

2026 Syracuse Biathlon Community Survey

This survey was created with the intent of collecting feedback from the biathlon community on various issues impacting race events. There were 28 survey completions during the response period. The data has been summarized along with each question graphed with complete data on the following pages. This summary identifies the top responses for each question along with the SBC interpretation/action.

Which race format would you most like to see offered?

Pursuit Weekend(or Day) - Sprint & Pursuit	32.0%
Sprint	20.0%
Individual Relay	20.0%

A bit of a mixed bag with the pursuit weekend having the highest response. The big item is that the team relay format had zero votes so we will not offer this format except in conjunction with some other race (ex. Sprint in morning, relay in the afternoon).

This question along with responses to some of the other questions indicate that most people want to race a four-shooting format. We will try to honor this desire with the exception of novices where we will restrict that group to a sprint format in most cases.

Which race format(s) would keep you from participating in an event?

Team Relay	26.3%
Sprint	15.8%
Individual Relay	15.8%

Based on this question, we will try to avoid any team relays for awhile along with the sprint format for non-novices. We may still use the individual relay format on occasion to give competitors some experience with the format.

When considering participating in a race, which factor(s) are most important?

Driving distance to Venue	21.1%
Weather	18.4%
Day of Week	15.8%

Understood but unfortunately driving distance and weather is out of our hands. Osceola may be a hike but has the most dependable snow year-to-year. See the day of week question for a specific response on that issue.

When considering participating in a race, which factor(s) keep you from participating in a race?

Driving distance to Venue	30.6%
Weather	18.4%
Race Distance - Too Long	10.2%
Day of Week	10.2%

See previous re: driving distance and weather. The race distance has been a big question for us over the years. Experienced competitors typically want a more format compliant distance while our recreational/novice competitors favor a shorter distance. Over the years we've tended to shorten our race distances but will attempt to stay closer to the IBU distances for the non-novice competitors this coming season.

What day of the week would you prefer races to be held on?

Saturday	73.1%
Sunday	23.1%
Friday	3.8%

An overwhelming desire for Saturday races! We'll try to make this happen but is dependent on venue & race organizer availability.

What time would you prefer race start times to be?

11am	39.3%
10am	32.1%
9am	14.3%

We'll look at trying to move our start time to 11am this winter season but will depend on the venue. Any of us setting up on race morning can attest to having seen enough sunrises driving to Osceola.

For winter venues, please rank your preferred location to race.

Osceola Ski & Sport	64.0%
Saratoga	24.0%
Lake Placid - Mt. Vanhoeffenburg	8.0%

Good to see that Osceola Ski & Sport is well received. They provide us the best options for our events, good trails with decent grooming, a modern lodge and are supportive to the club. We've looked at other options over the years but Osceola really is the best option in most cases.

For summer venues, please rank your preferred location to race.

Osceola Ski & Sport	36.4%
Syracuse - Pratts Falls	36.4%
Saratoga	22.7%

Similar to the winter with Pratt's being a viable option. So everyone is aware, we struggle every year deciding to stay at Pratt's. There is a fee for the use of the park plus we have to pay to have a park ranger present when rifles are on site. With the typical turnouts lately, this costs the club money to continue to hold events in the park. If we see a greater participation level, we'd certainly consider adding more summer events there.

What total race distance would you prefer? (select any that you would participate in, don't select those distances that would keep you from entering a race)

6km	41.7%
8km	20.8%
4km	16.7%
10km	16.7%

We've been leaning towards 4-5km distance over the last few years. As discussed previously, we'll try to hold four shooting formats for non-novices which will provide a longer race distance while novices will race a sprint format and maintain the 4-5km distance.

How much advance notice of a race do you need?

1 Month	35.7%
2 Months or more	32.1%
2 Weeks	25.0%

We try to get our race info out as early as possible but need to make sure that details are set before putting the info out there. We've made the mistake of putting a date out and then having to change it with someone showing up on the wrong day. With the number of locations that races are posted on, we want to make sure it's correct before the info goes out to everyone.

Would having a season point series or ranking system make you more inclined to participate?
This would allow individuals to compare themselves to other competitors across the state. This could also be used as part of determining the Champion at the NY Biathlon Championships.

No	40.0%
Yes	36.0%

Pretty much 50/50. This has been done in the past including right up to last season with the points/percent back lists on the NY Biathlon website. This is a volunteer effort to maintain and will be evaluated by the NY Biathlon committee.

IF we decide to reduce race offerings, which season would you most like to see held?

Winter	84.0%
Summer	16.0%

There have been no discussions at this point about eliminating a certain season but this is useful information in the event that we reach that point. The biggest issue that would lead to this option is a lack of support/volunteers. Many longtime helpers are reaching the point of 'retiring' so there needs to be some new help stepping up to keep things going.

What type of age group awards would you most like to see offered?

Drinking Glass	29.6%
Giant Cookies	22.2%
Medal	11.1%

While the giant cookies are definitely a hit, I don't think we can get Deb Fuge-Klossner to be our dedicated awards bakery! We're still using up the pin awards which will likely take us through the next season but we'll consider glasses or some type of food/beverage option. I think that for most people, once you have one or two of an award, winning any more doesn't mean much.

Do you feel that the Syracuse/Polar Bear Pursuit Challenge should continue?

Yes - Definitely	78.6%
Meh - doesn't matter to me	21.4%
No - Could care less	0.0%

Good to hear that the pursuit challenge is still of interest. It's been tough some years with weather conditions but we'll keep running if there's a desire for it.

If the Challenge continues, which of the following options would you prefer?

Two days - 1 weekend - Held at one venue	38.5%
One day - both races held on the same day at one venue	30.8%
Two days - 2 different weekends - Held at two venues	15.4%

Always an interesting question. The feedback we've gotten in the past is similar to the survey. People say they want two days on one weekend but when we do that, participation numbers are lower than when we do a single day/two race option. This is understandable as the two day option typically will require an overnight stay or more driving. Syracuse and Polar Bear will be discussing how we want to handle this for the coming winter.

In the past, there was a qualification process for participating in the Empire State Games.
Would you like to see some type of requirement put in place?

No - Leave it as it currently is with open registration	60.0%
Yes - Require the completion of at least one NY Biathlon race in the preceding 12 months	28.0%
Yes - Re-institute a points list based on race performance with only the top 'x' eligible to participate	4.0%

This question was mostly out of curiosity but most folks want to see the ESG's stay as it is. If our participation numbers increase, then a qualification system would need to be considered. We also now have competitors from out of state and Canada participating which would impact their taking part.

Polar Bear Biathlon had traditionally offered a race on New Years Day. Do you have any interest in seeing this return?

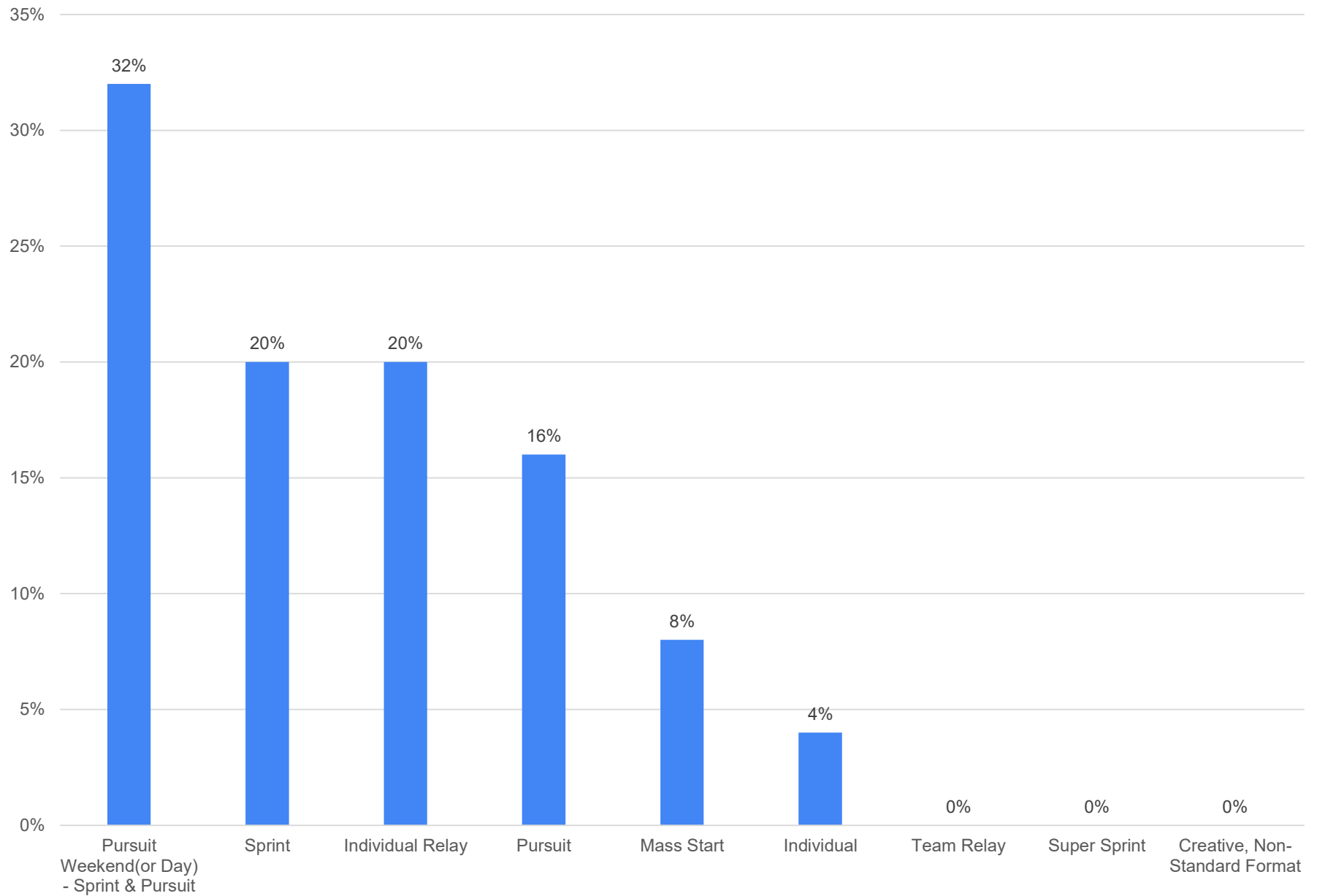
No preference either way	64.3%
Yes	21.4%
No	14.3%

