



Tackling the Inequality in American Youth Club Soccer

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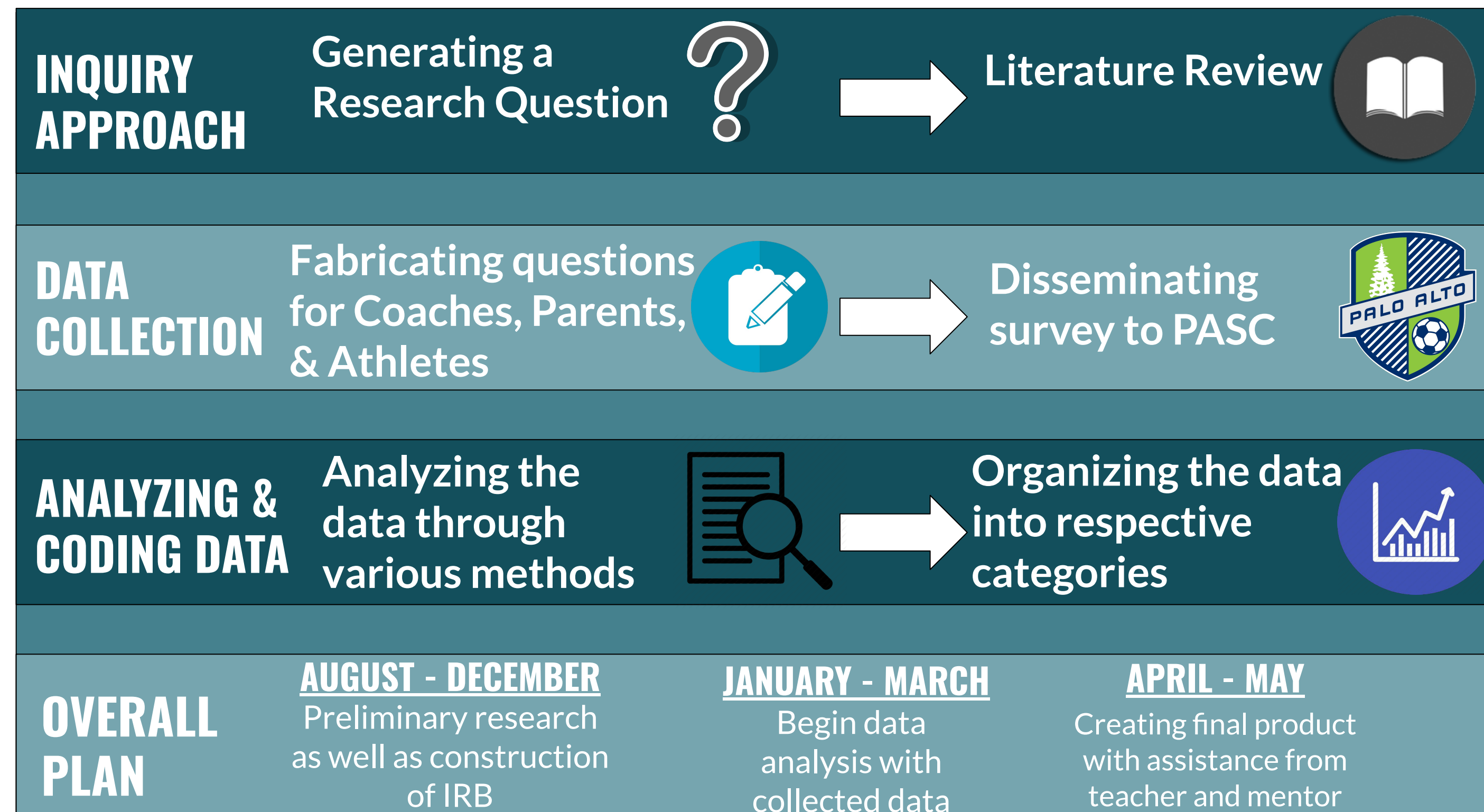


