

Rugby World Cup

Tournament Coverage and its Impact
on Gender Balance in Sports News
Media in Aotearoa New Zealand

December 2022



isentia

About this Study

Rugby World Cup 2021 was held in New Zealand during October and November 2022.

This study analyses tournament coverage among New Zealand media and its impact on the gender balance of overall sports coverage during the tournament period.

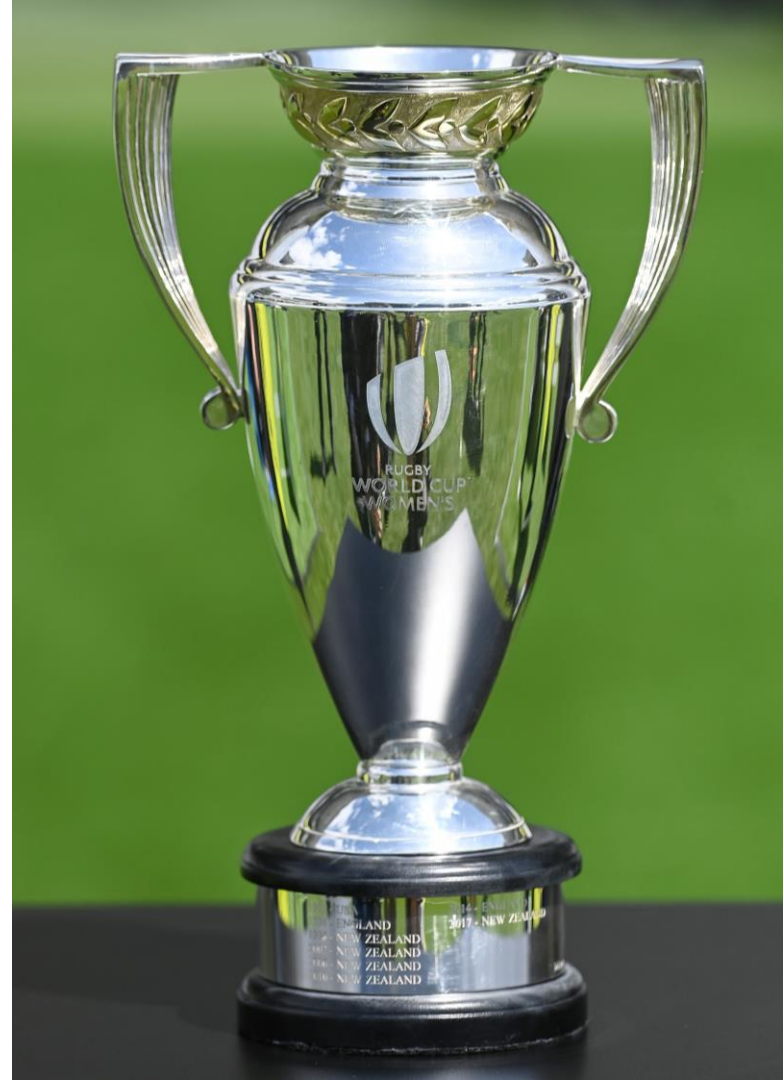
It forms part of the broader [Sport NZ - Isentia study](#), which involves analysis of around one-third of all New Zealand sports news coverage, selected randomly each day. It has been running since 2019.

The study includes television, radio, print and online sports news coverage. It excludes match broadcast and live blogging of sports fixtures. As a result, Spark Sport and Sky Sport are not included in this case study.



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Key Findings



Rugby World Cup

Highlights from the Sport NZ - ISENTIA study of gender balance in sports news media in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Weight of Coverage

The Rugby World Cup made up 25% of all sports news coverage in New Zealand during its tournament period.

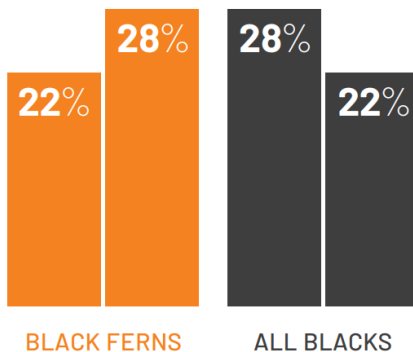
This was a period that also included the men's T20 Cricket World Cup, Rugby League World Cup, All Blacks northern hemisphere tour and other international rugby.

By comparison, the Cricket World Cup, held in New Zealand earlier this year, accounted for 13% during its tournament window.

25%

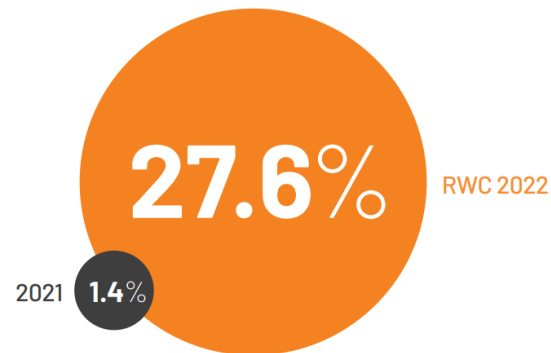
Head to Head

On 29 October, the Black Ferns played Wales at the same time as the All Blacks played Japan. Both teams generated 22% of all sports news coverage on match day and 28% the day before in the lead up to these games.



