

**2022**

# **UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2022 WORKLOAD JOURNEY REPORT**



**FIFPRO PLAYER WORKLOAD MONITORING**

—  
2022 PWM Flash Report - Women's football report

# 01 ABOUT

## FIFPRO PLAYER WORKLOAD MONITORING (PWM) PLATFORM


Launched in early 2021, the FIFPRO PWM platform is a digital tool tracking the workload status of professional football players from around the world.

FIFPRO PWM is a player-centric, match scheduling and workload monitoring, platform developed and operated jointly by FIFPRO and Football Benchmark. It is part of FIFPRO Player IQ Hub, a player-focused knowledge centre that aims to help shape decisions in the football industry to protect and improve the careers and working lives of footballers.

FIFPRO PWM combines world-leading scientific knowledge with data insights to monitor player workload and match scheduling across different competitions. The platform is an analytics tool that will enable better decisions to be made in relation to future competitive

scheduling, making competitions more sustainable and putting players' health, careers, and performance first. The rich database held within FIFPRO PWM's continuously evolving platform is the source of the analysis presented within this report on women's football.

The FIFPRO PWM platform currently has over 60,000 match appearances on record, covering 85 female and 270 male professional footballer's workload journeys since 2018.

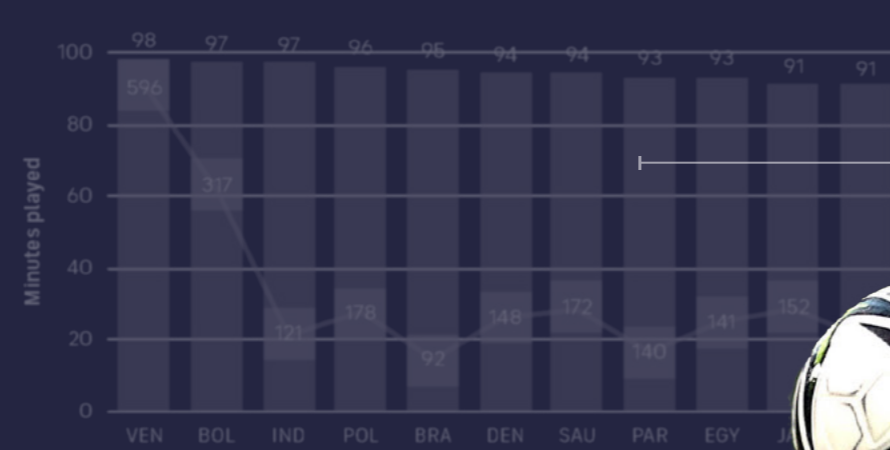
 **The FIFPRO PWM platform is freely accessible at the FIFPRO website and at the Football Benchmark website.**

### FIFPRO PWM FLASH REPORT

This edition of the FIFPRO PWM Flash Report focuses on players participating at the 2022 UEFA European Women's Championship (EURO 2022). In addition to historical comparisons, the report describes the various types of player workload journeys, showcasing the vastly different ways players prepared for the tournament. Finally, the report also documents individual player stories, shedding light on the imbalances that exist in the professional game today.

### FOOTBALL BENCHMARK

Football Benchmark is a digital data & analytics platform that includes financial and operational performance data from more than 200 European and South American professional football clubs and social media performance metrics of hundreds of football clubs and players. The business intelligence tool also provides market value estimates for 8,500+ players, covering the best leagues of the UEFA, CONMEBOL and AFC confederations.



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# 02 FOREWORD

Professionalization of women's football has accelerated in many parts of the world, particularly over the last few years. The term "professionalization" is multifaceted; how much players are playing and how we are tracking their workload journey are both part of it.

International tournaments, like the UEFA Women's European Championship 2022, provide us with a milestone to answer and reflect on these questions, through the evaluation of a country's most high-profile players - its national team.

The FIFPRO Player Workload Monitoring facilitates a view on the industry that is perhaps often overlooked and unseen: the fragmented and disproportionate spread of games from team to team and player to player, the overreliance on international games and the positive influence reforms can make.

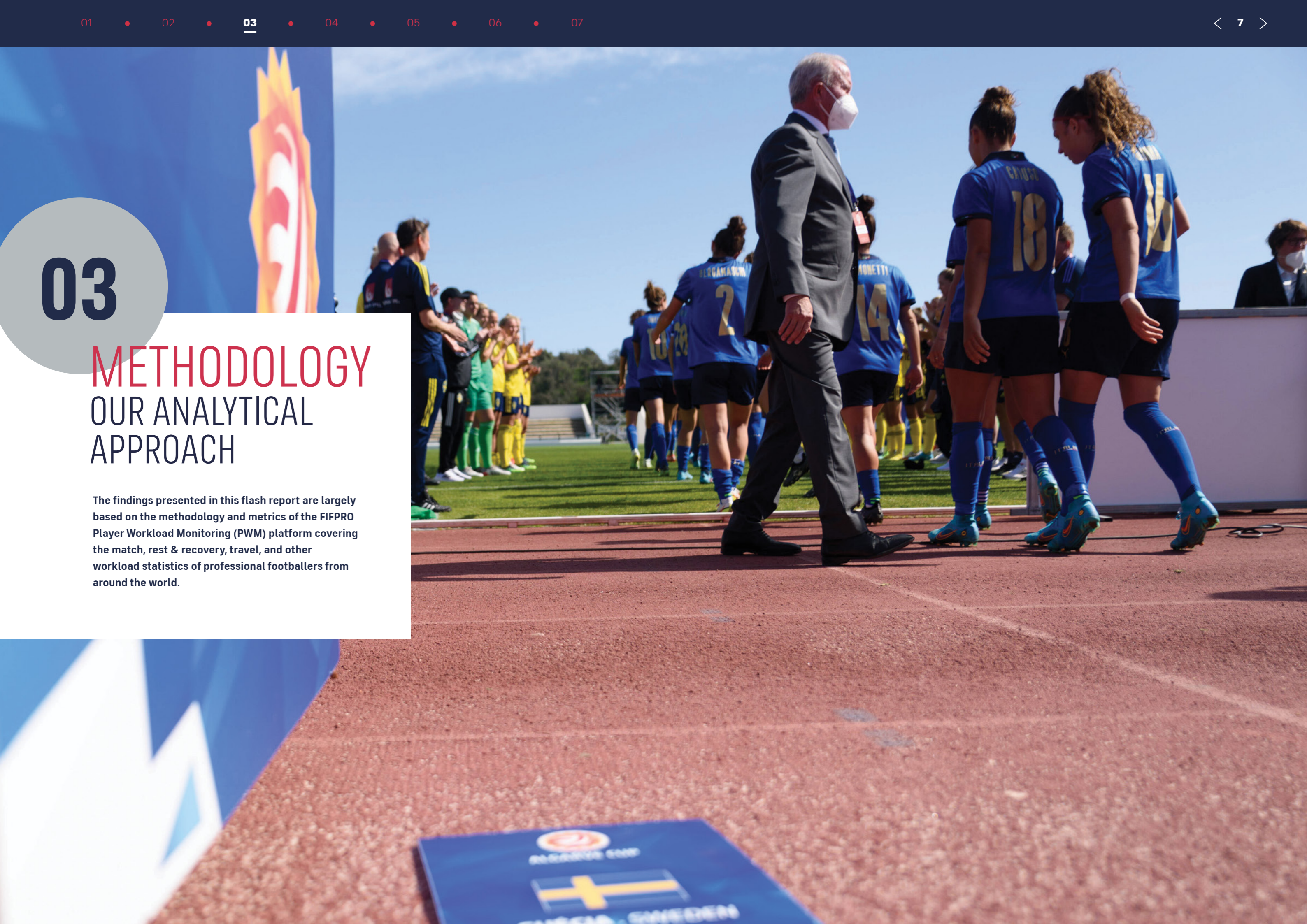
The recent UWCL reforms for the 2021/22 season, and their subsequent success both on and off the field highlight how important and meaningful reforms can be to the overall industry.



# 03

## METHODOLOGY OUR ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The findings presented in this flash report are largely based on the methodology and metrics of the FIFPRO Player Workload Monitoring (PWM) platform covering the match, rest & recovery, travel, and other workload statistics of professional footballers from around the world.



# 03 METHODOLOGY

## OUR ANALYTICAL APPROACH

In order to put the analytical results of the report into context, it is important to understand the key characteristics of the underlying dataset.

### PLAYER SAMPLE & PROFILES

The report focuses on all members of the final squads participating at the 2022 UEFA European Women's Championship. The squads were last updated on 6 July 2022; any changes in personnel made afterwards are not reflected in the report's analysis.



16 National teams



368+ players

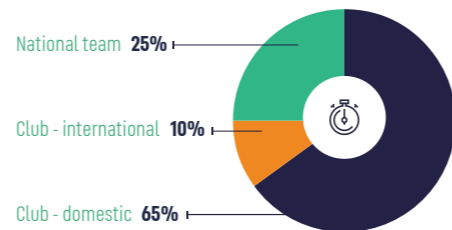
### PERIOD ANALYSED

When analysing the workload journey of players before the tournament, we assessed all their appearances in the period between 1 July 2021 and 20 June 2022. This selection covers a full football season for most players.



### MATCHES COVERED


There are currently close to 13,900 player appearances on record in the underlying data set. This includes all competitive and friendly matches of all players of the sample. Appearances are categorized as either domestic club, international club, or national team matches.




# TERMS & DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used throughout the report to illustrate the workload situation of professional football players. The same principles are applied within the FIFPRO PWM platform.


## GLOBAL PLAYER AND COMPETITIONS


 **FIFPRO PWM SAMPLE** - this annual report analyses match schedule and workload data of the over 360 female football players from 16 national teams who take part in EURO 2022. The analysis covers all matches played by these players in the approximately 12-month period leading up to the tournament, including official club and national team matches, as well as friendlies.


## PLAYER WORKLOAD


 **PLAYER WORKLOAD** - this term refers to all applicable workload indicators such as match workload, rest & recovery, and travel. The concepts of overload and underload relate to the imbalance between the load induced on players (match workload and travel log indicators) and their recovery (rest & recovery indicator). It is important to note that it is the cumulative exposure to overload or underload which really impacts on a player's health, performance, and career longevity.

