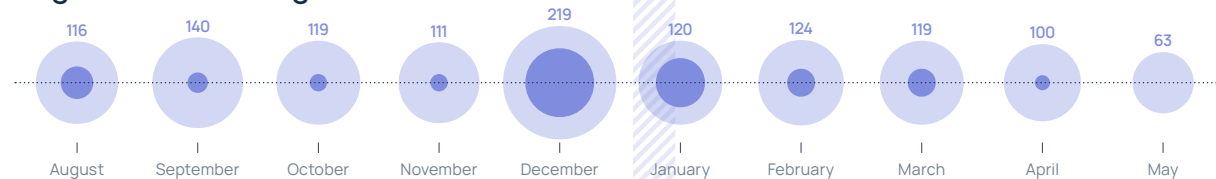
Breakdown of all
injuries by league
from 2019 to 2022



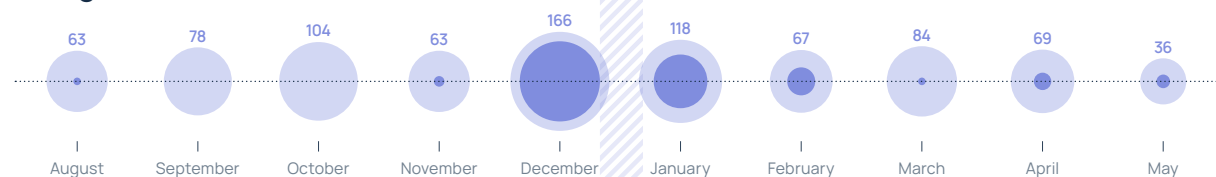
Bundesliga



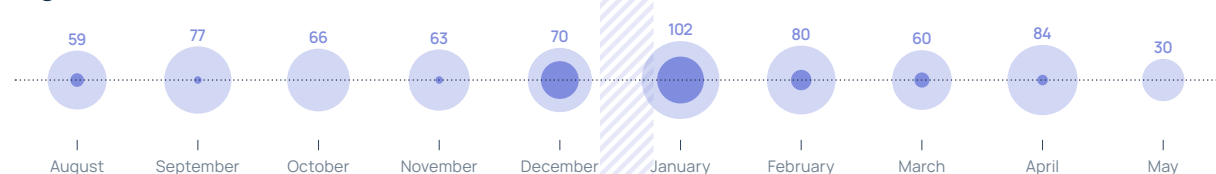
English Premier League



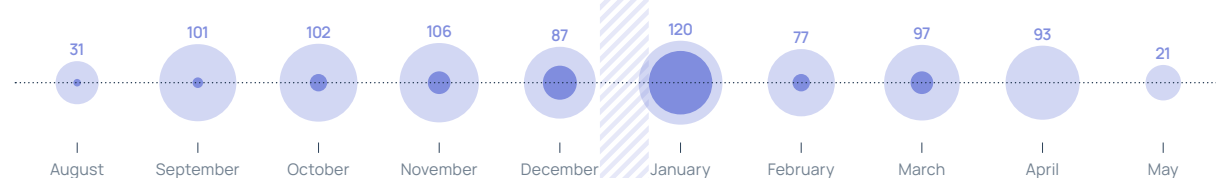
La Liga



Ligue 1



Serie A



Some leagues fared better than others, but the winter break brought some much needed relief as non Covid-19 related injuries declined.

The winter break

Consideration must also be given to the fact that whilst clubs in the top five leagues took a break from competitive action, they continued to train.

An overall comparison of non Covid-19 injuries in January and February provides an interesting point of analysis. These absences rose by 57 – a comparatively high figure when we consider that similar absences remained constant in September and October (500) and even declined going into November (441) and December (411).

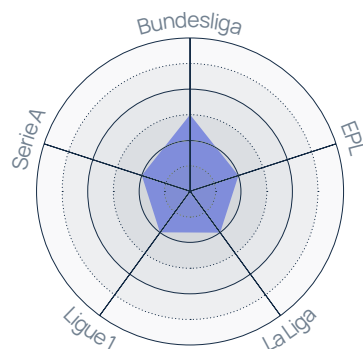
This indicates an initial net positive effect of a winter break (from December to January) but overall rates of absence quickly returned to previous levels from February onwards.

A breakdown by league shows that rates of non Covid-19 absence in fact worsened in Ligue 1 during the winter break (46 in December 2021, 65 in January 2022 and 73 in February 2022).

Injuries by type



Ankle

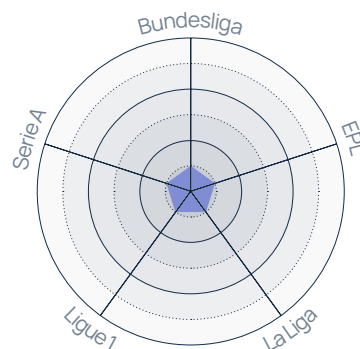


Ligue 1 matched the English Premier League in terms of average cost of injury (€260,000), this was over three times that of Serie A, which recorded the lowest total cost (€4.24m) and severity figure (14 days). The Bundesliga accounted for 28% of all injuries of this type, with Ligue 1 amassing 17% of the total.

The data for each injury group has been benchmarked and ranked across all five leagues.



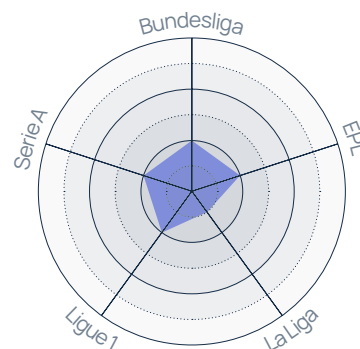
Back



The Bundesliga and English Premier League combined to register over half of these injuries (31, 27) but La Liga clubs still suffered the highest total cost (€5.62m). Sides in France and Italy recorded the same average cost (€70,000) over their 35 combined instances. The most severe injuries came in Ligue 1 (33 days).



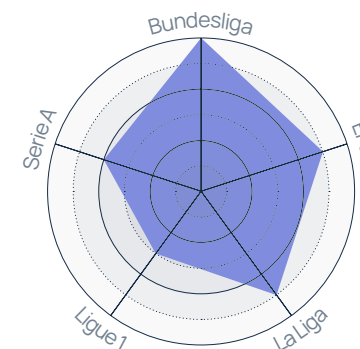
Calf/Shin



Of the 273 instances, clubs in England suffered the most (70), although clubs across the leagues suffered similar numbers. La Liga clubs paid out the most on average (€370,000) with Bundesliga clubs paying out far less (€110,000). Ligue 1 saw the highest severity figure (28 days), closely followed by their Spanish counterparts (25).



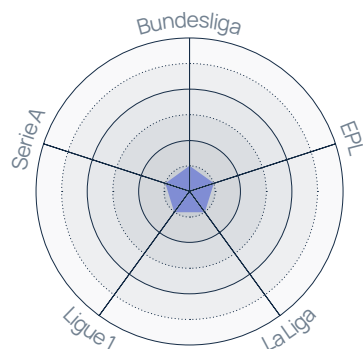
Covid-19



Only Ligue 1 clubs registered less than 100 recorded cases (79) and these unsurprisingly came at the lowest cost (€6.14m). Bundesliga clubs were worst hit (219 players) yet the total cost (€11.85m) still came to half that of the English Premier League (€22.54m).



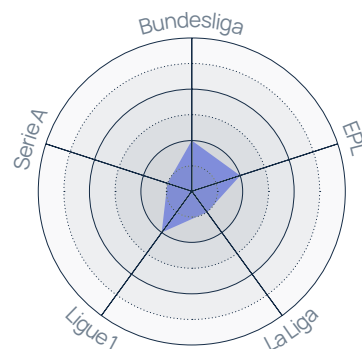
Foot



Players in both Germany and Spain suffered nine instances each but these came at twenty times the average cost in Spain (€810,000) and significantly greater total cost (€7.31m). English clubs suffered most with 26 instances. The most severe injuries came in Spain (40 days) with Serie A not far behind (38).



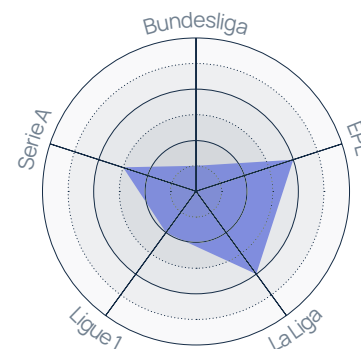
Groin



Clubs in both the Bundesliga and Ligue 1 (50, 55) recorded more injured players than Serie A and La Liga combined (20, 23). The English Premier League registered the highest average cost (€230,000) and overall total paid in salaries (€10.58m). Clubs in Italy appeared to avoid this injury type as only 20 players were affected.



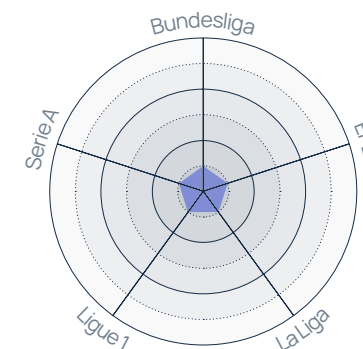
Hamstring



Clubs in England were most affected with 104 players recording 123 instances. La Liga closely followed with 120 instances, but this was shared between fewer players (87). Bundesliga clubs appear less susceptible to this type of injury (27 players, 31 instances). Severity remained similar across the five leagues.



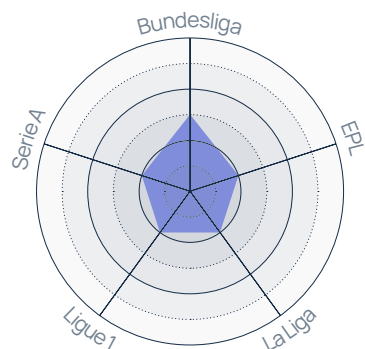
Head/Concussion



Head/Concussion injuries came at a relatively low total cost of €4.6m. Ligue 1 saw the fewest instances with six, whilst Serie A saw double this (14). Bundesliga clubs paid out the lowest average cost (€30,000) with the sides in England paying out the most in total (€1.38m).



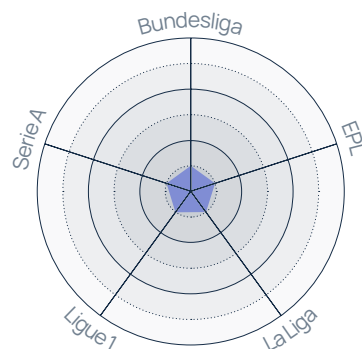
Knee



Knee injuries came at an average cost of €410,000 in England, four times that of Ligue 1 (€90,000). Bundesliga clubs were most affected (83 instances), closely followed by Serie A (72). La Liga recorded the second highest severity figure (34 days) behind the English Premier League (40).



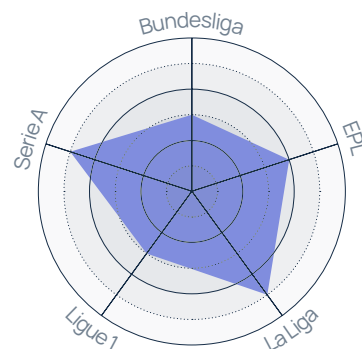
Ligament



Ligament injuries were the most severe in terms of overall average absences (39 days) but there were no injuries of this type recorded in France. All clubs in the Bundesliga, English Premier League and La Liga saw four instances each at varying costs. They were most expensive overall in Italy (€1.19m) with clubs paying out €400,000 per instance.



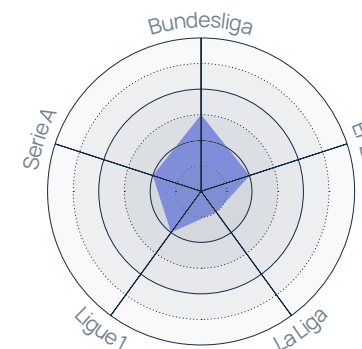
Muscle



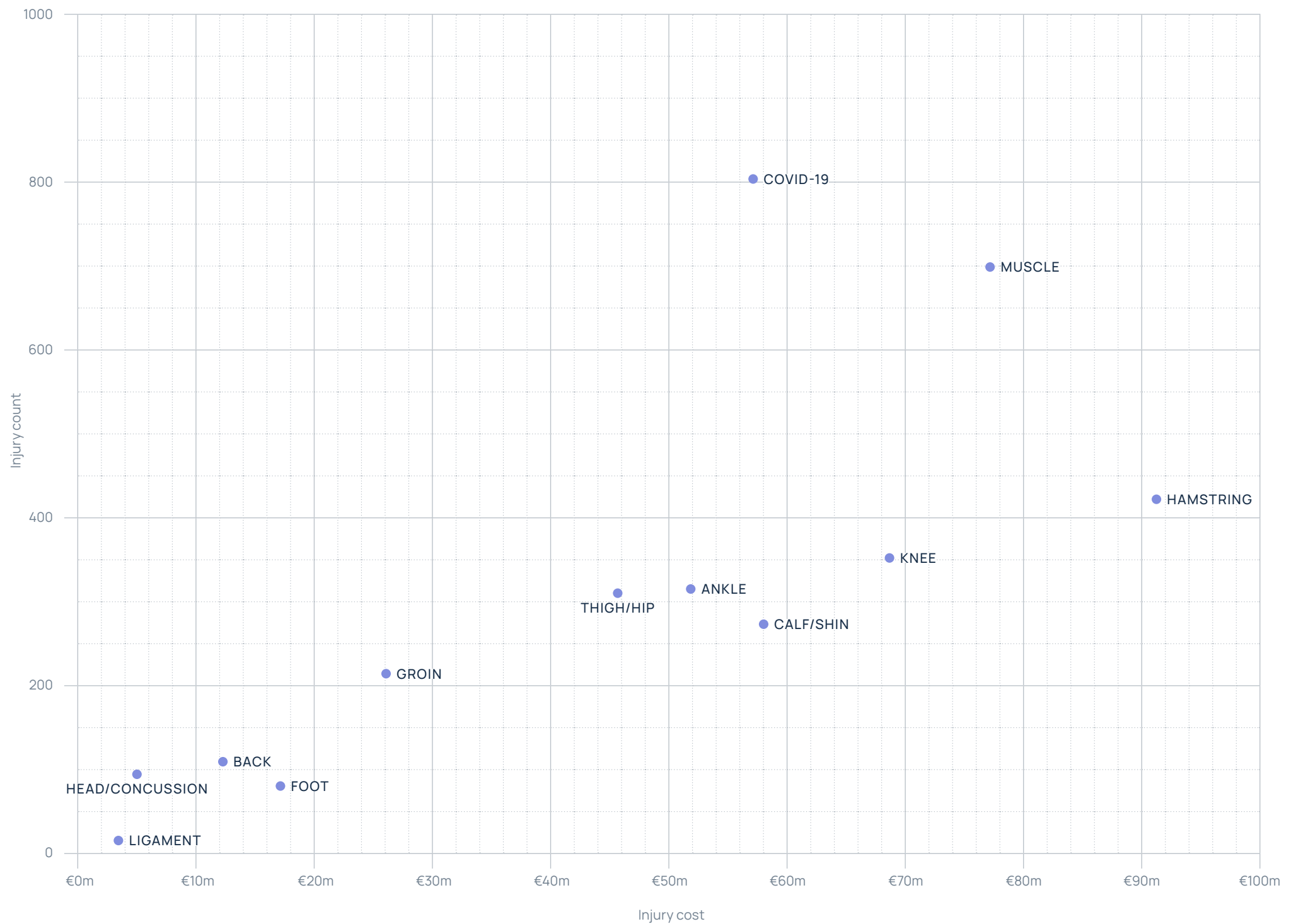
Serie A suffered the most here with 185 instances, over double that of Ligue 1 (88). However, the latter recorded the most severe of this type with players out for an average of 26 days. Players in La Liga were out for an average of 17 days per Muscle injury.



Thigh/Hip



All leagues recorded fewer than 100 instances except for the Bundesliga (106). These did however come at a relatively low level of severity (20 days). English Premier League clubs paid out the most (€18.06m), more than La Liga, Ligue 1 and Serie A combined.



Injuries by position

Remarkably, it was Ligue 1 that registered the highest severity figure for each position on the pitch. Defenders were the worst affected missing an average of 28 days.

Working up the pitch, Goalkeepers in Germany were the most injury prone (82). These came at a relatively low cost of €80,000. In contrast, Serie A registered almost half as many instances (42) at an even lower cost figure (€60,000).

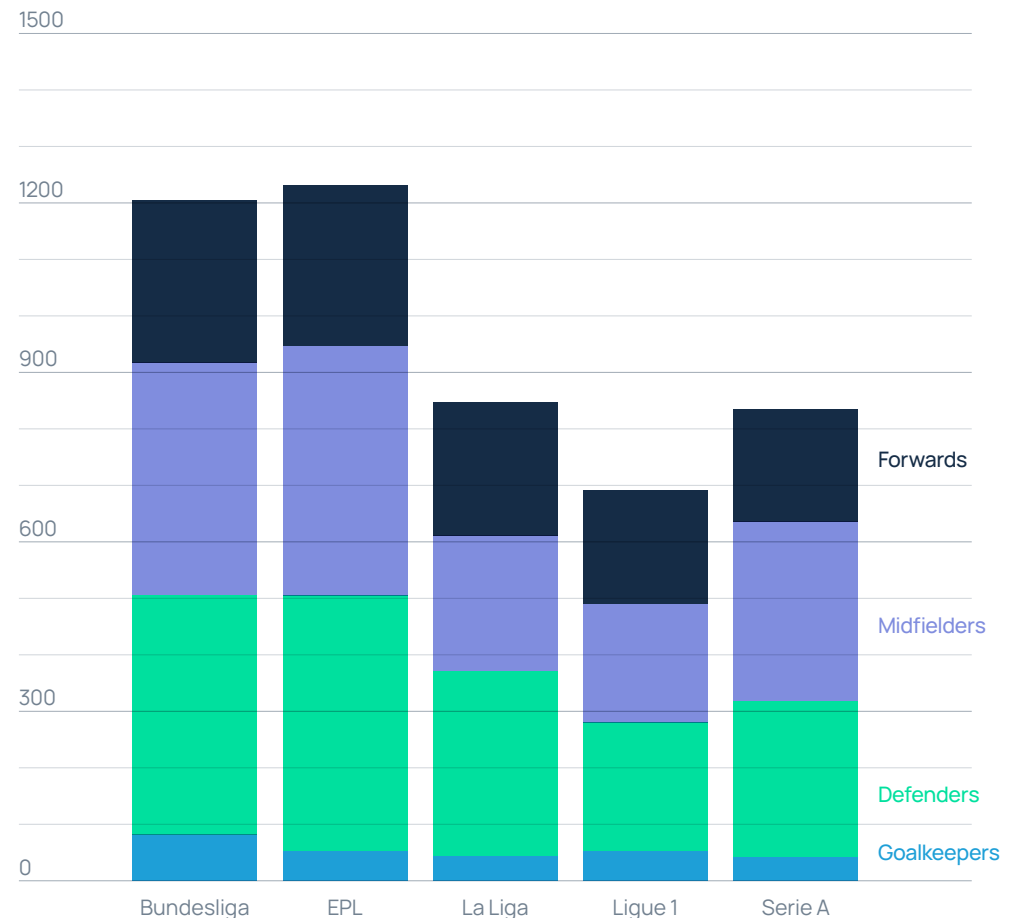
Defenders combined to record the highest number of injuries at 1707, 86 more than midfielders. Clubs in England paid out the most for these injuries, spending €170,000 per instance.

Sticking with England, clubs suffered over double the number of injuries to midfielders (442) than their French equivalents (209). Again, the English Premier League paid out the most in total salaries (€77.62m).

One would expect Forwards to 'lead the line' in terms of injury cost. However, Midfielders cost European clubs the most (€211.75m). Forwards came second (€189.8m), closely followed by Defenders (€184.73m).

This analysis shows a growing trend by clubs in Europe to spend more money on Midfielders as the modern game evolves. It is undeniable that a heightened emphasis is now placed on those in midfield to dictate play and the tempo of games. Therefore, it is unsurprising that there has been a resultant adjustment in financial outlay by clubs.

Injury totals by playing position





Goalkeepers

Injuries to Goalkeepers were most expensive in the English Premier League (€7.57m), closely followed by the Bundesliga (€6.29m). The latter also sustained the most injuries (82) at an average cost of €80,000. Ligue 1 saw the most severe injuries with players out for 21 days on average



Defenders

Injuries to Defenders in the English Premier League cost clubs more than double any other league (€78.49m). Injuries came at a cost of €25.16m in Serie A at €90,000 per absence. Defenders in France again recorded the most severe injuries (28 days); double that of the Bundesliga (14).



Midfielders

Average cost of absence was similar in both England (€180,000) and Spain (€160,000). Clubs in the Bundesliga suffered 30 fewer instances than in the English Premier League (442). Average cost of injury was lowest in Germany (€80,000). Midfielders in Serie A recorded 318 instances at a total cost of €40.70m.



Forwards

Despite sustaining the fewest injuries, French clubs suffered the most in terms of severity (24 days). Injuries were most costly in the English Premier League (€55.96m) with La Liga only €2m behind. Average absence was most costly in Spain (€230,000) and both Ligue 1 and Serie A recorded similar numbers (€150,000).



Injuries by age

Over the last four years, injury numbers amongst the under 21 age group have increased ten-fold, which seems to indicate an increased emphasis on and use of younger talent by clubs across Europe.

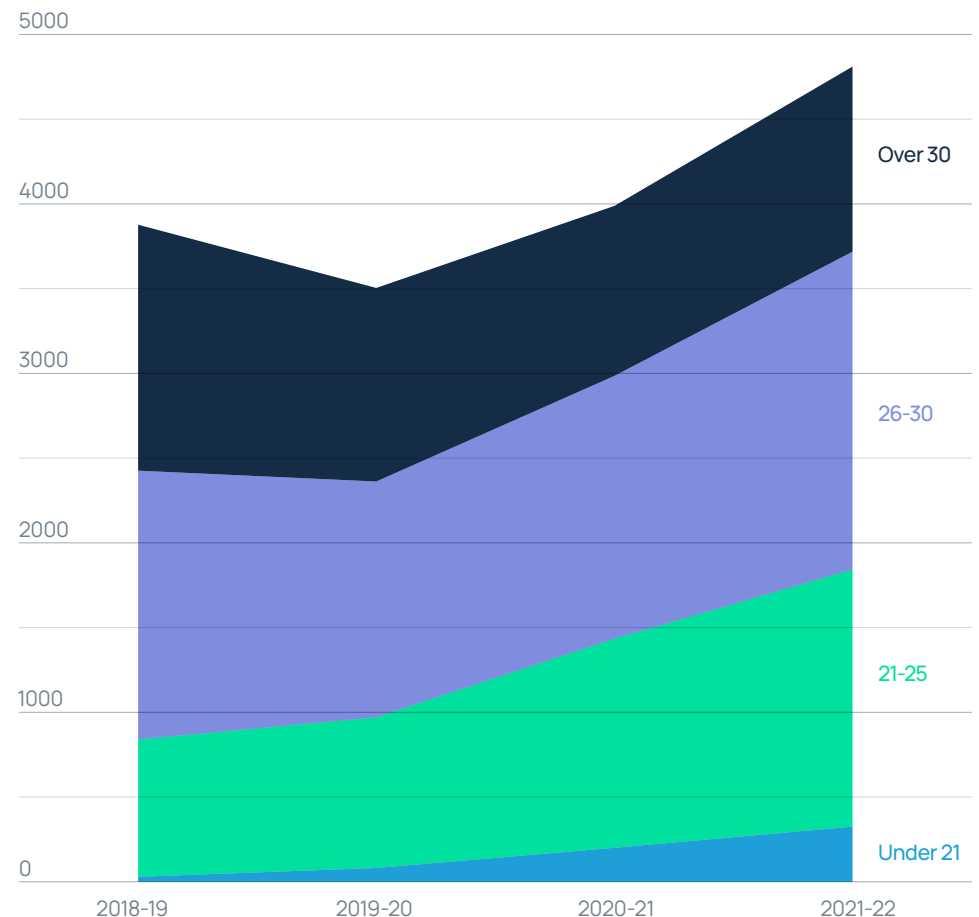
Bundesliga saw the most injuries to this age group (48 players, 109 instances). This points to a bigger problem of recurring injuries, an issue that this seasons data indicates is becoming increasingly prevalent across Europe. Yet this must also be taken in relative terms as a sizeable gap remains in terms of injury count with the other age groups.

Players aged 26-30 led the way with 1875 injuries, representing a rise of 324 on the previous year. This age group was worst affected in England which saw 509 instances.

There is also an interesting prominence of injuries among the over 30s in La Liga and Serie A perhaps indicative of players being able to prolong their careers in what would be considered to be leagues with a lower tempo playing style.

Those aged 21-25 were worst affected in Germany (412 instances) at an overall cost of €18.34m. The English Premier League suffered eight fewer injuries to players of this age yet recorded three times the injury cost (€56.70m).

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

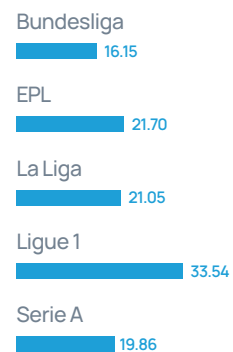
Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity (days)



Total injury cost



21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity (days)



Total injury cost



26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity (days)



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity (days)



Total injury cost



Bundesliga

ARMINIA BIELEFELD
AUGSBURG
BAYER LEVERKUSEN
BAYERN MUNICH
BORUSSIA DORTMUND
BORUSSIA MÖNCHENGLADBACH
EINTRACHT FRANKFURT
FREIBURG
GREUTHER FÜRTH
HERTHA BERLIN
HOFFENHEIM
FC KÖLN
MAINZ
RB LEIPZIG
UNION BERLIN
VFB STUTTGART
VFL BOCHUM
WOLFSBURG

Introduction

In Germany, it was Bayern Munich who were once again victorious – winning a record extending 10th consecutive title. The Bavarian club continue to dominate domestically and Robert Lewandowski led the way with 35 league goals. Elsewhere, newly promoted VfL Bochum managed to defy pre-season expectations and comfortably survive their first season back in the top flight for over a decade.

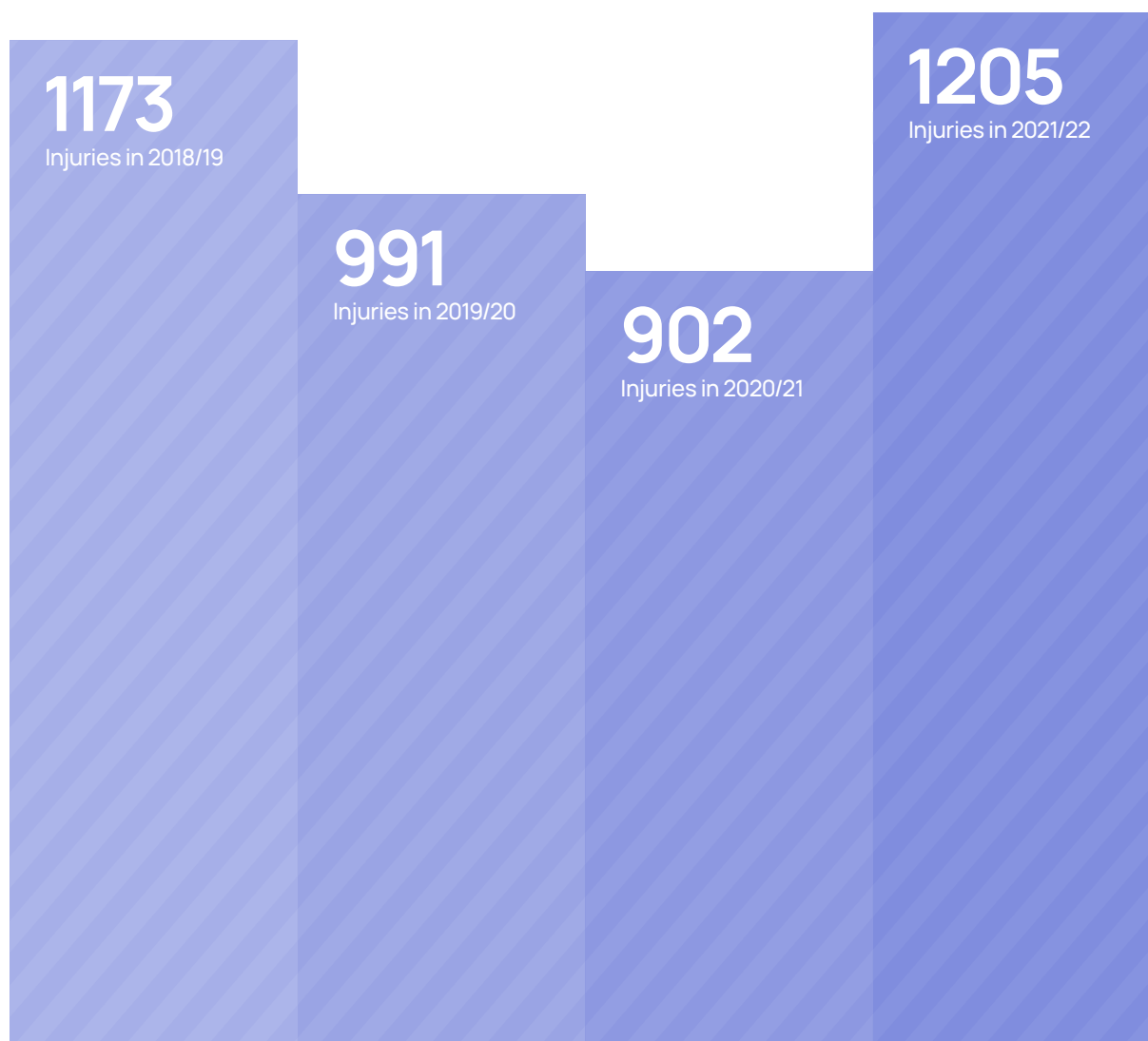
A frantic final day

Over the course of the season, FC Köln caught the eye under Steffen Baumgart. The German took control of a side that narrowly avoided relegation in the 2020/21 season and successfully guided them back into the top half of the table.

Other notable performances came from Freiburg and Union Berlin. Both clubs, despite expectations, found themselves challenging for a place in the top four at the business end of the season.

