

# Survey Results

IOF Fair Play Project

# IOF Fair Play Survey

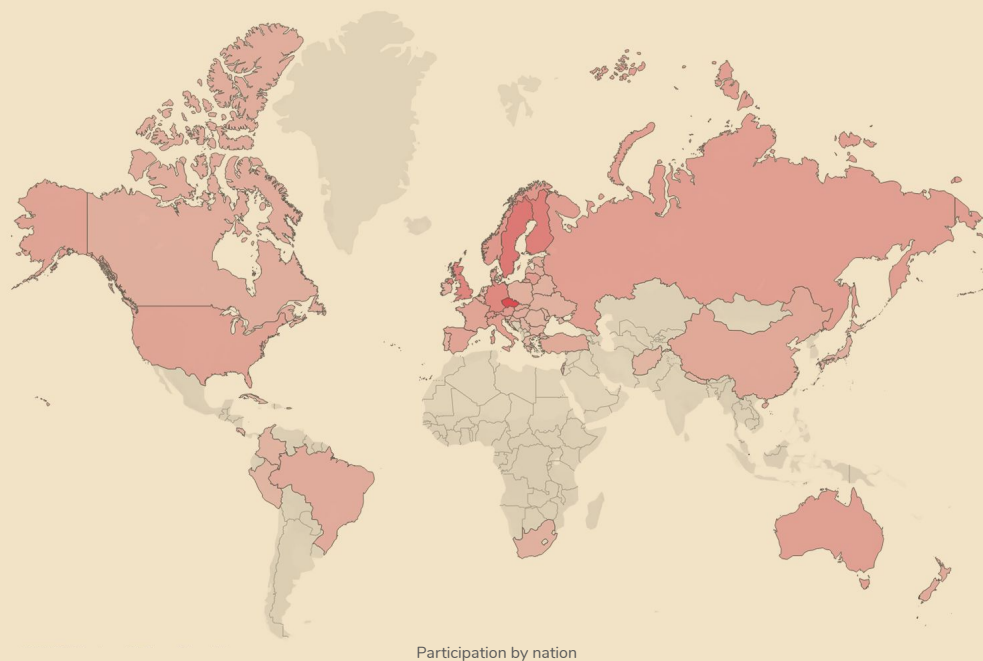
The International Orienteering Federation is currently conducting a project to align Fair Play values across the sport through an educational platform. As a part of this project, we have aimed to gain a better understanding of the current Fair Play landscape within orienteering.

To do so we sent out a survey to all member federations, athlete commissions, coaches & registered athletes in IOF eventor. We also made an open call on the IOF website [orienteering.sport](http://orienteering.sport) for responses.

This document aims to present a summary of the responses collected.

## NOTE

- All percentages in this summary have been rounded off to the nearest base number.
- Questions where respondents have been asked to provide a rating have all been answered on a scale of 0-6.
- Anti doping questions are out of scope of this survey as these are managed through the WADC & ADeL.



# Demographics

1786

Responses

54

Countries

1563

Foot O

287

MTB O

273

Ski O

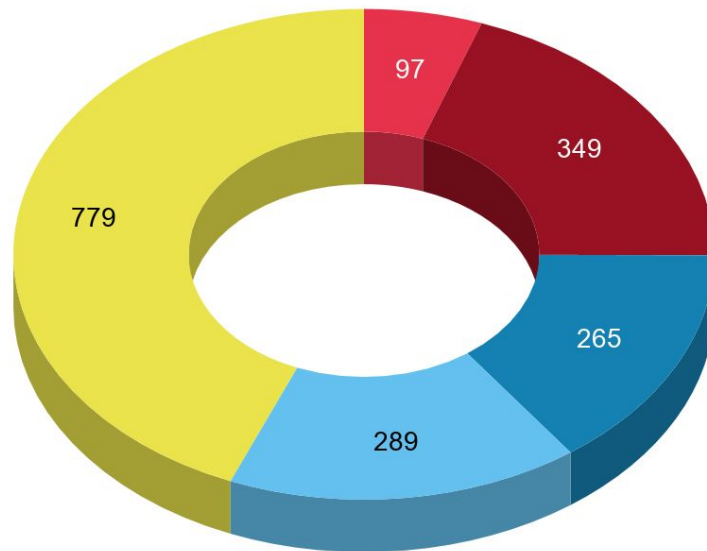
143

Trail O



# Age

All respondents



# of respondents per age group

**5%**

>18

**20%**

18-25

**15%**

25-35

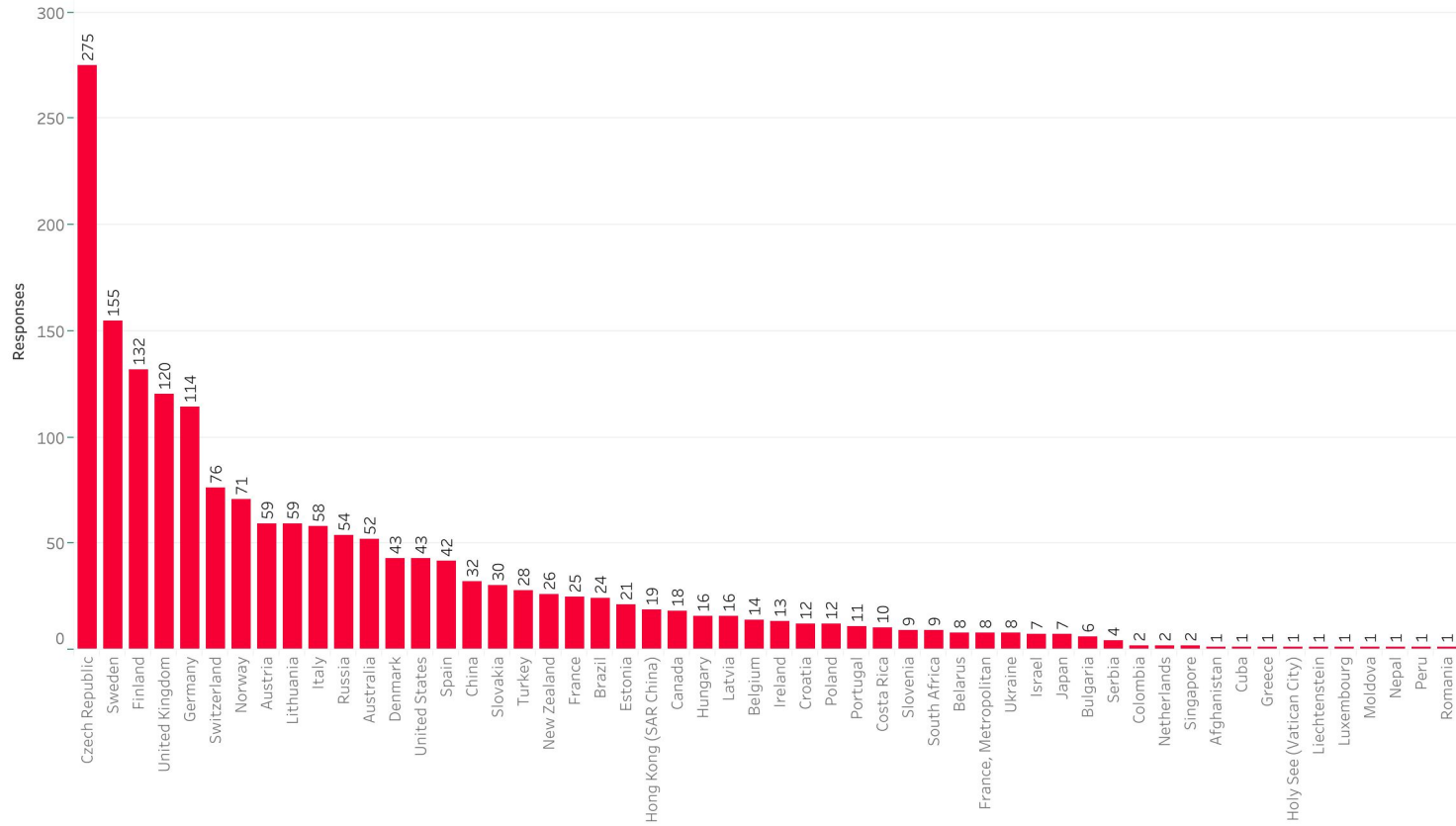
**16%**

35-45

**44%**

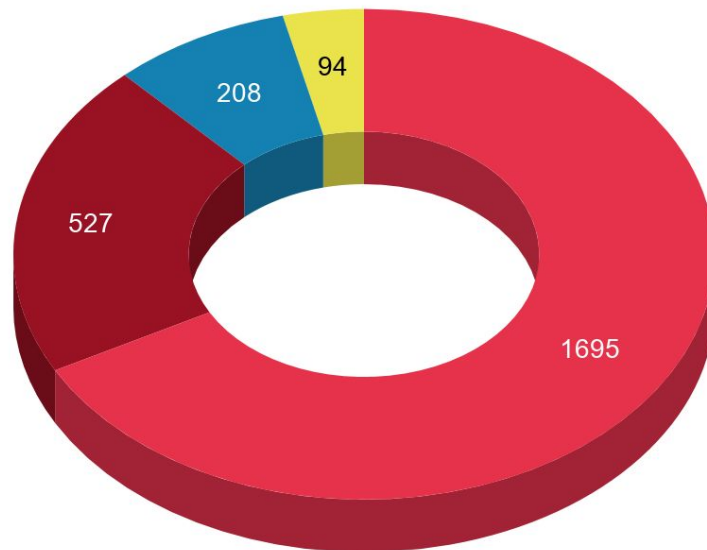
45+

# Participation by nation



## Role

All respondents



# of respondents per role

**95%**

Athletes

**30%**

Coaches

**12%**

National OF Reps.