Popularity Shines Through

Popularity was the most prominent theme in Rugby World Cup coverage, featuring in more than a quarter of all stories. This theme is normally absent from sports news coverage, only featuring in 1.4% of all stories in 2021.



Coverage



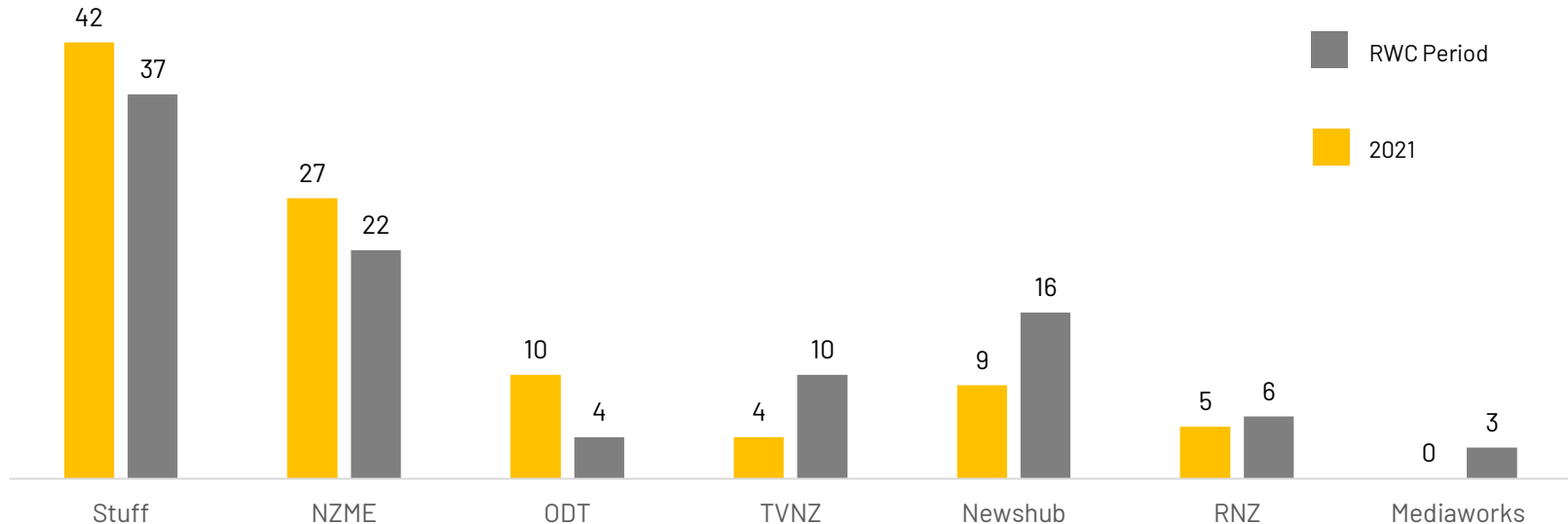
A wide-angle photograph of a large stadium filled with spectators during a rugby match. The sky is dark and cloudy, with stadium lights illuminating the field. The crowd is dense, and the field is green with white markings. Two goalposts are visible on the field. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The Rugby World Cup made up 25% of all sports news coverage in New Zealand during its tournament period.

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Market Share

TVNZ and Newshub significantly out-performed their normal market share during the Rugby World Cup period, while Stuff and NZME were both down.



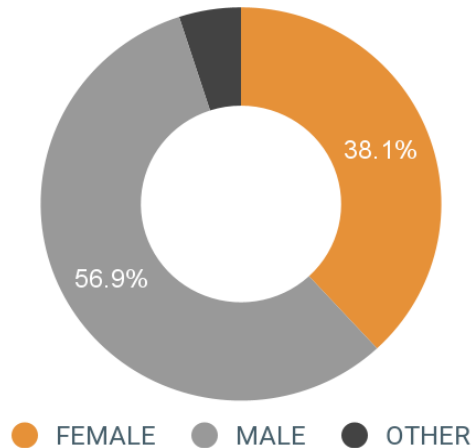
Gender Balance



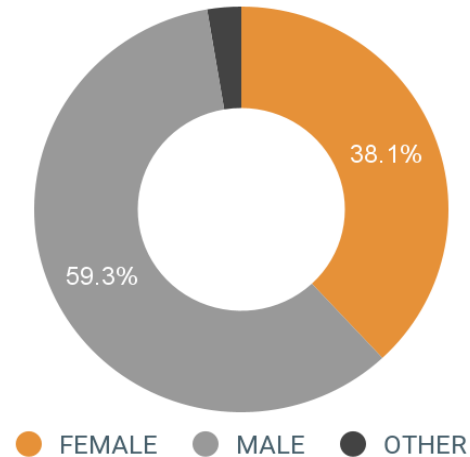
Balance v Visibility

These results are for all sports news coverage across the RWC period and show a continuation of the mid-year results, where the two are now back in alignment after visibility started to lag balance in 2021.