This info has been passed on to Polar Bear. This event was a traditional start of the biathlon season but struggled with poor early snow and lower participation.

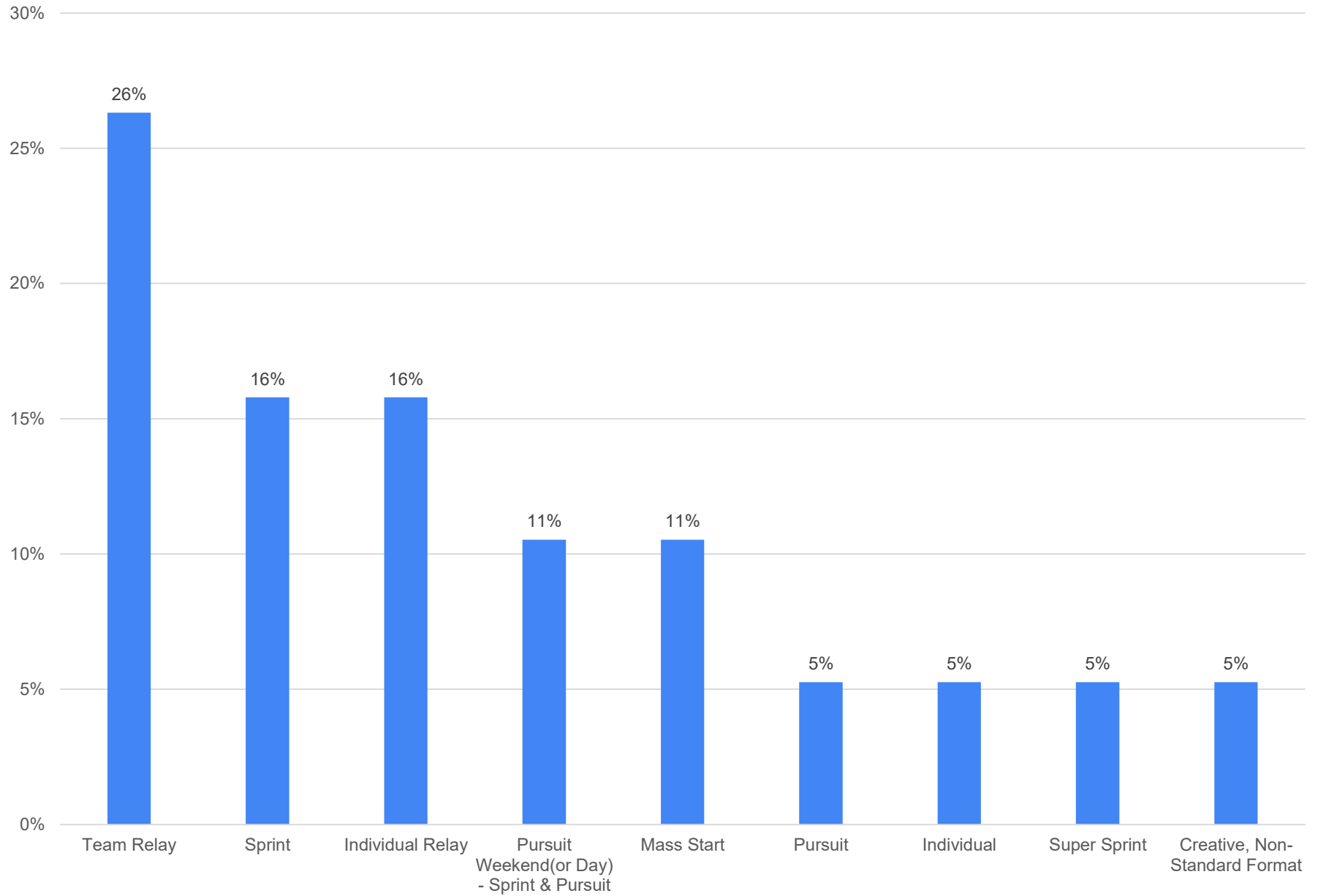
Lastly, if there any ideas, suggestions, complaints that you'd like us to be aware of, please leave us your thoughts.

Thank you for all the comments and gratitude provided to the club! There's some interesting ideas that were proposed that we'll look at moving forward. We're always open to feedback from the community so always free free to reach out to us.

