



Gaelic Football – What sort of game do we want?

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Objectives....

- The competitive context in which Gaelic games operates
- Understand some of the prevailing issues around the game
- Rule changes in other sports and common purposes
- Outline the mandate, stakeholder consultation and engagement undertaken by the SCPR in 2018
- Detailed coverage of the data that defines modern day Gaelic football
- Conclusions

Understanding the context....

1. Declining attendances at 'live' sport – move away from the stadium (e.g. ATP rights sale to Amazon 2017)
2. Two in three Irish sports fans now consume sport entirely apart from the stadium – 1:4 Irish males has pay-per-view sport (The Teneo Sports' Sponsorship Index, 2018)
3. Neither of the two All Ireland finals in 2018 were amongst Ireland's Top 5 'Most watched' programmes.
4. Latent concern about the 'spectacle' – how the game engages its audience

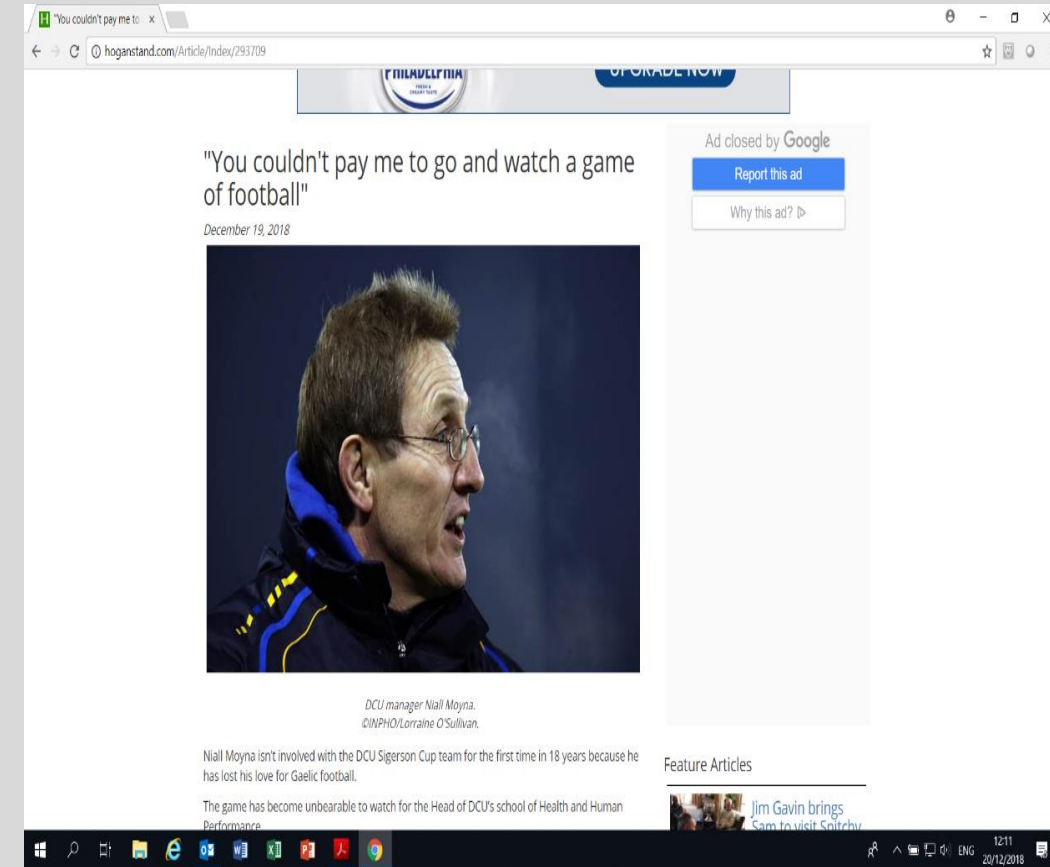


Considerations....

1. Coaches and players are more cerebral about the game – there is a rational, strategic and purposeful approach
2. Competing for national titles requires considerable human, physical (ESRI, 2018) and financial investment (2018: 7 counties > Euro 1 m) – expectation of a return on this
3. Greater complexity around tactics – defensive, transition, engagement further up the pitch, possession (e.g. 75% of all passes in AIF 2018 were with hand)
4. Overall length of season and the fluctuating nature of competition mitigates against longer term player development – e.g. knock out, then league, then knock out
5. On-going discussions about competitive balance and its impact on competitions

Understanding the prevailing issues...

- Significant reduction in number of possessions teams had only 7 years ago (Carroll, 2018)
- Issue of Risk/ Reward – challenge is how to incentivise engagement higher up the pitch (Allister *et al* (2018) – total attacks)
- Exponential growth in short passing, short kick outs and, conversely, a marked decline in ‘turnovers’ or dispossessions (Carroll, 2018: 2011 – 2018 4-fold increase in ‘short’ kick outs).
- Rise in concern around ‘cynical’ fouling and a fear that this may not be adequately mitigated against – Allister *et al* (2018) (Fouling = SC: 0.56).
- Challenge to support match officials to consistently apply playing rules



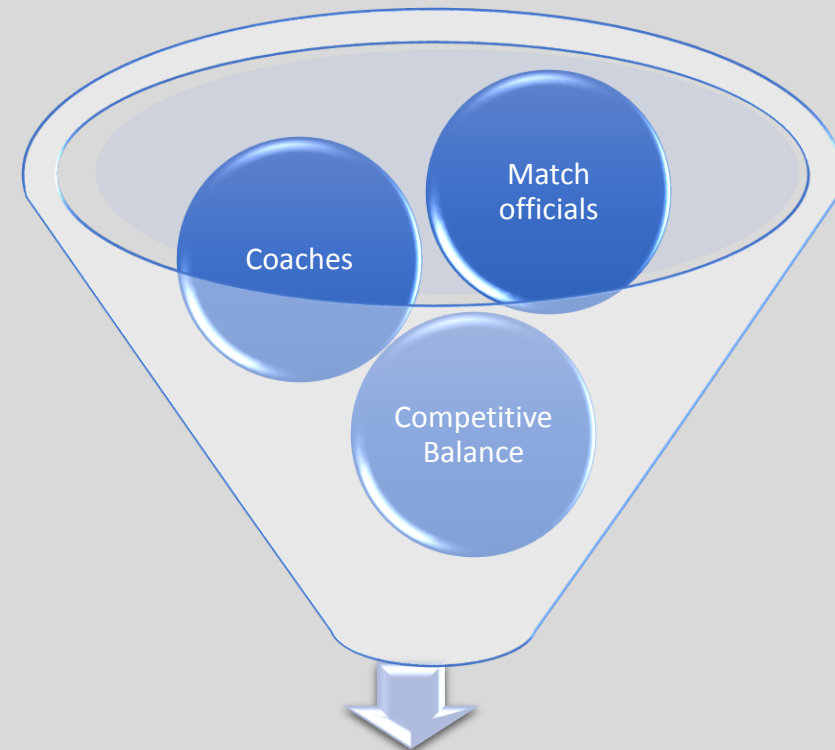
Redefining our relationship with the game...

- The game has evolved and should be allowed to find its equilibrium
- Much more tactical/ strategic than previous eras
- Failure to properly define the cause – focus on symptoms
- Dragging the game back to a by-gone era

- Duty to recognise the heritage of the game(2018 UNESCO Cultural Heritage – hurling/ camogie)
- The game is dull, devoid of any excitement, much too rational
- International sport is more popular – TAM figures (2018)
- The GAA needs to act decisively to preserve the game as we know it