BALANCE

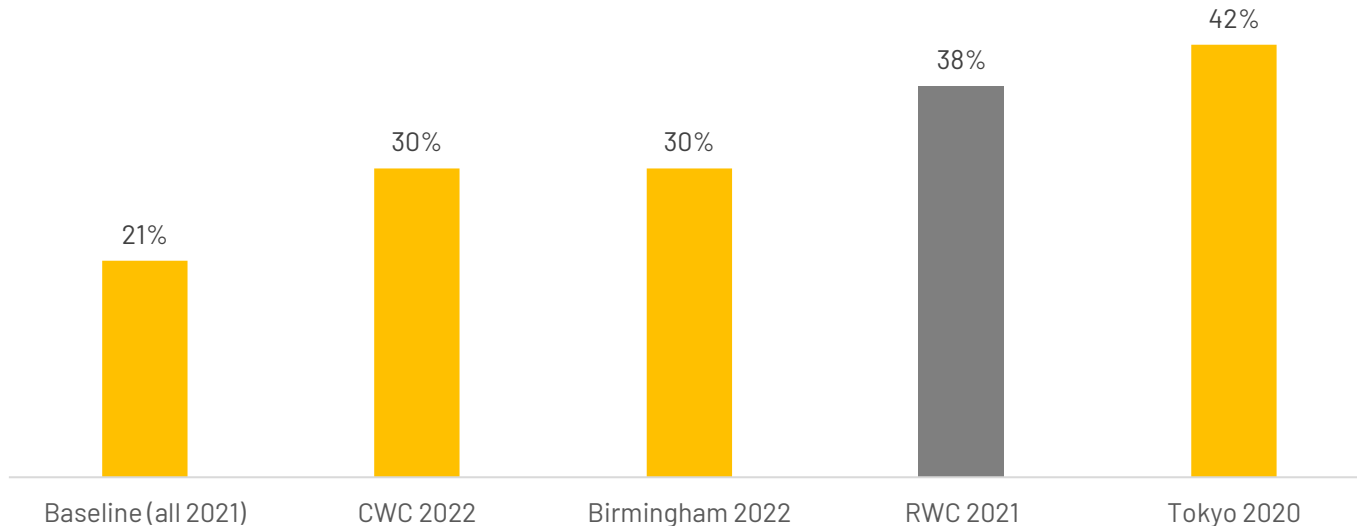


VISIBILITY



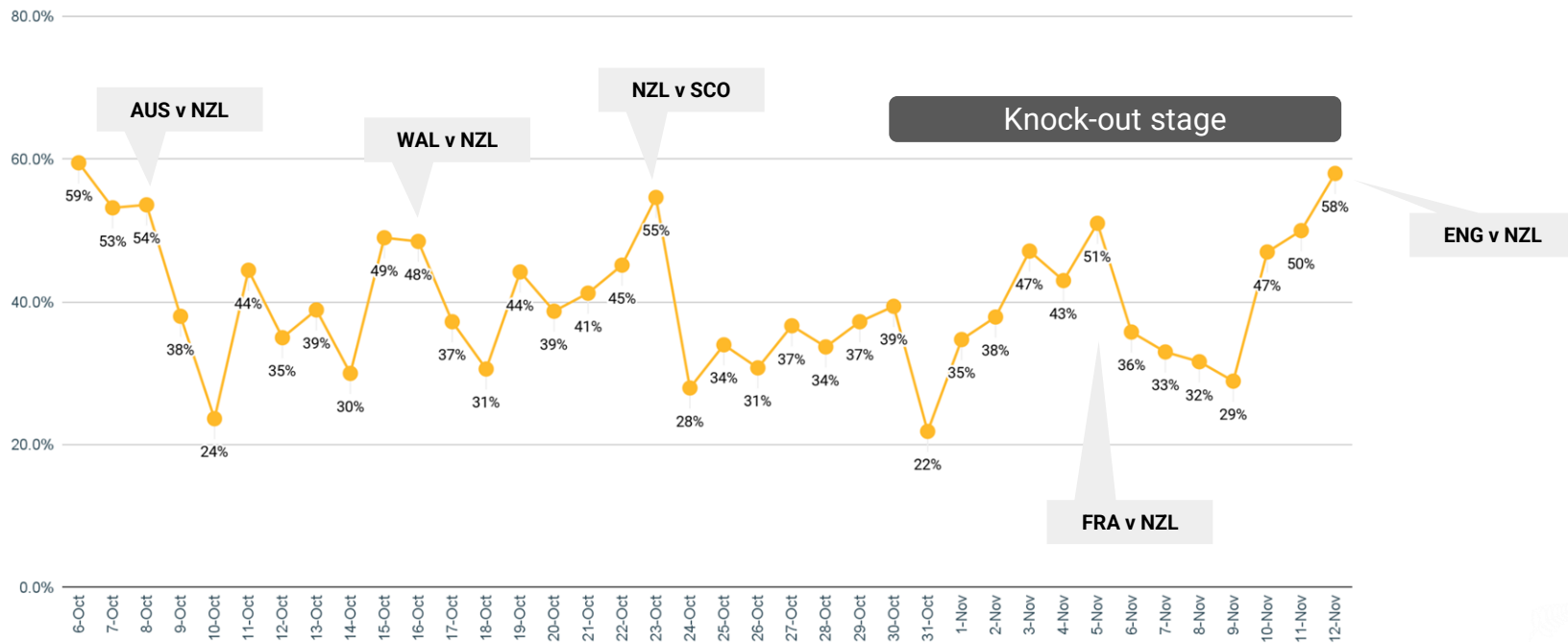
The World Cup Effect

These figures show the proportion of all sports news coverage (not just event coverage) devoted to women's sport during the period of a major sporting event, compared to the average figure for 2021. These results show the ability of these events to create short-term spikes in gender balance. The Rugby World Cup is second only to the Tokyo Olympic Games.



Daily Trend

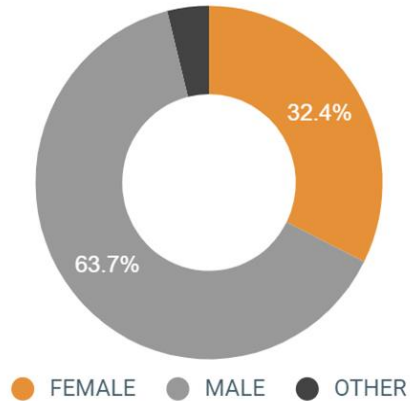
This graph shows the percentage of all sports news coverage devoted to women's sport across each day of the tournament. All days were above the average of 21% recorded across 2021.



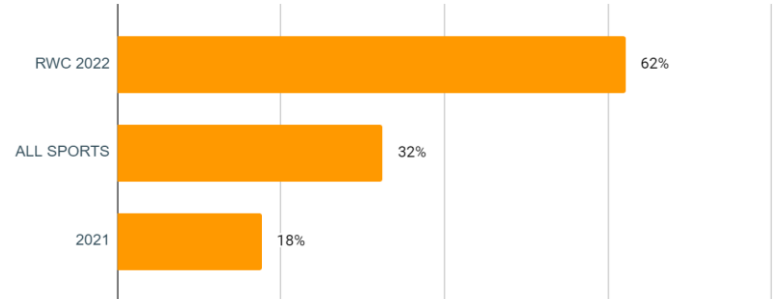
Sources

These charts look at the gender of sources quoted in all coverage during the tournament period. The proportion of female sources was 18% in 2021. During the Rugby World Cup this climbed to 32%.

