



# VenuesWest comparative sporting attendance at major sporting events November 2021

VENUES WEST

# Major sporting attendance at our venues

While the global COVID-19 pandemic has presented major challenges across the nation and the world, the impact on the sport industry has been substantial. As a result, the delivery of world class sport and entertainment experiences to Western Australians has been more challenging, yet more rewarding, than ever. VenuesWest has made a concerted effort to continue to provide Western Australians the chance to attend sporting events live and has presented the community with opportunities to see events they would not normally have, such as the AFL Dreamtime match and the AFL Grand Final both hosted at Optus Stadium in 2021 in front of sold-out crowds. Despite our greatest efforts, sporting attendance data at our venues inevitably indicates that over the last three financial years, average attendances at sporting matches has decreased by at least 10% at all our venues for all major sports, showing the true impact of the pandemic. Sports have navigated two full years of compressed and changeable season fixtures and venues have managed event delivery for no crowds through to 50 to 100% capacity. With the possibility of international borders opening in early 2022, VenuesWest looks forward to attracting more global and national sporting events at our venues for our fans to enjoy.

## Sporting attendance over the last three financial years

Venue	Sport	League / Event	Team	2018 season average attendance	2019 season average attendance	2020 season average attendance	2021 season average attendance	% change**
RAC Arena	Basketball	NBL	Perth Wildcats	N/A	11,586	10,956	9,155	-21%
RAC Arena	Netball	Suncorp Super Netball	West Coast Fever	9,240*	6,314	4,788	5,624	-11%
Optus Stadium	Aussie Rules	AFL	West Coast Eagles and Fremantle Dockers	47,549*	47,727	22,010	39,168	-18%
Optus Stadium	Cricket	BBL	Perth Scorchers	N/A	30,133	25,992	19,989	-34%
Optus Stadium	Rugby	Bledisloe Cup	Wallabies v All Blacks	N/A	60,533	N/A	49,451	-18%
HBF Park	Soccer	A-League	Perth Glory	7,555*	10,084	7,785	4,025	-60%
HBF Park	Rugby	Various	Western Force	10,808	8,430	2,667	8,275	-23%
HBF Arena	Aussie Rules	WAFL	West Perth Football Club	2,115	1,445	2,330	1,737	-18%

Attendance figures based on ticket sales

\*Only contains partial season data as data was collected from the 2018/19 financial year.

\*\*If the 2018 season only contains partial data, the percent change is compared between the 2021 season and the 2019 season

**Figure 1 – VenuesWest sporting attendance at our venues over the last three financial years**

### Basketball at RAC Arena

The Perth Wildcats compete in the NBL league and play home matches at RAC Arena. Over the last three seasons, total attendance has dropped by 16% with average attendance decreasing by 21% from 11,586 in the 2019 season to 9,155 in the 2021 season. COVID-19 hit Australia during the 2020 Grand Final series between Perth Wildcats and the Sydney Kings. Due to lockdowns and uncertainty, the Perth Wildcats were crowned the NBL20 Champions with a 2-1 series victory. The Wildcats returned to RAC Arena with a NBL21 pre-season match at restricted capacity with 3,377 in attendance in December 2020. The team hosted 18 matches across the 2021 season with an average attendance of 9,155 including the Grand Final series where the Wildcats lost to Melbourne United.

### Netball at RAC Arena

The West Coast Fever compete in the Suncorp Super Netball league and play home matches at RAC Arena. Attendance has dropped over the last three seasons (2019 – 2021 seasons) by 49%; however, average attendance has only decreased by 11% from 6,314 in the 2019 season to 5,624 in the 2021 season. When COVID-19 hit Australia, the 2020 season was deferred to commence in August in a condensed format with a hub in Queensland with all teams relocating to the hub. The 60-game season was held over 78 days with WCF losing to the Melbourne Vixens in the Grand Final. RAC Arena hosted one watch party in September which was attended by just over 5,000 fans. In the 2021 season, only four matches were held at RAC: two games in May with an average attendance of 4,701 and two games in July with average attendance of just over 6,500. The 2021 finals series were once again hosted in Brisbane at 50% capacity.

## **AFL at Optus Stadium**

The West Coast Eagles and Fremantle Dockers compete in the Australia Football Leagues and play home matches at Optus Stadium. Over the last three seasons, total attendance has decreased by 18% with average attendance also decreasing by 18% from 47,727 during the 2019 season to 39,168 in the 2021 season. The first round of the 2020 season began on time in March with Optus Stadium hosting in front of no crowd, however, the remaining rounds were delayed until June after COVID-19. AFL matches did not return to Optus Stadium until mid-July in front of limited capacity; however, by late August, the remaining matches were played in either Queensland or South Australia with the Grand Final played in Brisbane. The 2021 season was affected much the same due to various lockdowns and crowd restrictions, with locations for rounds announced in parts. However, due to the on-going lockdown situation in Melbourne, Optus Stadium proudly hosted the 2021 Grand Final match in front of a sold out 60,000+ audience.

## **Cricket at Optus Stadium**

The Perth Scorchers compete in the Big Bash League (BBL) and play home matches at Optus Stadium. Over the last three seasons, total attendance has decreased by 53% with average attendance also decreasing by 34% from 30,133 in the 2019 season to 19,989 in the 2021 season. The 2020 season finished before COVID-19 impacted Australia's borders and was therefore unaffected by the global pandemic. In the 2021 season, the Scorchers only played four home games compared to seven in the previous seasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to restricted capacity. The team called three other stadiums 'home' during the season resulting from relocations. Optus Stadium did host the Sydney Thunder v Hobart Hurricanes for one match during the season to a low crowd of 2,768 on a Thursday night during the season.

## **Bledisloe Cup at Optus Stadium**

Optus Stadium has hosted the Bledisloe Cup two years in recent time: in August 2019 and September 2021. Due to multiple date changes due to border restrictions, attendance dropped by 18% in 2021 compared to 2019.