## MATCH WORKLOAD


 **MINUTES PLAYED AND APPEARANCES** - the number of minutes spent on the pitch by a player during a match. Includes added time at the end of the first and second halves as well as any extra time required for competitions (where applicable). If a player played any length of time of a match, then it is accounted for as an appearance.


 **MATCH TYPE** - matches played by a player are divided into various categories: domestic league, domestic cup, international club competition, national team matches and friendlies.


 **CRITICAL ZONE** - a match is considered to fall into the "critical zone" if the player was on the pitch for at least 45 minutes and played a minimum of 45 minutes in the previous game and did not have at least 5 days of rest and recovery time between these two appearances. It is important to note that it is the cumulative exposure to matches in the critical zone, together with travel, and potentially shortened off-season and on-season breaks, that constitutes an issue for a player's health, performance, and career longevity.


 **BACK-TO-BACK MATCH** - an appearance is considered as a "back-to-back" appearance if the player did not have at least 5 days of rest and recovery time since their last appearance.

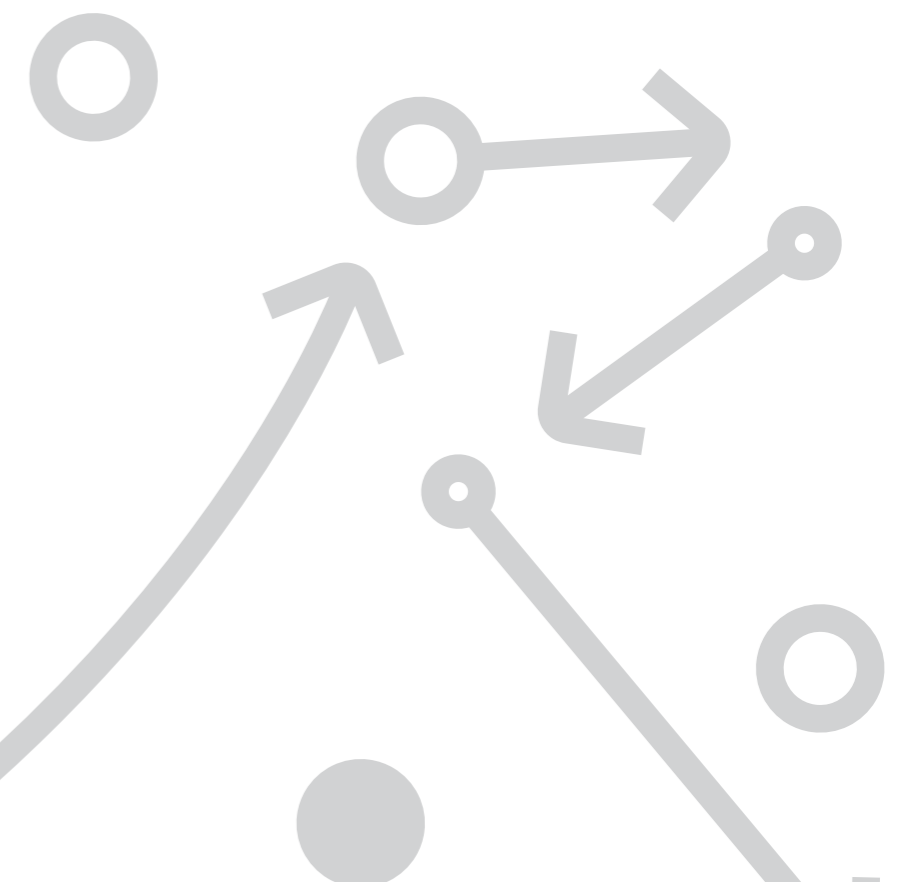
## REST & RECOVERY

 **REST TIME** - the period (in hours and days) between the end of a player's previous match and the start of their next match. This is generally the time allocated to rest & recovery and training. According to FIFPRO's 'At the Limit' study from 2019, players need at least 120 hours (5 days) between games to perform at their best over a season and to manage injury risk.

 **OFF-SEASON BREAK** - the period given to players between two seasons, without training or matches, to recover and regenerate. Off-season breaks are mandatory, should last at least 28 days (combination of physically inactive and active weeks) and must take place outside the club and national team environment.

 **IN-SEASON BREAK** - the period (in calendar days) that a player is permitted to take without matches or training, during a season. On-season breaks are mandatory and should last 14 days. However, they are sometimes not honoured, particularly given the demanding requirements of the match calendar.

 **RE-TRAINING** - following the off-season break / holiday period, a minimum acceptable period of time for re-training and preparation must be guaranteed to all players before participation in future competitive matches. The optimal duration of a re-training period depends on various factors including the physical status of the player and the duration of the break itself. However, it is considered that a re-training period lasting at least 4 weeks is needed to work fundamentally on injury prevention and to optimize future performances.



# 04 KEY FINDINGS

01



## DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PREPARATION

EURO 2022 squads are comprised of players with varying workload levels and notable differences in terms of playing opportunities. This translates into players coming into the tournament with vastly disparate levels of preparedness.

02



## INCREASED PLAYING TIME

When compared to EURO 2017, many top national team players on average increased their overall playing time leading up to EURO 2022.

03



## INCREASED INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AND PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

There are two major driving forces behind more playing time: the increase in international club competition minutes between 2017 and 2022 and the more common migration of players to developed professional leagues outside of their own countries.

04



## HIGH PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL TEAM MINUTES

For many players, national team minutes represent a huge chunk of their overall workload (sometimes above 20-30% in a season). This can be attributed to fewer match-opportunities at club/domestic level and therefore highlights the important role national team football still has in overall competitive opportunities for many players.

05



## LIMITED INTERNATIONAL CLUB MINUTES

The UEFA Women's Champions League represents the only source for international club minutes in Europe. This translates into few high-level playing opportunities at continental club level, with a total of only 16 clubs taking part in the group stages of the competition.

06



## DIVERSE DOMESTIC LEAGUES

Domestic league games are responsible for the majority of the players' workload. The total number of matches in the 16 EURO participant country's domestic top tiers ranged between 56 and 240 in the most recent season (2021/22 or 2022). However, in most leagues, a player could only play a maximum of 22 matches, which makes continued professional development challenging.

07



## DOMESTIC CUPS DRIVE UP PLAYING TIME

The share of domestic cup minutes is the most prominent in the workload of the English and the Portuguese national team squads (28% and 27%). Teams in these two countries have access to two domestic cups, which helps to drive up their playing time.



## 05

# AN EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONALIZATION HISTORICAL WORKLOAD COMPARISON

In recent years, the professionalism of women's football in many countries has shown signs of acceleration. While we see a long overdue development, fragmentation and substantial differences still exist in the degree of professionalization across the various leagues. One way to assess how developed a country's football landscape is to analyse the workload of the very best players they produce: the members of the national team squad. EURO 2022 provides us with a great opportunity to reflect on how much top European players are playing today, and to put that into a historical context.





# 05 AN EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONALIZATION

## HISTORICAL WORKLOAD COMPARISON

This chapter compares a few selected national teams' workloads in the periods leading up to the 2017 and the 2022 UEFA European Women's Championships. The selection includes five national teams that have been consistently among the top performers in women's football during this period. Due to the scarcity of available historical workload information, Spain is not

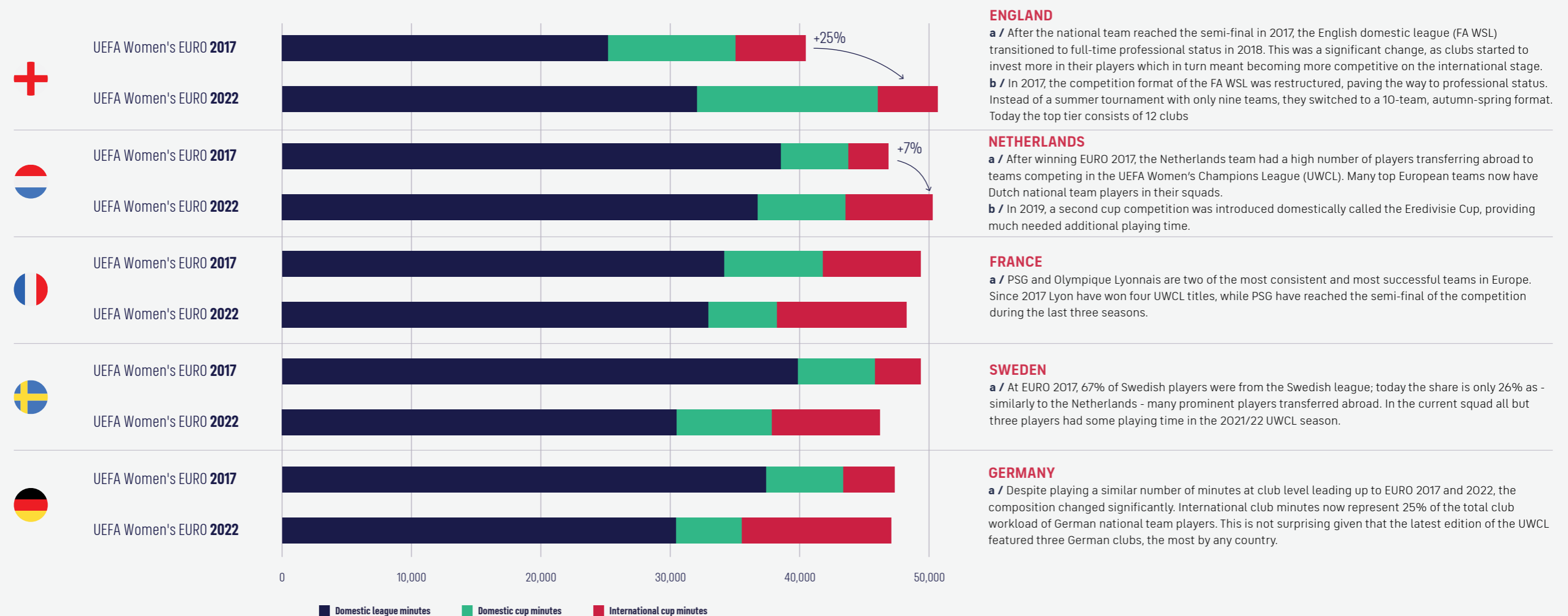
included in this analysis, even though they boast numerous top players in their ranks.

