

WOMEN'S LEAGUE SQUASH · DATA REPORT

Active Women's County Leagues

This report tracks the participation data of the active women's squash leagues over two seasons.

1,124

women played in 2025/26 up from
1,024

65%

of last season's women came back

458

brand new women joined the leagues

15

leagues across England tracked in
2025/26

Participation grew about 10% in a single season

2024/25: 1,024 women



2025/26: 1,124 women



This is growth built on both a **loyal core** and **strong recruitment. Across all women's county leagues**

65% of last season's women returned (67% once students are set aside). 358 did not. It currently takes **4.6 new women to grow the leagues by 1** . Keeping more of the women we already have is the fastest route to growth.

+100

net growth in a single season

666

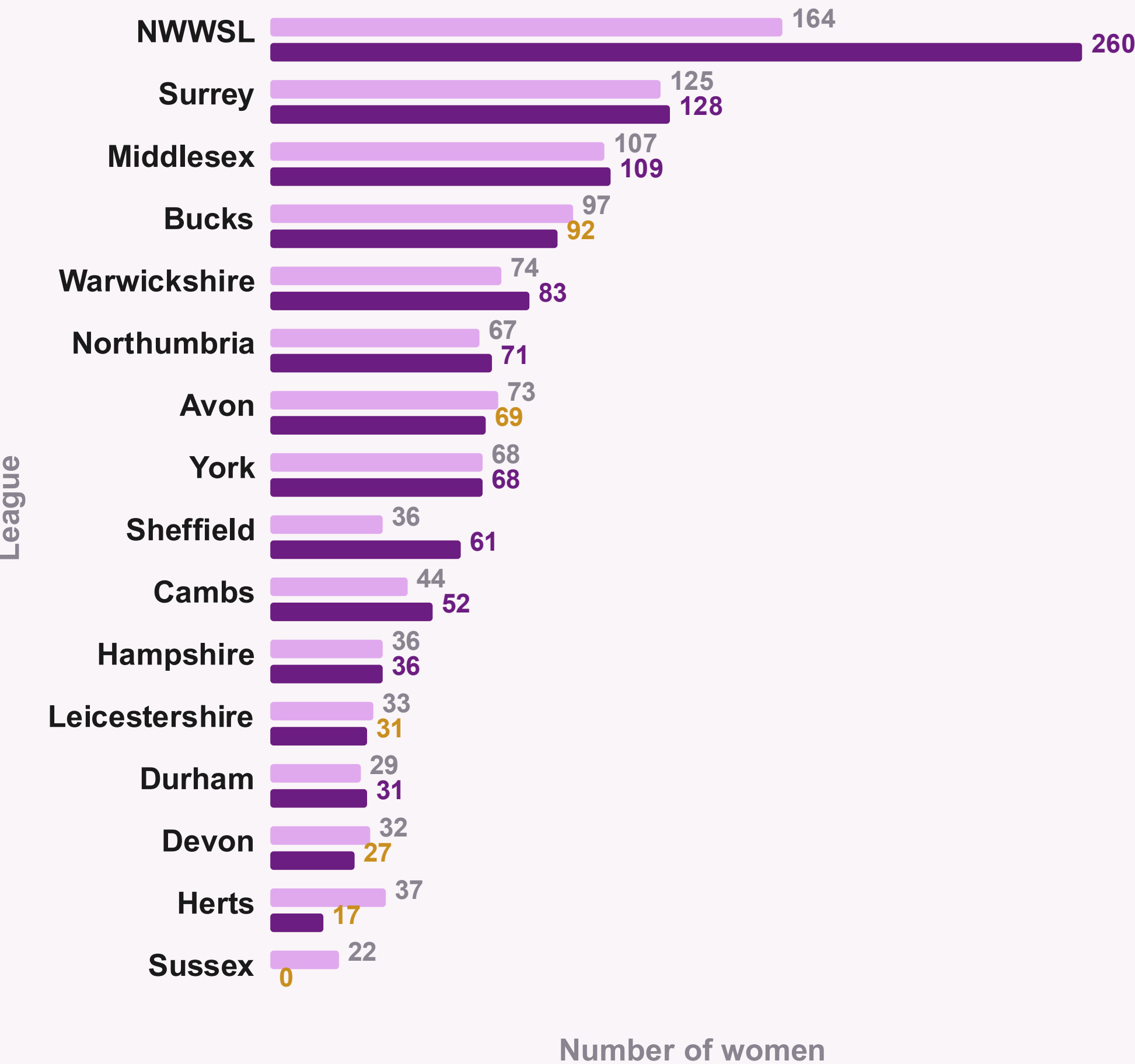
came back, 65% of last season's women

458

new women joined the leagues

Players per league

2024/25 2025/26



164 → 260

NWWSL player growth up 96 women in one season. Due to new beginner 3rd division.

36 → 61

Sheffield grew strongly, up 25 women.

37 → 17

Herts more than halved, and Sussex ran no women's league at all.

Where the players went

666

RETAINED

Played both seasons. 65% of last season's women stayed.

358

LEFT

Did not return to any league, about a third turned over.

458

NEW

First-time league players.

Players almost never switch between leagues, so **every league lives or dies on its own recruitment and retention.**

Not every leaver is lost. Babies, work, moving and travel are the natural rhythm of women's lives. A season out is not the same as leaving. Some of these 358 women will be back. **The job is to keep the door open and make returning easy.**

Students are also included in the losses

78 women played for a university club in 2024/25. Students graduate and move on, so some apparent drop-out is simply the academic cycle.