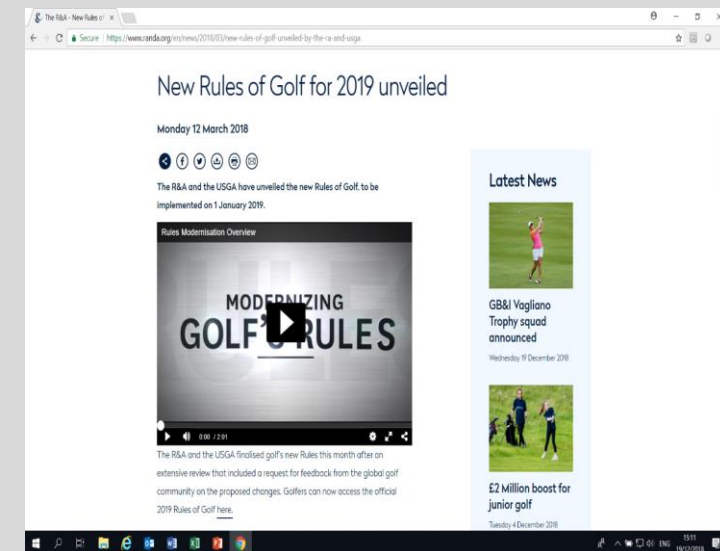
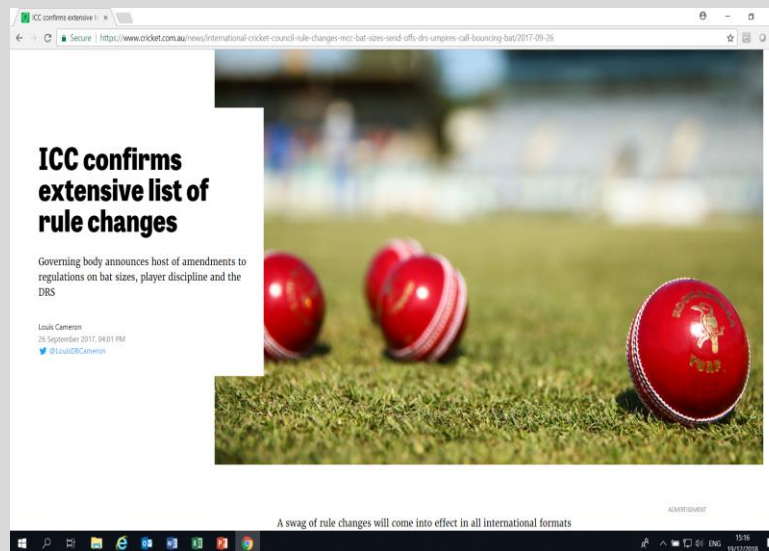
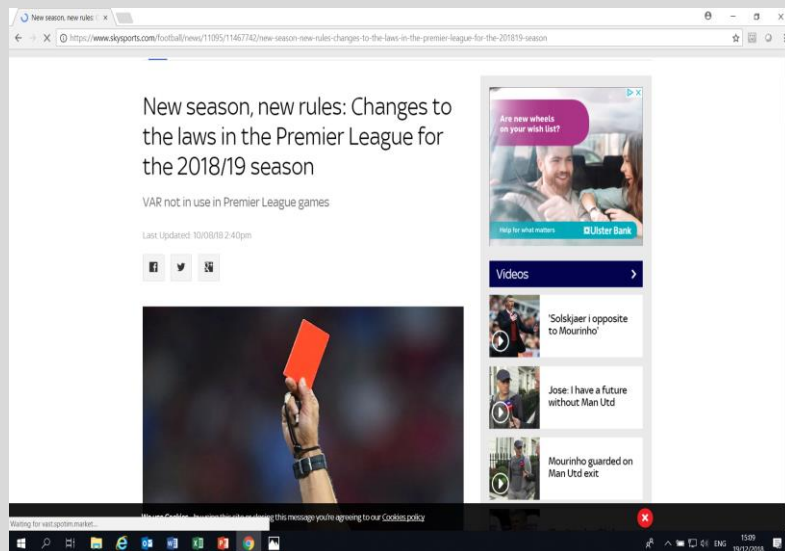
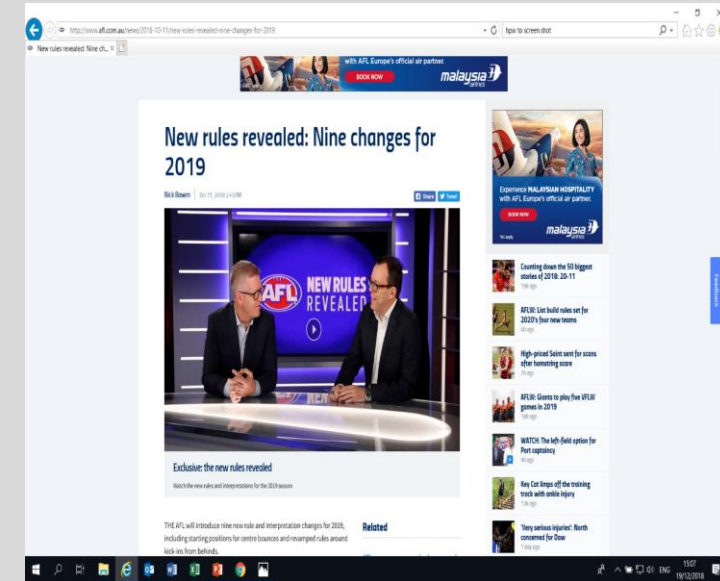
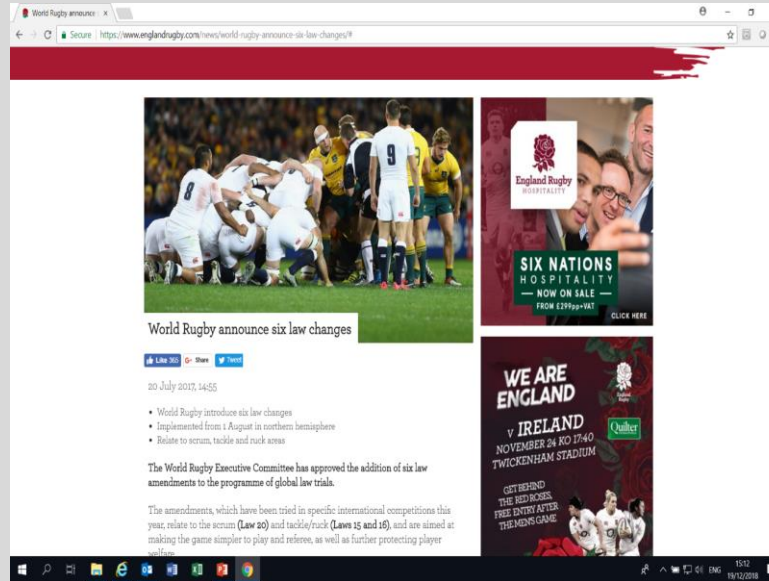
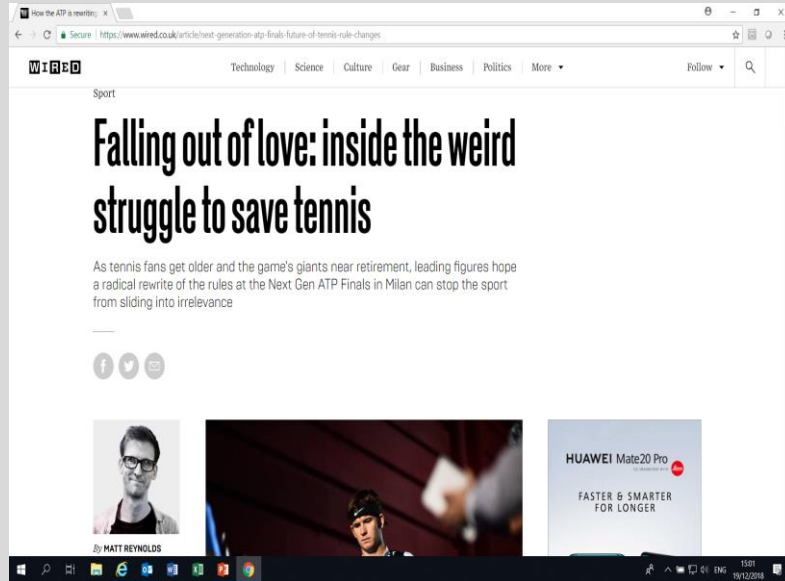
Aggregating views on Gaelic football...

- The ball is in contest to a greater extent
- Players displaying a heightened level of autonomy to demonstrate a range of skills
- A proportionate use of kicking and hand-passing is evidenced (based on current predictive trends: 2023 there will be 95 – 96 foot passes)
- Fast, invasive and high-scoring games are the norm
- Greater level of one-on-one contests to allow highly talented individuals have space to flourish
- Flair, unpredictability and excitement



Future of Gaelic Football

Sports are changing – all this in only the last 6 months



What rules changes have other NGBs made in the last 6 months..

Tennis

- WTA – protected seeding for players out of competition for 52 weeks or more; 25 second shot clock on services (Serena Williams)
- At Wimbledon, decision to move to a tie-break situation when the final set reaches 12-12 – Mens S/F 2018 Anderson v Isner – 6.5 hours

AFL

- The 6-6-6 rule, which sees teams having six players in each of their defensive and forward arcs and six in the midfield at each centre bounce
- Players are allowed to play on while the penalty is being measured out, and they can advance the mark by 50 metres without the penalised player delaying the match.