The analysis covers the 365-day period before the two major tournaments in question for all players who were included in the final squads. The expectation is that the combined workload of national team players can reveal

and correlate to recent developments in competitive match opportunities. Which competitions have developed the most or have been reformed to provide more playing opportunities? What is the overall trend of on-pitch minutes for top players? On average, the data shows that in two out of five national teams, players increased their combined

playing time leading up to the EURO 2022 when compared to EURO 2017. One of the major driving forces of this change was the improvement in international club competition minutes which has increased significantly for all but one national team.

### TOTAL CLUB MINUTES PLAYED BY SQUAD MEMBERS IN THE SEASON PRECEDING THE TOURNAMENT



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

06

## JOURNEY TO EURO 2022 COMPREHENSIVE SQUAD COMPARISON

Even at the very top of the women's game, there are notable differences in terms of playing opportunities. In this section, the diverse workload journeys of the 23 players of all EURO 2022 national teams are analysed, covering the year leading up to the tournament. The analysis focuses on workload differences between and within the squads.



# 06 JOURNEY TO EURO 2022

## COMPREHENSIVE SQUAD COMPARISON

### WORKLOAD DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SQUADS

EURO 2022 features 16 of the continent's best women's national teams. Each national team consists of 23 players, three of whom must be goalkeepers. Squad composition almost always inherently includes players at different stages of their career and development, both at national team level and at club level.

This blend of varying levels of experience also combines with the different roles players may have at their domestic clubs and the context of the league itself. Be it from the bench, as regular starters, or as players who have their load managed across several competitions, the players' access to on-pitch minutes is going to differ. In this section, we delve into the workload comparison of all sixteen EURO 2022 squads.

Analysed period: 1st July 2021 – 20th June 2022

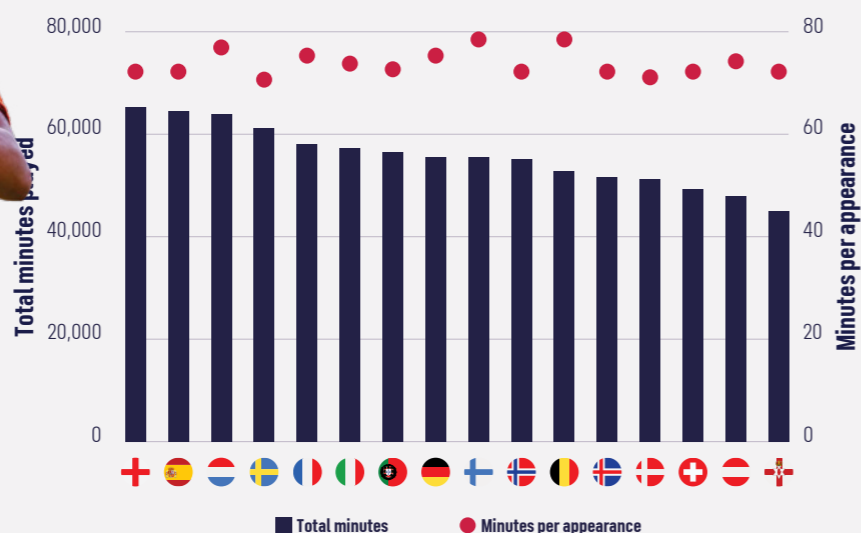
### TOTAL MINUTES PLAYED

The main takeaway is that there appears to be a huge gap in workload and playing time between the very best European national teams. Overall, the combined workload of national teams ranged between 45,048 minutes (across 627 appearances made) and 65,233

minutes (905 appearances) during the analysed period. This shows a serious imbalance as the team with the most combined minutes played 45% more than the team with the least. The difference is even more striking when we consider that the analysis covers only a single season.

Combined minutes of players of national team squads and their average minutes per appearance

(Period covered: July 2021 - June 2022)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

### NATIONAL TEAM MINUTES

Competitive opportunities with the national team are still fundamental in providing playing time in women's football. Concerning these types of match-opportunities, the qualification tournament for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup was an important source of minutes for every European team as it kicked off during the analysed period.

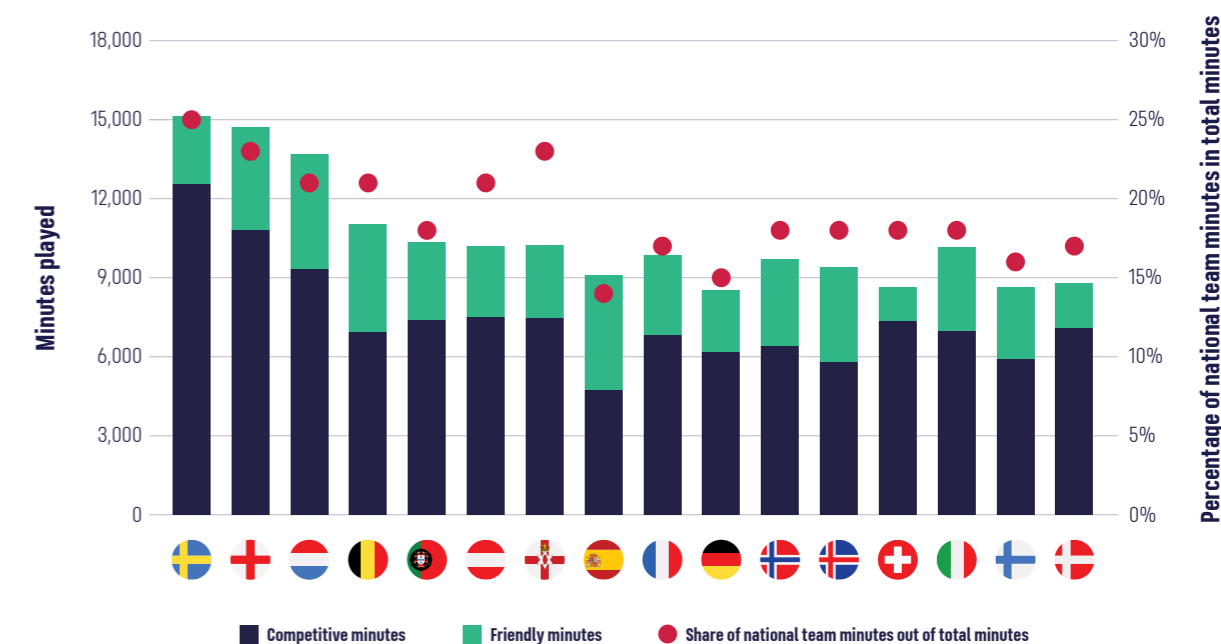
It should also be noted that the Tokyo Olympic Games were postponed to the summer of 2021 and thus took place during the analysed period of this report. Three European national teams took part: Netherlands, Sweden, and Team Great Britain (comprised mostly of

England national team players). Rather unsurprisingly then, these three teams are at the top of the ranking by combined national team minutes over the last 12 months.

Importantly, 13 out of the 16 EURO participant teams played in one of the following friendly tournaments in February 2022: Arnold Clark Cup (in England), Algarve Cup (Portugal), Tournoi de France, Pinatar Cup (Spain) or the SheBelieves Cup (USA). These friendly tournaments are particularly relevant for international women's football and are now considered to be a traditional part of the schedule.

### Combined national team minutes of players of national team squads and its share out of all minutes played by these players

(Period covered: July 2021 - June 2022)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

On average, national team minutes accounted for 19% of the overall workload across the 16 teams. Six of them relied on this source quite heavily during the past year (over 20%).

When breaking down national team minutes into competitive and friendly type of games, Spain is the most balanced (similar number of minutes in both) while the Swiss players experienced the most uneven distribution as they played the fewest number of friendlies and exhibition matches.

## CLUB MINUTES

There is a general and substantial reliance on national team minutes in women's football, particularly in a historical context. In many cases this overreliance can be attributed to a lack of match-opportunities in club football.

Domestic league games are responsible for the majority of the workload. The number of domestic league games is determined by the number of participating teams and the format of the competition. Our research shows that the number of top-tier teams in the sixteen countries' league

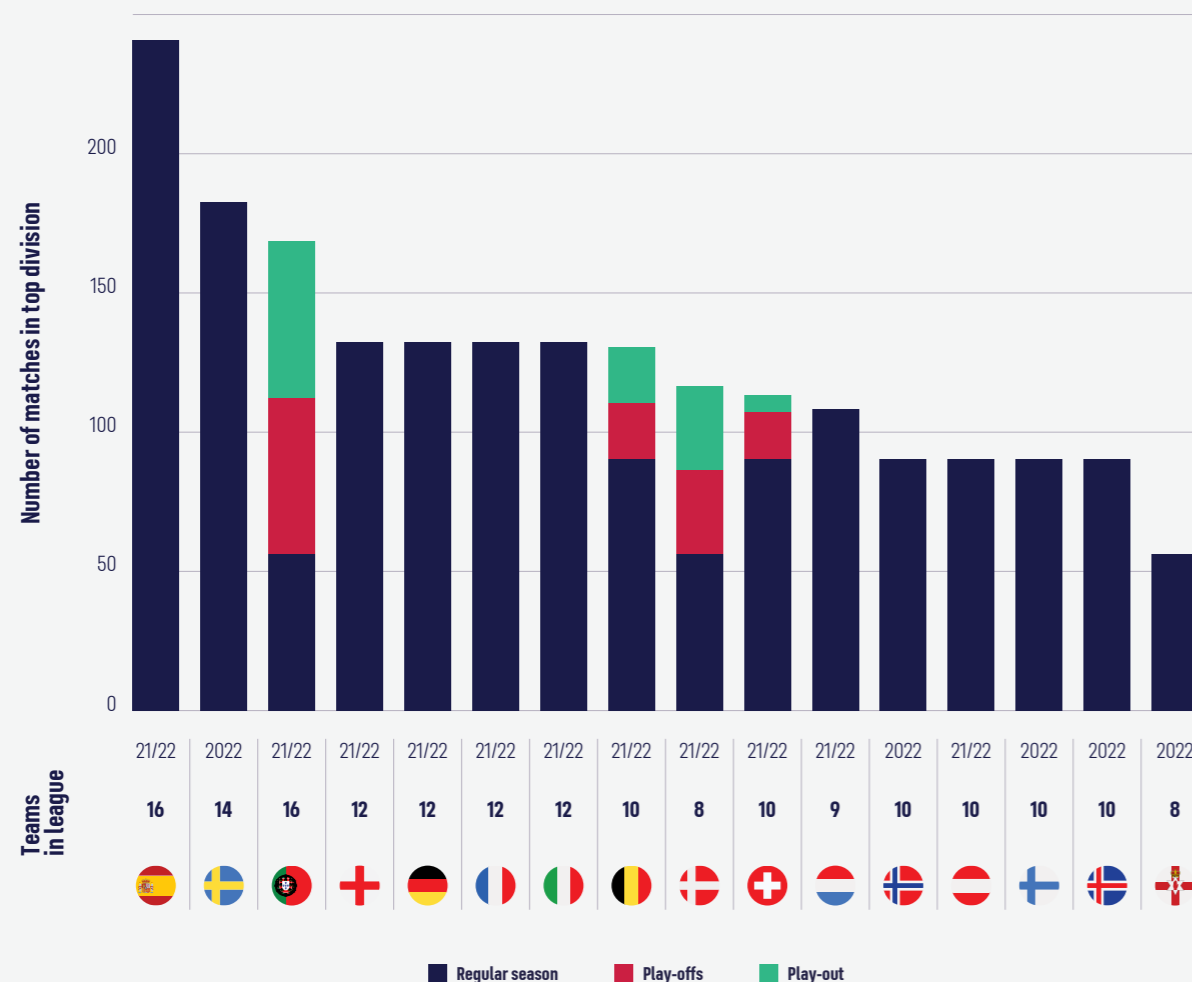
system varies between 8 and 16, a considerable gap. The volume of league matches in these competitions ranged between 56 (Northern Ireland) and 240 (Spain) in the most recent season (2021/22 or 2022). Consequently, in most leagues a player could play a maximum of only 22 games, which can make continued professional development challenging. A clear trend is that players often seek a transfer to other leagues that could provide them with more playing opportunities across multiple competitions.