However, the final day stole the headlines. With the odds stacked firmly against VfB Stuttgart, they went into their 36th and final game needing a win against high-flying FC Köln. Pellegrino Matarazzo's side also needed a seemingly likely favour from Borussia Dortmund against relegation rivals Hertha Berlin. Combine a dramatic comeback from Borussia Dortmund with a 92nd minute winner from VfB Stuttgart captain Wataru Endo and it was Hertha Berlin who were forced to play the relegation play-off, which they went on to win.

Yearly trend of injuries



A review of the yearly trend of injuries paints an unexpected picture. There have been a combined 4271 injuries over the last four Bundesliga seasons, an average of 1068. This is surprising considering there are fewer teams, and therefore fewer match days in the German top-flight compared to the other top European leagues.

There were 1205 injuries incurred during the 2021/22 season. This represents a sizeable 34% increase when compared to the season before (902). As we will see later, there was an undoubted impact caused by the continuing challenges of the Covid-19 outbreak over the course of the season.

However, if we analyse the two previous Covid-19 disrupted seasons (2019/20 and 2020/21), we see that there was a downward trend in the number of absences – 991 in 2019/20 and 902 in 2020/21. Perhaps Bundesliga clubs have increased player workload too soon?

Club analysis

Bayern Munich fell victim to the highest injury cost (€21.43m). They also suffered the highest number of injuries (97) at an average cost of just under a quarter of a million euros (€220,000).



Injury effect

Overall cost of injuries came to €82.77m over the course of the 2021/22 season, representing an increase of just over €5m. This is a modest rise considering total injuries rose by over 300.

Second-placed Borussia Dortmund also found themselves second in terms of injury cost (€15.01m) and overall instances (93).

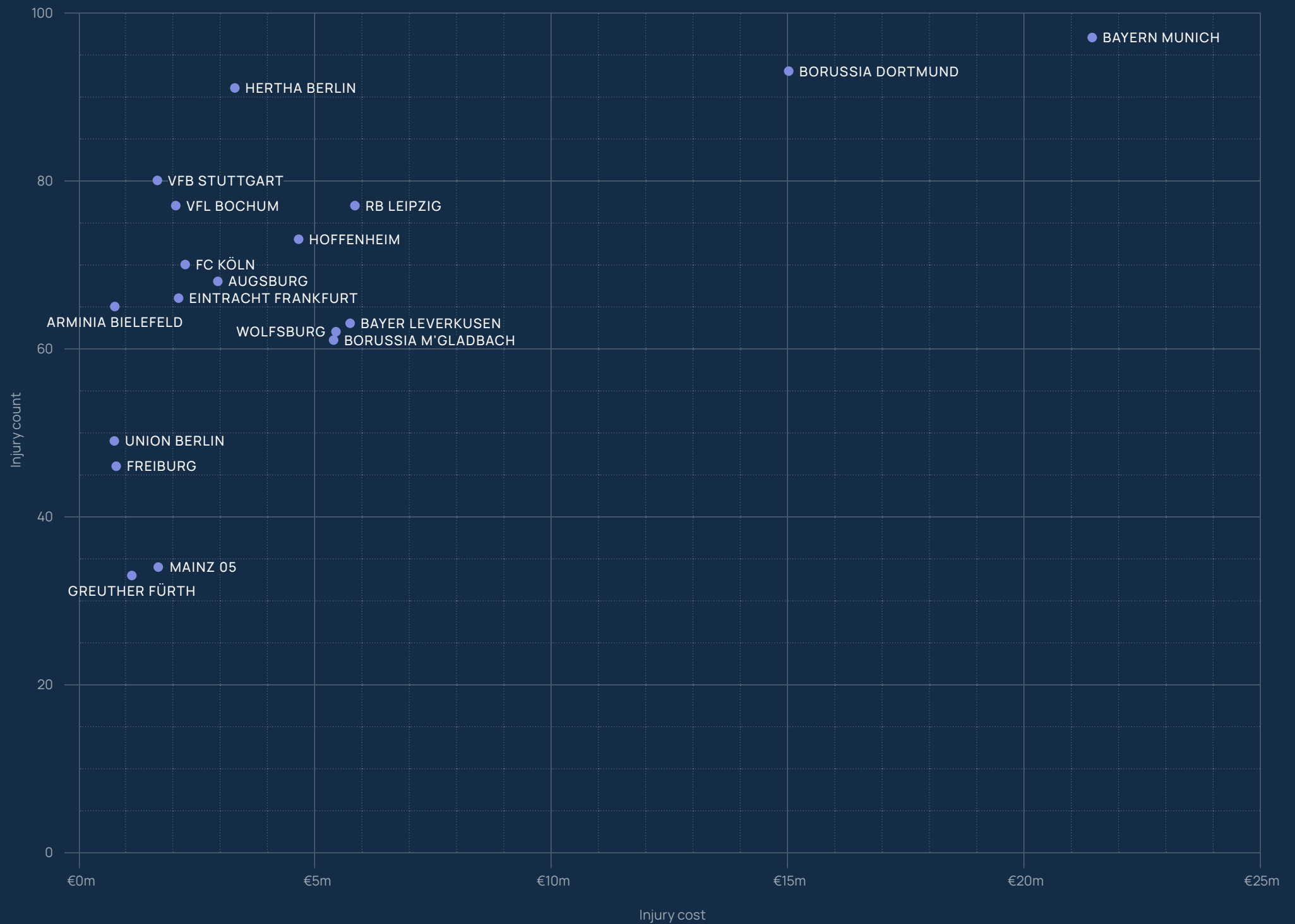
In what was a difficult season for Hertha Berlin, they can point to the 91 injuries they suffered at an average cost of €40,000. These injuries came at a relatively low cost of €3.29m. Elsewhere at the bottom of the table, Arminia Bielefeld recorded 65 injuries totalling €750,000 and, despite suffering from the fewest number of injuries (33), Greuther Fürth were unable to avoid a last-place finish.

A memorable season for Freiburg can certainly in part be attributed to the third lowest injury total in the league. For a club with a smaller budget, it is unsurprising that these came at an average cost of €20,000, four times smaller than that of 10th place Borussia Mönchengladbach.

RB Leipzig were beaten to 3rd place by Bayer Leverkusen who suffered 14 fewer injuries but both sides recorded similar injury cost numbers.

→ The adjacent matrix illustrates the relationship between the injury cost and injury count of all teams in the Bundesliga.

Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund were the outliers, with a greater number of injuries and much higher costs than all other 16 teams.



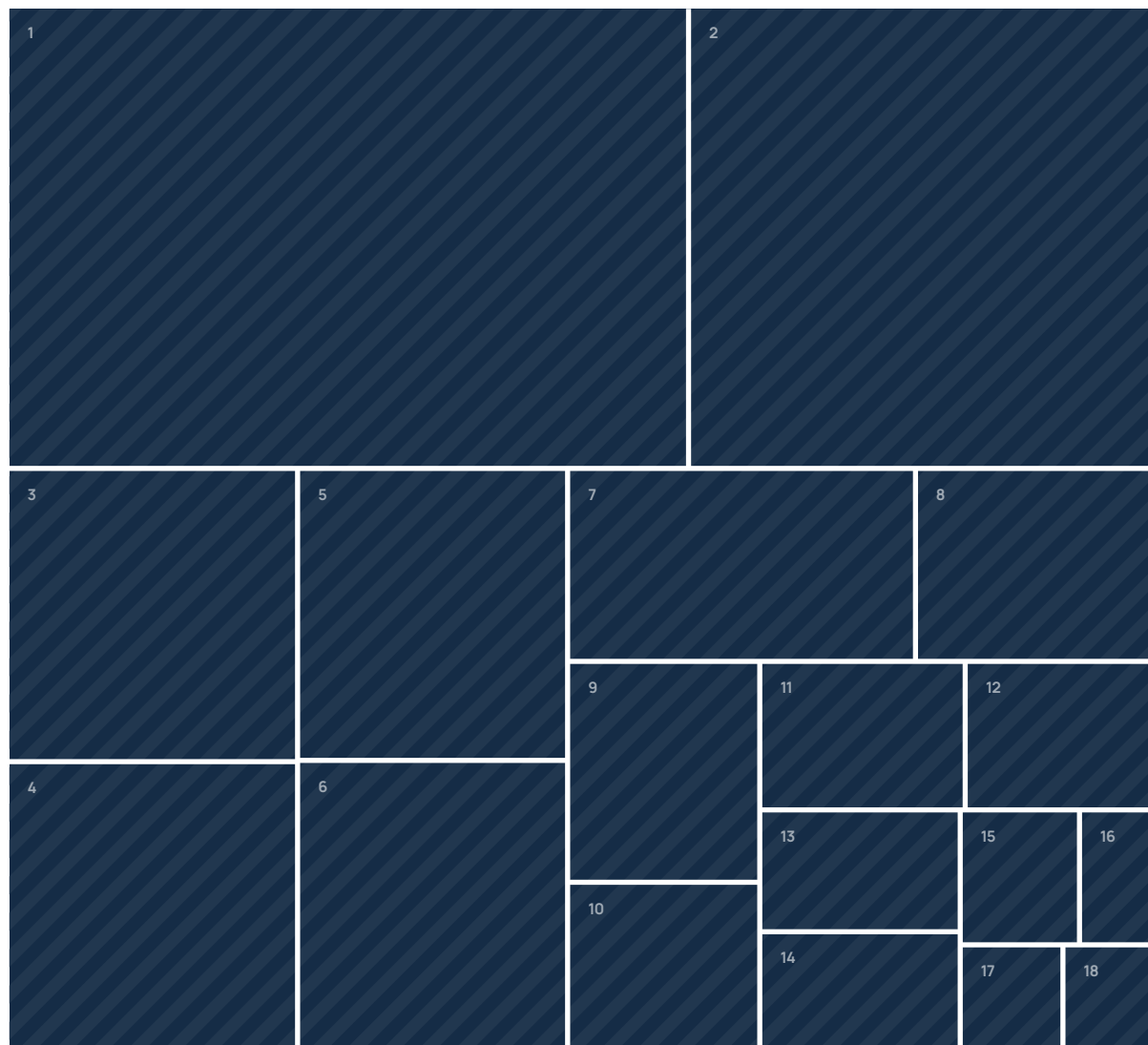
The combined injury cost of Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund accounts for 44% of the league total. The latter also saw players out for just under three times as many days compared to last season (1617).

Seventh placed Union Berlin account for the lowest share of injury cost (0.9%). Outside of the top two, RB Leipzig paid out the largest sum of the top 10 (€5.84m).

Comparing the top and bottom halves of the table, we can see that the injury count is almost identical (602 vs. 603). Although, the combined €36.45m injury cost of the top two is greater than the bottom 9 combined.

	TEAM	TOTAL INJURY COST	SHARE OF INJURY COST
1	BAYERN MUNICH	€21.43M	25.9%
2	BORUSSIA DORTMUND	€15.01M	18.1%
3	RB LEIPZIG	€5.84M	7.1%
4	BAYER LEVERKUSEN	€5.73M	6.9%
5	WOLFSBURG	€5.43M	6.6%
6	BORUSSIA M'GLADBACH	€5.38M	6.5%
7	HOFFENHEIM	€4.64M	5.6%
8	HERTHA BERLIN	€3.29M	4.0%
9	AUGSBURG	€2.93M	3.5%
10	FC KÖLN	€2.24M	2.7%
11	EINTRACHT FRANKFURT	€2.10M	2.5%
12	VFL BOCHUM	€2.04M	2.5%
13	MAINZ 05	€1.67M	2.0%
14	VFB STUTTGART	€1.65M	2.0%
15	GREUTHER FURTH	€1.11M	1.3%
16	FREIBURG	€0.78M	0.9%
17	BIELEFELD	€0.75M	0.9%
18	UNION BERLIN	€0.74M	0.9%

Share of injury cost



The top 5



Bayern Munich

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Borussia Dortmund

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



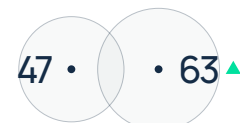
Points



Bayer Leverkusen

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



RB Leipzig

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



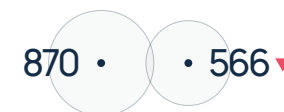
Union Berlin

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Injuries by month

Injuries numbers in the Bundesliga were consistently high across the 10 months of the season, perhaps pointing towards the high tempo pressing tactics adopted by a number of the clubs across the German league.

Winter break

With a peak in November (144), the expectation would be to see a decline in numbers in December and January as players enjoyed a break from competitive football. Upon initial review, overall absences increased but if we remove Covid-19 cases, we see that numbers did in fact reduce from 101 in December 2021 to 88 in January 2022 with a return to previous levels February 2022 (99).

An interesting comparison arises when looking at the numbers for December and March. Despite recording similar injury numbers (130 vs. 135), there was a significant difference in the costs incurred (€11.66m vs. €5.98m).

Injury cost was high at the start of the season as both Benjamin Pavard (Bayern Munich) and Emre Can (Borussia Dortmund) were among those to be sidelined. There was however, a sharp drop off in injury cost in the final months of the season, as the big clubs were seemingly able to rotate squads effectively and maintain a healthy workload for their players.

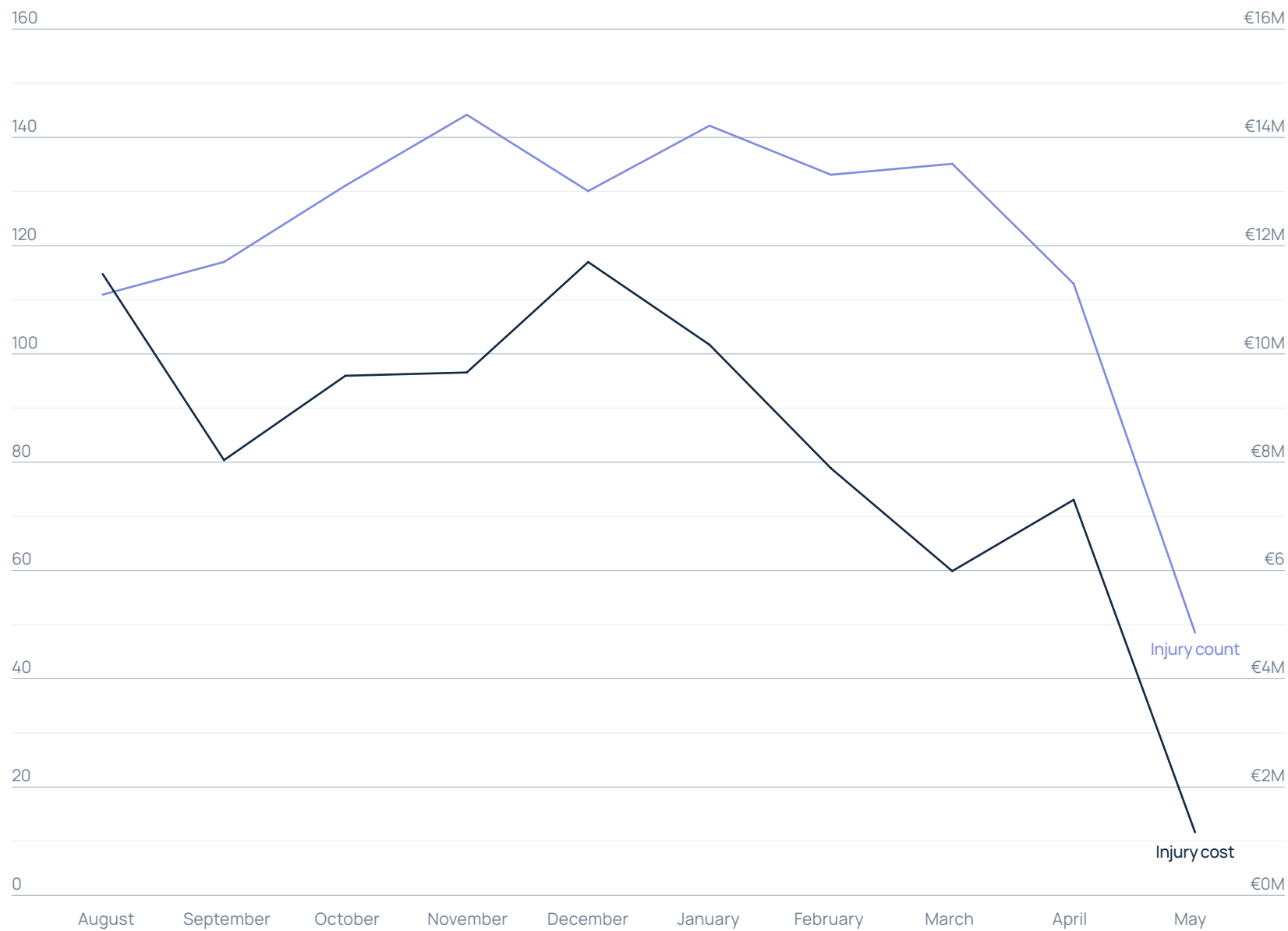
THERE WILL BE ALMOST NO PRE-SEASON PREPARATION THEN IT'S BUNDESLIGA AND CHAMPIONS LEAGUE MATCHES EVERY THREE, FOUR DAYS UNTIL THE WORLD CUP.

THIS SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AND WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES HOW WE CAN OFFER PLAYERS A BREAK BECAUSE THAT IS IMPORTANT.

HANSI FLICK

GERMAN NATIONAL TEAM MANAGER (VIA THE ATHLETIC)

Injury cost & count
totals by month



Injuries by type

As the wave of Omicron spread through Europe, Bundesliga clubs saw a significant impact. Covid-19 topped the table affecting 219 players with 237 positive tests during the winter months. These came at a cost of €11.85m (14% of the overall figure).

Knee injuries topped the cost chart with clubs spending €14.44m on the 73 injured players. These injuries also came at a high level of severity (33 days out). Players such as Leon Goretzka (Bayern Munich) and Mahmoud Dahoud (Borussia Dortmund) were among the unlucky ones.

Ankle injuries came at just under half the total cost of Knee injuries (€6.37m).

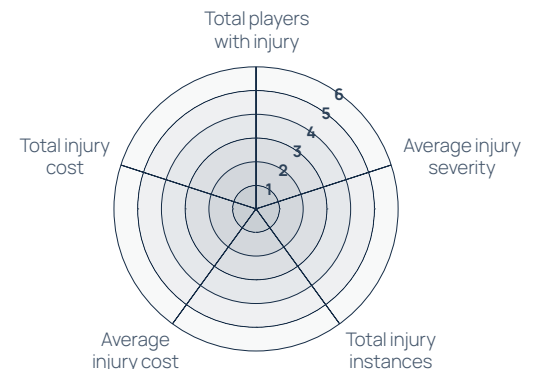
Hamstring vs. Back

Both Hamstring and Back injuries affected 27 players but there is a surprising disparity when the costs are compared. The former cost clubs (€4.41m) over double that of Back injuries (€1.92m).

We can see why this data is skewed if we consider that the top three clubs account for half of these Hamstring injuries.

Ligament injuries were the most severe (58 days), a stark contrast to last season (17). Despite their heightened severity, this type only cost clubs a combined €1.11m in paid salaries. Four players suffered this type at an average of over a quarter of a million euros (€280,000).

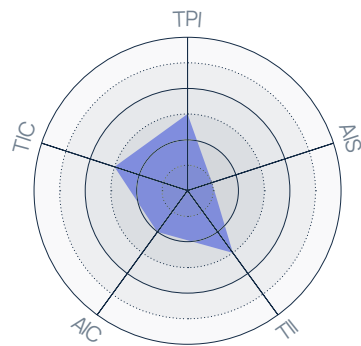
Thigh/Hip injuries can also be found near the top of the table in terms of injury cost (€10.61m) despite registering just over half the instances of Covid-19 (106).



All the data for each injury group has been benchmarked and given a score from 1-6. The highest figures across the categories are marked with 1.



Ankle



78

Total players with injury

16.45

Average injury severity (days)

89

Total injury instances

€0.07m

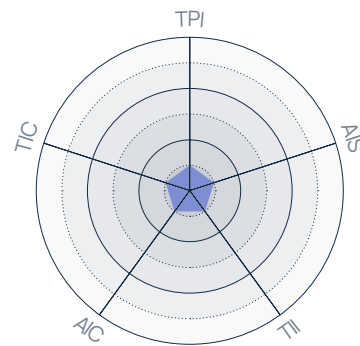
Average injury cost

€6.37m

Total injury cost



Back



27

Total players with injury

11.29

Average injury severity (days)

31

Total injury instances

€0.06m

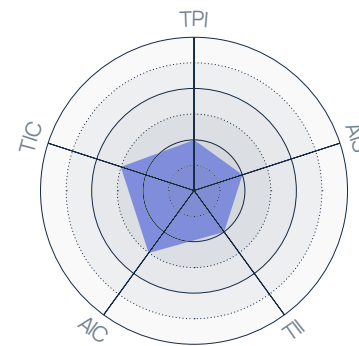
Average injury cost

€1.92m

Total injury cost



Calf/Shin



42

Total players with injury

22.33

Average injury severity (days)

49

Total injury instances

€0.11m

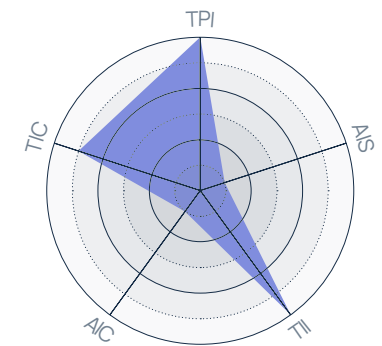
Average injury cost

€5.63m

Total injury cost



Covid-19



219

Total players with injury

11.23

Average injury severity (days)

237

Total injury instances

€0.05m

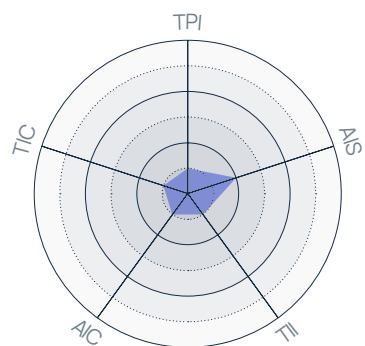
Average injury cost

€11.85m

Total injury cost



Foot



9

Total players with injury

18.56

Average injury severity (days)

9

Total injury instances

€0.04m

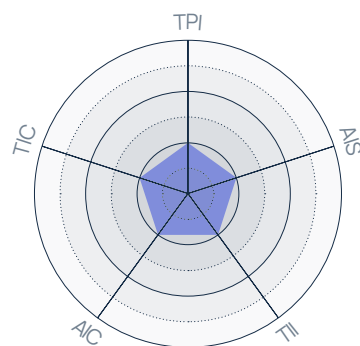
Average injury cost

€0.33m

Total injury cost



Groin



50

Total players with injury

18.68

Average injury severity (days)

57

Total injury instances

€0.08m

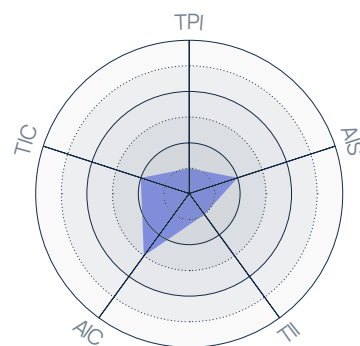
Average injury cost

€4.84m

Total injury cost



Hamstring



27

Total players with injury

22.29

Average injury severity (days)

31

Total injury instances

€0.14m

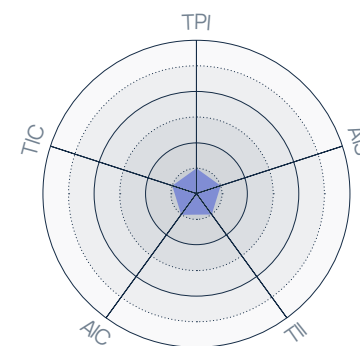
Average injury cost

€4.41m

Total injury cost



Head/Concussion



26

Total players with injury

8.47

Average injury severity (days)

29

Total injury instances

€0.03m

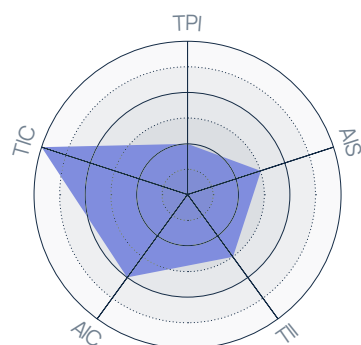
Average injury cost

€0.97m

Total injury cost



Knee



73

Total players with injury

32.92

Average injury severity (days)

83

Total injury instances

€0.17m

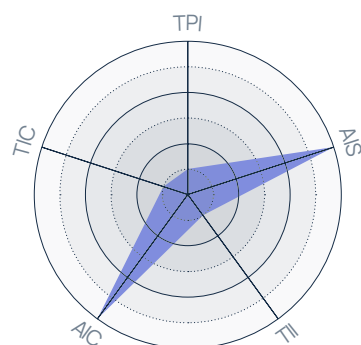
Average injury cost

€14.44m

Total injury cost



Ligament



4

Total players with injury

58.00

Average injury severity (days)

4

Total injury instances

€0.28m

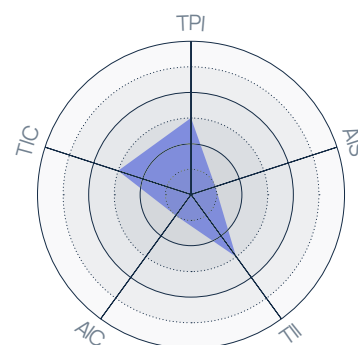
Average injury cost

€1.11m

Total injury cost



Muscle



87

Total players with injury

13.27

Average injury severity (days)

115

Total injury instances

€0.05m

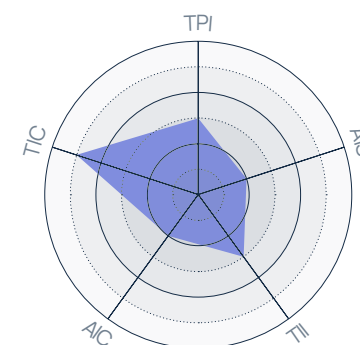
Average injury cost

€5.95m

Total injury cost



Thigh/Hip



93

Total players with injury

19.56

Average injury severity (days)

106

Total injury instances

€0.10m

Average injury cost

€10.61m

Total injury cost

Covid-19 cases by club

Germany was unable to avoid a fourth wave of Covid-19 as the Omicron variant spread rapidly across Europe. A sizeable 60% of cases in the season were recorded during the first three months of 2022.

The number of players infected (219) more than tripled when compared to the season before (70). The league continued but attendances were forced to be reduced – up to 50% capacity or a maximum of 15,000 spectators.

VfB Stuttgart suffered the brunt of the 237 cases, recording a league-high of 26. This makes their final day survival even more impressive. Bottom half finishes for Augsburg and Wolfsburg came following contrasting Covid-19 experiences. The latter suffering the lowest number of cases (6) whereas Augsburg could perhaps point to their 11 positive tests as an explanation for their final league position.

The top end of the table were also not immune. Bayern Munich recorded 25 cases – 18 more than rivals Borussia Dortmund.

54

BUNDESLIGA CLUBS RECORDED
THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF POSITIVE
CASES IN JANUARY 2022.

+

+

+

Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by club



Injuries by position

Defenders proved to be the most injury prone in the 2021/22 season. A total of 144 players were injured, overtaking Midfielders when compared to the 2020/21 season.



Recurring theme

Defenders incurred 424 injuries, pointing towards a number of recurring injuries for the back four.

It was a similar story for midfielders as the 412 injuries were 'shared' between 142 players. The men in the middle of the park did combine to form the highest total injury cost (€32.90m) – €10m more than defenders. Both Kingsley Coman (Bayern Munich) and Karim Bellarabi (Bayer Leverkusen) were sidelined on a number of occasions.

Forwards recorded a surprisingly low average cost of €70,000 per injury in the 2021/22 season. This is a noticeable drop from €100,000 in 2020/21 and points towards a possible shift in mentality. The emergence of the false nine position, often filled by midfielders, could offer a possible explanation.

Goalkeepers were also not immune to the increasing impact of injury. The number of players injured almost doubled from 28 to 43 last season. This perhaps points to the influence of the sweeper keeper where they are required to play a more active role.

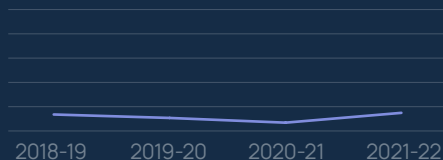
69%

DEFENDERS AND
MIDFIELDERS COMBINED
ACCOUNTED FOR
69% OF INJURIES IN
THE BUNDESLIGA.



Goalkeepers

Total injuries over time



43

Total players with injury

17.16

Average injury severity (days)

82

Total injury instances

€0.08m

Average injury cost

€6.29m

Total injury cost



Defenders

Total injuries over time



144

Total players with injury

14.15

Average injury severity (days)

424

Total injury instances

€0.06m

Average injury cost

€23.43m

Total injury cost



Midfielders

Total injuries over time



142

Total players with injury

15.14

Average injury severity (days)

412

Total injury instances

€0.08m

Average injury cost

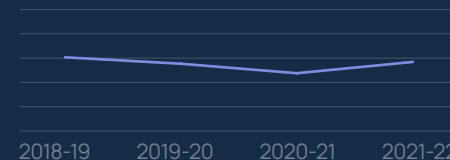
€32.90m

Total injury cost



Forwards

Total injuries over time



114

Total players with injury

16.09

Average injury severity (days)

287

Total injury instances

€0.07m

Average injury cost

€20.14m

Total injury cost

Injuries by age

Players aged 26-30 suffered the most injuries (457) in the 2021/22 Bundesliga season. The 21-25 age group closely followed (412) as the numbers followed a similar trend to that of the season before.