Golf

- When taking relief (from an abnormal course condition or penalty area, for example), golfers will now drop from knee height.
- The penalty stroke for accidentally striking the ball more than once in the course of a stroke has been removed.

Three Key Trends in Rule Changes...

- **Speeding up play** – AFL (e.g. When a defender marks or is given a free kick within nine metres of their goal the man on the mark must be brought into line with the top of the goal square); Golf (e.g. introduction of a 'local' rule for balls out of bounds); Tennis (e.g. reduction in toilet breaks/ attire changes in WTA); Basketball (e.g. 3 second defensive violation)
- **Eradicating cynical/foul play** – Soccer (e.g. retrospective 'diving bans'); Rugby Union (e.g. Trialling of tackle at armpit level); Formula 1 (e.g. banning of T-wings and shark fins); Ice Hockey (e.g. goaltenders penalized for deliberately 'freezing' the puck)
- **Use of technology to ensure fair outcome** – Soccer (e.g. introduction of VAR); Rugby Union (e.g. use of video replay to decide if a player was offside prior to scoring); Cricket (e.g. use of hawk eye in decision review system); NFL (e.g. introduction of 'smart helmets' to address concussion).

SCPR Playing Rules Proposals for Experimentation

- David Hassan (Doire)- Cathaoirleach
 - Frank Murphy (Corcaigh)
 - Brian Cuthbert (Corcaigh)
 - Seamus Kenny (An Mhí)
 - David Collins (Gaillimh)
 - Alec McQuillen (Aontroim)
 - Michael Delaney (Laois)
 - Pat Daly (Páirc an Chrocaigh)
- Tracy Bunyan (Páirc an Chrocaigh)- Runaí
- The SCPR met on 6 occasions from May to October 2018

SCPR Playing Rules Proposals for Experimentation

SCPR Work Package 2018

SCPR

Terms of Reference

Guiding Principles

Stakeholder Consultation- Internal
& External

Proposed changes/amendments to
playing rules

Outcomes of changes/amendments
to playing rules

Proposals submitted to Central
Council for consideration

The Standing Committee on the Playing Rules		
Proposals Received from County Boards 2018		
County Board Name	Proposal(s)	
Wexford County Board (Coiste Chontae Loch Garman)	1. Introduction of Referee's in both codes 2. No reverse handpass permitted towards your own goal within 45m in Gaelic Football 3. In Gaelic Football, a team must keep a minimum of four players within 45m of the opposition goal 4. Allow direct pick up in football as per LGFA	
	5. Introduce a "shot clock" to football to restrict teams' ability to just retain possession without actually attacking (say 2 minutes); as per basketball, clock is re-set when possession is lost	
	6. Can Rule 2 of the "rules of specification" be amended to allow hurling to have the same number of subs as football in normal time (six)? Not sure why hurling can only have 5 subs.	
Australiasia Council	1. Discarding of the black card and replacing with the existing "Yellow Card" rule.	
Roscommon County Board (Coiste Contae Ros Comain)	1. Breaching of steps between plays. Notice it creeping-in in matches and typically when a forward is bearing down on goal. 2. Minimise the maximum number of consecutive hand-passes to 3. 3. The black card should be removed, it doesn't serve any purpose. It doesn't punish the payers and his team 4. The sanction (a note) for a charge on players to the front or back should be changed up to a yellow, players can receive a serious injury from such challenges. 5. The sanction for pushing an opponent is a joke and this is open to wide abuse by players and managers and more go unpunished. 6. When the sliotar is played directly over the crossbar from a sideline sliotar, the score will be worth two points, provided it is not touched in flight by any player on the attacking or defending teams.	
Cork County Board (Coiste Chontae Chorcaí)		
Football playing rules		
	Hand-pass (Rule 1.4(e); Definition 9(a))	
	Proposals:	
	Put a limitation on the number of consecutive hand-passes a team is allowed per 'possession' of the ball.	
	Allow no back hand -passing by the defending team in that team's defensive half of the field.	
	Allow no return of the ball by means of a hand-pass to the defensive half of the field once a team has taken possession of the ball in the defensive half of the field.	
	(Note Rule 1.2(i) may need to be amended to have the mid-line marked the width of the field).	
	Sideline-Kicks (Rule 2.9)	
	The sideline kick to be taken from the ground.	
	The ball shall only be played forward.	
	Exception - for a sideline-kick on or inside the 13m line.	
	Sin-Bin	
	Trial again in National Leagues for:	
	Black Card infraction.	
	Two Yellow Card Infractions (Rule 1.2(ix)(b), Rules of Control).	
	Penalty – 10 minutes	
	Kick-Out (Rule 2.7(a))	
	The kick-out be required to travel to the 45m line (nearest to the kick-out) or beyond.	
	Exception may be made for Under 15 or younger grades	

SCPR Playing Rules Proposals for Experimentation



SCPR Playing Rules Proposals for Experimentation - 2018

Overview

- **June/July 2018:** Consultation process with County Boards in relation to Playing Rules
- **July 2018:** Meeting with Chairperson, Referee's Development Committee
- **October 2018:** Consultation process with Senior Intercounty football players/managers/referee's on proposed playing rules for experimentation
- **October 2018:** 9 trial games held to identify any unintended consequences/challenges arising from the possible implementation of the proposed playing rules for experimentation.
- **November 2018:** Following review and analysis of consultation responses/feedback from key Stakeholders/trial games/data sets, SCPR finalised its position in respect of proposed playing rules for experimentation to be submitted to An Coiste Bainistíochta and Ard Chomhairle for decision.