SOURCE GENDER - ALL COVERAGE



% OF FEMALE SOURCES

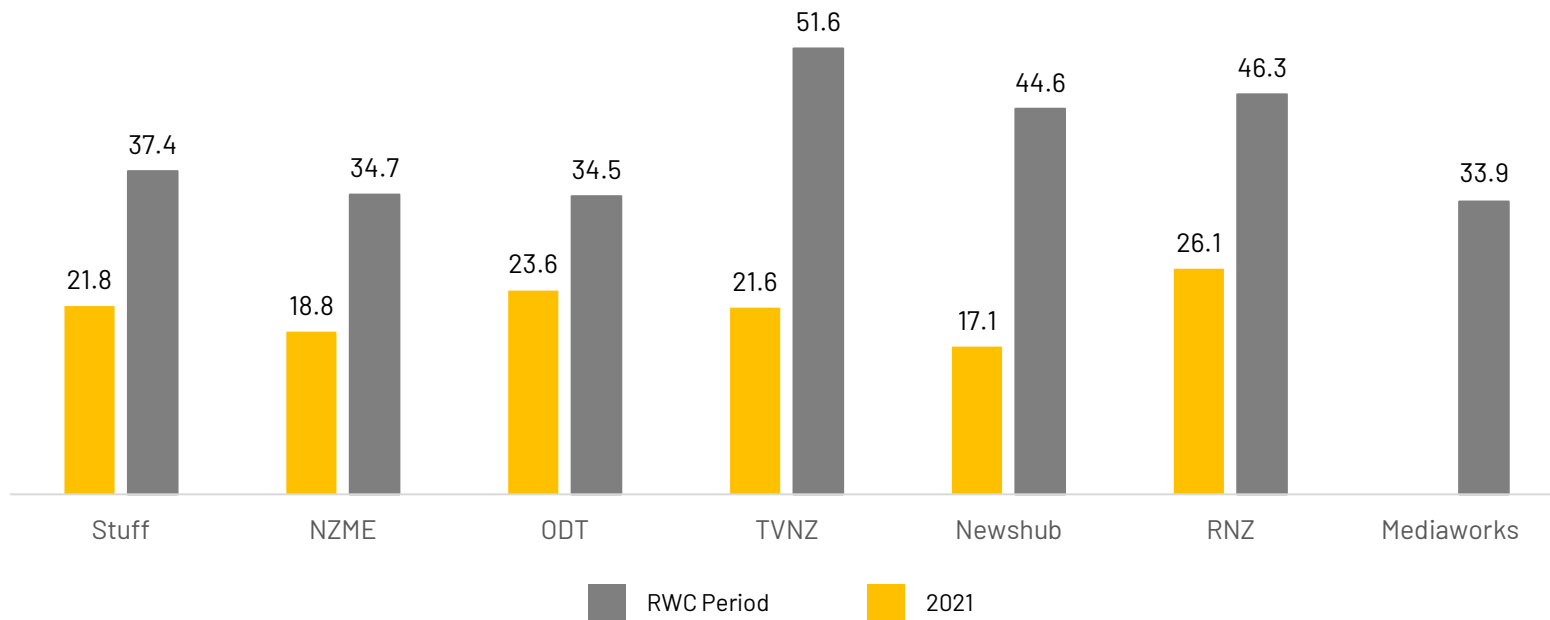


The Media



Gender Balance

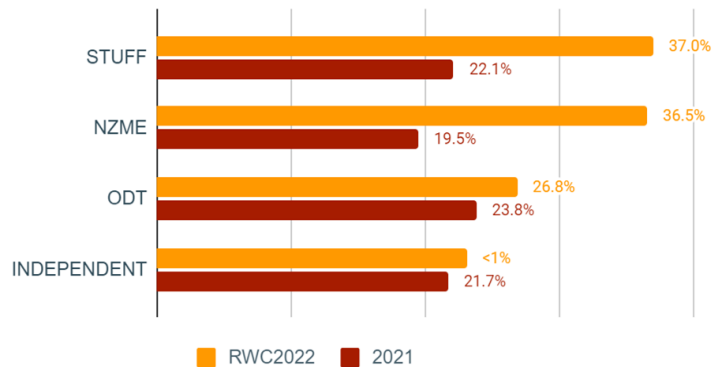
As with the Cricket World Cup, the spike in coverage of women's sport extended across all major media outlets during the Rugby World Cup period. Again, this is all sports news coverage



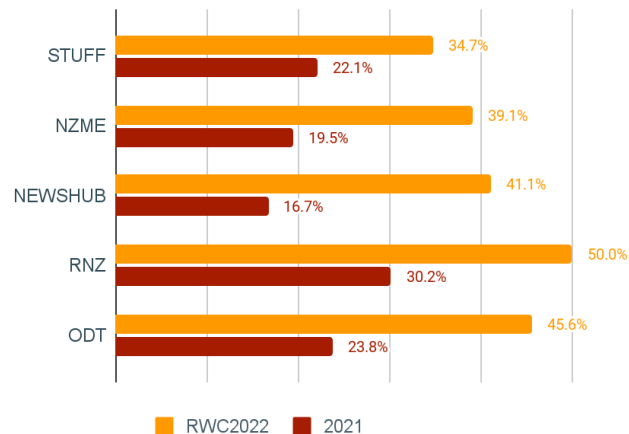
Media Type

As with the Cricket World Cup period, the 'World Cup Effect' extended to all media companies across all media types.

PRINT



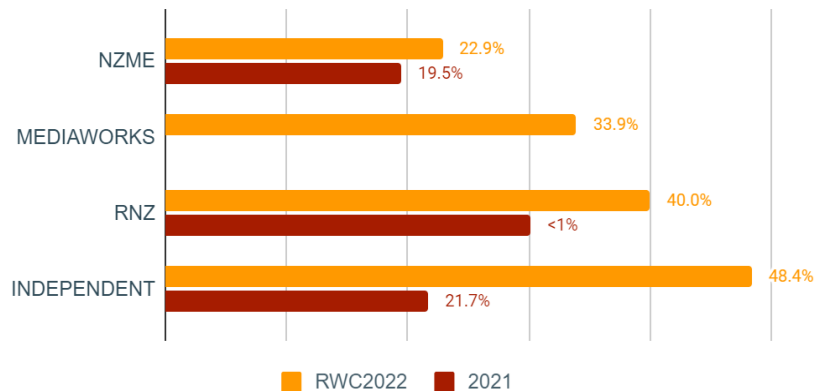
ONLINE



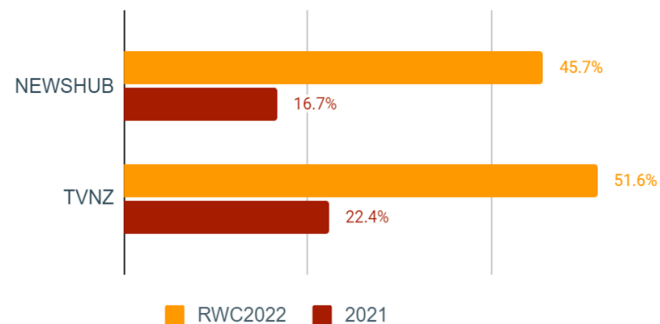
Media Type

Again we see TVNZ and Newshub strongly out-performing their normal market share during the Rugby World, both in broadcast and online.