Experience pays

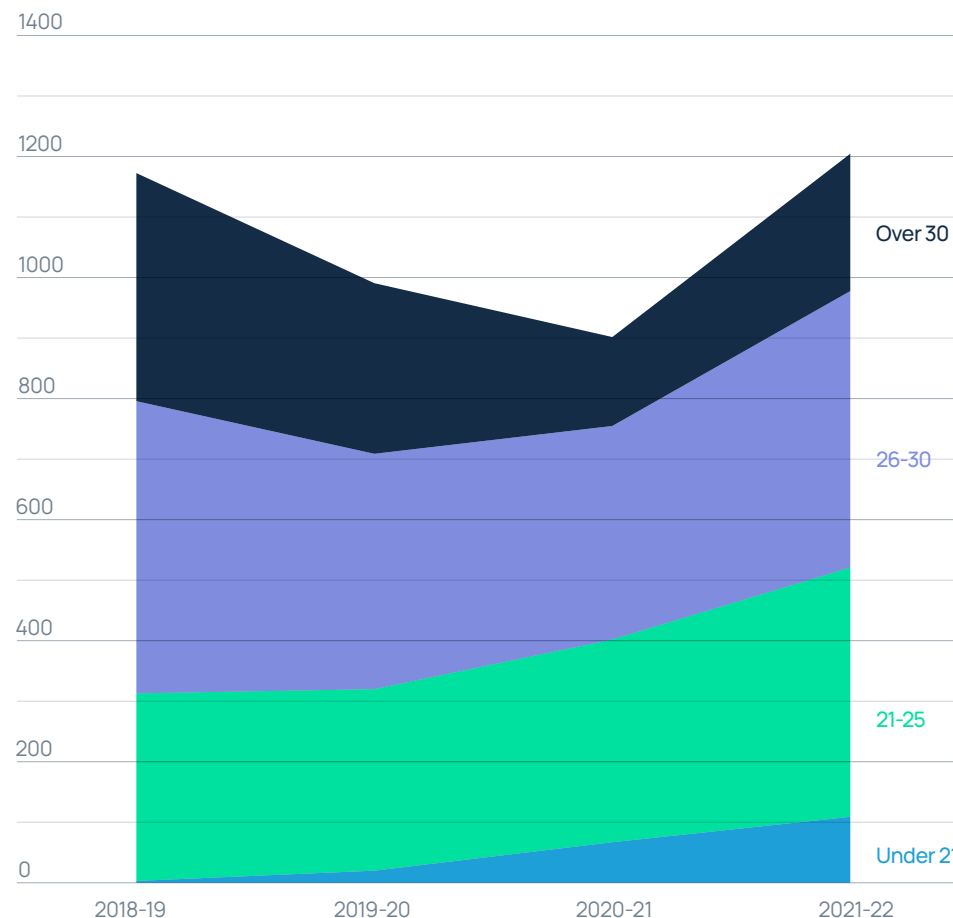
Whilst 21-25 recorded a high number of injuries, this was in stark contrast to the over 30s. Players aged 21-25 (412) recorded just under double the amount of injury instances than their more experienced teammates (227). Yet experience came at a higher total cost (€20.91m vs. €18.34m).

This analysis implies that, much like their La Liga counterparts, Bundesliga clubs are putting further emphasis on experience over youth. This is perhaps a viable alternative for clubs outside the top two to counteract the top-heavy nature of the league.

There are similarities when looking at both the 21-25 and the 26-30 age groups. Whilst the latter experienced more injuries (457), they came at over double the cost (€41.07m).

Injury severity was very similar across the board, at an average of 15 days out with under 21s experiencing marginally worse injuries (16 days).

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Scale is 1:2

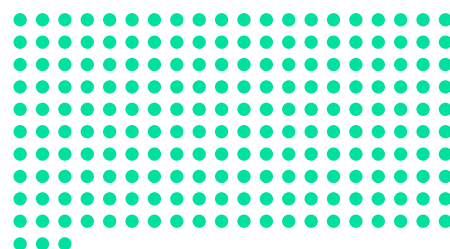
Each dot represents: 2 players injured;
2 days out through injury; €2m injury cost

21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

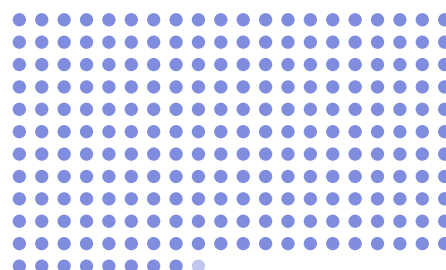


26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



English Premier League

ARSENAL
ASTON VILLA
BRENTFORD
BRIGHTON
BURNLEY
CHELSEA
CRYSTAL PALACE
EVERTON
LEEDS
LEICESTER
LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER CITY
MANCHESTER UNITED
NEWCASTLE
NORWICH
SOUTHAMPTON
TOTTENHAM
WATFORD
WEST HAM
WOLVES

Introduction

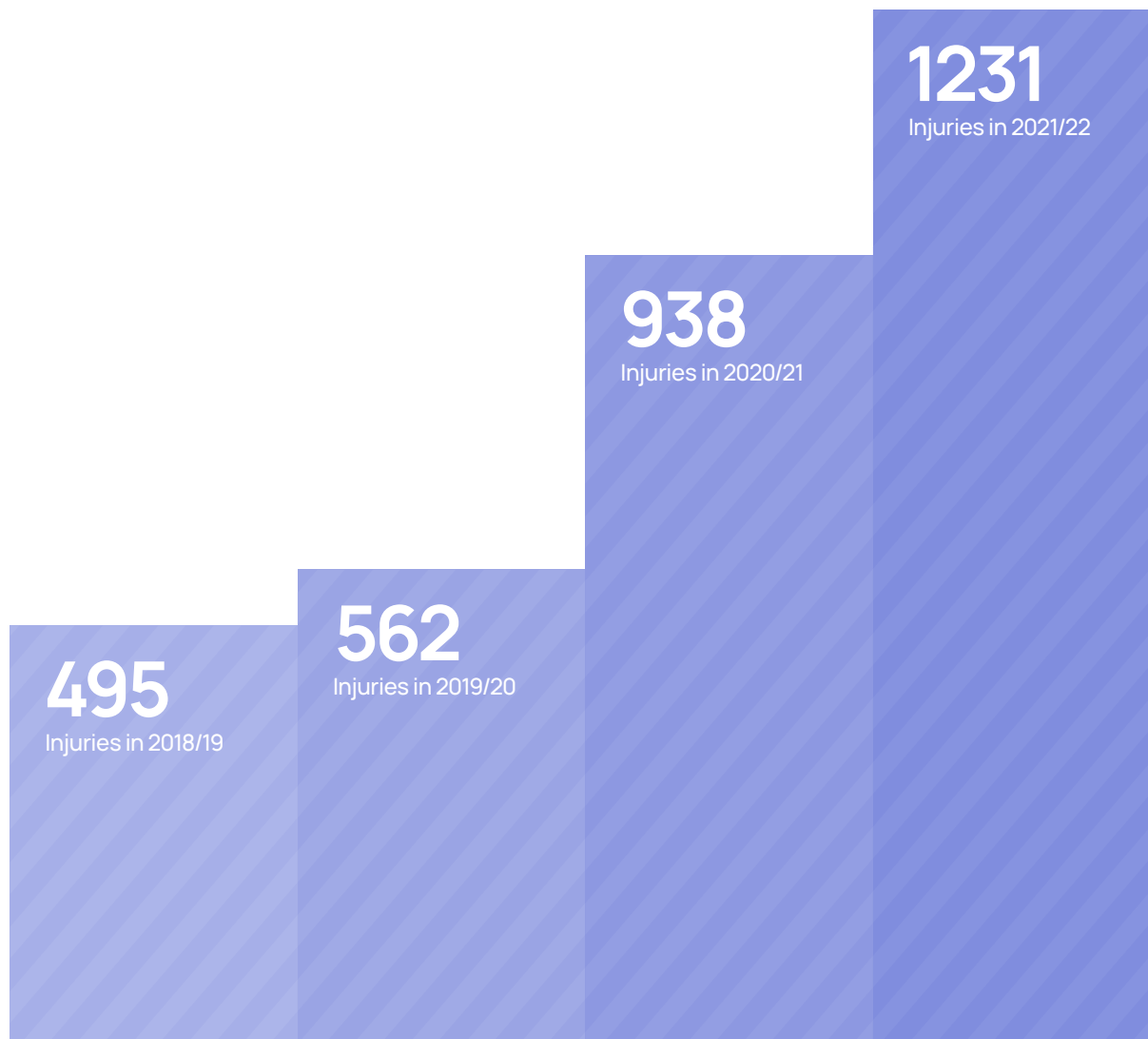
The 2021/22 English Premier League season came to yet another dramatic conclusion. Manchester City were crowned champions on the final day thanks to an İlkay Gündoğan-inspired comeback against Aston Villa as Liverpool fell just short of their rivals.

However, Jürgen Klopp's men did achieve the incredible feat of playing the maximum number of games in a single season. The 63 games in total, across domestic league, cup and European competition must surely have taken its toll.

At the bottom of the table, it was Burnley, Watford and Norwich who suffered relegation, ending the six-year run in the top flight for both the Clarets and the Hornets. Defying pre-season predictions, Graham Potter and his Brighton side achieved a record points total and finished only five points off the European places. Brentford also managed to overcome the odds and finish a comfortable mid-table.

Despite appearing front-runners for a top four finish with three games to play, Arsenal were pipped into fourth by North London rivals Tottenham.

Yearly trend of injuries



Clubs in the English Premier League suffered 1231 injuries during the 2021/22 season – compare this to the 2020/21 season and that constitutes a worrying increase of just over 30%. With fixture congestion being an ever-present theme on the back pages over the course of the season, the physical impact on players is clearly reflected in the data.

Take this one-step further, and the injury totals across the last four seasons come to an eye watering 3226. These numbers only strengthen the case for the soon-to-be-introduced five substitute rule.

Despite the undeniable advancements in sports science and physiotherapy, one possible explanation is the change in styles of play with a significant number of clubs adopting a high pressing and high tempo style, perhaps this is leaving its mark on the absence numbers.

Compare this to the figures in Ligue 1 (691 in 2021/22) where the tempo is slower, and this explanation looks to ring true.

Club analysis

English top-flight clubs paid out a total of £184.57m (€219.64m) in salaries to injured players during the 2021/22 season, at an average of £150,000 (€180,000) per recorded injury. The top six clubs accounted for over half of this figure, £98.58m (€117.32m).



Despite having an average of three unavailable players per match day, Manchester City successfully defended their crown but it was Chelsea who topped the injury count table (97) with Manchester United (81) and Liverpool (80) in second and third place. The latter feeling the effects of a full season of competitive matches after victory in both domestic cup competitions and a one-goal defeat to Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League Final.

Manchester United found themselves top of the injury cost tree (£26.72m / €31.79m), with a substantial average cost per injury of £330,000 (€390,000), accounting for 14.5% of the total injury cost for the league.

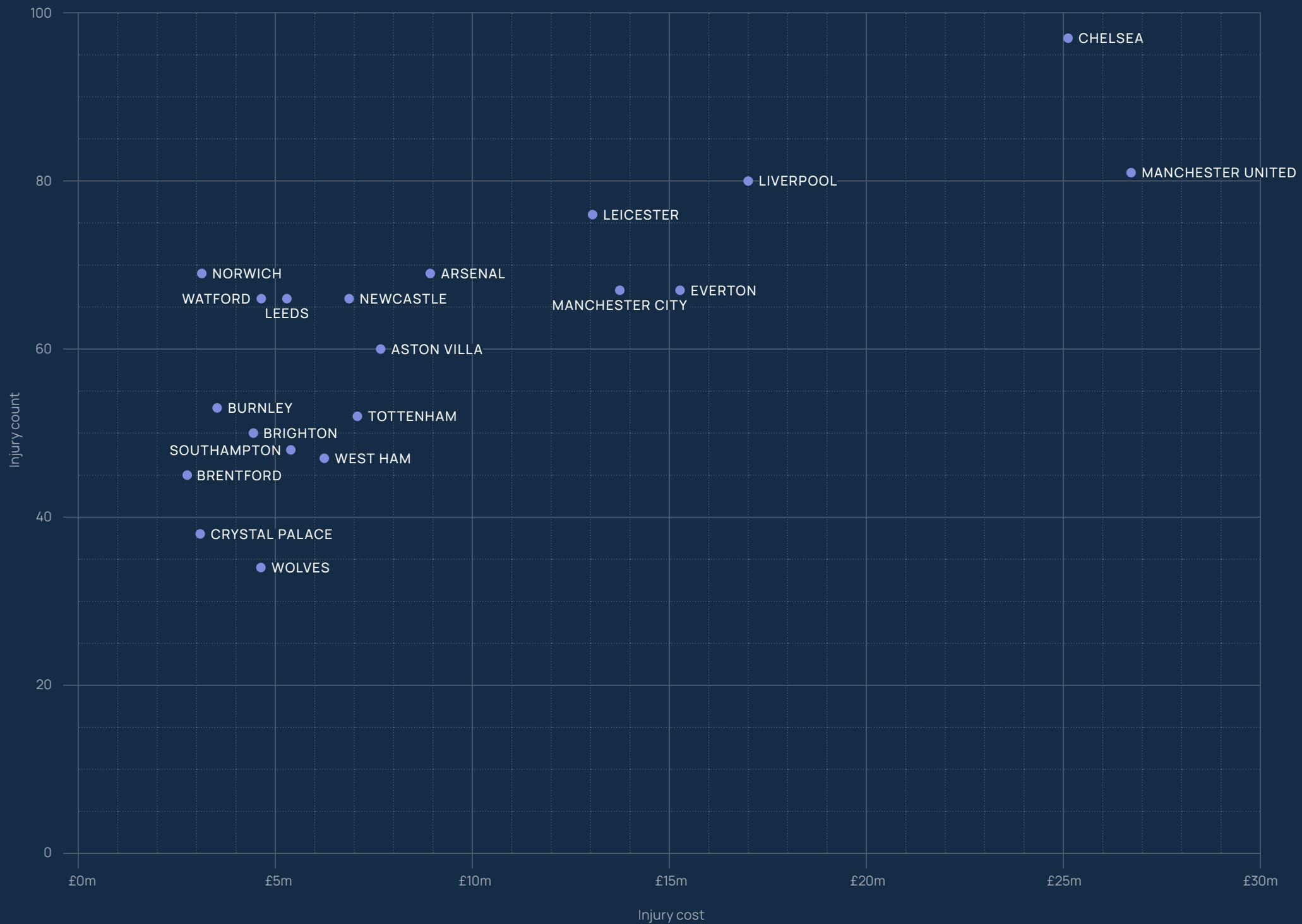
Relegated trio of Norwich, Watford and Burnley suffered a combined total of 188 absences at a combined cost of £11.29m (€13.43m).

After a tough December (17 injuries), Newcastle then bolstered their squad in the January transfer window. This will have potentially contributed to a resultant decline in injuries sustained in the second half of the season. Their strong finish to the season can also be partially explained by sustaining just seven injuries in April and May.

→ The adjacent matrix illustrates the relationship between the injury cost and injury count of all teams in the English Premier League.

Chelsea recorded the most injuries with 97, with **Manchester United** recording the league's highest cost of £26.72m.

Injury cost & count matrix

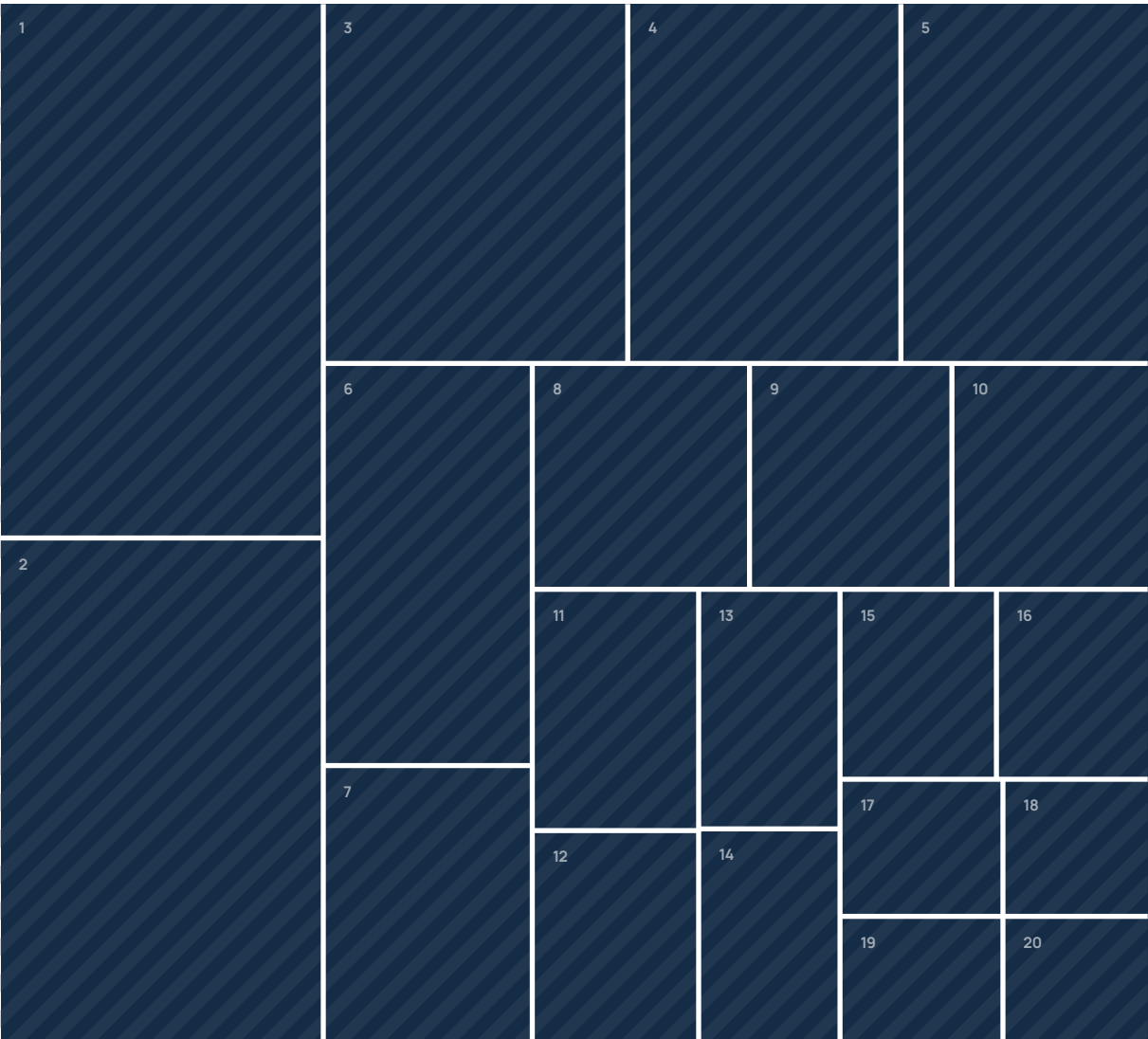


Comparing the injury numbers sustained by clubs in the top and bottom halves of the table (653 and 578 respectively), injury numbers were reasonably similar. The difference inevitably came in injury cost.

Analysing the total costs of absences to clubs in the top (£126.95m/€151.07m) and bottom half of the table (£57.62m/€68.57m) points to an apparent correlation between the amount spent on injured players and league position. However, correlation is not causation. Despite finishing just outside of the relegation zone, Everton feature near the top of the table when it comes to share of injury cost (8.27%).

TEAM	TOTAL INJURY COST	SHARE OF INJURY COST
1 MANCHESTER UNITED	£26.72M	14.48%
2 CHELSEA	£25.12M	13.61%
3 LIVERPOOL	£17.00M	9.21%
4 EVERTON	£15.27M	8.27%
5 MANCHESTER CITY	£13.74M	7.44%
6 LEICESTER	£13.05M	7.07%
7 ARSENAL	£8.93M	4.84%
8 ASTON VILLA	£7.67M	4.15%
9 TOTTENHAM	£7.08M	3.84%
10 NEWCASTLE UNITED	£6.87M	3.72%
11 WEST HAM	£6.24M	3.38%
12 SOUTHAMPTON	£5.39M	2.92%
13 LEEDS	£5.29M	2.87%
14 WATFORD	£4.64M	2.51%
15 WOLVES	£4.63M	2.51%
16 BRIGHTON	£4.44M	2.40%
17 BURNLEY	£3.52M	1.91%
18 NORWICH	£3.13M	1.70%
19 CRYSTAL PALACE	£3.09M	1.67%
20 BRENTFORD	£2.76M	1.50%

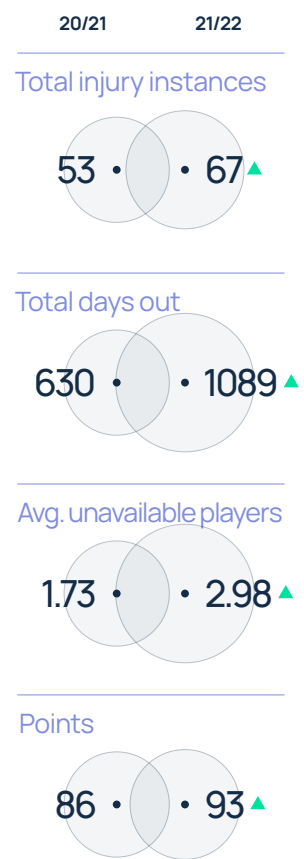
Share of injury cost



The big 6



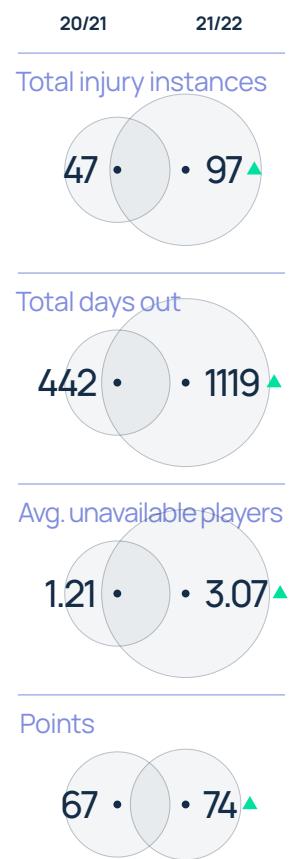
Manchester City



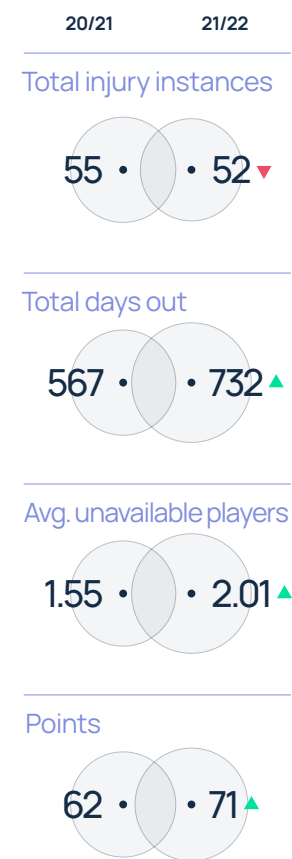
Liverpool



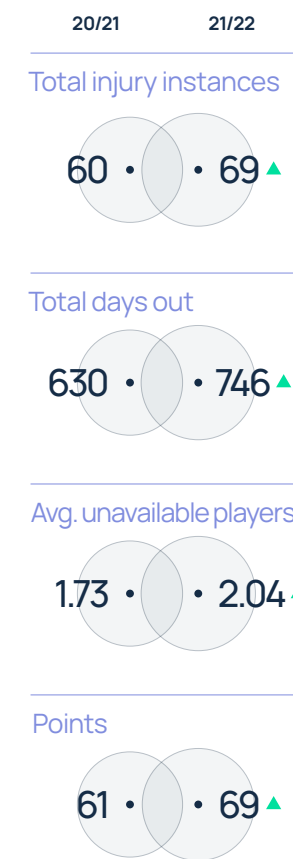
Chelsea



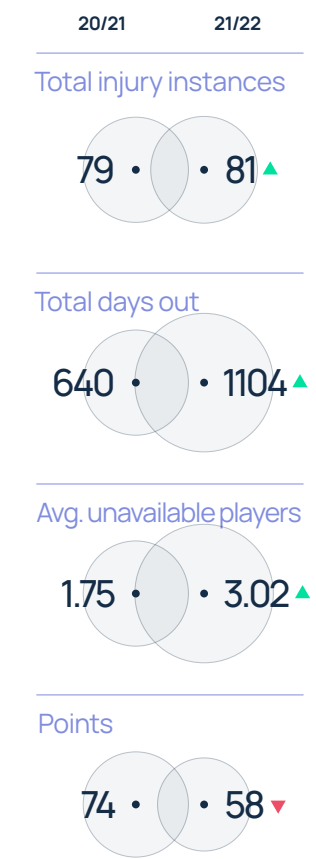
Tottenham



Arsenal



Manchester United



Injuries by month

In what was the first full season since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is interesting to assess the injury numbers month by month.

Dark December

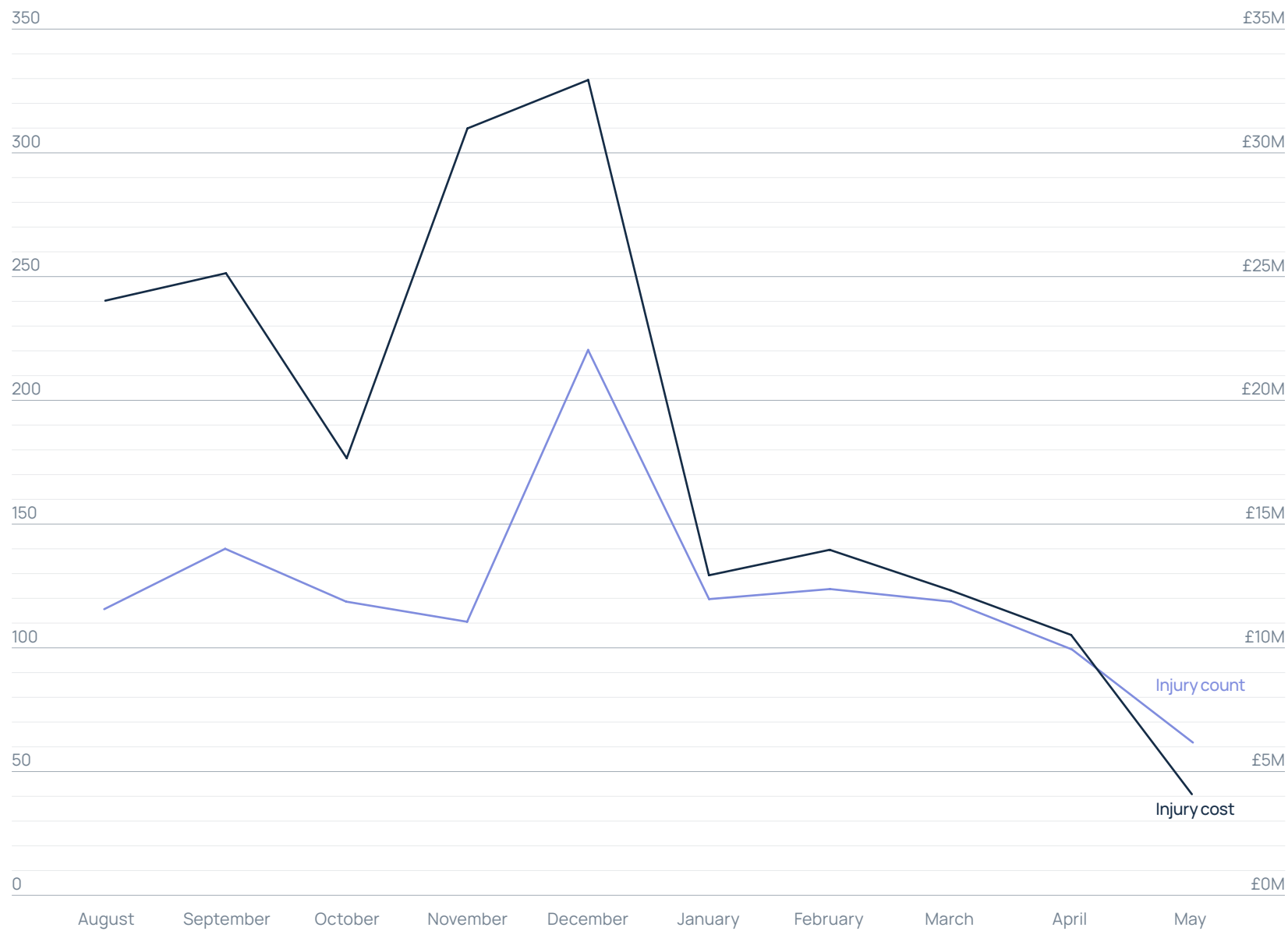
Clubs incurred the most injuries in the month of December (219) at a cost of £32.82m (€39.06m). This is not surprising as during this month, numerous matches were postponed due to the Omicron wave hitting England during this month. Some clubs even went as far as to call for the league to shut down until the New Year. The effect of Omicron only added to the problems faced by clubs during what is already a very congested month for fixtures.

If we consider the data for the first half of the season vs. the first half of the 2020/2021 season, we can see that not only did English Premier League clubs record more injuries (705 vs. 526) but also they came at a greater cost. Injuries between August and December 2021 cost clubs £130.43m (€155.21m), compared to £32.82m (€39.06) between January and May 2022.

63

MAY SAW THE LOWEST
NUMBER OF INJURIES.

Injury cost & count totals by month



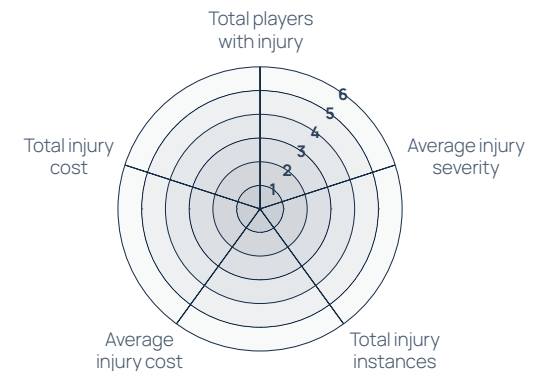
Injuries by type

As previously referenced, Covid-19 remained an issue for all teams during the season but a review of the other injury types shows there were other forces at play. Another emerging issue is that of the protocols for Head injuries and Concussions. Clubs experienced 21 Head/Concussion injuries at a cost of £1.15m (€1.38m).

