

The Global Fan



Football fandom is changing

The passion of match-going fans will always remain a constant, clubs being at the heart of local communities.

But that fan passion is now driving football around the world. Fans around the world are drawn to it, making their own versions of it and experiencing the game through an ever-evolving lens.

It's this rapidly evolving phenomenon and lightning-fast growing community of fans which sparked the creation of Fan Tokens and the Socios.com platform. That's why we've conducted this in depth report to further understand what drives these fans that we strive to serve.

We surveyed football fans around the globe – over 8,000 from the UK, USA, Brazil, Nigeria, Japan, South Korea and Italy – on their support of overseas teams. What gets

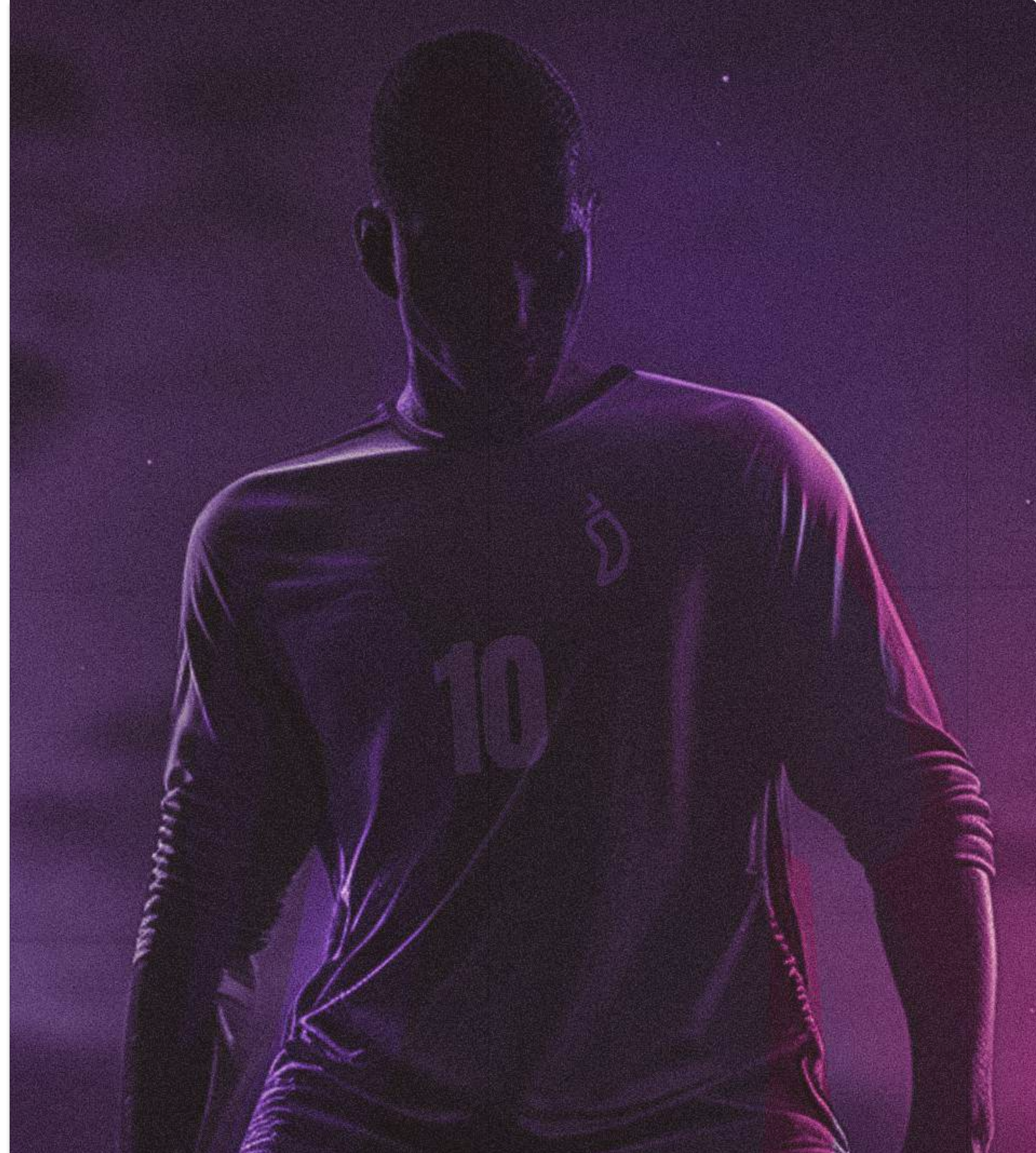
them battling time-zones to watch action from the other side of the world? Which teams have a truly global cut-through? Who is drawn to tradition, who is drawn to heroes on the pitch?

The results are illuminating – Nigerian fans are different from South Korean fans, the UK has a different relationship with the game than the newer US market.

It is these differences, however, that makes football so compelling.

We all experience the game differently, we all have varying moments that made us fall in love with football.

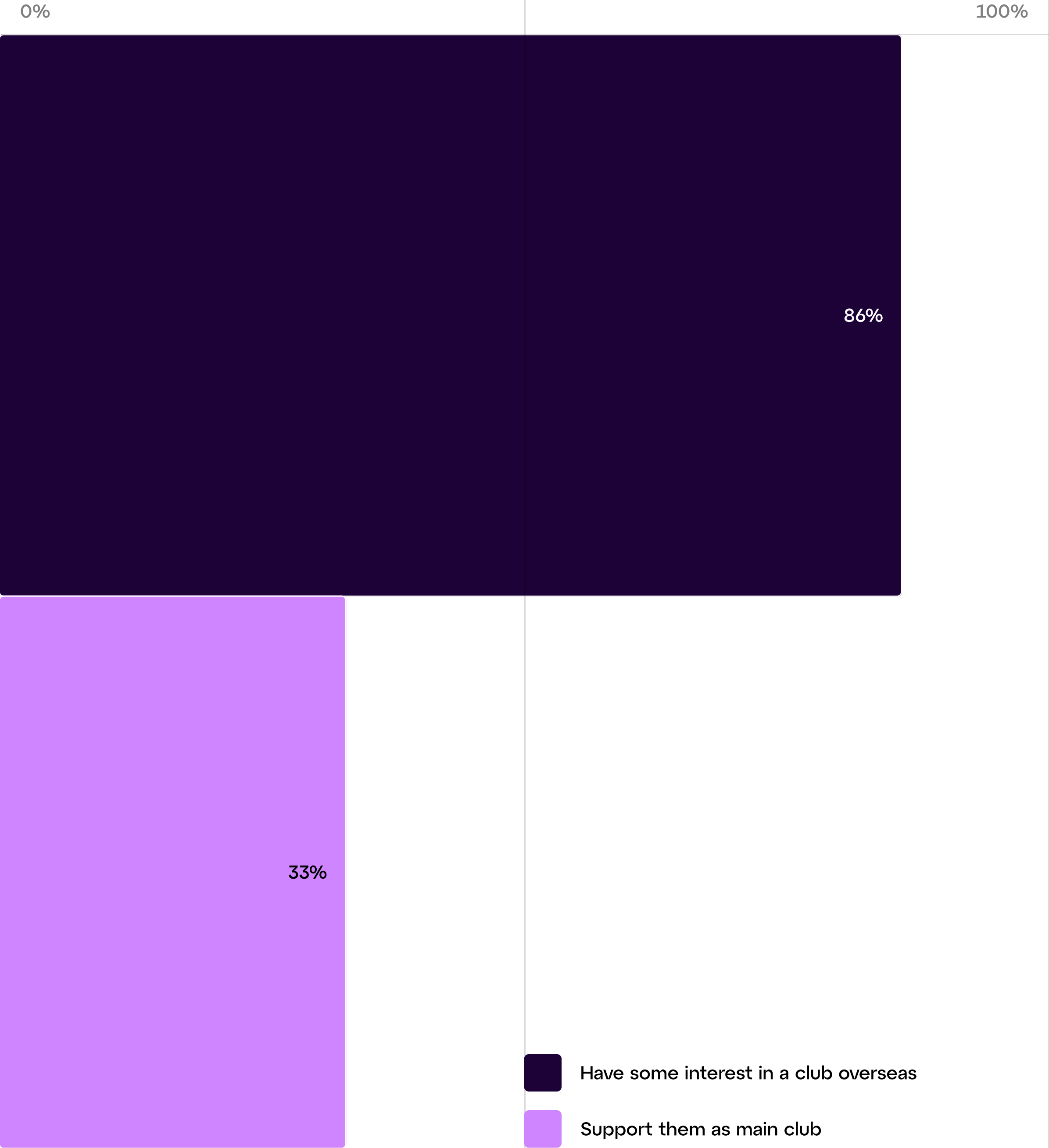
The sport itself though, remains a true global connector.



Football support from overseas

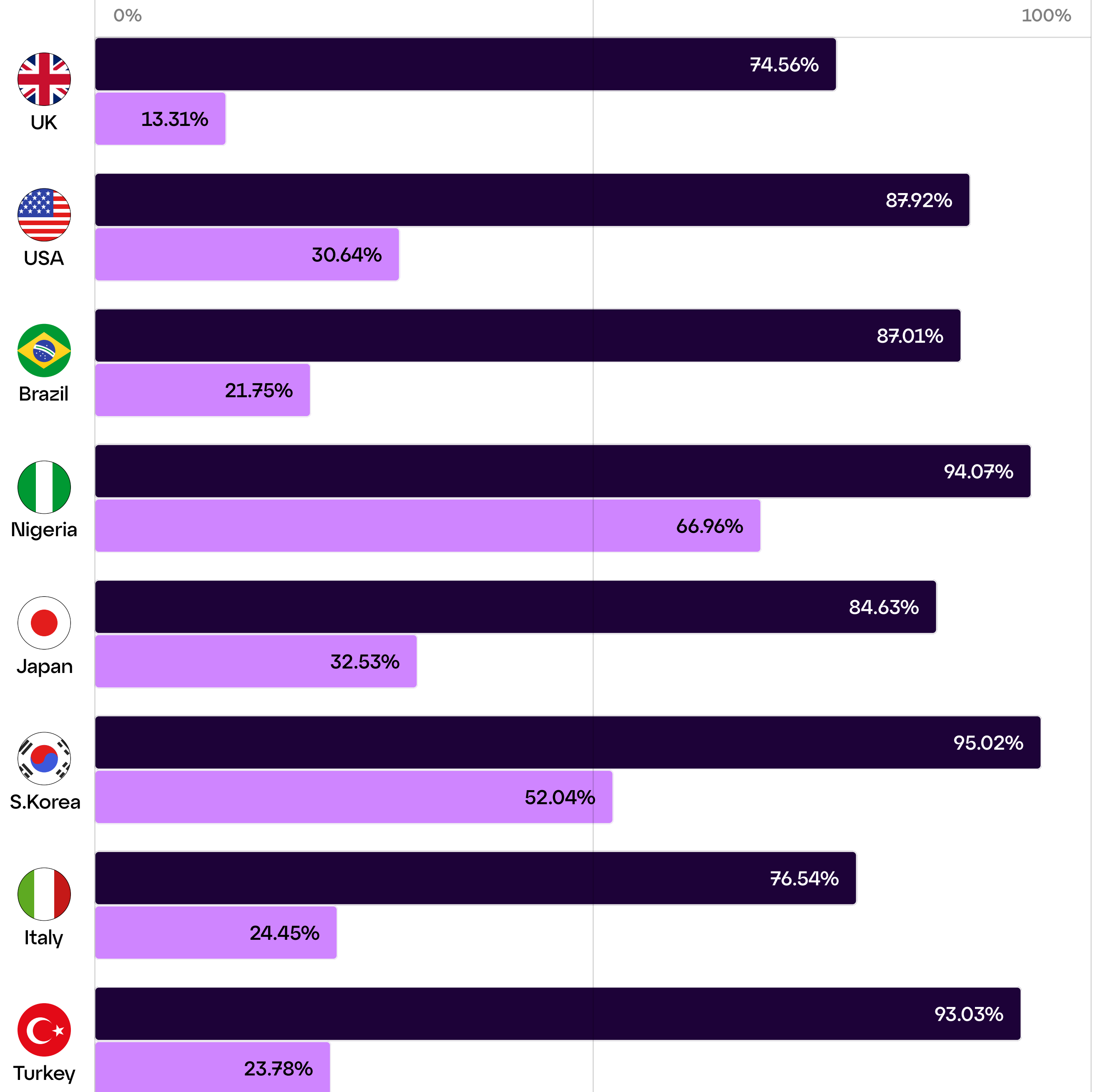
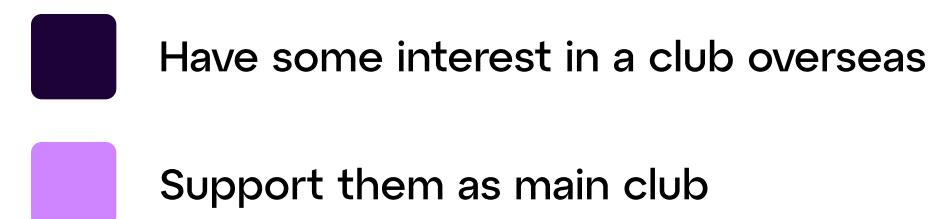
Global average

Our journey begins here - we surveyed thousands of football fans across the globe to ask about their support of overseas teams. An astonishing number of supporters have an interest in a team away from their own country - while the level of that fandom varies the world over. La Liga and the Premier League are the runaway leaders in terms of interest, with England interestingly boosted by the Championship, which is the sixth most-followed league by foreign fans.

