



Why do Active Referees keep Refereeing Hockey?

Wpgrefs.com hosted a survey between October 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019 asking Referees why they returned to Refereeing each season. During these three months 48 active Referees responded. There were 3 first-year Referees, 14 with 1-3 years of experience, 14 with 4-6 years, and 17 with 7+ years of experience.

This report focuses on two questions:

- Question 1: What is the main reason you started Refereeing Hockey?
 - Does this differ depending on level of experience?
- Question 2: What is the main reason you return to Refereeing hockey each season?
 - Does this differ depending on level of experience?

The two questions were purposefully open ended to provide respondents with the opportunity to provide varied answers rather than selecting from a series of pre-selected answers. The answers were coded into categories based on similarities to other participants' answers resulting in 16 categories for both question 1 and question 2. Both questions had 15 very similar categories with one special category each; reason to start (question 1) had "I hated playing" (1 response) and the reason to keep Refereeing had "I do not know" (2 responses).

Finally, all survey participants were included in all results except for the three first year officials, who were did not have responses for "What is the main reason you return to Refereeing hockey each season?" because they have, by definition, never returned to Refereeing.

Results Part 1: Why do Referees Start and Keep Refereeing Hockey?

The two charts illustrating the responses for Results Part 1 are on page 2. Chart 1 illustrates the reasons Referees gave for why they started Refereeing hockey. The top three reasons to start Refereeing were: "make money", "passion for the game" and "stay involved after no longer playing or coaching". Also note that "it looked like fun" was a bottom 6 reason for reasons to start while "improve knowledge of the game" was in the top 4.

Chart 2 summarizes the reasons that Referees gave for continuing to Referee with the top three being: "it is fun", "make money", and "passion for the game". "Improve knowledge of the game" was not a top reason to keep Refereeing but was a top reason to start. "Fun" jumped from the bottom half of reasons to start to the #1 reason to keep Refereeing.