If we look at the total cost of each type of injury, we can see that Thigh/Hip injuries (£15.18m / €18.06m) came at a very similar cost to Muscle injuries (£14.64m / €17.43m). With only 60 recorded instances, Thigh/Hip injuries came at a significant average cost of a quarter of a million pounds (€300,000) per injury. A contributing factor to this sizeable figure was the serious Thigh injury picked up by Paul Pogba.

Ligament injury severity

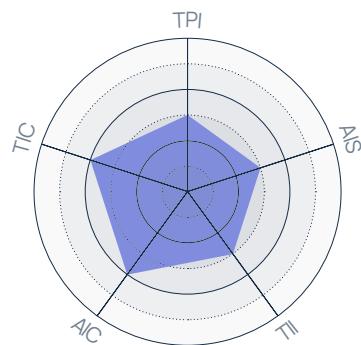
The most severe injury in terms of player absence were Ligament injuries, an average of 43 days out for the 4 instances, closely followed by the 70 recorded Knee injuries that sidelined players for 40 days on average. The latter came at a higher average cost (£34,000 / €41,000).



All the data for each injury group has been benchmarked and given a score from 1-6. The highest figures across the categories are marked with 1.



Ankle



66

Total players with injury

21.36

Average injury severity (days)

77

Total injury instances

£0.22m (€0.26m)

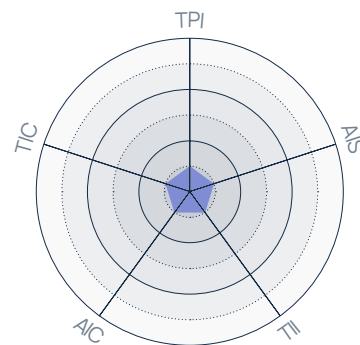
Average injury cost

£16.82m (€20.01m)

Total injury cost



Back



24

Total players with injury

9.70

Average injury severity (days)

27

Total injury instances

£0.07m (€0.09m)

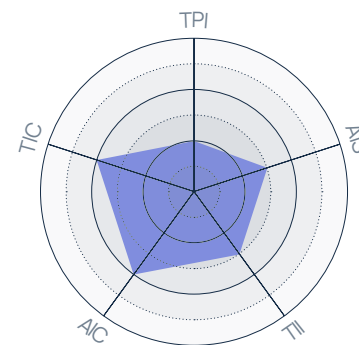
Average injury cost

£1.95m (€2.31m)

Total injury cost



Calf/Shin



58

Total players with injury

20.76

Average injury severity (days)

70

Total injury instances

£0.23m (€0.28m)

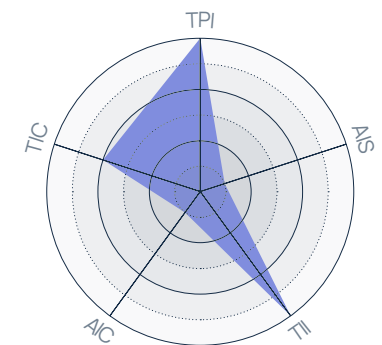
Average injury cost

£16.22m (€19.30m)

Total injury cost



Covid-19



181

Total players with injury

9.94

Average injury severity (days)

186

Total injury instances

£0.10m (€0.12m)

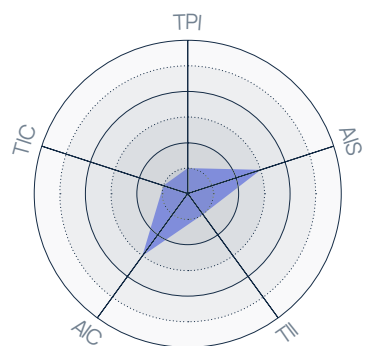
Average injury cost

£18.94m (€22.54m)

Total injury cost



Foot



24

Total players with injury

19.58

Average injury severity (days)

26

Total injury instances

£0.15m (€0.18m)

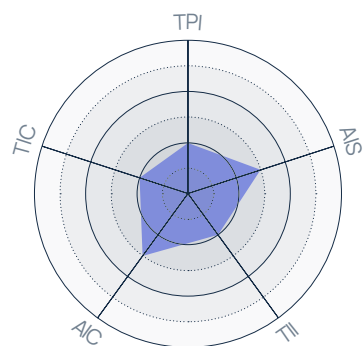
Average injury cost

£3.95m (€4.70m)

Total injury cost



Groin



42

Total players with injury

19.89

Average injury severity (days)

46

Total injury instances

£0.19m (€0.23m)

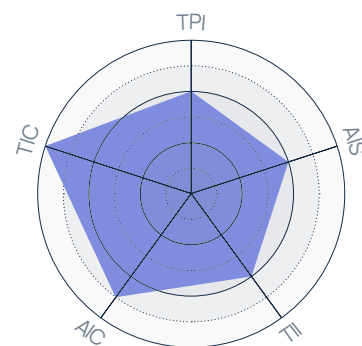
Average injury cost

£8.89m (€10.58m)

Total injury cost



Hamstring



104

Total players with injury

29.35

Average injury severity (days)

123

Total injury instances

£0.25m (€0.30m)

Average injury cost

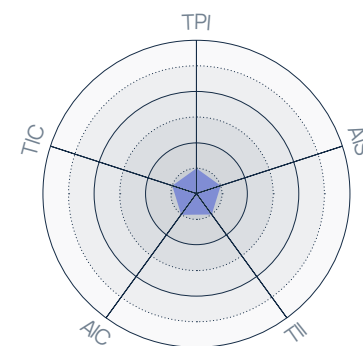
£30.95m (€36.83m)

Total injury cost

1



Head/Concussion



21

Total players with injury

7.66

Average injury severity (days)

21

Total injury instances

£0.06m (€0.07m)

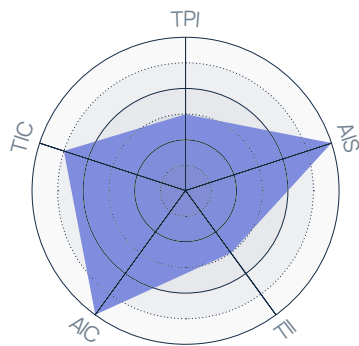
Average injury cost

£1.16m (€1.38m)

Total injury cost



Knee



67

Total players with injury

40.30

Average injury severity (days)

70

Total injury instances

£0.34m (€0.41m)

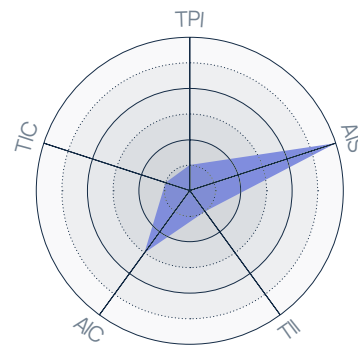
Average injury cost

£23.94m (€28.49m)

Total injury cost



Ligament



4

Total players with injury

42.50

Average injury severity (days)

4

Total injury instances

£0.16m (€0.19m)

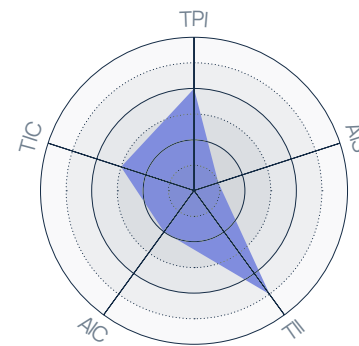
Average injury cost

£0.64m (€0.76m)

Total injury cost



Muscle



104

Total players with injury

11.83

Average injury severity (days)

133

Total injury instances

£0.11m (€0.13m)

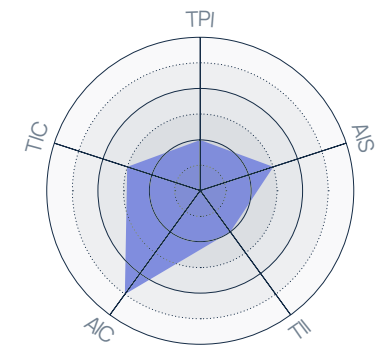
Average injury cost

£14.64m (€17.43m)

Total injury cost



Thigh/Hip



52

Total players with injury

24.80

Average injury severity (days)

60

Total injury instances

£0.25m (€0.30m)

Average injury cost

£15.18m (€18.06m)

Total injury cost

Covid-19 cases by club

Last season there were 186 cases of Covid-19 across the English Premier League at a cost of £18.94m (€22.54m). As you might expect, significant spikes in cases appear in December (80) and January (41).

Overall, players were unavailable for a total of 1,800 days with Chelsea suffering the most significant impact (18 cases) as players including Romelu Lukaku and Timo Werner were ruled out due to the virus.

At the other end of the scale, Watford, Wolves and Leeds suffered the joint lowest level of Covid-19 related absence (5). This lack of disruption was not enough to protect Watford and Leeds from an end-of-season relegation fight – Leeds prevailing with a final day win over Brentford.

Out-of-control Omicron

In December, Chelsea, Tottenham, Crystal Palace and Leicester City shared the title of most affected with seven recorded cases at each club as the Omicron variant wreaked havoc across the country.

80

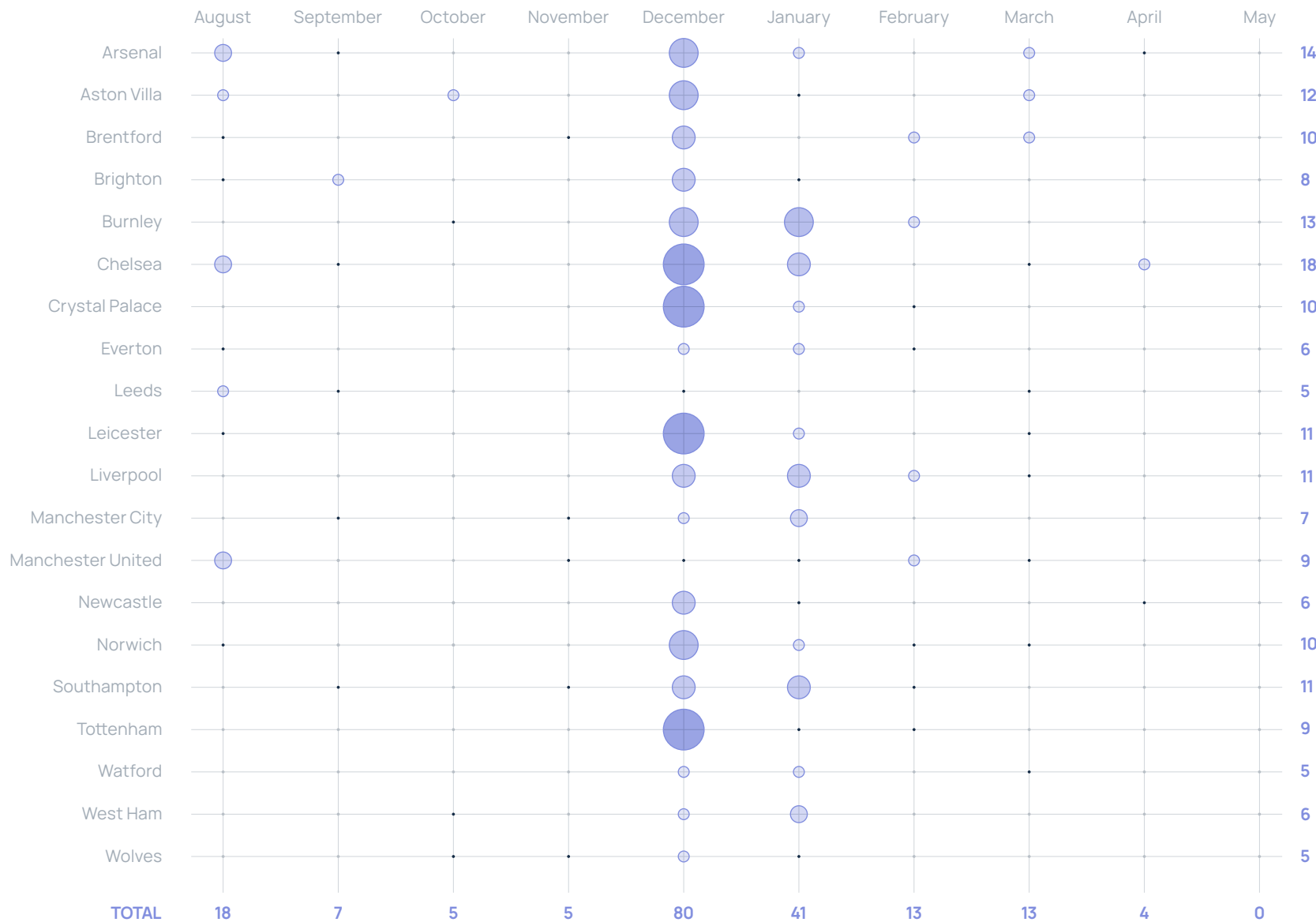
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS
RECORDED THE HIGHEST NUMBER
OF CASES IN DECEMBER.

+

+

+

Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by club



Injuries by position

Whilst overall injury numbers rose compared to last season, there was an interesting shift in the distribution of these injuries by position.

The modern game

Considering the recent evolution of the modern game, the role of Defenders has undergone significant change. Wingbacks are now deployed as secondary midfielders and are arguably the busiest players on the pitch in terms of distance travelled and overall game involvement. The recurring injuries suffered by Chelsea's Marcos Alonso and Reece James, and Leicester City's Ricardo Pereira further support this observation.

It is therefore unsurprising that Defenders (452) actually topped the injury instance table in the English Premier League last season with Midfielders (442) close behind.

Fans might expect Strikers to top the league in terms of injury cost but this not the case, which further emphasises a shift from English clubs to invest in this new style of football.

However, it perhaps surprisingly was the Goalkeepers who suffered the most severe injuries (19 days) but at a relatively low cost – £6.36m (€7.57m). Southampton's Alex McCarthy had the unenviable label of the most severe injury.

37%

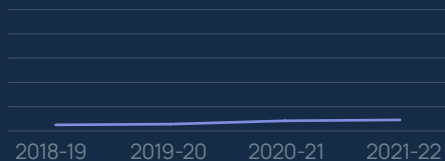
DEFENDERS ACCOUNTED FOR 37% OF ALL INJURIES IN THE ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE.





Goalkeepers

Total injuries over time



35

Total players with injury

19.40

Average injury severity (days)

53

Total injury instances

£0.12m (€0.14m)

Average injury cost

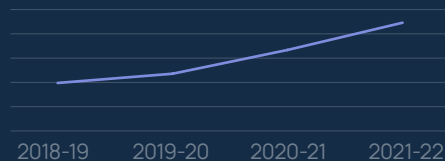
£6.36m (€7.57m)

Total injury cost



Defenders

Total injuries over time



166

Total players with injury

17.05

Average injury severity (days)

452

Total injury instances

£0.15m (€0.17m)

Average injury cost

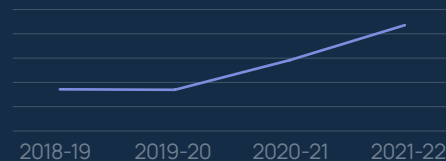
£65.96m (€78.49m)

Total injury cost



Midfielders

Total injuries over time



165

Total players with injury

15.14

Average injury severity (days)

442

Total injury instances

£0.15m (€0.18m)

Average injury cost

£65.23m (€77.62m)

Total injury cost



Forwards

Total injuries over time



97

Total players with injury

15.11

Average injury severity (days)

284

Total injury instances

£0.17m (€0.20m)

Average injury cost

£47.02m (€55.96m)

Total injury cost

Injuries by age

It was the oldest age group that suffered the most severe injuries, in terms of days unavailable (17). Notable absences included Winston Reid (West Ham) and Alex McCarthy (Southampton) who were out for more than 400 days combined.

Since 2018/19 season, the number of injuries has increased significantly, particularly among players under 21 (from 5 in 2018/19 to 73 last season.) This can be attributed to the ever-increasing production of young talent within academies, both home-grown and overseas, as clubs fight it out for a competitive advantage – take the examples of Bakayo Saka and Emile Smith-Rowe at Arsenal.

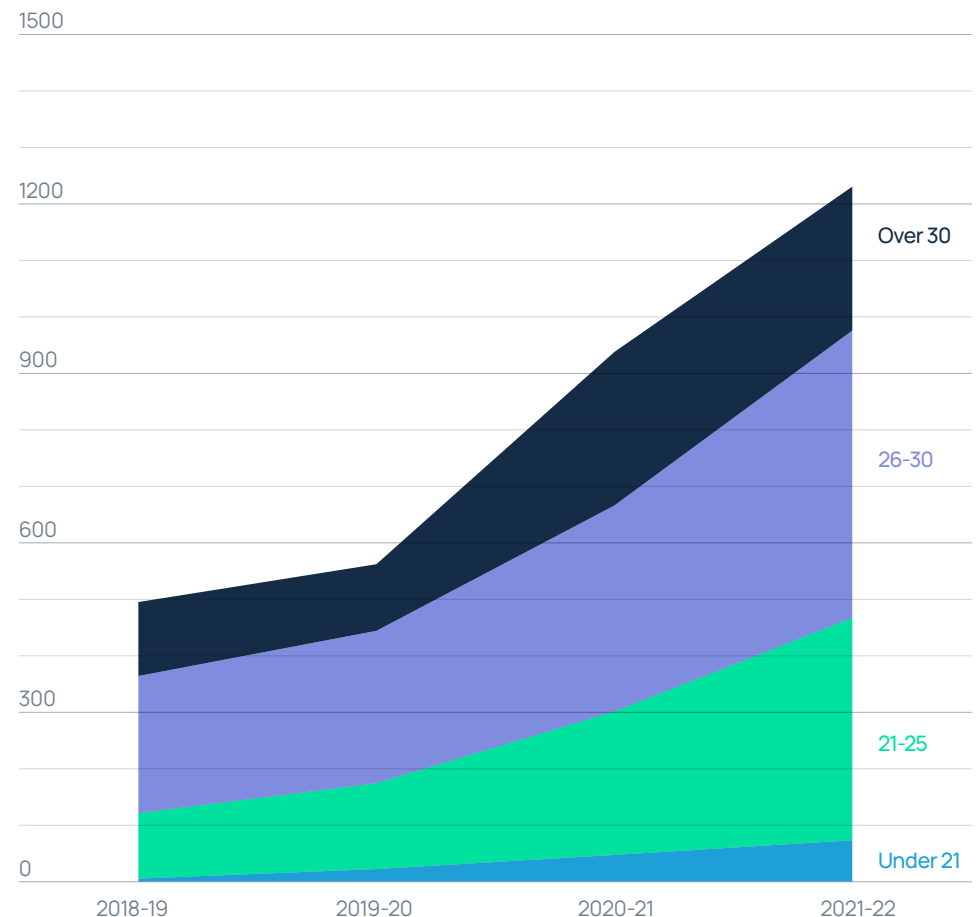
It was those aged 26-30 that suffered the most. Their 509 injuries constituted a near 40% rise on last year (365) and cost clubs a total of £84.67m (€100.76m).

It is also interesting to note that injuries to the Over 30s (255) decreased when compared to last year (272).

A changing landscape

Comparing the cost numbers to the previous season the landscape has changed. Both the Over 30 and the 21-25 age groups saw a decline in injury cost. In contrast, injuries to both under 21s and 26-30 year-olds doubled in cost.

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Scale is 1:2

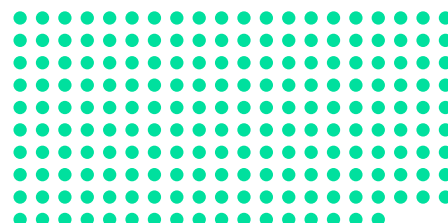
Each dot represents: 2 players injured;
2 days out through injury; €2m injury cost

21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

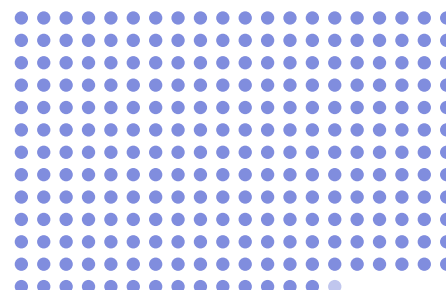


26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



La Liga

ALAVÉS
ATHLETIC BILBAO
ATLÉTICO MADRID
BARCELONA
CÁDIZ
CELTA VIGO
ELCHE
ESPANYOL
GETAFE
GRANADA
LEVANTE
MALLORCA
OSASUNA
RAYO VALLECANO
REAL BETIS
REAL MADRID
REAL SOCIEDAD
SEVILLA
VALENCIA
VILLARREAL

Introduction

After narrowly missing out on the title last season to their city rivals, Real Madrid were the runaway winners of the 2021/22 La Liga. Los Blancos secured their 35th league title with four games to spare. Star striker Karim Benzema finished with 27 league goals and in the process equalled Raúl's club goalscoring record of 323.

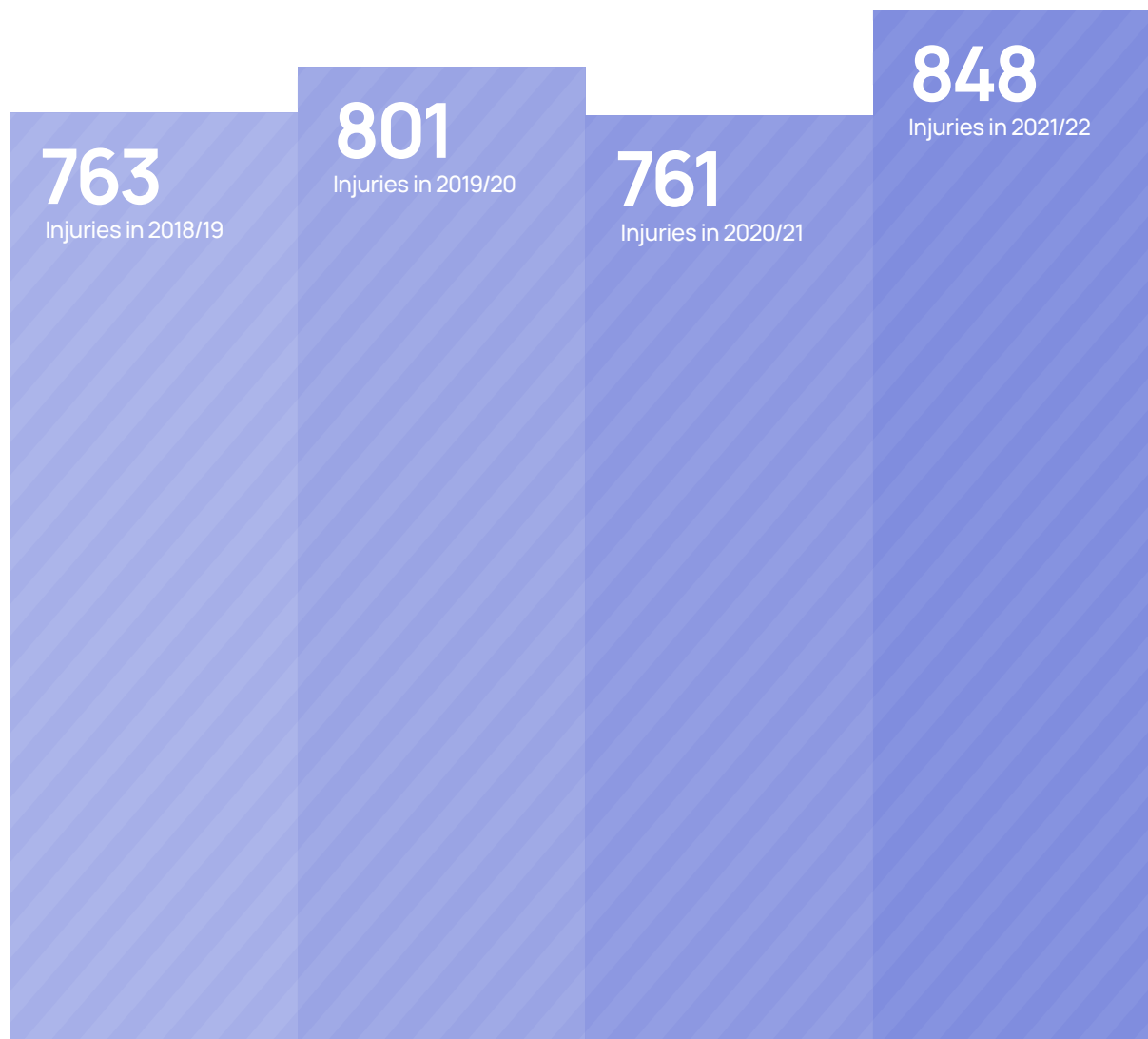
Whilst the top three followed pre-season expectations, it was a season to remember for Rayo Vallecano. With one of the smallest budgets in the league, Andoni Iraola's side defied all odds as the club found themselves fighting for a Champions League spot going into the winter break.

Barcelona's challenges have been well documented and it was no surprise that Ronald Koeman was relieved of his managerial duties in November following their 1-0 defeat to Iraola's side. He was swiftly replaced by club legend Xavi, which saw a turnaround in the club's form over the second half of the season.

Third time lucky

A word also for Getafe manager Quique Sánchez Flores. The Spaniard arrived in early October for his third spell as head coach. Losing all of their first seven games and looking certain for the drop, he managed to steer his side to safety with relative ease.

Yearly trend of injuries



Covid-19 continued to disrupt leagues across Europe and La Liga was no different. There were 848 injuries during the 2021/22 season, an 11.4% rise on the year before. However, if we consider the trend of the last four seasons, it is difficult to see a clear pattern emerging.

Overall, La Liga clubs have sustained 3173 instances of injury over the past four seasons. Significantly less than the Bundesliga (4271) yet a sizeable 601 more than Ligue 1 clubs (2572).

In the 2021/22 season, the 20 clubs suffered from an average of 42 injuries but distribution of these injuries across the teams was not equal.

La Liga opted to introduce a five-substitute role in the 2020/21 season, which continued through last season. It is interesting to note that this seems to have had minimal impact in terms of injury prevalence – there were 761 absences recorded in 2020/21.

Club analysis

The 848 injuries cost La Liga clubs €130.12m. A deeper dive into the numbers shows that the overall costs hide significant disparities in where these costs were sustained.



Champions Real Madrid topped the table in terms of both injury count and cost for the second season running. Their 114 injuries came at a total cost €40.41m. This is unsurprising due to the Galacticos' reputation of attracting world class players. Injuries to Karim Benzema, Luka Modrić and Toni Kroos would certainly put a dent in the finances of any club.

Overachievers Rayo Vallecano can certainly look to their 32 injuries as a contributing factor to their successful season. A contrasting experience for Levante who suffered the sixth highest injury count (46) on their way to relegation.

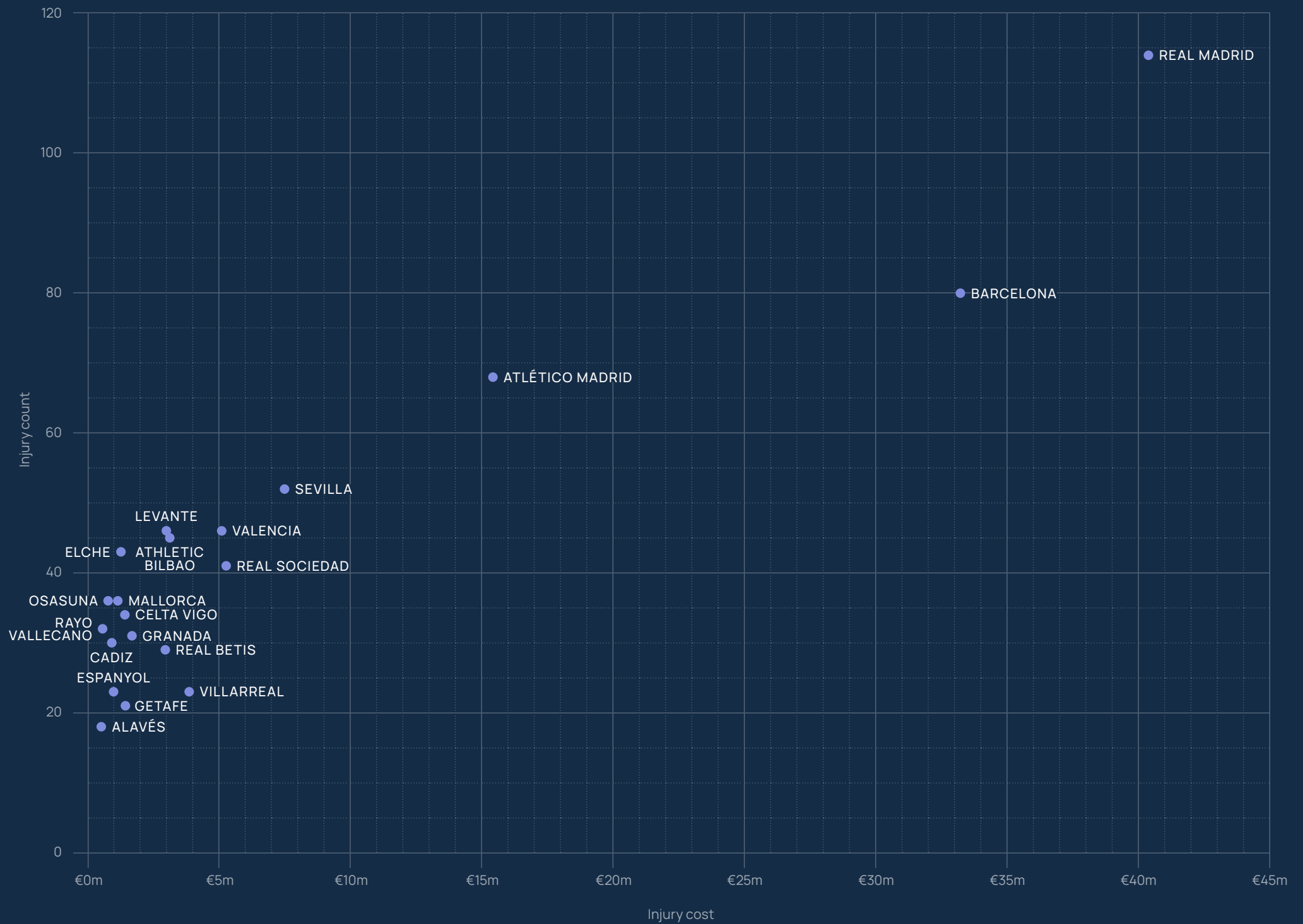
Holders Atlético Madrid suffered 26 more injuries compared to last season and could only manage a third place finish.