Combined overall minutes played at club level by EURO squad players ranged between 34,813 minutes (in 466 appearances) and 55,426 minutes (in 764 appearances). The composition of club minutes varies by country, but - as it was highlighted earlier - league minutes are mostly responsible for the overall workload of a player. In some cases, such minutes represent more than 90% of the club related workload (Belgium and Northern Ireland).

The data shows that the share of domestic cup competition minutes is more prominent for the English and Portuguese squads (28% and 27%). Crucially, teams in these countries have access to two cup tournaments, which helps driving up playing time.

Finally, international club competitions are the third category of club minutes, but as the data shows, it is marginal in most squads. In the following segment we take a closer look at this category.

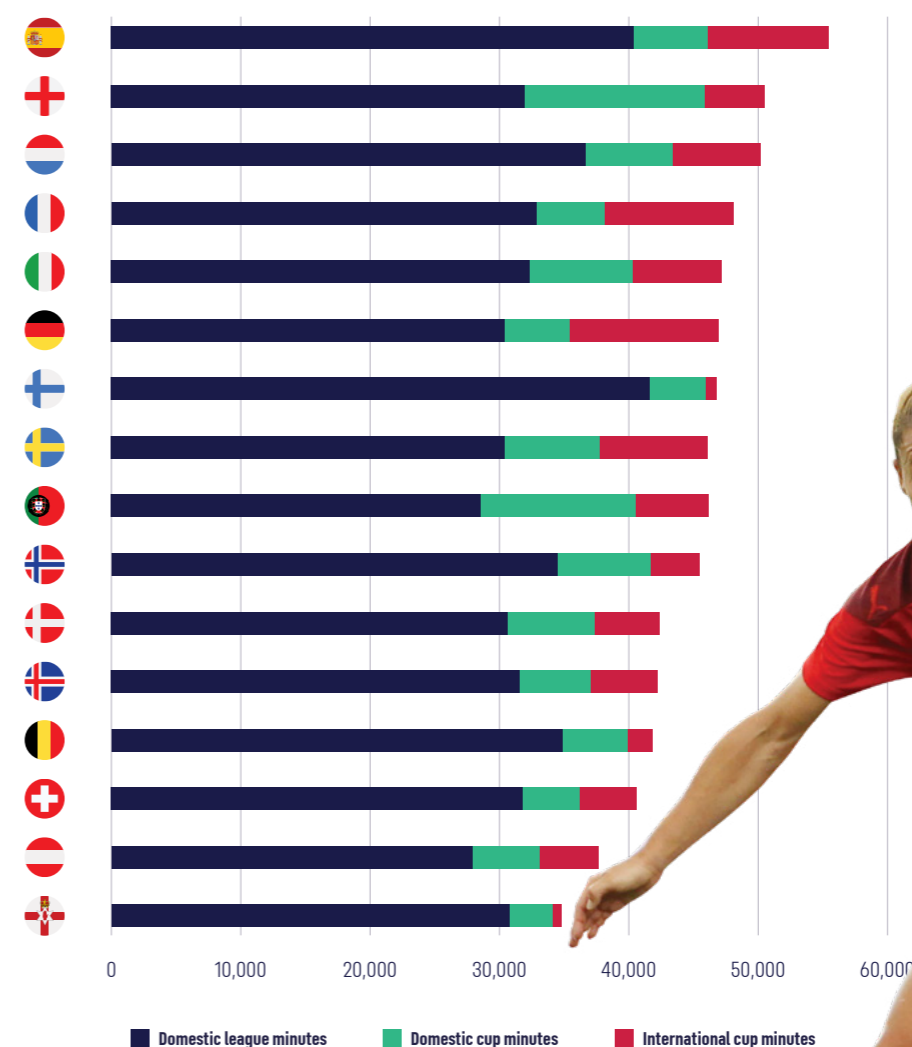
Number of matches and clubs in EURO 2022 participant countries' top divisions (2021/22, 2022 seasons)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

Breakdown of combined club football minutes of EURO squads by competition type

(Period covered: July 2021 - June 2022)



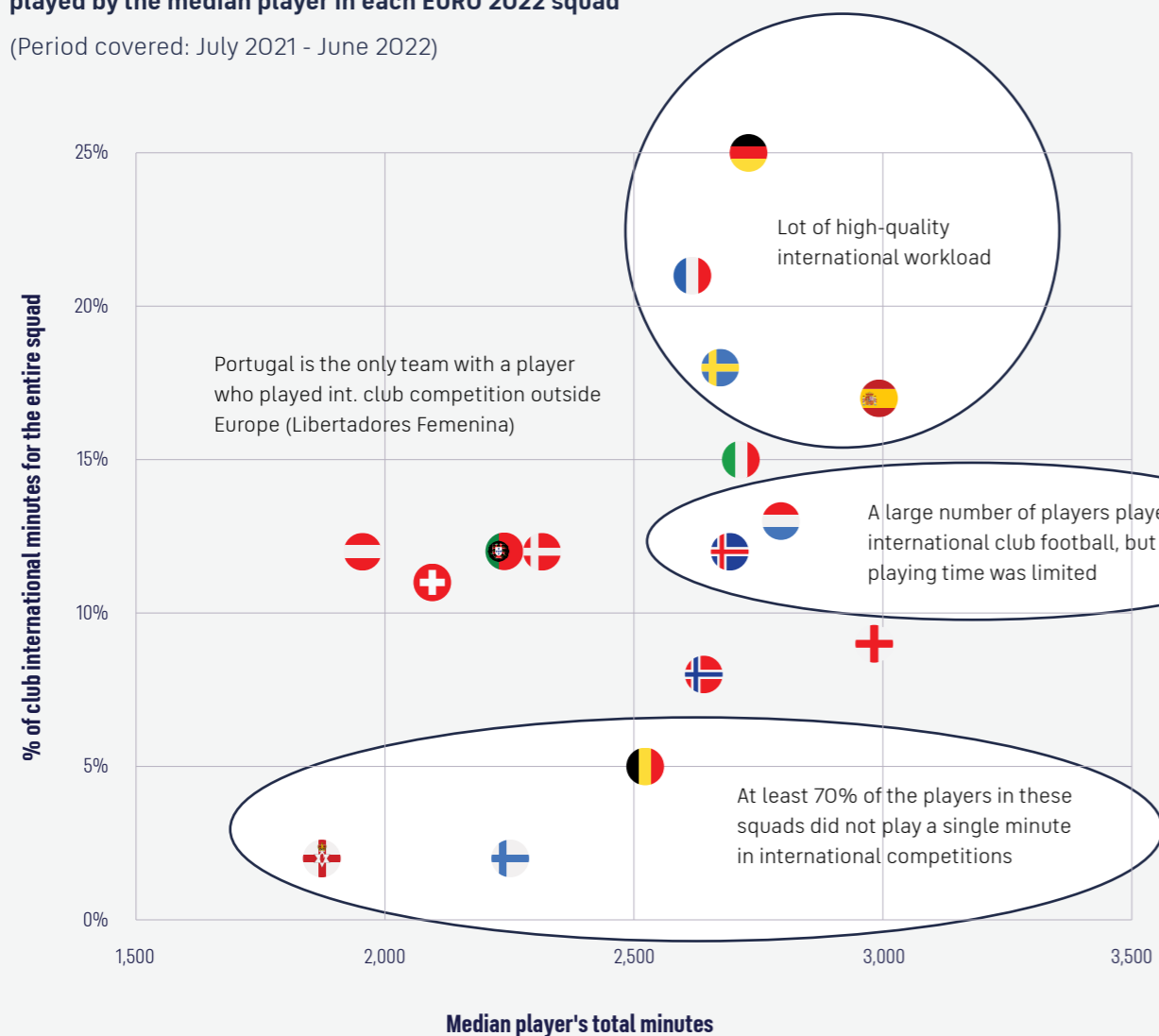
Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis



## INTERNATIONAL CLUB MINUTES

Share of international club minutes in overall player workload and the minutes played by the median player in each EURO 2022 squad

(Period covered: July 2021 - June 2022)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

The UEFA Women's Champions League (UWCL) represents the sole source for international club minutes in the European women's game. Comparison with men's football can often be quite misleading, but in this case, it highlights an important factor in relation to competition formats and access. As opposed to the single club tournament for women's football players in Europe, men's football players now have access to no fewer than three tournaments in the shape of the men's Champions League (UCL), Europa League, and the Europa Conference League. Notably, the number of teams that qualify for the group stage of the UWCL is just half of that in the UCL, showing the gap in international match opportunities but also how important the steps already taken towards expansion were.