## **Soccer at HBF Park**

The Perth Glory compete in the A-League and play home matches at HBF Park. Over the last three seasons, total attendance has fallen by 65%, with average attendance dropping 60% from 10,084 in the 2019 season to 4,025 in the 2021 season. The 2020 season started as normal but the COVID-19 pandemic saw the end of the season delayed until July with the finals held in August. Once the pandemic arrived, HBF Park did not host any more matches due to restrictions. The 2021 season had a delayed start due to COVID-19 and was only played over the course of five months. In this time, HBF Park hosted thirteen matches but capacity restrictions resulted in smaller crowds.

## **Rugby at HBF Park**

Western Force has competed in several different leagues over the last four seasons with home matches at HBF Park. Over the last three seasons, total attendance has decreased by 23% and average attendance has also dropped by 23% from 10,808 in the 2018 season to 8,275 in the 2021 season. In 2018, the Western Force competed in the World Series Rugby league in which all seven matches were played at HBF Park, drawing in large crowds. In 2019, the team competed in the Global Rapid Rugby league which saw HBF Park host six matches with the rest played across the Asia-Pacific region. The 2020 Global Rapid series season only went ahead with one match after being cancelled due to COVID-19. In 2021, due to travel and border restrictions, the Super Rugby league contained only Australian teams, known as Super Rugby AU, in which HBF Park hosted six matches to various size crowds. The Western Force also competed against New Zealand teams as part of the Super Rugby Trans-Tasman expeditions which resulted in two matches played at HBF Park to an average crowd of 11,193.

## **WAFL at HBF Arena**

The West Perth Football Club competes in the WAFL league with home matches at HBF Arena. Over the last four seasons, attendance has dropped by 18% with average attendance dropping by 18% from 2,115 during the 2018 season to 1,737 in the 2021 season. The 2020 season was delayed due to COVID-19 and had one less team than normal seasons. The 2021 season resumed with a full ten-team league.