INTRODUCTION

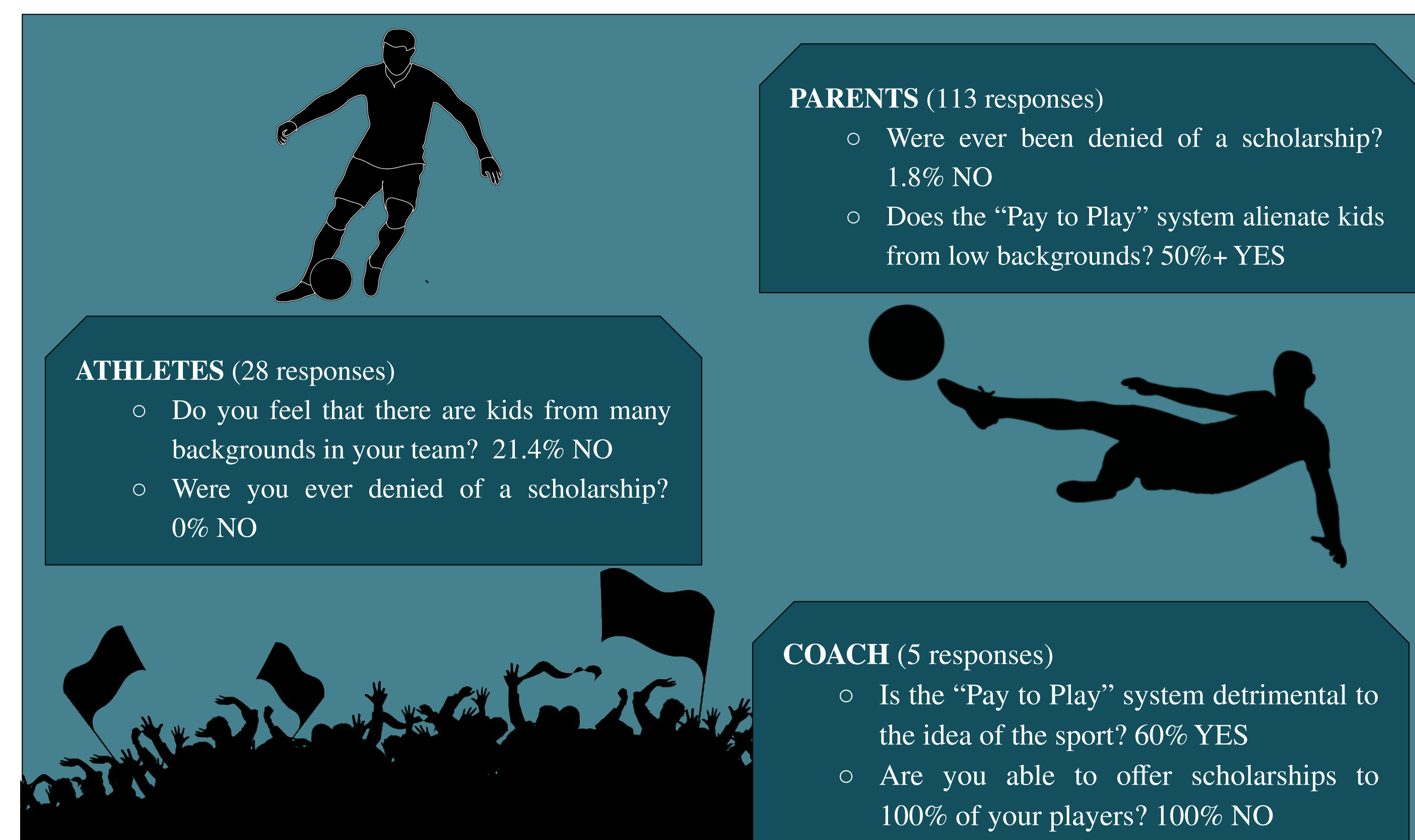
Football is more than just kicking a ball

Football, or soccer, is a way of life, a unifying force. The 2010 World Cup final was seen by at least a billion people, almost a seventh of the world population (Fifa.com, 2005). Soccer in the United States is a young sport, still gaining popularity with all sorts of groups. However, the problem with the American style of youth club soccer is our “pay to play” system. This has proven to be extremely problematic, as it requires one to pay a significant amount of money to participate in a simple sport (Carpenter, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES



DATA AND FINDINGS



How urgent do you think it is to find an alternative solution to the “pay to play” system?