**5%**

International OF Reps.

\*Participants could select multiple options.

# Elite Athlete Participation

Responded that they are an athlete & have competed on WOC / World Cup level

309

Responses

37

Countries

257

Foot O

63

MTB O

59

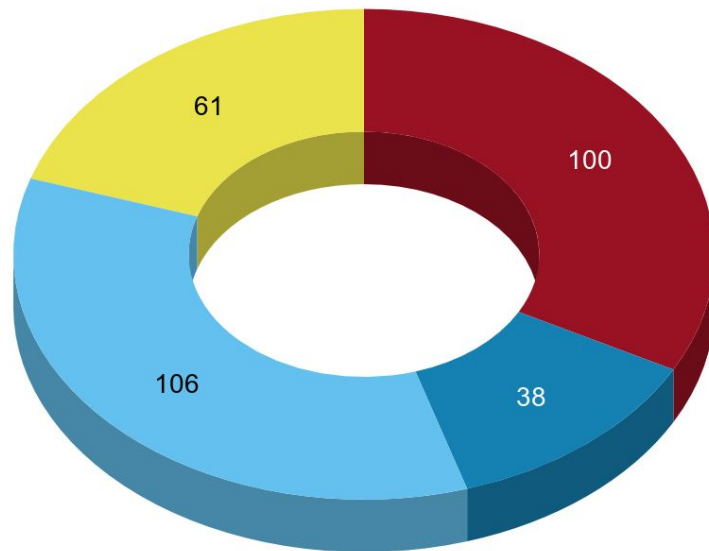
Ski O

32

Trail O

# Age

Elite Athletes



# of respondents per age group

0%

>18

32%

18-25

12%

25-35

34%

35-45

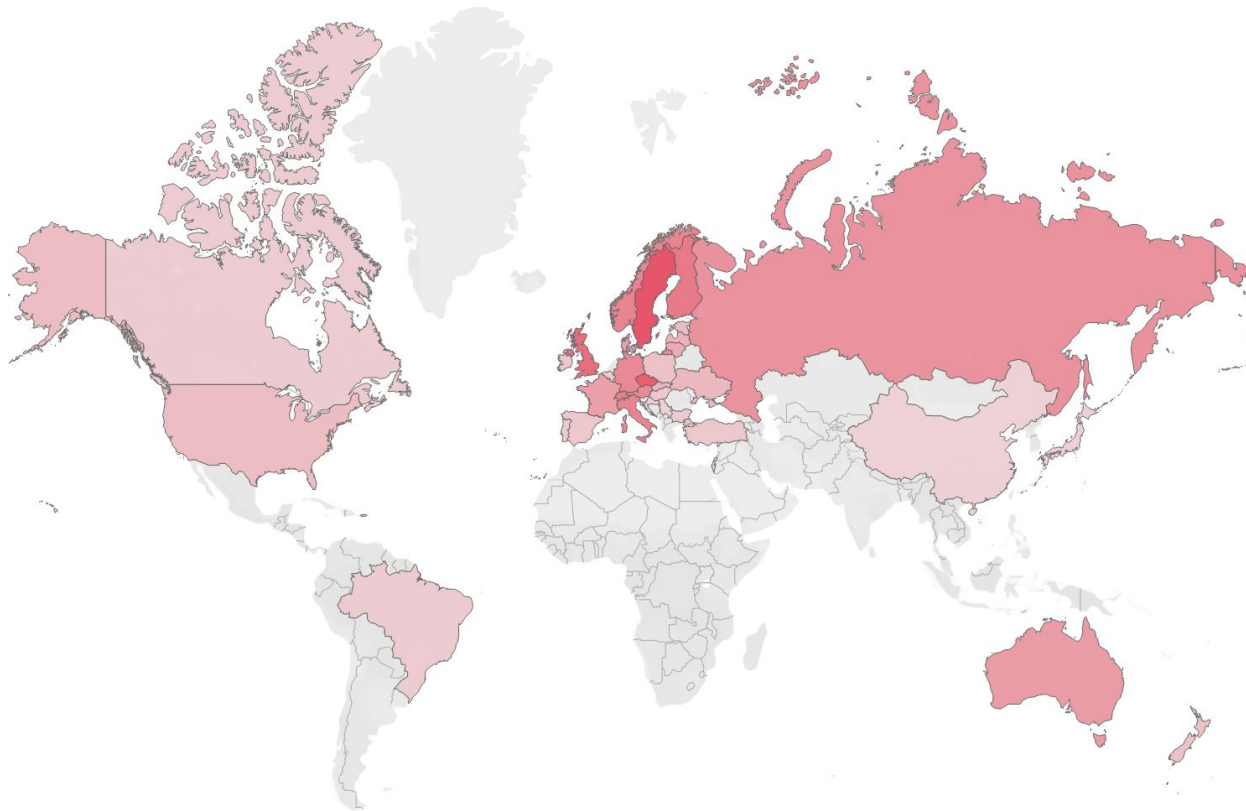
20%

45+

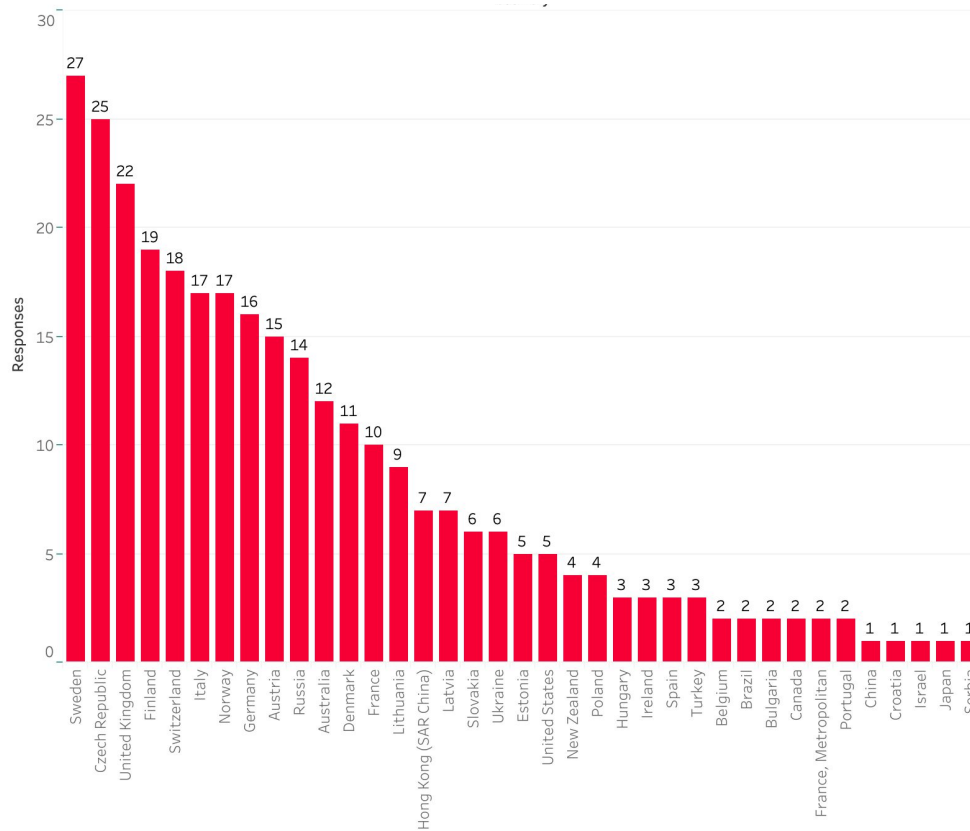
\*No WOC / World cup athletes 18 or under filled out the survey.

# Elite Athlete participation by nation

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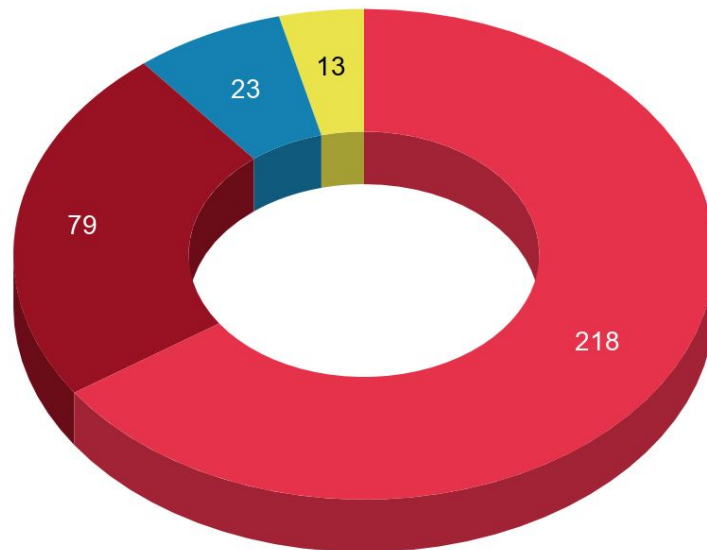


# Elite Athlete participation by nation



## Role

Elite Athletes



# of respondents per role

**71%**

Athlete Only

**26%**

Athlete & Coach

**7%**

Athlete & NOF Rep.

