

Impact of COVID-19 on the Sports Job Market in the United States

Analysis of Full-Time Job Postings on Teamwork Online

Overview

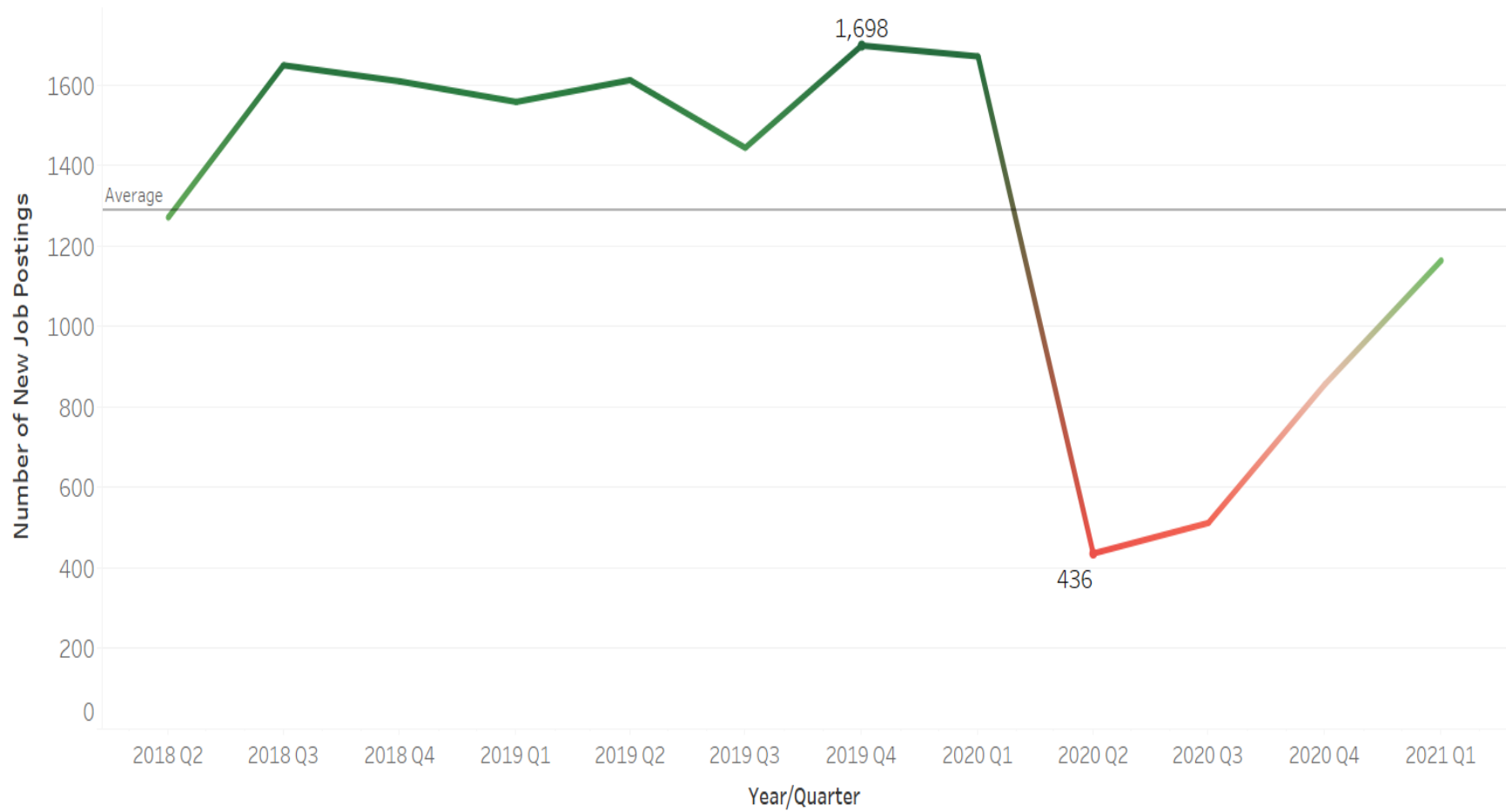
The impact of COVID-19 on the sports job market cannot be understated. The cancellation of sporting events and seasons wreaked havoc on all industry revenue streams, forcing sports properties to take unprecedented measures. Layoffs, furloughs, and salary reductions have been prevalent across the board in the Big 5 professional sports leagues and Power Five intercollegiate athletic departments. New job postings on Teamwork Online also dwindled to a bare minimum in the quarter following the onset of the pandemic. While the sports industry was hit hard in the second quarter of 2020, each subsequent quarter has seen an increase in new job postings, but not yet returning to pre-pandemic levels. Compared to the two previous years, the number of jobs posted in a month drastically decreased from April to January during the pandemic. However, February and March 2021 showed more new job postings than their 2020 and 2019 counterparts. Sales positions decreased relative to postings in other departments during COVID (April 2020-March 2021). Before COVID (March 2018-March 2020) sales accounted for 35% of positions, but only 25% during COVID (-11%). Admin/General Management (+5%), Facility Operations (+4%), and Player Operations (+3%) saw the greatest relative increases.

