

FIFA®



# International Transfer Snapshot

JANUARY 2023



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# OVERVIEW

The year 2022 saw the transfer market begin to bounce back from the many effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and those signs of recovery are becoming ever clearer as January 2023 even witnessed new records being set. Around 75% of the 211 FIFA member associations declared that they had an open registration window in January 2023. For the majority of northern hemisphere leagues, this window falls in the middle of the league campaign and gives clubs an invaluable opportunity to strengthen their squads ahead of the most crucial phase of the season, whereas for those leagues that are just getting underway, January is the main transfer period. The January 2023 window was also novel in the sense that it opened just a couple of weeks after the FIFA World Cup 2022™ in Qatar.

Overall, the figures from the window that has just closed indicate that the transfer market is on a clear upwards trend. In January 2023, there was an increase of 14.4% in the number of international transfers and a rise of 49.4% in the amount spent on transfer fees in men's professional football compared to the same window in 2022.

A total of 4,387 such transfers were completed in January 2023 – a new all-time high for the transfer window at the beginning of the year. Around 14% of these transfers included a transfer fee. In total, transfer fees amounting to USD 1.57 billion were agreed between clubs, with most of this money (89.7%) spent by clubs based in Europe. This represents a drastic increase of 49.4% compared to the total outlay in January 2022 and it even surpasses the previous record of USD 1.34 billion, which was set in January 2018.

In women's professional football, the number of transfers in January also increased once again (+30.2% compared to January 2022) as a total of 341 transfers were completed. The total spending on transfer fees has also continued to grow in the women's game – by more than 50% compared to the same period in 2022 – and reached a total of USD 774,300 in January 2023, further underlining the impressive exponential growth of women's football in recent years.



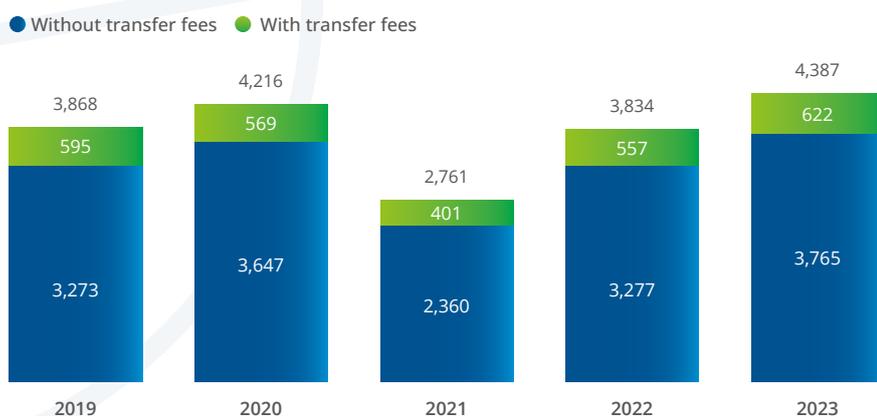
# MEN'S PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL



## TRANSFERS AND TRANSFER FEES

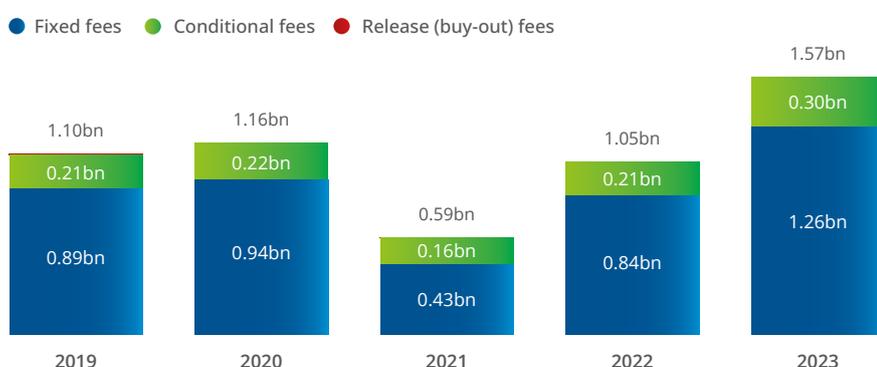
The number of transfers in the January 2023 window rose by 14.4% compared to January 2022, with a new January record of 4,387 total transfers completed.<sup>1</sup> Total spending on transfer fees reached USD 1.57 billion, an increase of 49.4% compared to January 2022 and the highest total ever recorded for the transfer window at the beginning of the year.