RADIO



TV



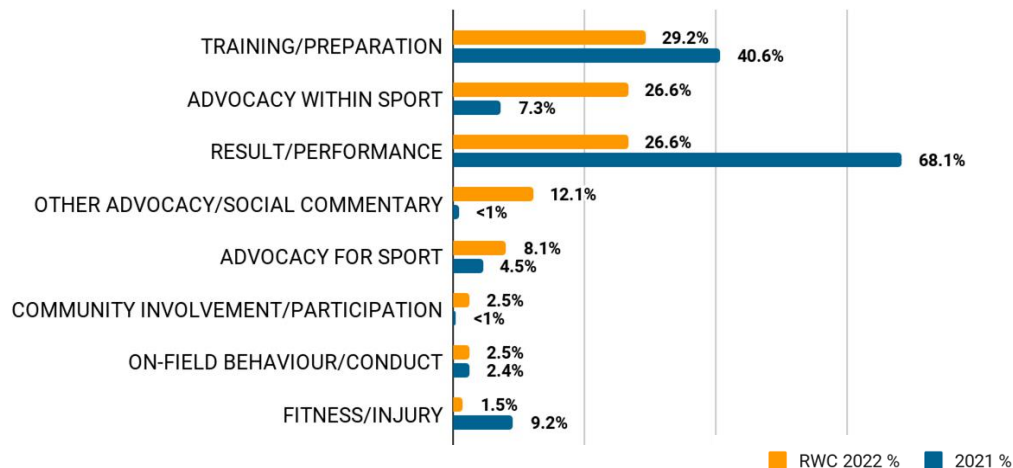
Athlete Portrayal



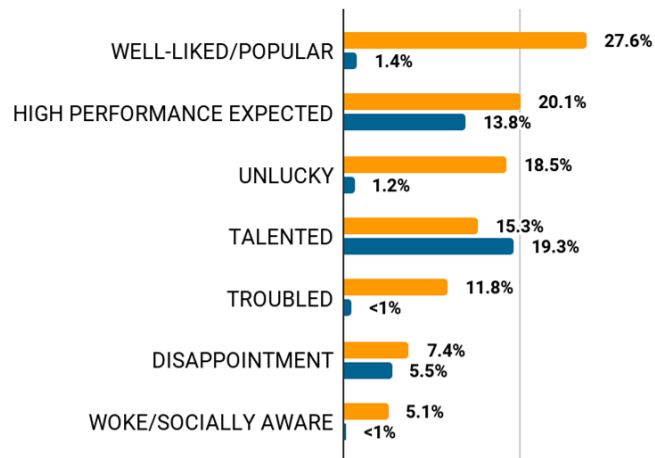
Topics & Themes

These charts show the most prominent topics and themes in RWC coverage (as opposed to all coverage in that period) compared to the averages for 2021. Advocacy was a key topic, with coverage looking at the rise of women's sport and inequity with male sport, while results/performance was less prominent.