113 responses

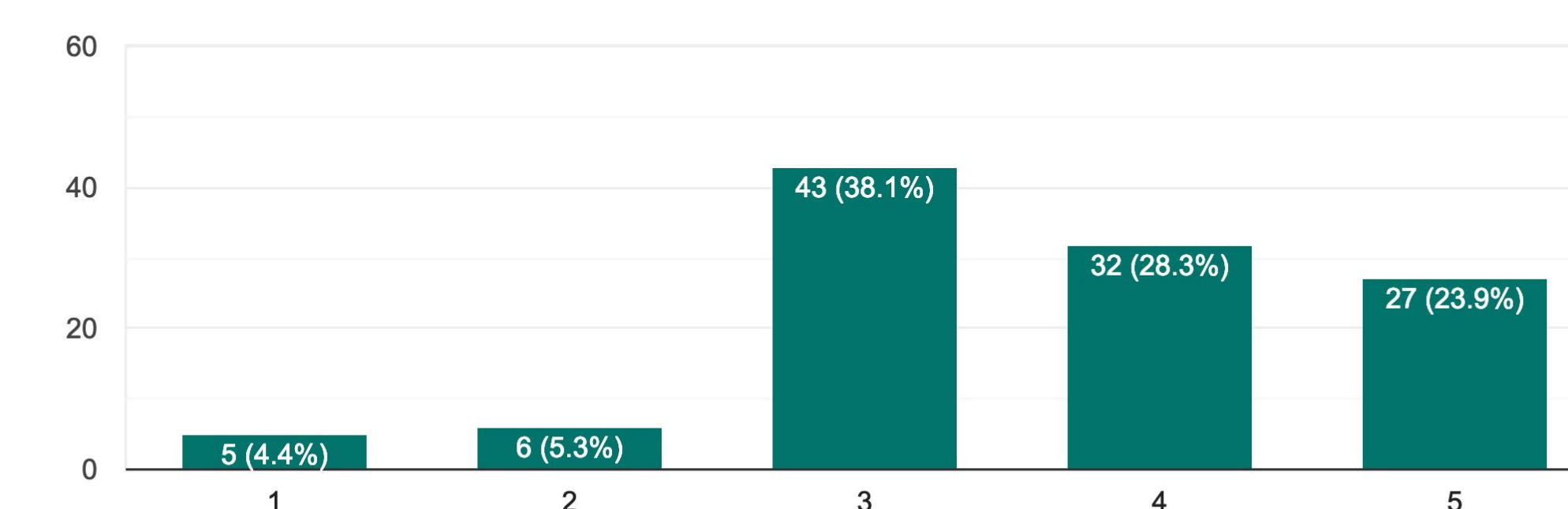


Figure 1: Tackling American Youth Soccer Data. Parents' opinions on how urgent they feel it is that the pay to play system should be altered or even replaced, with 5 being very urgent and 1 being not at all urgent.

CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

The “Pay to Play” system is not as prevalent in Palo Alto as it is in other parts of the state and country, as the collected data did not exhibit so. Palo Alto is a community in which the percentage of scholarship applications may differ from other cities with much more variability in socioeconomic status. After deep research and consideration, it must be noted that there are definitely inherent costs to the competitive side of the game, and this includes referees, facilities, coach fees, and more. As shown in the responses, many people are okay and with paying such fees, but there are always going to be marginalized groups that won't be able to afford it.