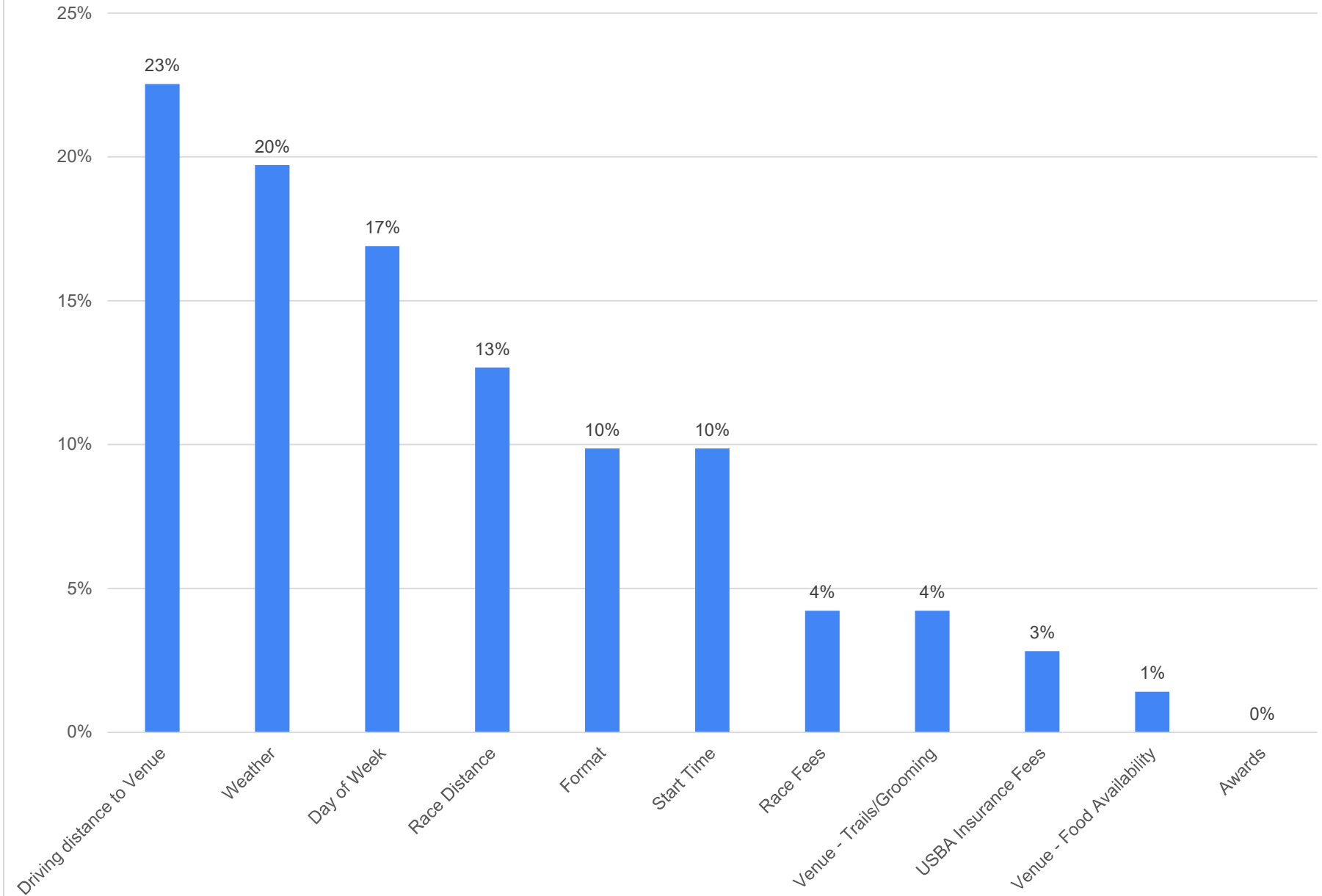
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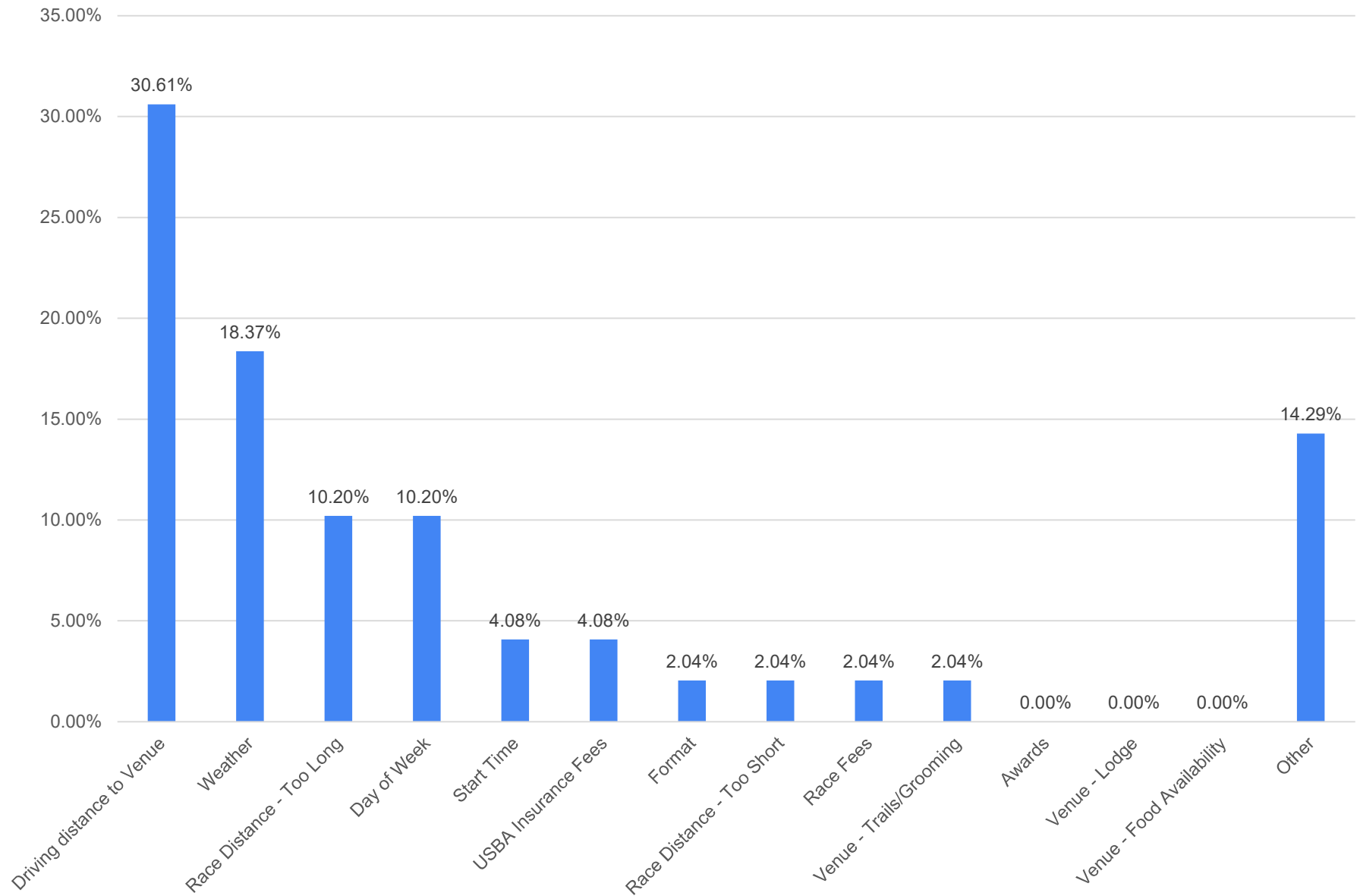
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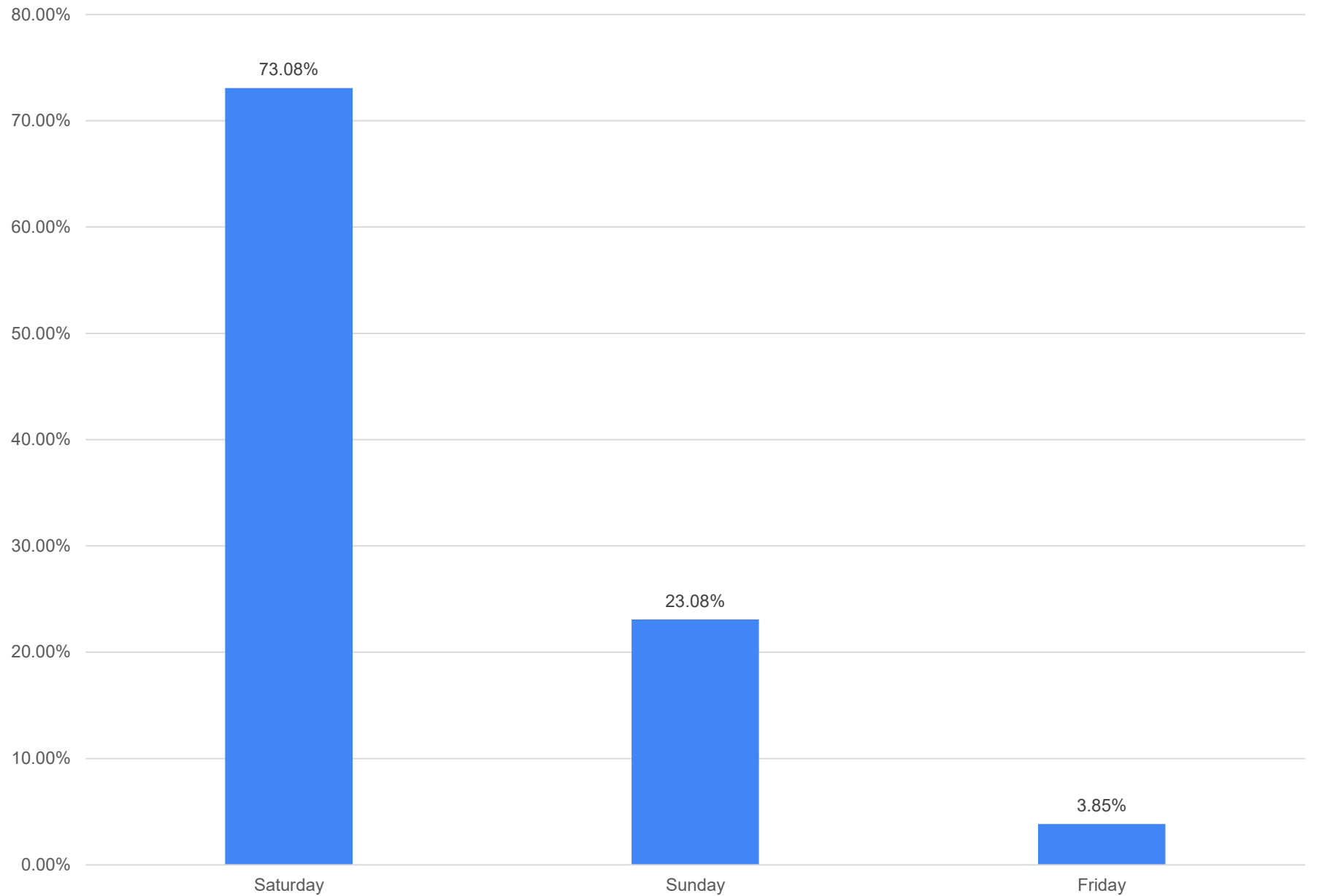