TOPICS



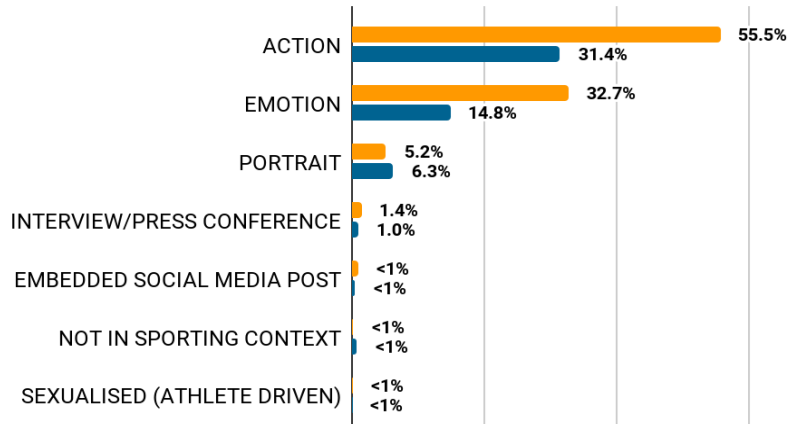
THEMES



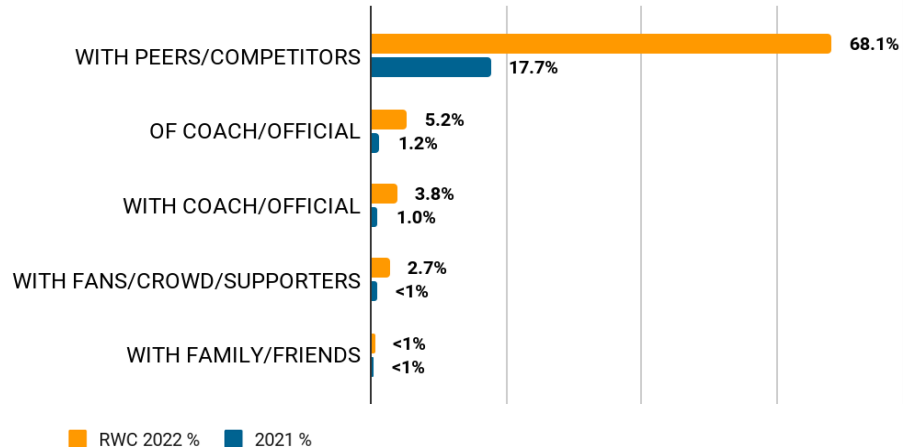
Imagery

Action and emotion were both far more prominent than usual and there was also more imagery showing players with teammates or competitors in RWC coverage than across 2021. This is possibly due to the 2021 sample featuring more imagery of individual sports, including at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