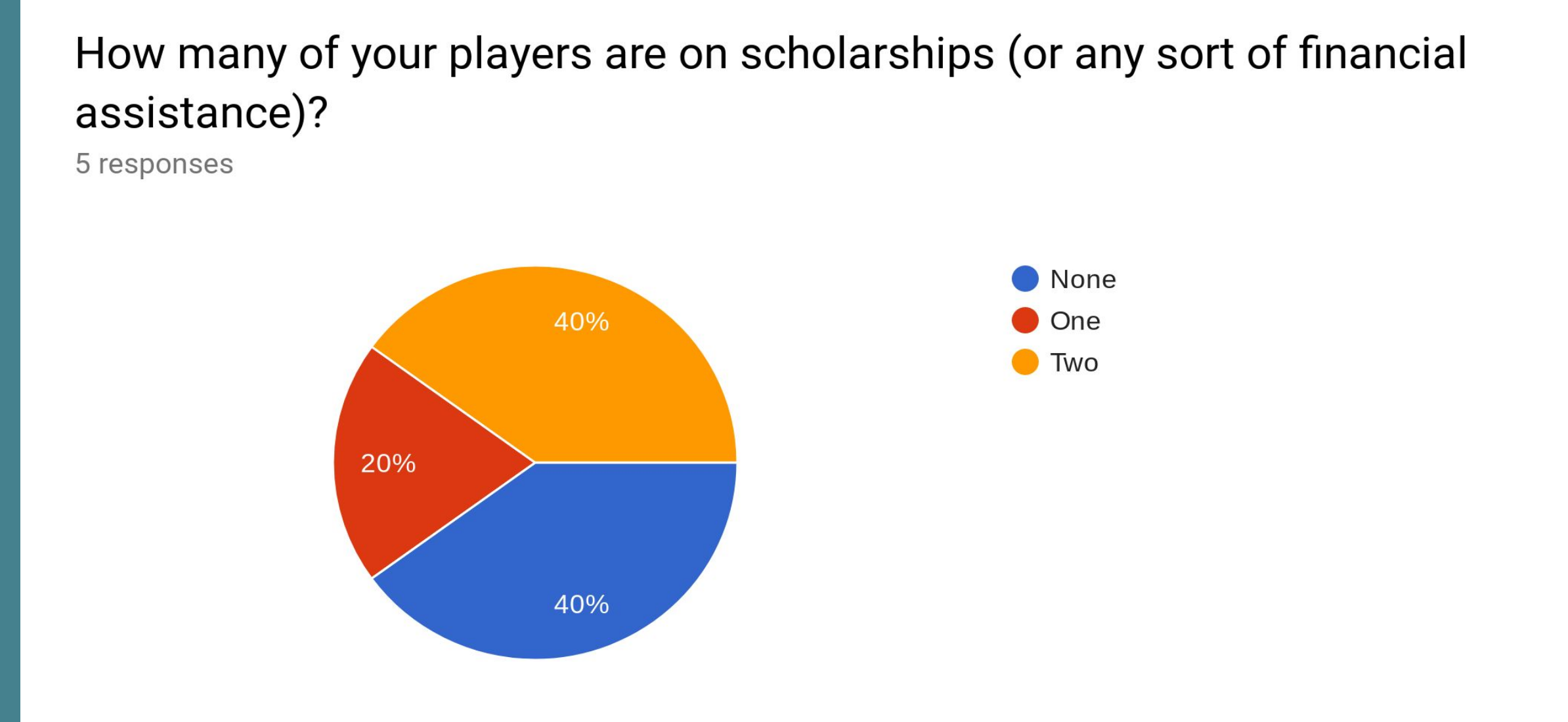