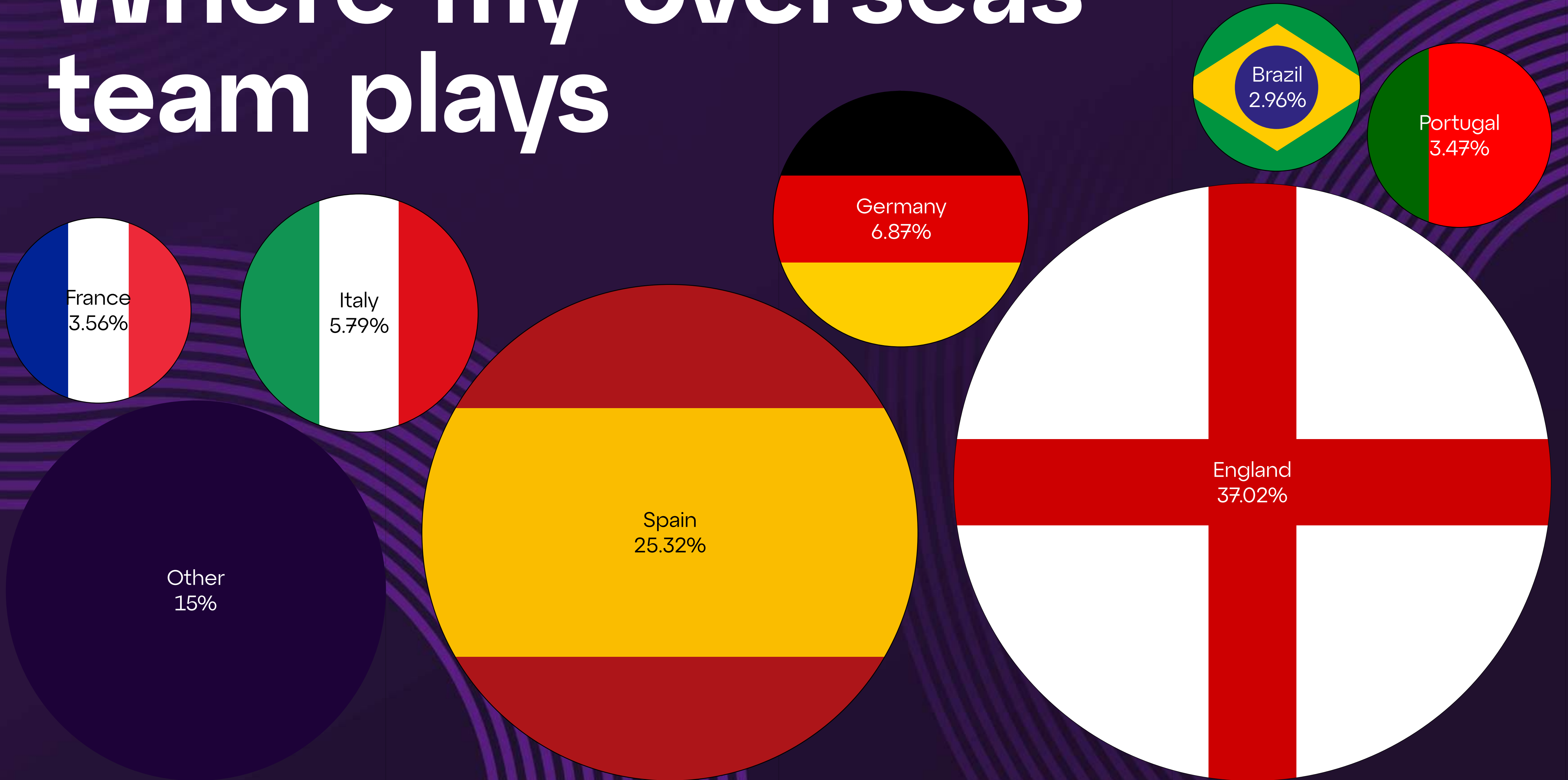


Football support from overseas

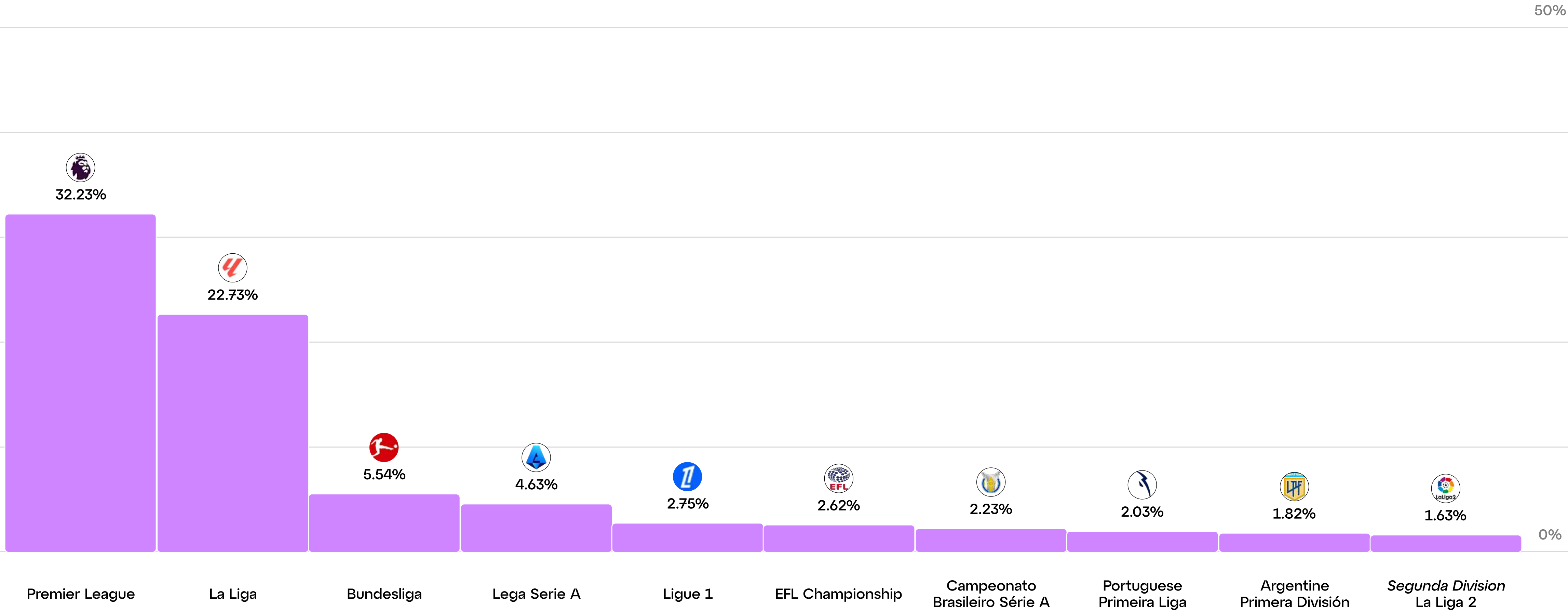
By country



Where my overseas team plays



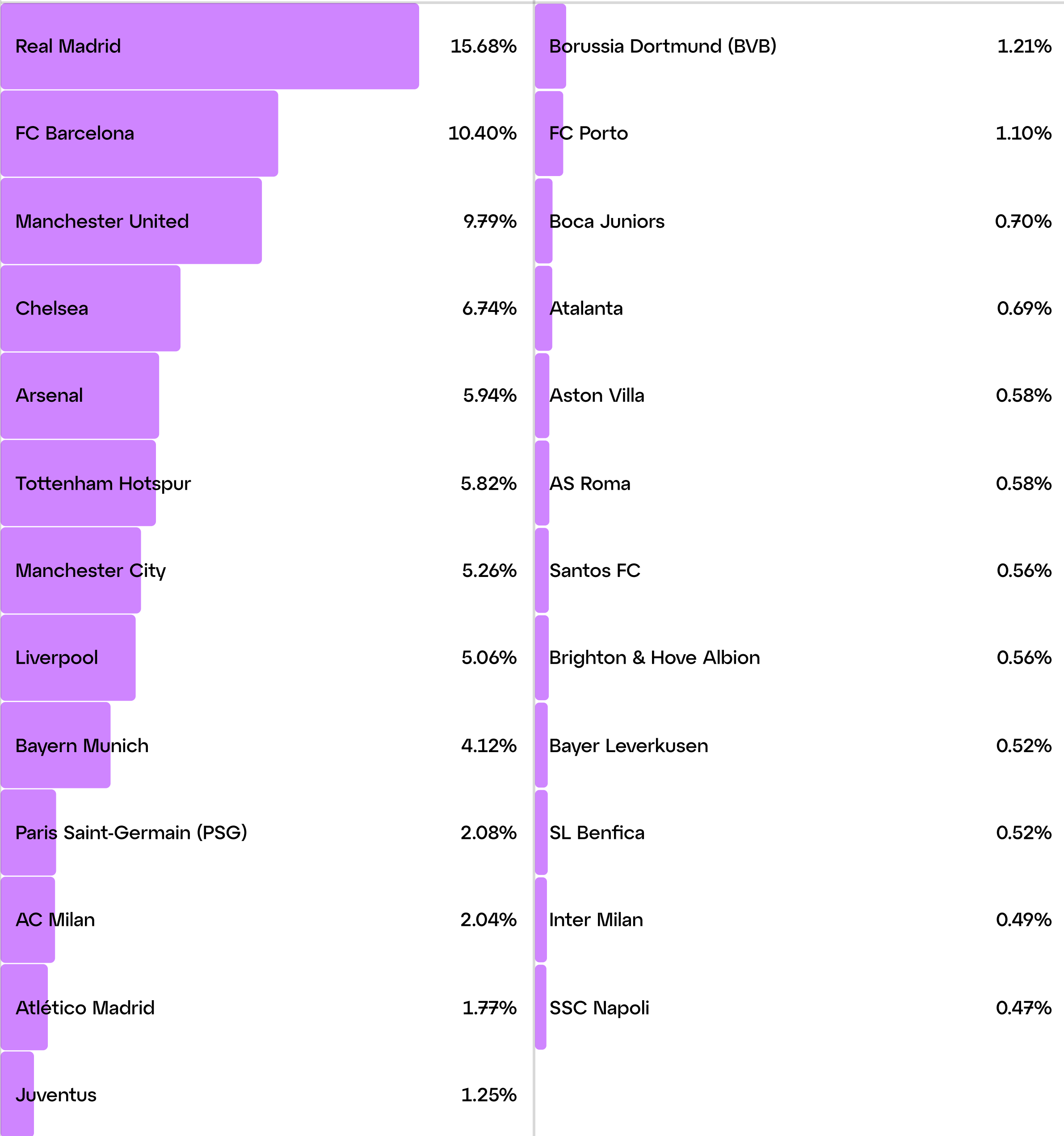
The league I watch



The global league table

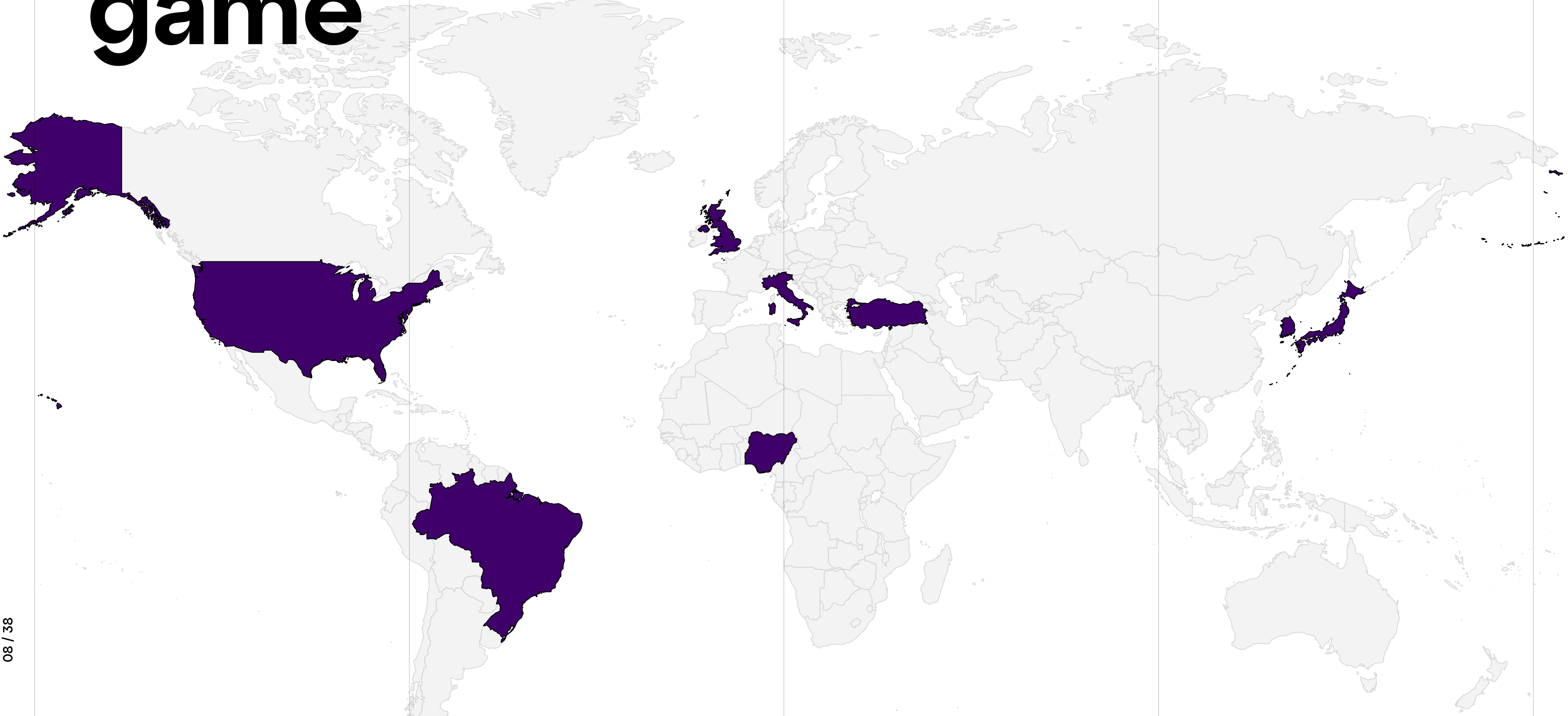
When picking their favourite overseas team, fans around the world voted far and wide, producing this league table of global support. La Liga giants Real Madrid and FC Barcelona are in a familiar battle for top spot with Los Blancos coming out runaway winners. From there it is the biggest Premier League clubs and Bayern Munich making up the best of the rest. The attraction of England's top flight knows no bounds with the likes of Brighton & Hove Albion and Aston Villa joining the traditional Top Six in the Top 25 list.

** excludes respondents who chose 'other'*



The global game

The diaspora of support across the globe makes for fascinating reading - the Premier League dominates in the USA, South Korea and Nigeria, while Brazil far prefer La Liga. The names one might suspect - Manchester United, Real Madrid, FC Barcelona, Chelsea, Manchester City et al - battle for support across the markets surveyed, but keep an eye out for the Kaoru Mitoma fan club in Japan - while South Korea is a Tottenham stronghold thanks to Son Heung-min.



United Kingdom

Favourite Overseas Leagues

1 Spain 42.86%

2 Italy 11.57%

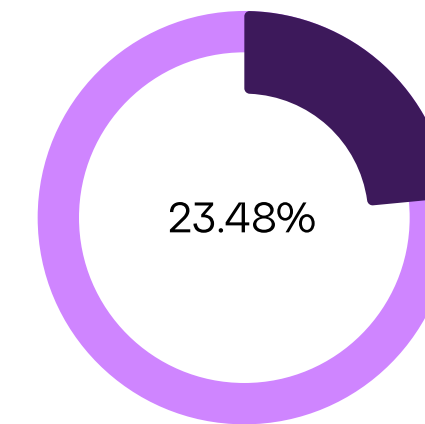
3 Germany 10.58%

4 France 6.22%

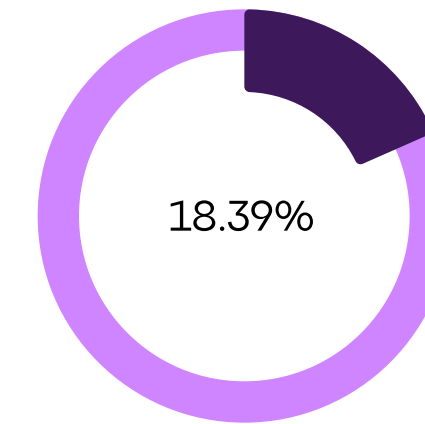
5 Portugal 4.63%

Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'

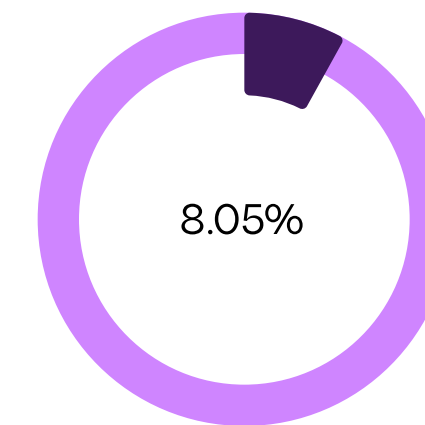

Real Madrid



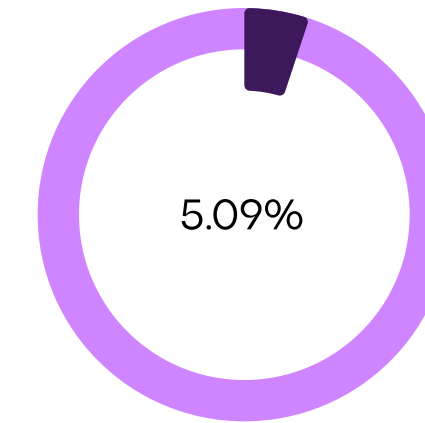

FC Barcelona



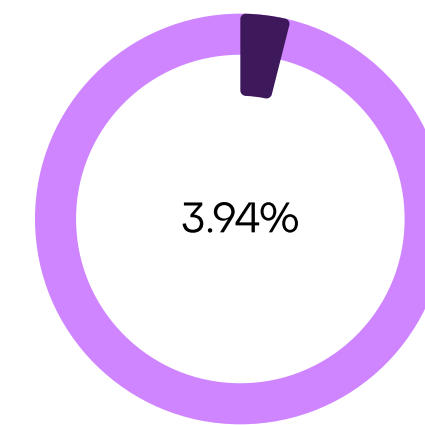

Bayern Munich



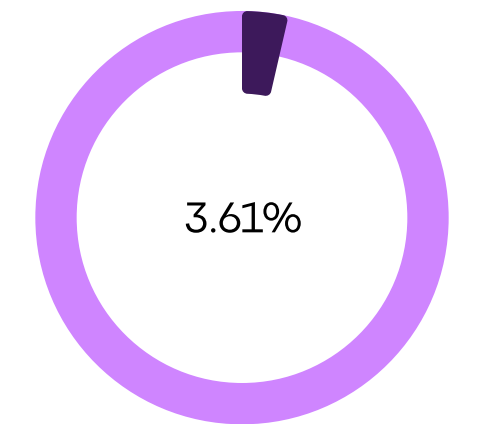

Atlético Madrid



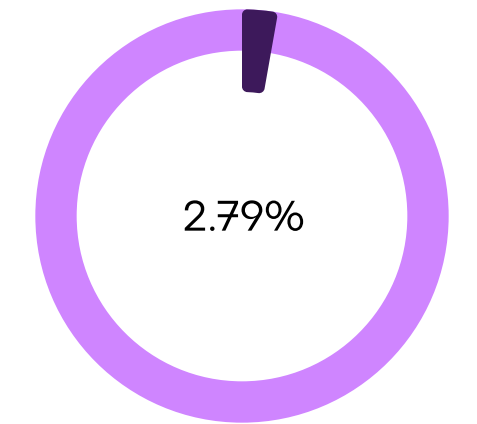

AC Milan



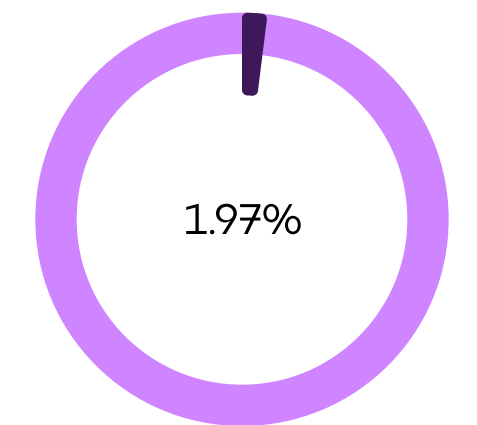

Juventus



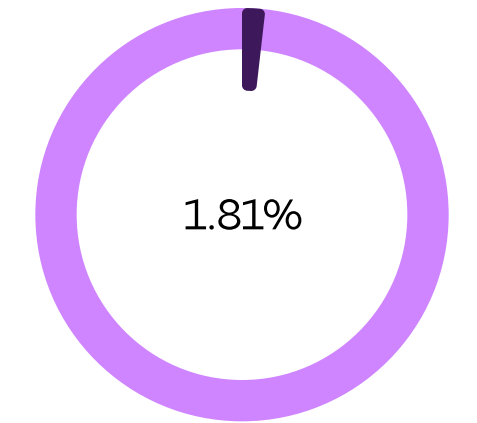

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG)