# Supporting data

## Basketball at RAC Arena

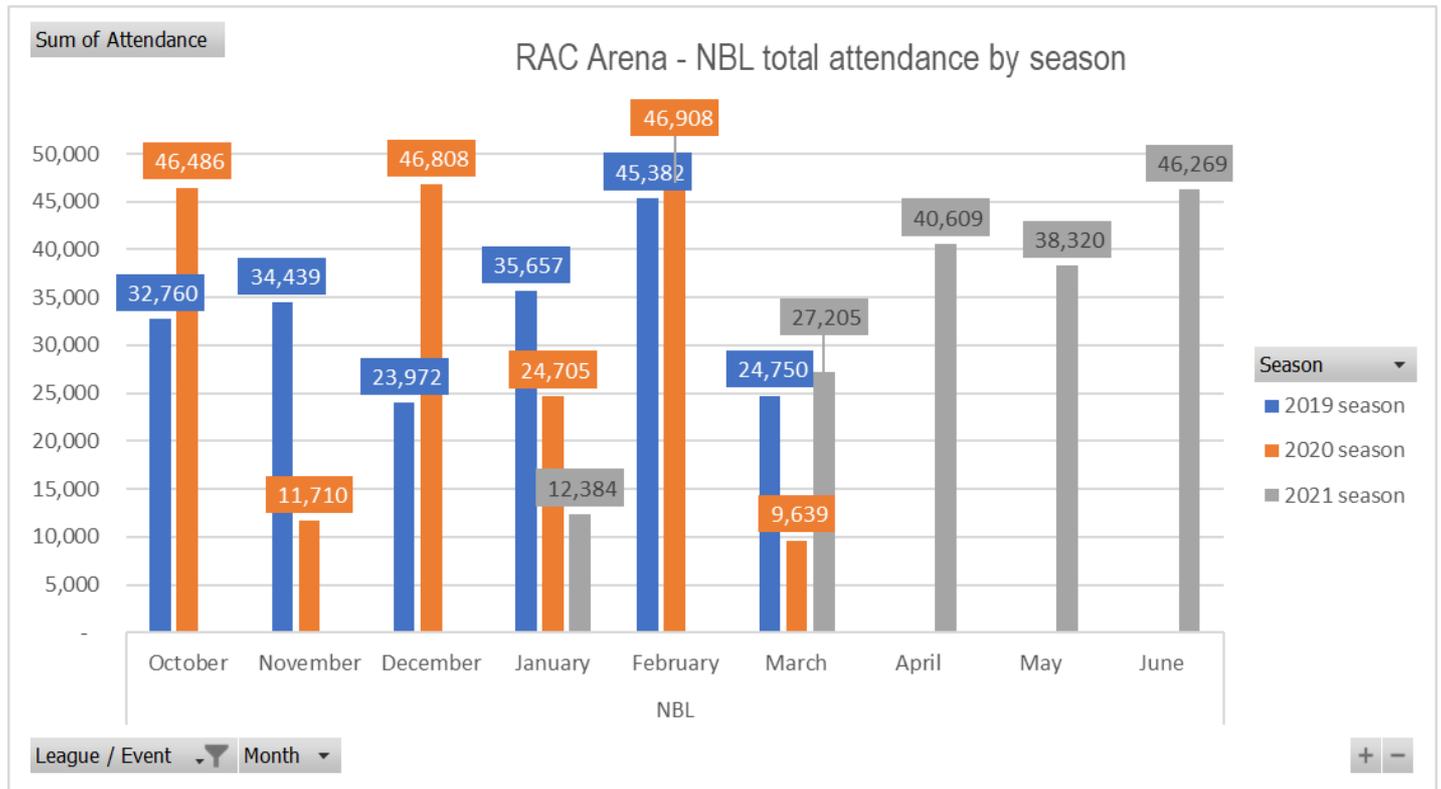


Figure 2 – NBL attendance at RAC Arena by month and season

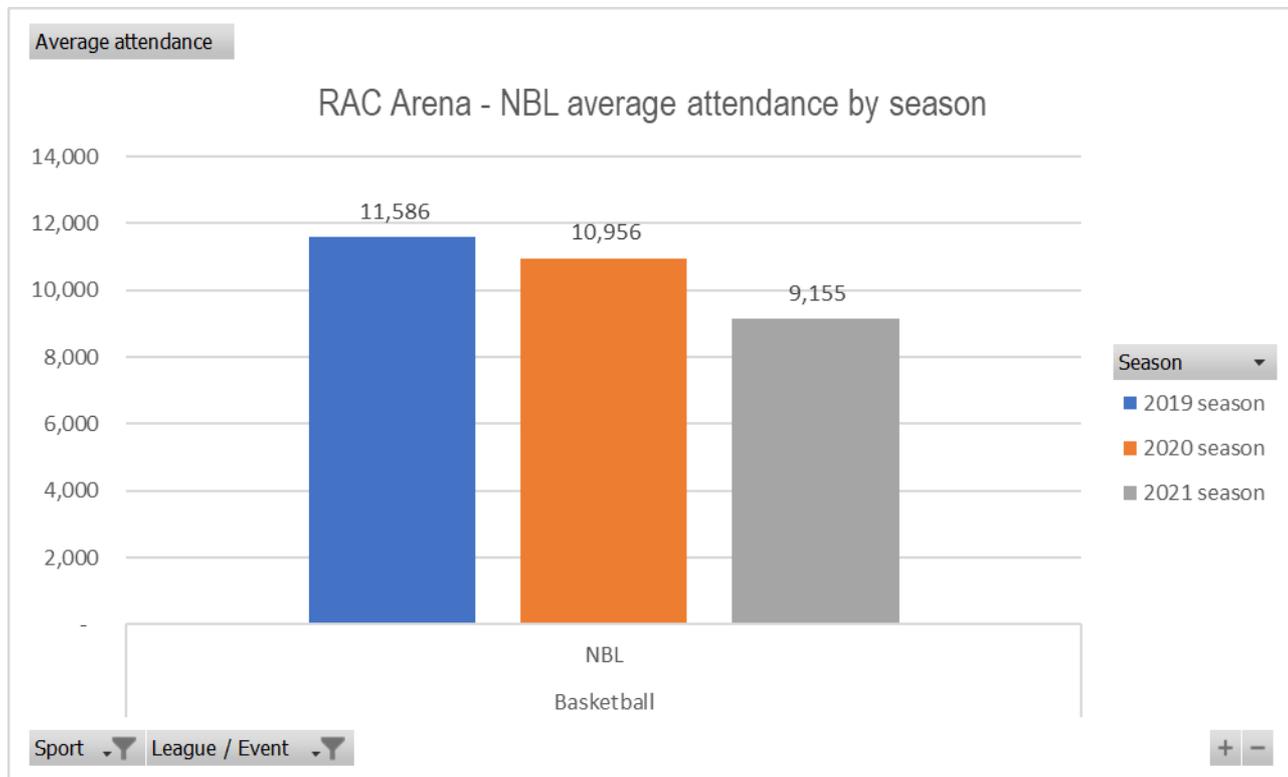


Figure 3 – NBL average attendance at RAC Arena by season