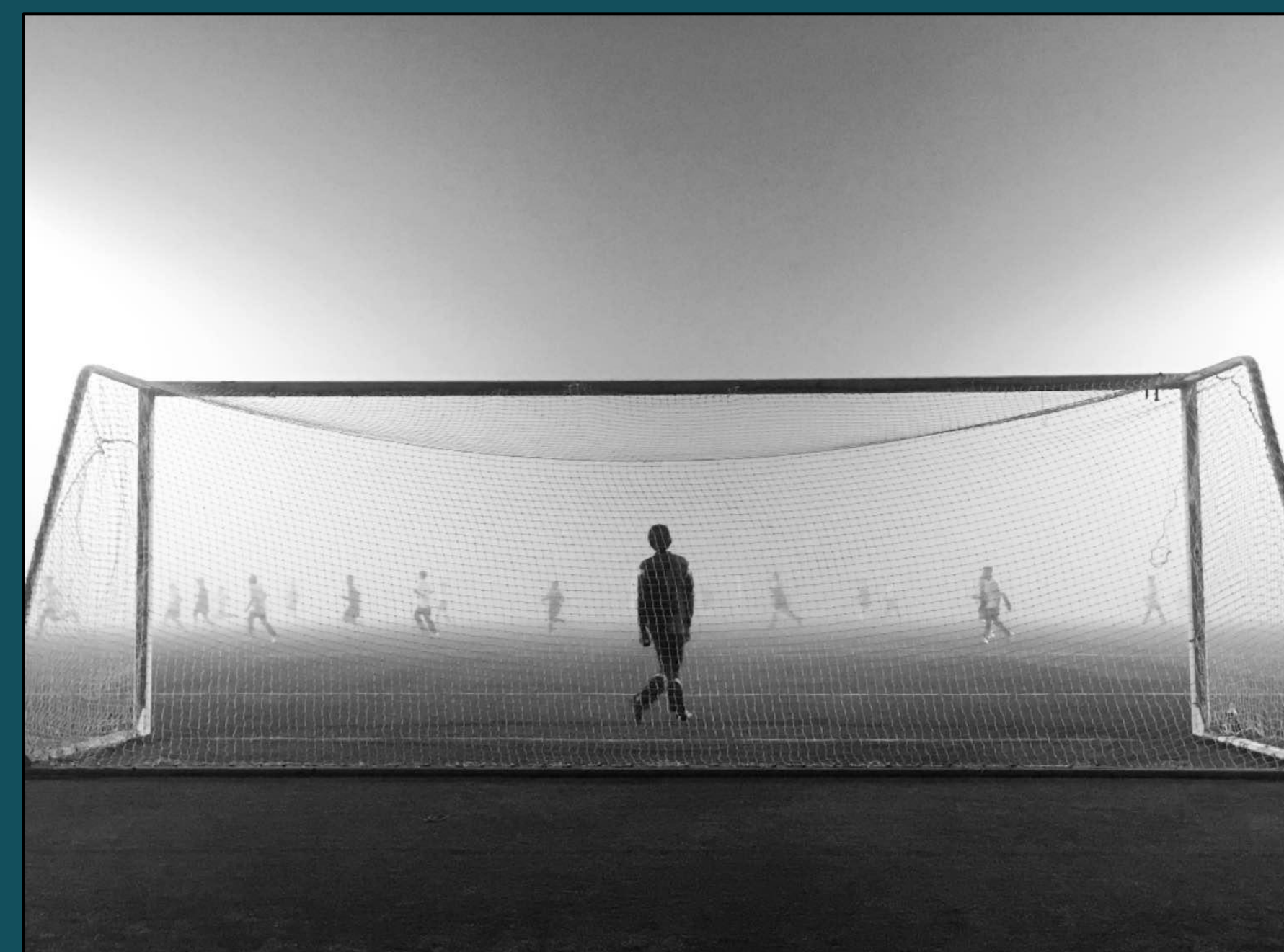