[Go to interactive visualization of Teamwork Online full-time job postings](#)

Quarterly Job Postings from Q2 2018 to Q1 2021

The impact of the pandemic on new job postings on Teamwork Online was swift and dramatic. For the eight quarters spanning Quarter 2 2018 to Quarter 1 2020, an average of 1,467 new jobs were posted each quarter, ranging from a low of 1,272 in Quarter 2 2018 and a peak of 1,700 in Quarter 4 2019. The impact of COVID-19 on new job postings started to be felt in early April, which corresponded with the start of Quarter 2 2020. Only 437 new jobs were posted in the second quarter of 2020, a 73.9% decrease from the first quarter of the year. However, jobs on the site have rebounded over the past three quarters, nearly reaching the average number of job postings within the data set in Q1 2021. The number of new postings increased 67.2% from Q3 2020 to Q4 2020, and then 36.0% from Q4 2020 to Q1 2021. The visual below displays the total number of new job postings on Teamwork Online by quarter, spanning from Q2 of 2018 through Q1 of 2021.

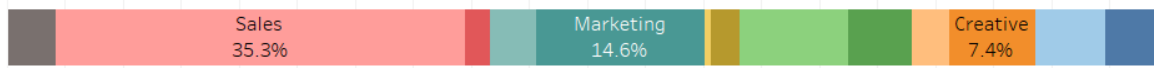
Quarterly Total Job Postings on Teamwork Online from Q2 2018 to Q1 2021



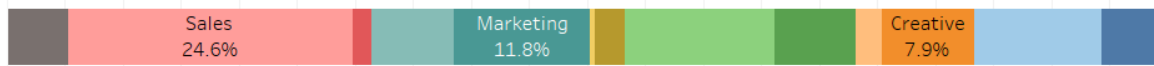
Comparing Job Allocation Before and During COVID-19

Sales positions decreased relative to postings in other departments during COVID (April 2020-March 2021). Before COVID (March 2018-March 2020) sales accounted for 35% of positions, but only 25% during COVID (-11%). Five departments experienced a decrease in job allocation, with Sales (-11%) and Marketing (-3%) seeing the largest departmental decreases. Seven departments experienced an increase in total job allocation, with Admin/General Management (+5%), Facility Operations (+4%), and Player Operations (+3%) seeing the greatest relative increases. This visual shows the change in percent each department accounted for before and during COVID-19.

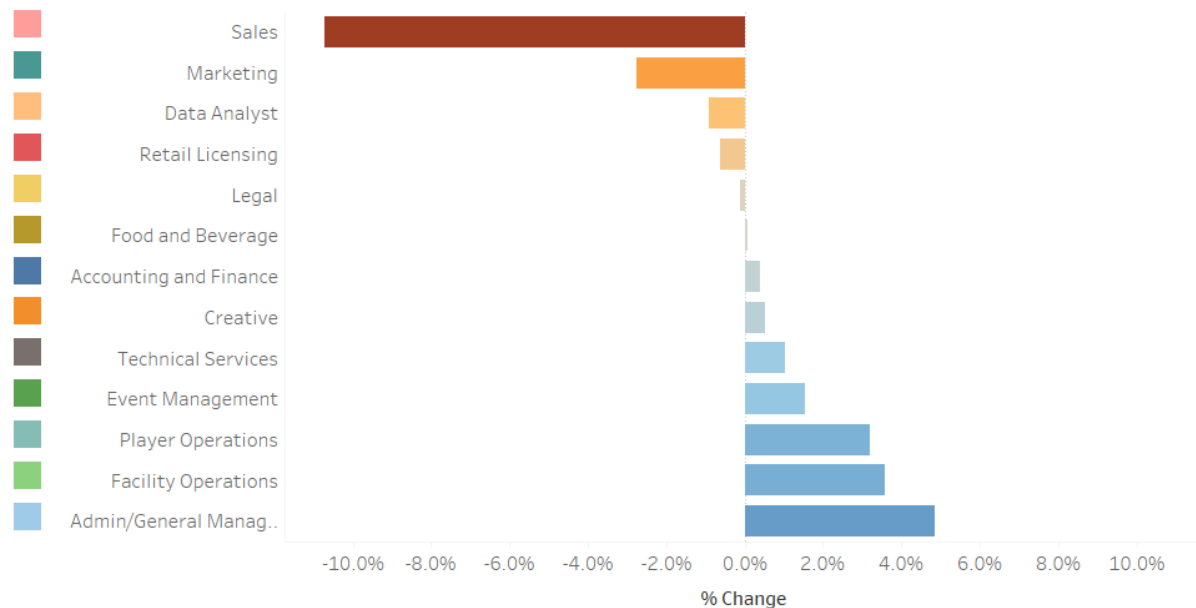
Job Allocation By Department BEFORE COVID-19 (March 2018-March 2020)