47

left the leagues

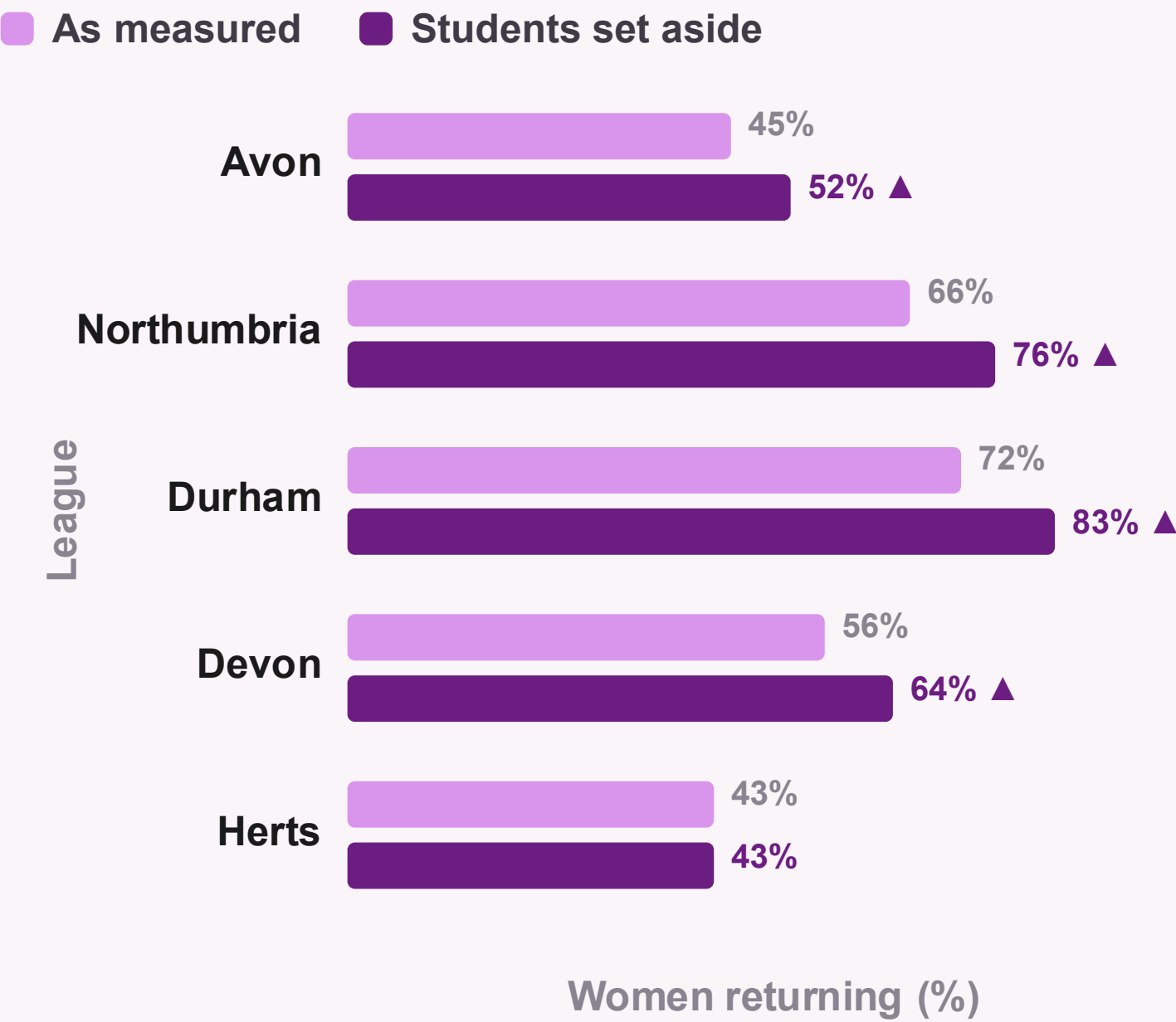
24

still at a university club

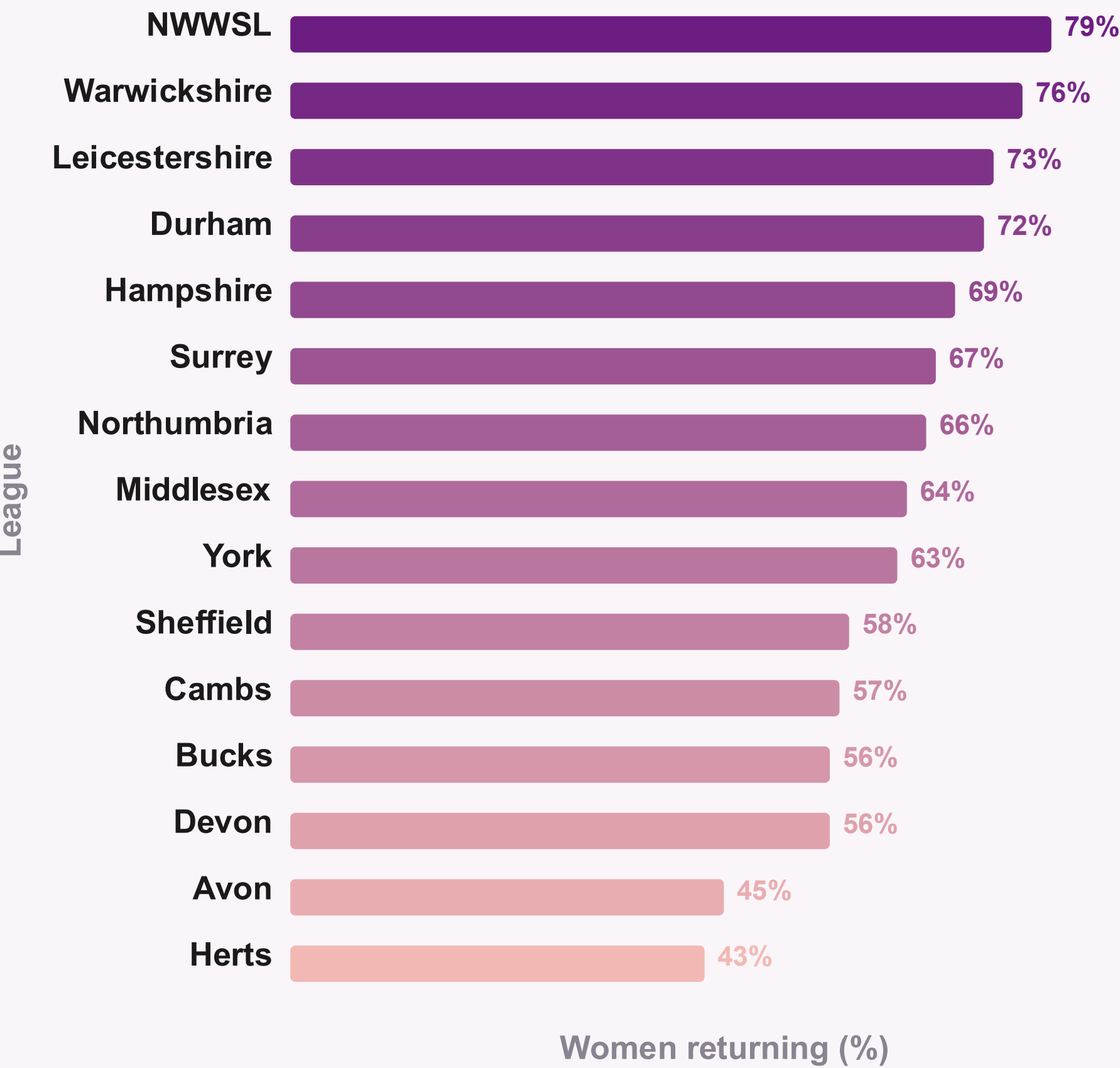
7

moved to a local club

Setting students aside lifts overall retention to 67%.



Player retention by league



Retention runs from four in five women returning down to fewer than half.

79%

NWWSL retention was high.

43%

Herts kept just under half, shrinking from 37 women to 17.

Sussex

Ran no women's league at all in 2025/26.