Chart 1: Reasons for Starting to Referee Hockey

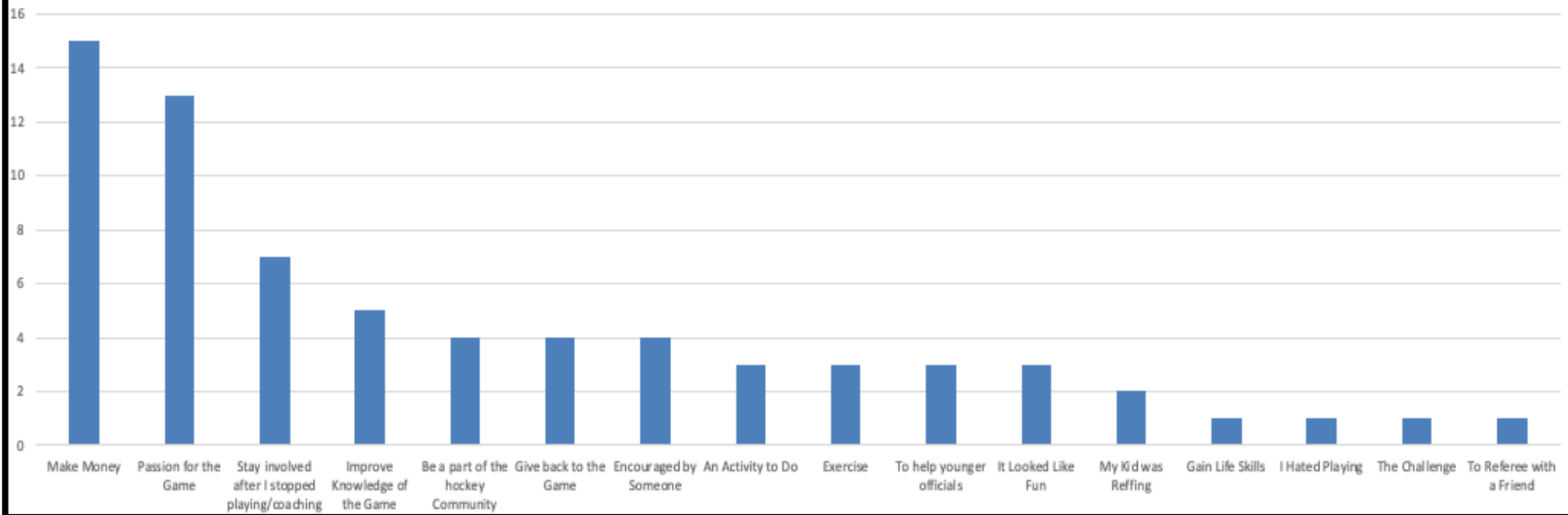
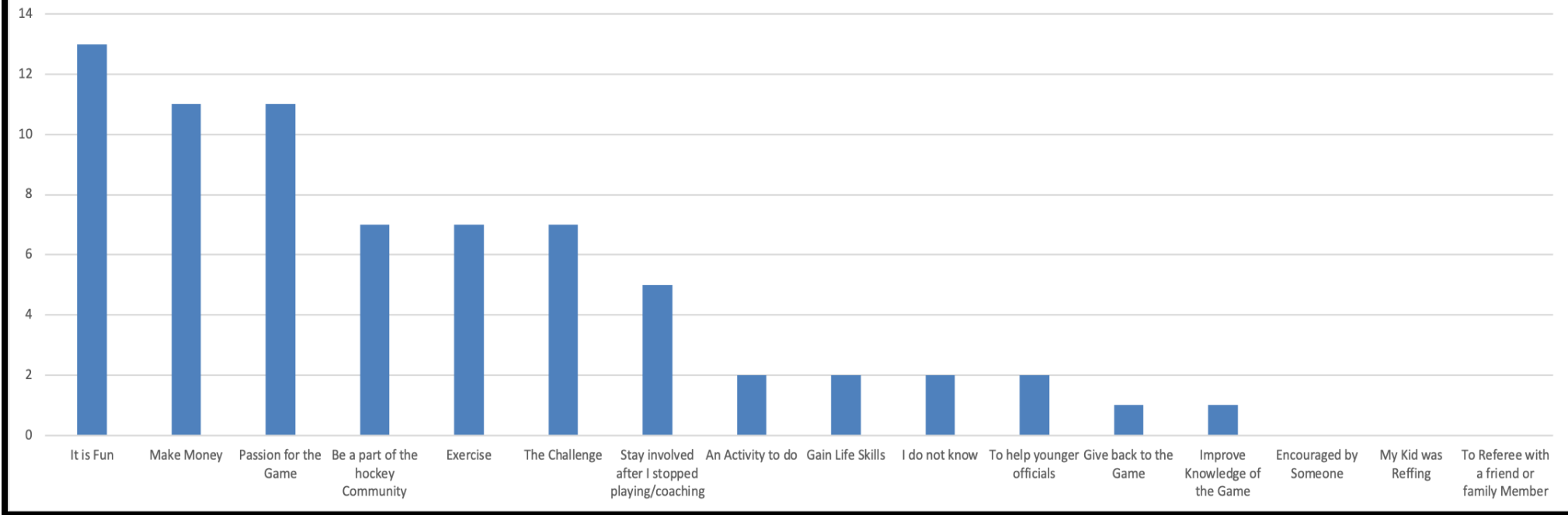


Chart 2: Overall Number of Referees that Identified each Category as the Reason They Keep Refereeing



Results Part 2: Does Experience effect the Reasons for Starting and Continuing to Referee Hockey?

Chart 3 (on this page) and Chart 4 (on page 4) illustrated how many Referees identified each category for starting and continuing to Referee, just as Chart 1 and Chart 2. However, Charts 3 and 4 have separated the responses in years of experience, as noted at the bottom of each chart, using the colors blue (less than 3 years of experience), red (4-6 years) and green (7+ years).

Chart 3 shows that “make money” was selected more by Referees with 0-3 seasons of experience more than either other experience group. Otherwise, for the top 3 reasons to start Refereeing, there was little variation between the different experience groups.