Job Allocation By Department DURING COVID-19 (April 2020-March 2021)



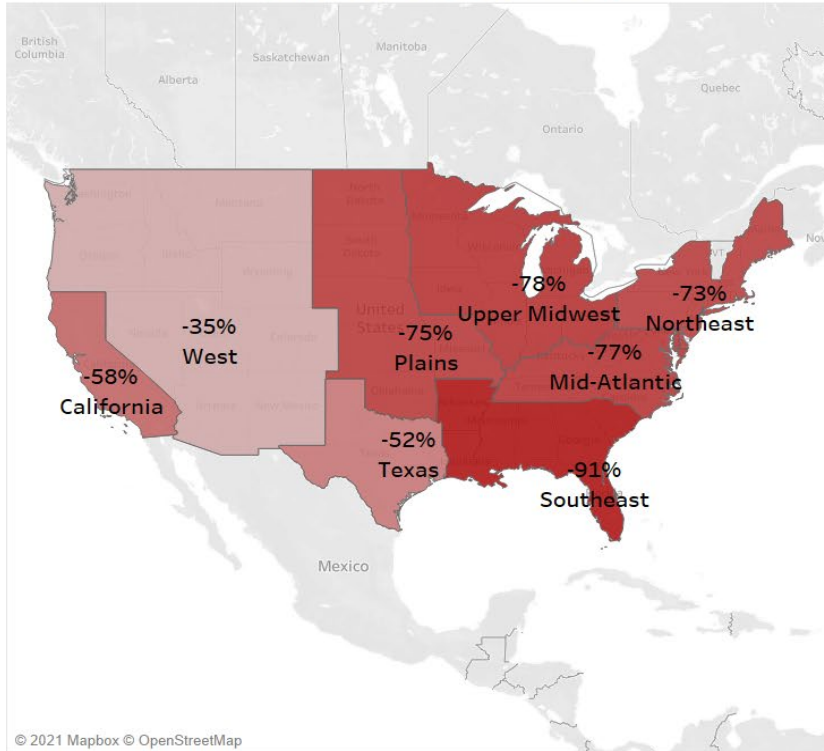
Changes to Jobs Pre- and Post- Pandemic by Department



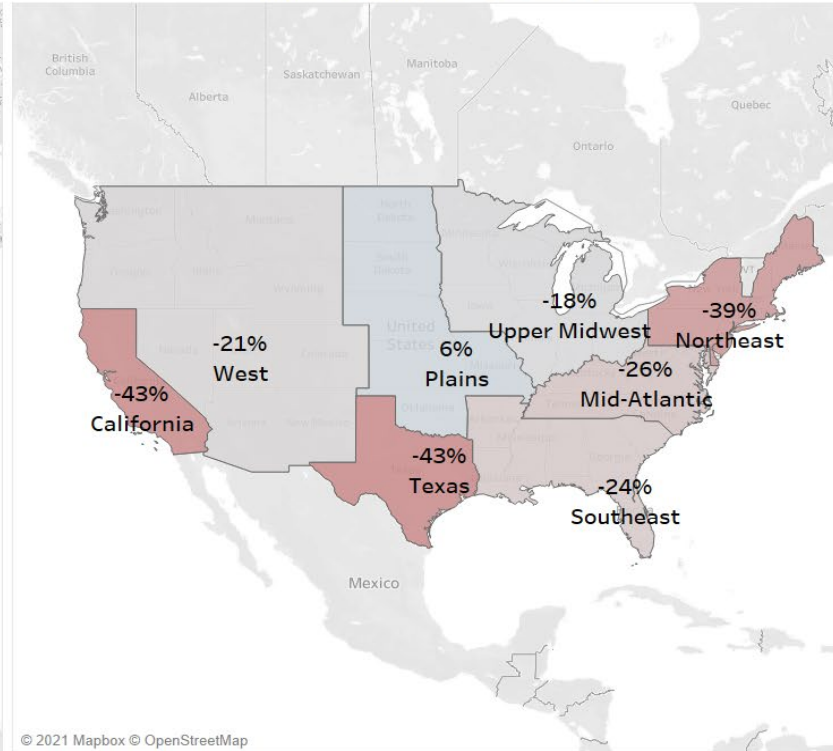
New Job Postings by Region

This visual shows two maps, with the map on the left depicting the percent change in the number of new job postings in the three months post COVID-19 (April-June 2020) by region compared to April-June 2018-19. The job listings decreased significantly, with the Southeast seeing the greatest decline in jobs (-91%). The area least affected during this time was the West (-35%). The map on the right shows the number of new job listings over the last three months (January-March 2021) compared to (January-March 2019-20). The new job listings here only show a slight decline, with the Plains region (+6%) showing an increase. The areas that show the greatest decrease are California and Texas (-43%). Compared to the map on the left, this map is a clear sign that new job listings are starting to revert to their normal numbers pre-pandemic.