## Netball at RAC Arena

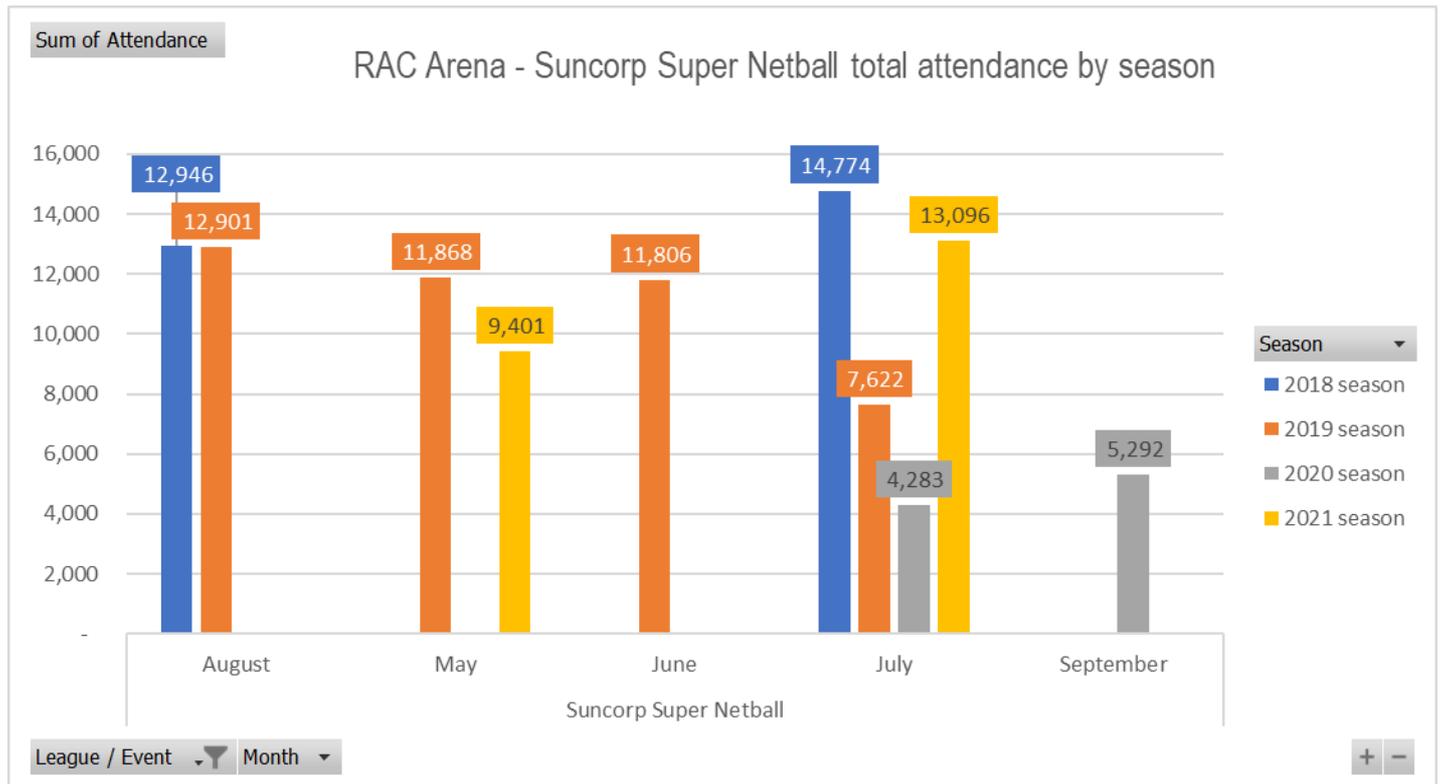


Figure 4 – Suncorp Super Netball attendance at RAC Arena by month and season

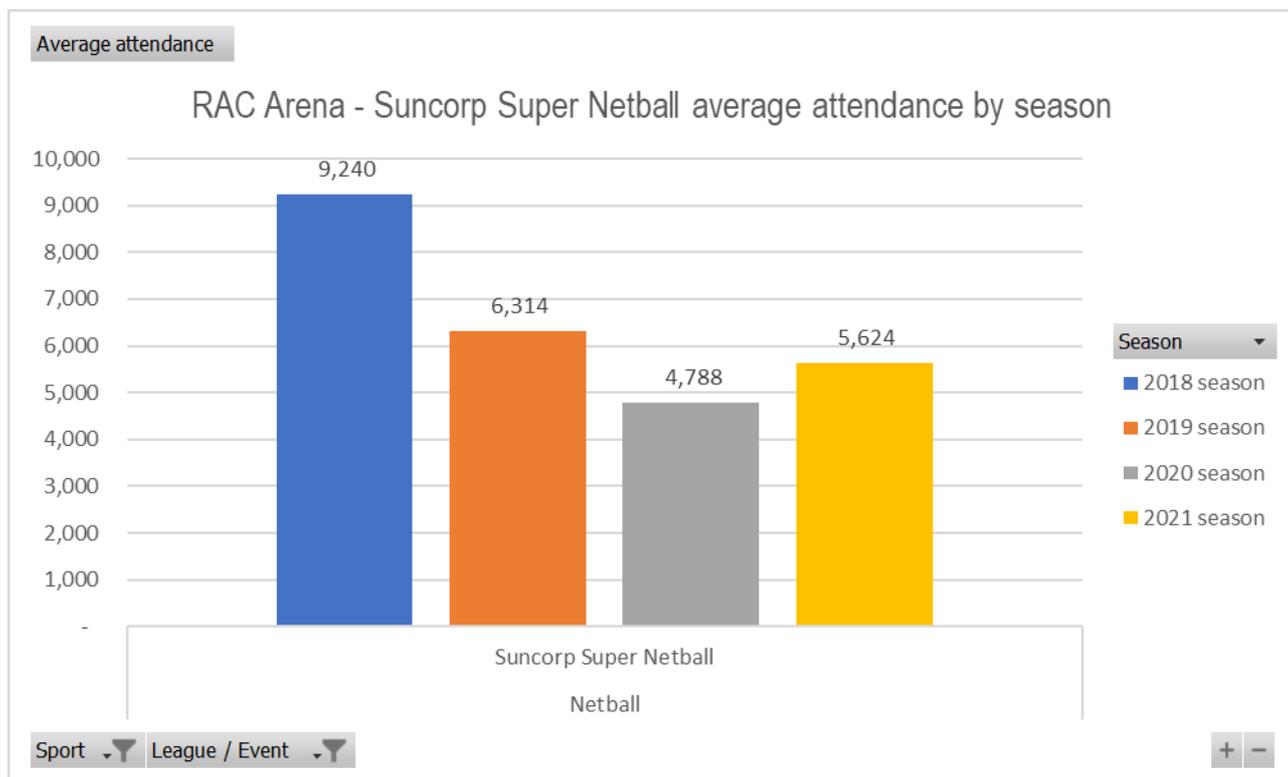