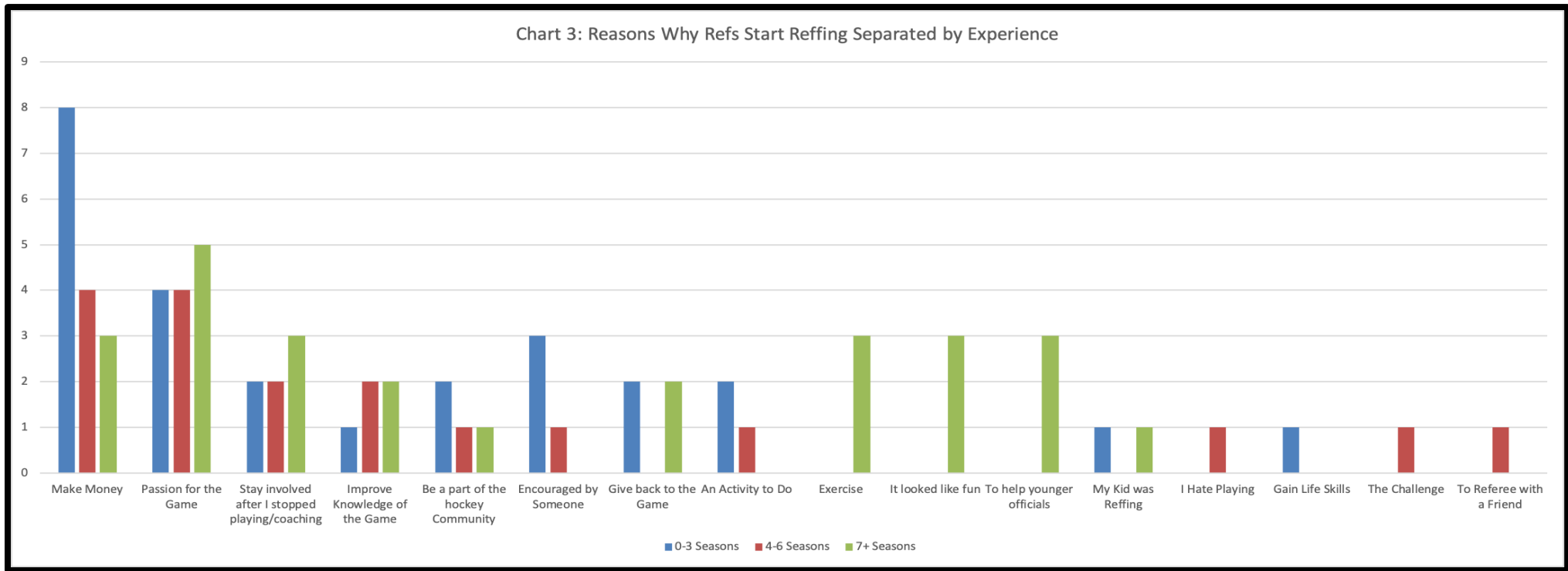
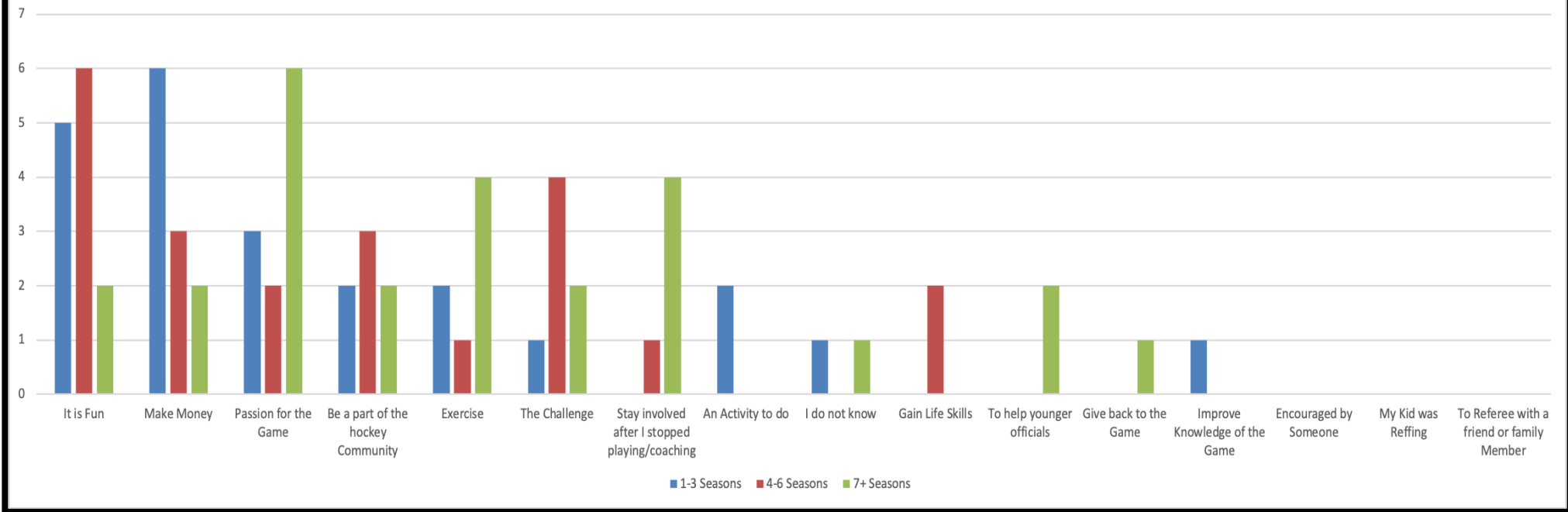