Real Betis fell victim of the most severe impact of player absence despite suffering only 27 injuries at a cost of €2.93m. This meant that players missed an average of 19 days, more than double that of Real Madrid (9.97). This did little to impact the fortunes of the Seville-based side who managed to secure a top five finish.

Of the top two, Barcelona suffered the more severe injuries (22 days out). These 80 injuries came to an average cost of €420,000, just under three times the league average.

→ The adjacent matrix illustrates the relationship between the injury cost and injury count of all teams in La Liga.

Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atlético Madrid were the only teams to break the 60 injury mark. The cost of **Real Madrid's** injuries was more than 5 times that of any team outside the top 3.



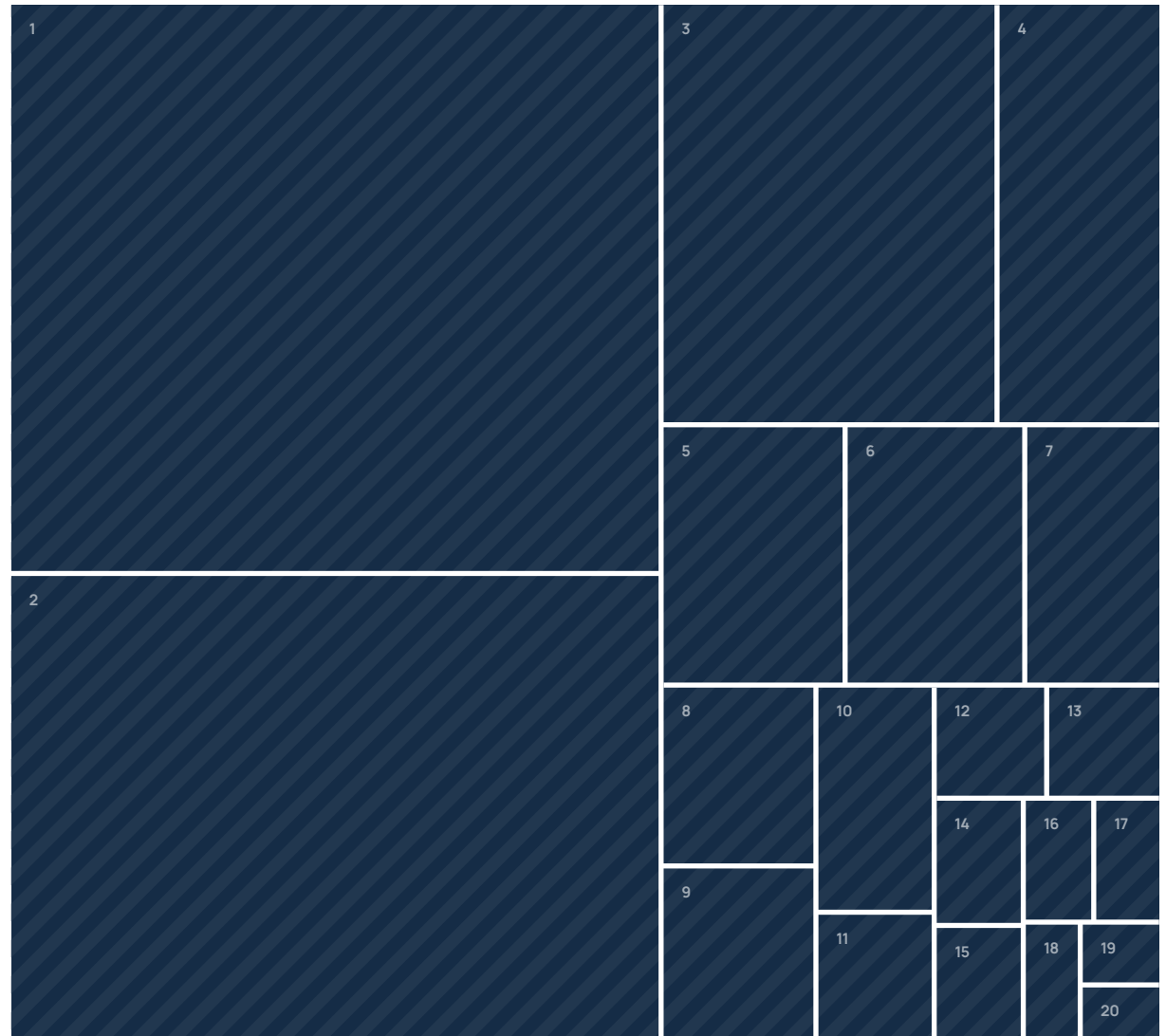
Looking at the share of injury cost per club reveals a stark gap between the top clubs and the rest of the league.

The combined injury costs incurred by Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atlético Madrid account for 68% of La Liga injury costs. Compare this with fourth placed Sevilla (52 injuries at €7.46m) and this gap is evident. The Europa League specialists contributed an overall 5.74% to the numbers.

To put this into perspective, injury cost to clubs in the bottom half totalled €12.67m. An overall 10% share of the injury cost, down from 16% the previous season.

	TEAM	TOTAL INJURY COST	SHARE OF INJURY COST
1	REAL MADRID	€40.41M	31.1%
2	BARCELONA	€33.23M	25.5%
3	ATLÉTICO MADRID	€15.40M	11.8%
4	SEVILLA	€7.46M	5.7%
5	REAL SOCIEDAD	€5.25M	4.0%
6	VALENCIA	€5.08M	3.9%
7	VILLARREAL	€3.84M	2.9%
8	ATHLETIC BILBAO	€3.10M	2.4%
9	LEVANTE	€2.97M	2.3%
10	BETIS	€2.93M	2.3%
11	GRANADA	€1.66M	1.3%
12	GETAFE	€1.41M	1.1%
13	CELTA VIGO	€1.39M	1.1%
14	ELCHE	€1.24M	1.0%
15	MALLORCA	€1.12M	0.9%
16	ESPANYOL	€0.96M	0.7%
17	CADIZ	€0.89M	0.7%
18	OSASUNA	€0.75M	0.6%
19	RAYO VALLECANO	€0.54M	0.4%
20	ALAVÉS	€0.49M	0.4%

Share of injury cost



The top 5



Real Madrid

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



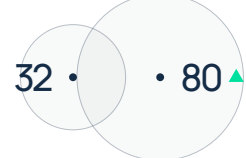
Points



Barcelona

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



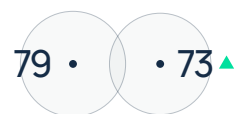
Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Atlético Madrid

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



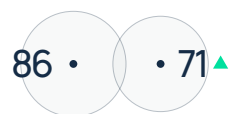
Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Sevilla

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



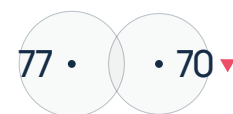
Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



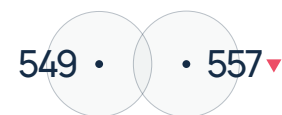
Real Betis

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Injuries by month

La Liga experienced another winter peak in terms of player absence. Of the 166 injuries recorded in December, 108 were confirmed Covid-19 cases. Leaving 35% of absences in this month attributable to injury.



However, we also see a rise in non Covid-19 related absences during the winter break (58 in December 2021 to 69 in January 2022). Although we do see a resultant decline in numbers (54) in February 2022.

January was the most expensive month overall, costing clubs €21.14m.

Niggly November

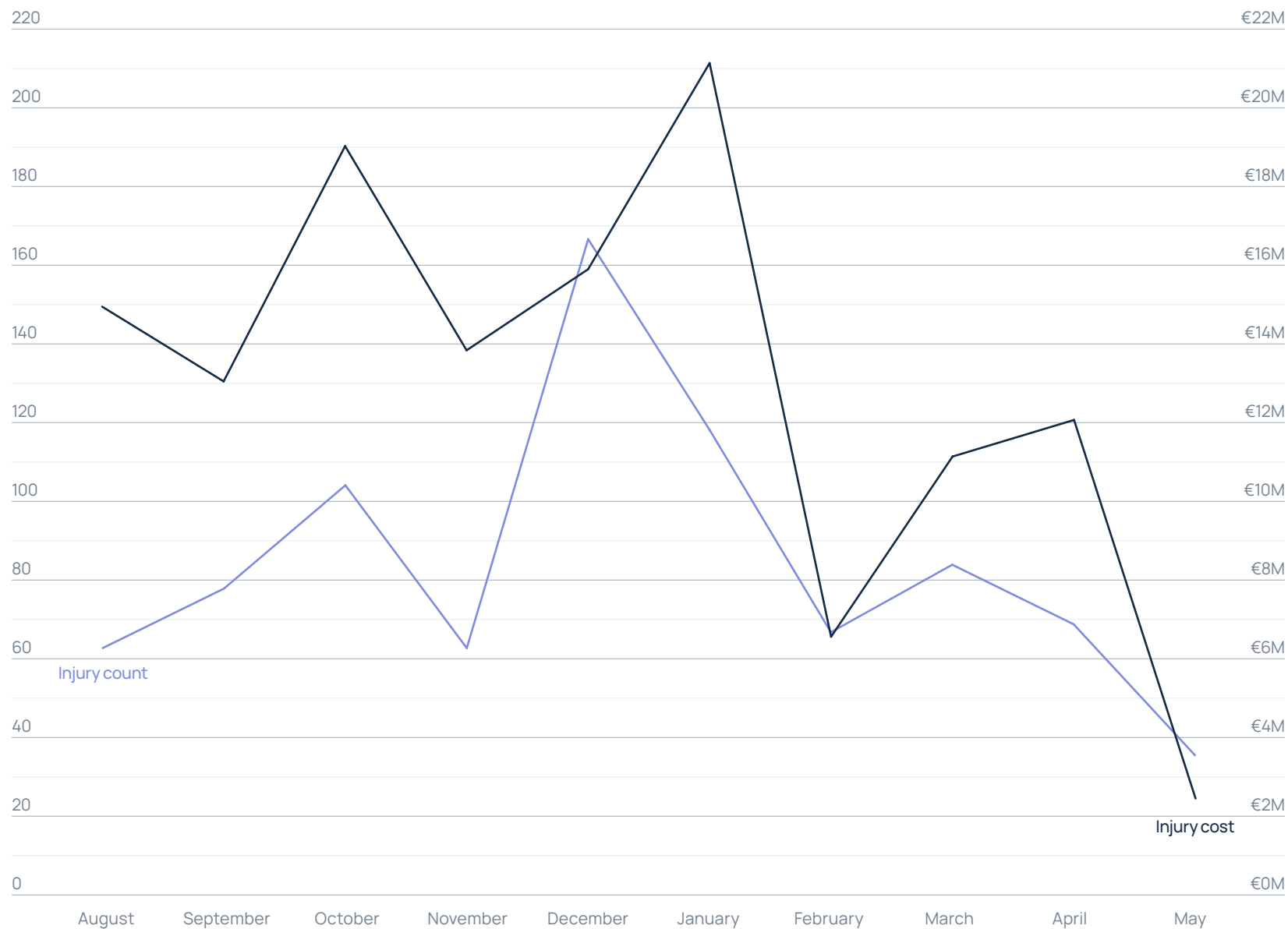
Further analysis into the numbers points to the November being an anomaly. According to the data, 63 injuries occurred at a disproportionate cost of €13.84m. The most severe of which being that of Sergi Roberto (Barcelona) who underwent surgery and missed over 140 days. By looking at the injuries during this month, the top three in the league accounted for a third of the total cost, which provides a partial explanation for the distorted figures.

From August to December, Spanish clubs suffered 474 total absences at a cost of €76.76m. However, these numbers reduced in the second half of the season (374, €53.36m).

33%

THE TOP THREE IN THE LEAGUE ACCOUNTED FOR A THIRD OF THE TOTAL COST OF INJURY IN NOVEMBER.

Injury cost & count totals by month



Injuries by type

The analysis shows that Covid-19 led the way in terms of absence. Muscle injuries came in 2nd place with 142 players suffering 178 injuries. This is in fact a decline on the numbers last season (163 players and 223 injuries). This type of injury was topped only by Hamstring injuries in terms of total cost. Hamstring injuries cost La Liga clubs €23.60m in wages, accounting for an 18% share of the overall cost in Spain.

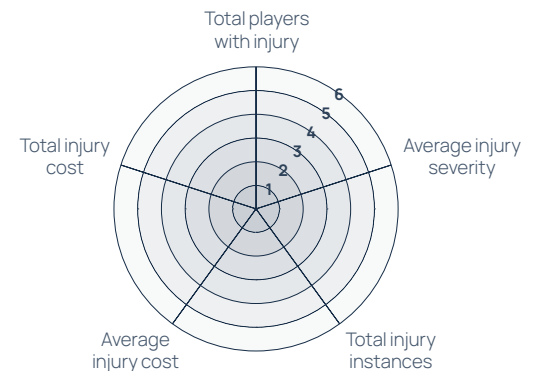
The 'not so golden' boot

Despite only affecting nine players, Foot injuries came to an astounding average cost of €810,000. This figure is more than five times greater than the overall average cost of injury across all types. The most serious of which involved Barcelona player Samuel Umtiti. Umtiti was sidelined for over three months which helps explain the high severity figure for this particular type of injury (40 days).

Calf/Shin injuries affected 32 players at a total cost of €14.3m. These came at an average cost of €370,000 per instance, a figure only topped by that of Foot injuries.

Two injuries with similar instance numbers were Covid-19 (182) and Muscle (178). However, Muscle injuries came at just over double the total cost (€20.94m). These also came at a higher average cost, €120,000 vs. €50,000.

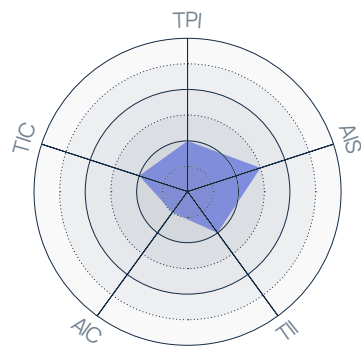
Groin injuries sidelined 23 players at an average cost of €100,000.



All the data for each injury group has been benchmarked and given a score from 1-6. The highest figures across the categories are marked with 1



Ankle



37

Total players with injury

20.98

Average injury severity (days)

43

Total injury instances

€0.16m

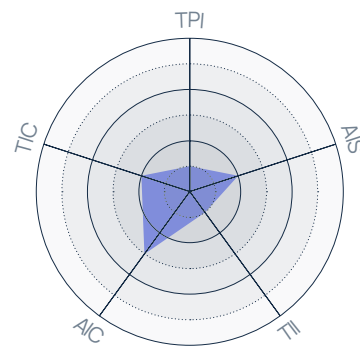
Average injury cost

€6.72m

Total injury cost



Back



13

Total players with injury

12.94

Average injury severity (days)

16

Total injury instances

€0.35m

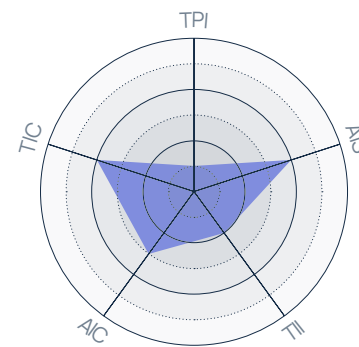
Average injury cost

€5.62m

Total injury cost



Calf/Shin



32

Total players with injury

25.05

Average injury severity (days)

39

Total injury instances

€0.37m

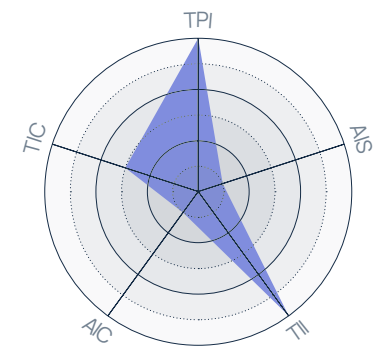
Average injury cost

€14.30m

Total injury cost



Covid-19



175

Total players with injury

8.25

Average injury severity (days)

182

Total injury instances

€0.05m

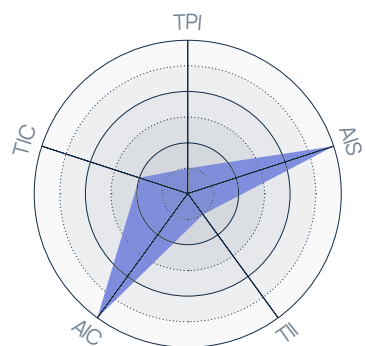
Average injury cost

€9.32m

Total injury cost



Foot



9

Total players with injury

39.78

Average injury severity (days)

1

9

Total injury instances

€0.81m

Average injury cost

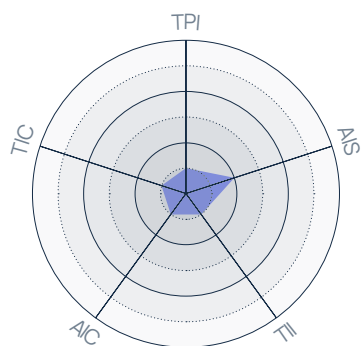
1

€7.31m

Total injury cost



Groin



23

Total players with injury

16.00

Average injury severity (days)

24

Total injury instances

€0.10m

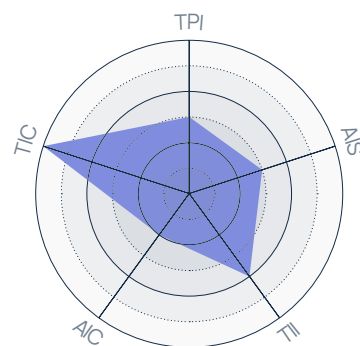
Average injury cost

€2.28m

Total injury cost



Hamstring



87

Total players with injury

21.74

Average injury severity (days)

120

Total injury instances

€0.20m

Average injury cost

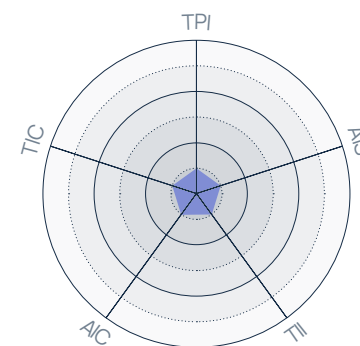
€23.60m

Total injury cost

1



Head/Concussion



24

Total players with injury

6.94

Average injury severity (days)

24

Total injury instances

€0.05m

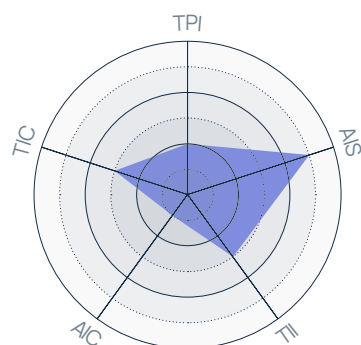
Average injury cost

€1.06m

Total injury cost



Knee



58

Total players with injury

33.71

Average injury severity (days)

68

Total injury instances

€0.16m

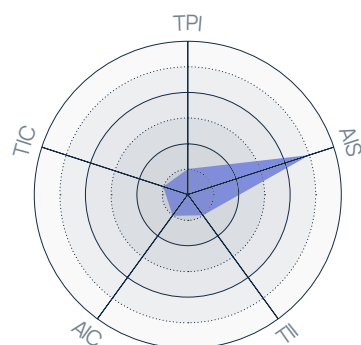
Average injury cost

€10.95m

Total injury cost



Ligament



4

Total players with injury

31.25

Average injury severity (days)

4

Total injury instances

€0.09m

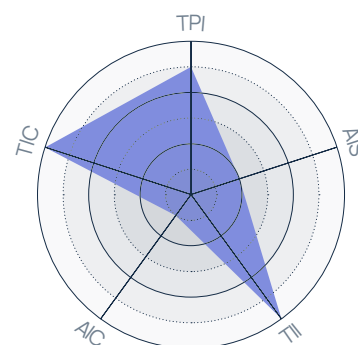
Average injury cost

€0.37m

Total injury cost



Muscle



142

Total players with injury

17.35

Average injury severity (days)

178

Total injury instances

€0.12m

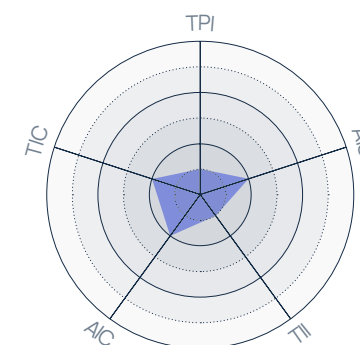
Average injury cost

€20.94m

Total injury cost



Thigh/Hip



25

Total players with injury

14.41

Average injury severity (days)

27

Total injury instances

€0.20m

Average injury cost

€5.49m

Total injury cost

Covid-19 cases by club

Player absence due to Covid-19 persisted in the Spanish top-flight throughout the course of the season. The virus affected 175 players with 182 confirmed positive tests across the 20 clubs.

Omicron woes

These 182 cases cost clubs €9.32m at an average of €50,000 per positive test. Compare this to last season and we can see that the Covid-19 issues worsened. In the 2020/21 season, there were half the number of positive tests (83).

Real Madrid found themselves top of the tree once again in terms of player absence due to Covid-19 as Los Blancos recorded 20 cases.

There was a clear peak in December with 108 confirmed cases. This month alone contributed to 59% of the overall case numbers. Rayo Vallecano experienced all of their 18 cases during this month, which perhaps explains their downturn in form in the second half of the season.

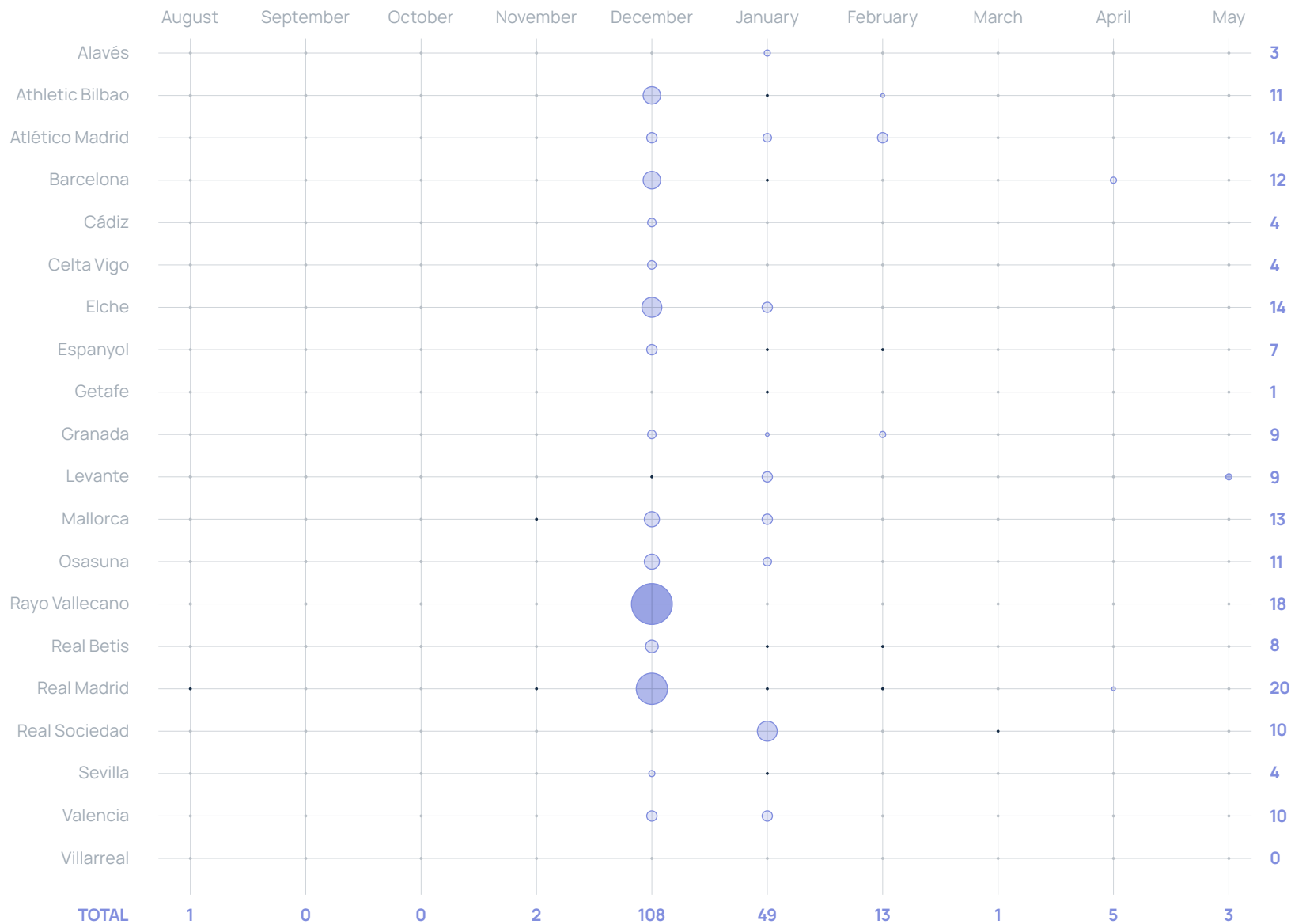
Levante were perhaps unfortunate to experience three Covid-19 cases in the final month of a season that ultimately ended in relegation.

20

REAL MADRID FOUND THEMSELVES TOP ONCE AGAIN IN TERMS OF PLAYER ABSENCE DUE TO COVID-19 AS LOS BLANCOS RECORDED 20 CASES.



Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by club



Injuries by position

Spanish footballing philosophy focuses heavily around midfielders and a possession-based style of play so it would be reasonable to expect midfielders to see higher incidences of injury and absence. The data would disagree.



On the back foot

Defenders recorded the highest number of injuries across the course of the season (327). These came at a cost of €35.75m, which was slightly lower than Midfield injuries (€37.57m).

Defenders also suffered a worryingly high number of recurring injuries – 138 players sustained 327 absences.

The significantly higher total injury cost of strikers (€54.06m) can be in part explained by Barcelona's acquisition and subsequent injuries sustained by both Sergio Agüero and Memphis Depay. Albeit purchased for free, both players missed number of games due to injury.

Conversely, Goalkeepers are historically paid the least and attract 'lower' transfer fees and this is illustrated in the data. Despite over 44 injuries in the position, they only cost their clubs a total of €2.74m in salaries. This figure is just over half the injury cost compared to last season, despite suffering a similar number of injuries (44 vs. 37).

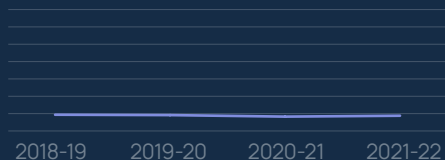
THREE DAYS IS THE RIGHT TIME TO RECOVER? FROM A CARDIOVASCULAR, METABOLIC AND ENERGY LEVEL, IT'S ENOUGH. BUT ON A MUSCULAR LEVEL, IT TAKES FIVE DAYS.

JOSE LUIS SAN MARTIN
FORMER FITNESS COACH AT REAL MADRID



Goalkeepers

Total injuries over time



29

Total players with injury

13.43

Average injury severity (days)

44

Total injury instances

€0.06m

Average injury cost

€2.74m

Total injury cost



Defenders

Total injuries over time



138

Total players with injury

17.11

Average injury severity (days)

327

Total injury instances

€0.11m

Average injury cost

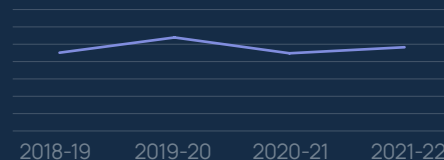
€35.75m

Total injury cost



Midfielders

Total injuries over time



123

Total players with injury

19.29

Average injury severity (days)

240

Total injury instances

€0.16m

Average injury cost

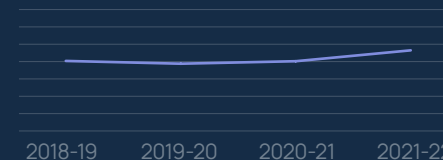
€37.57m

Total injury cost



Forwards

Total injuries over time



112

Total players with injury

16.98

Average injury severity (days)

237

Total injury instances

€0.23m

Average injury cost

€54.06m

Total injury cost

Injuries by age

Unfortunately, it was the younger generation of players that suffered the most severe injuries in the 2021/22 La Liga season.

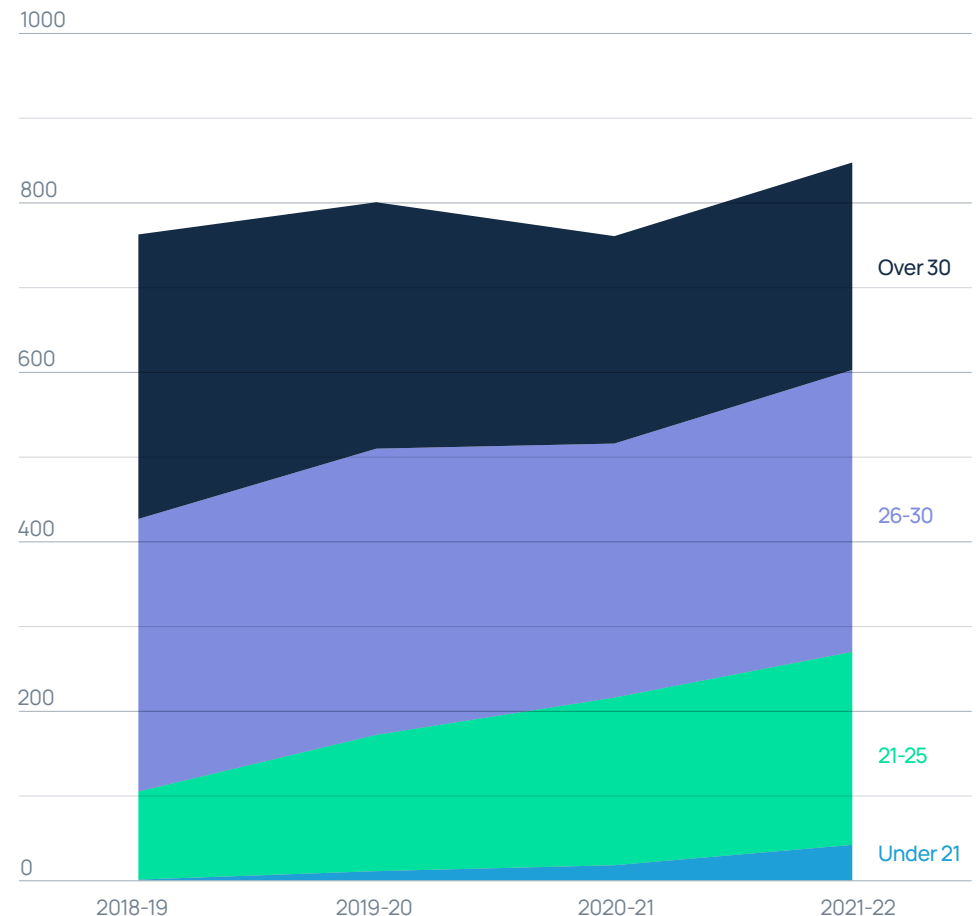
Only young once

Players under the age of 21 were absent for an average of 21 days. The data shows that 22 players were forced to watch from the sidelines due to injury at a cost of €3.74m. Ansu Fati of Barcelona was sidelined for the longest period.