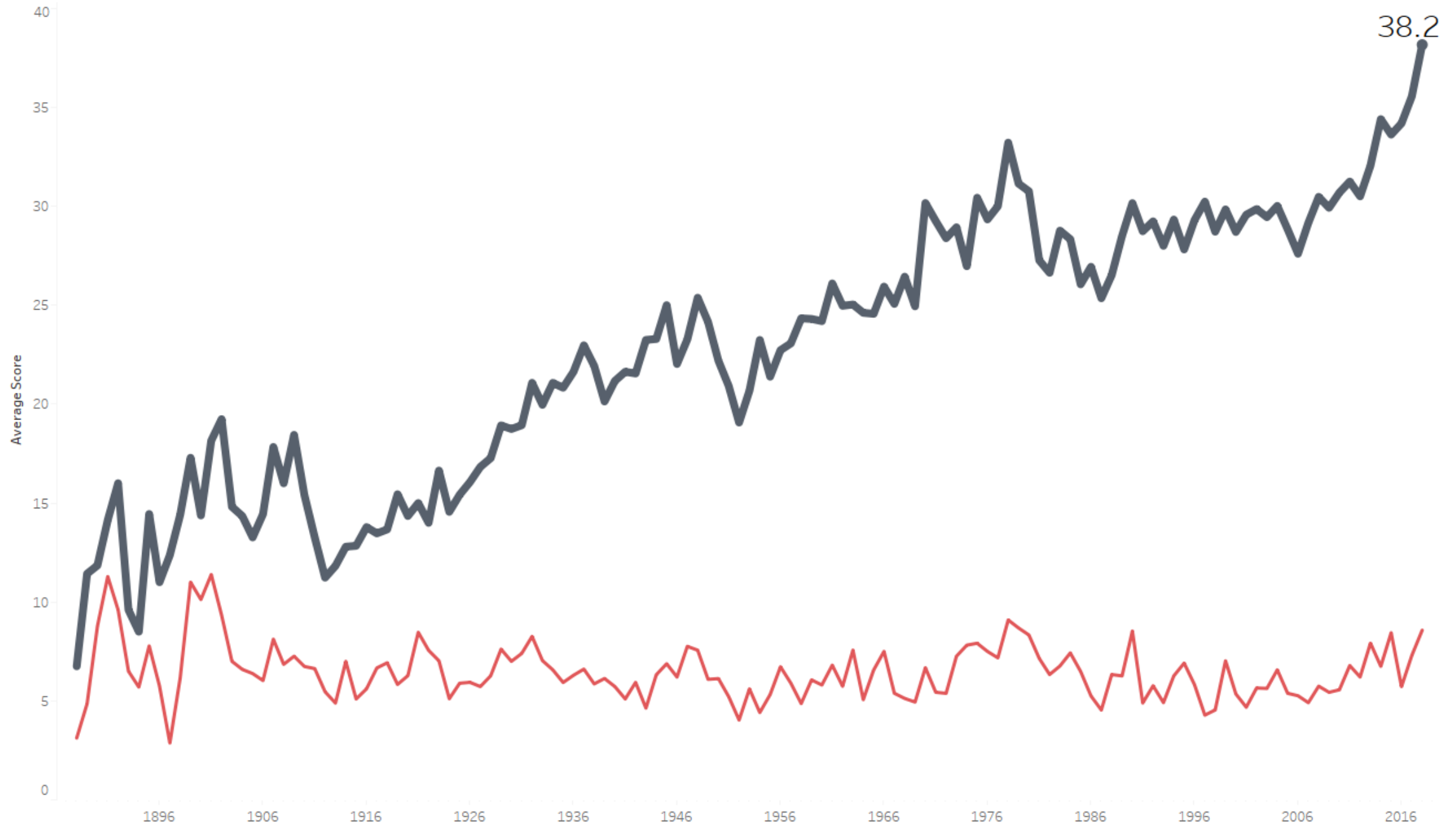
Past

Present

Future

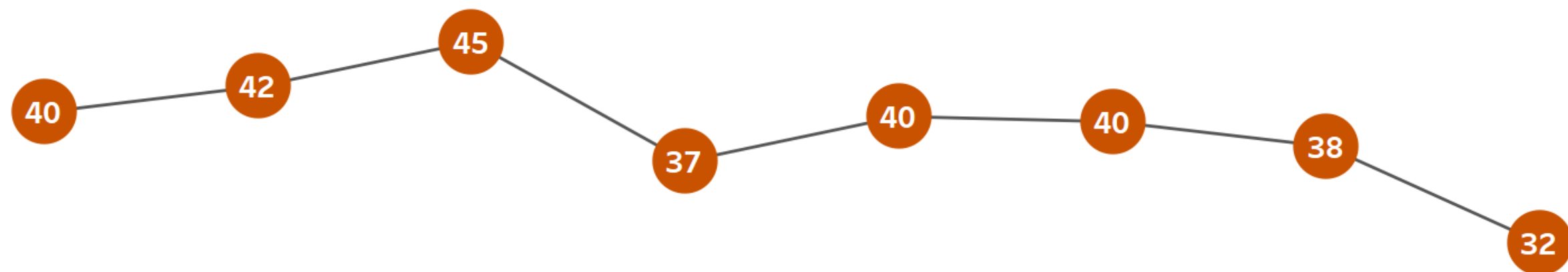
The Average Total Score per Game in 2018 was **38** - the highest it has ever been.

Winning Margin is within a similar range



Fouls Per Game - Average of 32 per Game - Lowest Recorded

Note that 2014 (introduction of new rules) saw the upward trend reverse



2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

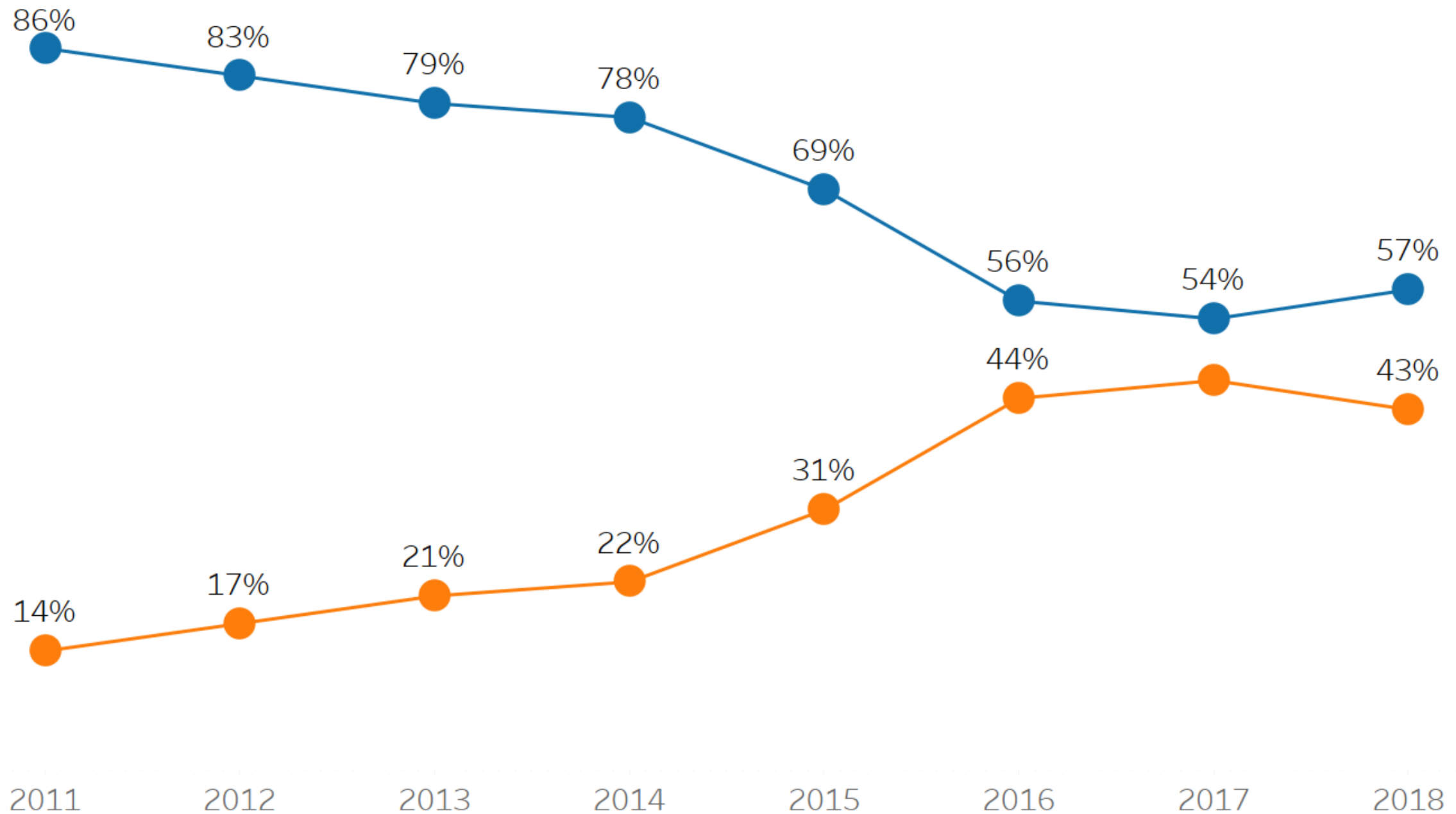
2016

2017

2018

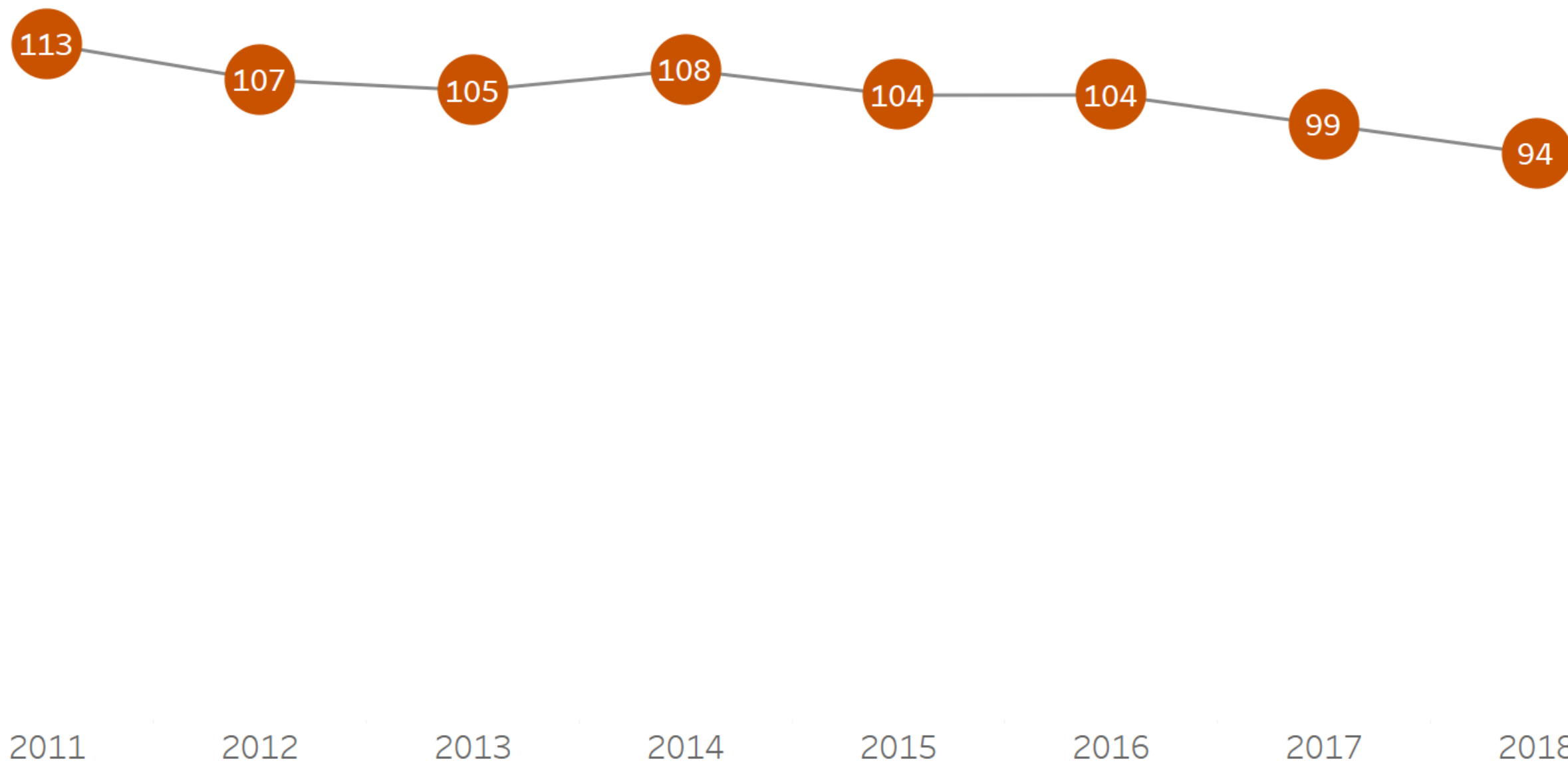
How Far are kickouts Travelling?