**4%**

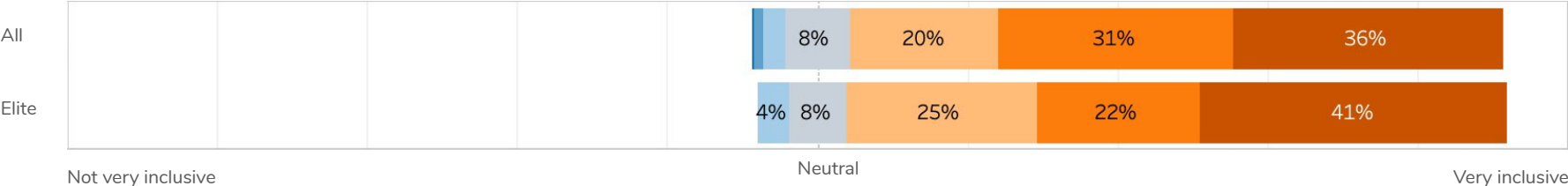
Athlete & IOF Rep.

\*Participants could select multiple options. 'Athlete only' is correct at 71%. The mixed roles include multiple combinations and therefore equal more than 29% combined.



**Inclusivity**

# How inclusive do you feel orienteering is as a sport?

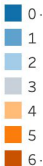


4.8/6

Average  
All Respondents

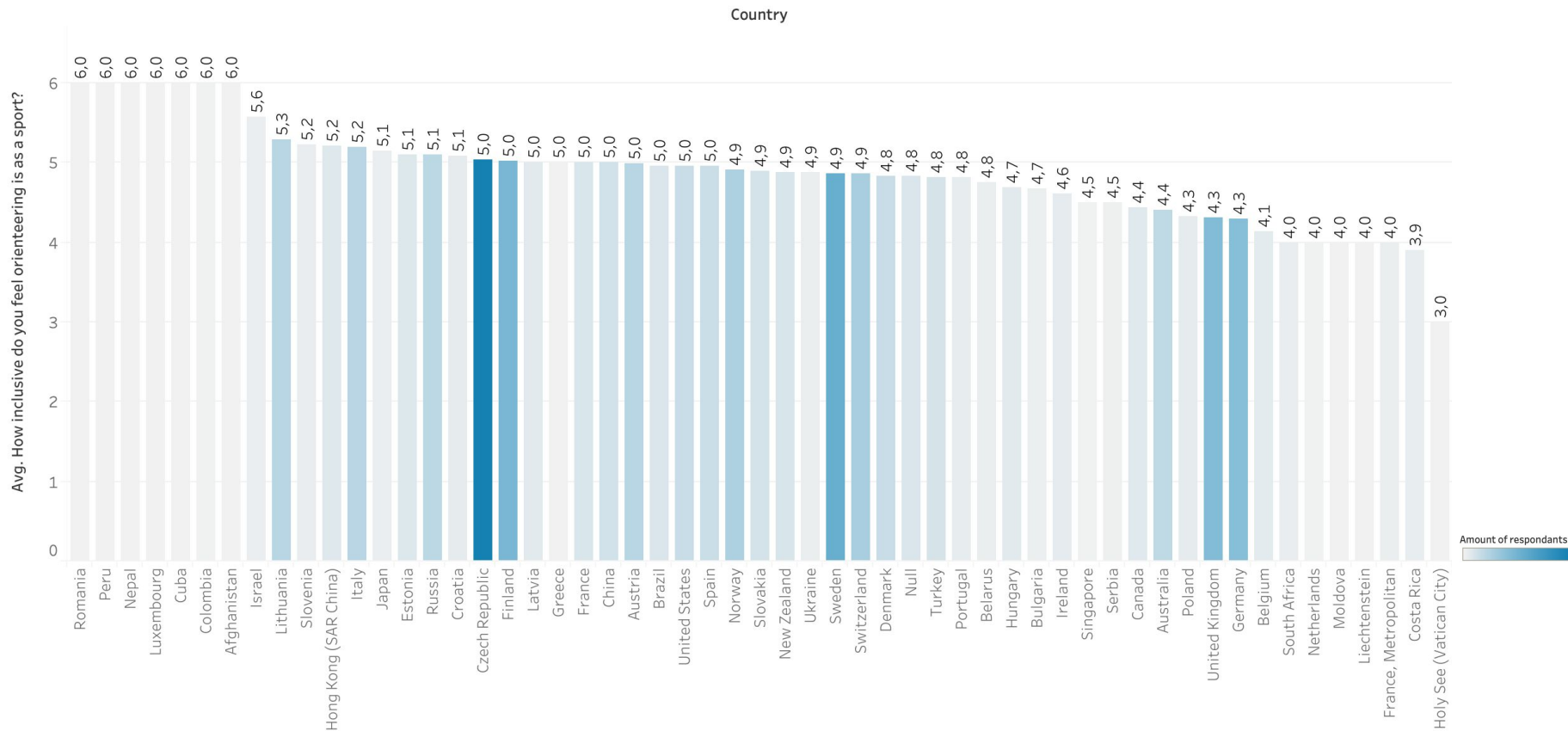
4.9/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



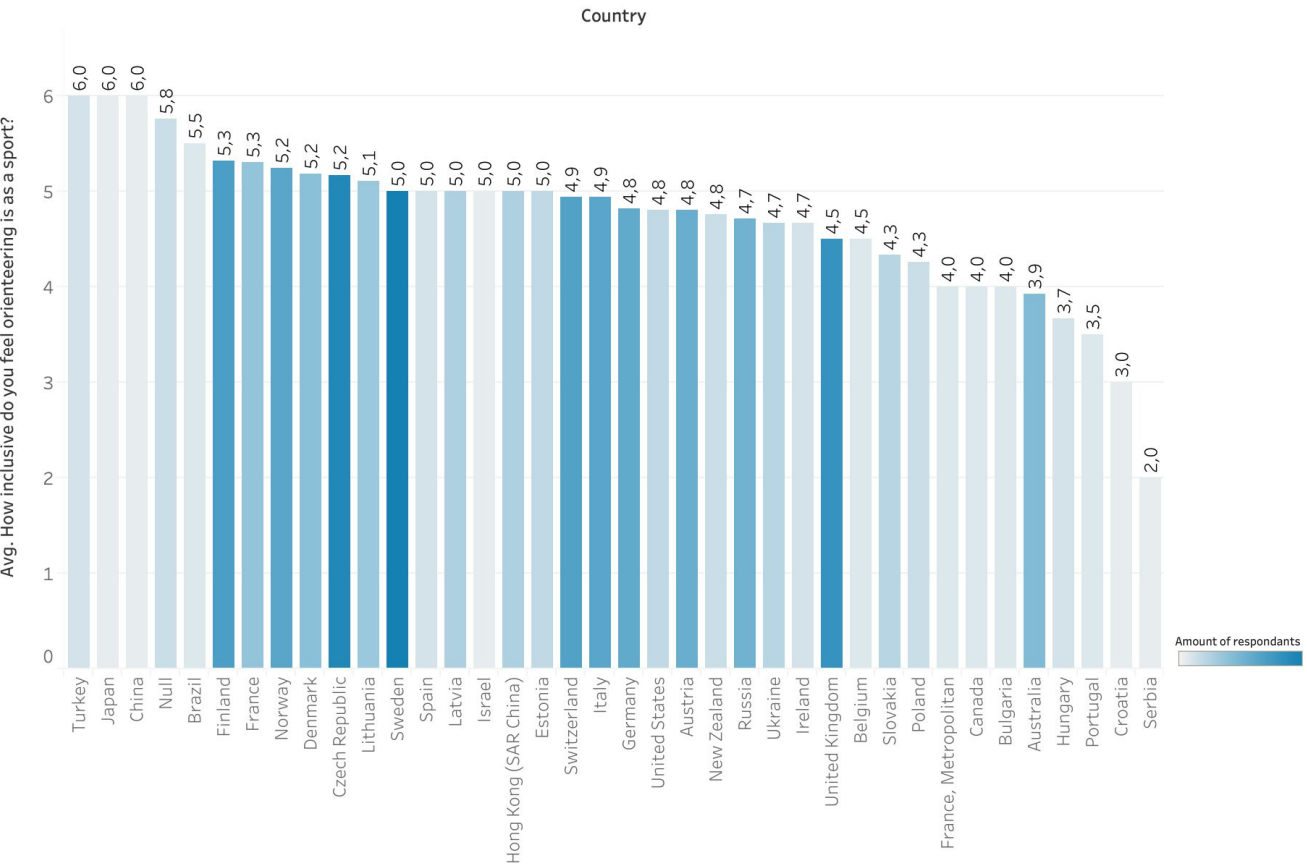
# How inclusive do you feel orienteering is as a sport?

All repondants



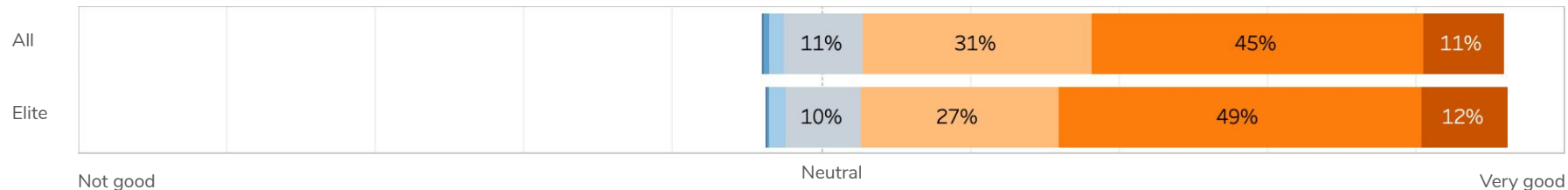
# How inclusive do you feel orienteering is as a sport?