The recent UWCL reforms for the 2021/22 season (more teams), and its subsequent success both on and off the field, highlight how crucial meaningful reform can be to the overall industry. It would be critical to continue exploring the introduction of new formats for international club competitions in European women's football as these matches represent huge development opportunities and provide increased competitive access for an even wider pool of top players.

Data shows that international club minutes represented 25% of the overall workload of the German national team's 23 players, the highest such share among the 16 squads. It should be noted that during the latest edition of the competition the group stage featured three German teams (the most by any country).



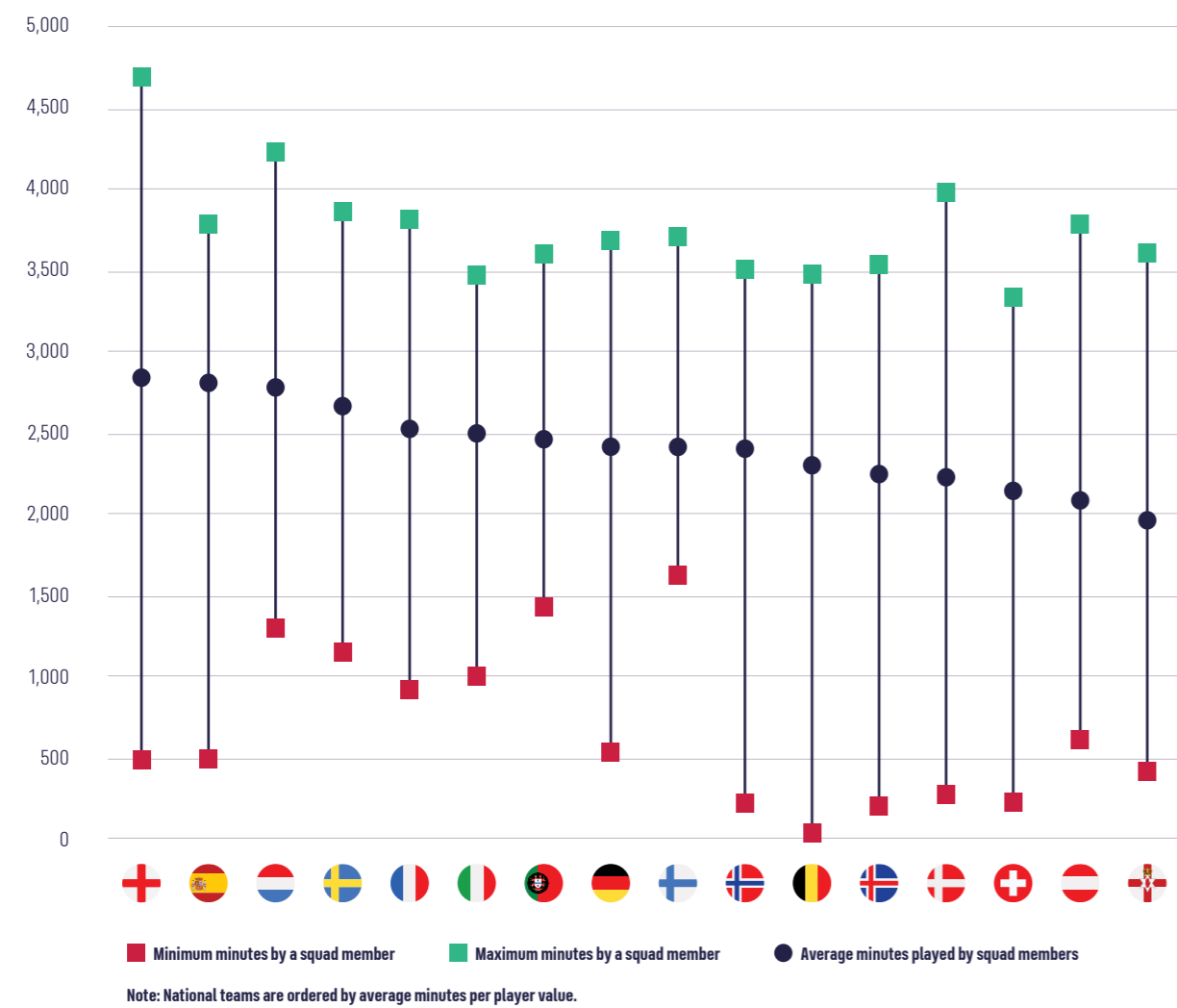
## WORKLOAD DIFFERENCES WITHIN SQUADS

As highlighted earlier, EURO 2022 squads are comprised of players with different workload backgrounds. This indicates that not all players are prepared equally for the tournament; some players' workload journey involves much more playing time. In this section we aim to capture differences in on-pitch minutes within the squads and offer explanations for the findings.

Our research shows that players called up for Finland had the most similar workload journey leading up to the tournament: this is confirmed by the visual below that shows that for Finland the maximum, minimum and average minutes per player were the closest to each other. At the other end of this analytical spectrum, we find Belgium where the gap between the players with the most and the least minutes in 2021/22 was the largest.

### The highest, the lowest and the average minutes per squad member

(Period covered: July 2021 - June 2022)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis



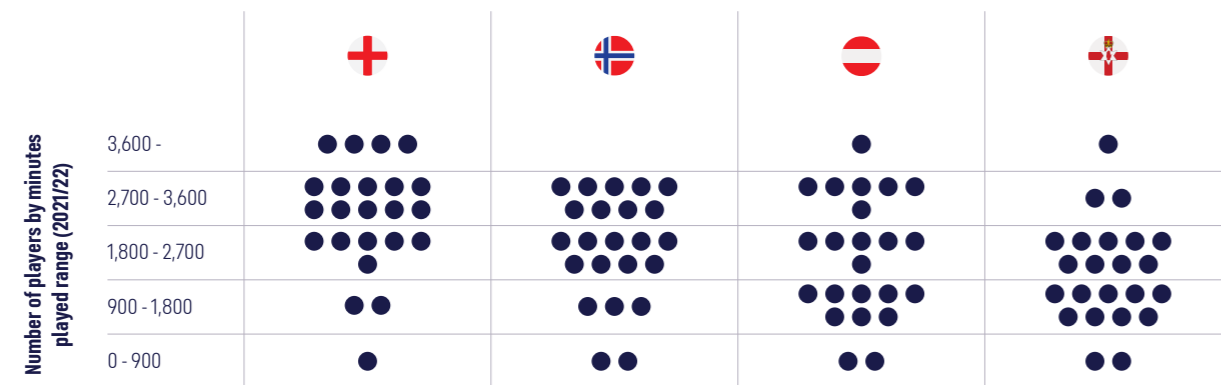
## GROUP A

England's squad features players with a very high workload during the past year. Their squad includes the player with the most minutes accumulated (Millie Bright - 4,601 minutes). The player with the fewest minutes in the past year was Chloe Kelly who was sidelined with an ACL injury for 11 months.

Norway's squad is assembled of players with a very similar workload background. Most of them played 1,800-3,600 minutes (20-40 matches).

Austria's squad is the most balanced in Group A though, with Manuela Zinsberger (Arsenal FC) being the only one whose total minutes played exceeded the 3,600 mark.

Northern Ireland, who make their major tournament debut also includes players with similar workload although at the lower end of the spectrum. Similarly to Austria, Northern Ireland also have one player exceeding 3,600 minutes in Demi Vance (Rangers WFC - 3,606), even though by only a small margin.



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

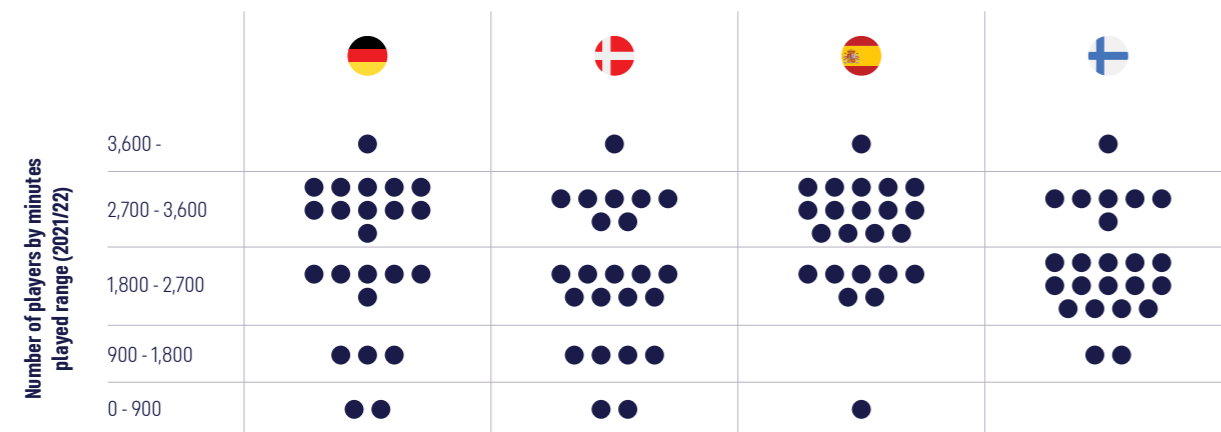
## GROUP B

Most players (11) in the German national team played between 2,700 and 3,600 minutes during the period under review. Svenja Huth recorded the highest combined minutes as she was a fundamental member for both VfL Wolfsburg and the national team.

Denmark's squad has one of the highest standard deviations of workload in the past year between players. Their most utilised member during the analysed period was Stine Ballsinger.

Spain's squad features players with very similar workload backgrounds with the exception of Marta Cardona, who was injured with a meniscus injury in August 2021.

Rounding off the group, Finland's squad is quite balanced from a workload perspective, their outstanding player is defender Anna Westerlund by playing in her home country's Åland United.