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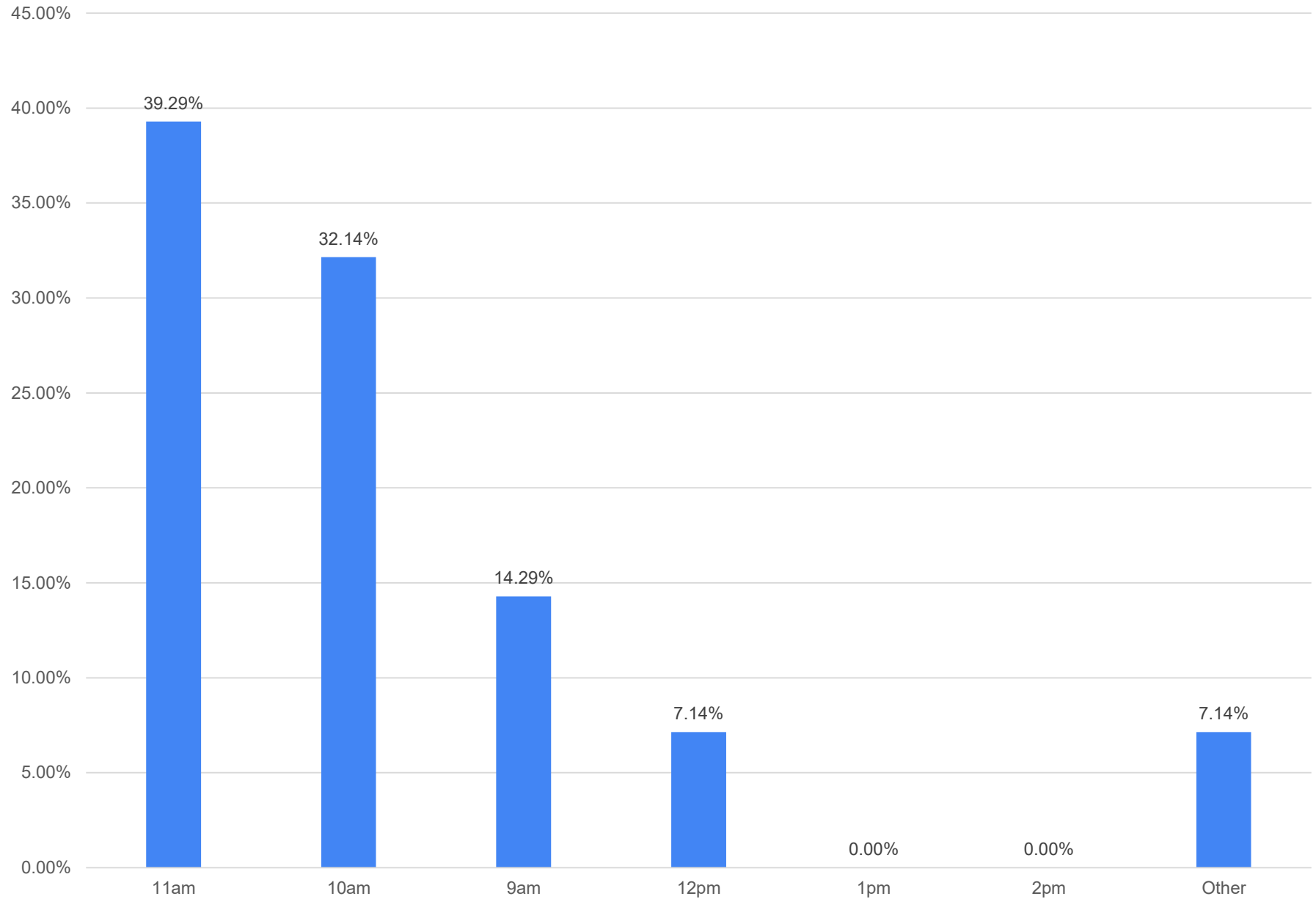
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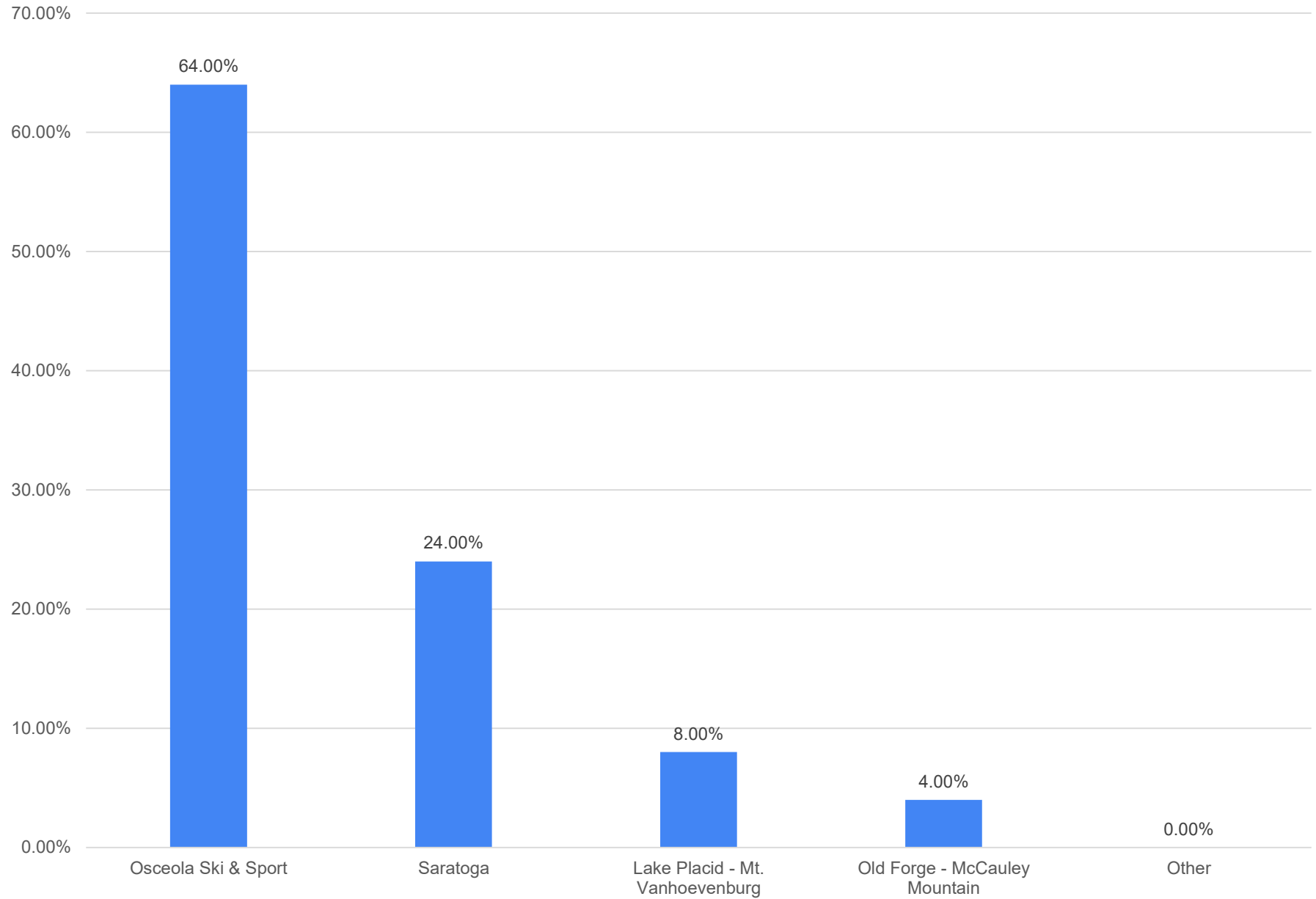