However, it was injuries to the Over 30 age group that cost La Liga clubs the most. Players in this bracket accounted for just under half of the total injury cost for the league (€58.06m). The Over 30s have cost clubs the most over the past two seasons and this follows the general understanding that older players take longer to recover, yet remain on higher salaries.

Injuries to players aged 26-30 came to €46.87m (€11m less in paid salaries when compared to the oldest age group). This age group were also worse affected, 151 players recorded 333 absences.

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Scale is 1:2

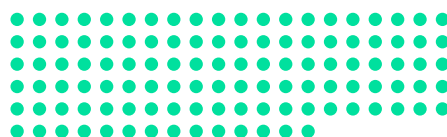
Each dot represents: 2 players injured;
2 days out through injury; €2m injury cost

21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

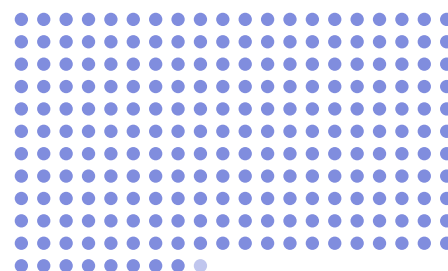


26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Ligue 1

ANGERS
BORDEAUX
BREST
CLERMONT
LENS
LILLE
LORIENT
LYON
MARSEILLE
METZ
MONACO
MONTPELLIER
NANTES
NICE
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN
REIMS
RENNES
SAINT-ÉTIENNE
STRASBOURG
TROYES

Introduction

PSG secured their eighth title in the last ten years in what was the 84th season of Ligue 1. However, it was a season to forget for both St-Étienne and Bordeaux as they suffered relegation. The latter found themselves rooted to the bottom of the table from week 24 onwards with just six wins all season.

PSG were almost untouchable across the course of the season, occupying top spot from week 3. The clinical Kylian Mbappé led the line with an impressive 39 goals across all competitions. The Frenchman was ably assisted by the arrival of one of the greatest to ever play the game – Lionel Messi.

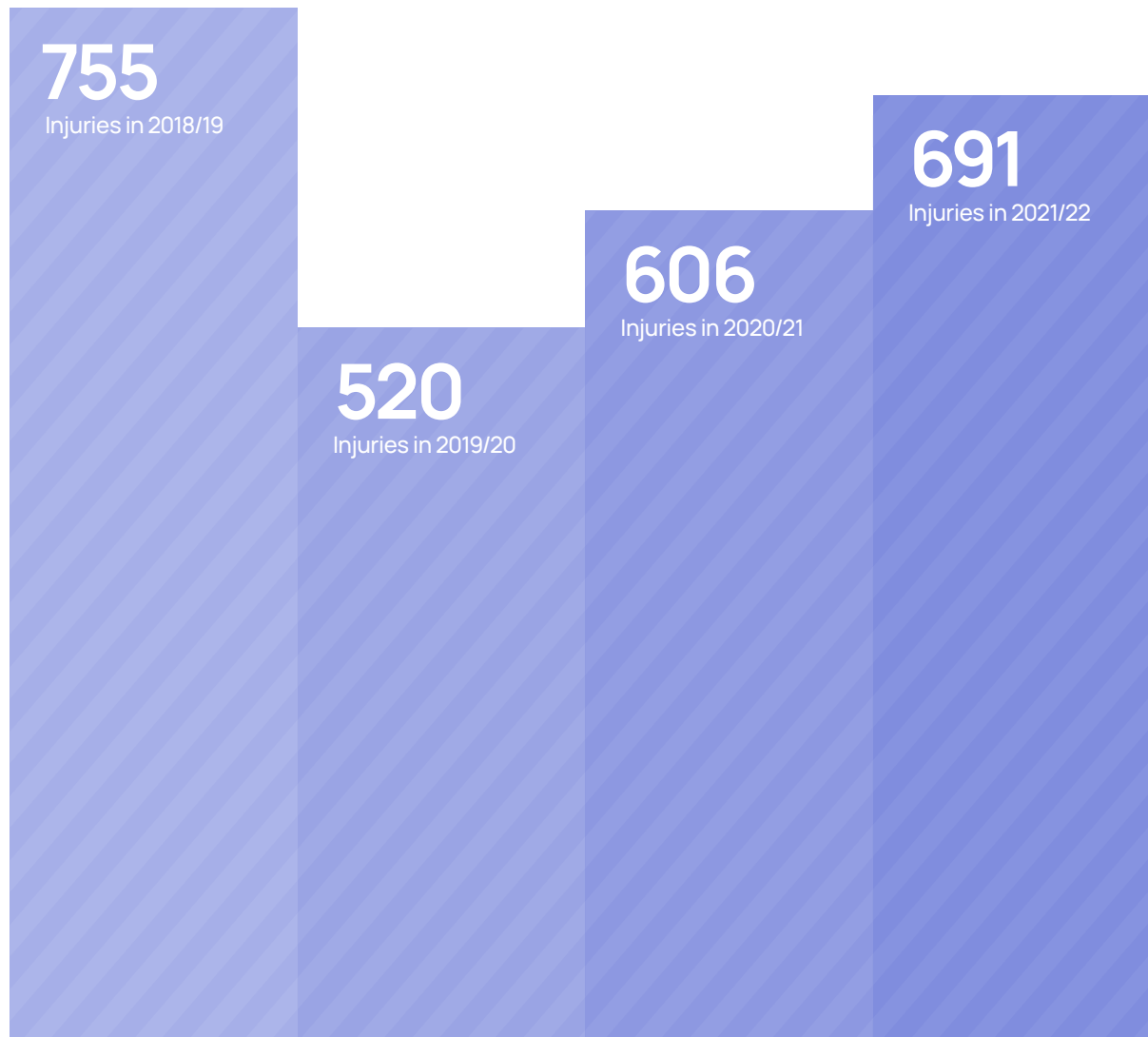
Elsewhere in the league, Antoine Kombouaré guided his Nantes side to a notable 9th place finish along with a triumphant Coupe de France campaign.

2012 champions Montpellier had to settle for a thirteenth place finish while both newly promoted sides (Troyes and Clermont) survived the drop.

Relegation surprises

Among the relegated sides, Metz were arguably the only side that fulfilled pre-season expectations. Whilst even the most optimistic fans of both Bordeaux and St-Étienne would admit that recent seasons have been challenging, few would have expected their seasons to end in relegation.

Yearly trend of injuries



Ligue 1 clubs saw a total of 691 injuries during the 2021/22 season, a 14% increase on the previous season, at a cost of just over €80m. As shown by the data, this figure has been on an upward trajectory. The relatively low number of player absences in the Covid-19 disrupted 2019/20 season (520) is an anomaly as the French Football Federation decided to abandon the season due to the start of the pandemic.

If we look at comparative cost, this has followed a similar pattern. Overall injuries came at a cost to clubs of just under €10m more in 2021/22 – a proportionate increase considering the rise in total absences.

The 691 injuries recorded in the French top flight is the lowest of all the top five leagues. This is perhaps surprising considering that it is the longest season in terms of days. However, the lower intensity of playing style when compared to other leagues could offer a partial explanation.

Club analysis

Given the well-documented investment in their playing squad, predictably PSG topped the table in terms of injury count (91) and cost (€40.73m). These absences came at a cost of €450,000 per injury.



Parisian dominance

Compare the champions to second placed Marseille and there is a stark difference. Marseille only suffered from 23 injuries, at total cost of €3.09m. Despite sustaining 68 fewer injuries than PSG, Marseille were unable to bridge the gap, finishing 15 points behind their rivals.

Unlike Marseille, both Nice and Rennes were able to capitalise on low rates of injury. Rennes (23, €2.09m) finished the season in fourth place, one place higher than Nice (25, €2.54m).

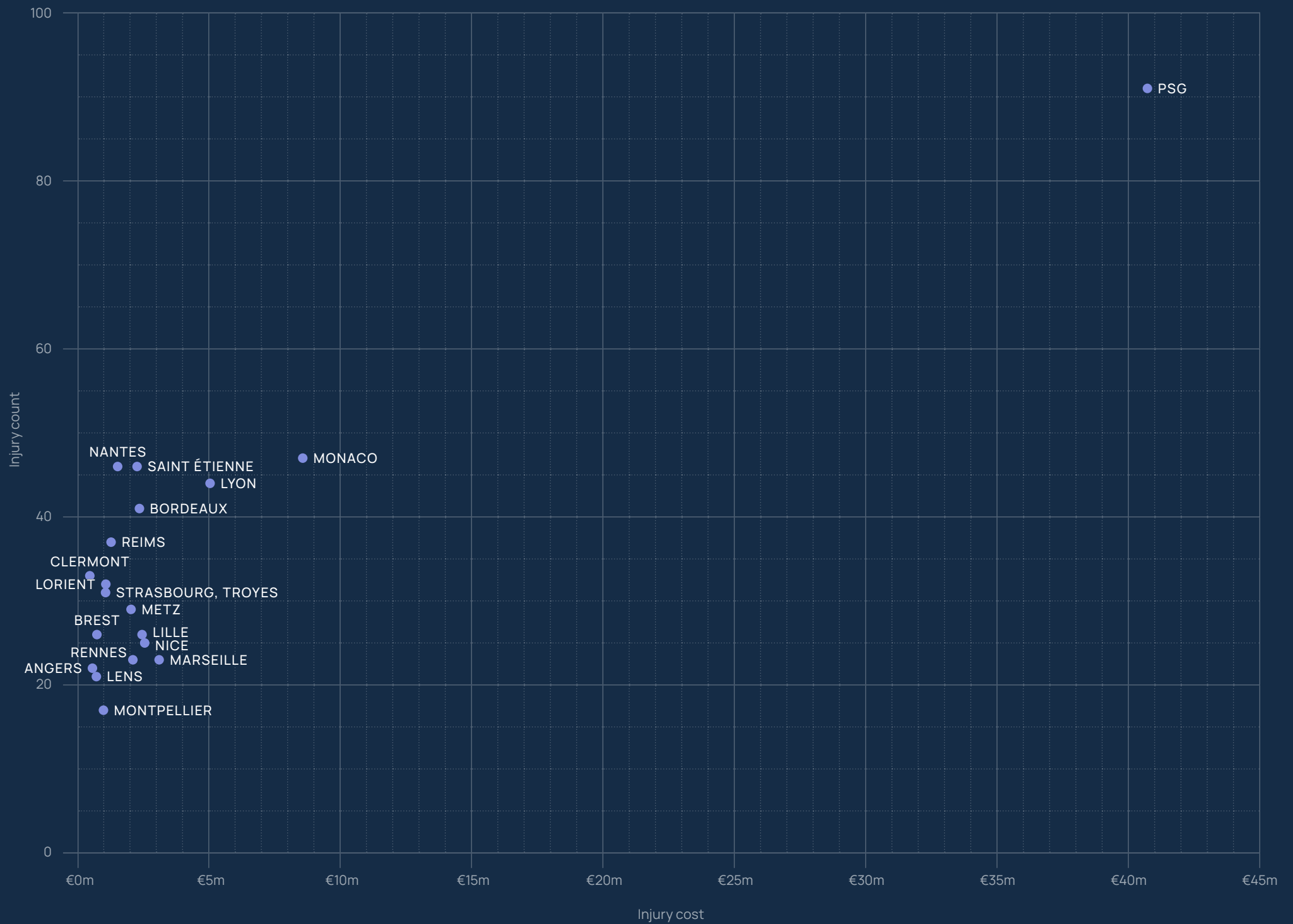
Overachievers Nantes saw 46 injuries at an average cost of €30,000 – evidence that success does not always require significant financial backing.

If we consider the average cost of injury, only Monaco (€180,000) and Marseille (€130,000) came close to PSG. Despite occupying second and third spot, a significant financial gap between PSG and the rest of the league remains.

At the bottom end of the table, Metz were unable to exploit their low injury rate (29) but it is interesting to note that these came at a higher average cost (€70,000) than both Bordeaux (€60,000) and St-Étienne (€50,000).

→ The adjacent matrix illustrates the relationship between the injury cost and injury count of all teams in Ligue 1.

Paris Saint Germain were in a different league in terms of both the number of injuries and injury count. **Monaco** were the only other team to incur an injury cost of over €5m.

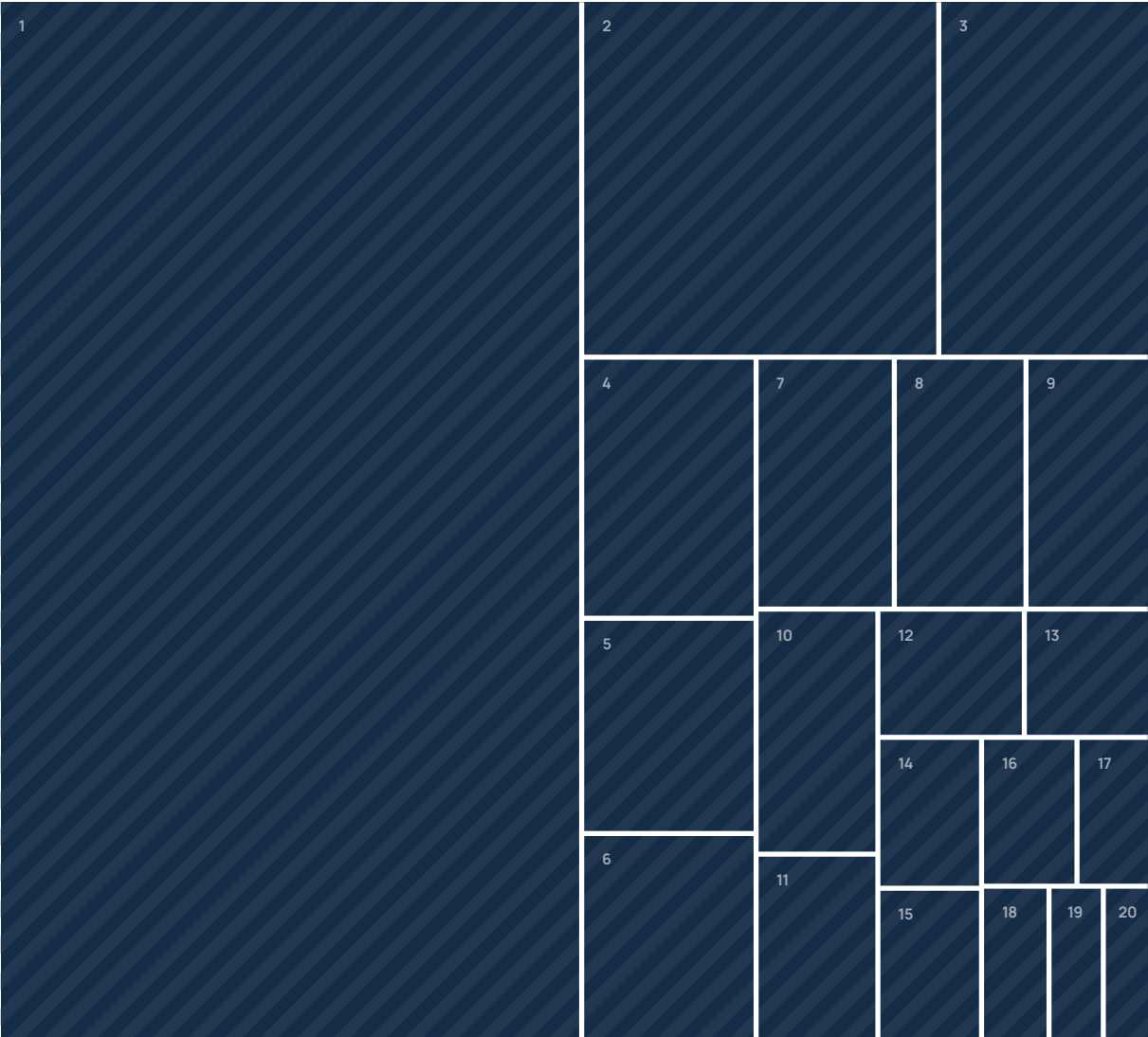


PSG accounted for over 50% of the total injury cost for the league, the highest share across the top five European leagues.

For comparison, the top 10 accounted for €67.73m of total injury cost, of which 60% came from PSG. The bottom 10 constituted 16% of the overall total (€12.67m). This cost figure rivals the combined total of Marseille and Monaco (€11.64m), illustrating the significant financial inequality in the league.

	TEAM	TOTAL INJURY COST	SHARE OF INJURY COST
1	PARIS SAINT GERMAIN	€40.73M	50.7%
2	MONACO	€8.56M	10.6%
3	LYON	€5.03M	6.3%
4	MARSEILLE	€3.09M	3.8%
5	NICE	€2.54M	3.2%
6	LILLE	€2.44M	3.0%
7	BORDEAUX	€2.34M	2.9%
8	SAINT ÉTIENNE	€2.25M	2.8%
9	RENNES	€2.09M	2.6%
10	METZ	€2.02M	2.5%
11	NANTES	€1.51M	1.9%
12	REIMS	€1.26M	1.6%
13	LORIENT	€1.06M	1.3%
14	STRASBOURG	€1.05M	1.3%
15	TROYES	€1.05M	1.3%
16	MONTPELLIER	€0.97M	1.2%
17	BREST	€0.72M	0.9%
18	LENS	€0.70M	0.9%
19	ANGERS	€0.55M	0.7%
20	CLERMONT FOOT	€0.45M	0.6%

Share of injury cost



The top 5



Paris Saint Germain

20/21 21/22

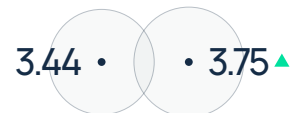
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



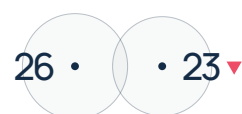
Points



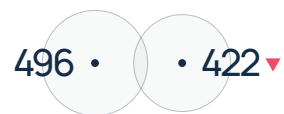
Marseille

20/21 21/22

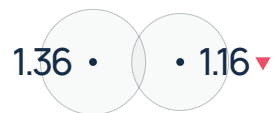
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



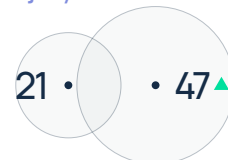
Points



Monaco

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



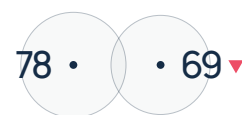
Total days out



Average unavailable players



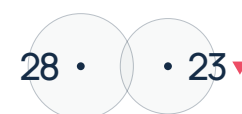
Points



Rennes

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



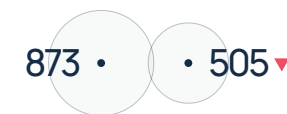
Nice

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Injuries by month

Injuries peaked in January 2022 with 102 recorded instances, following the winter break. These came at a cost of €13.7m which seems to contradict the widely held view that the winter break results in lower rates of injury and illness.

A look at the absence numbers, excluding Covid-19, tells a similar story. We see a jump from 46 in December 2021 to 65 in January 2022 with a further eight instances recorded in February. The idea of a break has long-since been a debate across Europe but the data shows that it is ineffective in France.

Following the 37 Covid-19 cases in January, there were 80 absences recorded in February – of which only seven were positive tests. This would infer that players in the French league suffered from the prolonged effects of Covid-19 absence in the months following – PSG's Angel Di Maria is a perfect example.

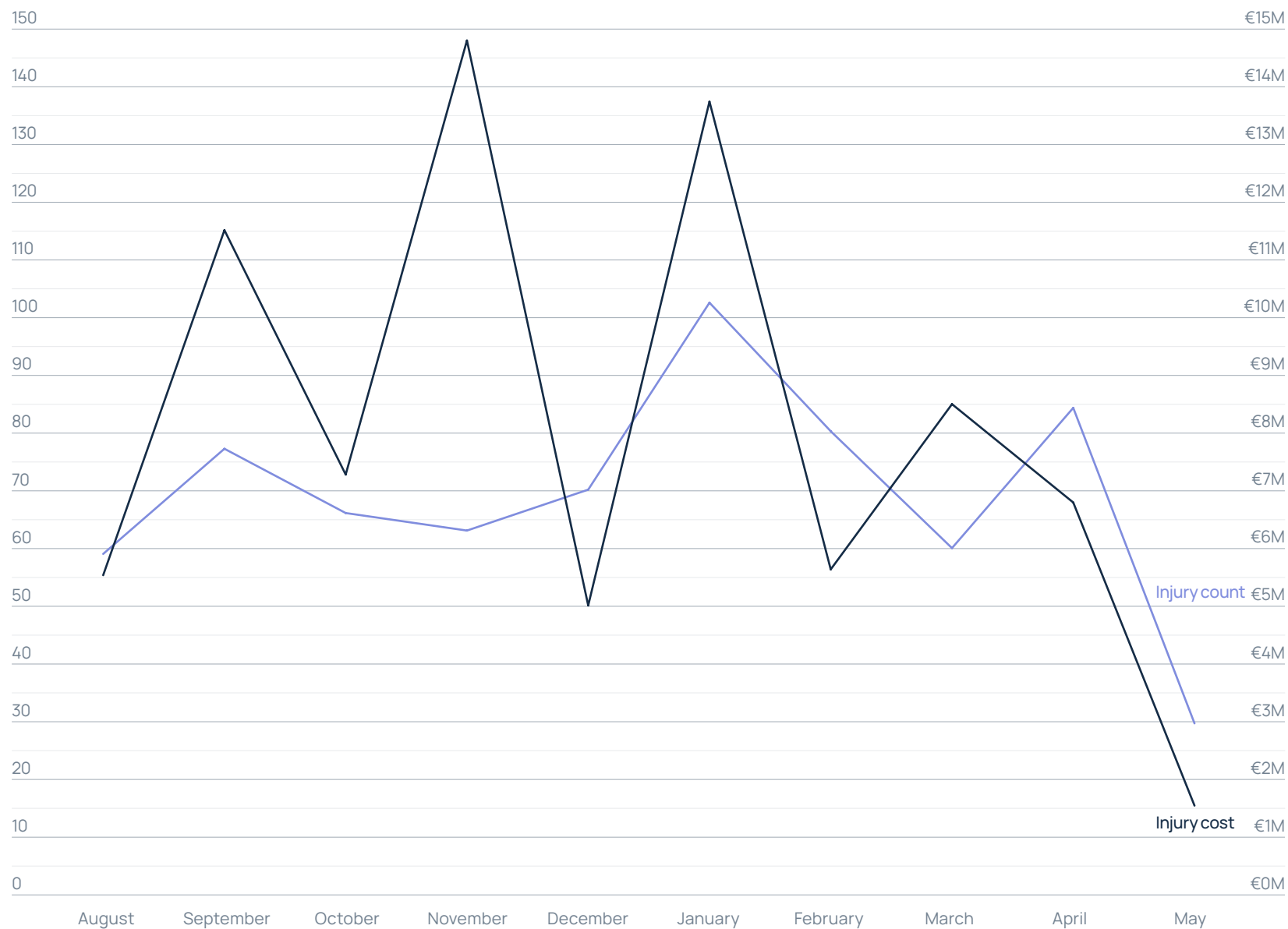
November saw the highest injury cost at €14.75m at an average of €220,000. Injuries to Neymar and Julian Draxler (PSG) in this month account for a significant element of these costs. October saw a similar number of injuries (66) yet at half the cost (€7.29m).

Taking this further, costs were much higher in September (€11.49m), November (€14.75m) and December (€13.7m).

€14.75M

NOVEMBER SAW THE HIGHEST INJURY
COST AT €14.75M AT AN AVERAGE OF
€220,000 PER INSTANCE.

Injury cost & count totals by month



Injuries by type

An in-depth look at the injuries by type highlights an apparent lack of re-occurring injuries, which is certainly a positive for Ligue 1 clubs. As an example, Thigh/Hip injuries affected 65 players with a total of 70 recorded instances.

This finding further emphasises the slower tempo of the league, placing players under lesser workloads throughout the season.

Covid-19 again led the way affecting 78 players throughout the course of the season. These came at an average cost of €80,000 per case with players missing 12 days on average.

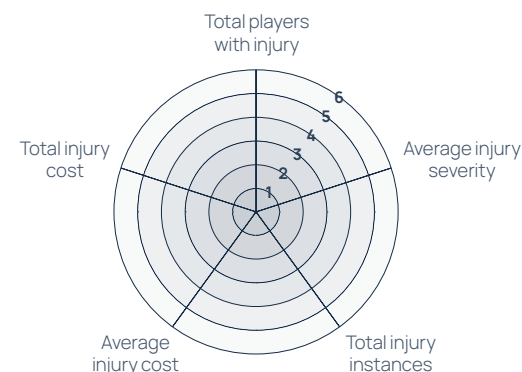
Ankle injuries proved most expensive for French clubs. €14.52m was paid out on salaries across the 49 injured players. One of the league's highest earners, Kylian Mbappé (PSG) was among those sidelined over the course of the season, which will have had a disproportionate impact on the total cost.

In terms of frequency, Muscle injuries proved to be the most persistent. This type of injury accounted for 13% of all injuries in Ligue 1. These 88 incidences forced clubs to pay out €9.34m in salaries of the 75 players affected.

Costly Hamstrings

Hamstring injuries came at a slightly lower total injury cost (€9.08m). Monaco's experienced midfielder Cesc Fàbregas was out for the majority of the season with this type of injury.

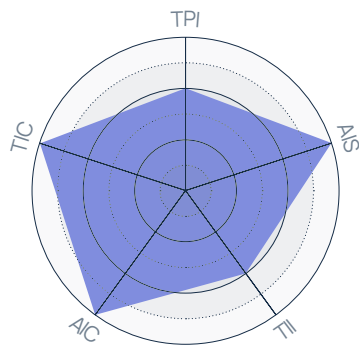
These forms of absence did come at a similar level of severity – 26 and 27 days for Muscle and Hamstring respectively.



All the data for each injury group has been benchmarked and given a score from 1-6. The highest figures across the categories are marked with ①



Ankle



49

Total players with injury

32.16

Average injury severity (days)

55

Total injury instances

€0.26m

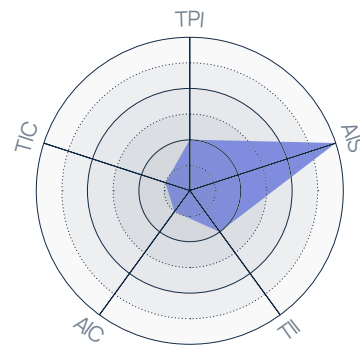
Average injury cost

€14.52m

Total injury cost



Back



18

Total players with injury

33.30

Average injury severity (days)

20

Total injury instances

€0.07m

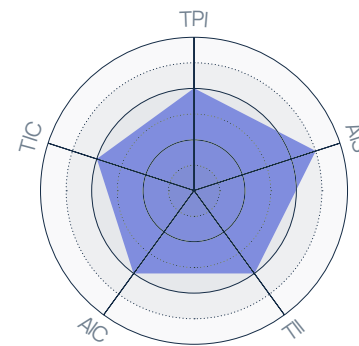
Average injury cost

€1.34m

Total injury cost



Calf/Shin



48

Total players with injury

27.59

Average injury severity (days)

56

Total injury instances

€0.17m

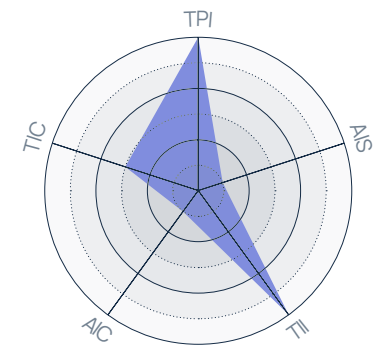
Average injury cost

€9.54m

Total injury cost



Covid-19



78

Total players with injury

11.94

Average injury severity (days)

79

Total injury instances

€0.08m

Average injury cost

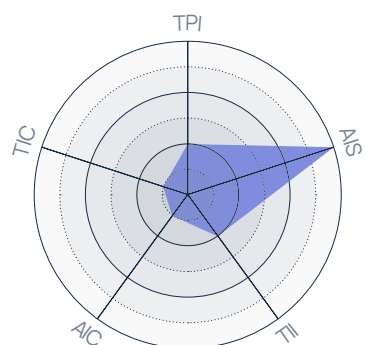
€6.14m

Total injury cost

LIGUE 1



Foot



23

Total players with injury

30.65

Average injury severity (days)

23

Total injury instances

€0.06m

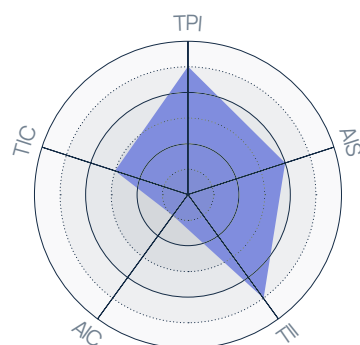
Average injury cost

€1.41m

Total injury cost



Groin



55

Total players with injury

23.35

Average injury severity (days)

66

Total injury instances

€0.08m

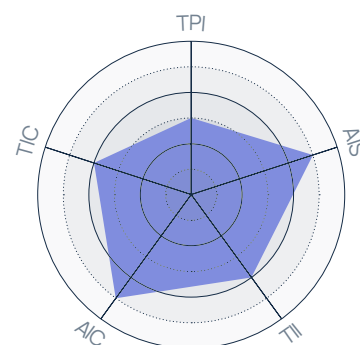
Average injury cost

€5.56m

Total injury cost



Hamstring



41

Total players with injury

27.19

Average injury severity (days)

47

Total injury instances

€0.19m

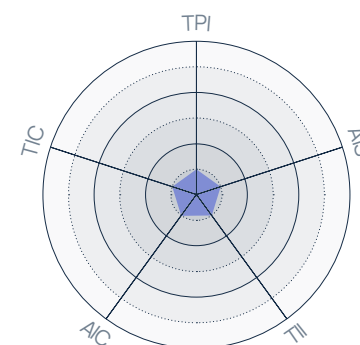
Average injury cost

€9.08m

Total injury cost



Head/Concussion



6

Total players with injury

13.34

Average injury severity (days)

6

Total injury instances

€0.05m

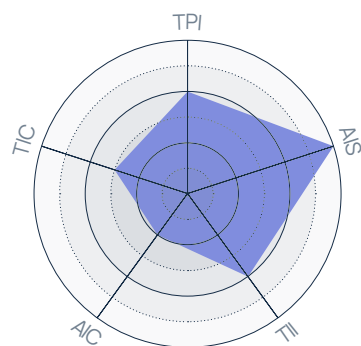
Average injury cost

€0.31m

Total injury cost



Knee



50

Total players with injury

31.02

Average injury severity (days)

59

Total injury instances

€0.09m

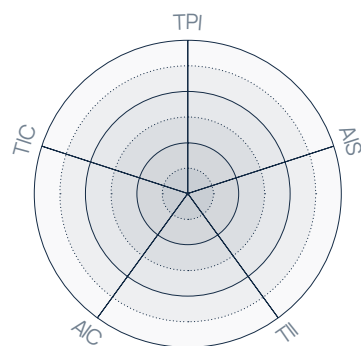
Average injury cost

€5.60m

Total injury cost



Ligament



0

Total players with injury

0

Average injury severity (days)

0

Total injury instances

€0.00m

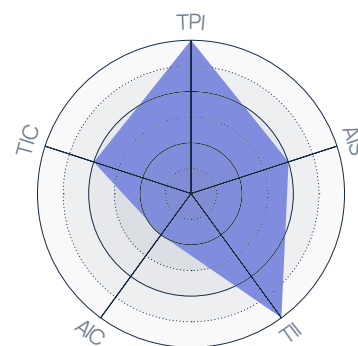
Average injury cost

€0.00m

Total injury cost



Muscle



75

Total players with injury

25.84

Average injury severity (days)

88

Total injury instances

€0.11m

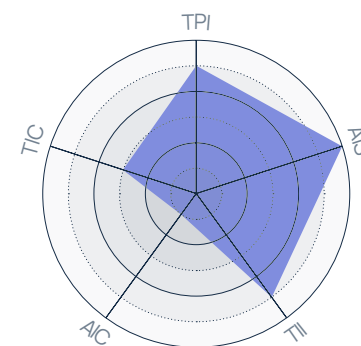
Average injury cost

€9.34m

Total injury cost



Thigh/Hip



65

Total players with injury

33.01

Average injury severity (days)

70

Total injury instances

€0.08m

Average injury cost

€5.85m

Total injury cost

Covid-19 cases by club

Ligue 1 followed a similar pattern to its other league counterparts. French clubs were worst affected from December to January due to Omicron. However, the French league was the least affected with 79 cases in total.