Chart 4 (on page 4) shows reasons to keep Refereeing divided by experience. Just as in chart 1 (reasons to start), “make money” is more likely selected by the least experienced group than either of the other two. “It is fun” was unlikely to be selected by the most experienced group, however, this group was likely to select “passion for the game” and “exercise” as reasons to continue compared to the other two experience groups.

Chart 4: Reasons to Keep Refereeing Divided By Experience



Summary of Results

- Question 1: Why do Referees start and keep Refereeing Hockey?
 - “Fun” is not an important factor to Referees starting to Referee (bottom 6 of reasons to start). However, “fun” is the #1 reason why Referees keep Refereeing.
 - “Money” is in the top 3 for both starting and continuing to Referee. However, “money” is more important for why Referees start than why they keep Refereeing. Evidence: 15/44 (34%) of all top 5 responses identify “money” as a reason to start. In comparison, only 11/48 (23%) of all top 5 responses for why Referees continue identify “money”.
 - Building on Answer 2, community-type options (i.e. “passion for the game”, “stay involved”, “the hockey community”, and “the challenge”) were overall more important reasons to start and continue than “money”.
 - The overall reasons to start were similar, but not the same, as the reasons to keep Refereeing. The top 3 of starting or continuing both included “passion for the game” and “make money”. However, “stay involved” was a top 3 reason to

start, but not a top three reason to continue. Instead, “it is fun” replaced “stay involved” as a top 3 reason to continue.

- Question 2: Does experience effect the Reasons for starting and continuing to Referee hockey?
 - There are clear differences between groups. For example, 0-3 year Referees are more likely than more experienced Referees to identify “making money” as a reason to start and a reason to keep Refereeing.
 - Focusing on the top 3 reasons to keep Refereeing:
 - “It is fun” was select most by 1-3 year and 4-6 year Referees but not by 7+ year referees.
 - “Make Money” was favored by the Referees with 1-3 years of experience compared to other groups, just as with reasons to start Refereeing.
 - The most experienced group (7+ years) selected “passion for the game” more than the Referees with 1-3 years or 4-6 years of experience.

Conclusions

- Conclusion 1: Referees who start Refereeing for reasons other than money are more likely to Referee longer. The evidence for this is found in Chart 4 for “make money” where there is a definite drop in the number of Referees who identify “make money” as a reason to keep Refereeing as they gain more experience. Those Referees who do not identify “money as a main reason they Referee may stay with the job longer than those who do select money as a reason they start.
- Conclusion 2: “It is fun” is more important for why Referees keep Refereeing than “it looks like fun” is for why they start. This suggests that administrators could focus on community building and team building as one strategy to increase retention.
- Conclusion 3: “Passion for the game” was a top 3 reason why Referees start and keep Refereeing. This suggests that there is an intrinsic value to Refereeing for Referees that are less likely to quit.

Research Limitations

There are three main limitations that may yield further research.

- There were only 3 first year Referees. Therefore, this group was underrepresented.
- The sample was heavily focused on minor hockey Referees. What about junior and senior Referees?
- Referees in this sample were asked to remember the reason they started. How would their responses change if they were followed over several years answering similar questions as this research?