Elite Athletes



# Perceived understanding of Fair Play

## How good would you say athletes are in following the fair play rules?

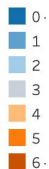


4.5/6

Average  
All Respondents

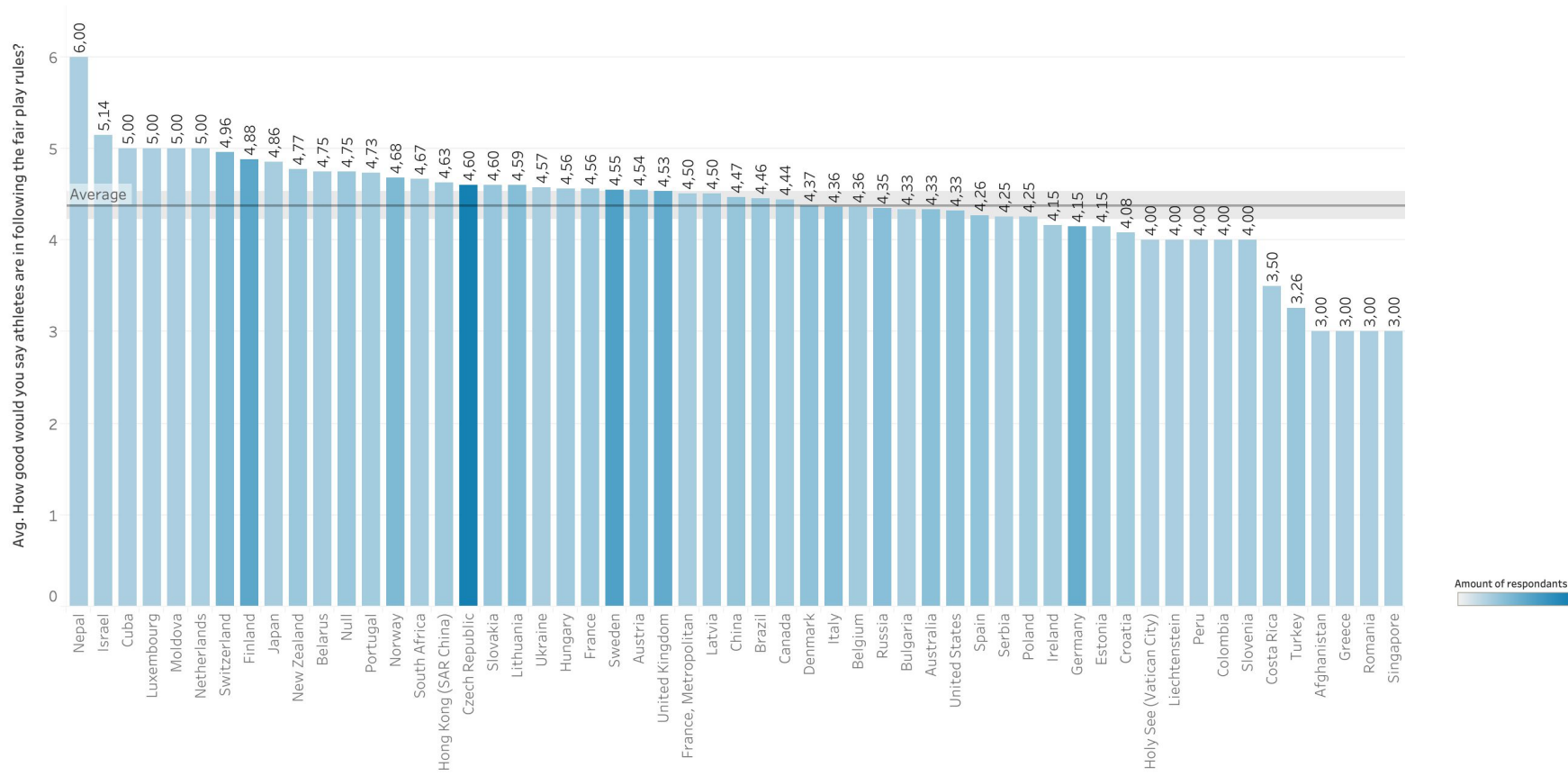
4.6/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



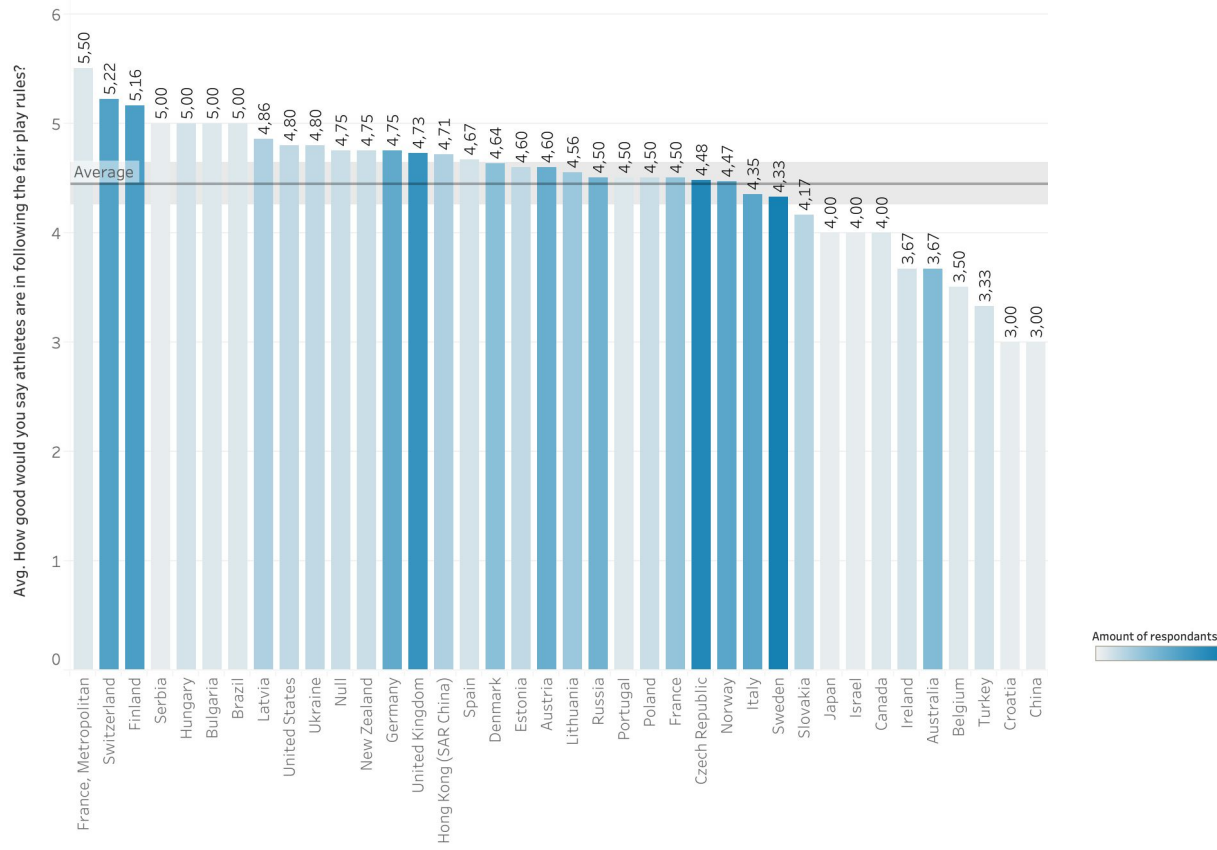
# How good would you say athletes are in following the fair play rules?

All repondants



# How good would you say athletes are in following the fair play rules?

Elite Athletes





**Do you feel like you have a clear understanding of what fair play within orienteering means?**

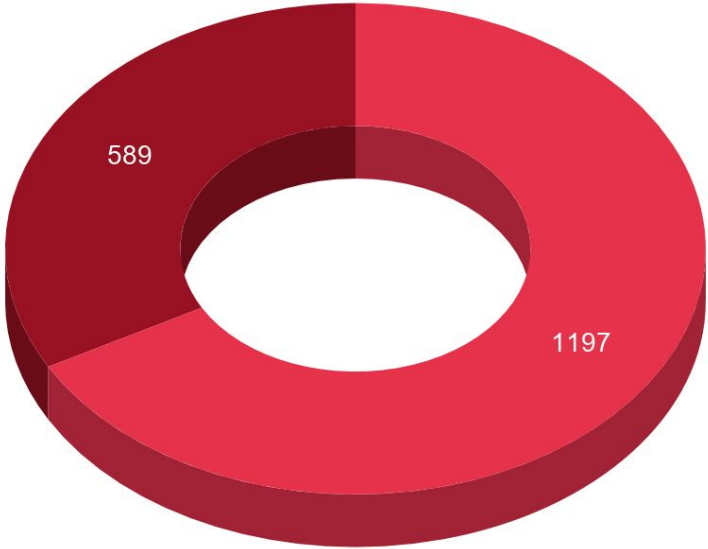
All repondants

67%

Yes

33%

No



# of respondents

## **Sample of responses**

**Can you describe what the core  
of orienteering fair play is?**

“Reading IOF Competition Rules, the description is complete for me. The essential takeaway is that the competitor is allowed to attain good result in competition only through athletic performance and navigation.

“Same possibilities for everyone to understand the map at racing speed without the map drawing and course setting raising doubts that cannot be eliminated while slowing down. Not trying to get unfair advantage (map, terrain, course)

“I believe (at least from what I feel in Europe), no one would feel satisfaction from a success based on anything else than his/her abilities and what has become a regular part of preparation (old maps, training in similar terrains...)