Figure 5 – Suncorp Super Netball average attendance at RAC Arena by season

## AFL at Optus Stadium

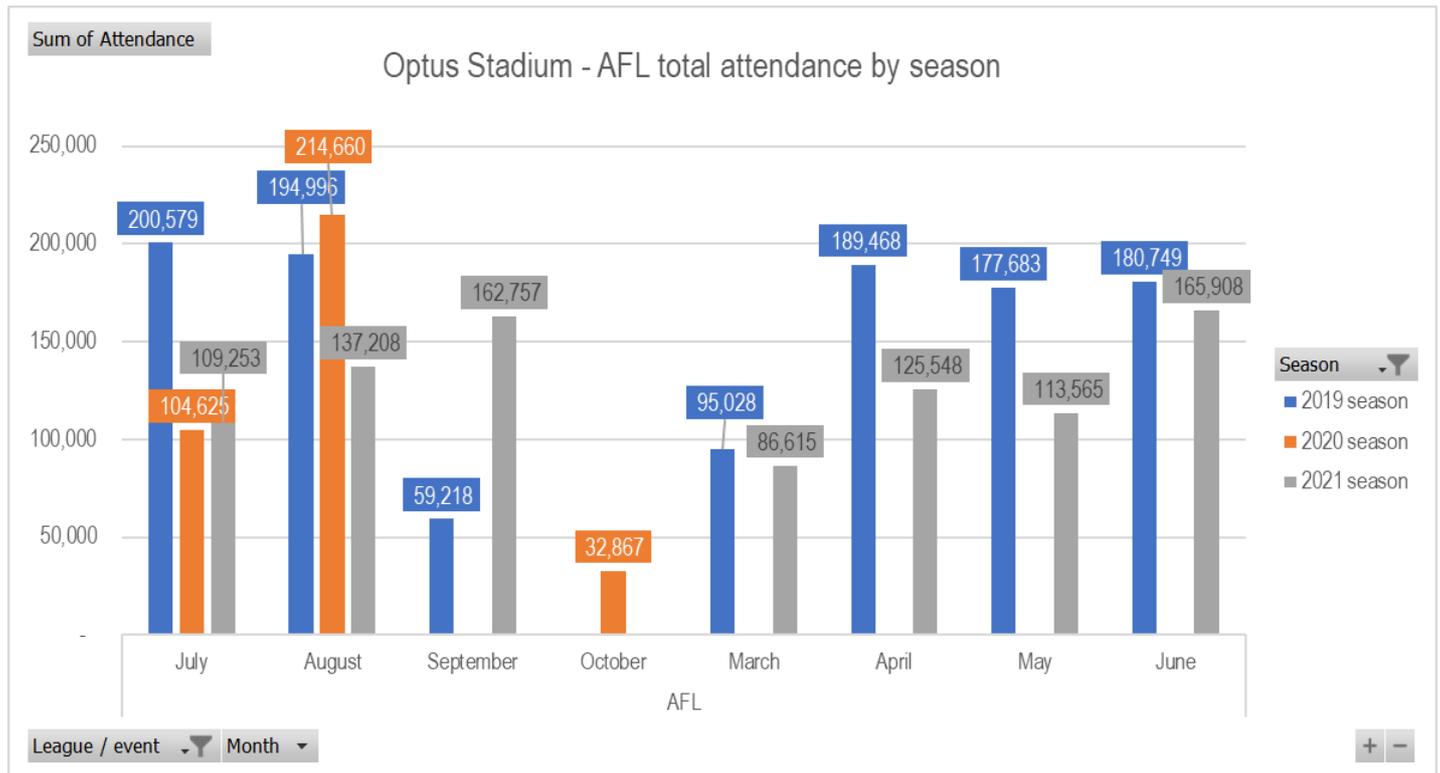


Figure 6 – AFL attendance at Optus Stadium by month and season

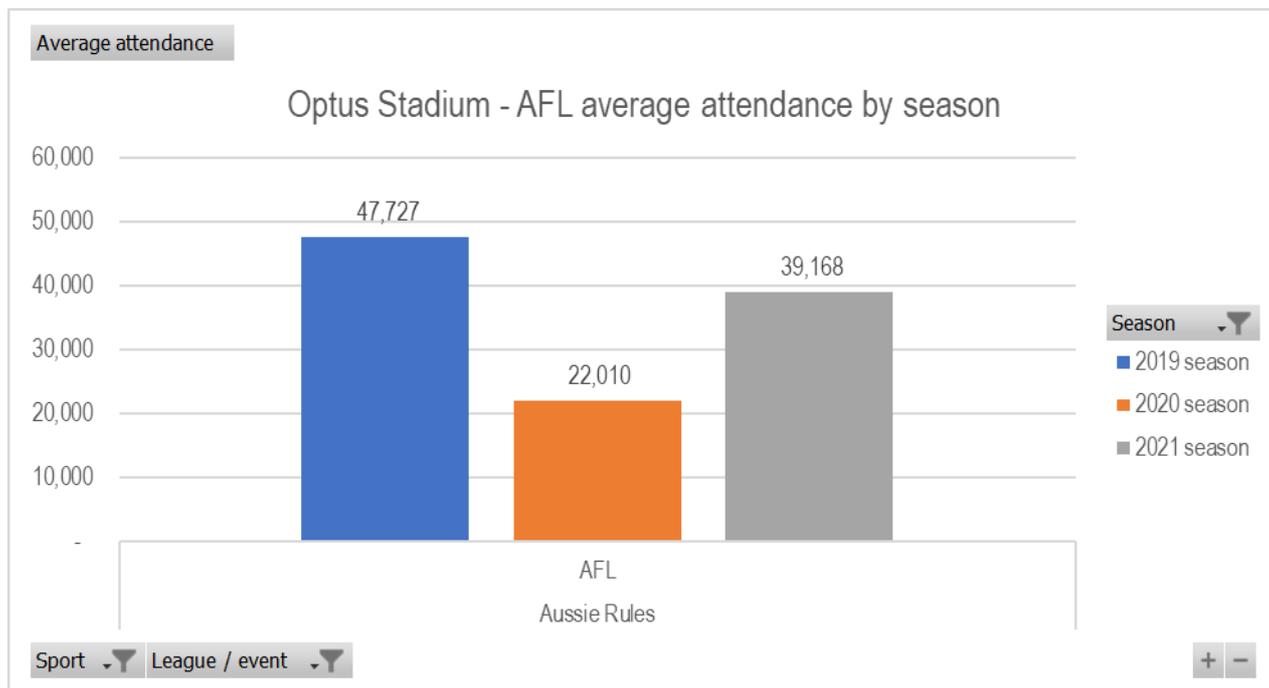