In 2011 - **86%** of Kickouts travelled past the 45 (Long).



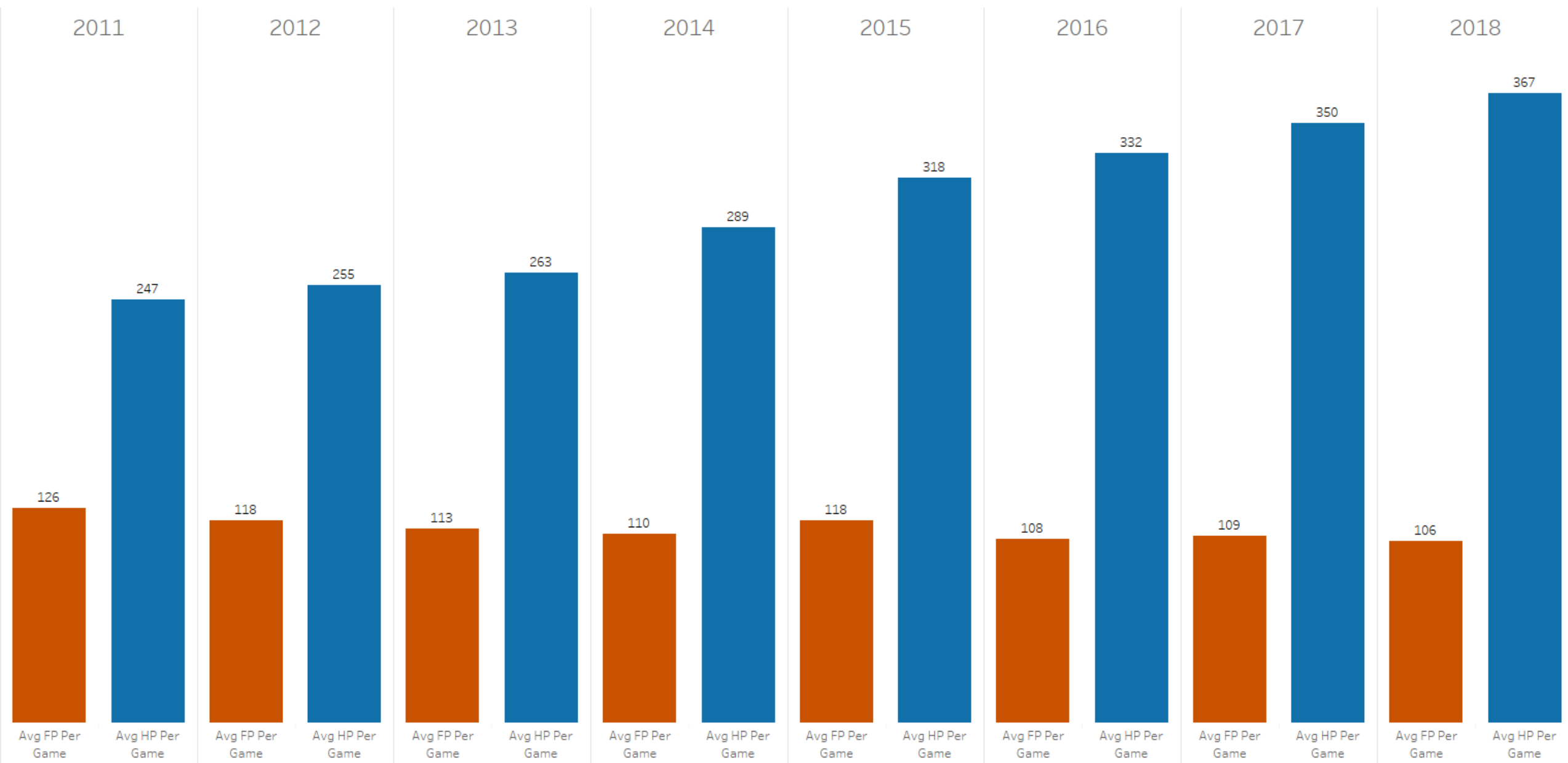
Team Possessions Per Game - Each time a team has possession of the ball, counts as 1 possession.