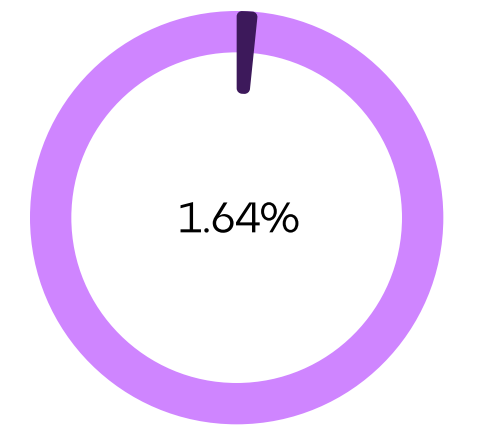

Borussia Dortmund (BVB)




Inter Milan

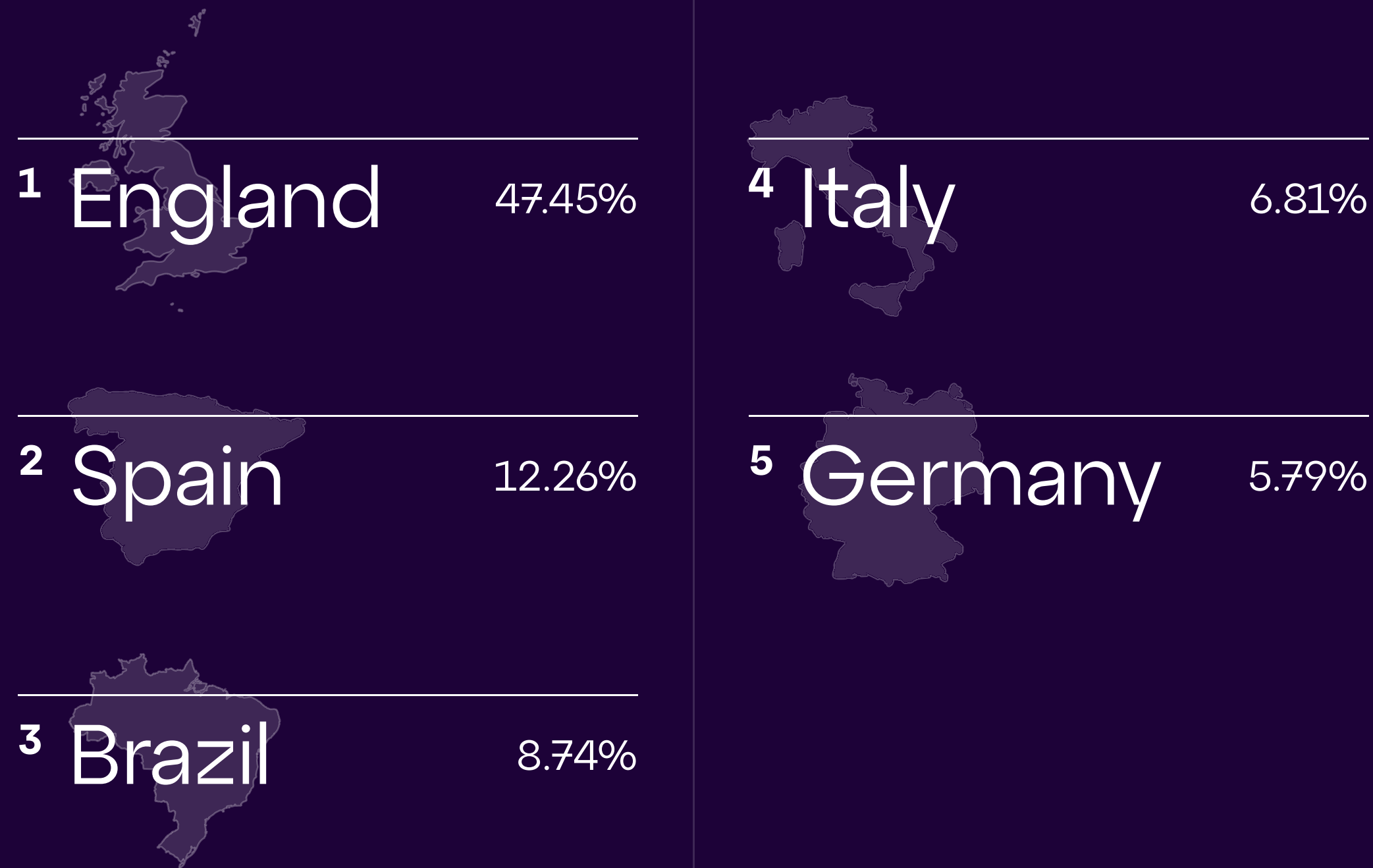



AFC Ajax



USA

Favourite Overseas Leagues

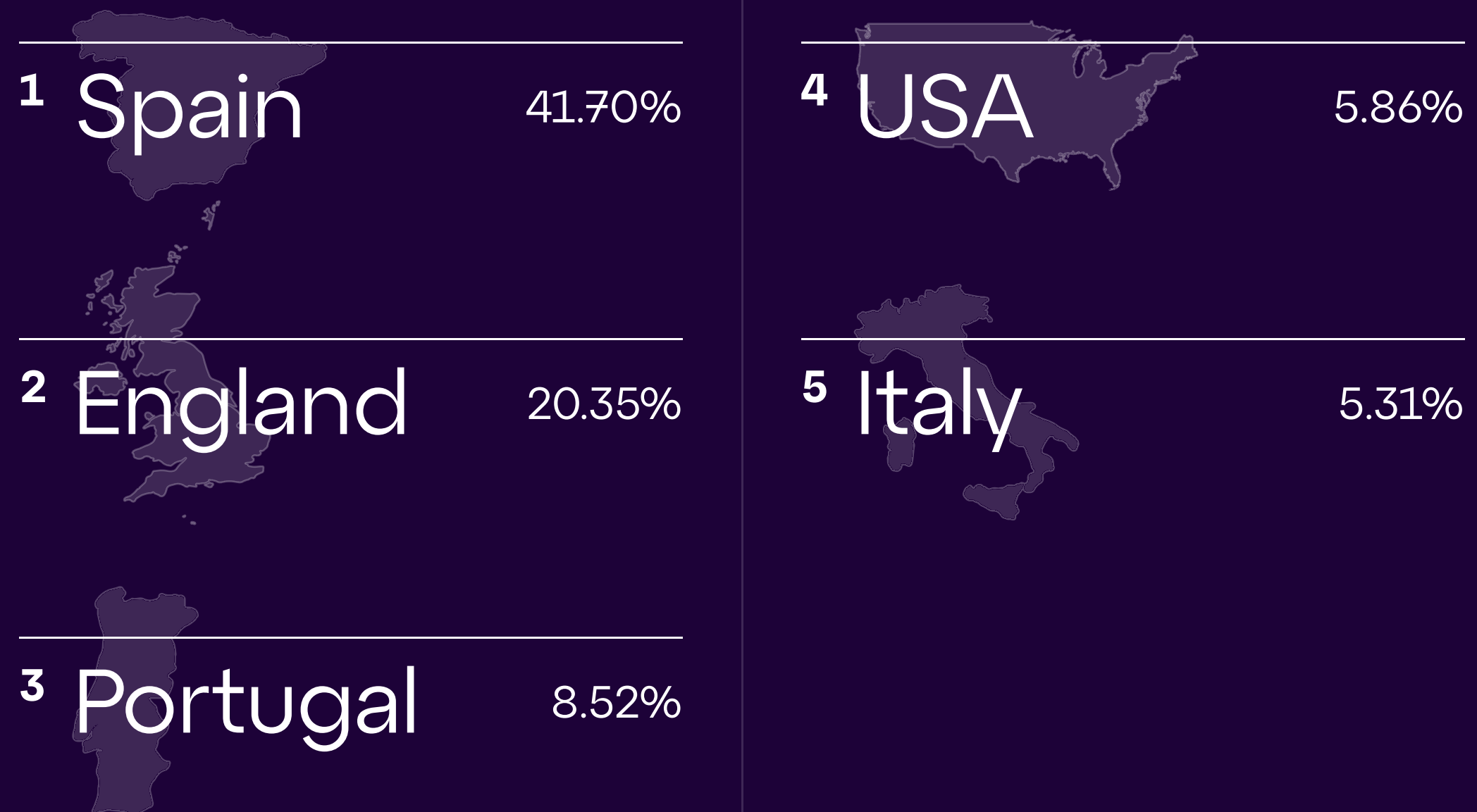


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



Brazil

Favourite Overseas Leagues

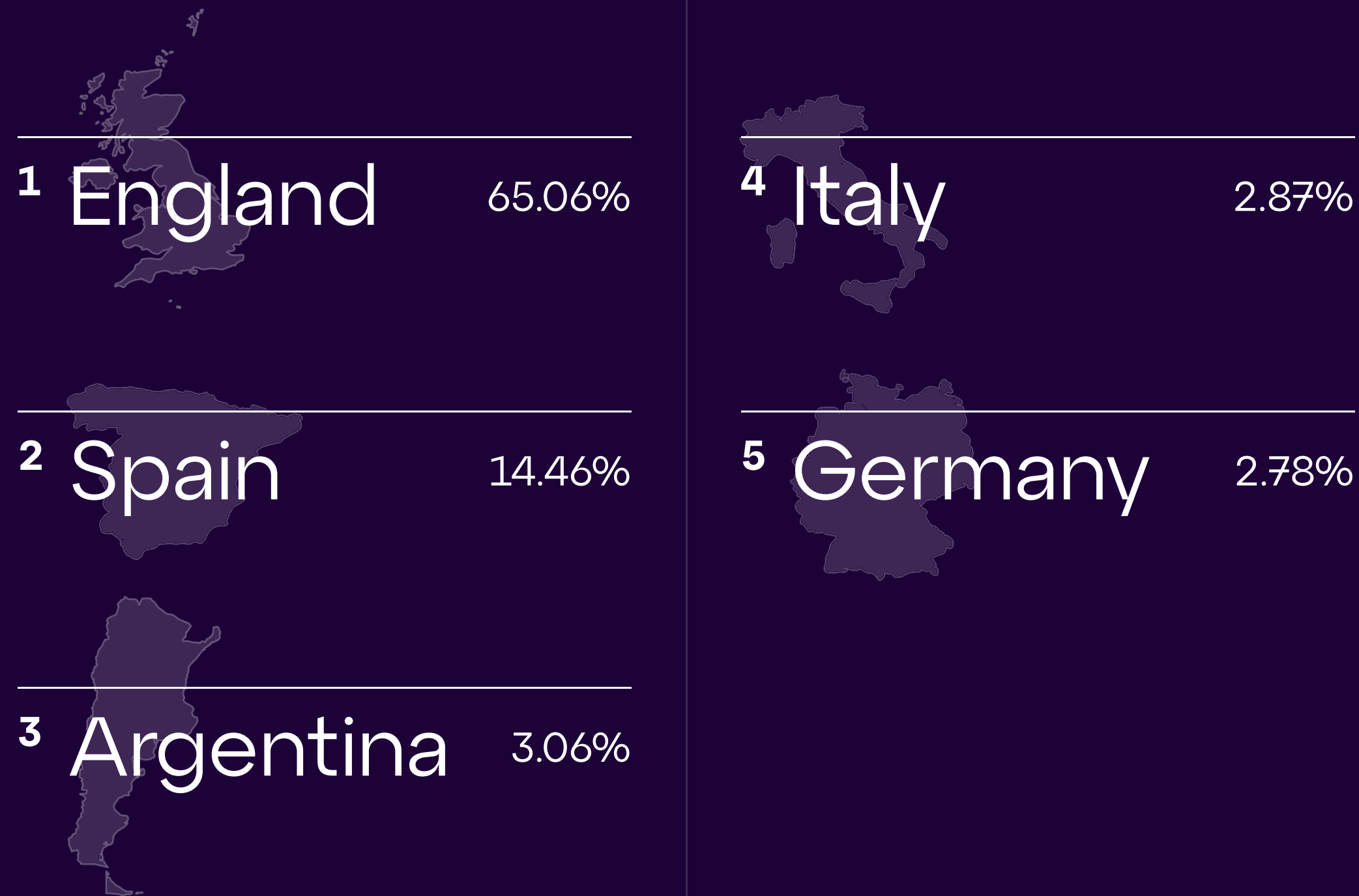


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



Nigeria

Favourite Overseas Leagues

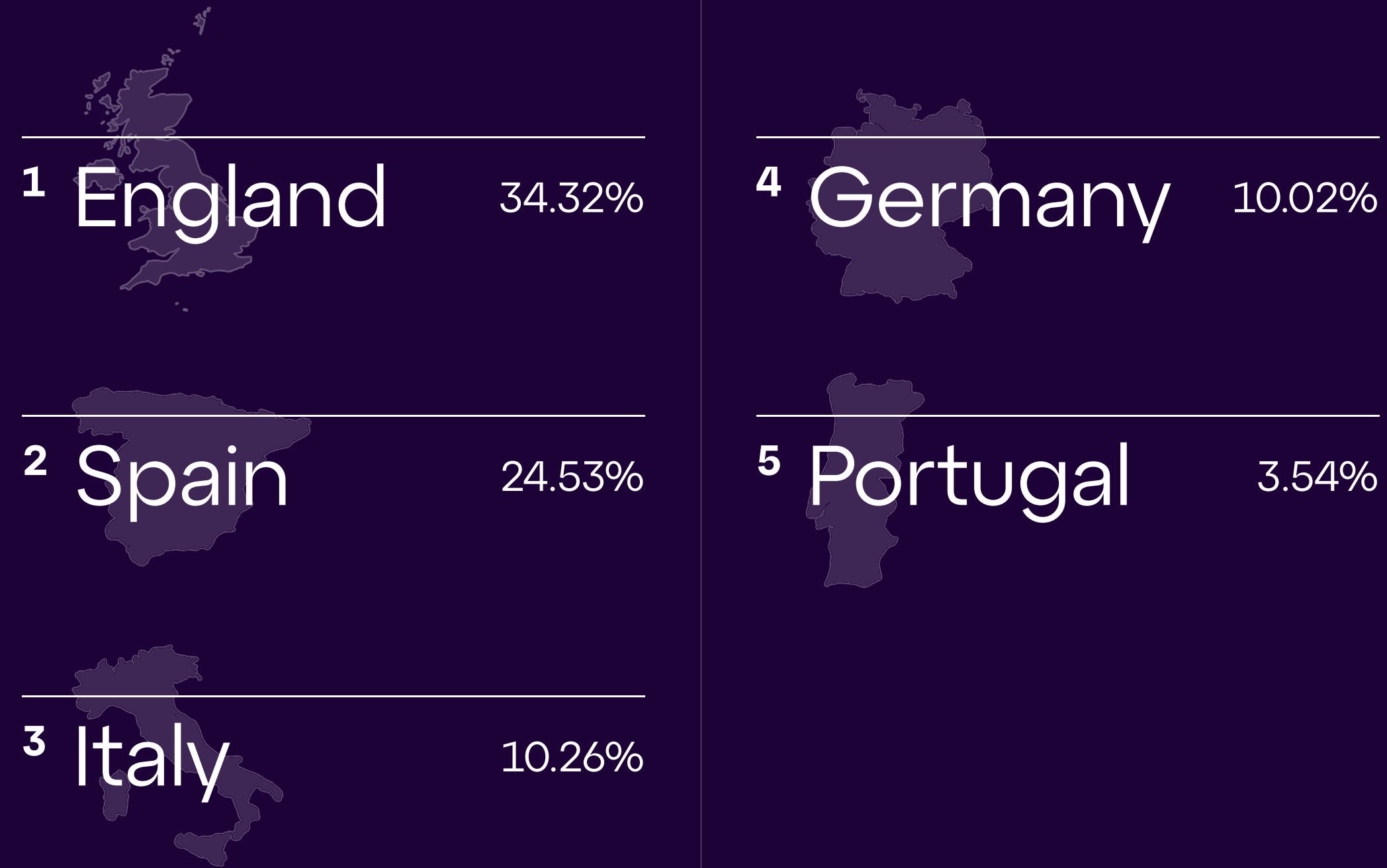


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



Japan

Favourite Overseas Leagues

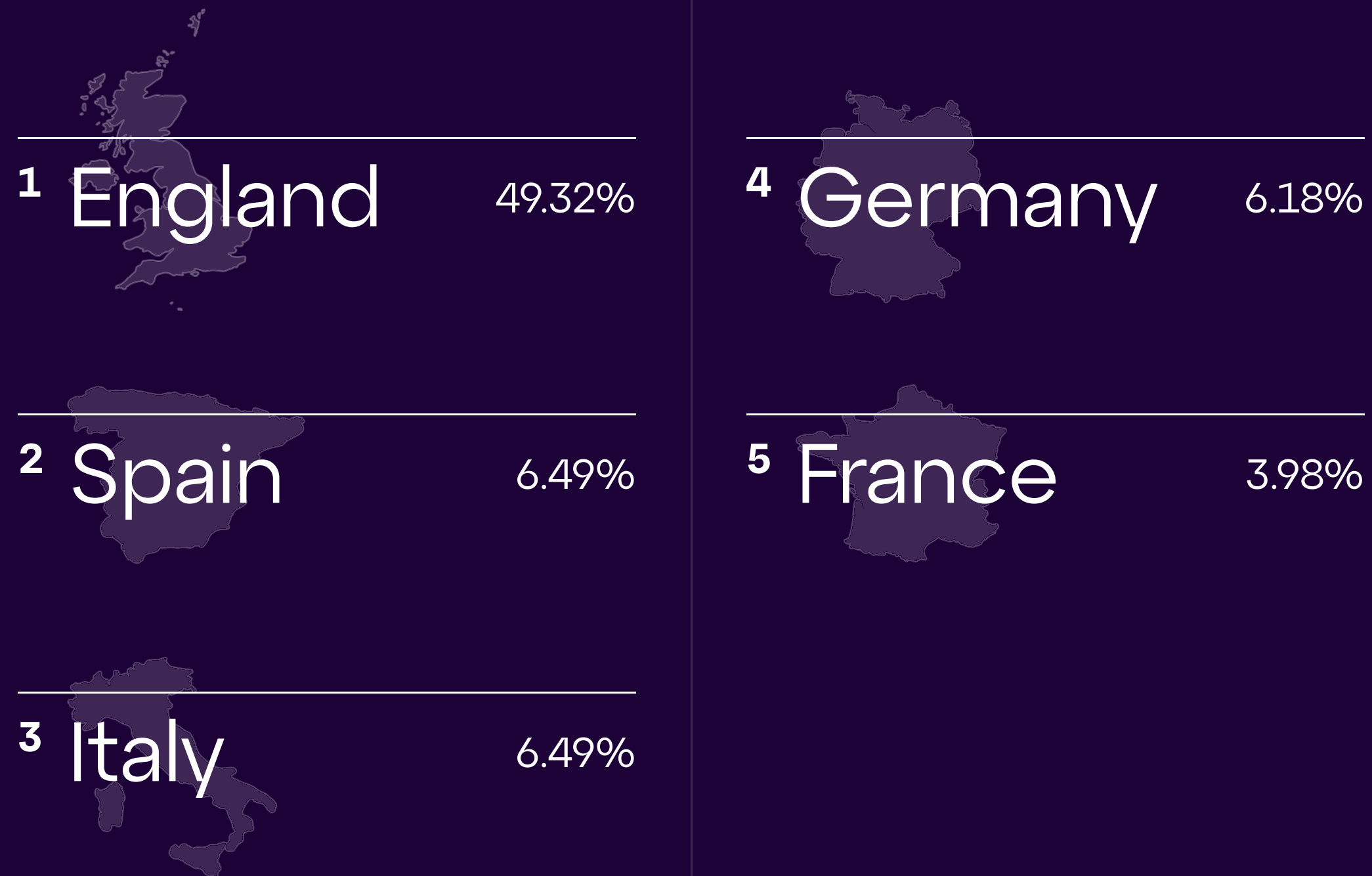


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



South Korea

Favourite Overseas Leagues

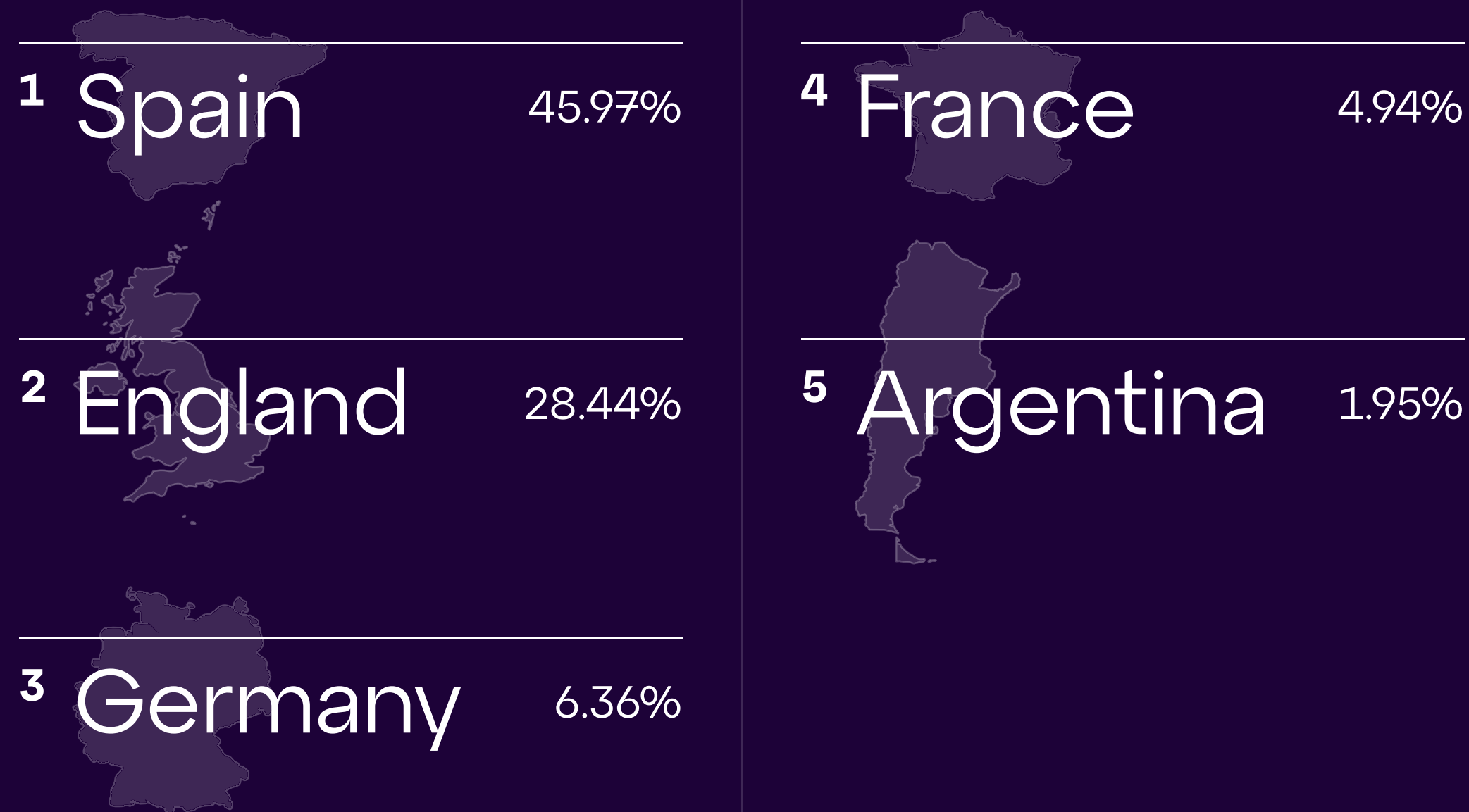


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



Italy

Favourite Overseas Leagues

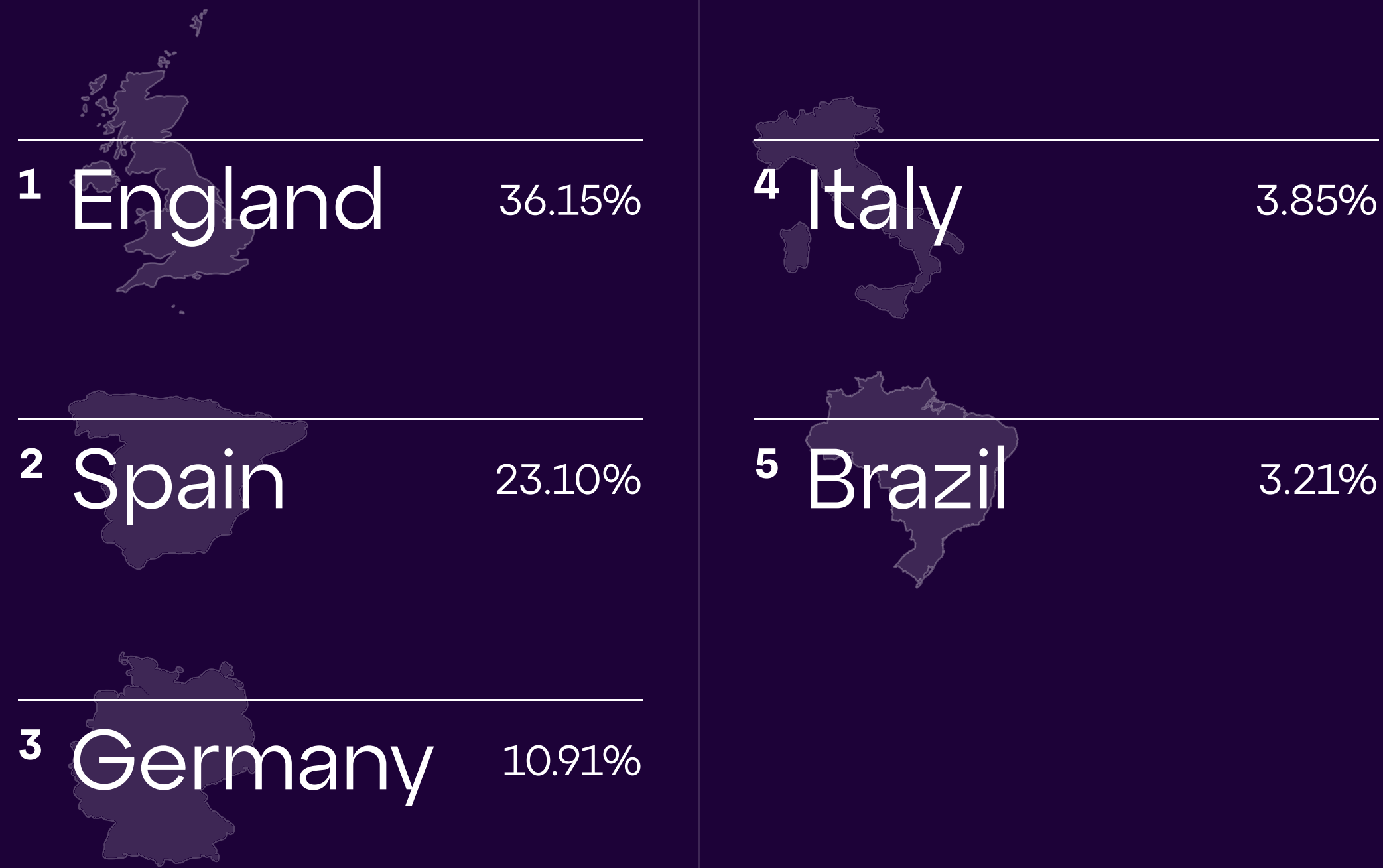


Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



Turkey

Favourite Overseas Leagues



Favourite Overseas Team * excludes respondents who chose 'other'



What fuels football fandom?

Football support differs all over the world – the reason behind supporters' passion and the way they interact with the game. Understanding this can be crucial to any brand in sport's engagement with fans around the globe.

Passion and emotion are a global unifier, but more heavily weighted in traditional footballing hotbeds, including, but not limited to, the likes of Brazil, Italy and the UK. US respondents generally are drawn towards the sport itself, the athleticism and skill of the players, while Japanese and South Korean fans are more drawn to iconic players when compared to other countries.



What fuels love for football?

	Global	UK	USA	Brazil	Nigeria	Japan	S.Korea	Italy	Turkey
The passion and emotion	33.13%	31.16%	31.94%	47.35%	38.36%	19.76%	23.28%	38.57%	33.33%
Supporting my team	28.58%	38.07%	27.94%	38.02%	25.63%	17.56%	23.28%	30.62%	27.46%
The excitement and drama involved in the game	28.27%	34.81%	31.44%	27.33%	31.30%	28.04%	27.26%	21.87%	23.68%
Watching football with friends, family, or fellow fans	27.55%	32.05%	29.54%	31.47%	32.61%	19.26%	20.60%	30.32%	23.68%
Watching skill and athleticism of players	26.23%	21.89%	33.53%	26.95%	25.89%	34.43%	26.07%	20.87%	20.30%
The feeling of winning	26.11%	25.74%	20.26%	25.60%	33.39%	27.54%	23.98%	21.17%	30.15%
The strategic and tactical aspects of the game	19.99%	16.47%	23.65%	18.00%	21.88%	21.56%	19.20%	18.79%	20.20%
An iconic player	17.57%	11.74%	16.17%	9.05%	12.12%	23.95%	38.21%	14.81%	15.62%
An iconic team	16.97%	18.05%	19.16%	13.28%	10.72%	17.47%	16.72%	25.75%	15.62%
The cultural importance of football in your country	14.57%	15.09%	14.37%	21.85%	7.24%	11.98%	14.13%	15.11%	17.61%
Being part of a global game and community	14.04%	15.19%	19.06%	9.34%	15.87%	14.67%	12.14%	11.03%	14.93%

Ryan Norys

Chief Revenue Officer at Tottenham Hotspur