Figure 1: International transfers during the January 2023 registration period



**4,387**  
international transfers  
in January 2023,  
a new January  
record

Figure 2: Transfer fees in USD during the January 2023 registration period



USD  
**1.57bn**  
spent on  
transfer fees,  
more than  
in any other  
January window

<sup>1</sup> At the time of publication, there were 428 pending transfers for which an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) had been requested by the engaging association in January 2023. If the releasing association issues the ITC in any of these transfers, the figures for this period will change accordingly.

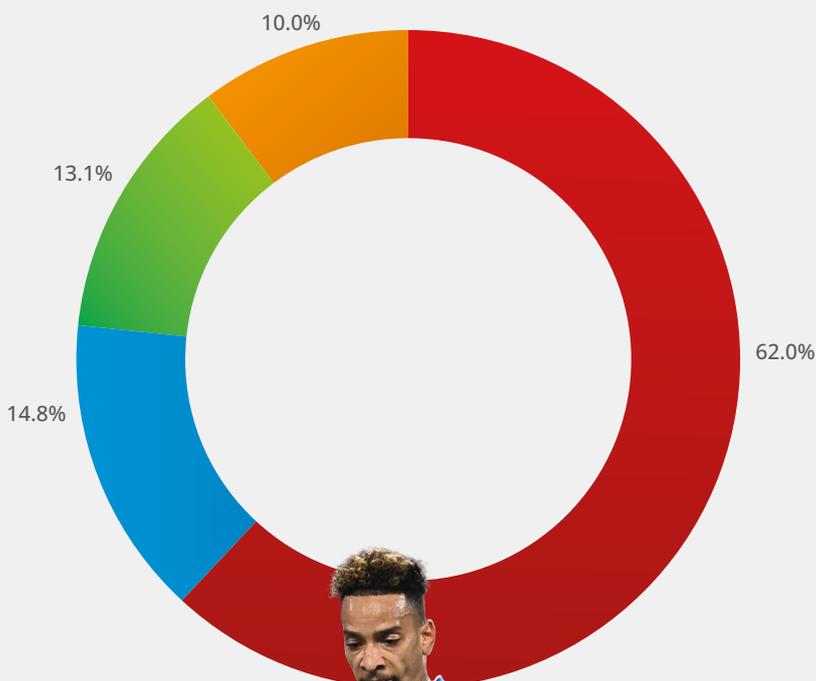


## TRANSFER TYPES

Out-of-contract transfers are typically always the most common type of transfer, and it is therefore not surprising that they also represented the lion's share of the transfers concluded in the January 2023 transfer window with 62.0% of the total number. The remaining 38.0% of all transfers consisted of permanent transfers, loan deals, or players returning to their parent clubs following a loan.

Figure 3: Transfers by type (January 2023)

● Out of contract ● Loan ● Permanent ● Return from loan



**62.0%**  
of all transfers  
involved  
out-of-contract  
players

**14.8%**  
of all transfers  
were loan deals,  
1.3 percentage  
points less than  
in January 2022



# TRANSFERS AND FEES BY PLAYER AGE

While professional players can now hope to play well into their 30s, the vast majority of transfers with fees generally fall into two distinct age groups: 18-23 and 24-29 years old (52.4% and 39.5% of all transfers with fees, respectively). However, players in the lower of these two age groups accounted for more than 70% of the total outlay in January 2023, whereas players in the higher of the two groups accounted for 23.5% of the total spend.

Figure 4: Spending on transfer fees in USD and number of transfers with transfer fees by player age (January 2023)



Players aged 18-23 accounted for **52.4%** of all transfers with fees and for **72.4%** of the total spend on transfer fees



## TRANSFERS BY CONFEDERATION

Just as in previous years, European clubs completed more transfers than clubs from any other confederation, with close to half of all transfers involving players moving to a club in Europe. Similarly, the USD 1.41 billion spent by European clubs represented almost 90% of the global outlay on transfer fees during the January 2023 registration period. European clubs were also the principal recipients of such funds, pulling in more than USD 1.2 billion or almost 80% of the global total – even more than in January 2022, when they received 75.3% of all transfer fees.

Figure 5: Transfers and transfer fees in USD by confederation (January 2023)



The amounts for spending on and receipts from transfer fees are only shown for confederations with at least five incoming and outgoing transfers with transfer fees respectively.