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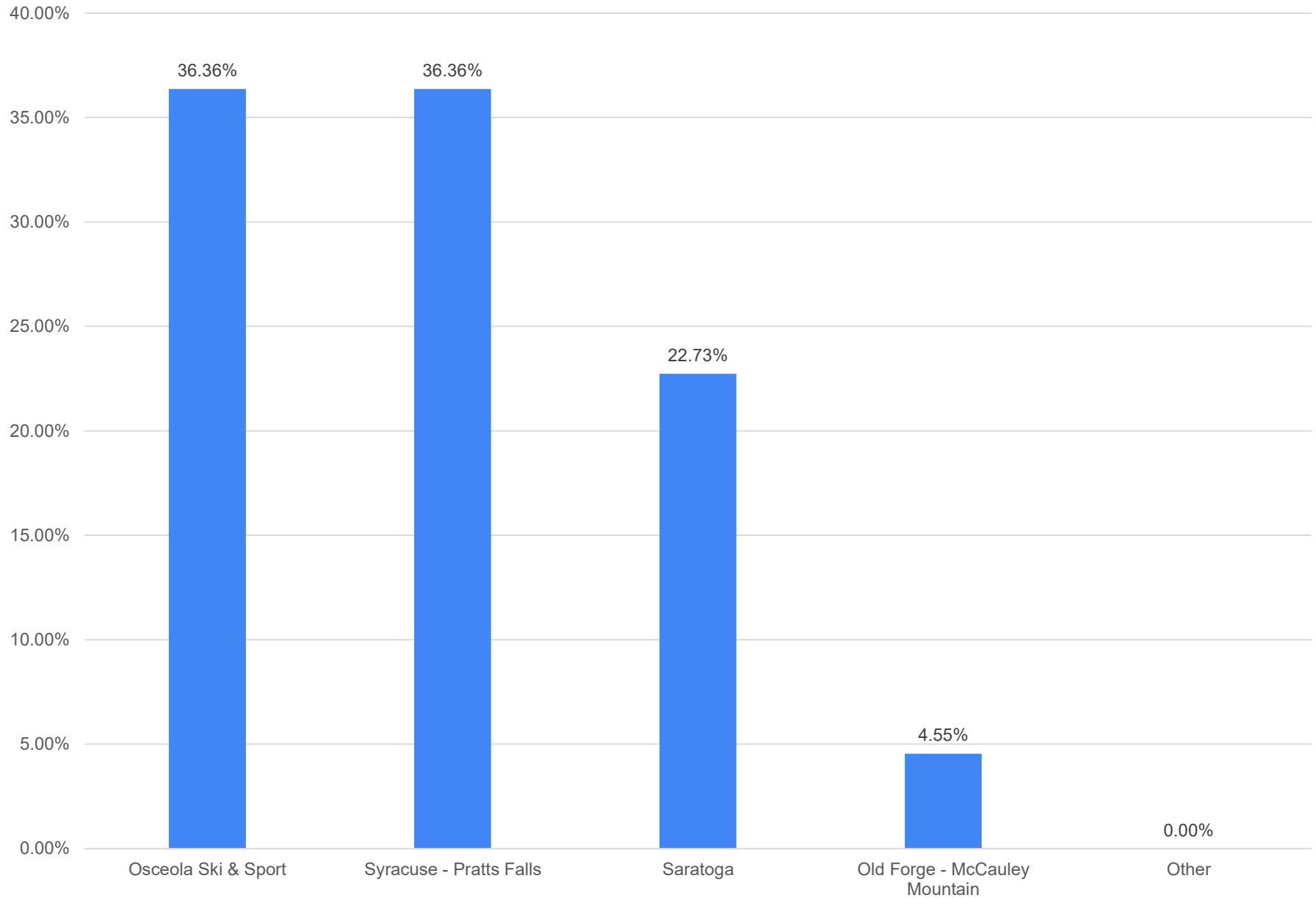
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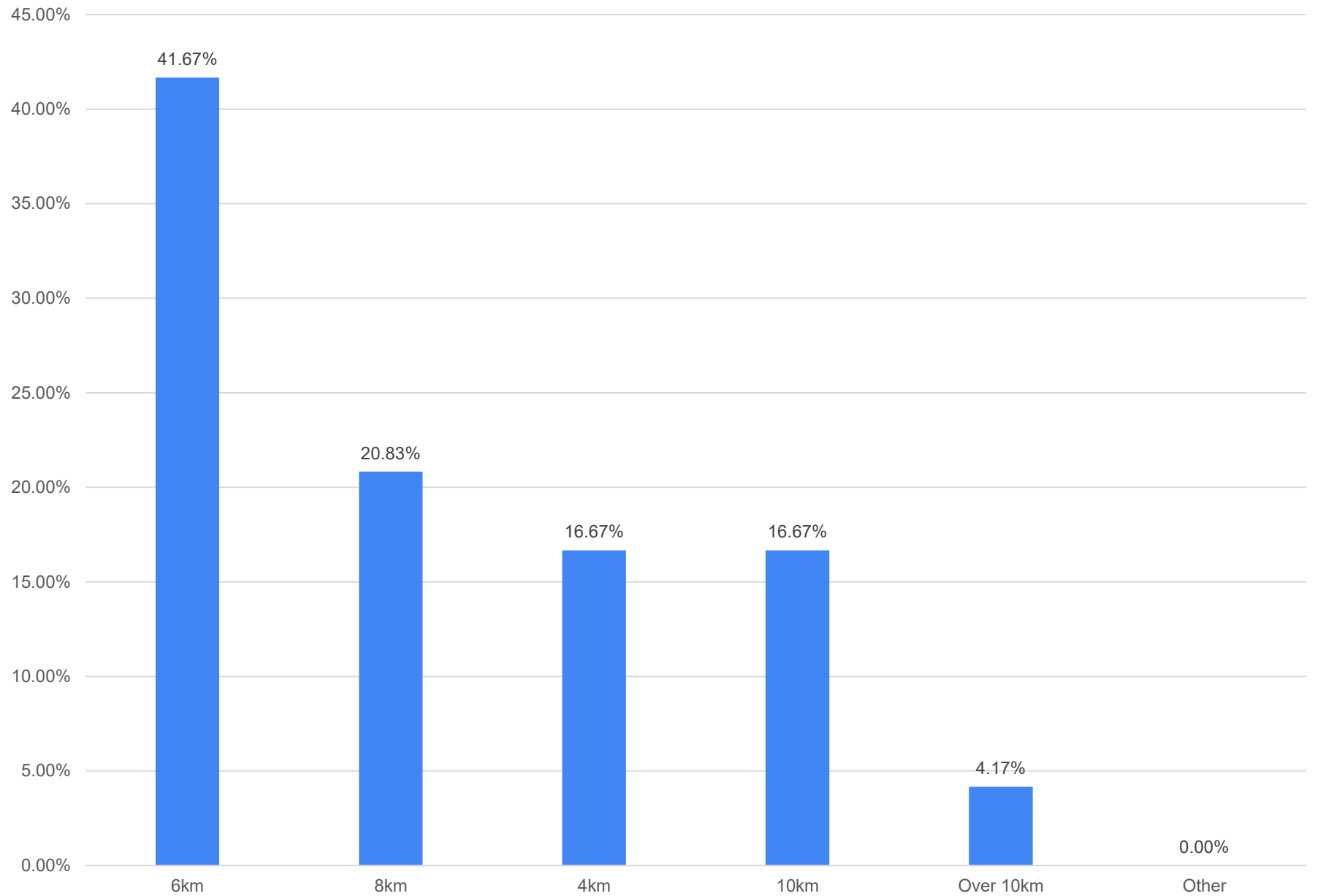
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