At Tottenham Hotspur, our global fanbase is at the heart of everything we do. Regardless of location, it is of paramount importance to us that all fans feel they are part of the Spurs family.

One region that has truly become a hotbed for our support is South Korea. We're immensely proud of our strong following there, which has grown significantly in recent years. Our aim is to build a long-lasting and meaningful relationship with our South Korean supporters, to ensure we keep them connected to our club for years and generations to come.

We have actively engaged with our fans in the region, making multiple trips for pre-season tours. These visits have been essential in not just strengthening our fan base but in laying the foundations of a solid support network. But it's never just been about playing matches - we know fans desire more than that. We've had a clear focus on interacting with the fans, understanding how they connect with football, and tailoring our approach to deepen that connection.

Across the globe, Tottenham Hotspur competes for fan engagement with some of the biggest clubs in the world. To maintain and grow this support, we've developed a range of strategies tailored to fans depending on where they are in the world.

A key part of our approach in bringing tangible benefits to our global supporters is embracing new digital technologies and partnering with brands such as Socios. Web3 technology offers the club an opportunity to build a direct and meaningful relationship with our global fanbase by delivering personalised experiences.

We've found that Fan Tokens are especially popular with fans across the world who are living far away from the UK. We understand the benefits available which is why we offered free Fan Tokens to all our Season Ticket Holders and Members at launch.. With millions of fans around the world, it's our responsibility to make sure that everyone feels engaged, included, and valued—no matter where they are based.

At Tottenham Hotspur, we believe every fan deserves a unique and inclusive connection to the club and that will remain a key focus for us moving forward. We've taken time to understand their preferences, ensuring that we engage in ways that resonate with them. This isn't just about short-term gains; it's about building a long-term relationship.

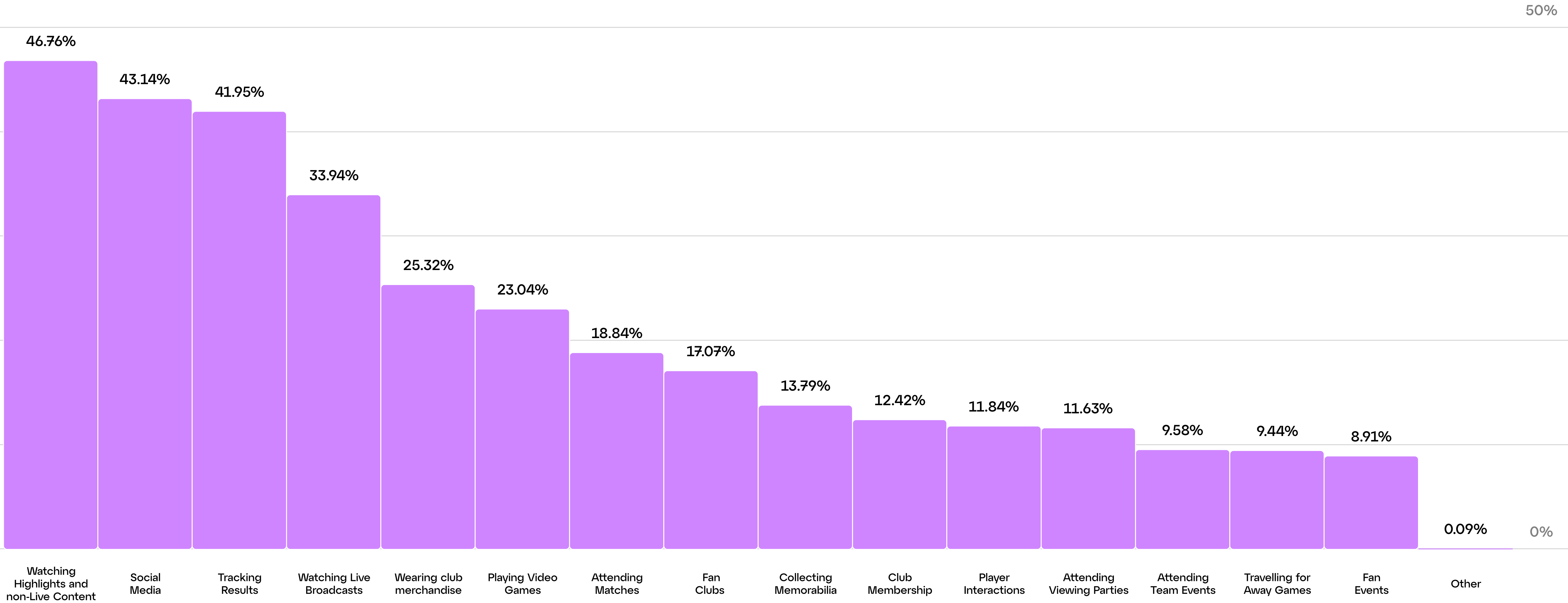
How do overseas fans engage

The level of overseas fandom hugely varies across different regions - Nigeria seem to be the most fanatical about their team in particular, with almost all fans of an overseas team watching every or most matches. South Korean supporters, meanwhile, are a little more passive when it comes to watching every game. The same fans, however, are passionate about individuals, scoring the highest out of any region when asked if individual players or managers have influenced their support of an overseas club.