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

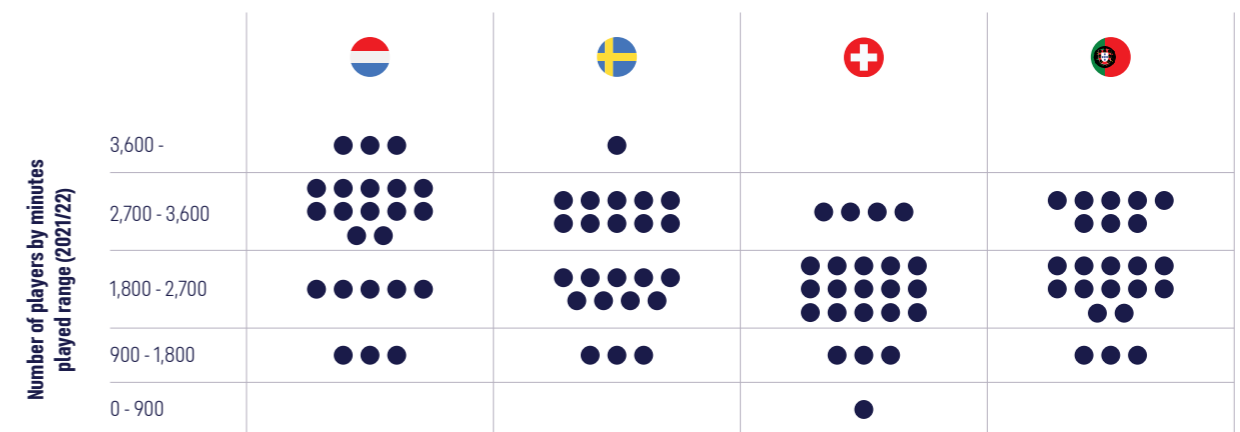
## GROUP C

The majority of players in the squad of the defending European champions, the Netherlands, played between 2,700 and 3,600 minutes last season. Their squad has the third most national team minutes and this squad consistency and familiarity is a critical feature.

Sweden's national team is balanced with almost all players falling in the 1,800-3,600 minutes range.

Most players in the Swiss national team played between 1,800 and 2,700 minutes, without any outliers.

Portugal's case is very similar to Switzerland and - after Finland - their squad is the second most balanced in terms of playing time in 2021/22.



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

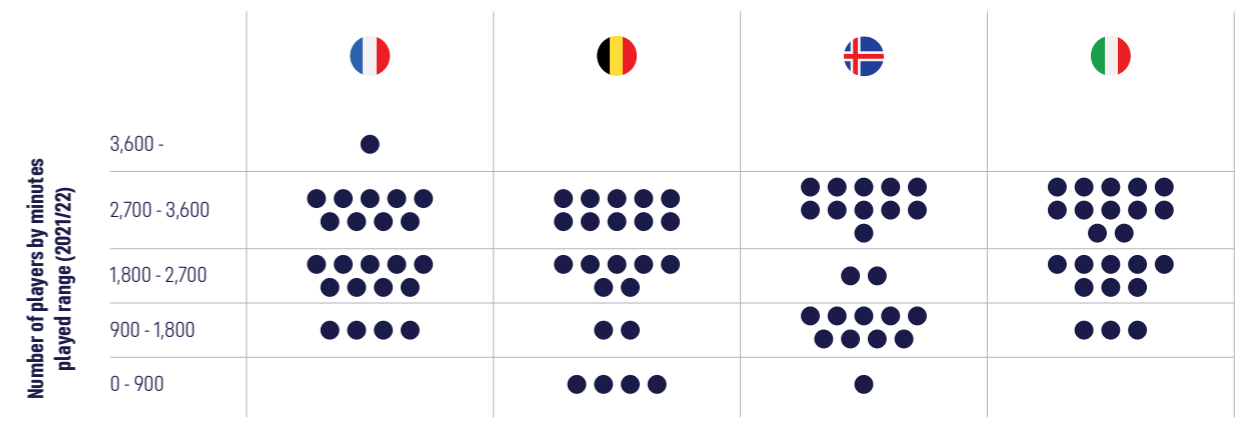
## GROUP D

The French national team's players had a very similar workload in the past year with the only outlier being Juventus' goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin with 3,810 minutes.

The Belgian side is the most diverse from a workload point of view with multiple players below 900 total minutes.

Iceland's squad could be divided into two major groups based on their playing time: one was heavily utilised by their clubs, while the other was struggling to find enough playing time.

Italy's national team does not feature top or bottom outliers and can be considered balanced. 96% of players within that team play their domestic club football in Italy, which could be an explaining factor.



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

# 07

## DIFFERENT REALITIES INDIVIDUAL PLAYER WORKLOAD STORIES

In the final chapter of the report, the focus is on individual player workload analysis and what it says about the overall structure and stratification of European women's football. Having established that there are significant differences both within and between EURO national team squads, it could still be worthwhile to highlight the workload journey of specific players in 2021/22 season.





# 07 DIFFERENT REALITIES

## INDIVIDUAL PLAYER WORKLOAD STORIES

### WORKLOAD COMPARISON – DIFFERENT PLAYER PROFILES

#### DISCLAIMER

This report segment was developed before Alexia Putellas suffered an injury in early July and had to withdraw from Spain's EURO 2022 squad.

As the FIFPRO Annual Workload Report on women's football showed, the opportunities provided by professional women's football at the highest level are still somewhat limited. There are significant workload differences even at the top of the game, between some of the biggest names in women's football. There is an expectation that the players who represent their countries at the elite level should all have a balanced workload which allows for access to an adequate number of matches to help prepare them for their performance on the biggest stages.

Take, for example, the Spanish national team's two key players: Alexia Putellas and Ona Batlle. The former is widely considered as one of the best players in the world and was awarded the Ballon d'Or Feminin in 2021. Putellas has been playing for FC Barcelona since 2012. Batlle's career on the other hand followed a different course: after beginning her career in Spain, she signed for Manchester United FC in England and is now one of the few Spanish national team players who ply their trade abroad.

Putellas and Batlle are both selected by Spain on a regular basis: each played 10 times for the national team over the course of the 2021/22 season in various qualifiers and friendlies. Even though their national team workload is very similar, they face distinctly different

conditions at club level. While both are starters for their clubs, Putellas played **approx. 30% more minutes in 2021/22** than Batlle. Crucially, all this difference comes from club football.

In this chapter we analyse the reasons behind this difference and aim to ascertain what it means in the larger context of European women's football. Arguably, the match schedule of Putellas could give an indication as to what a "benchmark" may be in women's football as it is balanced across multiple domestic and international competitions, with few intermittent underload periods that are otherwise still prevalent in women's football.

However, her workload now cannot be viewed in isolation of her serious injury suffered on the eve of EURO 2022 that meant she had to miss the tournament. The case study on her season does, however, offer us an opportunity to reflect on the work still needed to be done in the medical and sports physiological field for women's footballers. Increasing match opportunities for players, and therefore increasing load, must come hand-in-hand with the progression of off-field support and the professionalization of those structures around the game. The areas of sports science and injury prevention must be specifically tailored for the needs of women's footballers.

*Matches played between July 2021 and June 2022 were considered, up until the club football break before the European Championship.*





## ALEXIA PUTELLAS

Attacking midfielder

Age: 28  
Season: 2021/22



## ONA BATLLE

Full-back

Age: 23  
Season: 2021/22



### MATCH WORKLOAD

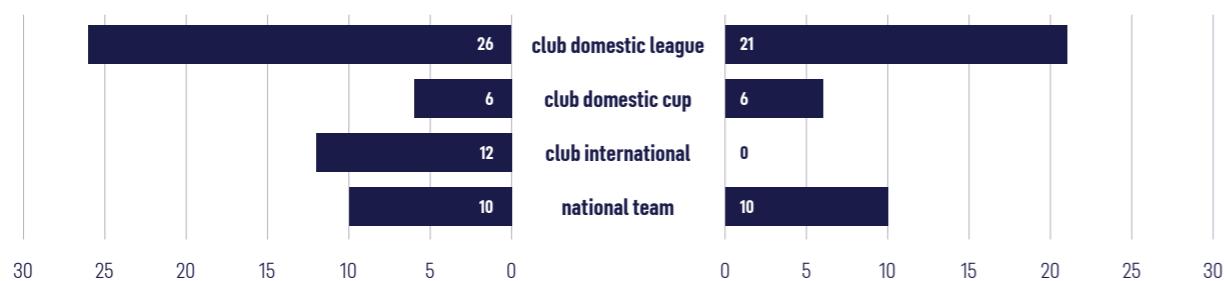
The data shows that Putellas played 17 more games than Batlle. The bulk of the difference comes from the fact that FC Barcelona advanced all the way to the final of the UEFA Women's Champions League, the only international club competition in Europe. Batlle's club did not qualify for the competition and there is not any other option to play international matches. Another important factor is that the English league includes only 12 clubs, whereas the Spanish league consists of 16 teams, resulting in more potential playing time. Ultimately, Batlle could not get close to Putellas' workload, even though she missed only one fixture in Manchester United's campaign.

Over the course of the analysed period, Batlle played 3.7 matches per month on average, less than once a week. This compares unfavourably to Putellas' 5.4 games per month figure.

**54** appearances in total

#### APPEARANCES (2021/22)

**37** appearances in total



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

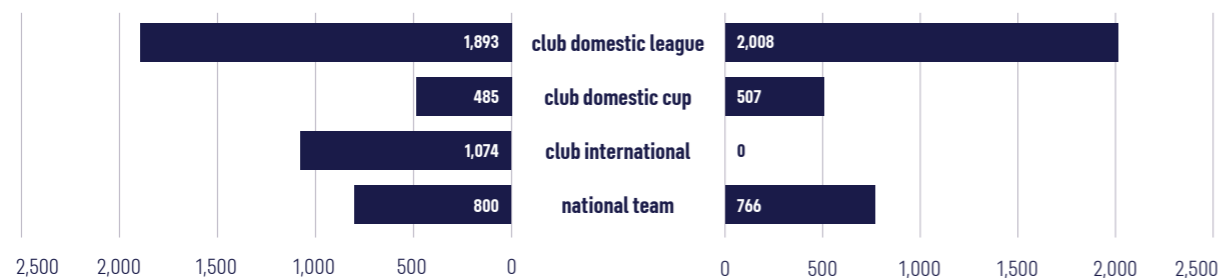
### ON-PITCH TIME

The difference in appearances translates into a gap of almost 1,000 minutes in terms of total playing between the two players. The gap could have been even higher, but Putellas' average minutes per app is much lower, indicating that she could be often rested before UWCL clashes.