The standard of the leagues

Median SquashLevel & Geometric Mean

416

2024/25 · geo. mean 447

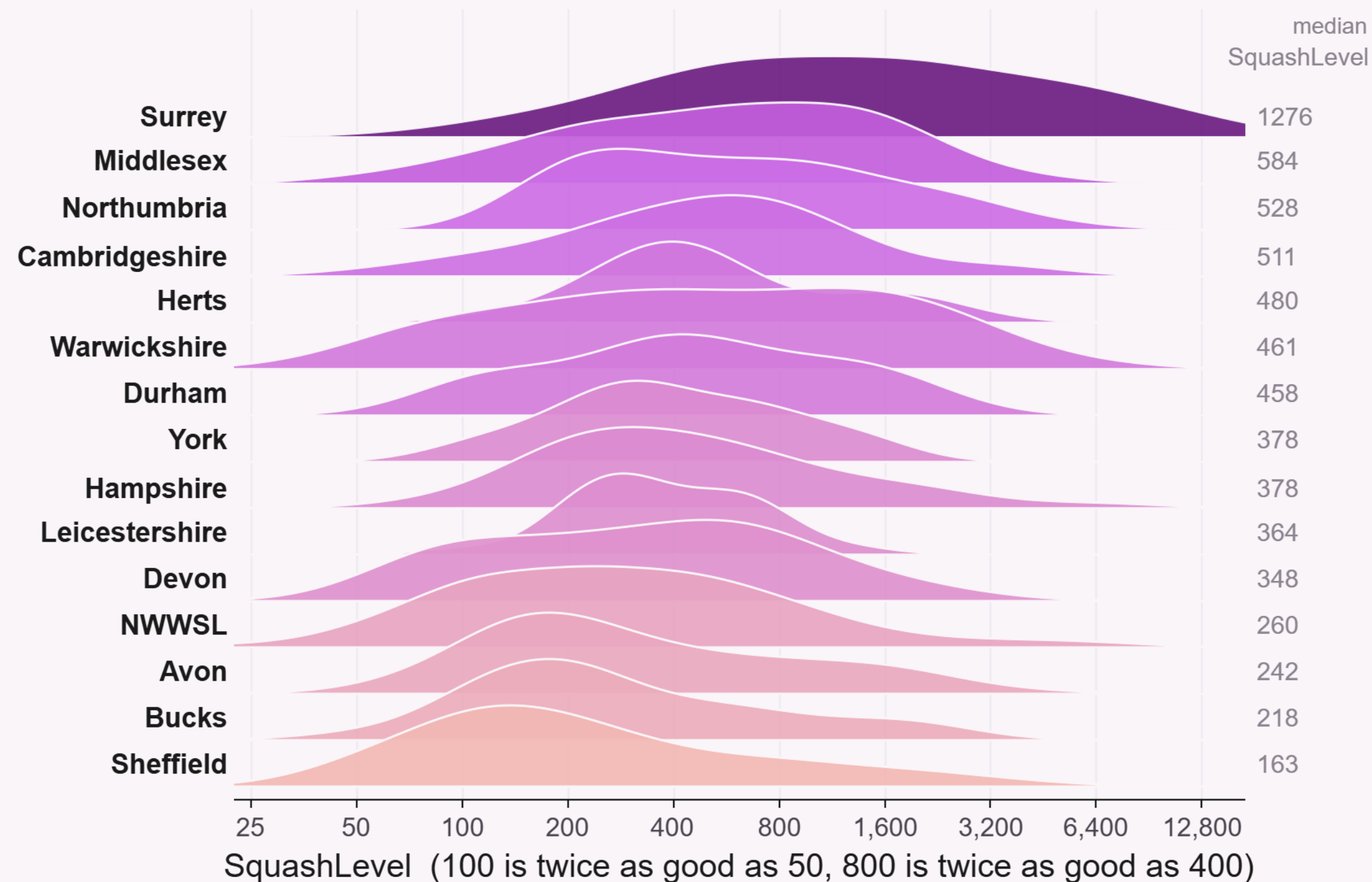
382

2025/26 · geo. mean 423

SquashLevels standard doubles as it rises: a player on 400 is twice as strong as one on 200, so the chart uses that doubling scale. Between seasons the whole curve shifted slightly left. **That is not the game getting weaker, it is new beginners arriving. Median SquashLevel: 416 → 382** (geometric mean: 447 → 423)



Every league has its own mix



Position shows how strong a league is; width shows how mixed. Curves show each league's shape, not its size.

Surrey: broad level span

Stretches from club players up to England internationals. Needs depth of competition.

NWWSL: high participation at the base

Not weak. This is the exact shape of a league recruiting hard at entry level. Needs a pathway that carries beginners upward.