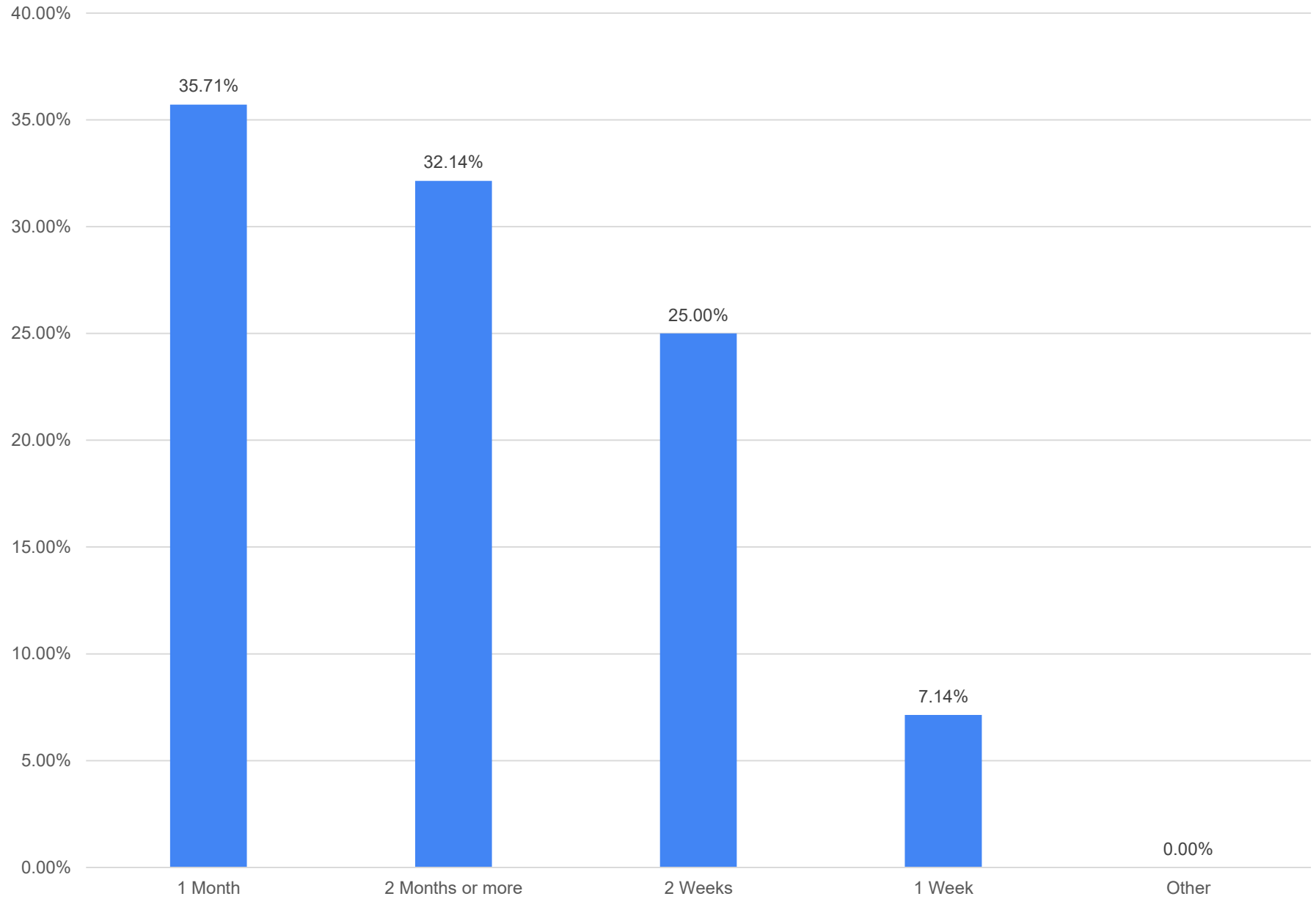
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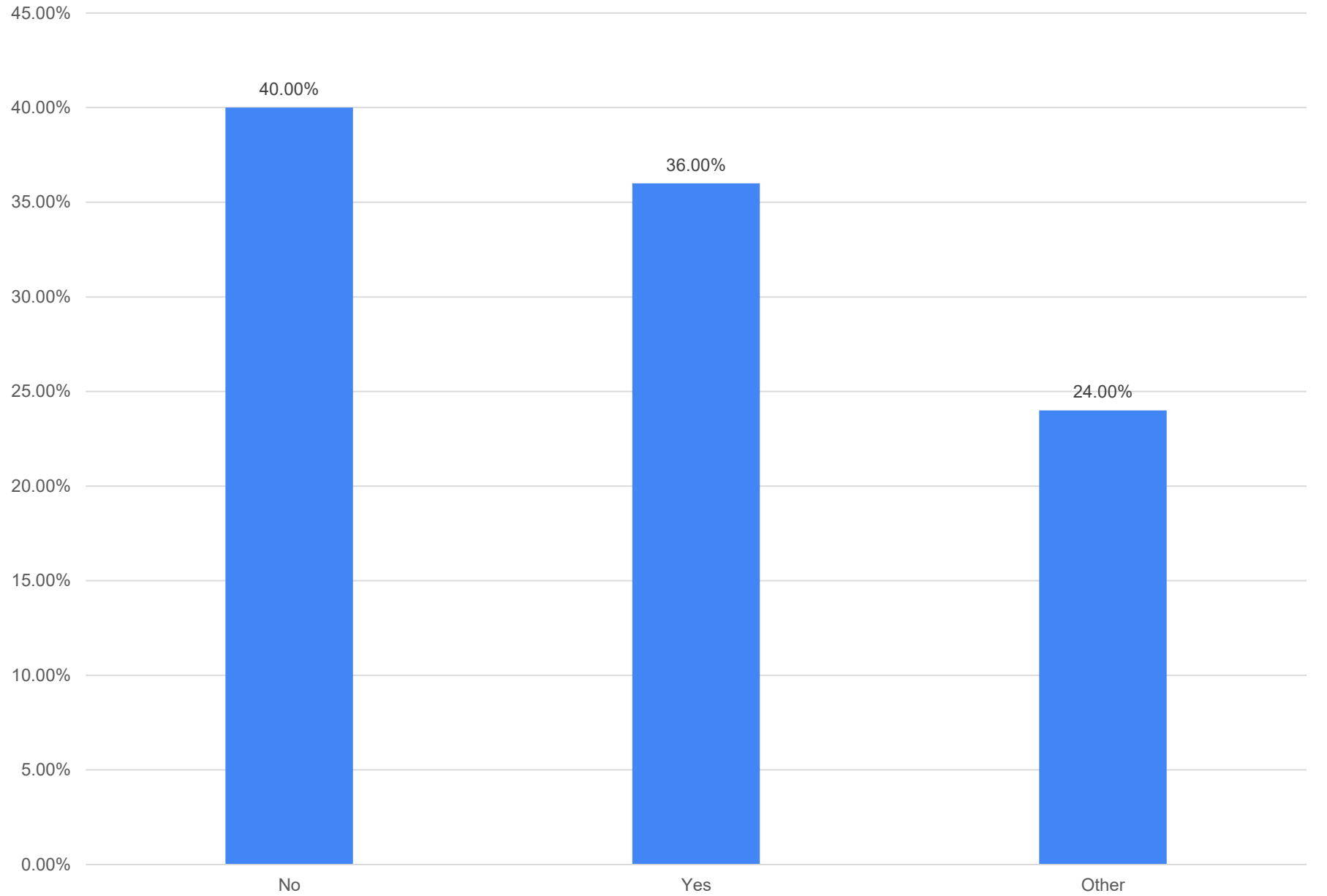
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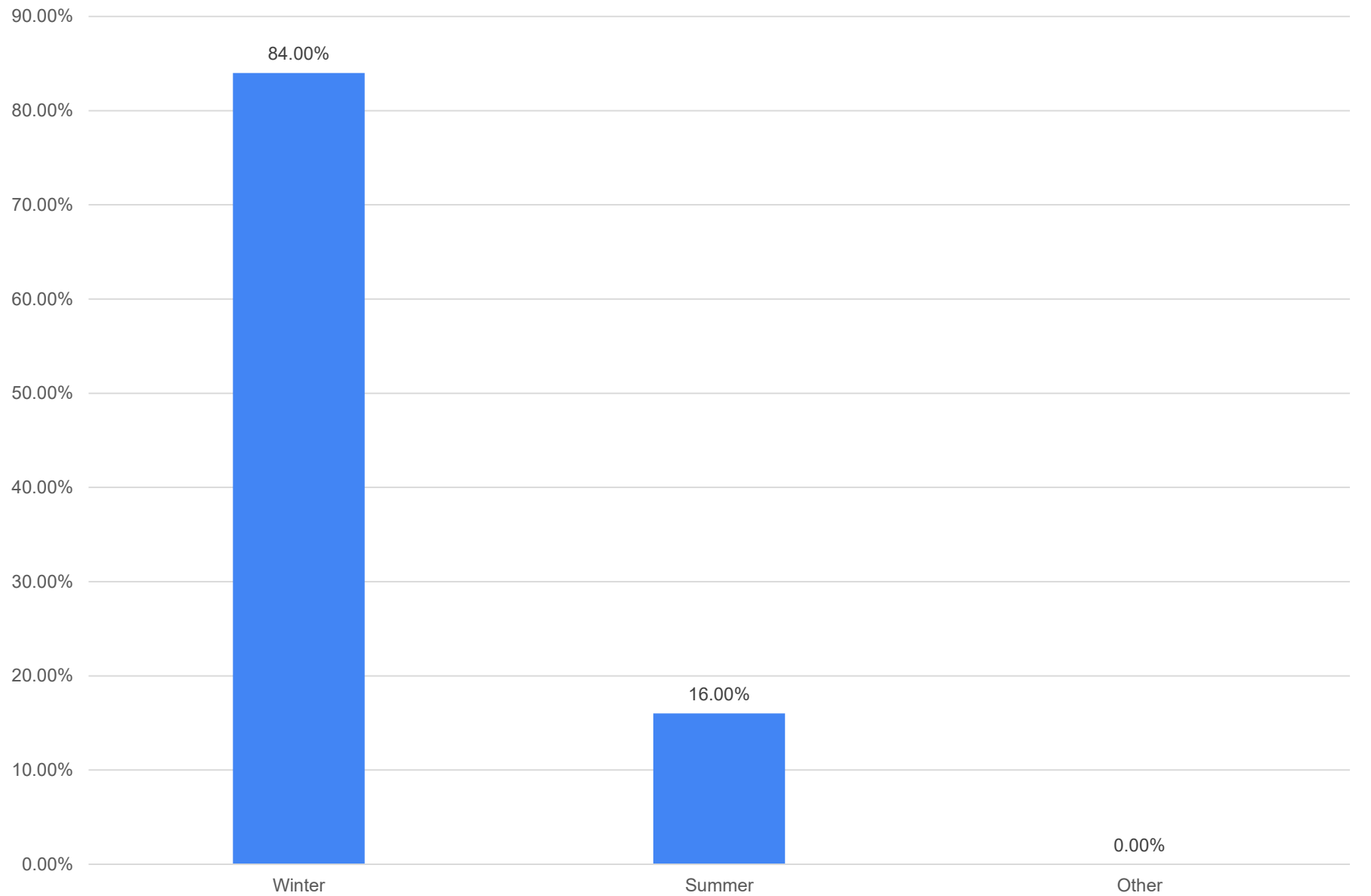