## TOP ASSOCIATIONS

Out of all associations, clubs from England spent by far the most on transfer fees with a total outlay of USD 898.6 million. This represented an increase of more than 150% compared to January 2022 and constituted a new high, beating England's own record outlay of just over USD 500 million, which was set in 2018. Brazil, however, completed the most incoming (301) and outgoing (280) transfers.

Figure 6: Associations featuring in at least one of the top fives by incoming transfers, outgoing transfers, spending on transfer fees or receipts from transfer fees in January 2023 (global ranks in parentheses)



The amounts for spending on and receipts from transfer fees are only shown for associations with at least five incoming and outgoing transfers with transfer fees respectively.

# WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL



## TRANSFERS AND TRANSFER FEES

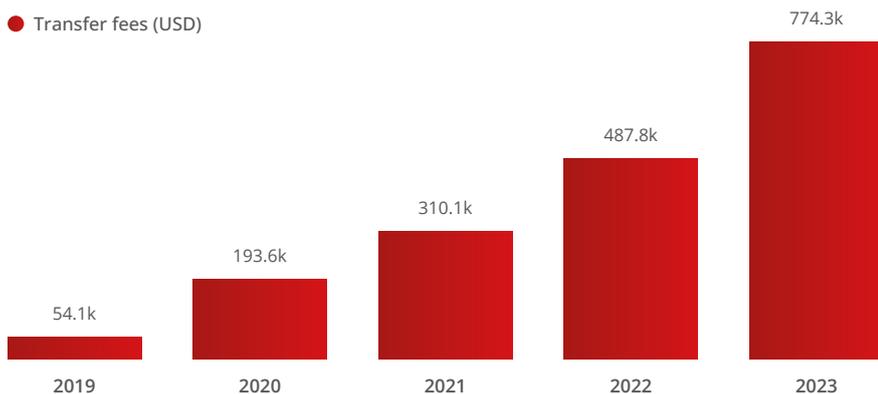
With the biggest-ever FIFA Women's World Cup™ now just around the corner, the spotlight is certainly shining on the women's game. Women's leagues and clubs all around the globe are clearly gearing up for the biggest competition in the women's calendar, including by making more international transfers compared to the equivalent period in 2022. A total of 341 international player transfers were completed in January 2023, representing an increase of 30.2% compared to January 2022. The total outlay for transfer fees in January 2023 amounted to USD 774,300, a new January record and 58.7% higher than in the January 2022 window.

Figure 7: International transfers during the January 2023 registration period



**341**  
international transfers,  
an increase of  
**30.2%**  
compared to  
January 2022

Figure 8: Transfer fees in USD during the January 2023 registration period



USD  
**774.3k**  
spent on  
transfer fees,  
**58.7%**  
more than in  
January 2022

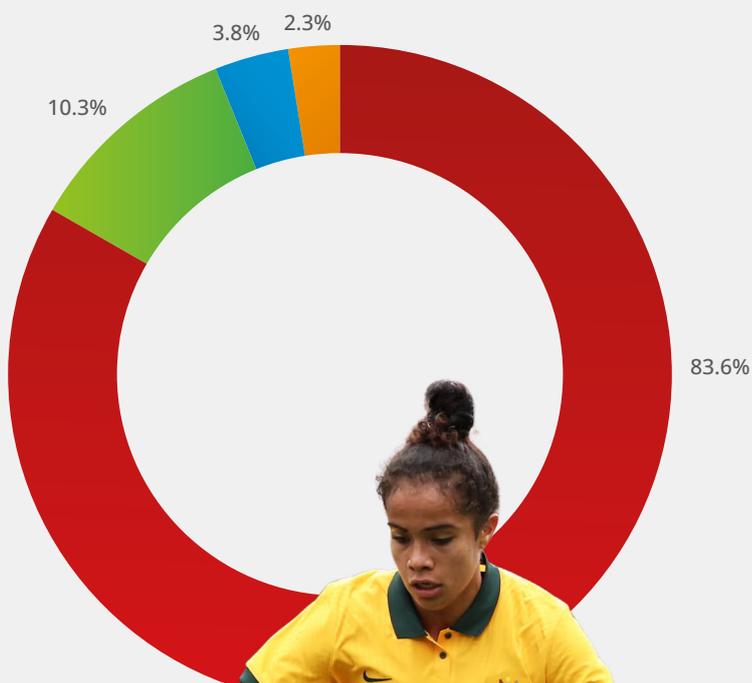


## TRANSFER TYPES

As in the men's game, most transfers in January 2023 (83.6%) involved out-of-contract players, with roughly the same number as in the equivalent period last year. For the first time since the introduction of the requirement to use TMS for transfers in women's football, the share of permanent transfers during the January transfer window exceeded 10% (10.3%) and is beginning to approach the equivalent number in the men's game (13.1% in January 2023).