SquashLevels of players

Median SquashLevel & Geometric Mean

223

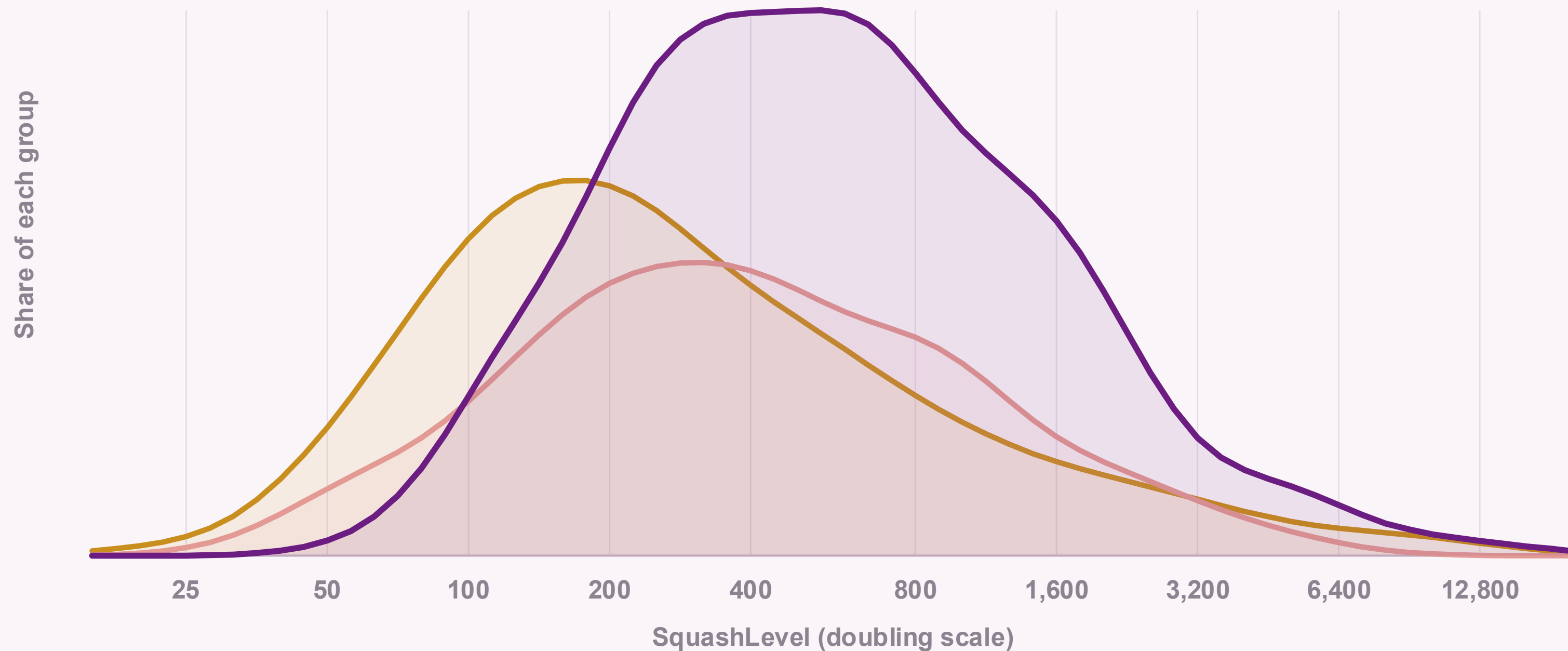
New women · geo. mean 277

355

Women who left · geo. mean 370

520

Loyal core · geo. mean 554



New women arrive as beginners

The front door of the sport is working.

Losses skew towards 300

Women leave at every level, but the lower her standard the more likely she is to go: 41% of beginners did not return, against 26% at the top.

Those who stay are the strongest

Once a woman establishes, she sticks.

Six findings from two seasons

01

Participation is growing

Up about 10% in one season, 1,024 to 1,124 women. This is real growth mainly from the new beginner division from NWWSL.

02

Life shapes the churn

Babies, work, moves and travel pull women out for a season or two. A season out is not leaving. Make returning easy.

03

NWWSL is the model for beginners

Best retention in the country at 79%, and 130 new women. Experimenting with different formats increased participation and opened up options for new regions and clubs to join.

04

The majority of the losses are below the median

The player losses at this level suggest that some beginners start and then don't stay. Improving how a player is welcomed into her second season feels like a quick win. This is a current data gap; two seasons cannot yet show it.

05

Leagues stand alone

Players rarely switch leagues, so there is no central fix. Leagues are administered regionally by the squash counties and do not generally communicate.

06

Where do the students go?

As students graduate, they do not tend to re-enter another league with a club. Clubs could find graduates moving to their areas by contacting the universities.

WHAT WE DO NEXT

One priority: Recruit beginners & Retain them.

Leagues & clubs can...

- ◆ Create a beginners division so first matches are winnable.
- ◆ Ask universities to share local club offers with their graduating students.
- ◆ Personally contact last season's players before entries close. A season out is not goodbye.
- ◆ Ask leavers why. Is the reason for leaving a life event or something fixable.
- ◆ Offer a clear next step after a first season: a box league, a friendly night or inter-club friendly.

Girls In Motion can...

- ◆ Write up the NWWSL model as a playbook.
- ◆ Catch graduating students: only 7 of 78 carried on at a local club.
- ◆ Target support to county leagues that want to grow participation.
- ◆ Track this data every season so progress is measured.
- ◆ Contact counties to protect at-risk leagues before they fold. A league is far easier to save than to restart.

Want your league to grow?

Get in contact to see how we can help

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