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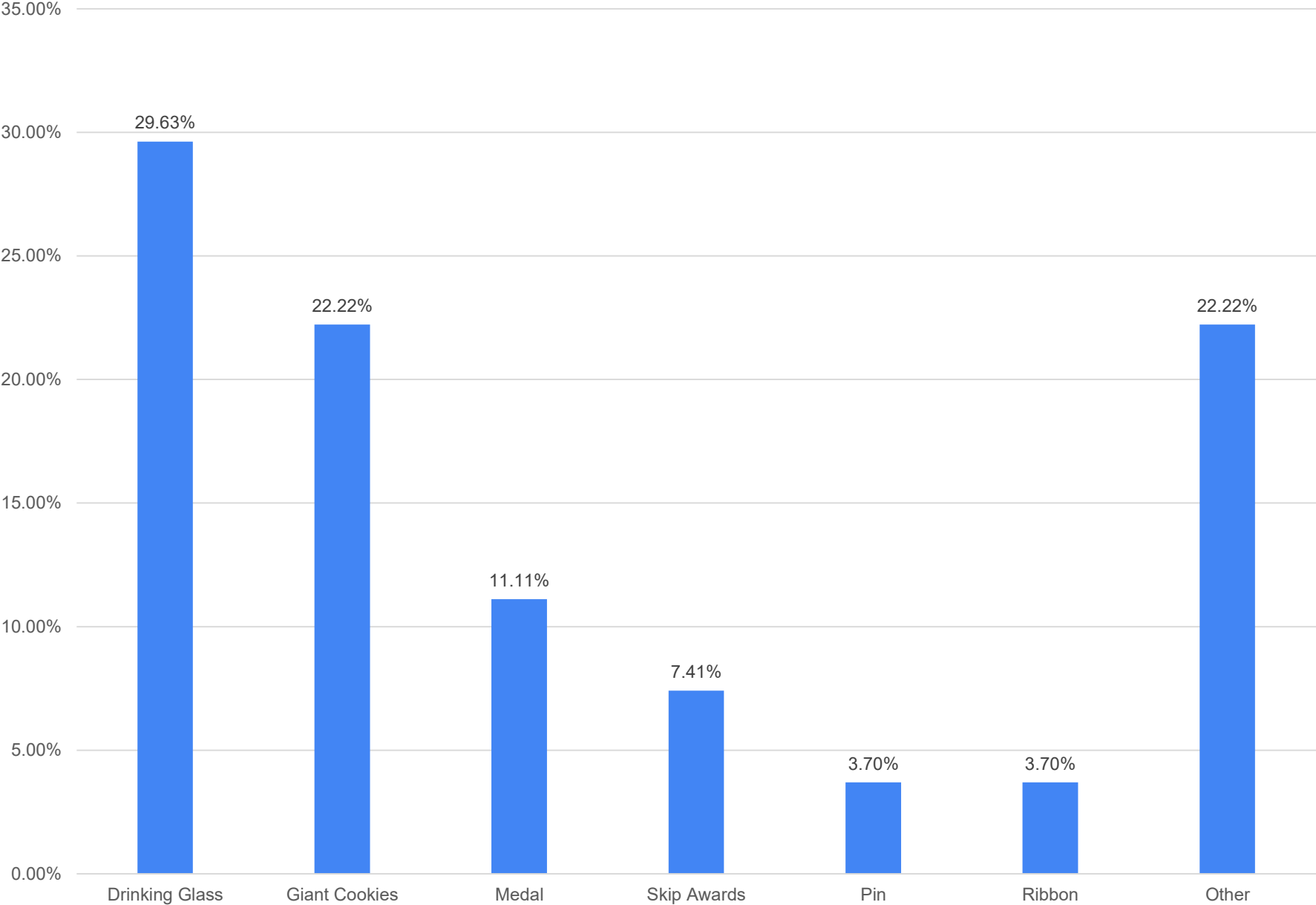
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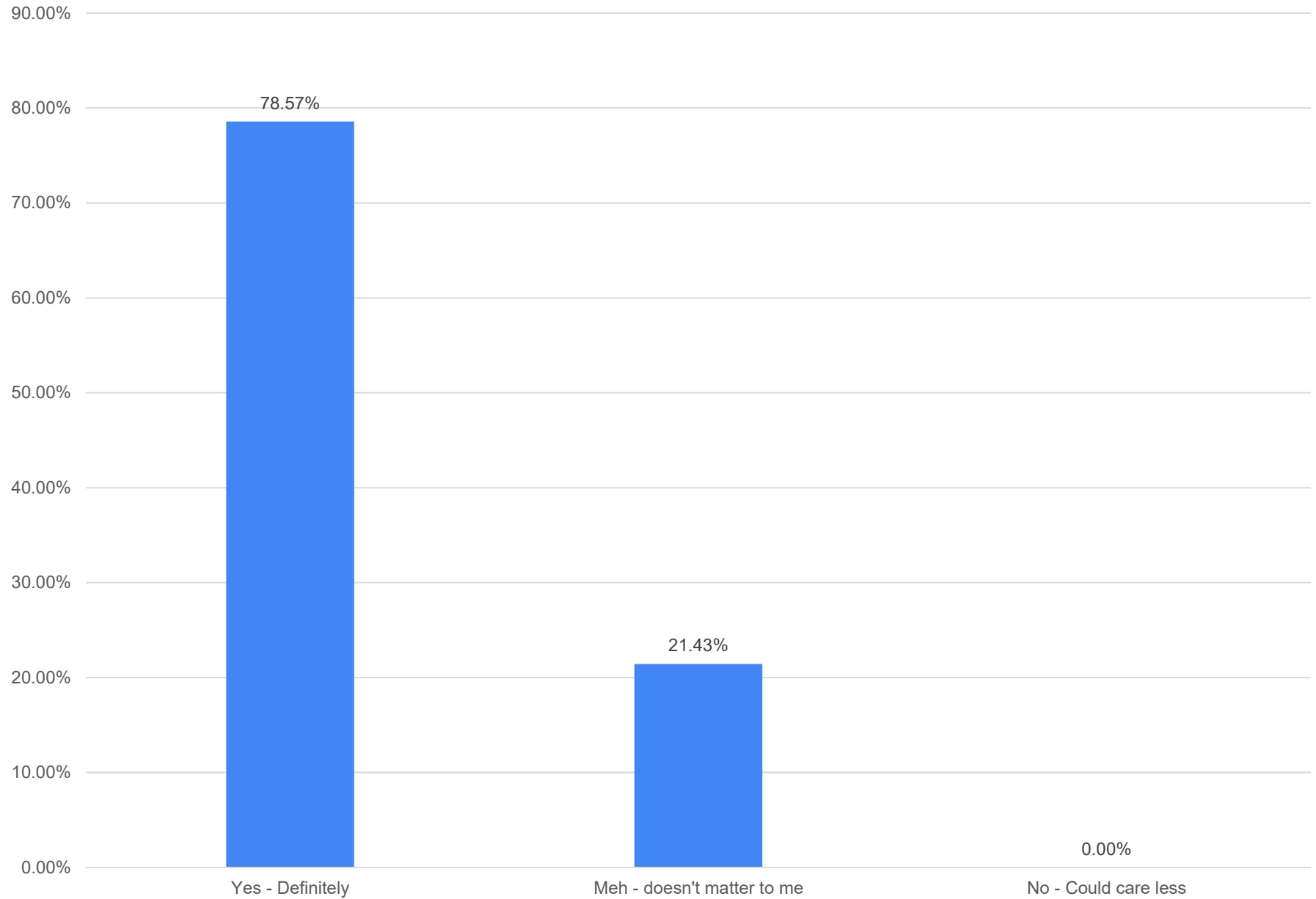