Figure 7 – AFL average attendance at Optus Stadium by season

## BBL at Optus Stadium

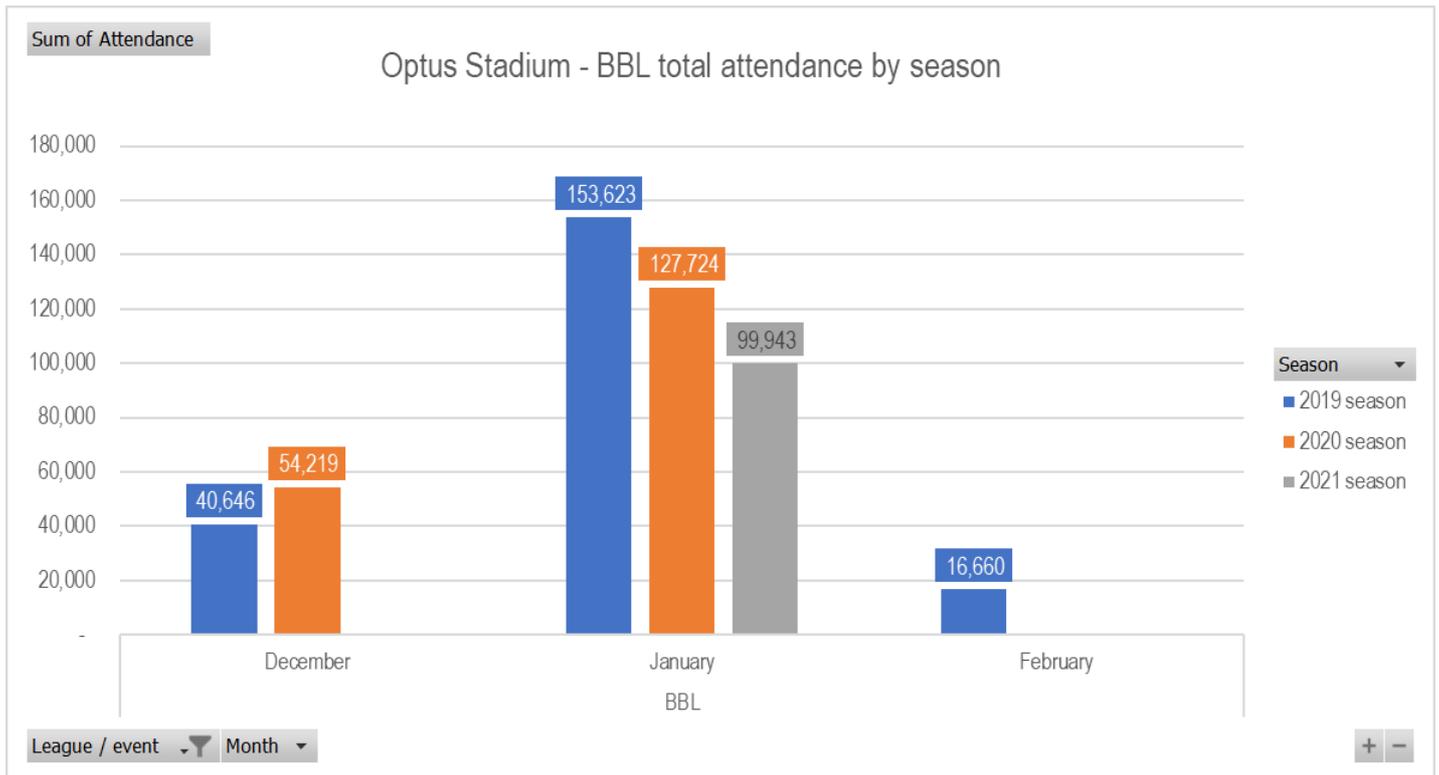


Figure 8 – BBL attendance at Optus Stadium by month and season

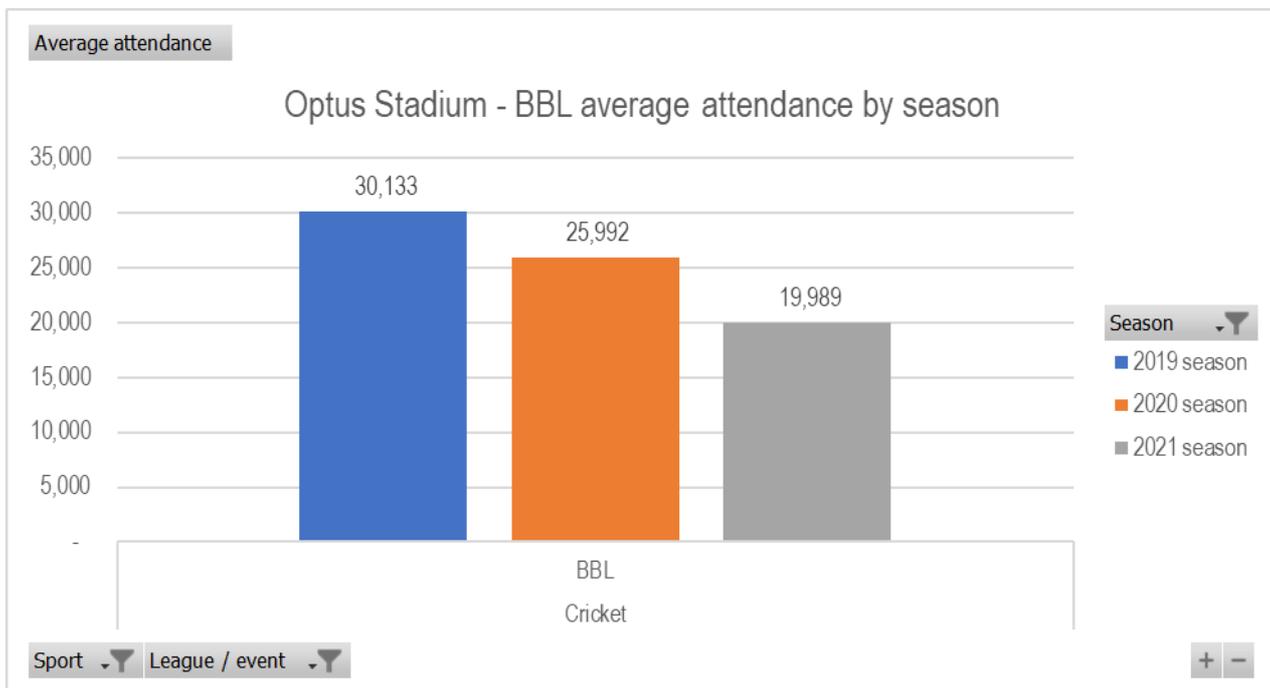