Average Possessions per game has dropped ~20

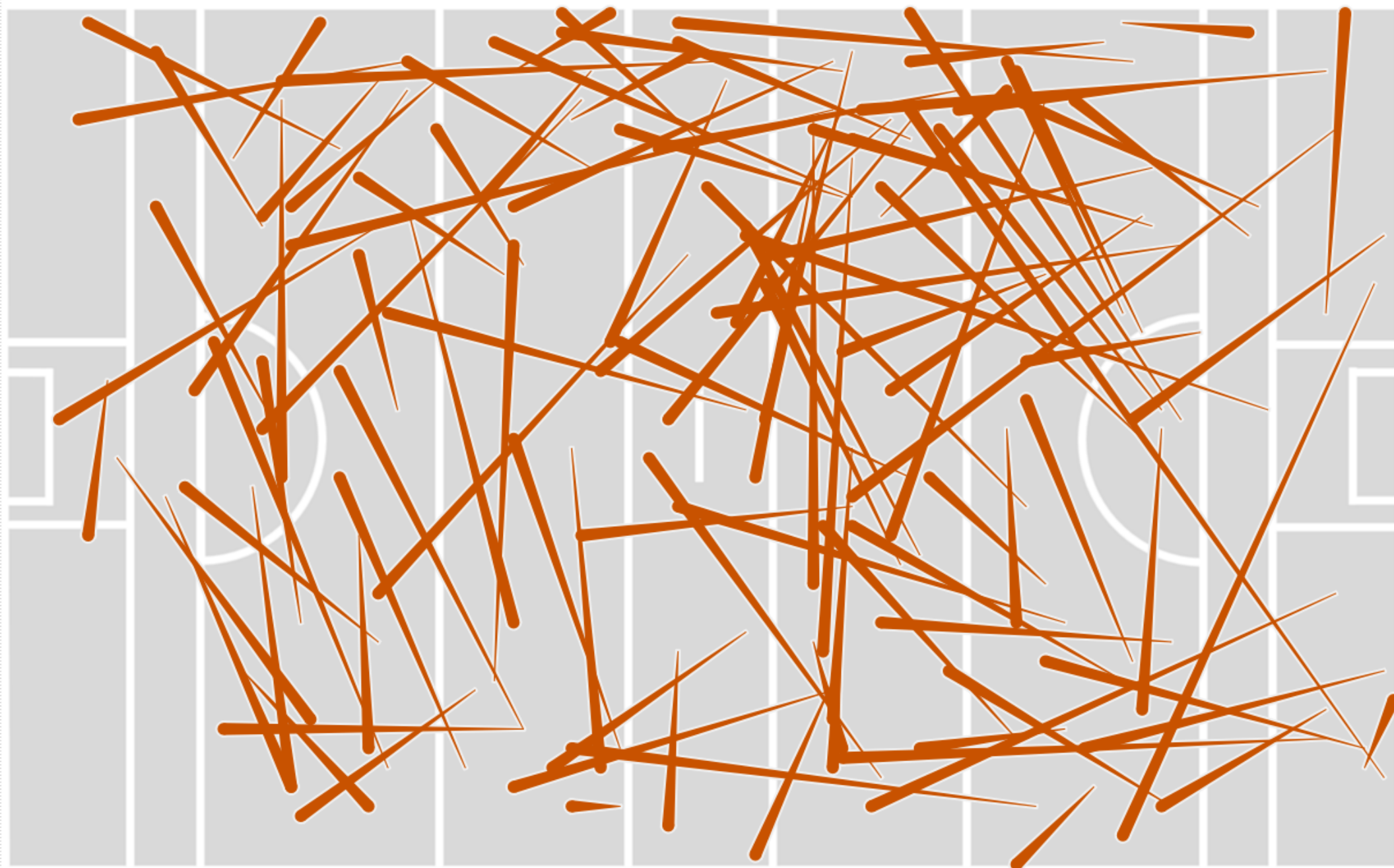


Hand Passing - Foot Passing Trend

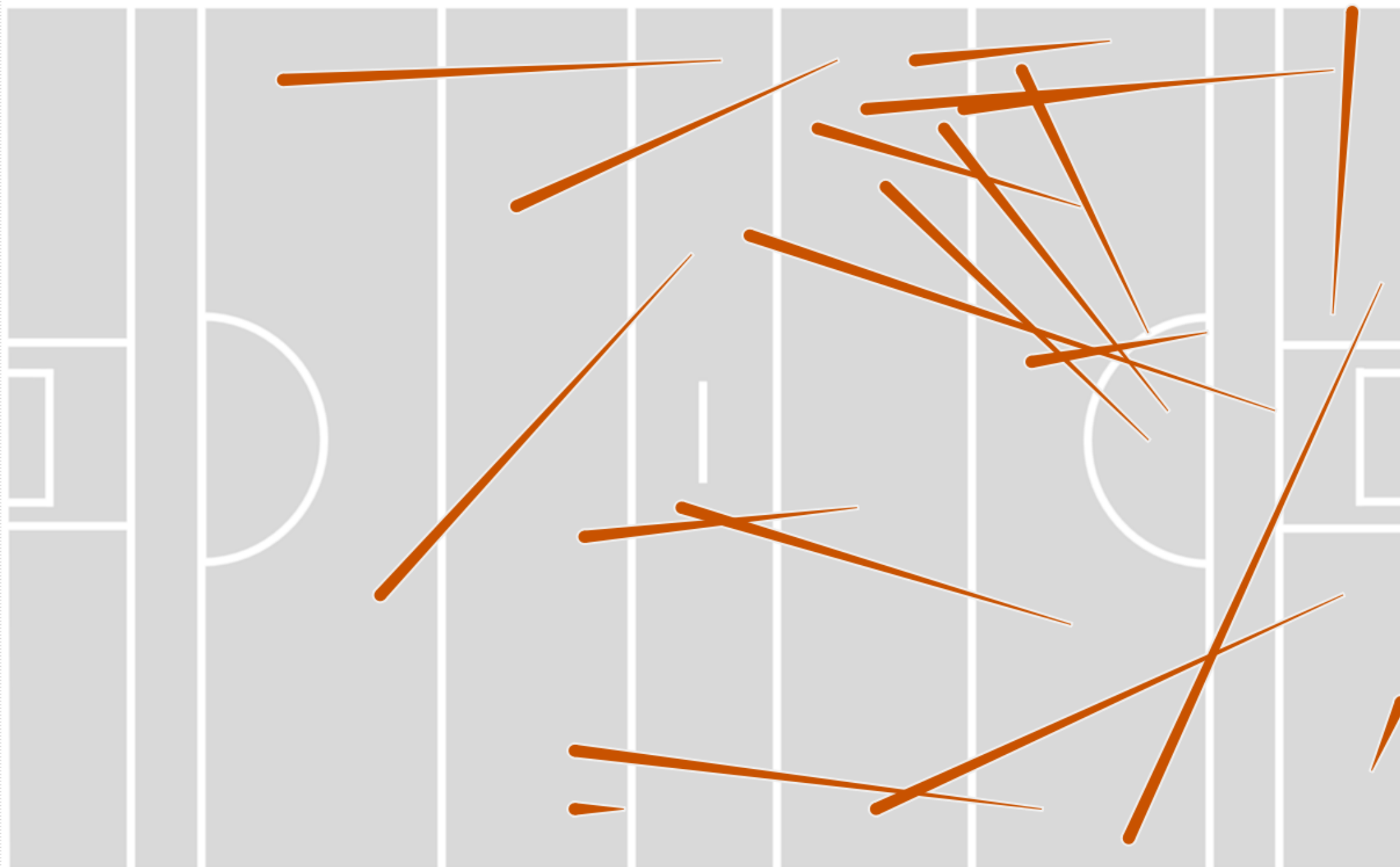
On average there are over **120 additional hand passes** per game in 2018 compared to 2011



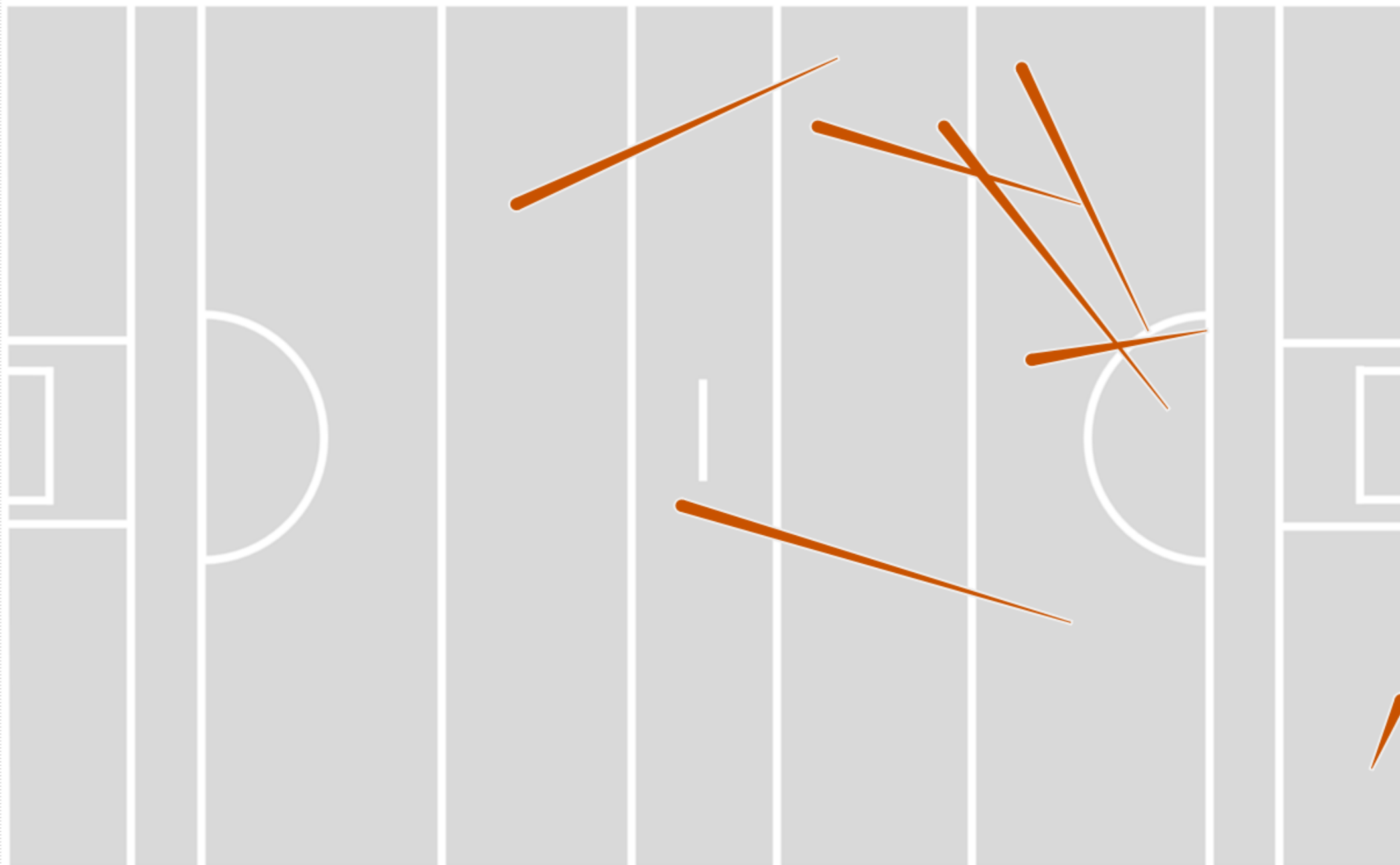
All Ireland Final 2018 : Kick Pass Map Both Teams (~113 Total)