“It is hard to control every athlete. Fair play is to respect the rules, even if they might not be controlled very strictly. (eg embargoed areas)

“Not gaining an advantage through activity that is unavailable to all competitors.

“Respecting the rules concerning forbidden areas, both before and during competition. Respecting the nature of the terrain as well as the challenge of unknown courses. Helping people in danger.

“ Relying solely on one's own map and compass skills to complete a course

“ It's based on personal fair play understanding. If its not present, there is no fair play. Our sport is too sensitive and hard to control and there are a lot of room for cheating

“ I do not gain or try to gain any information about the upcoming races except the officially known facts, like from bulletins, interviews with organisers, previous maps etc

“ Fair orientering means that all athlertes should in principle have the same possibility to prepare. Information should be available to all competitors at the same time. No pre-knowledge about the map or terrain.

“ That all athletes should have equal opportunities before and during the race.

“ Running, Skiing or biking the course with only map and compass without help from outside, not influence or hinder other people

“Do not use any kind of substance to obtain advantage over the other athletes. Follow all the rules with or without officers, cameras, etc. Conscious discipline. The health and safety of others athletes are more important than my performance

“An understanding of the rules but also a realisation that in our sport it is impossible to police many of the rules, and we therefore need to have a an understanding of the ethics of orienteering.

“We have "clear" rules which cannot be controlled (visiting an embargoed area, getting informations from organisers...). Fairlay means that we stick to the rules even cheating could be simple. So the basic values are trust and respect!

“Every athlete of orienteering should engage the sport by his/her own ability, effort and skill in the course of competition without using any unauthorized assistance both physical and mechanical devices or from other athletes or official.

“For organizers: ensuring level ground for all participants and avoiding misleading information incl. maps. Participants: not sharing information until competition ends, don't offend, stop to help in critical situations

“Certain level of trust that no competitor looks at their map before the start. Or that the organizers don't give out information to for example their own club members or anyone.

“Follow the rules. Disqualify yourself if you see you have done something wrong.

“That most important thing is that the first runner should have the same difficulty as the last runner (If its possible)).

“Everyone have to be your own referee

“Competitors from nearby have no advantage over competitors from afar.

“I think key to fair play, at least at our club is our attitude to the sport. We learn kids our sport is about friendship. Friendship with each other and friendship with nature. You can't cheat in sport where everyone support each other.

“The core is that we trust one another not to cheat. We trust each other that we don't go to the embargoed areas, that we all want to have equal chances of winning and that we don't want to have any advantages before running our own race.

“Follow the rules and when misstaken, come clean about it and tell the competition center.

## **Sample of responses**

**How can we improve the  
understanding for fair play  
within orienteering?**

“Set clear and understandable rules what is allowed and what is not. In the case of breaching those rules, impose strict sanctions to warn others.

“Strengthen the theoretical learning, through the practice of competition to enhance understanding

“Publish specific examples of violations

“Finding mottos that explain fair play and use them everywhere.

“You could make a video with some "story" about non-fair play behavior. Namely show some most common violations or you could write about real events, when someone got this kind of advantage and it really influenced results.

“Clear rules about what is OK and not. I can see that there are different views of what is OK and not at the international competitions: shouting routes at arena passages, crossing unclear forbidden areas for example.

“Teach it at a young age at club level. I, for example, have never read/heard about the regulation about fair play. Which grey zones that's not OK.



# Fair Play observations

# Have you ever observed anyone in your immediate surrounding that has acted in a way that you think is against orienteering fair play?

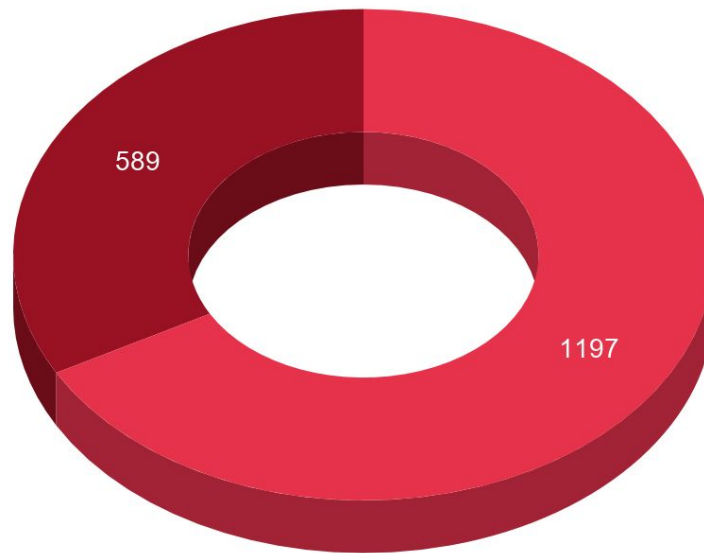
All repondants

67%

Yes

33%

No



# of respondents

# Have you ever observed anyone in your immediate surrounding that has acted in a way that you think is against orienteering fair play?

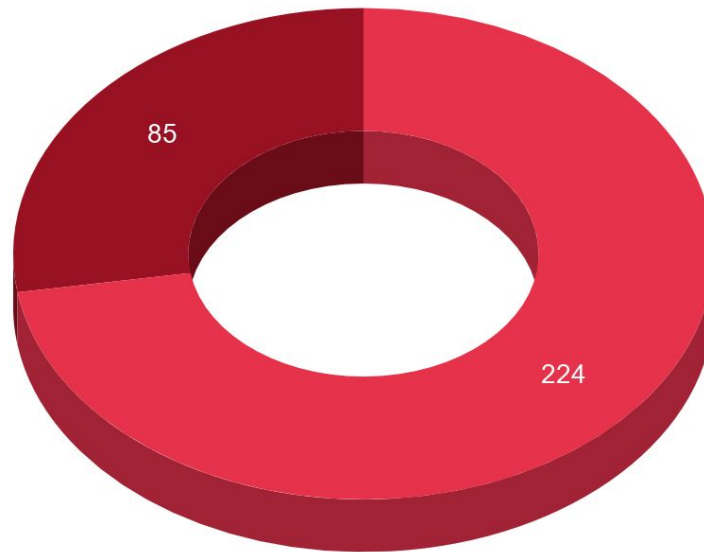
Elite Athletes

72%

Yes

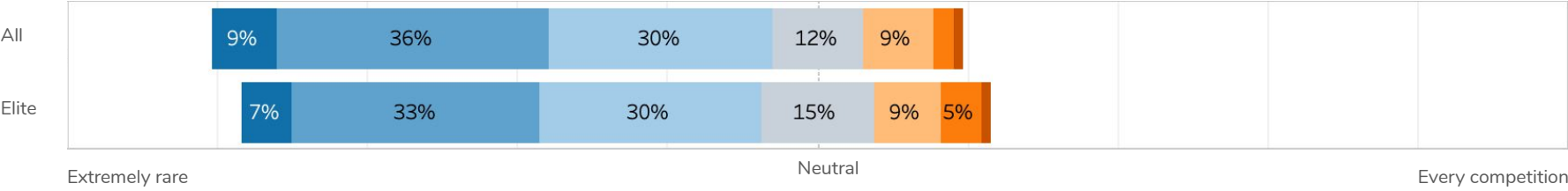
28%

No



# of respondents

# How frequent would you say that you observe abuse of fair play?



1.9<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

2.1<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
Elite Athletes



**Sample of responses**

**What have you observed?**

“Following a better athlete, without performing any navigation. Large Scandinavian relays do seem to have a different code of ethics on this, but at other individual events this seems more egregious.

“Usage of an old map during relay competition to show a course. Saying control codes during relay competition among team members from the same club.”

“Not all people know the rules of sprint and quite often they run where they shouldn't. Sometimes they don't know they get advantages by breaking the rules.

“People trying to get access to map/course, going into embargoed area or passing information to runners in a caranteen.

“International events host country participants have often taken part although they almost every year train in the very competition terrain and on the same maps (in WMOC events in particular).

“Training within embargoe or being there, spectators helping runners on course. Watching other competitor's maps before running.

“Trying to start one minute before the start list time

“Displayed the race map for team members, told about the course on an old map, tried to start earlier than his own start time, used the mobile in the toilet at quarantine, ran in canceled area ...

“In national event most typical is that some athletes have too good knowledge of terrain. In international: 1) athletes want to get to terrain as close as possible, marginally close to breaking of rules 2) team representatives try to get as much information as possible, sometimes marginally close to breaking rules.

“Following other runners is the most common. Most competitors want to do right, but sometimes also organisers makes it difficult for the athlete to do right. Unclear markings for forbidden areas is one example on that. Teams who want to book accommodation in closed areas at World Championships. Athletes or teams that have training sessions in closed areas at EOC and WOC.

“Climbing fences, jumping over walls, destroying vegetation forbidden to pass, entering embargoed areas with old maps...

“Being in embargoed area before the race.  
Seeing the area map before the race.  
Officials giving out some information before the race to small group of people not publicly available: main roads are icy after night (ski-o) etc...

“Some people have admitted even in TV interview that they have asked somebody to show their position and still succeeded in the competition. This is an example showing that there are certain things that many people think is ok to do, even if those things are forbidden in the rules. It may be unawareness of the rules, but also disrespect towards written rules compared to what is the "common practice" if there are no sanctions.

“Race controllers who have said more than the information provided publicly. In sprint: way too many times runners passing forbidden objects.