**4,252** minutes in total

#### MINUTES PLAYED (2021/22)

**3,281** minutes in total



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

## ALEXIA PUTELLAS ONA BATLLE

### AVERAGE MINUTES PER APPEARANCE



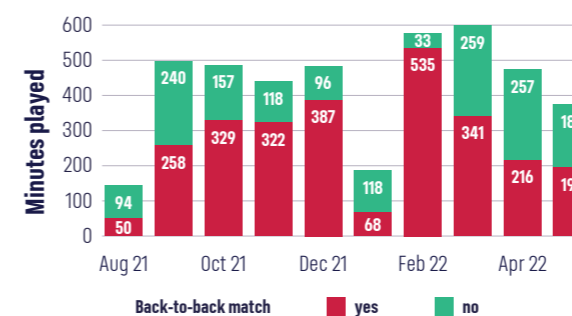
### SCHEDULE

The charts show that the second half of the season was much busier for Putellas; this where most of the difference in playing time originates from (UWCL knock-out stage). Batlle's busiest period came in later November and early December when she had five back-to-back matches due to playing for Spain. As a comparison, Putellas had similarly condensed periods more often during the season; this is confirmed by the fact that almost two-thirds of her minutes were played back-to-back. For Batlle, a significantly lower share of her minutes came in back-to-back games, indicating that there is still room for growth to avoid underload.

**63.0%** of all minutes played in back-to-back matches

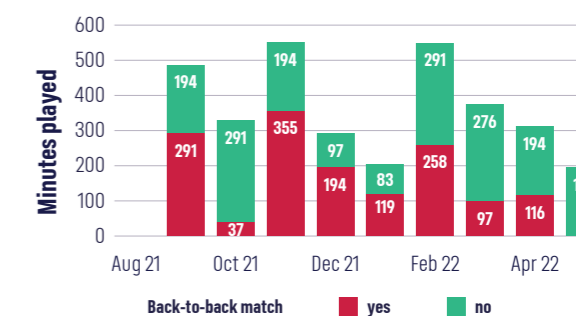
#### WORKLOAD OVER THE SEASON

(minutes of back-to-back matches highlighted in red)



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

**48.6%** of all minutes played in back-to-back matches



### TRAVEL

Rather unsurprisingly, we find that Batlle's workload in terms of travel was also lower, because her club was not involved in international games. However, the two players travelled virtually the same distance as members of the Spain national team squad and they both spent over 2 days just by travelling long-distance (50+ hours) during the season.

#### TRAVEL DISTANCE (international matches only)



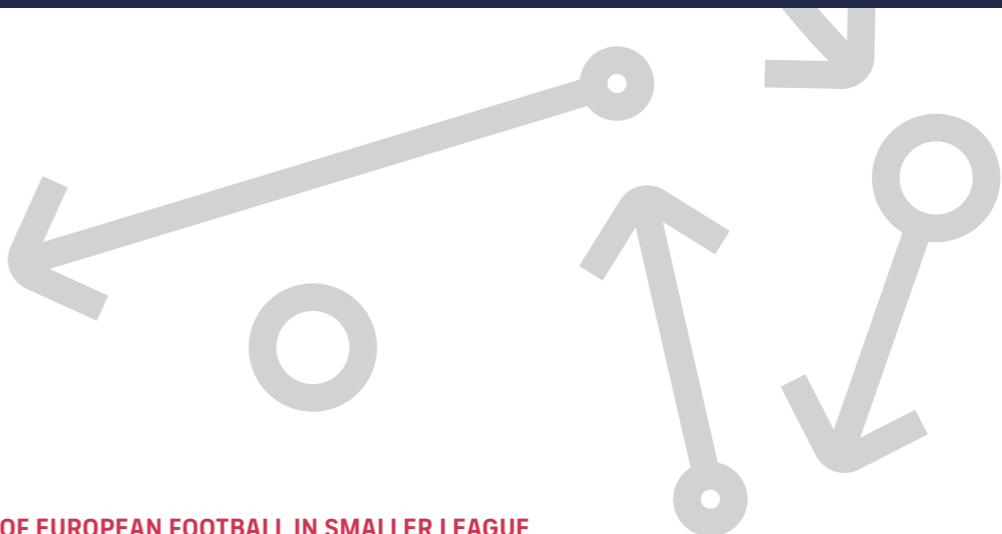
Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

### CONCLUSION

It would be important to expand domestic leagues in more countries and involve more teams at the highest tier of domestic football. In addition, we would advocate for potential introductions and new reforms in the international club competition space. If done cohesively, this would provide more playing opportunities year-round and prevent periods of underload.

## WORKLOAD ACROSS THE SEASON

As we have seen in the previous chapters and analyses, there are significant differences in playing time between players in almost every Euro squad. The data shows large variances in workload in preparation for the tournament, and therefore the fragmentation in opportunities across the continent for players. In this segment we analyse how the gap between key members of the squads appeared over the course of the 2021/22 season. In doing so we aim to explain the drivers behind this inequality.



### FINLAND - DOMESTIC LEAGUE VS PLAYING ABROAD

#### RIA ÖLING



After missing out on the 2017 European Championship, Finland is back in the tournament in 2022. In the visual below we compare minutes played by Ria Öling and Essi Sainio between July 2021 and May 2022.

Sainio plays for HJK Helsinki in Finland and was selected for the squad for six games in the period. She is one of only two players in the squad representing the Finnish domestic league. Öling, on the other hand, signed for FC Rosengård in the Swedish Damallsvenskan that has more teams than the Finnish Kansallinen Liiga (14 vs 10). While it is true that Öling also played more times for the national team than Sainio in the analysed timeframe, the bulk of the minutes difference between is down to club football opportunities.

#### ESSI SAINIO



● Essi Sainio ● Ria Öling



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis

### FRANCE - IMPACT OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL IN SMALLER LEAGUE

#### KENZA DALI



Kenza Dali and Marie-Antoinette Katoto started together France's last World Cup qualifier against Slovenia in April 2022. Generally, both players have been in national team squad throughout the season and made 8 and 11 appearances, respectively. However, their club minutes in 2021/22 were markedly different: by the end of the season Katoto recorded 1,300+ more minutes in total and made 44 appearances compared to Dali's 35.

Playing for Everton FC in England, Dali did not have access to international club matches, while Katoto's PSG (France) advanced deep into the UWCL knock-out stages. Even though Dali played in two domestic cups as opposed to Katoto's one in France, this did not make up for the difference accrued elsewhere.

#### MARIE-ANTOINETTE KATOTO



● Kenza Dali ● Marie-Antoinette Katoto



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis



**ITALY - SAME LEAGUE WITH AND WITHOUT EUROPEAN FOOTBALL**

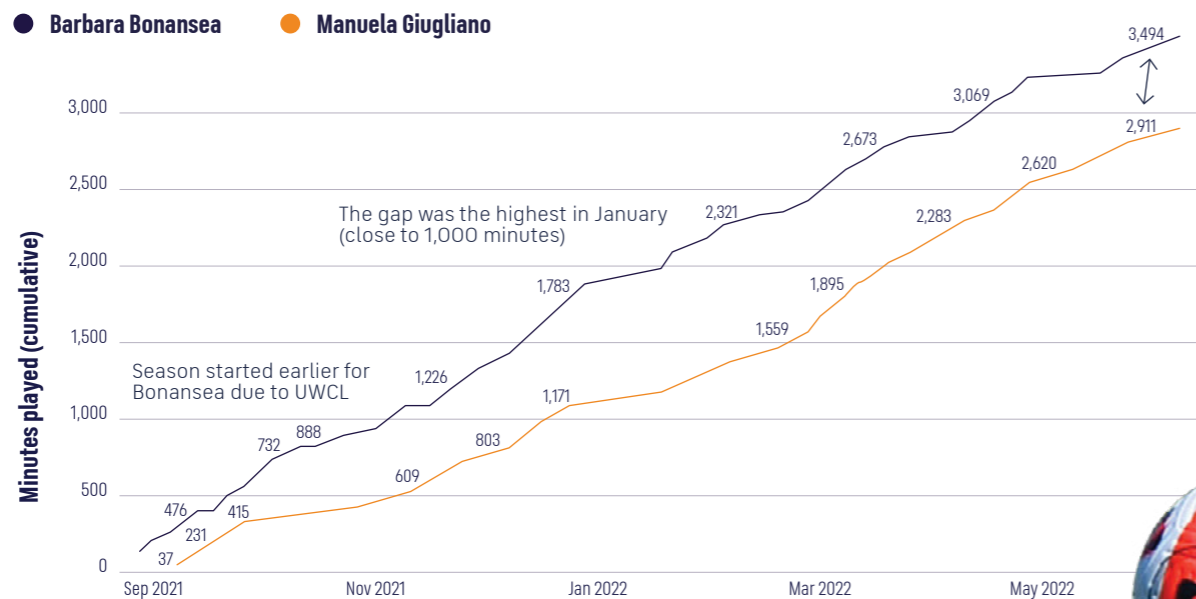
**BARBARA BONANSEA**



Barbara Bonansea (Juventus) and Manuela Giugliano (AS Roma) both play in the Italian Serie A and have been integral to the national team setup for many years. Yet, when analysing their 2021/22 season in total, there is a striking difference between their total workloads. Whereas Bonansea accumulated 46 appearances, Giugliano made only 32 over the course of the season.

A large part of this gap is explained by the fact that Juventus could take part in the UEFA Women's Champions League qualifiers, group stage and quarterfinals. This, and a few more national team appearances meant that Bonansea made 44% more appearances, which is very high at this level. The only reason why Giugliano in the end played "only" 583 fewer minutes is that she was substituted less often and thus had a higher minutes per appearance metric for the season.