Covid-19 comparisons

Ligue 1 also suffered a decline in Covid-19 cases when compared to the season before (97). They were not the only league to see this trend as Serie A also recorded a decrease. By comparison, cases in the German league tripled over the course of the season and doubled in both Spain and England.

PSG suffered 16 positive cases, of which 11 were in January. Players affected included Lionel Messi and Juan Bernat.

Bordeaux found themselves in second place with 9 cases. All of these were incurred in December but this proved insufficient time to recover and beat the drop come the end of the season.

A successful season for Nantes was aided by suffering only four cases. However, the same cannot be said for St Étienne who also saw four cases over the course of the season but were defeated in the relegation playoff.

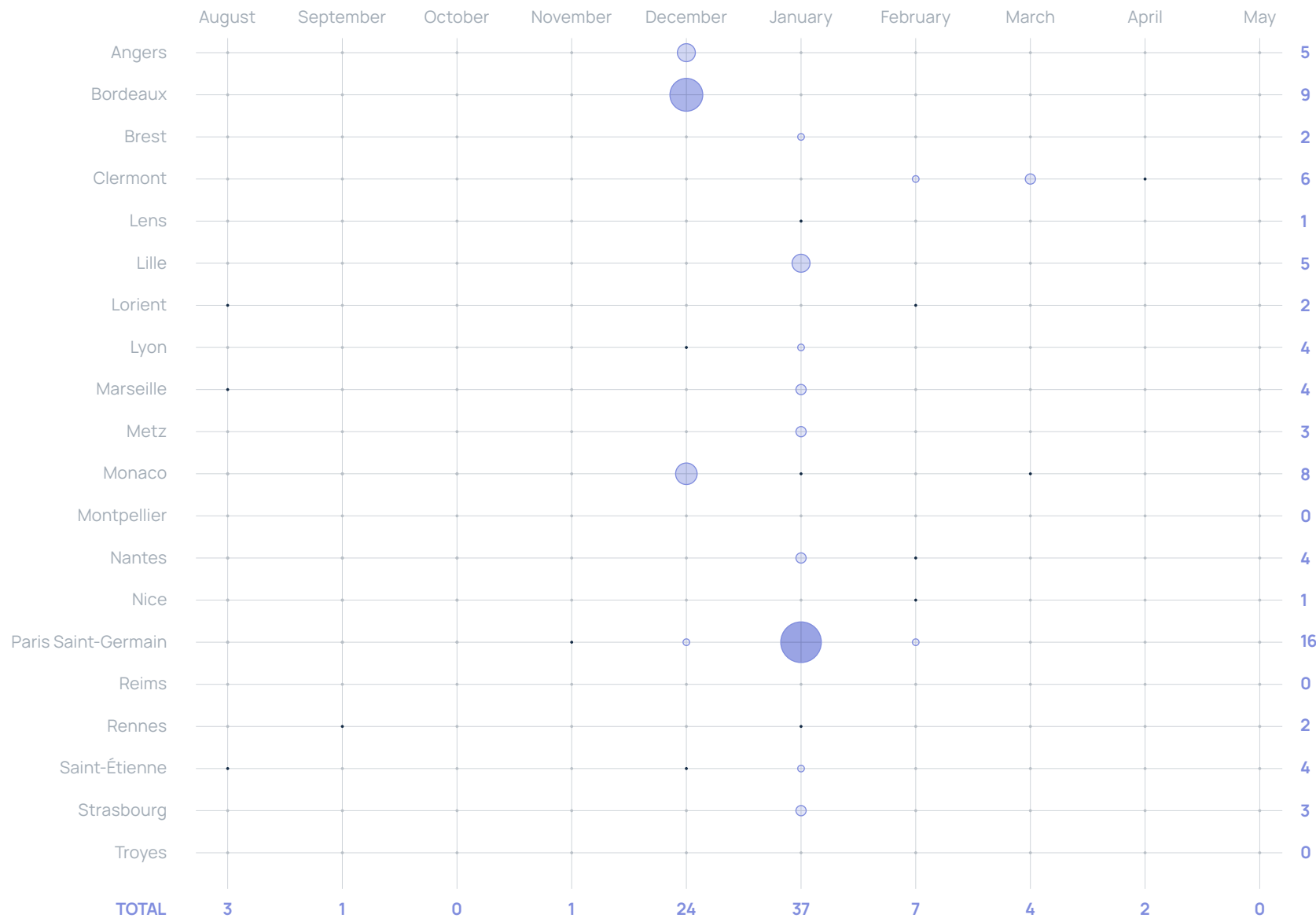
16

PSG SUFFERED 16 POSITIVE CASES, OF WHICH 11 WERE IN JANUARY. PLAYERS AFFECTED INCLUDED LIONEL MESSI AND JUAN BERNAT.

+

+

Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by club



Injuries by position

Injuries to Forwards again proved most expensive to clubs in Ligue 1 (€30.2m). This accounted for more than a third of the total injury cost for the league. Considering the number of high paid strikers in the league, this cannot come as a surprise.



Injury-prone problem

Forwards also proved to be relatively injury prone with 103 players suffering 201 injuries. A deeper dive into the numbers shows that PSG's Messi, Neymar and Mbappé were among those affected. This offers a strong explanation for the sizeable €150,000 cost per instance.

Despite this, Defenders incurred the highest number of injuries (228), a slight increase compared to the previous season (210). Absences in this position came at a total cost of €21.91m.

Although Defenders suffered the most injuries, they actually came at a joint-lowest average cost of injury alongside Goalkeepers (€100,000).

Goalkeepers suffered a high number of injuries (53) considering there are comparatively fewer players in this position. As these were 'shared' between 32 players, this points to a number of recurring injuries for the men between the sticks.

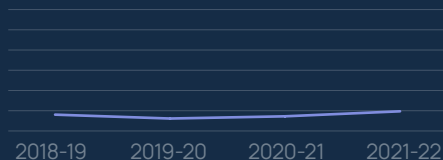
€150,000

INJURIES TO FORWARDS
CAME AT THE
HIGHEST AVERAGE
COST PER INSTANCE.



Goalkeepers

Total injuries over time



32

Total players with injury

20.85

Average injury severity (days)

53

Total injury instances

€0.10m

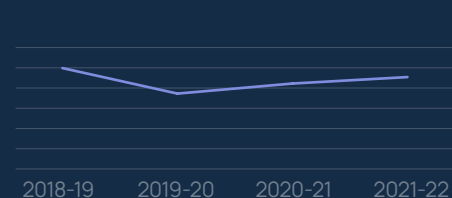
Average injury cost

€5.33m

Total injury cost



Defenders



124

Total players with injury

28.30

Average injury severity (days)

228

Total injury instances

€0.10m

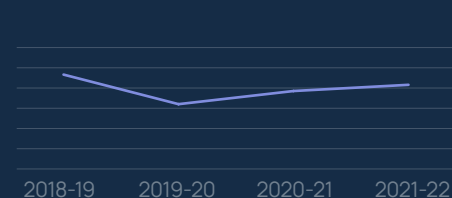
Average injury cost

€21.91m

Total injury cost



Midfielders



114

Total players with injury

23.89

Average injury severity (days)

209

Total injury instances

€0.11m

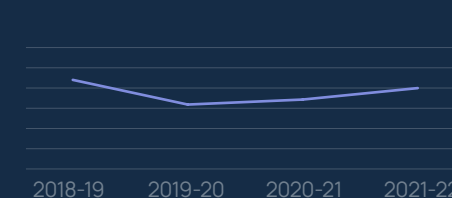
Average injury cost

€22.95m

Total injury cost



Forwards



103

Total players with injury

23.59

Average injury severity (days)

201

Total injury instances

€0.15m

Average injury cost

€30.20m

Total injury cost

Injuries by age

As with all of the top five European leagues, it was players aged 26-30 that incurred the most injuries. This age group accounted for 262 instances at a total cost of €38.32m, almost half the total cost for the league.

Age-old problems

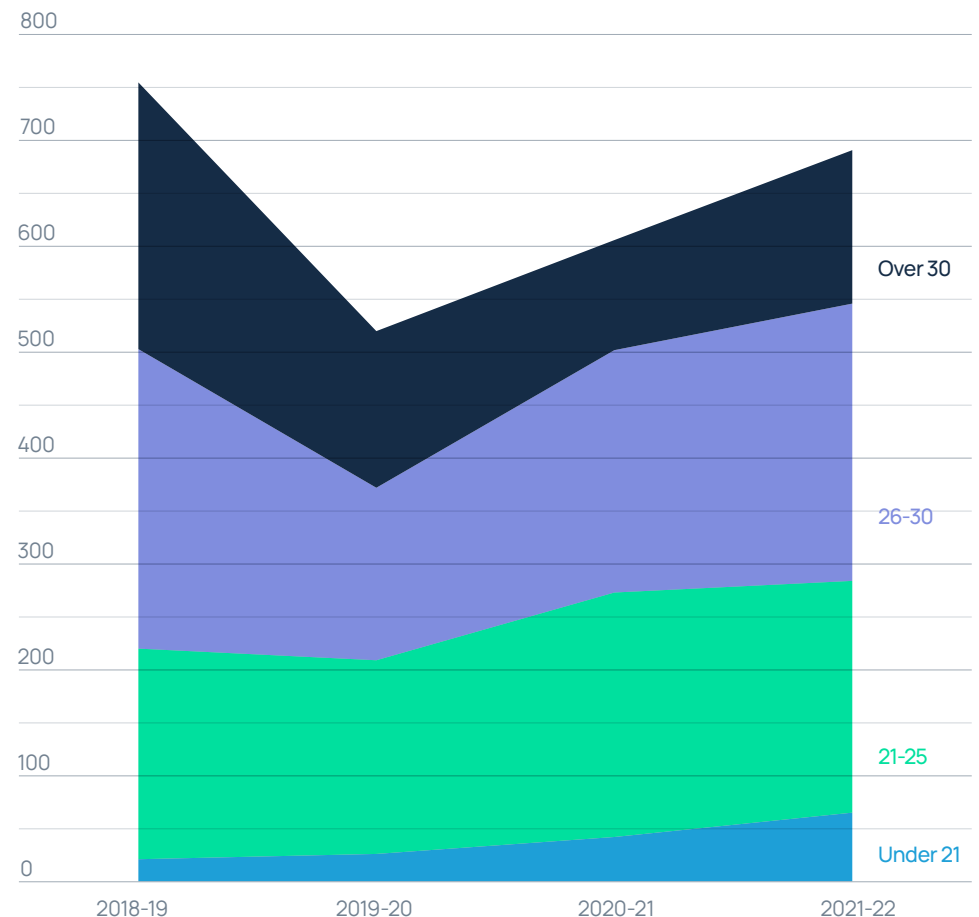
The numbers for 21-25 year olds are not far behind. Players in this age group recorded 219 injuries at a cost to clubs of €12.61m. This cost figure is markedly lower than that of the 26-30 year-olds.

The youngest age bracket (under 21s) accounted for 65 injuries – 9% of the total. A comparison over the last four seasons offers a thought-provoking point of analysis.

As with other European leagues, there has been an increased trend in the number of under 21 players that are used at the highest level. This can be seen when analysing the injury numbers for this age group in France over the last four years (21, 26, 42, 65). This increased workload is also reflected in the highest injury severity level (34 days).

In contrast, the 21-25 age group has seen a decline in absences (231 in the previous year). Despite recording 74 more instances, these came at a lower cost (€12.61m) than player absences in the over 30s category (€27.89m).

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

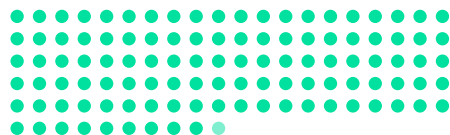


21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

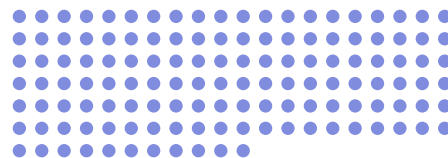


26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Scale is 1:2

Each dot represents: 2 players injured;
2 days out through injury; €2m injury cost

Serie A

A.C. MILAN
ATALANTA
BOLOGNA
CAGLIARI
EMPOLI
FIORENTINA
GENOA
INTER
JUVENTUS
LAZIO
NAPOLI
ROMA
SALERNITANA
SAMPDORIA
SASSUOLO
SPEZIA
TORINO
UDINESE
VENEZIA
VERONA

Introduction

Following the national team's victory in the delayed European Championships, the 2021/22 Serie A season sprung somewhat of a surprise. A.C. Milan ended their long wait for the Scudetto, pipping city rivals and defending champions Inter on the final day of the season. A run of four straight wins was not enough for the holders to retain their crown. Atalanta came into the season as dark horses but an 8th place finish proves there is still work to do.

A year of comebacks

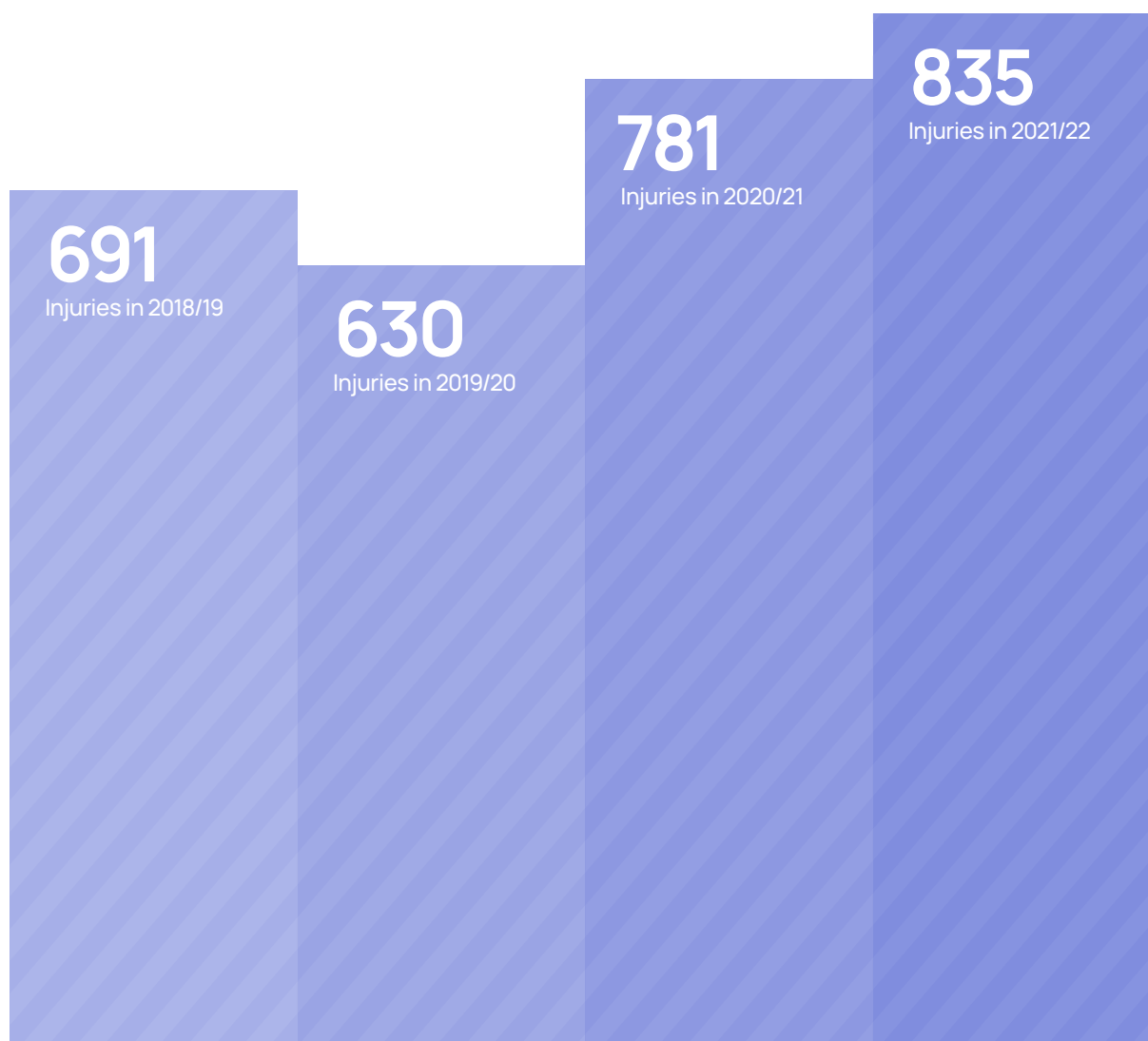
The return of serial winner Massimiliano Allegri at Juventus was not enough to mount a serious challenge. Napoli proved to be the proverbial joker in the pack splitting the Old Lady and the Milan-based sides.

Fiorentina were tipped by many to struggle again but the introduction of Vincenzo Italiano proved to be a masterstroke. The German guided his new team back into Europe and amassed a considerable 22 more points compared to the previous campaign.

Elsewhere, newly promoted Venezia were relegated at the first time of asking. A relegation that put an end to the rapid rise of a club that was in Serie D only five years prior.

The final word goes to survival expert Davide Nicola. Having already saved four teams from relegation in his managerial career to date, the Italian demonstrated his worth once again. Salernitana appointed the Italian in February 2022 and it proved decisive. With just three wins up to that point, Davide Nicola achieved what seemed to be the impossible.

Yearly trend of injuries



The 2021/22 Serie A season saw a 7% increase in injuries (835) compared to the season before (781). This increase follows the trend of the last few years. These absences came at a combined cost of €97.82m in salaries, an increase of nearly £15m on the previous season.

Players in the Italian top-flight have suffered a combined 2937 injuries over the last four years, at an average of 734 per season. This combined figure is 289 injuries less than the English Premier League over the same period.

Remarkably, these 835 injuries affected only 410 Serie A players, meaning that there were a high number of persistent injuries across the league. Does this point to the need for better management of player workload?

Club analysis

Champions A.C. Milan overcame the joint third highest injury count with Cagliari (55) but it was a different story for latter who were relegated to Serie B.



Juventus led the way in terms of injury count, suffering from 88 injuries at a cost of €22.6m. Injuries to key players Bonucci and Dybala were certainly a contributing factor to their disappointing fourth place finish.

Defending champions Inter sustained 38 absences over the course of the season at a cost of €6.09m (which was the ninth lowest in the league), 10 less than last season – and they were unable to capitalise and retain the title. Compare this to Salernitana (49 injuries, €1.95m) and it makes their final day survival even more impressive.

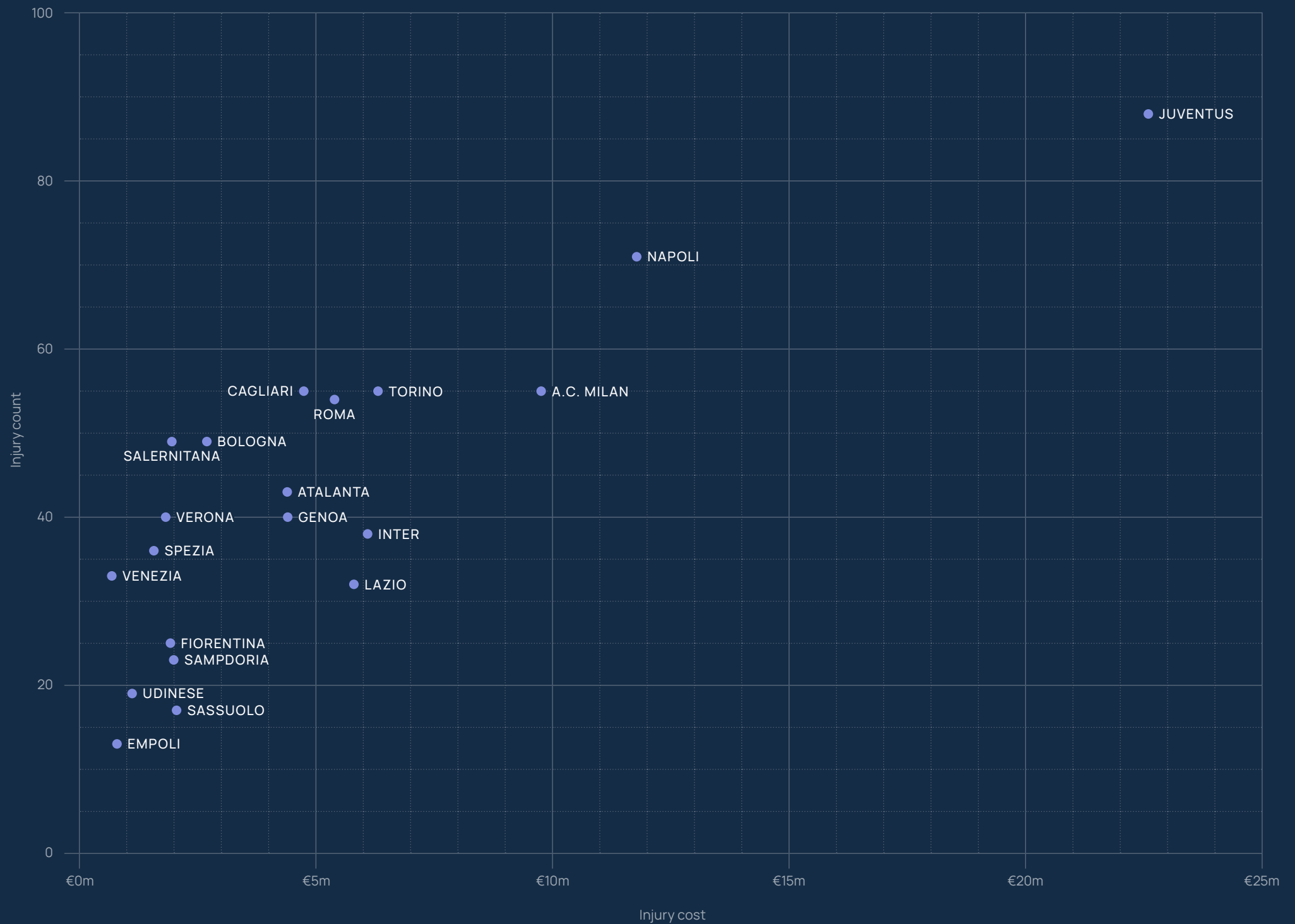
At the bottom end of the injury table were Empoli (13), Sassuolo (17) and Udinese (19). Sassuolo taking the crown for the highest cost of injury of the three clubs at €2.05m (an average of €120,000 per instance).

Lazio also suffered injuries to key players Immobile and Zaccagni, which helps explain their high average injury cost of €180,000. This seems to have had a minimal impact on what was a successful season for Maurizio Sarri's men.

Torino managed to defy their high injury count (55) and achieve a remarkable turnaround on the previous season. In his first season at the club, Ivan Jurić led them to a tenth placed finish.

→ The adjacent matrix illustrates the relationship between the injury cost and injury count of all teams in Serie A.

Juventus incurred injury costs of €22.60m, more than double that of eventual league winners **A.C. Milan**.



Analysing the share of injury cost across the league provides an insight into the financial dynamics within Serie A.

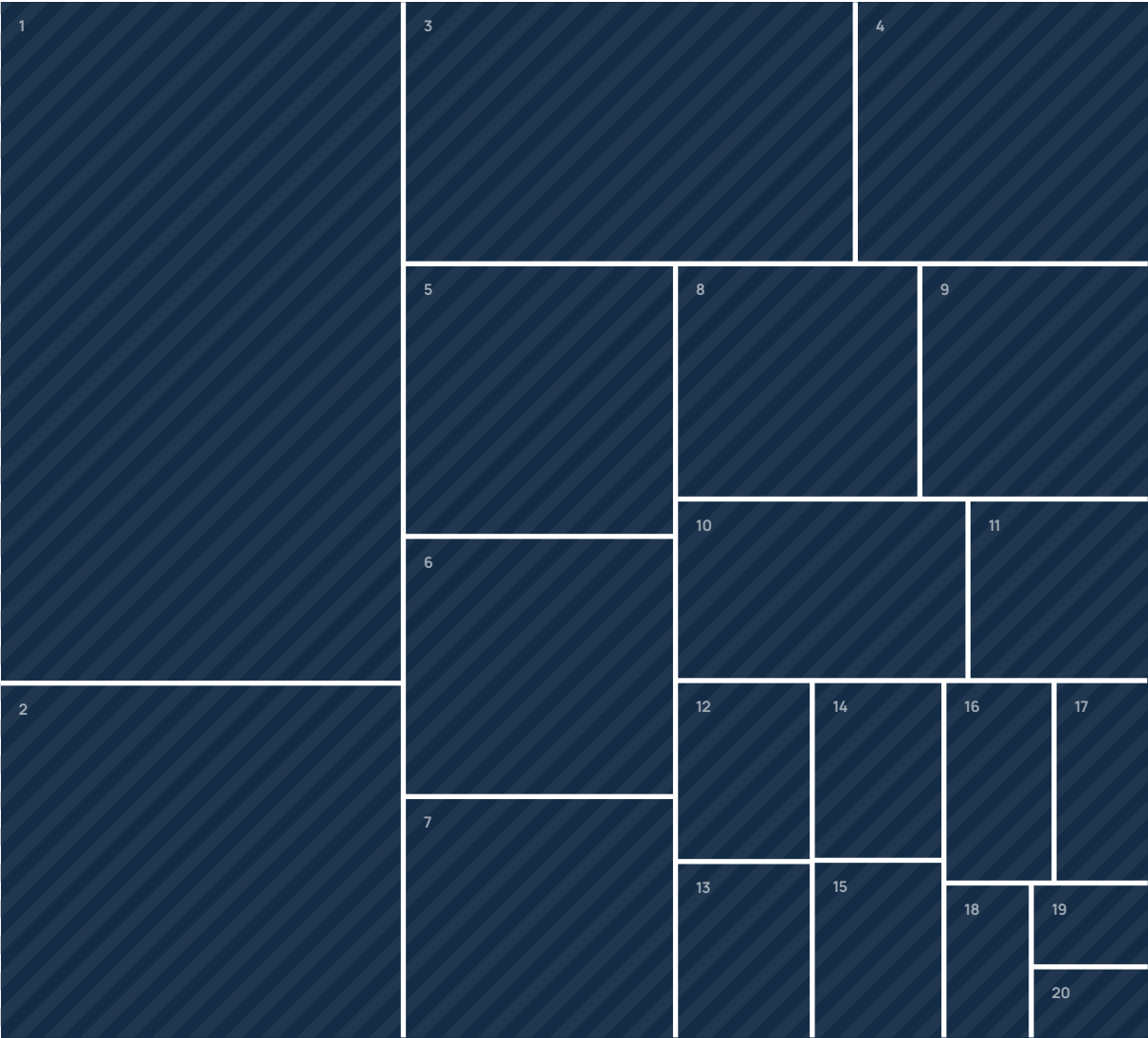
Juventus' league-high injury cost accounts for 23% of the entire league and an even more striking 30% of the overall total for the top 10.

Sticking with the top 10, these clubs suffered 501 injuries (€75.85m). Compare this to those in the bottom half (334, €21.97m) and a familiar pattern emerges.