Figure 9: Transfers by type (January 2023)

● Out of contract ● Permanent ● Loan ● Return from loan



**83.6%**  
of all transfers  
involved  
out-of-contract  
players

**3.8%**  
of all transfers  
were loan deals,  
2.3 percentage points  
less than in  
January 2022

# TRANSFERS BY PLAYER AGE

Players between 18 and 23 years of age were once again the best-represented age group in international transfers in January 2023 as they were involved in 48.7% of all transfers, followed by those aged between 24 and 29 (40.6%). Players between the ages of 18 and 23 also dominated in regard to transfer spending, with 50.0% of all transfers with fees and 54.7% of the total outlay falling in this age category.

Figure 10: Transfers by player age (January 2023)



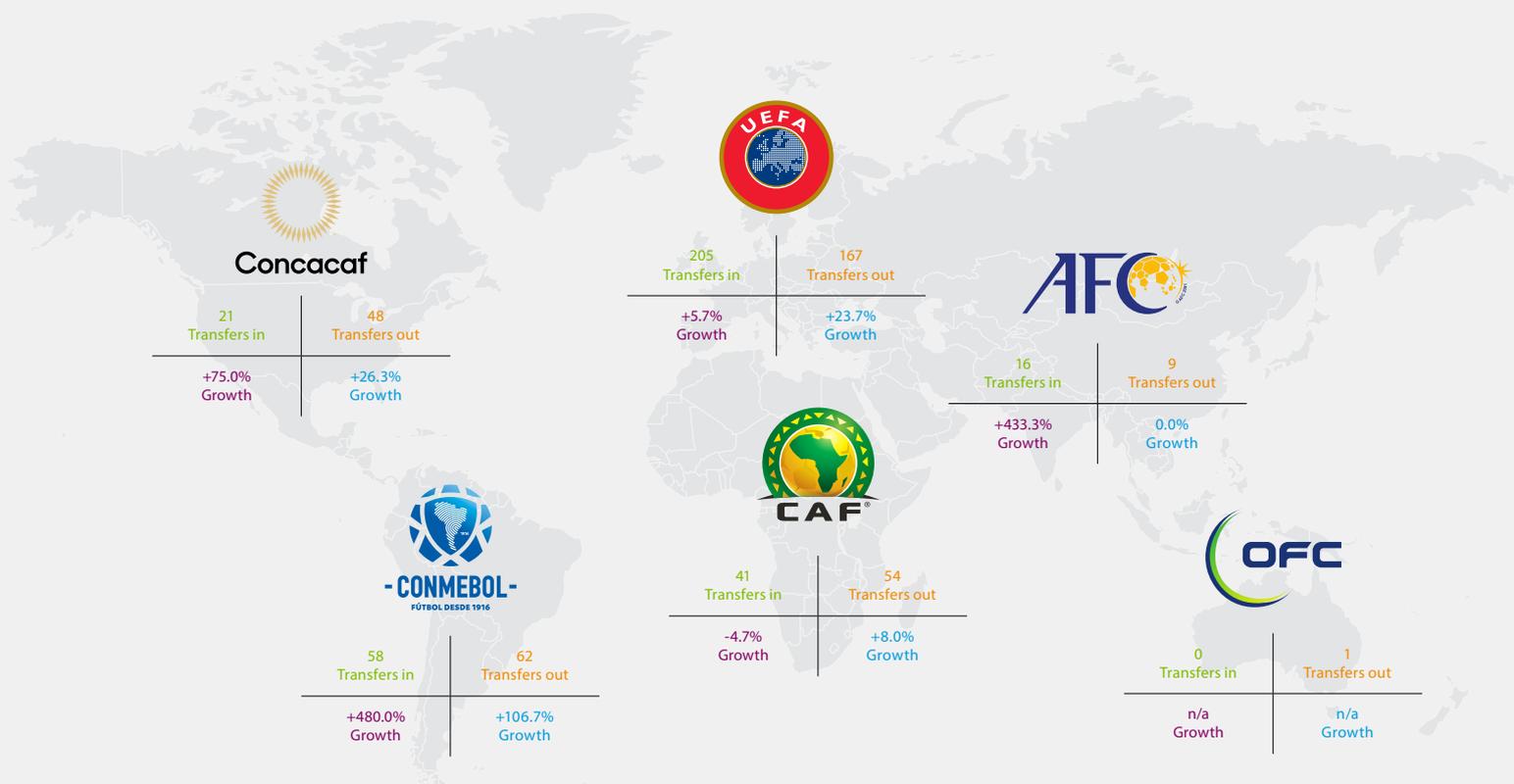
Players aged 18-23 accounted for **48.7%** of all transfers and **54.7%** of the spending on transfer fees