IMAGE TYPE



COMPOSITION

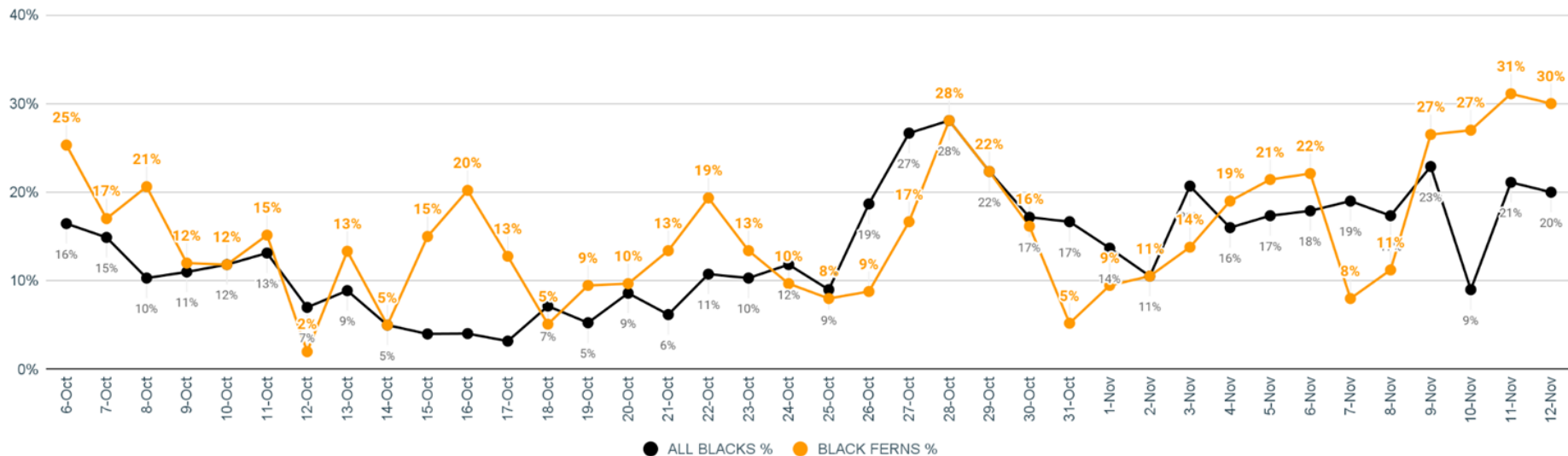


Black Ferns v All Blacks



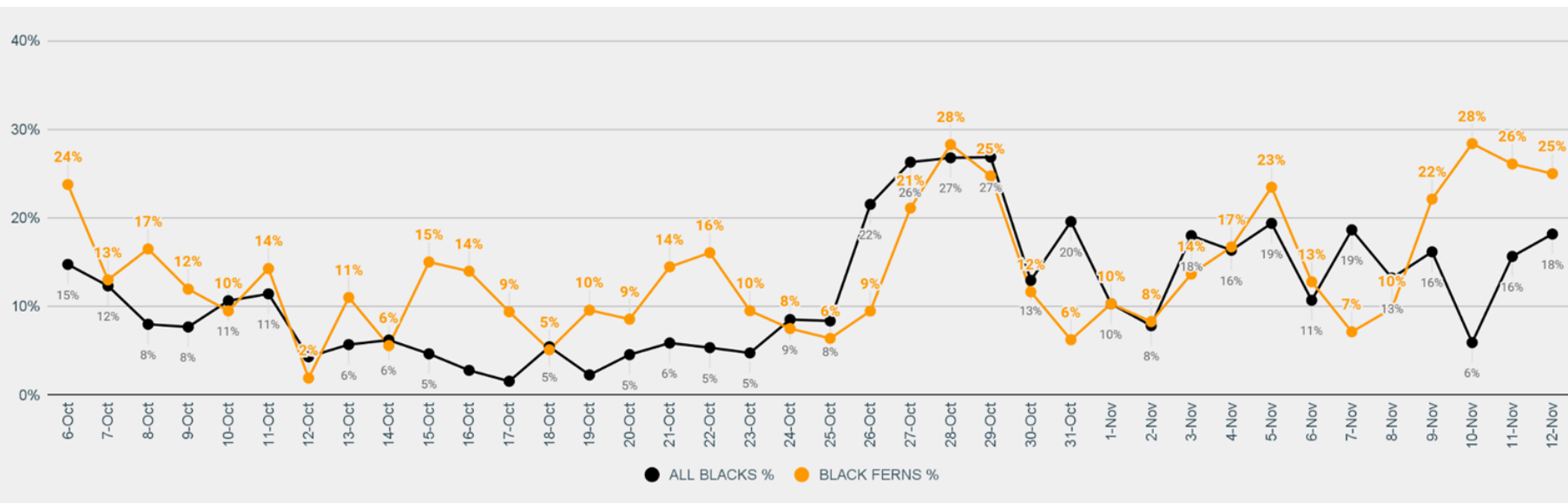
Share of All Daily Coverage

This chart compares each team's share of all daily sports news coverage during the tournament period. The Black Ferns averaged 15.1% and the All Blacks 12.8%



Visibility

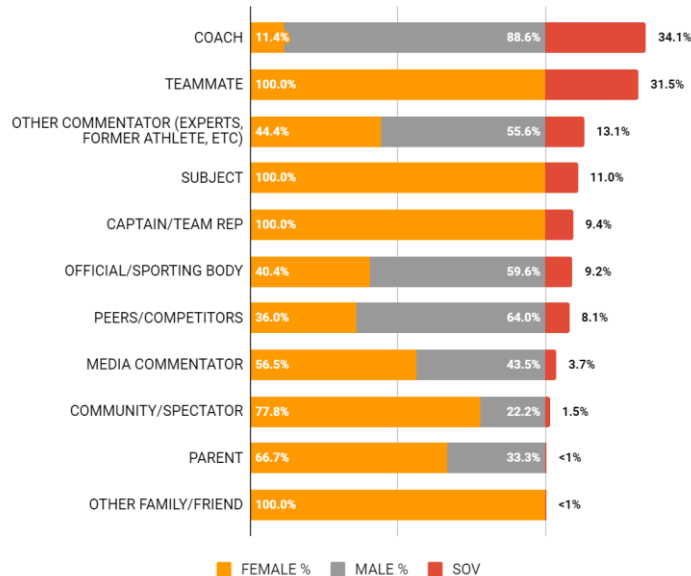
This chart compares visibility of players from each team in all sports news coverage during the