The three relegated teams account for 10% of the total cost of absence – less than third place Napoli (12%).

TEAM	TOTAL INJURY COST	SHARE OF INJURY COST
1 JUVENTUS	€22.60M	23.10%
2 NAPOLI	€11.78M	12.04%
3 A.C. MILAN	€9.76M	9.98%
4 TORINO	€6.31M	6.45%
5 INTER	€6.09M	6.22%
6 LAZIO	€5.80M	5.93%
7 ROMA	€5.39M	5.51%
8 CAGLIARI	€4.74M	4.84%
9 GENOA	€4.40M	4.50%
10 ATALANTA	€4.39M	4.49%
11 BOLOGNA	€2.69M	2.75%
12 SASSUOLO	€2.05M	2.10%
13 SAMPDORIA	€1.99M	2.03%
14 SALERNITANA	€1.95M	2.00%
15 FIORENTINA	€1.92M	1.96%
16 VERONA	€1.82M	1.86%
17 SPEZIA	€1.57M	1.60%
18 UDINESE	€1.11M	1.14%
19 EMPOLI	€0.79M	0.81%
20 VENEZIA	€0.68M	0.70%

Share of injury cost



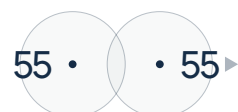
The top 5



A.C. Milan

20/21 21/22

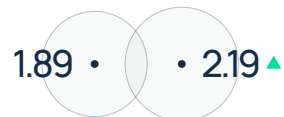
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



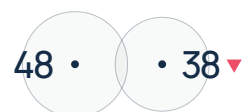
Points



Inter

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Napoli

20/21 21/22

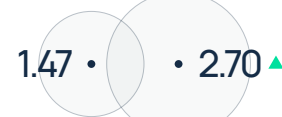
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Juventus

20/21 21/22

Total injury instances



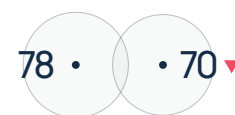
Total days out



Average unavailable players



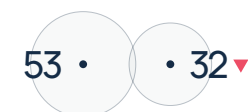
Points



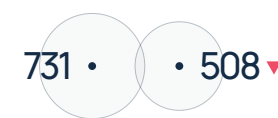
Lazio

20/21 21/22

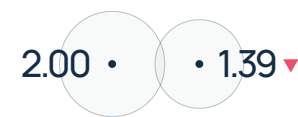
Total injury instances



Total days out



Average unavailable players



Points



Injuries by month

Despite low injury levels in August (31), there were a combined 340 injuries in opening four months of the season. These injuries came to a total cost of €50.51m.

August vs. May

August and May saw the lowest levels of injury. The majority of players hit the ground running and were also able to successfully navigate the final weeks of the season. A different picture arises when we look at the injury costs of both months.

With a combined 52 injuries in August (31) and May (21), we would expect a similar story in terms of cost to clubs. The month of August (€11.24m) saw almost ten times the injury cost of May (€1.15m) but why was this? Injuries to Alexis Sánchez (Inter) and Dries Mertens (Napoli) certainly played their part.

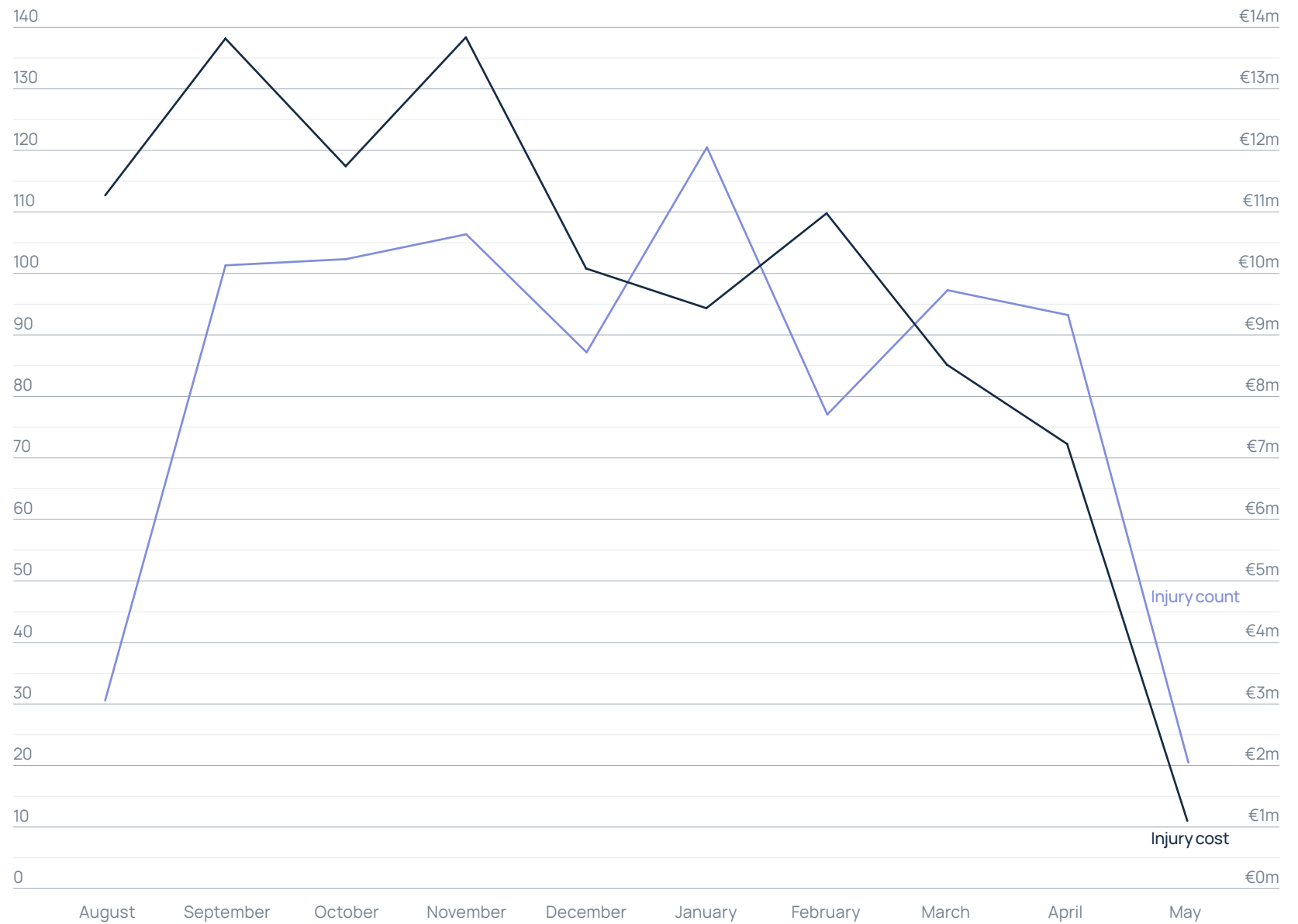
We also note that January saw the highest number of injuries (120). Upon review of the data, we see that Covid-19 cases in the league increased but if we exclude positive cases, overall absence numbers actually fell. With 67 non Covid-19 related absences in December 2021, January 2022 saw a decline (51), proving a positive impact of the winter break – albeit only in the short term.

Despite this decline, non Covid-19 absences rose once again in February (72).

10X

THE MONTH OF AUGUST (€11.24M)
SAW ALMOST TEN TIMES THE INJURY
COST OF MAY (€1.15M).

Injury cost & count totals by month



Injuries by type

Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, it was Muscle injuries that claimed the biggest share of injuries in Serie A. Muscle injuries affected 150 players with 185 recorded instances. These also proved to be the most expensive injury type with clubs paying out €23.54m in wages – an average of €130,000 per instance.

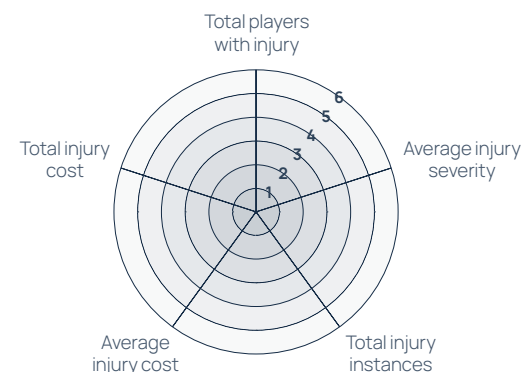
Injury comparison

An interesting comparison can be drawn when looking at Calf/Shin and Ankle injuries. These types affected the same number of players (50) with a marginal difference in overall instances (59 vs. 51). However, they come at a varying cost, €9.27m vs. €4.24m. We can go one-step further and see that Calf/Shin injuries cost double on average (€160,000). This is because both Zlatan Ibrahimović (A.C. Milan) and Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus) suffered with this type of injury.

Foot injuries took the title of most severe with an average absence of 38 days. This involved 12 players and 13 injuries. These also came at a high average injury cost of just over a quarter of a million euros (€260,000), more than double the average cost of injury absence across the league (€120,000).

Manuel Locatelli and Weston McKennie (Juventus) suffered Ligament injuries, contributing to the highest average cost of injury (€400,000). As this only affected three players, the total cost of injury is understandably low (€1.19m).

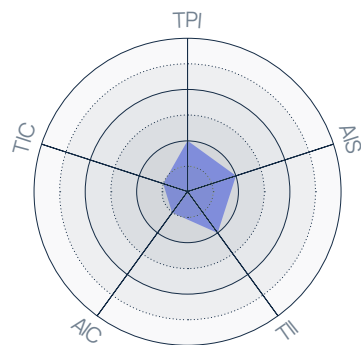
Thigh/Hip injuries also caused issues throughout the season for 46 players at a total cost of €5.67m.



All the data for each injury group has been benchmarked and given a score from 1-6. The highest figures across the categories are marked with 1



Ankle



50

Total players with injury

14.47

Average injury severity (days)

51

Total injury instances

€0.08m

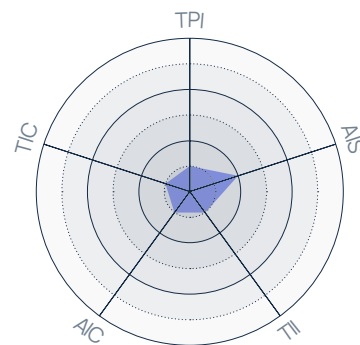
Average injury cost

€4.24m

Total injury cost



Back



13

Total players with injury

15.53

Average injury severity (days)

15

Total injury instances

€0.07m

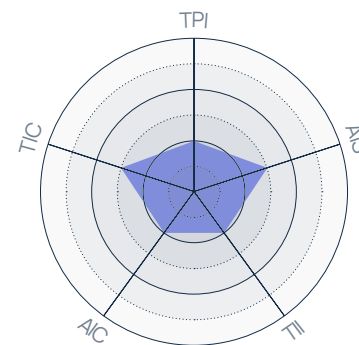
Average injury cost

€1.08m

Total injury cost



Calf/Shin



50

Total players with injury

19.19

Average injury severity (days)

59

Total injury instances

€0.16m

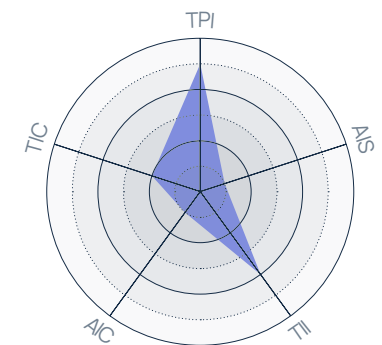
Average injury cost

€9.27m

Total injury cost



Covid-19



115

Total players with injury

9.72

Average injury severity (days)

120

Total injury instances

€0.06m

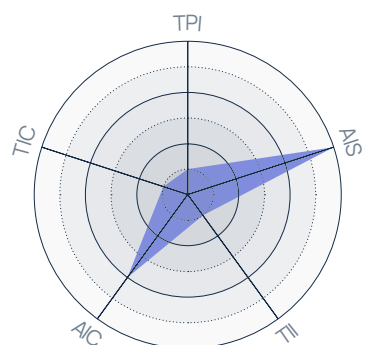
Average injury cost

€7.28m

Total injury cost



Foot



12

Total players with injury

37.85

Average injury severity (days)

1

13

Total injury instances

€0.26m

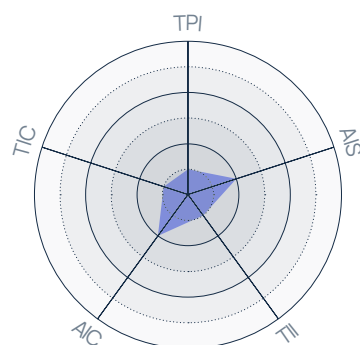
Average injury cost

€3.40m

Total injury cost



Groin



20

Total players with injury

17.05

Average injury severity (days)

21

Total injury instances

€0.13m

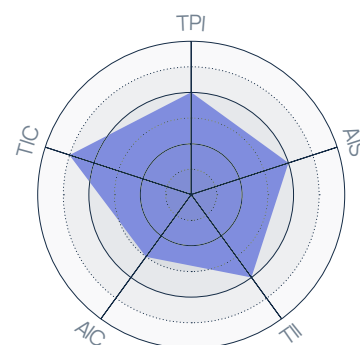
Average injury cost

€2.82m

Total injury cost



Hamstring



85

Total players with injury

27.42

Average injury severity (days)

101

Total injury instances

€0.17m

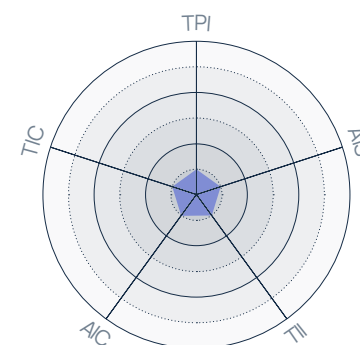
Average injury cost

€17.34m

Total injury cost



Head/Concussion



14

Total players with injury

6.68

Average injury severity (days)

14

Total injury instances

€0.06m

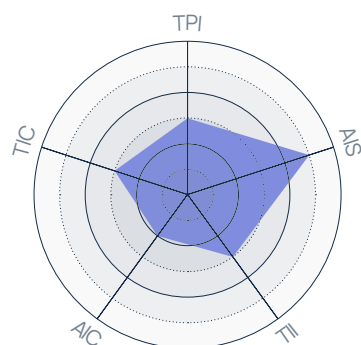
Average injury cost

€0.88m

Total injury cost



Knee



60

Total players with injury

29.86

Average injury severity (days)

72

Total injury instances

€0.14m

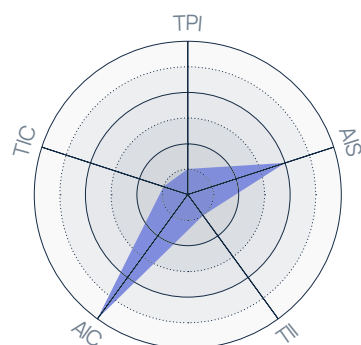
Average injury cost

€10.21m

Total injury cost



Ligament



3

Total players with injury

23.33

Average injury severity (days)

3

Total injury instances

€0.40m

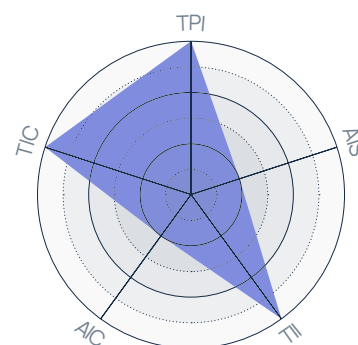
Average injury cost

€1.19m

Total injury cost



Muscle



150

Total players with injury

15.19

Average injury severity (days)

185

Total injury instances

€0.13m

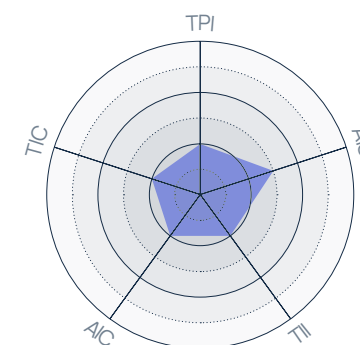
Average injury cost

€23.54m

Total injury cost



Thigh/Hip



46

Total players with injury

17.36

Average injury severity (days)

47

Total injury instances

€0.12m

Average injury cost

€5.67m

Total injury cost

Covid-19 cases by club

Despite its undoubted impact across all leagues, Covid-19 was not the most common cause of absence in Serie A. It did however result in the absence of over 100 players.

It was January 2022 that saw the most reported Covid-19 cases (69). Combine this with the numbers the month prior (20) and this accounts for 74% of the total cases. This does not come as a surprise when we consider that the Omicron wave hit the country during this time.

Lessening effect of Covid-19

Overall, the cost of Covid-19 absence to clubs over the course of the season was €7.28m (less than half that of the previous season). Napoli were the club most impacted by Covid-19 with 18 positive cases. This undoubtedly had an effect on their title challenge. Cagliari were close behind (16) with January being their worst month and their season ultimately ended in relegation.

18

NAPOLI WERE MOST
IMPACTED BY COVID-19
WITH 18 POSITIVE CASES.



Breakdown of Covid-19 infections by club



Injuries by position

Midfielders had the misfortune of topping the injury severity table in the 2021/22 Serie A season. Players missed on average 21 days per injury.

The men in the middle of the park suffered a number of recurring injuries. Overall injuries to these players also proved to be the most expensive in comparison to other positions (€40.7m). These came at an average cost of €130,000, which was in fact lower than that of Forwards (€150,000).

97 forwards were sidelined due to injury last season, costing clubs a total of €29.43m in paid salaries. This represents a similar figure when compared to last year (96 players, 203 injuries at a cost of €31.34m).

Considering that overall injury cost has risen compared to the previous season, it is interesting to note that the distribution of these injuries has remained broadly similar.

Players in defensive positions saw 276 instances of injury and illness over the course of the season. The back four accounted for 77 fewer injuries than their teammates at the top end of the pitch.

97

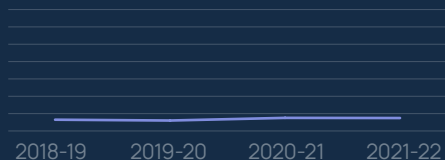
97 FORWARDS WERE SIDELINED DUE TO INJURY LAST SEASON, COSTING CLUBS A TOTAL OF €29.43M IN PAID SALARIES.





Goalkeepers

Total injuries over time



28

Total players with injury

16.93

Average injury severity (days)

42

Total injury instances

€0.06m

Average injury cost

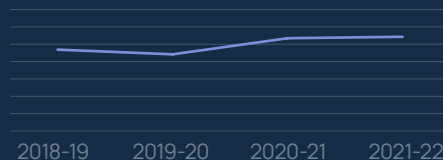
€2.53m

Total injury cost



Defenders

Total injuries over time



136

Total players with injury

15.47

Average injury severity (days)

276

Total injury instances

€0.09m

Average injury cost

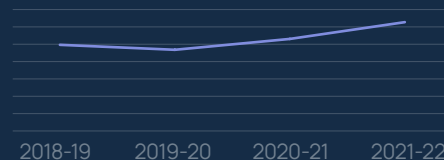
€25.16m

Total injury cost



Midfielders

Total injuries over time



149

Total players with injury

20.66

Average injury severity (days)

318

Total injury instances

€0.13m

Average injury cost

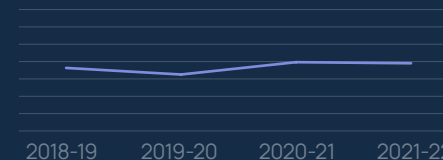
€40.70m

Total injury cost



Forwards

Total injuries over time



97

Total players with injury

17.83

Average injury severity (days)

199

Total injury instances

€0.15m

Average injury cost

€29.43m

Total injury cost

Injuries by age

The 26-30 age group suffered the most in the Italian top flight with 314 injuries at a cost of €43.45m. This accounted for 38% of all injuries.

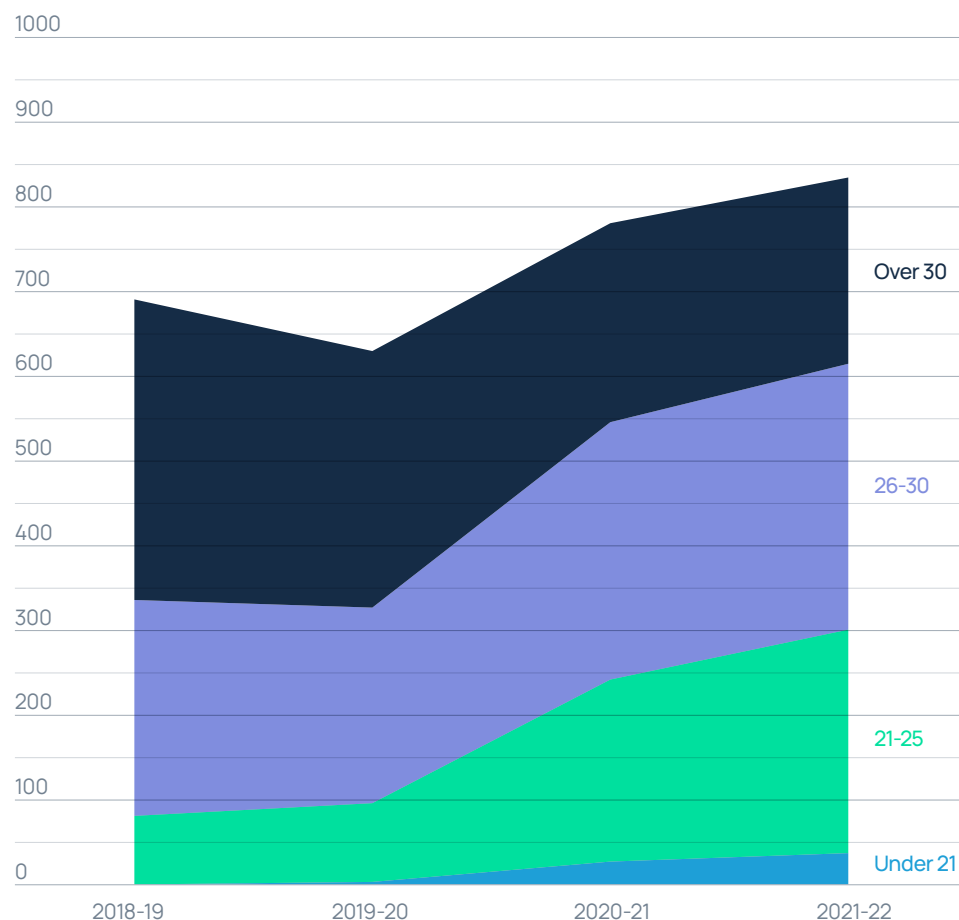
150 players aged 26-30 were sidelined for an average of 19 days. Overall injury severity remained extremely consistent across all age groups but it was the oldest age group that registered the lowest average days out (15).

Sticking with the over 30s, we can see that there has been a clear pattern of decline over the past four seasons (355, 303, 235, 220). This perhaps points to the fact that domestic Italian clubs are better equipped at managing workloads for this particular age group.

The 21-25 age group suffered the second most injuries (264) but these came at a relatively low total cost (€20.86m).

An analysis of injuries to the under 21 age group offers another interesting area of analysis. From no recorded injuries in 2018/19, there were 37 last season – 4% of the overall total for 2021/22. This follows the overwhelming trend across Europe and points to younger players being exposed to more and more first-team football.

Historic share of injuries between age groups



Under 21

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Scale is 1:2

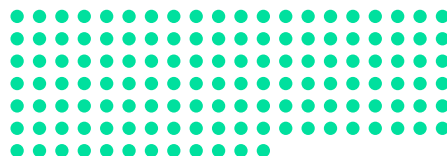
Each dot represents: 2 players injured;
2 days out through injury; €2m injury cost

21-25

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost

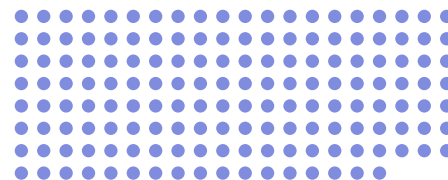


26-30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Over 30

Total players injured



Total injury instances



Average injury severity



Total injury cost



Independent broker, international focus

Howden Sport & Entertainment is a team of experts drawn from around the world with the sole focus of providing and delivering independent risk and insurance solutions to our clients operating in the sport and entertainment sector.

Capability & experience

Over the last 20 years our team have been appointed to design and place Player Personal Accident programmes for a broad range of clubs competing in the most prestigious leagues around Europe (including La Liga, The Bundesliga, The English Premier League, Serie A and Ligue 1). We also advise hundreds of players globally in respect of their individual Personal Accident requirements.

In addition to our work for clubs and players, we have also advised a wide range of clients from across the world of football including:



International
Governing Bodies



Leagues



National, Regional
and International
Tournaments



National Football
Associations



Broadcasters



Stadia and Venues



Whatever your risk and insurance challenges, we'll know the score.

Big game specialists

From international and national associations to leagues, professional clubs and individual players we have developed deep experience and understanding of the risks faced by clients operating in the unpredictable and challenging environment of professional football.

Going the distance

Our experience and understanding combined with our technical expertise, commitment to client and insurer relationships and industry leading, in house claims service, means that we are able to deliver on all aspects of your insurance and risk management needs.

Leading by example

We are a team of fiercely independent, entrepreneurial self-starters who use our experience and a deep technical understanding of the sector to deliver the best outcome for our clients. We pride ourselves on agility when it comes service and solutions. You can count on us to be there when it matters.

Someone to rely on, worldwide

Our local teams and leaders are experts in their field, who know their markets inside-out. So wherever they are in the world, our clients receive a personal service, backed by a global network of industry specialists.

\$14.5bn

Premium into international markets

90+ 10,000+

Territories Howden people

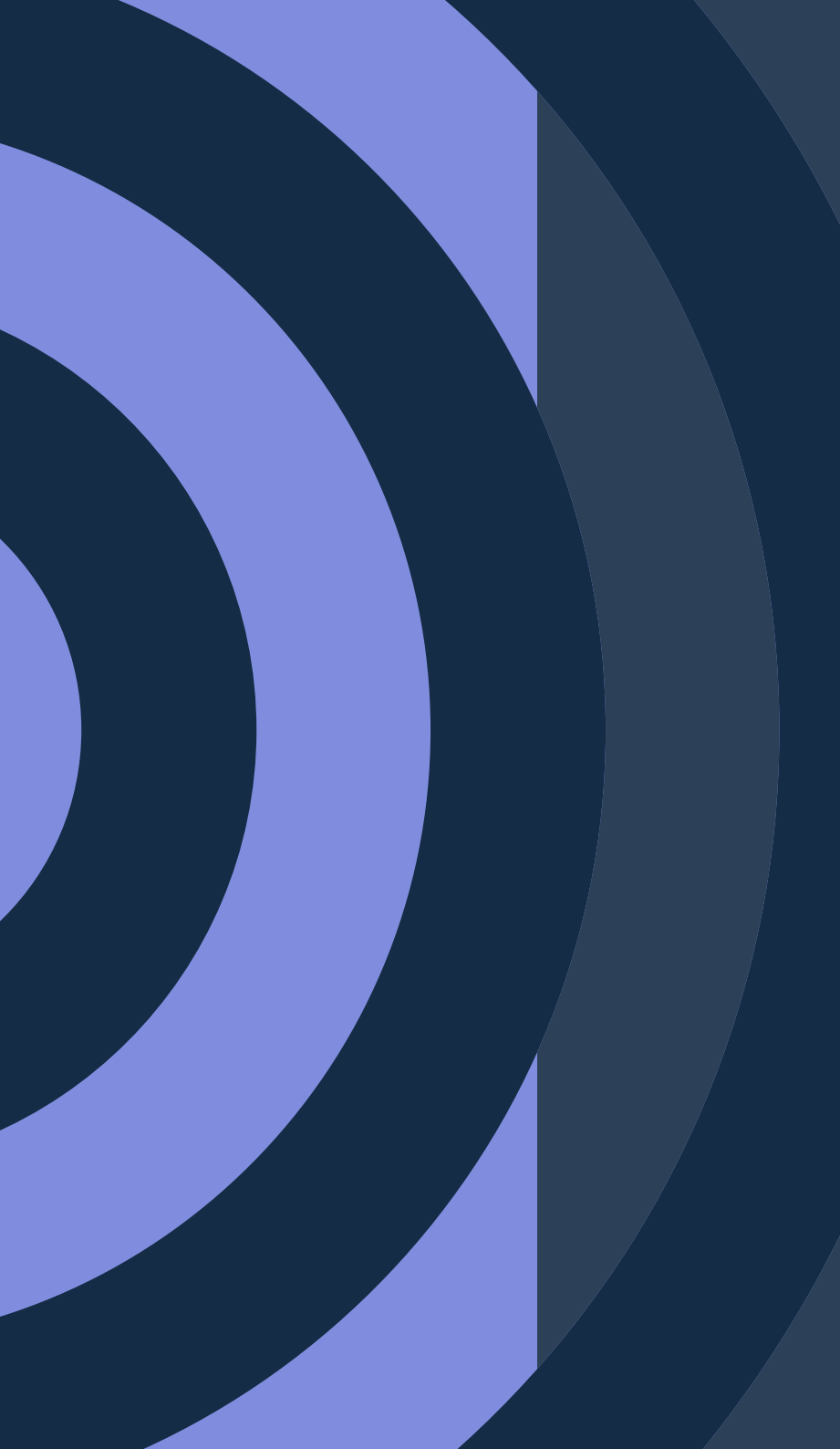
● Howden territories

● Howden One partners territories

Howden One increases our reach to over 90 territories and 20,000 professionals.

● Headquarters





Our principles help us stand out, while driving us to always try harder for our clients:

01

People first

We have seen time and time again that when we give our teams the space to perform and the support to grow, our clients reap the rewards.

02

Proudly independent

Our independence lets us move fast while making decisions for the long-term. It gives us the freedom to deliver for our clients, grow our base of employee shareholders, and stay true to ourselves.

03

Expertise and technology

Risks are getting more complex every day. But our investment in technology allows us to make data-driven decisions, and our specialist teams have the global resources to handle even the most challenging risks.

04

Committed to simplicity

Our business is run by brokers focused on getting the right expert in the room with our clients. We get out of our own way to provide an experience free of needless complexity – just the advice you need in a language you understand.

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