Figure 3: A pie chart illustrating the responses from the five coaches who were surveyed from PASC.

ANALYSIS

After analyzing the data, it is fair to say that many believe that the whole issue with the Pay to Play system is not just a lower class issue but affects a wider range of people financially. Nonetheless, the issue must be addressed and, after data collection, it is believed that scholarship availability must be increased rather than having the fees lowered, as dropping the costs is not feasible and creates new problems.



F, Miguel. “The Beautiful Game.” *Check out Apple's Soccer-Themed 'Shot on iPhone' Commercial*, 9 June 2016, www.idownloadblog.com/2016/06/09/apple-euro-2016-iphone-ad/.

IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

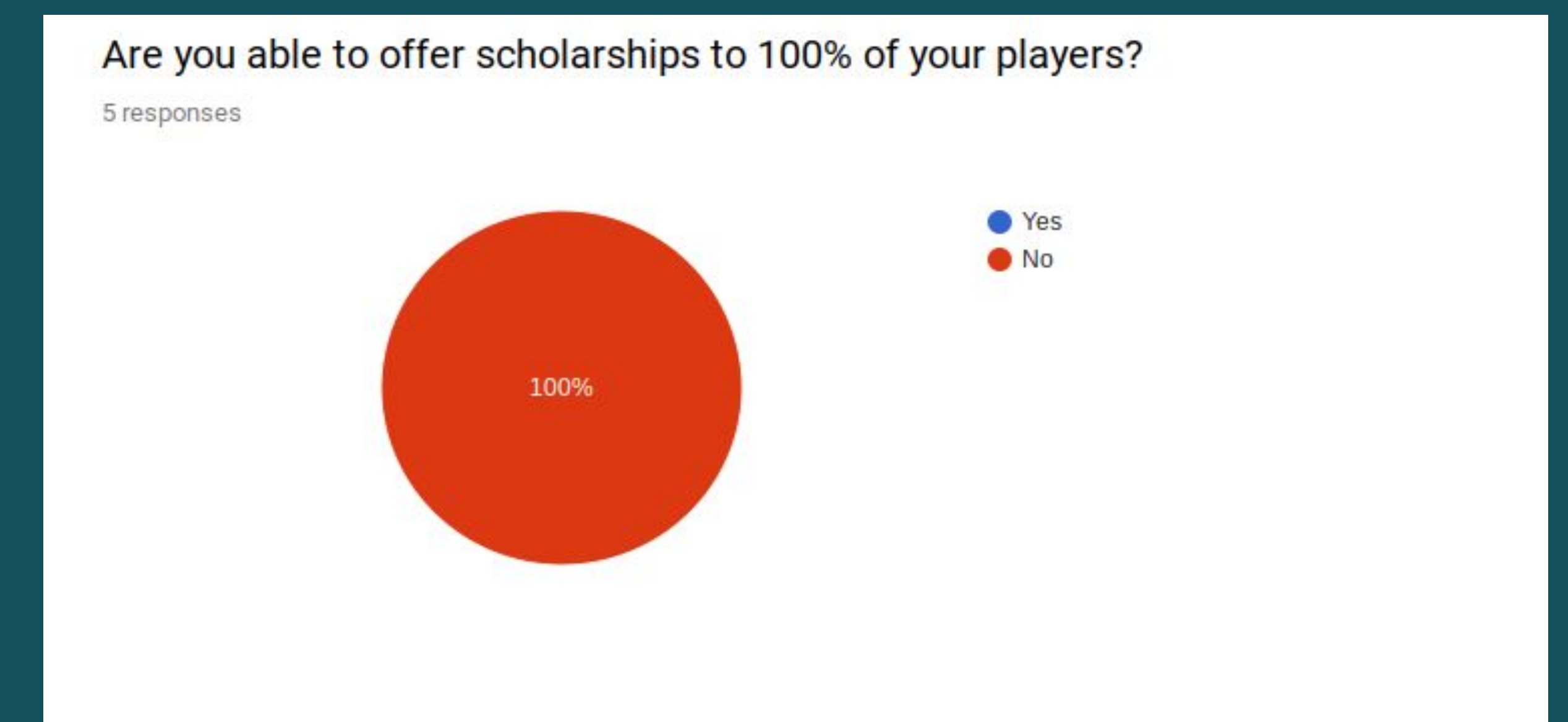


Figure 4: A pie chart illustrating whether the five coaches surveyed are able to offer scholarships to 100% of their players.

What does this mean?

Though the Palo Alto community doesn't believe it is an urgent issue, this problem also pertains to soccer players around the country. Instead, scholarship availability must be increased, which can be done through various ways. Communication to families must be expanded, as clubs like PASC mostly communicate via email. There must be increased funding for scholarships, and this can be done through sponsored events or donations. Finally, the criteria for scholarships must be broadened, as the current criteria for PASC is solely based on income when there are other large factors that come into play, like single-parent households, high rent, multiple players in a family, and non-Palo Alto residents from less affluent areas.

What is next?

Sending out information to PASC and around the soccer community. The poster as well as the research paper will be sent out to PASC families.

What can you do?

Clubs like PASC offer additional fees which cover scholarship families. One can help assist a family in need by contacting the Club scholarship manager as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

***Special thanks to Andrew Hernandez. Also, thank you to Natasha Paret of Palo Alto Soccer Club as well as Veronica Saleh.

Works Cited

Carpenter, L. (2016, June 01). 'It's only working for the white kids': American soccer's diversity problem.

FIFA.com. (2005, July 28). Football: The unifying force.