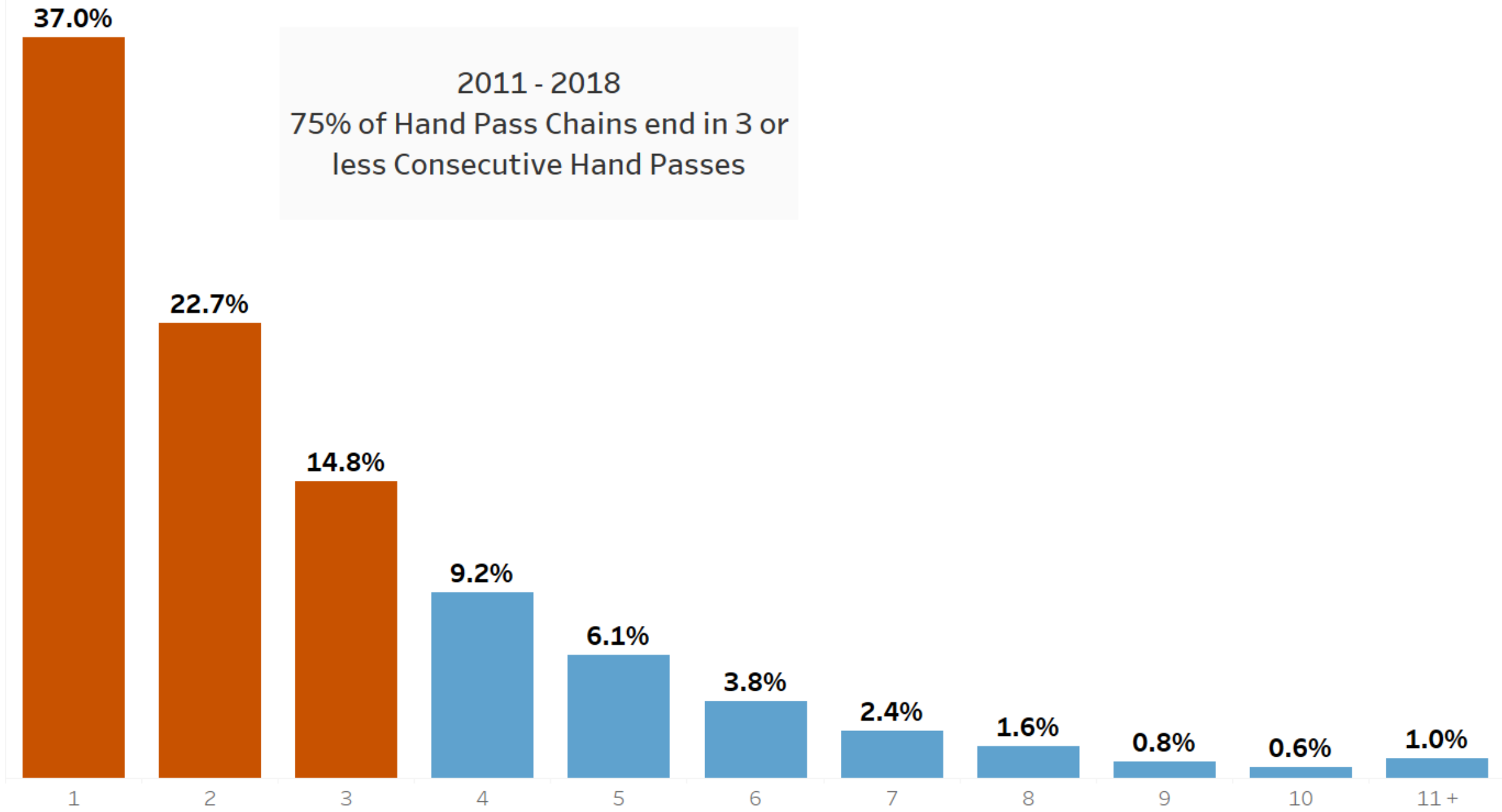
All Ireland Final 2018 : Kick Passes to a Contest (20 Total)



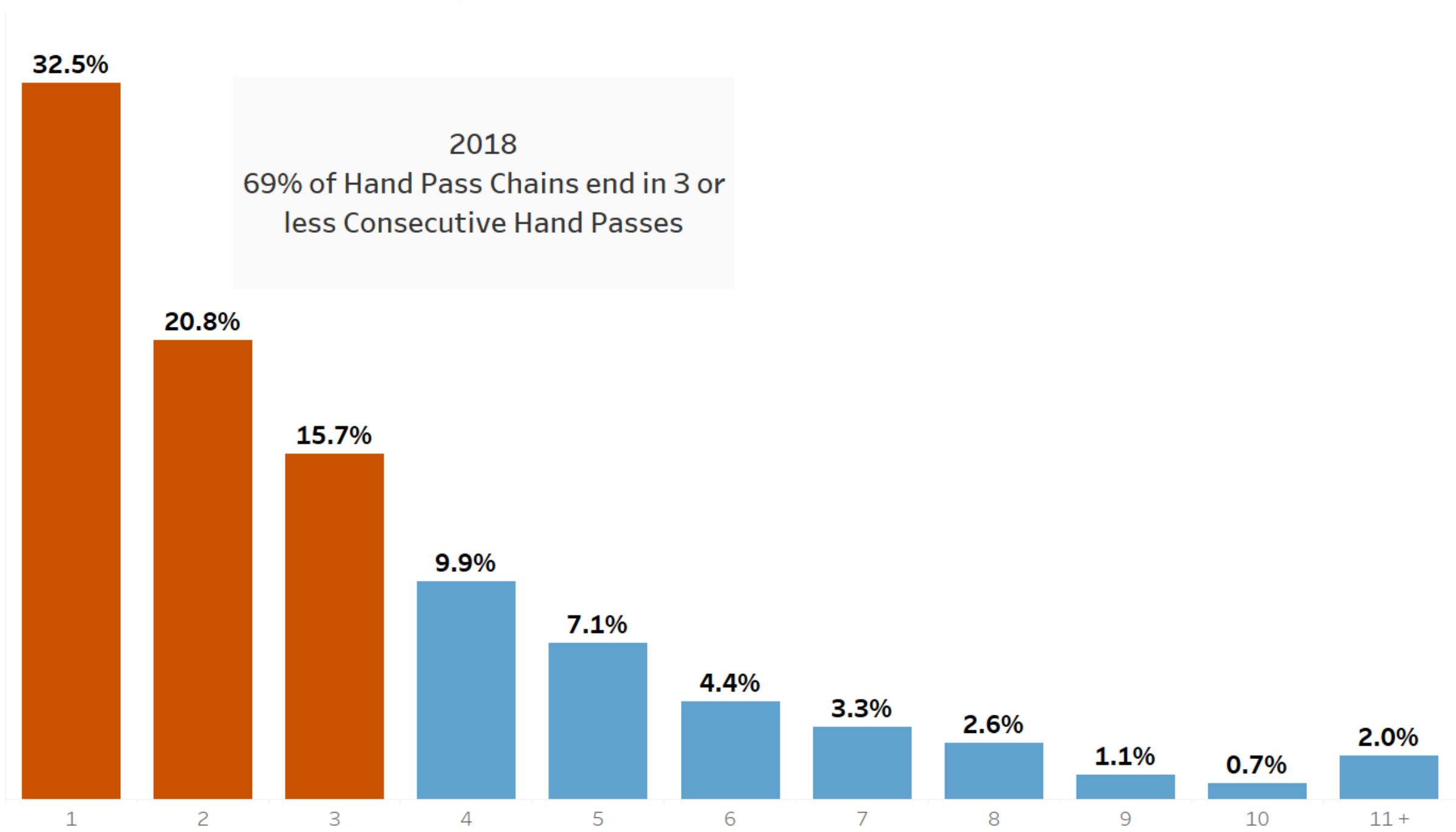
All Ireland Final 2018 : Kick Passes to a Contest 1st Half (7 Total)