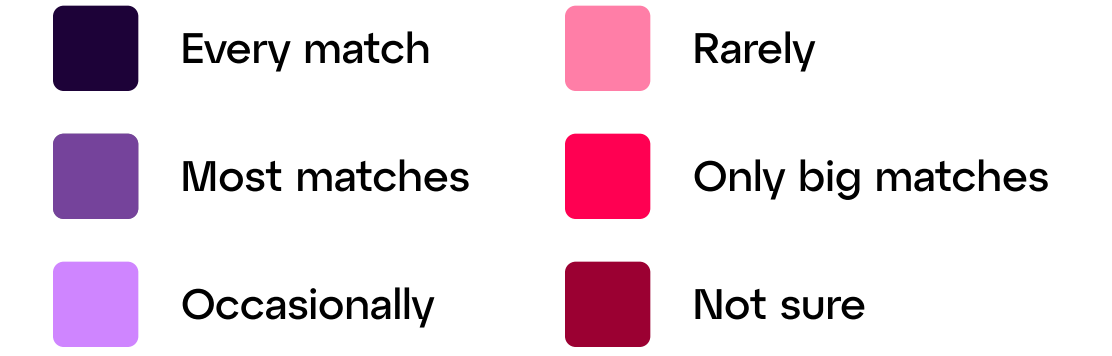


Global fan engagement with overseas teams

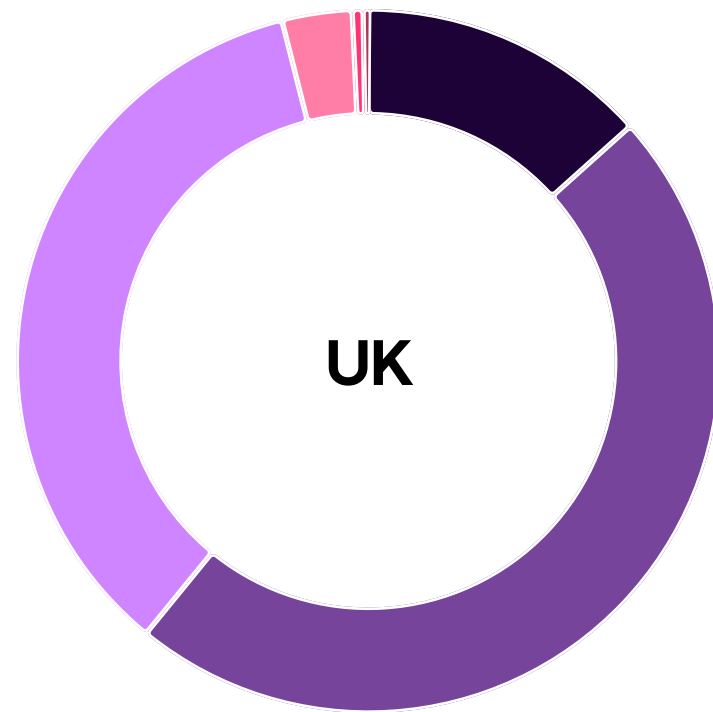
How respondents engage with their favourite overseas team



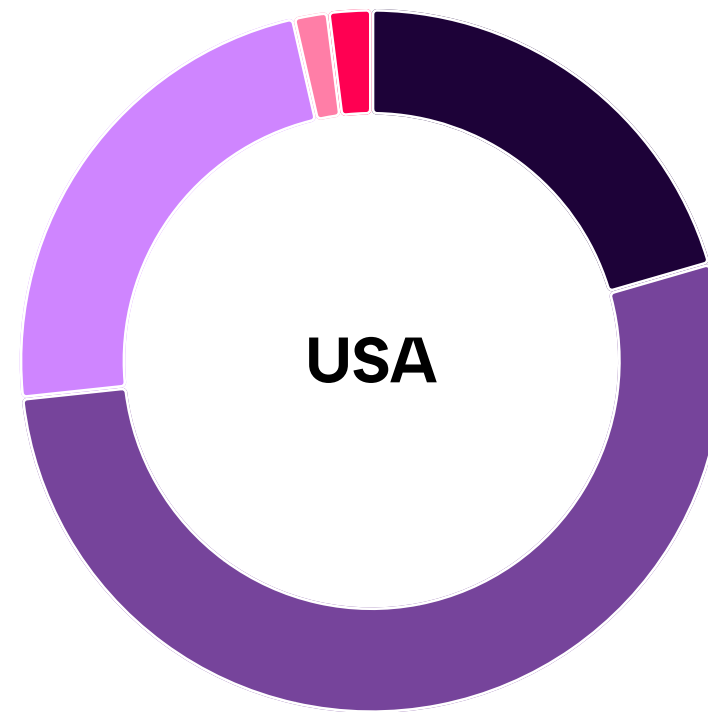
Of those who watch their overseas team's matches



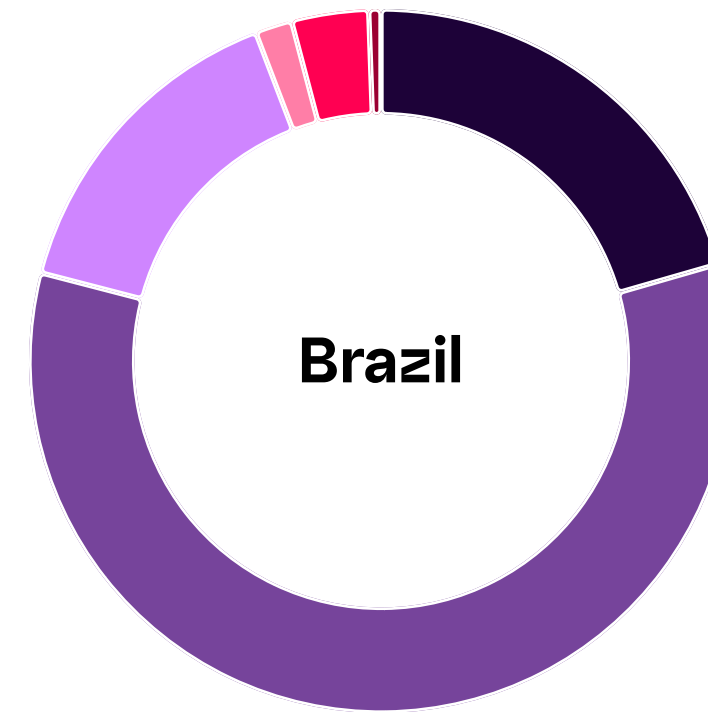
- 13.37%
- 47.52%
- 35.15%
- 3.22%
- 0.50%
- 0.24%



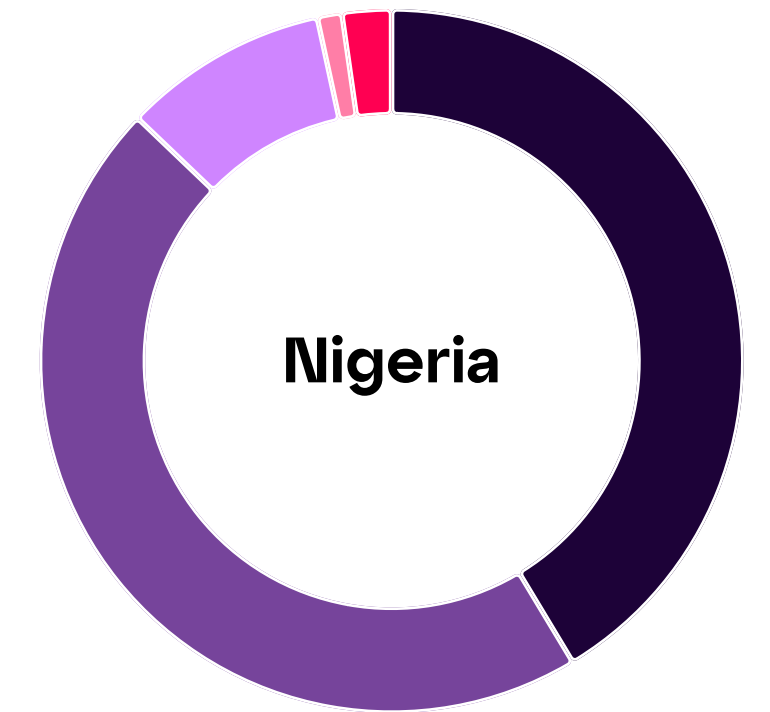
- 20.52%
- 52.79%
- 23.11%
- 1.59%
- 1.99%



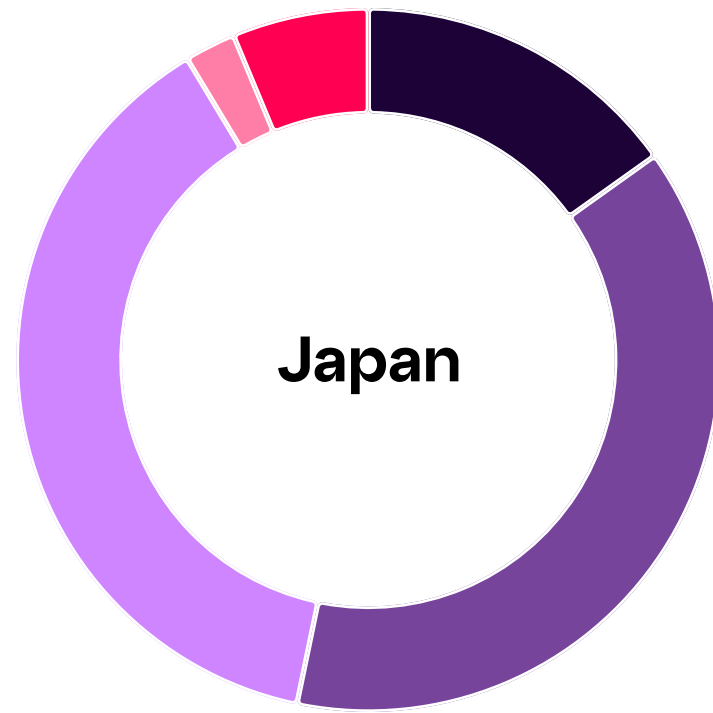
- 20.54%
- 58.50%
- 15.16%
- 1.70%
- 3.54%
- 0.56%



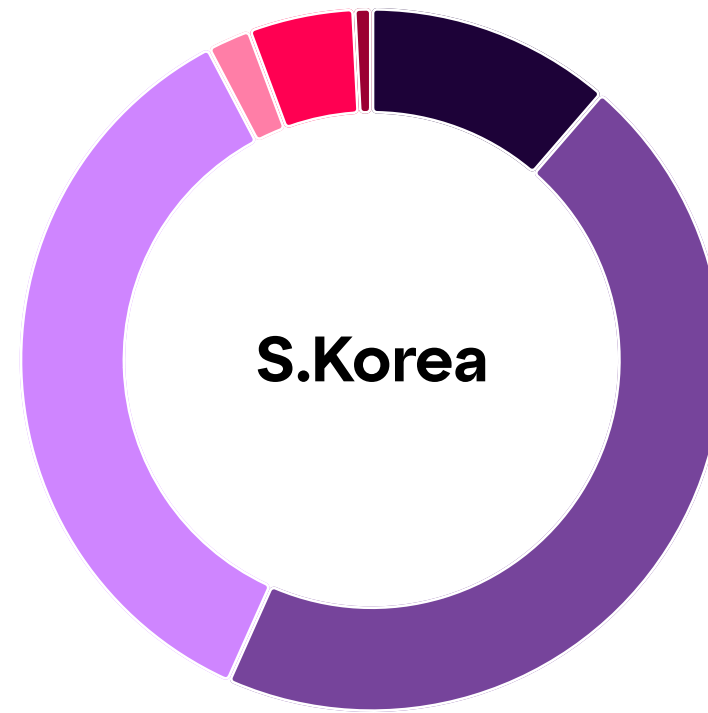
- 41.38%
- 45.76%
- 9.46%
- 1.13%
- 2.26%



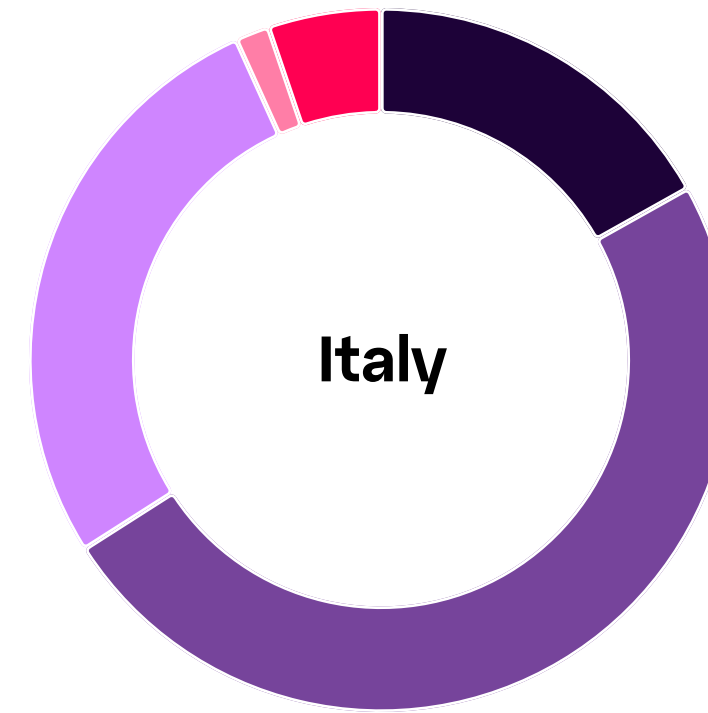
- 15.14%
- 38.12%
- 38.12%
- 2.35%
- 6.27%



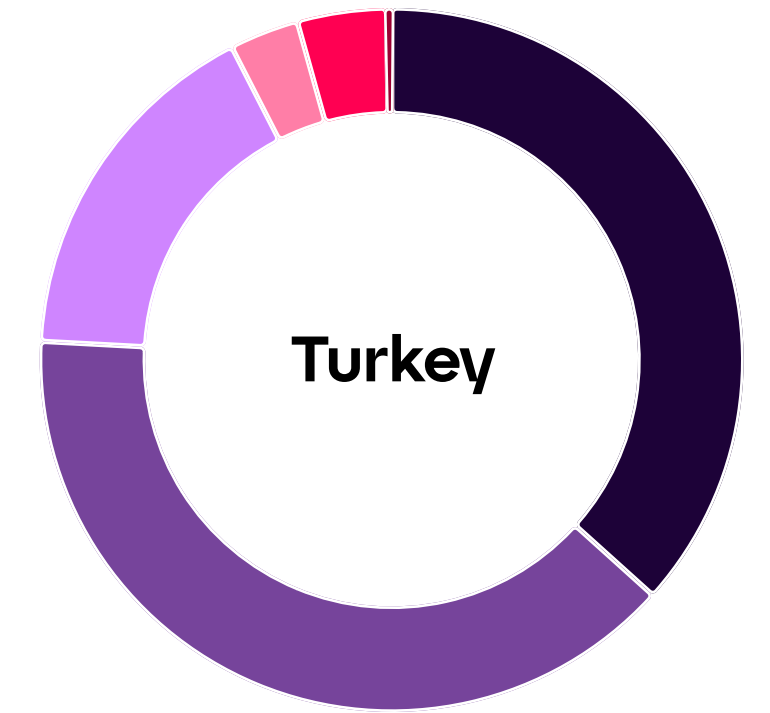
- 11.34%
- 45.34%
- 35.63%
- 2.02%
- 4.86%
- 0.81%