**MANUELA GIUGLIANO**



Source: FIFPRO PWM platform, Football Benchmark analysis



**PERIODIC CONGESTION**

It is clear by now that European Championship participants come from a very diverse “workload background” and represent different playing profiles. This is especially true when we consider the ebb and flow of their match load throughout the course of a season. In this segment we identified four players whose schedule in 2021/22 was characterized by different levels and types of periodic congestion. This phenomenon occurs when heavy workload phases are alternating with periods of limited playing opportunities. In this context the presence of heavy workload is signalled by the high number of back-to-back matches in which a player does not get at least 5 days of rest between two appearances.

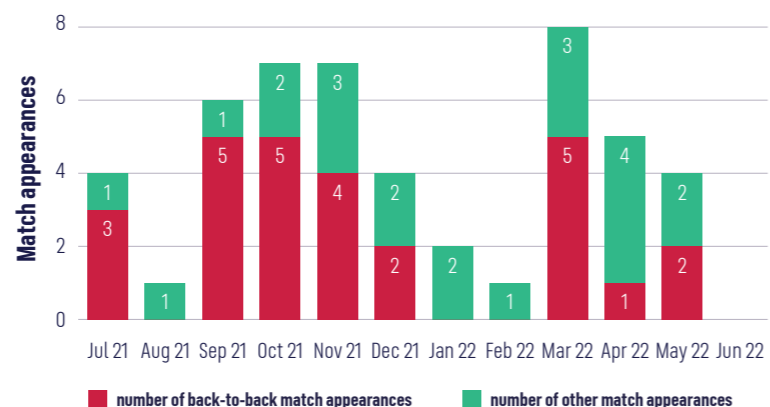
**Analysed period: 1st July 2021 – 20th June 2022**

 **JILL ROORD** – Imbalanced workload  
Netherlands, VfL Wolfsburg Frauen



- Started the season at the Olympic Games in Tokyo where she played in all four matches of the Dutch national team. This was followed by a three-week break before the club season.
- Throughout the season Roord played 49 matches in total, accumulating 3,998 minutes. This is among the highest figures among all players at the EURO 2022.
- More than half of her matches were played back-to-back with little rest in-between them. Crucially, almost of all her minutes came in competitive matches.
- What makes Roord's case particularly relevant is the distribution of appearances. Her autumn schedule was very heavy due to national team commitments and Wolfsburg's Champions League games. However, she played just a handful of matches in the middle of the season; the German league was on winter break between mid-December and the tail end of January. This ultimately led to a lopsided workload chart for the player.

**Number of back-to-back and other appearances by month (2021/22)**

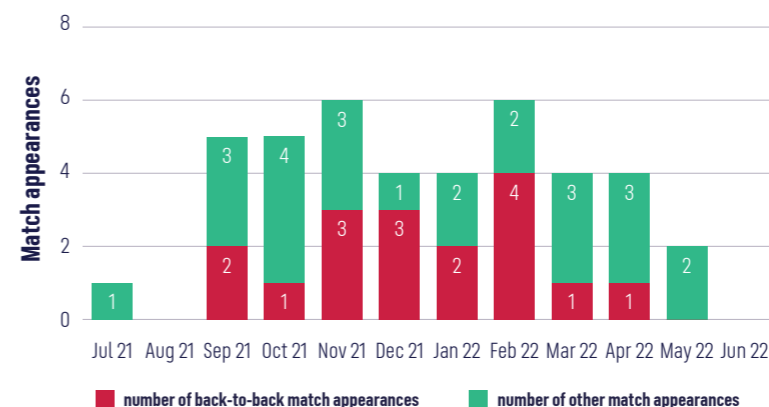


 **ELLA TOONE** – Balanced and long club season  
England, Manchester United FC



- No international club matches (see also Ona Batlle's case study on Page x).
- However, club season was relatively long. Even though the FA Women's Super League comprises of only 12 teams, there are two domestic cups providing additional playing opportunities. While there is still room for growth (as seen already with Batlle), at least this configuration creates a relatively balanced workload for the players throughout the season. More than 20% of her club minutes were in domestic cups.
- Toone had at least four matches every month between August and April, which is uncommon among players participating at the European Championship.

**Number of back-to-back and other appearances by month (2021/22)**



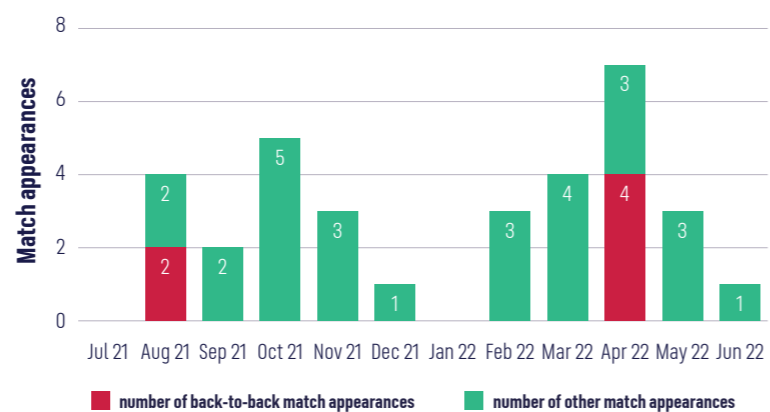


**JULIA STIERLI** - Domestic football heavy workload in a small league  
Switzerland, FC Zürich



- The Swiss Women's Super League has only 10 clubs, which limits the domestic playing opportunities. This is clear when assessing the match load of Stierli, who played at least four games in a month only three times in 2021/22. Only 18% of her appearances came in back-to-back matches, which is a sign of underload.
- Tellingly, the two busiest time period were at the very beginning of the season (two UWCL qualifiers) and in April when she was part of the Switzerland team's World Cup qualifying campaign.

Number of back-to-back and other appearances by month (2021/22)

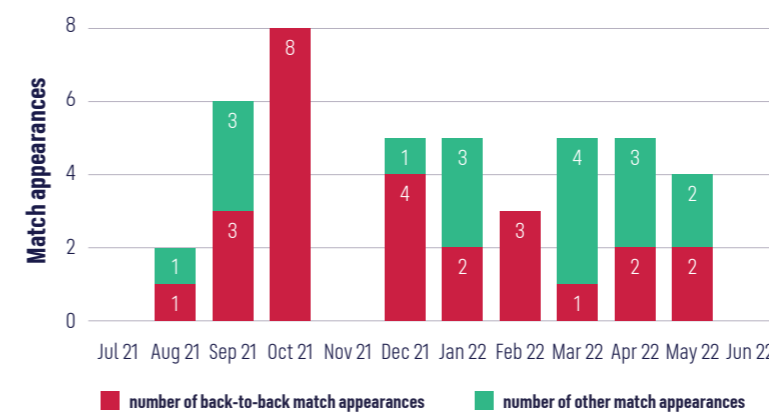


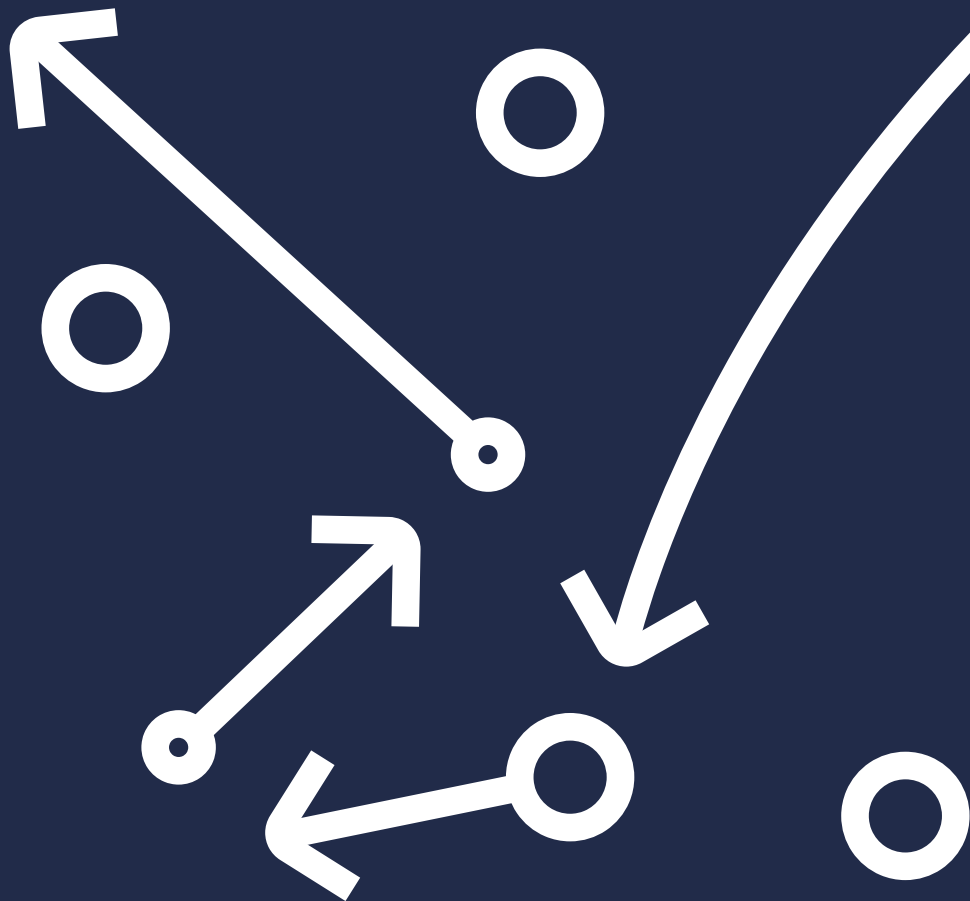
**CAROLINE GRAHAM HANSEN** - At the highest level in a large league  
Norway, FC Barcelona



- Playing for FC Barcelona, playing the most matches of any team in Europe in recent years.
- Hansen had one the highest workload in Europe, at least in terms of the percentage of back-to-back matches: over 60% of her appearances fell into this category in 2021/22. This is not surprising given the large number of competitions FC Barcelona were involved in.
- For Hansen, October-November was the most congested period. Afterwards, quite balanced workload. Missed a few games at the very end of the season (Copa de la Reina).

Number of back-to-back and other appearances by month (2021/22)





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[fifpro.org](https://fifpro.org)



[info@fifpro.org](mailto:info@fifpro.org)



+31 23 554 6970



Scorpius 161,  
2132 LR Hoofddorp  
Netherlands

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with Football Benchmark*

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Imago*

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