“Talk to others during the competition. Run in a group. Compete on your club or hometown maps. Show the map after finishing, to runners who have not started. Do not respect quarantines with mobile devices. Train on maps without permission from owner or club that manages it.

“Coaches going into the competition area cheering and giving information to their athletes.

“Young athletes in regional competitions hiding controls after their passage

“Crossing of out of bounds / not permitted to cross features (especially in sprint/urban orienteering) fraudulent declaration to obtain para class eligibility for TrailO. Communication devices in quarantine

“Phone in quarantine. Communication (voice) between someone in pre-start and someone in arena (including runners having finished their race). Teams training on maps that organizers had forbidden (not competition area, but linked to other access issues). Runners crossing forbidden areas.

“Early start, looking at the map before start, visiting competition area, crossing forbidden areas, running together.

“People who do not pass the starting point but depart before.



## **Sample of responses**

**What do you see as the biggest risk for  
unfair play in orienteering?**

**What area of our sport do you think is the most sensitive to unfair behaviour?**

“Knowing the controls or even the whole course before the event.

“Getting advantages by getting information about maps, courses and terrain in advance.

“Breaking an embargo since there is really no way to know if it has been done, and the advantage in some terrain (city sprint?) could be significant

“Culture definitions of what is fair

“Difficult to tell between drugs and unfairly getting information about the course before hand - I think both are more rife then people realise. (Although the top guys at WOC I don't think are on drugs!)

“Embargoed areas - it is not possible to guard all areas if somebody is not entering and training there, but it is crucial for our sport that all athletes have same conditions. And also uncrossable boundaries and out-of-bound areas.

“Well the chinese team at military champs pulled some extreme cases. Unfair knowledge of the terrain or courses seems bad. There was a loss of trust in the fairness of the organization, and then future results are more suspicious, and that is a sad position to be in

“95/5000 For example, in a sprint race, I wouldn't indicate where the finish would be until the day before the race.  
456/5000 There would be 2-3 variants of the race and all would be secured. The competitors on the day of the race would know where the race will take place. Otherwise it doesn't matter - everyone is studying google earth, different maps, walking in cities, looking at details etc. etc. WOC 2001 - was irregular, WOC 2003 also irregular, WOC 2014 absolutely irregular/Venice- with walking tourists in the city. Overall orienteering has very complicated rules and with this will never become an Olympic sport. Unless they simplify the rules.

“Of course things seen and suspected in China are exceptional and shouldn't be made possible. Generally, I think we can count the fairness of the athletes if the rules are clear enough and respected by the community. I think the most risk comes from the system level, if the success is seen as a national pride thing in some federation, similarly as doping systems work in other sports.

“That it Will enforce more and more people from the organizers for checking athletes, and thereby making it harder and harder to find people to engage in arranging competitions

“After recent events, it seems that there's a risk that some of the athletes might get a hold of the competition map before a race and study the course. Also better knowledge of a certain terrain might set people on different level. Or help from organizers / someone else during competition.

“Doping. Break embargoes. Following. "Online information" due to GPS possibilities.

“Online GPS streaming and gaining advantage before the start - even though online devices are forbidden in the quarantine zone you can't thoroughly check everybody all the time.

“Its too hard to control embargo areas - especially if old map exists. Also leaking of courses is very harmful - though it does not happen often in high level events, but it may be more frequent in less fair play orienteering countries

“Doping use. Poor quality maps and the areas with lottery element.

“Athletes not understanding what is unfair

“Technical challenges aren't the same for everyone, if one can prepare for them better or more concrete than others

“That people will lose their thrust of fair play in the sport. So we start creating nonsense rules, which will make the sport more complicated and boring for the runners/riders, which behave according to the rules. Also more people could be risking unfair play and we could become sth. like Tour the France in the previous century, where everybody was cheating, because it was normal.

“We can't monitor every where... So if to many people cheat we can't sanction.... In mtbo forest where there is a big network of paths but where it's forbidden to cut

“Destroying the motivation of performing well

“ Sprint orienteering. Very difficult to enforce an embargo. As O becomes more popular there will be greater incentive to cheat.

“ Benefits that can be obtained through advancing technology. Some examples... competitors making their own maps of new areas before a competition; using mobile phones to pass on information about a competition; televising a race that gives out information to advantage competitors who haven't yet started.

“ Following during competition. Far too many think it is ok.

“ Spreading orienteering to new countries where they focus mostly on results.

“ Recent allegations of athletes having access to maps and courses before the competition. Obviously that is a significant concern but until recent CISM and WC in China no one would have listed that as a concern. Don't make the mistake of just focusing on that issue and ignoring other issues.

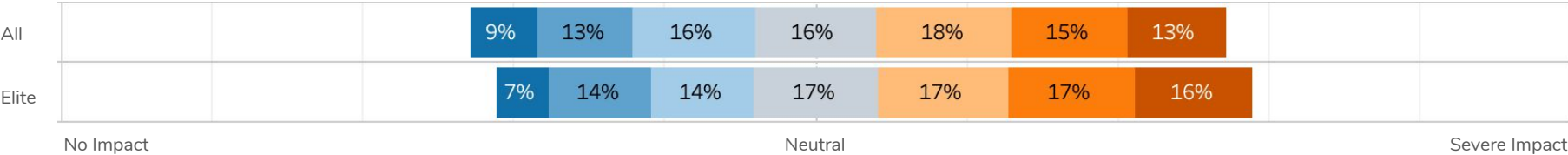
Until around 2008(?) the rules said something like 'runners shall navigate independently' which clearly meant following was forbidden. Now there is absolutely no mention of following in the Fair Play section! Clearly this means following is considered fair play. There is only a very vague reference to 'independent navigation' in rule 1.2. Yes a following rule is impossible to enforce but so are many other rules (embargoes, etc). A strong rule against following is important as it sets a strong moral standard. It should be followed up with an education campaign about just what constitutes following as opposed to running with another competitor but still navigating independently.

Rule (26.2) bans communicating with other runners. This should be enforced and highlighted in any education campaign

# Perceived impact of Fair Play scenarios

# Having visited the competition area before it has been embargoed.

All & Elite

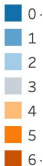


3.2/6

Average  
All Respondents

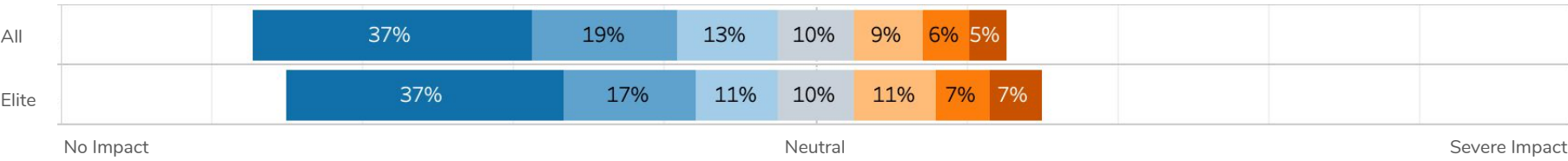
3.7/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Been actively training in similar terrain areas.

All & Elite



1.8<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

1.9<sub>/6</sub>

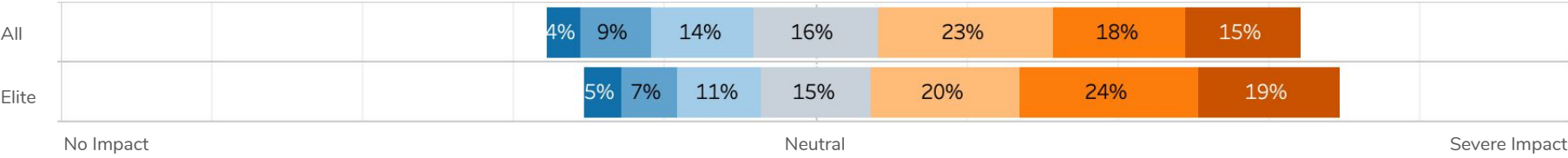
Average  
Elite Athletes





# Been walking through an embargoed area (not actively training).

All & Elite



3.6<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
All Respondents

3.8<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
Elite Athletes



# Been actively training in the competition area before the embargo is announced.

All & Elite

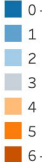


3.4<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

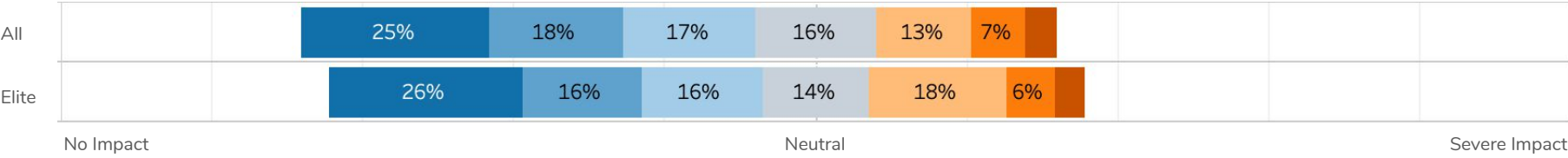
3.7<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Having access to old maps of the area.