- 16.88%
- 49.09%
- 27.27%
- 1.56%
- 5.19%



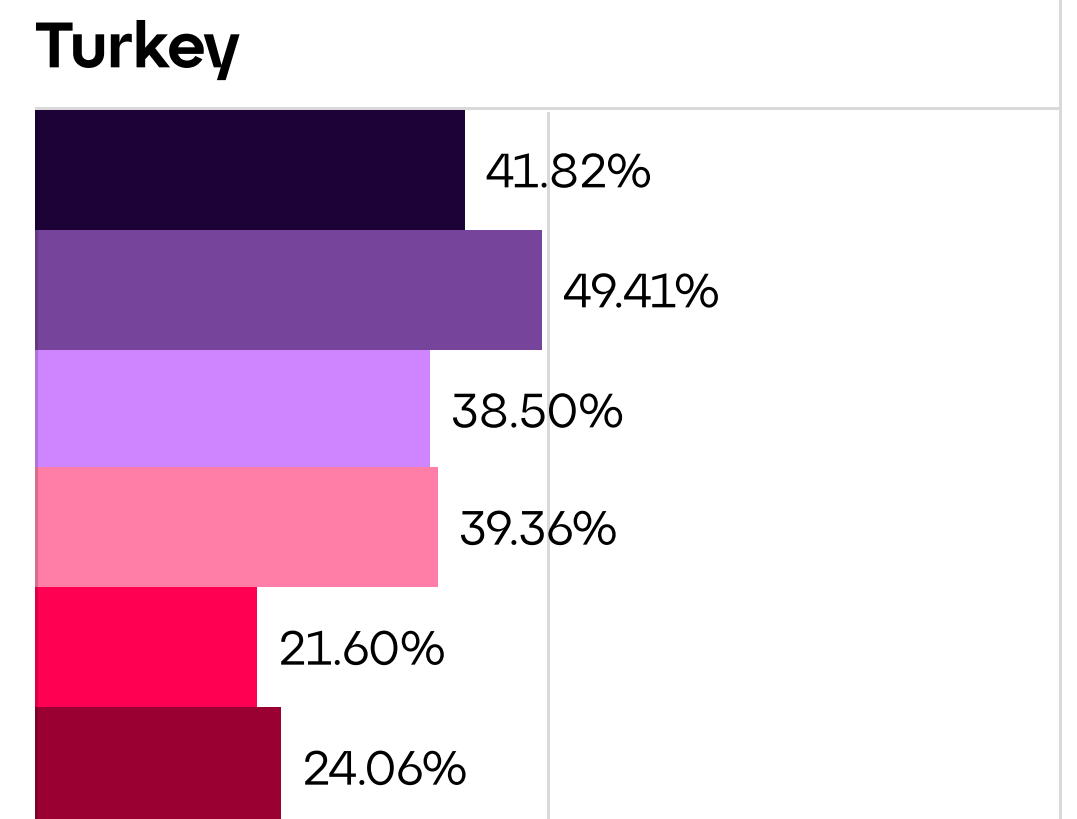
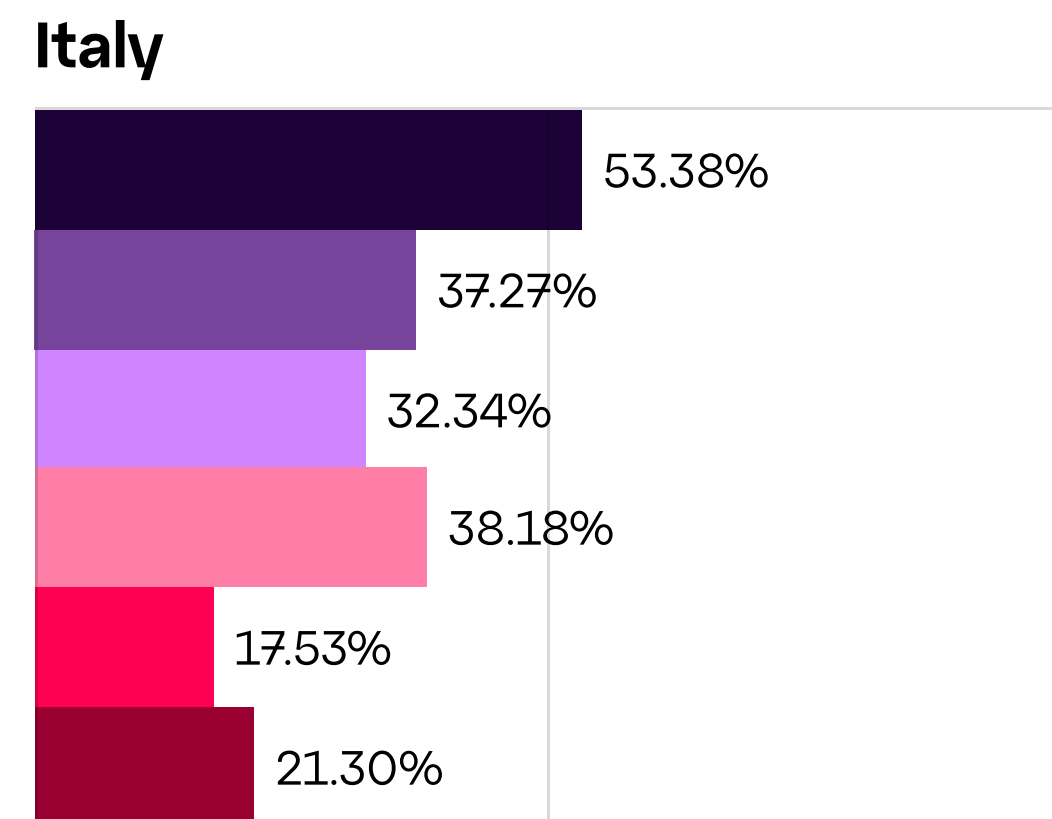
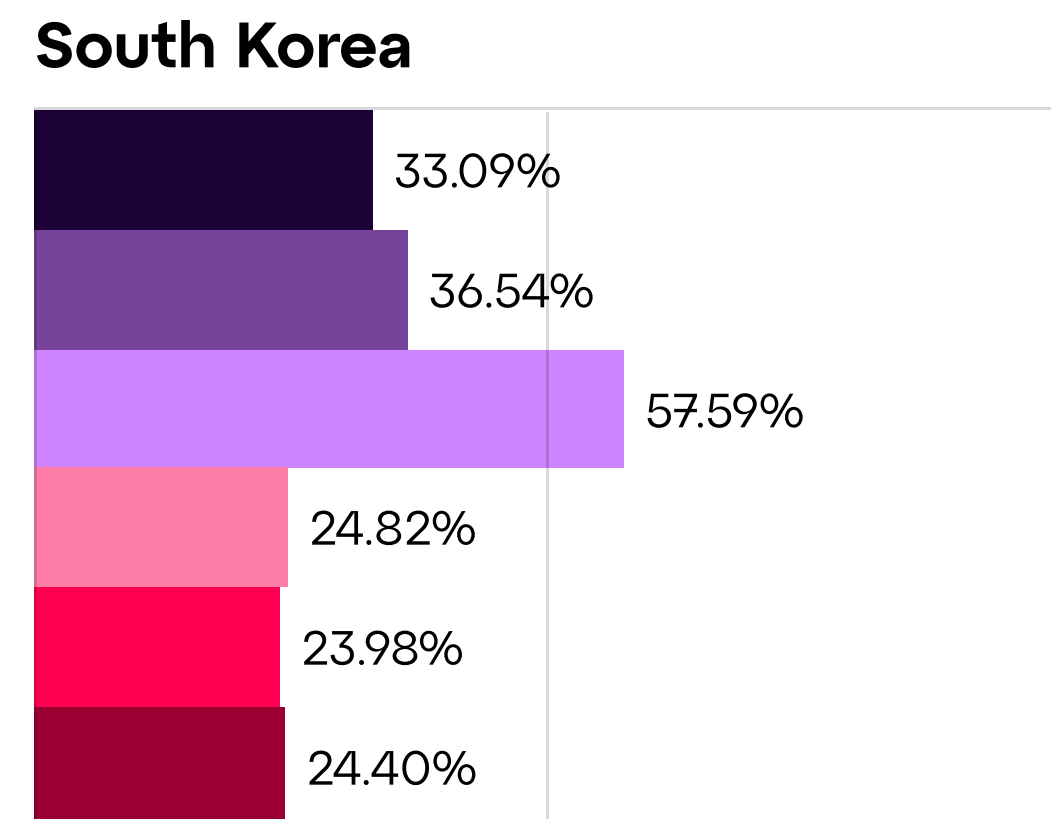
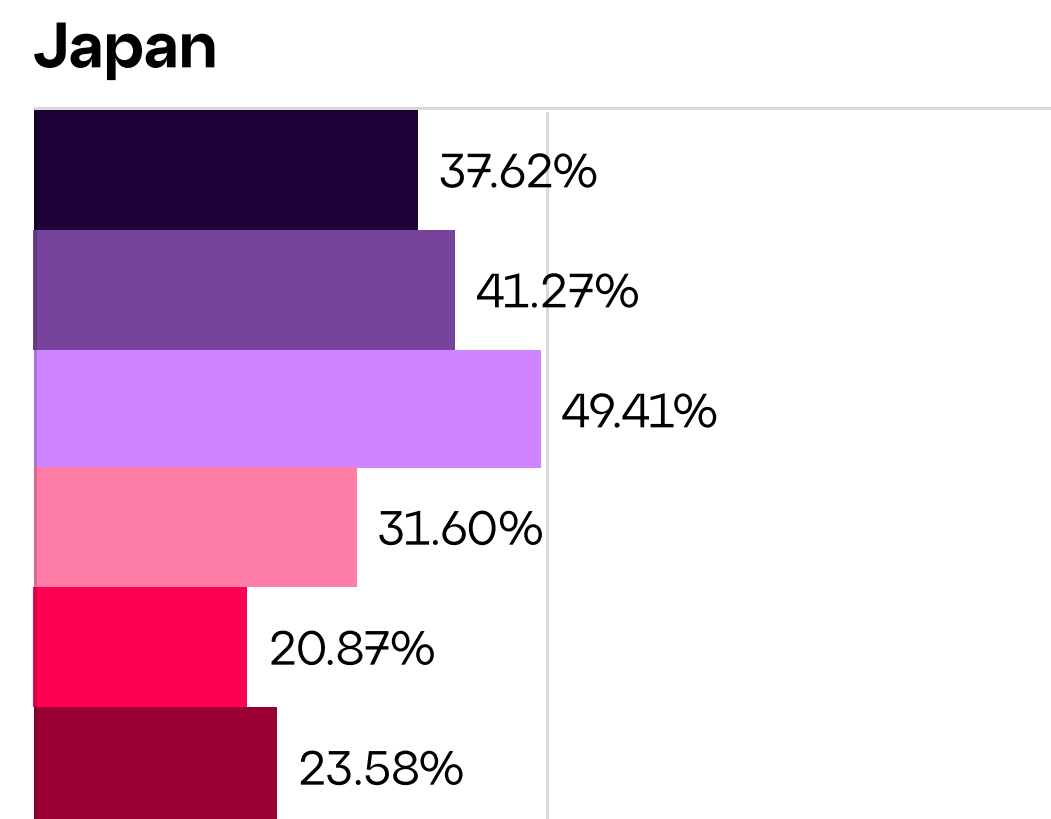
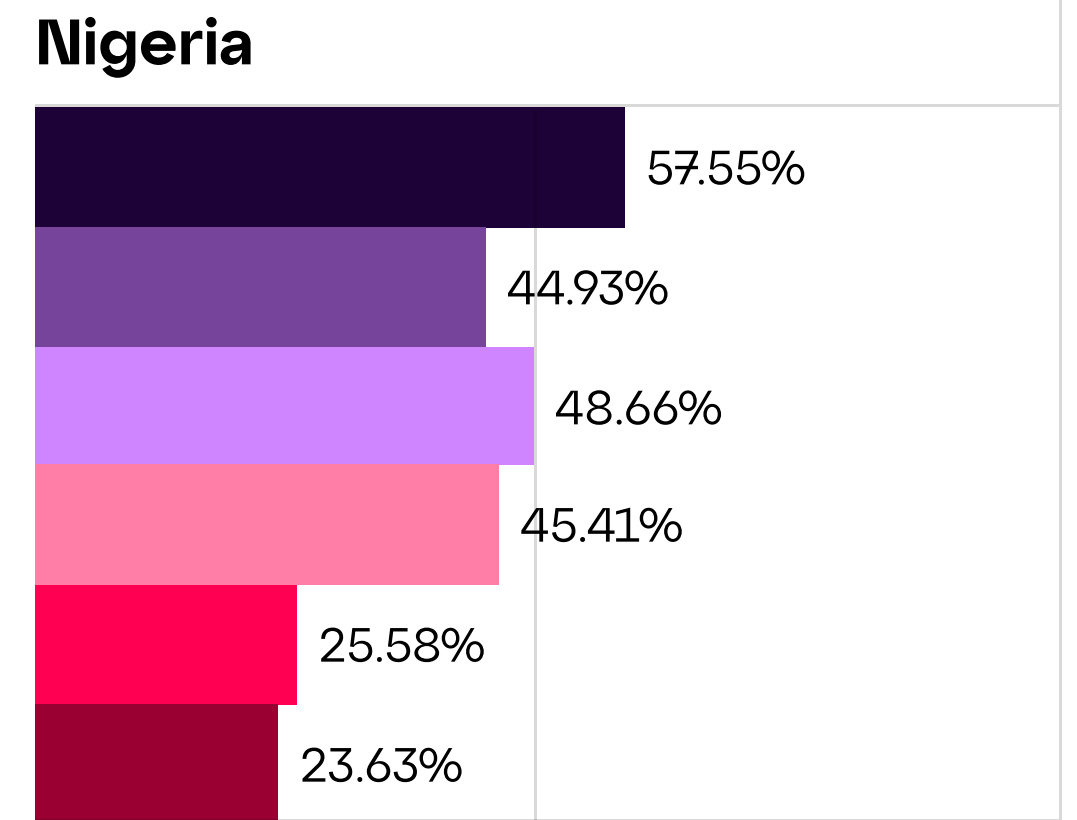
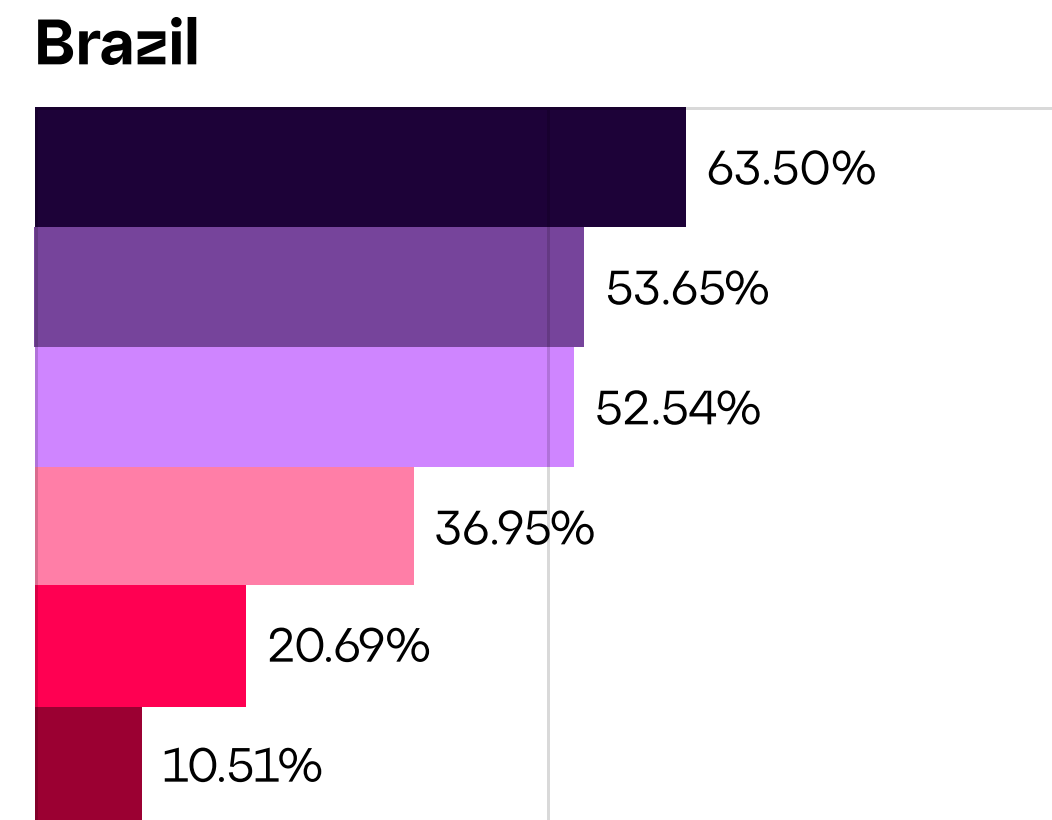
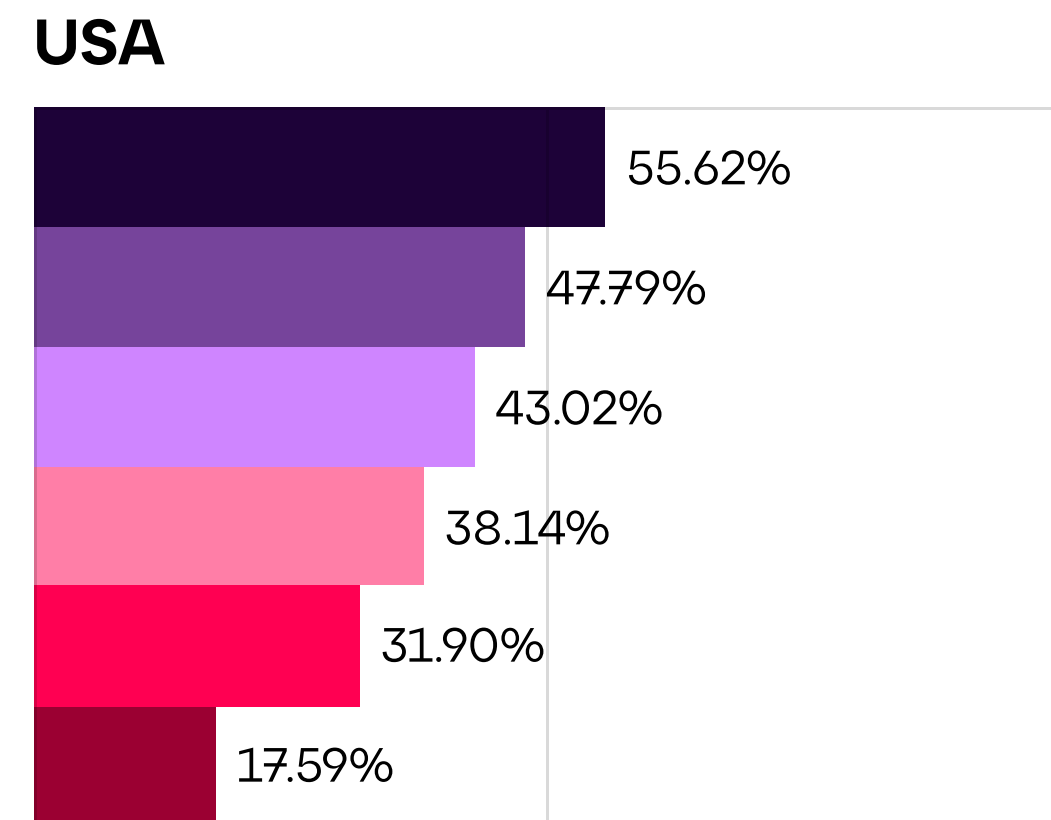
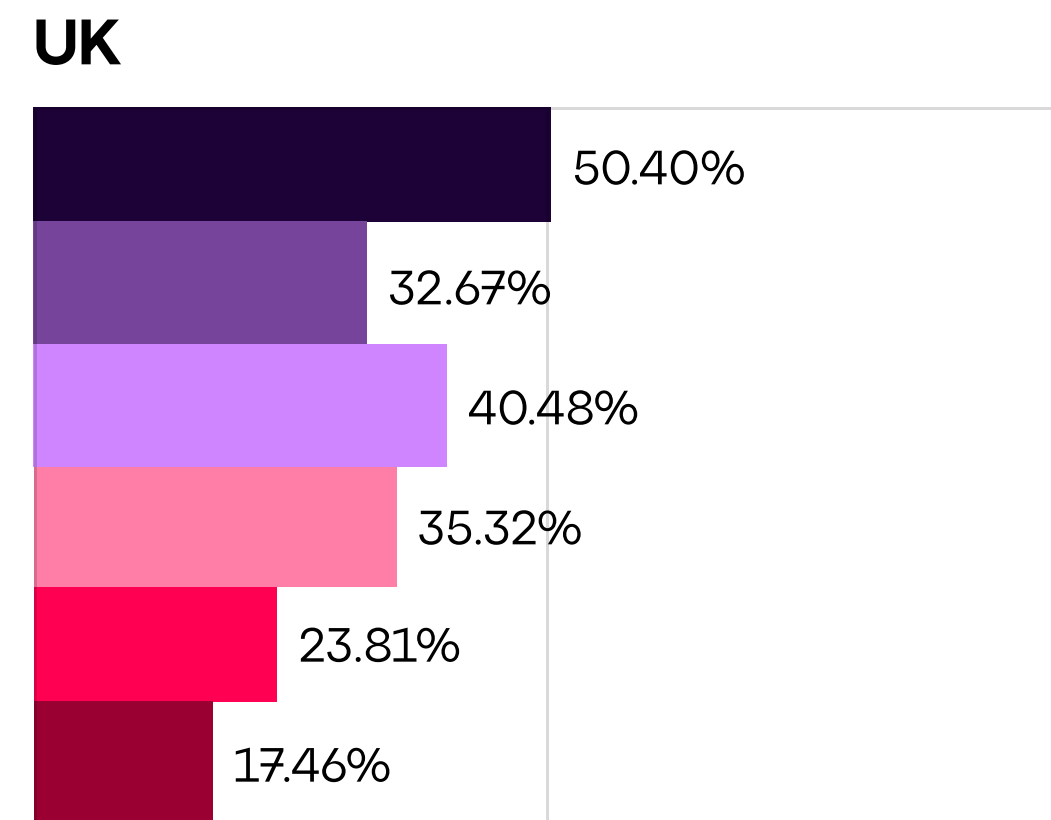
- 36.67%
- 39.18%
- 16.63%
- 3.19%
- 4.10%
- 0.23%