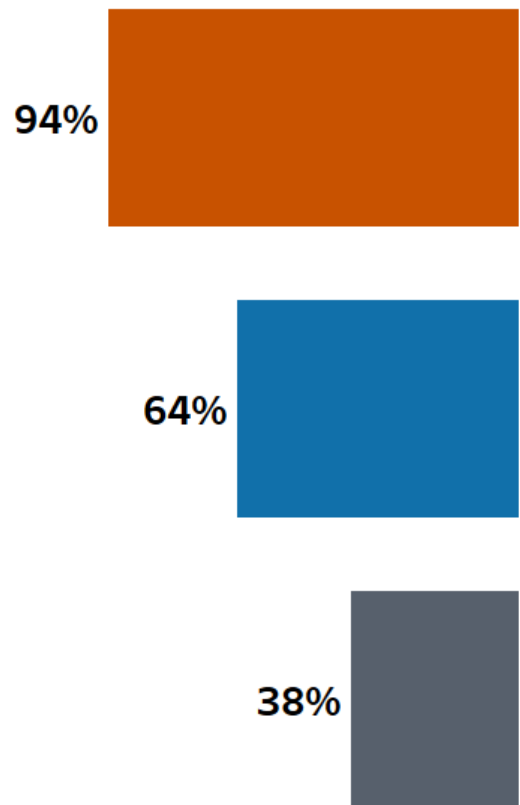
How Many Hand Passes in a Row | 2011 - 2018



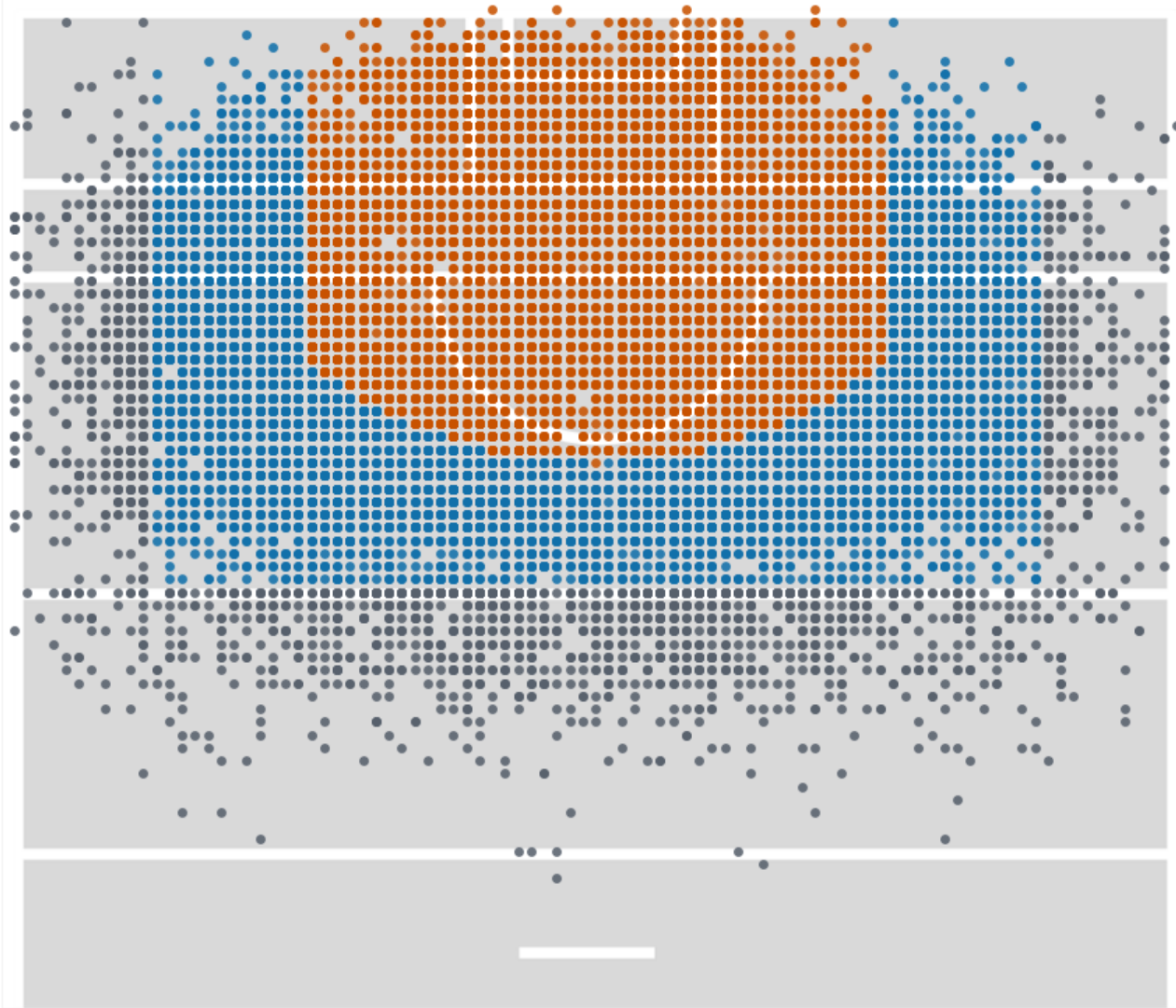
How Many Hand Passes in a Row | 2018 Only



Shots FROM FREE - Per Zone

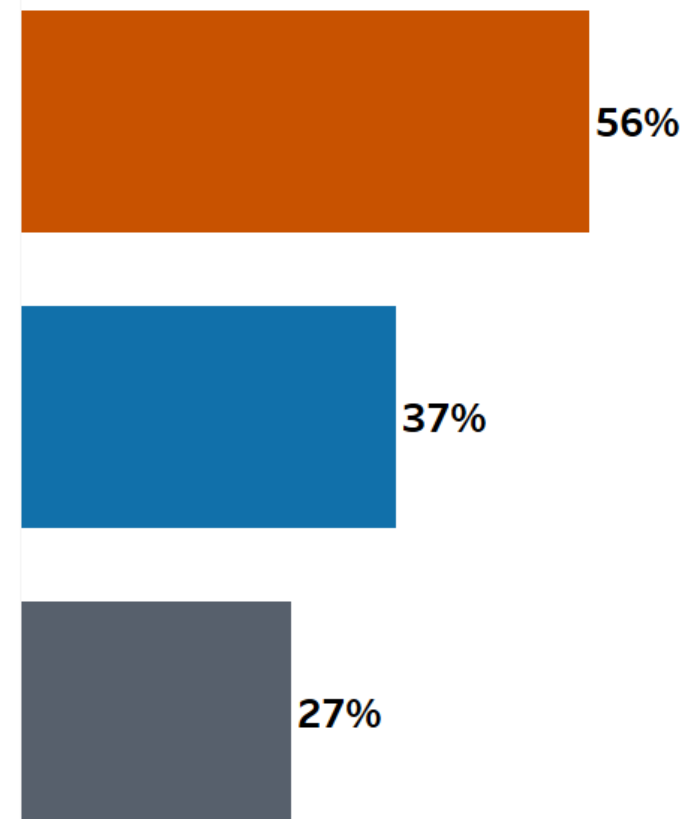


Shot Map - Shooting Zones and % of Scores



Inside Zone Mid Zone Outside

Shots FROM PLAY - Per Zone



Summary

- Higher total scores than ever
- Fouls per game lower (~10)
- Short Kickouts much more prevalent in last 7 years, although trend halted
- Hand Passing ~120 more per game than 2011 (50% increase in total)
- Team possessions continuing to decrease
- Longer Hand Pass Chains – nearly a third are now 4 or more (2018)

Experimental Rules

- **Kickout:** To encourage forward movement, move the play further up the field and naturally lead to contested possessions, as well as present opportunities for the skill of clean catching.
- **Sin Bin:** Assist with behavioural change and discourage foul play, which is a primary determinant of success at inter-county level.
- **The Advanced Mark:** To incentivize Catching and Kicking, Creative and Innovative Play and kicking in a forward direction
- **Sideline kick:** To generate more contested possessions, to encourage the ball to be returned to play quickly and to further initiate offensive play; More than twice as many sidelines go backwards than standard frees – 45% / 21%).
- **Hand Pass:** To counteract the apparent over use of the Hand-Pass – 50% (n. = 120) increase since 2011, with close to a third 'chains' now 4 passes or more

“It is very hard to **predict, especially the future**”