All & Elite



2.1/6

Average  
All Respondents

2.2/6

Average  
Elite Athletes

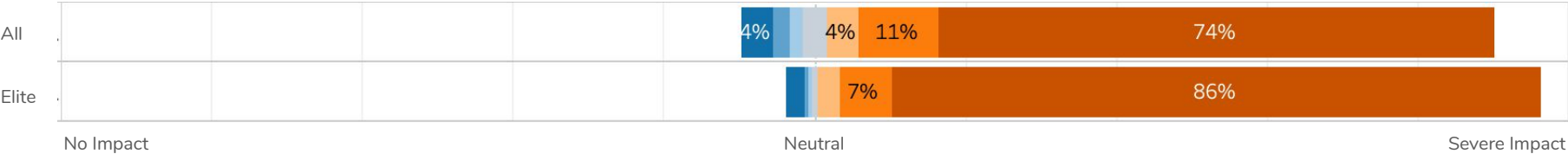






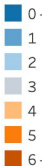
# Having access to the courses ahead of the competition day.

All & Elite



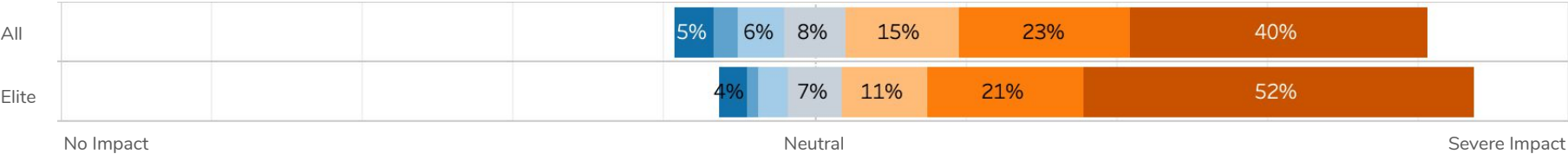
5.3<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
All Respondents

5.7<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
Elite Athletes



# Bringing a communication device into the quarantine.

All & Elite

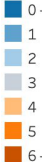


4.6/6

Average  
All Respondents

4.9/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Using a fitness accessory where you can read distance/steps/direction during a race.

All & Elite

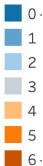


3.0/6

Average  
All Respondents

2.3/6

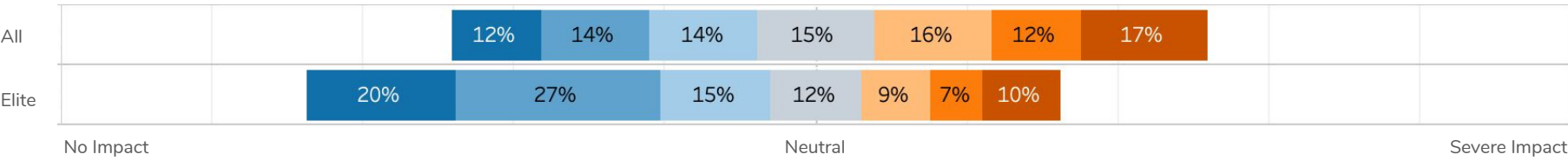
Average  
Elite Athletes





# Passing through a forbidden area on the course to gain time advantage.

All & Elite



3.0/6

Average  
All Respondents

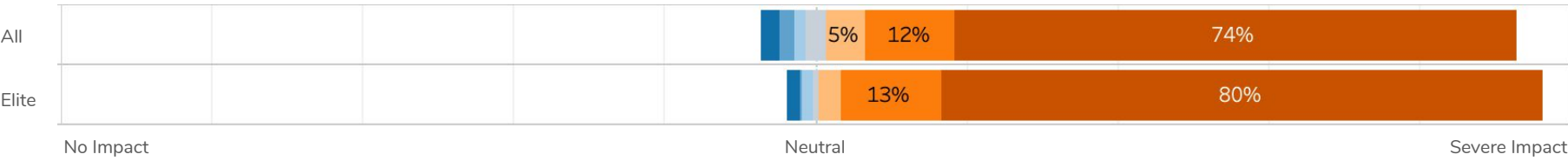
2.3/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Passing through a forbidden area on the course to gain time advantage.

All & Elite



5.4<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

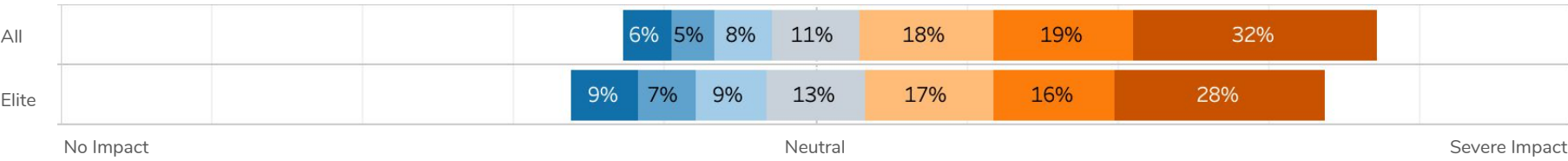
5.6<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Passing through a forbidden area on the course without gaining time advantage.

All & Elite



4.1<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
All Respondents

3.8<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
Elite Athletes



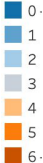
# Following another athlete during an individual race.

All & Elite



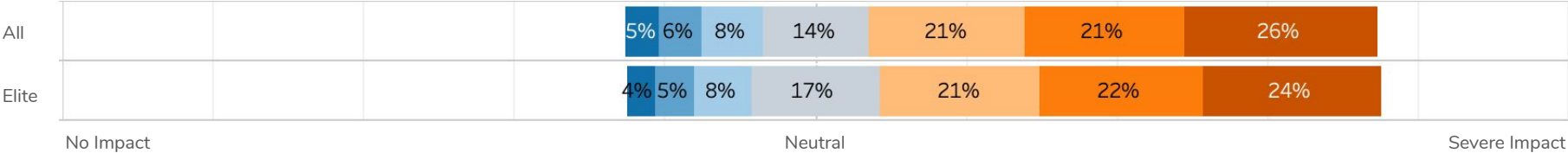
3.7<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
All Respondents

3.6<sub>/6</sub>  
Average  
Elite Athletes



# Actively co-operating with another athlete.

All & Elite

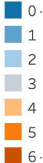


4.1/6

Average  
All Respondents

4.1/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Running within visual distance of another athlete.

All & Elite,      \*Not actively following, taking your own decisions.

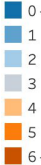


2.0/6

Average  
All Respondents

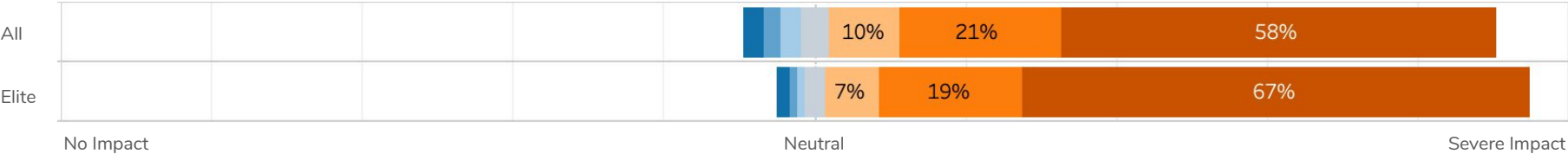
2.0/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Sharing the competition map with teammates before the race is over.

All & Elite

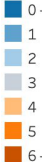


5.1<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

5.4<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Sharing other competition information with teammates before the race is over.

All & Elite

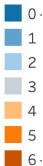


4.2/6

Average  
All Respondents

4.4/6

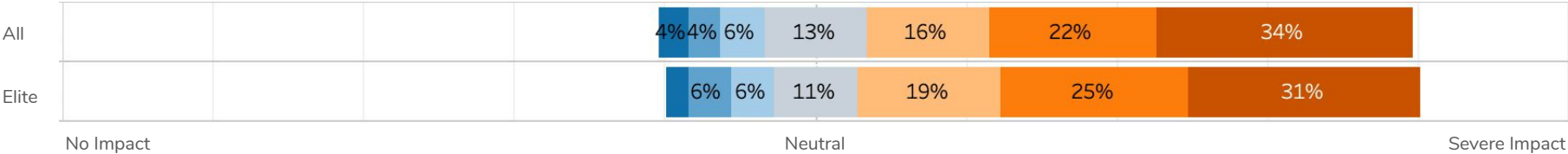
Average  
Elite Athletes





# A spectator on the course yelling instructions/pointing to control.

All & Elite

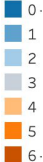


4.4/6

Average  
All Respondents

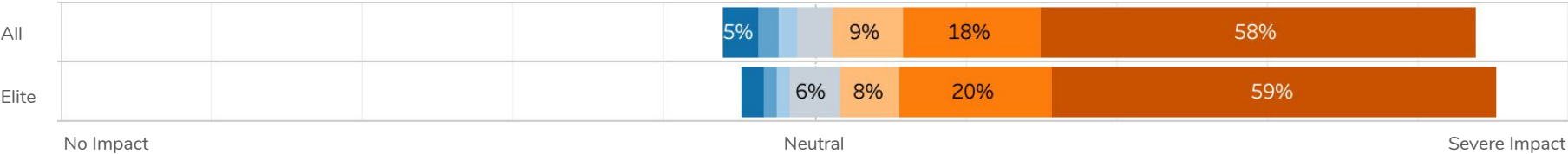
4.4/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Sharing a competition map online before race is over.