What influences your support for your overseas team?

- Team's history and tradition
- Team's current performance
- Individual players/managers

- Club's culture and values
- Family/peer influences
- Manager/coach



Neil Joyce

Co-Founder + CEO of the CLV Group



Football clubs often think they're at the cutting edge of reaching out to their global fans, but they are merely scratching the surface. Optimising ticket sales, kit sales and club TV subscriptions is where the majority of focus is, but this is not transformational for either fan experiences or the revenues up for grabs.

Clubs undoubtedly have huge global appeal, have well documented brand awareness, whether that be established or emerging plus reference their pride of having millions of ardent supporters around the globe all passionately devoted to their club - we often see the huge social media followers of these clubs being quoted containing hundreds of millions of followers and the number of digital touchpoints and media impressions that the clubs deliver through consumer marketing and partnership activations.

What does that actually mean, though? Clubs are currently hamstrung in their ability to identify, engage and ultimately deliver meaningful engagement at scale with global fans. Social media networks own the relationship with those fans, if in fact they are fans, followers or users of those channels. Relying upon social media to measure the scale of fandoms, alongside the aggregated volumes of TV viewers, raises more questions than answers as clubs look to truly own their fans and create new fandoms.

You may think this unfair on the clubs and to an extent it is, as this has been the basis for fandom measurement until now, but let's unpack why the "as-is" is not sustainable – I wonder how many people reading this follow a sports team they are not madly passionate about. How many of Arsenal's followers on X also 'follow' Tottenham in the U.S., what percentage of FC Barcelona's Instagram audience see a Real Madrid post with one scroll down? This is far from the passionate fandom clubs would like to connect with.

Big football clubs have some of the most desirable intellectual property on the planet, an identity that wholly dwarfs their global revenue. They spend hundreds of millions enhancing the performance of their overall product, the 90-180 minutes of on the field each week, so the challenge we throw down to them is to also look at investing further in off-field performance through creativity, collaboration and cultivation. The single biggest challenge facing these clubs is how to benefit in real terms from their fans around the world – connecting with them is the only way they will be able to harness the huge value of their support.

This Global Football Fan Report shows the huge number of ready and willing customers around the globe whose needs are not being met – they have a club they are desperate to be associated with but are not being connected with in a meaningful way.

Taking advantage of this is crucial in a European football landscape where financial regulatory schemes are in the headlines as much as weekend fixtures or big transfers. The need to generate revenue at the top level far outstrips the capability of traditional matchday income or the merchandising opportunity from match-going fans.

The U.S. is, once again, the promised land. Our separate, CLV Fandom report, Hearts, Minds & Wallets details a \$1.1billion revenue opportunity connecting with US fans before the 2026 FIFA World Cup. While the sport grows all the time in the States – with every Premier League game shown live – 36.5million fans – 44% of the country’s football fandom – are yet to pick a favourite team.

They’re out there to be won and offer a potential lifetime of club interaction, significantly growing a club’s stronghold in different regions.

A separate huge percentage of fans already have a team, but that club has limited understanding about them. They watch matches on a third-party subscription service, they buy shirts directly from sports manufacturers, they discuss the club with friends in a similar boat. Again, their ‘follow’ on Instagram or X means very little in real terms from a Direct-to-Consumer perspective, but

clearly has massive benefit to sponsors who value brand awareness, reach and media efficacy metrics as the key driver for their sports investments.

It’s a real miss from clubs, given that the potential is so huge. All types of brands are at pains to connect with potential consumers around the world – football clubs already have them willing and able. It’s just about making that connection, with a clear market level, fan acquisition and longer-term growth investment plan aligned to it.

Pre-season tours with no follow-up aren’t enough, these fans and floating voters need constant access. For their part, club partnership teams need to work to identify partners who can mutually grow fanbases, customer engagement and value beyond badging exercise. It will be fascinating to see whether those clubs with gambling partners on their shirts until 2026/27 seize the moment to look at creating partnerships where fan connection comes in a sustainable fashion.

The recent Manchester United FC partnership with Snapdragon(part of Qualcomm Technologies Inc) the technology delivering incredible experiences with premium performance across a variety of devices, including smartphones, laptops, tablets, desktops, and vehicles, provides strong

evidence of both the opportunity and application of creating and deepening fan connections and relationships bi-directionally between both the club and the partner. The early signs are promising, the partnership is demonstrating huge immediate performance for Snapdragon in its quest to have a stronger consumer facing presence, along with the way it is being leveraged by Manchester United’s fan engagement and consumer marketing teams with their content presentation of the new season kit launches, the recent 3rd kit launch being a particularly successful collaboration and wider fan engagement activities.

This has shown an interesting shift in partnership development where fans can be connected within such programs. The goal for clubs is generally to maximise commercial revenues, we advocate now that those revenues can be further increased if the clubs work with brands who have a track record of reaching sports fans and customers all over the world. Fan Tokens can be a way for clubs to shift to a more direct-to-consumer model.

Despite opposition in more traditional UK football circles, web3 is here to stay and can offer clubs exactly that – direct connection with fans that is unrestricted and unfiltered by Meta, Google or X.

Other markets don’t have the same reluctance towards adopting web3 technology. Fan Tokens or other club blockchain products are a seamless way of interacting with consumers and audiences more ready and willing to engage with new technologies.

Digital memberships provide a huge opportunity for clubs to reach their ‘fans’ that they currently don’t have access to. Arming that with real-world benefits and a tangible interaction with the club creates a longer-lasting connection. This is something that can be utilised by the club in a manner that is devoid of sportswear manufacturers, overseas fan club representatives and tech giants.

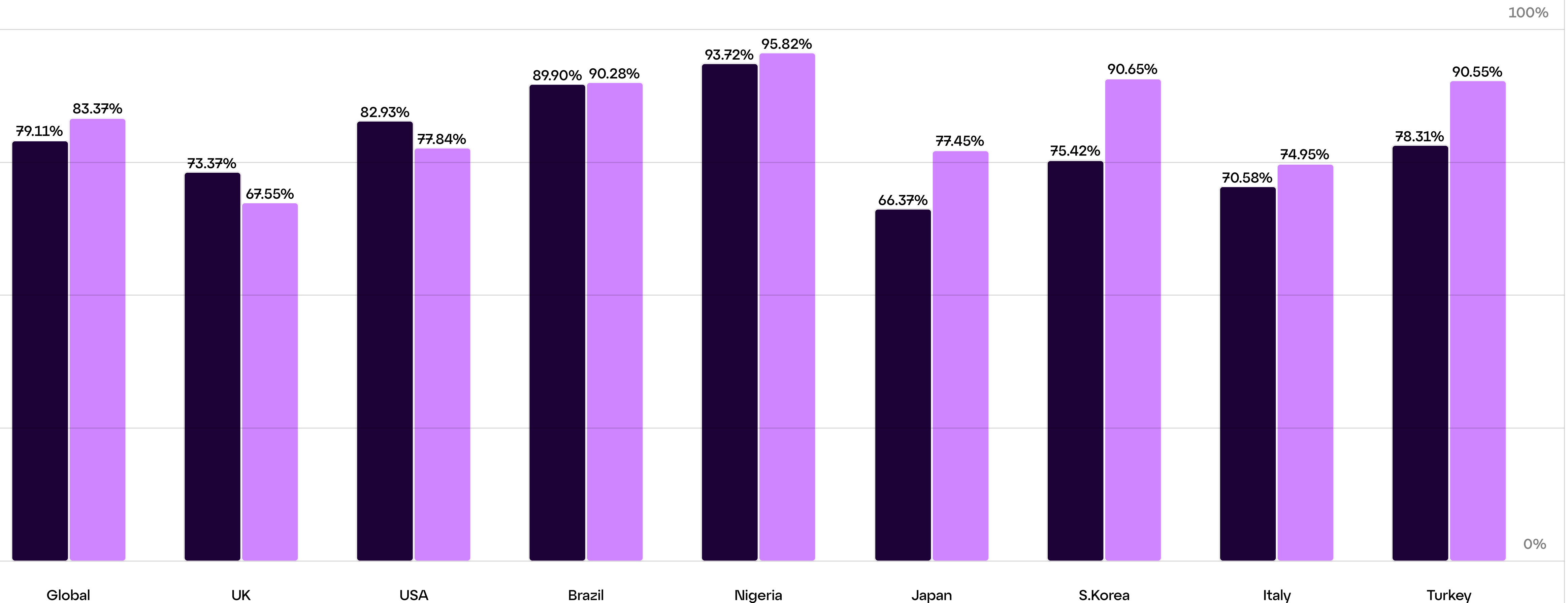
The next step will be claiming some of the hotly sought-after unclaimed fandom. Unlocking fan connections is now made possible : Strategic Focus, Data, Emerging Technology & Partnerships are key pillars. Whichever big club can harness this will steal a huge march on their rivals that ultimately bolsters their success off the pitch as well are re-investing on it.

Modern fandom

One thing that unites fans around the globe is the need for clubs to be doing more to engage and excite them. Every region feels strongly that more could be done, while they all feel technology plays a massive part in that - citing loyalty programs, tickets for global fans and meaningful fan votes.

Technology & digital platforms play a pivotal role in enhancing my experience

I feel my club could do more to enhance my relationship with them



100%

0%

Initiatives that would improve engagement with my club

Meeting players	28.00%
Increasing the frequency and variety of social media interactions	27.67%
Developing loyalty programs and rewards for long-time supporters	24.18%
Developing loyalty programs and rewards for overseas supporters	24.09%
Access to club merchandise/ memorabilia	23.19%
Offering behind-the-scenes content and exclusive insights into the club	22.59%

Offer global fans more match tickets	22.43%
Organising more fan events and meet-and-greet virtual sessions with players	22.38%
Organising more fan events and meet-and-greet in-person sessions with players	22.36%
Implementing fan voting on certain club decisions, such as kit designs	22.36%
Closer access to players and club facilities	21.26%
Improved suite of loyalty programs and rewards for devoted fans	21.13%
Virtual training ground access	19.19%
In person training ground access	18.59%
More opportunities to purchase or redeem	17.58%

The global game

The following findings are derived from data collected on the Socios.com app, a tokenised platform focused on responding to the needs and demands of global fans. To contextualise these insights, it is important to note that the fan token community predominantly consists of users aged 20 to 35, with a large segment being fans from overseas.

Internal research from our platform reveals a growing trend among users: a broadening interest in football clubs beyond their primary favourites. Specifically, 92% of recent users are now following multiple teams, indicating a more diverse and engaged fanbase similar to the findings from the wider research. This trend highlights the evolving nature of football fandom, where fans no longer limit their support to just one club but are increasingly interested in the broader football ecosystem.



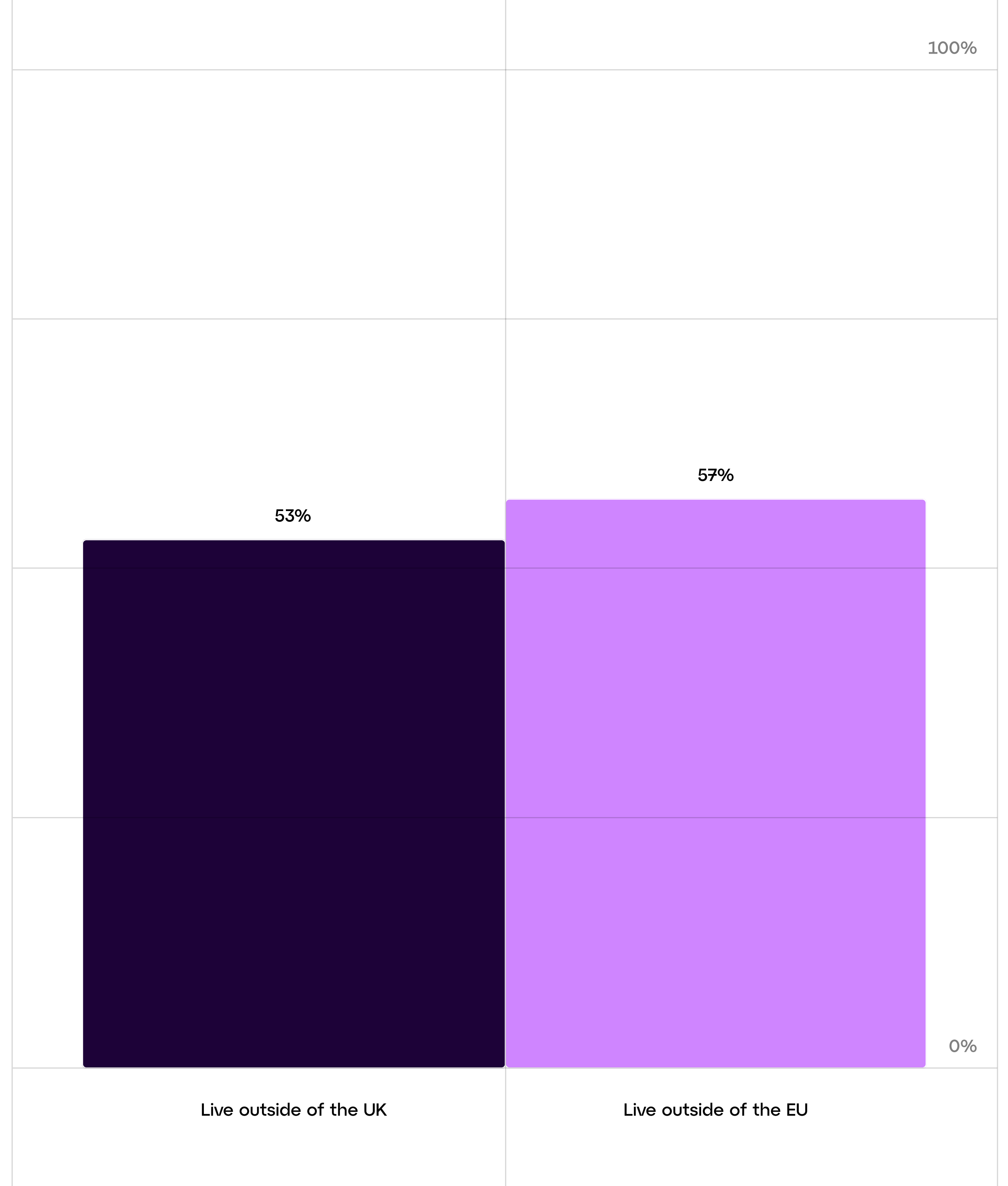
Internal research suggests that consumers on the platform are taking more of an active interest in other teams.