Figure 9 – BBL average attendance at Optus Stadium by season

## Bledisloe Cup at Optus Stadium

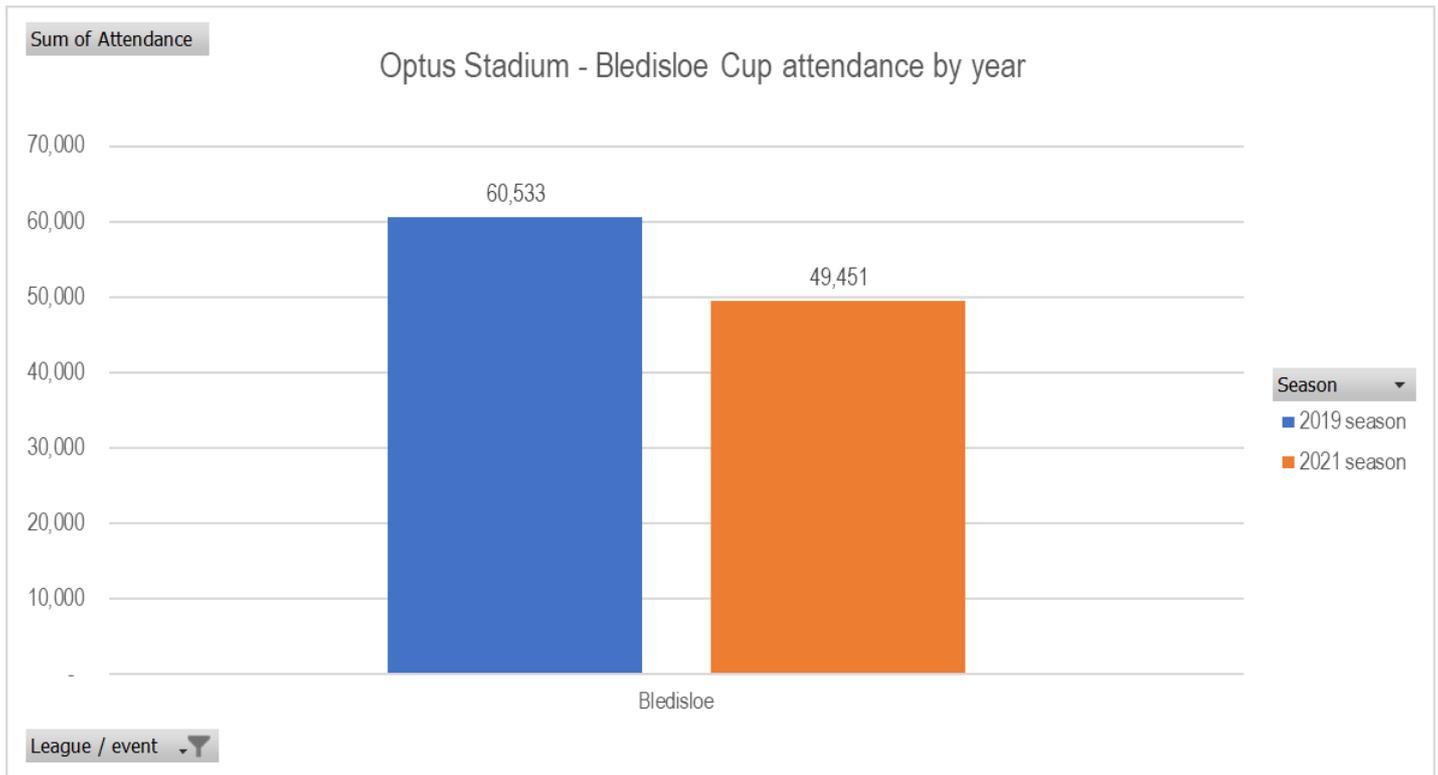


Figure 10 – Bledisloe Cup attendance at Optus Stadium by season

## Soccer at HBF Park

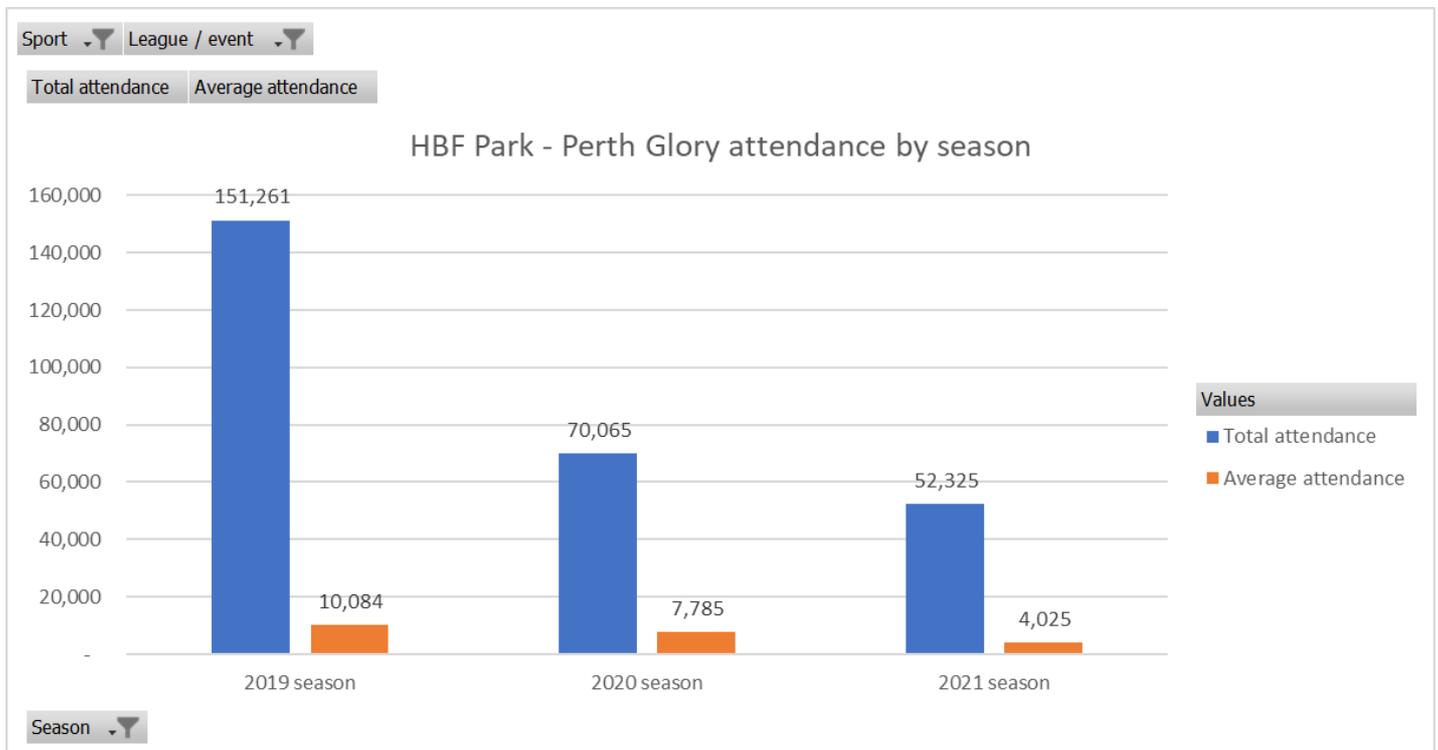