All & Elite

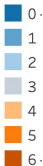


5.0/6

Average  
All Respondents

5.1/6

Average  
Elite Athletes



# Physical contact with another athlete at a control to be able to punch first.

All & Elite

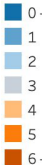


3.6<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
All Respondents

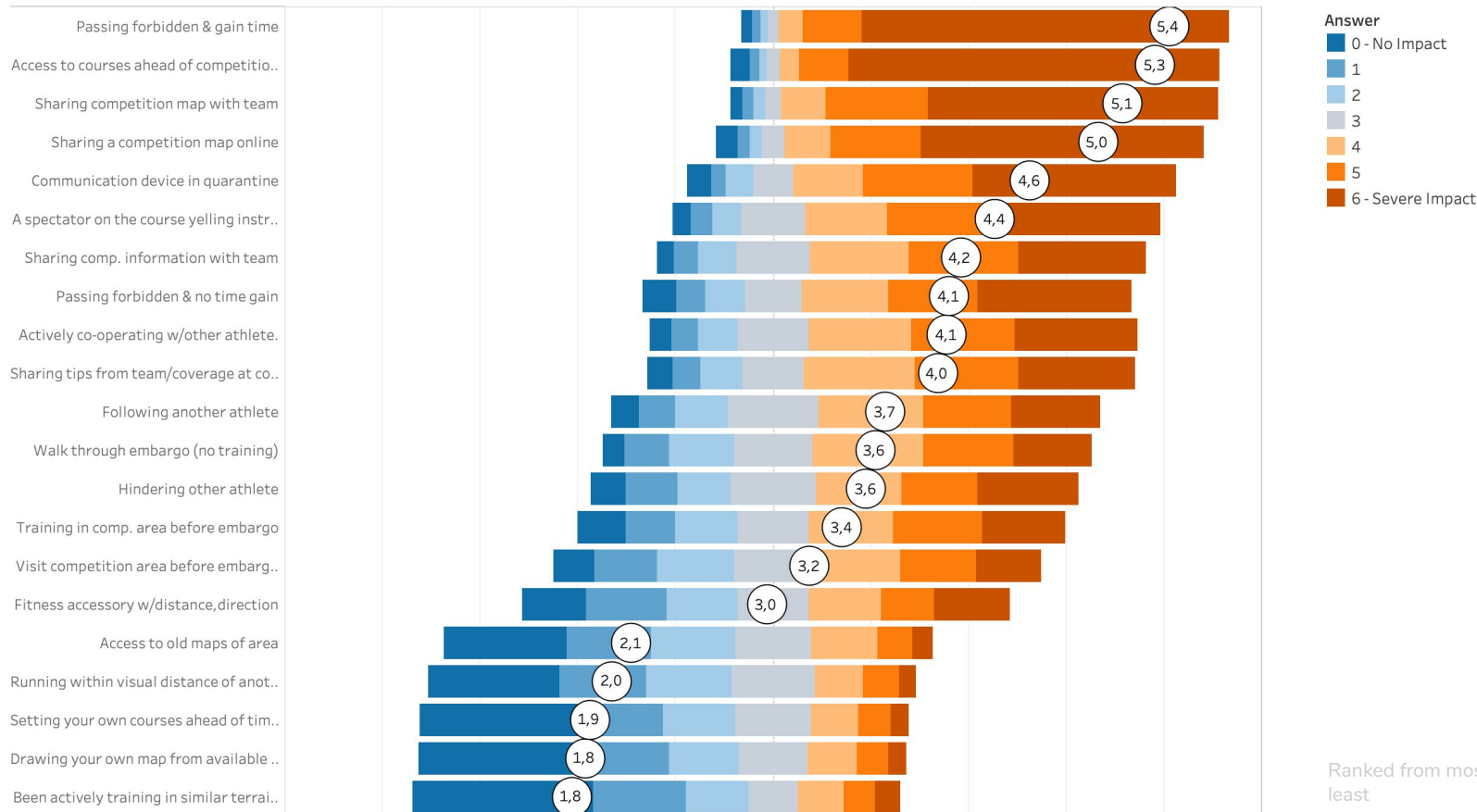
3.4<sub>/6</sub>

Average  
Elite Athletes



# How severely do the following impact fair play within orienteering?

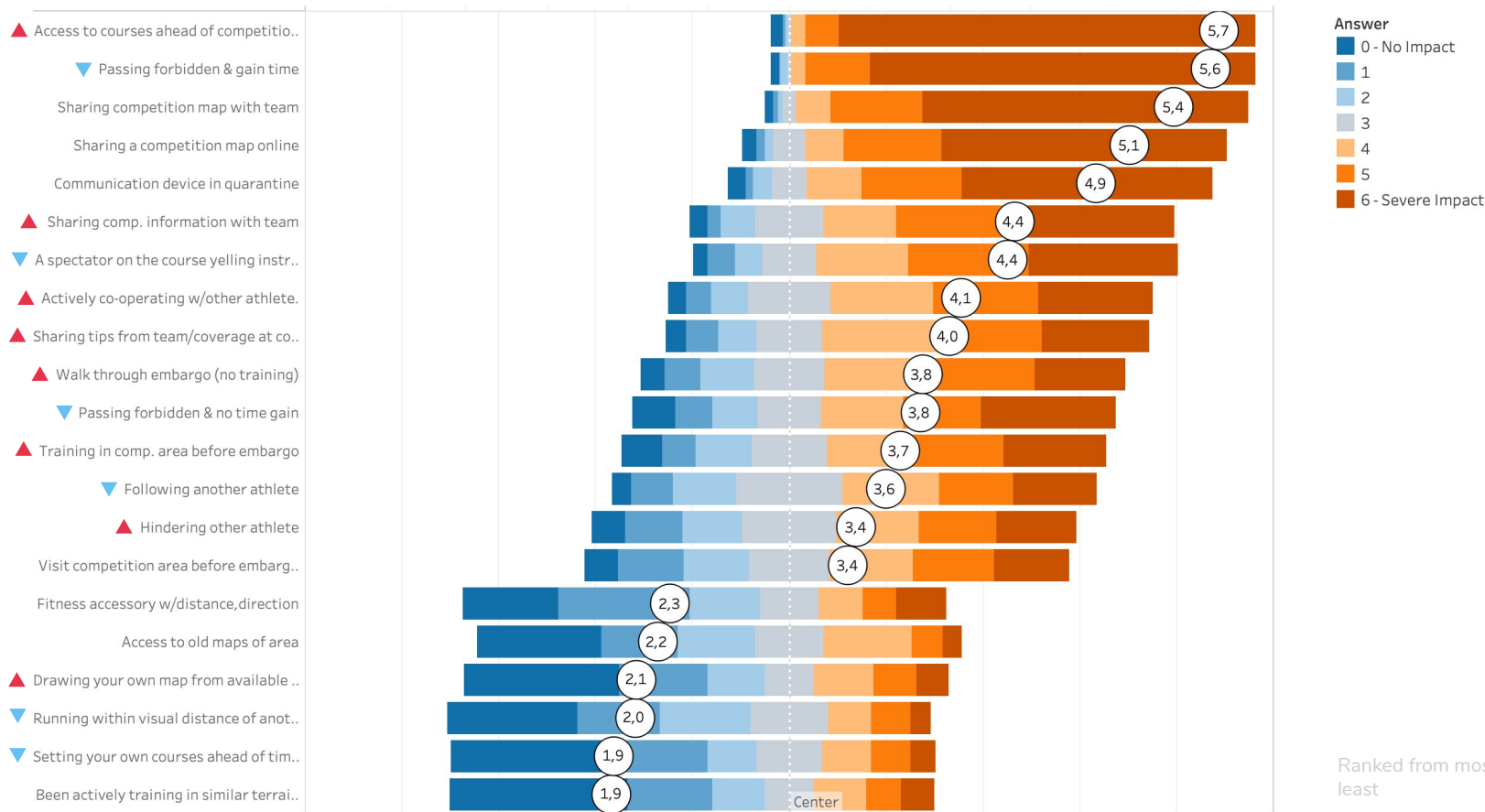
All repondants



Ranked from most impactful to least

# How severely do the following impact fair play within orienteering?

## Elite Athletes



## **Sample of responses**

**Have we missed any high impact situation  
that affects the fair play of orienteering?**

“ A person map the terrain and later run a race in the terrain.

“ Conflict of interest (best runner violating rules, but is kept in result list because same club as organiser)

“ Cutting in MTBO... Having a mechanical help hidden inside the bike.

“ Getting information from organizers/course planners beforehand that isn't available to all (eg. the type of forking, start location)

“ Use of drones over embargoes? Mainly sprint. Having 'home' advantage. Living in our near terrain or friends and family that do

“ Some specific impact situations in ski-orienteering (waxing, someone in terrain to create shortcuts,...)

“ Marshals showing athletes where to turn or run. TV cameras placed on routes and visible for riders. Lack of pre-starters to ride over high grass or make a ski track faster. Lack of marking tape on competition area to prevent athletes from minor offences or to save them from poor map readability. Unfair course planning, when it is impossible to read small map signs that show a dead end. Insufficient traffic control, when athletes get stuck in public traffic on course.

“ Coaches or team mates (not running that day) entering to the finish arena before the athlete (running that day) are in the quarantine. Presentation at the arena of athletes before the race.

“ Doping; Interfering with control sites; Providing better facilities or inconsistent services deliberately designed to disadvantage/advantage some competitors (for example unequal access to shade etc in a quarantine area)

# Appendix



## Additional material

Browse an interactive version of the impact responses online here:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/will.h.#!/vizhome/IOFFairPlay-Likertbreakdown/AllEliteAvg>

Impact responses by country:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/will.h.#!/vizhome/IOFFairPlay-Likertbreakdown/AllEliteAvgbyCountry>

We have published the survey responses that are available for download here:

<https://orienteering.sport/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/iof-fair-play-survey-results.csv>