## TRANSFERS BY CONFEDERATION

As can be seen from the figure below, the majority of international transfers of female professional players in January 2023 involved clubs in UEFA (205 incoming and 167 outgoing transfers). However, much of the growth compared to January 2022 can in fact be attributed to increased activity by clubs in other confederations, in particular in CONMEBOL, where the number of incoming transfers increased by almost 500% compared to the equivalent period in 2022.

Figure 11: Number of incoming and outgoing transfers in January 2023 and growth rates compared to January 2022 by confederation



## TOP ASSOCIATIONS

With 35 incoming transfers, clubs from Colombia registered the highest number of new players in January 2023. On the releasing side, both Sweden and the USA were number one, each with 26 outgoing transfers. Even though European clubs still dominated these movements, associations from three other confederations were also among the top five in terms of the number of incoming or outgoing transfers: Colombia and Brazil (both CONMEBOL), the USA (Concacaf) and Morocco (CAF).

Figure 12: Associations featuring in at least one of the top fives by incoming or outgoing transfers in January 2023 (global ranks in parentheses)



# METHODOLOGY



All transfer data provided in this report relates exclusively to international transfers of professional football players within the scope of 11-a-side football.

Transfer data has been analysed for all transfers completed between 1 January 2023 and 31 January 2023. The data was extracted from TMS on 6 February 2023. When making comparisons with previous years, we used the interval from 1 January to the last day of the official registration period of most European associations, i.e. 1 February for 2021 and 31 January for 2019, 2020 and 2022.

All references to transfer fees in this report are to the sum of all fixed, conditional and release (buyout) fees as declared in TMS. All fees are treated as upfront payments for calculation purposes, notwithstanding any instalment plans that may be agreed by clubs. All amounts are automatically converted into USD based on the conversion rate on the day when the transfer instruction is entered in TMS.

The numbers that feature in this report have been rounded.

Ties in graphs showing the top five associations have been broken at random.

We distinguish between four types of international transfers:

- Out of contract: when players who are no longer contractually bound to any former club sign an employment contract with a new club in a different association and no transfer agreement between clubs has been signed.
- Loan: when players are temporarily engaged by a new club: a) on the basis of a loan agreement between the club with which they have an employment contract and a club of another association, during the term of their employment contract with their parent club; or b) when the loan is extended by the new club with the agreement of the parent club.
- Return from loan: when players return to their parent club after a loan spell at another club.
- Permanent: when players are permanently engaged by a new club and a transfer agreement is signed between the new club and the former club, or when a club permanently engages players it has had on loan, with the agreement of the former club.



# DISCLAIMER



The information in this report is based on individual transaction data provided directly by football clubs in TMS. FIFA assumes no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided by the clubs. With regard to any technical references included in this report, please be advised that in the event of any contradiction between this report and the actual text of the relevant regulations, the latter shall always prevail. Equally, this report may not alter existing jurisprudence of the competent decision-making bodies and is without prejudice to any decision that the said bodies might be called upon to pass in the future.

Due to the nature of the TMS database, the presence of pending transfers, the potential cancellation of transfers, and data corrections, numbers may differ from one report to another. In the event of any contradiction between this report and other publications by FIFA, the most recent shall always prevail.

Any views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of FIFA.

## Source of data and preparation of report

The source of all data and information (unless explicitly stated otherwise) is:

FIFA  
Legal Strategic Projects Subdivision  
Legal & Compliance Division  
Zurich, Switzerland

## Data protection

The data contained in TMS and in this review is covered by Swiss data protection law.



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