Figure 11 – Perth Glory total and average attendance at HBF Park by season

## Rugby at HBF Park

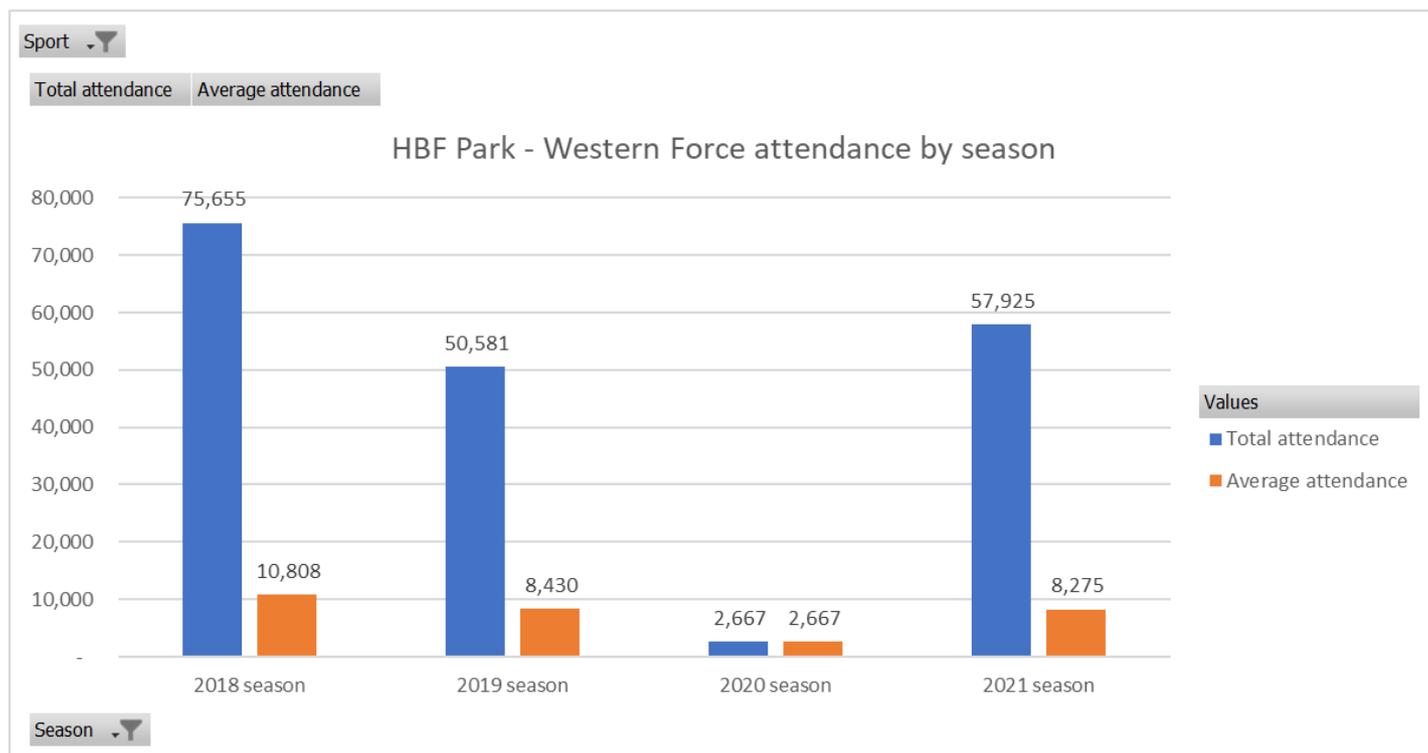


Figure 12 – Western Force total and average attendance at HBF Park by season