92%

of recent users on the Socios.com platform follow other teams in addition to their favourite team.

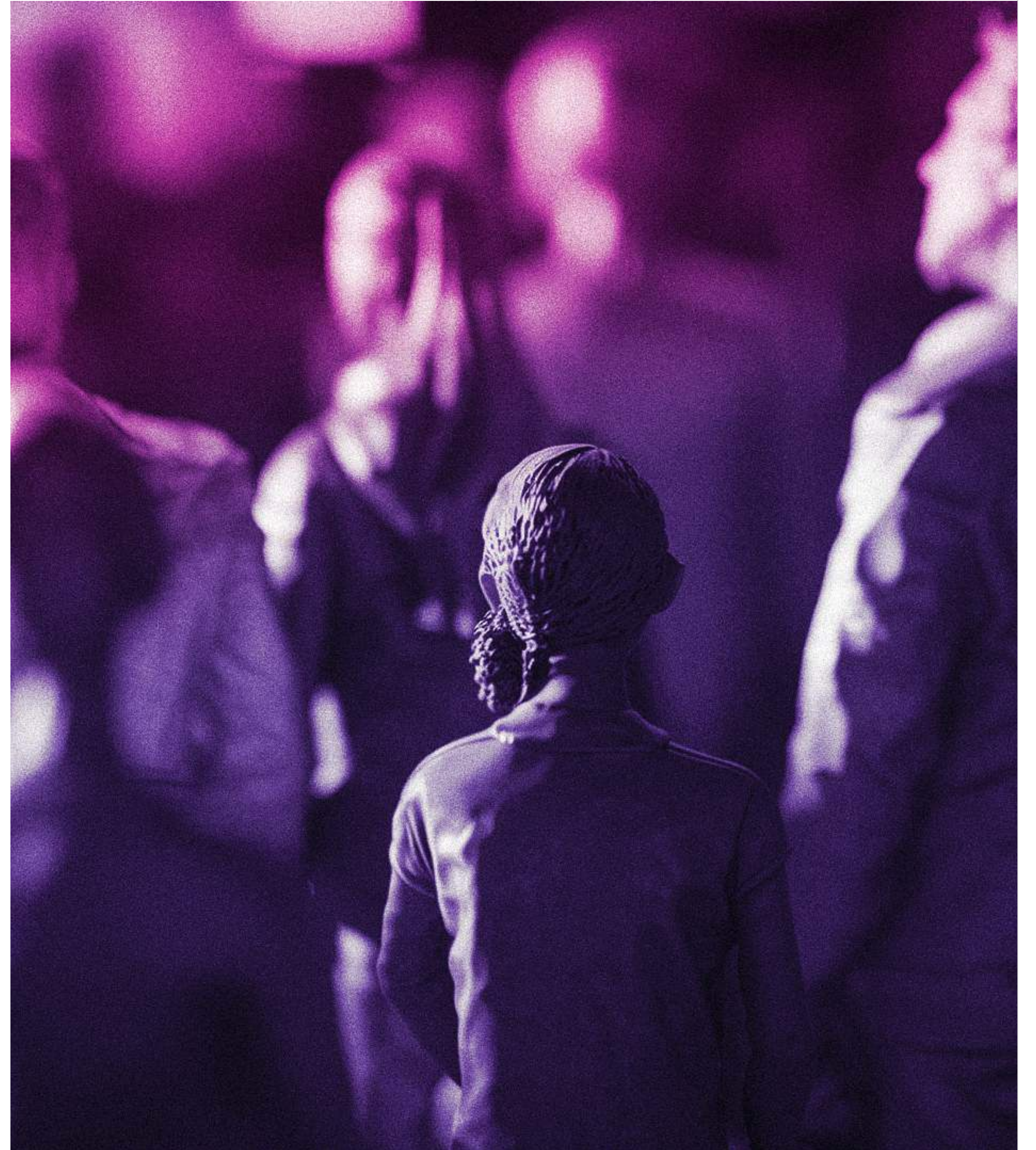
The Premier League appeal

One of the most compelling insights from our data is the significant international appeal of the Premier League. Despite being rooted in the UK, the Premier League has a vast global following, with many fans located far from the league's home turf. Notably, 53% of Socios.com users who consider a Premier League club as their favourite live outside the UK, with 57% residing outside the European Union (EU). This underscores the league's international reach and the passion it ignites across the globe.



Overseas teams + UK football fans

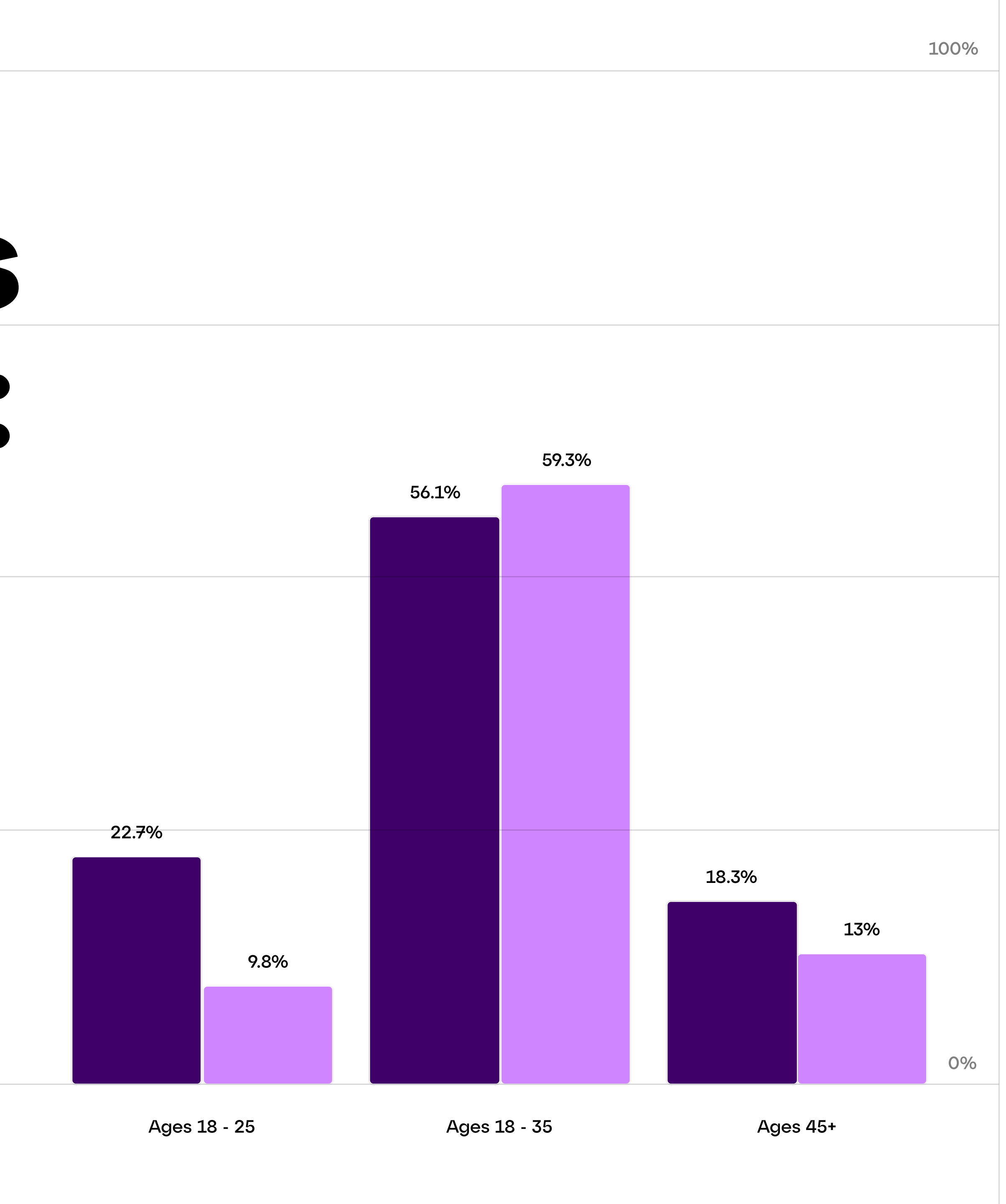
The appeal of football is not just a one-way street from the UK to the rest of the world. There is also a significant interest among UK users of Socios.com in overseas clubs. In a similar vein to the wider research, statistics from our platform show that 16% of UK supporters have a favourite team that is based outside of the UK. Among these on the platform, the most popular overseas clubs include FC Barcelona, AC Milan, and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG). This finding reflects the globalised nature of football, where fans are increasingly drawn to teams with international prestige and star players, regardless of geographical location.



Age demographics of global fans: home vs. abroad

* all stats refer to Socios.com users based in the UK

 Support a team in their home country  Support a team outside their home country



100%

0%

Preferred ways fans engage with their teams

Our latest data reveals a wide range of experiences favoured by UK Socios.com users, demonstrating diverse preferences among football fans. Fan Polls, enabling fans to take part in team decisions, play a key role in the Fan Token proposition and remain a popular feature. Other experiences that top the list are VIP Hospitality Packages, chosen by 28.1% of Socios.com users. These experiences offer an exclusive, behind-the-scenes matchday atmosphere, allowing fans to enjoy the game in a luxurious setting.

Following closely is the Play on the Pitch experience, which captivates 19.5% of fans (2,319 individuals). Meanwhile, Merchandise Giveaways rank third in popularity, with 18% of users (2,151 individuals) expressing a strong interest in collecting exclusive club items that allow them to showcase their passion and support.





Fan Token Holder Case Study

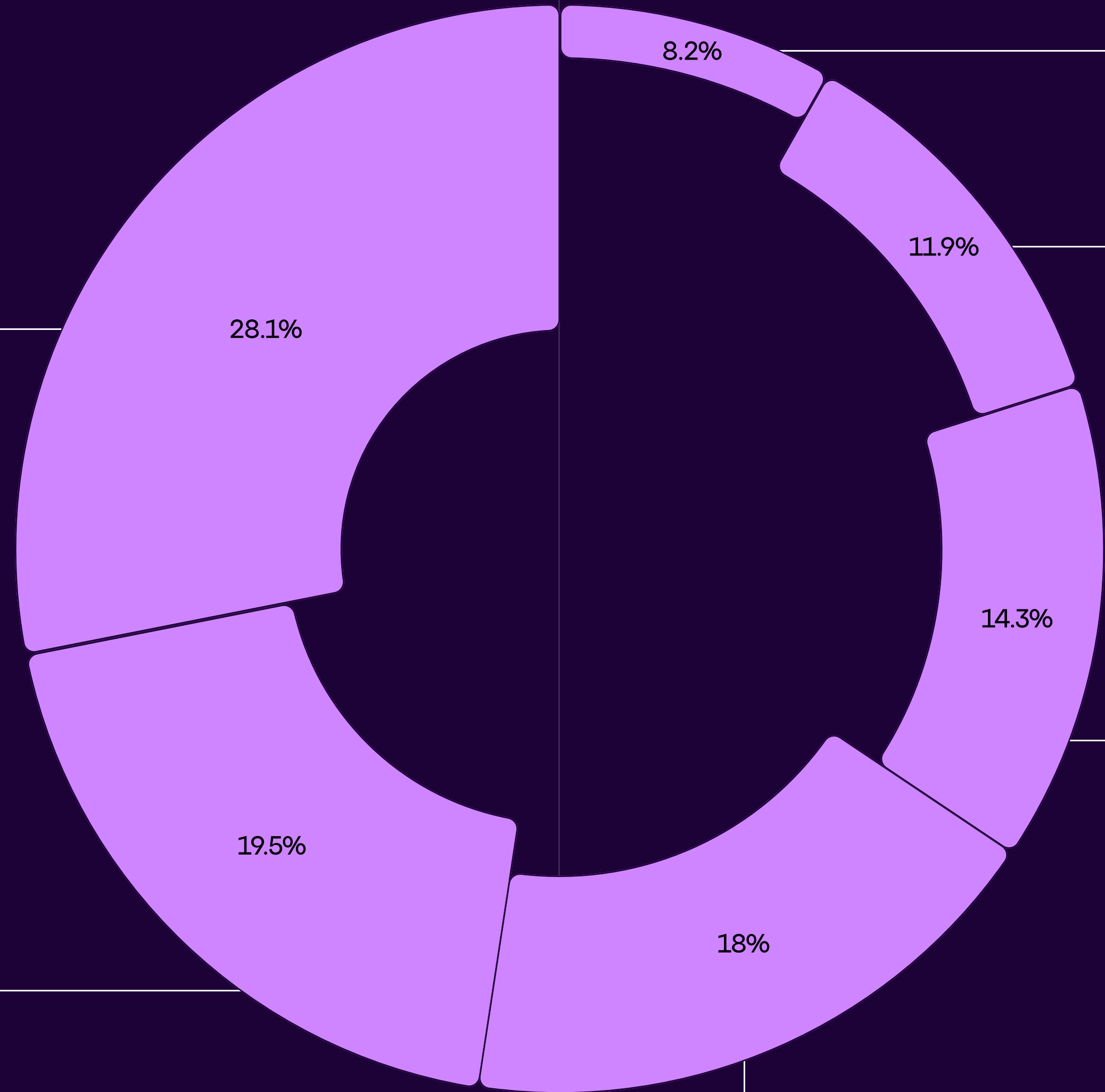
Fabian

Austrian football enthusiast

“

For me, the way I follow clubs can vary, but it often depends on the excitement level of the players, or the style of football being played. Besides my core teams, I also keep an eye on the results of European competitions, the top leagues, and the Austrian league, especially those clubs with Austrian players. Using Fan Tokens has completely transformed how I engage with football. Through the platform, I've had once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, like playing on the pitch in the stadiums of my favourite clubs—experiences that have made me feel a deeper connection with the teams I support. I've also found a lot of enjoyment in participating in the binding polls that the platform offers. For example, being able to vote on things like the design of the team bus or the captain's armband, and then seeing those choices come to life, has been immensely satisfying.

Favourite Experiences of UK Fan Token Holders



VIP Hospitality packages

3,352 (28.1%)

Play on the Pitch

2,319 (19.5%)

Merchandise giveaways

2,151 (18%)

General admission tickets

985 (8.2%)

Live interactive streaming

1,408 (11.9%)

Watch the team train

1,704 (14.3%)



Fan Token Holder Case Study

Karol *Tottenham Hotspur fan*

“

I'm an avid football fan who grew up in Tottenham, so naturally, I support Tottenham Hotspur. However, I don't have a strong attachment to a single team—I just enjoy football and sports in general. Being a Fan Token holder has allowed me to access experiences I would never have imagined. Before engaging with Socios.com, my football experience was limited to watching games on TV or at the pub, and occasionally attending a match in the grandstand. But with Fan Tokens, I've been able to enjoy games from the comfort of VIP boxes and even had opportunities like greeting the team on arrival or being pitch side during warm-ups. My favourite fan experience so far has been playing at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium. Everything about it was incredible—from using the real locker rooms to hearing my name announced over the stadium speakers and finally playing a full 60 minutes on the pitch. It felt incredibly authentic and surreal.



Created by Chiliz, the Sports Blockchain, Fan Tokens are a digital asset class powering a new channel for sports fans to connect and interact with their favorite teams and brands, tailored to the needs of global and digital-native fans, and enhanced / super-charged by the dynamic possibilities of web3.

Since Italian football giants Juventus FC launched their Fan Token in 2019, over 70 organisations across the global sports industry have embraced these digital utility to empower, rally, reward and enhance the experience of their fan bases. The list includes European and South American football powerhouses such as Manchester City, FC Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, Fluminense, Flamengo and Corinthians, but also the UFC and the PFL, Formula 1 teams, esport clubs and more.

The [Socios.com](https://www.socios.com) platform, the home of Fan Token utility, hosts a global community of 2.3 million users across over 160 countries.

The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 8,220 Football fans across the UK, USA, Brazil, Nigeria, Japan, Italy, Turkey, and South Korea. The data was collected between 19.08.2024 - 13.09.2024.

Internal fan data in relation to 'Favourite Experiences' was gathered via Fan Polls on the Socios.com app. 14,639 users holding Fan Tokens of Premier League clubs were able to choose their favourite experiences from 22.08.2024 - 28.08.2024.

Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is also a member of the British Polling Council.