tournament period. The Black Ferns averaged 14.8% of all players mentioned and/or quoted, while the All Blacks averaged 12.2%



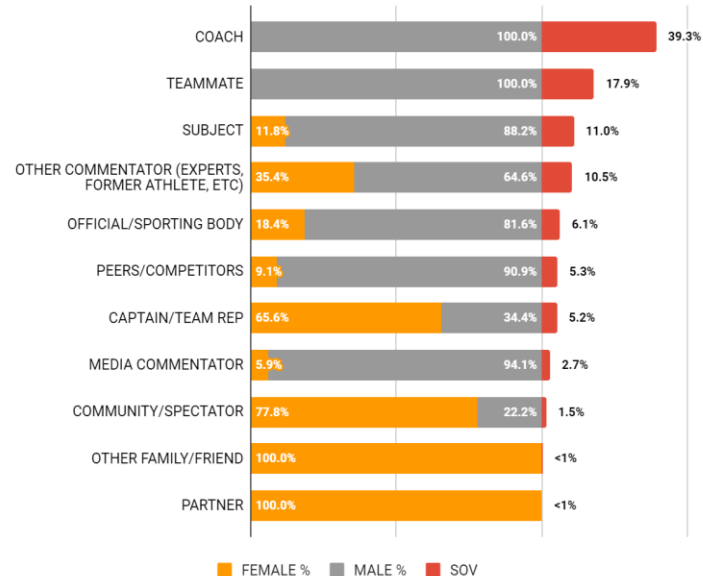
Sources

These charts show the type of people quoted in coverage of the Black Ferns and All Blacks during the Rugby World Cup period. All Black coaches were more likely to be quoted, while teammate quotes were far more prominent for Black Ferns.

BLACK FERNS



ALL BLACKS





sportnz.org.nz/mediaanalysis