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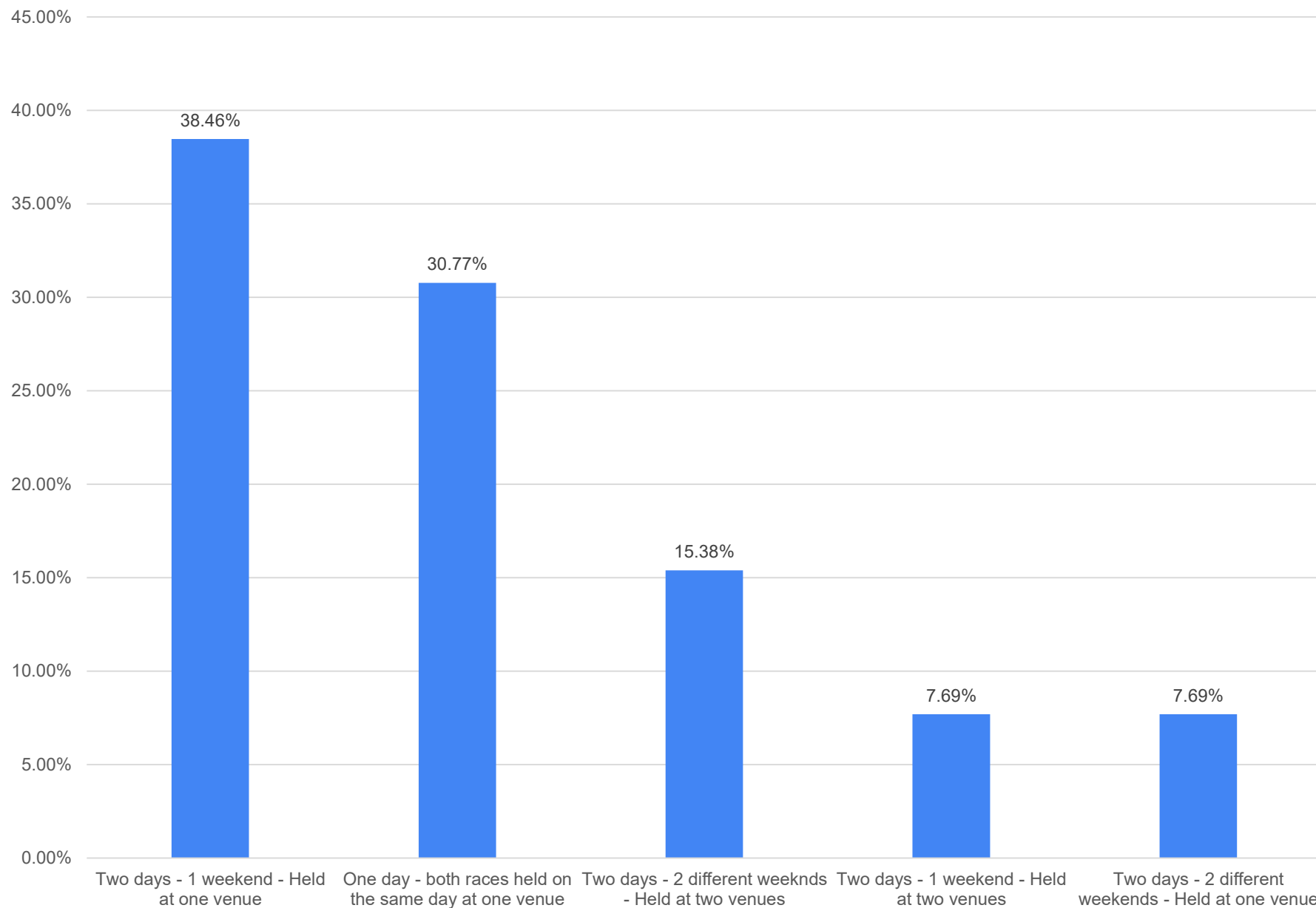
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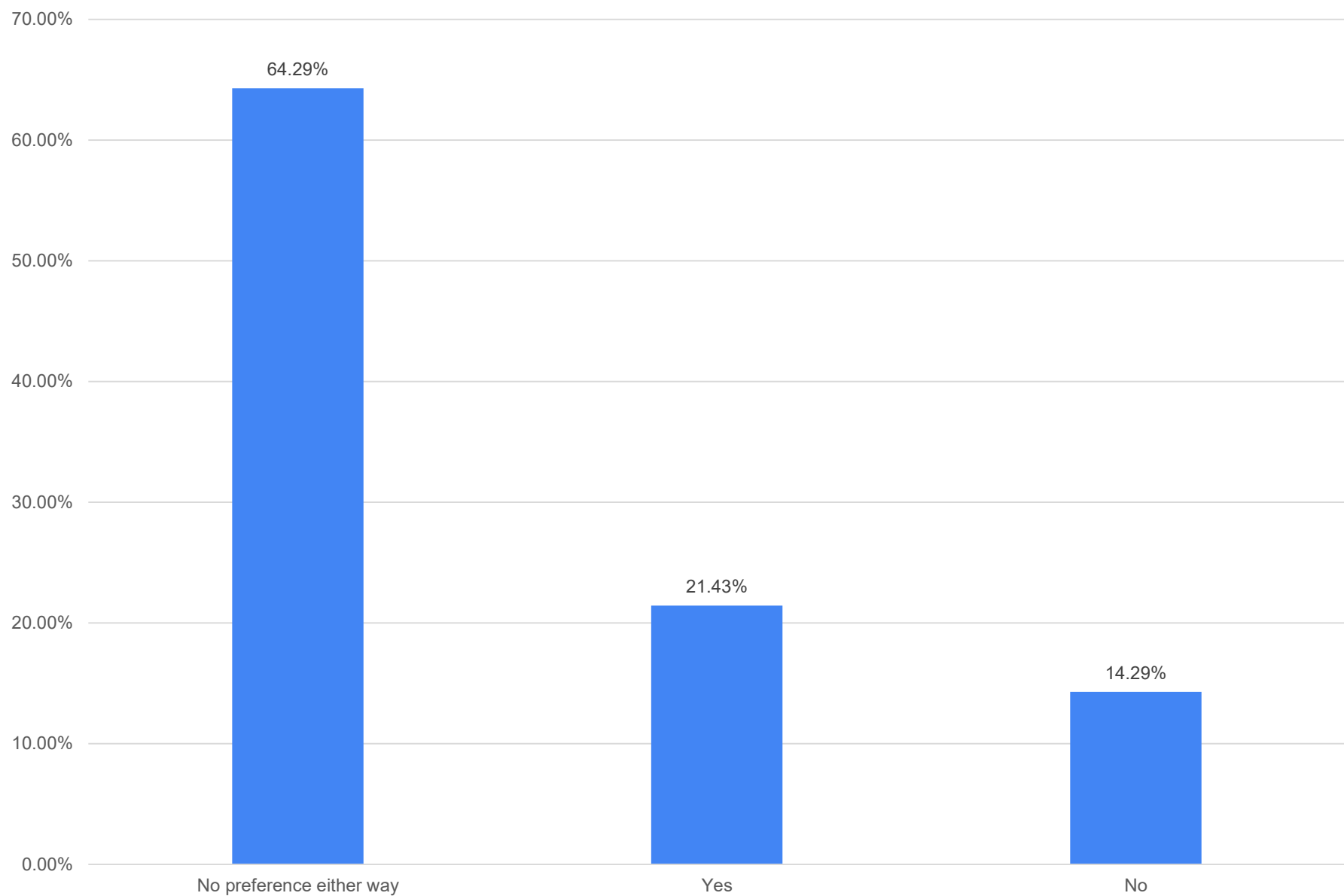
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