Change in New Job Postings in the Three Months Post-COVID-19 (Apr-Jun 2020) by Region Compared to Same Months 2018-2019



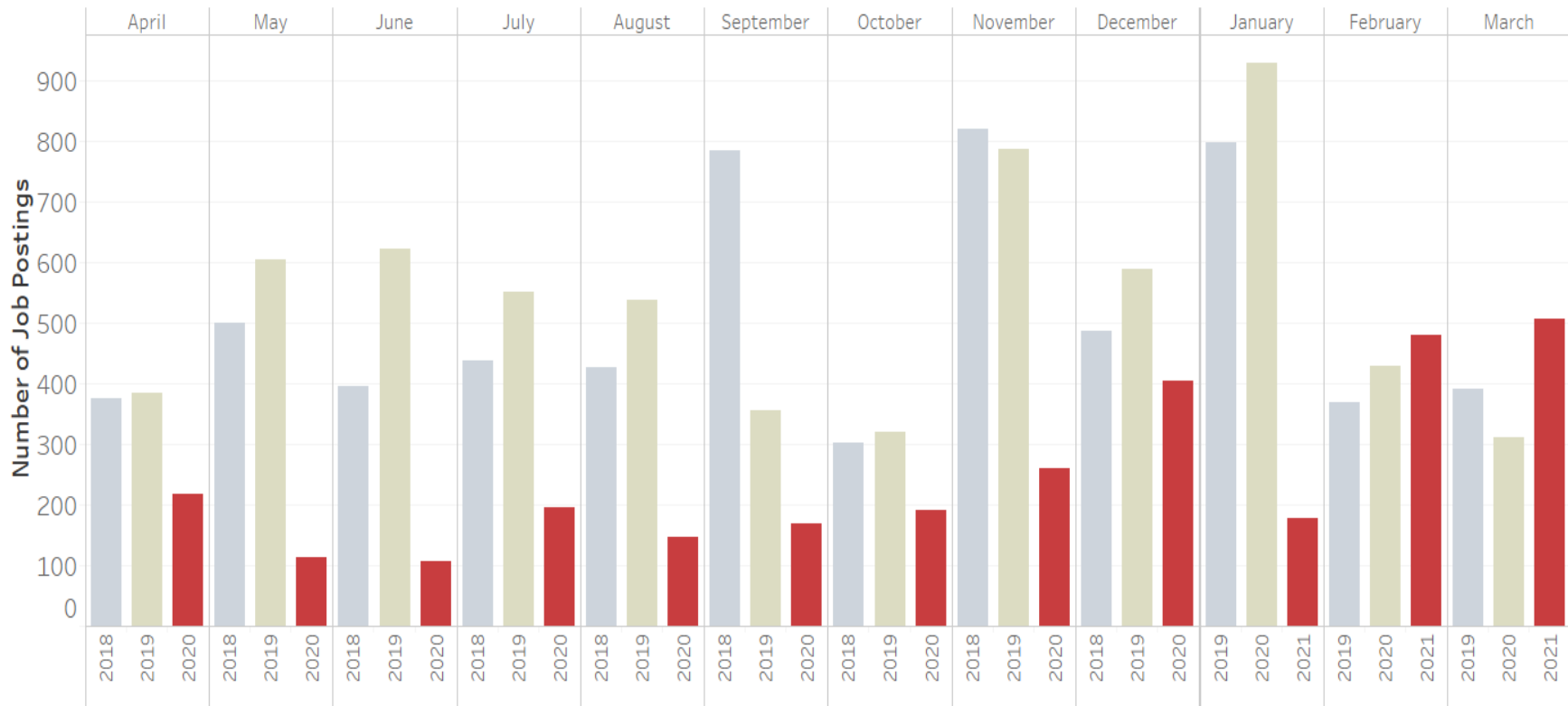
Change in New Job Postings in the Last Three Months (Jan-Mar 2021) by Region Compared to Same Months 2019-2020



Monthly Comparisons Before and During COVID

Compared to the two previous years, the number of jobs posted in a month drastically decreased from April to January during the pandemic. However, February and March 2021 showed more new job postings than their 2020 and 2019 counterparts. Overall, this is showing that the volume of new job postings onto Teamwork Online are not only starting to revert to pre-pandemic levels, but also slightly exceeding the volume of job listings per month compared to years past. The visual below shows the number of job postings by month from April 2018 through March 2021.

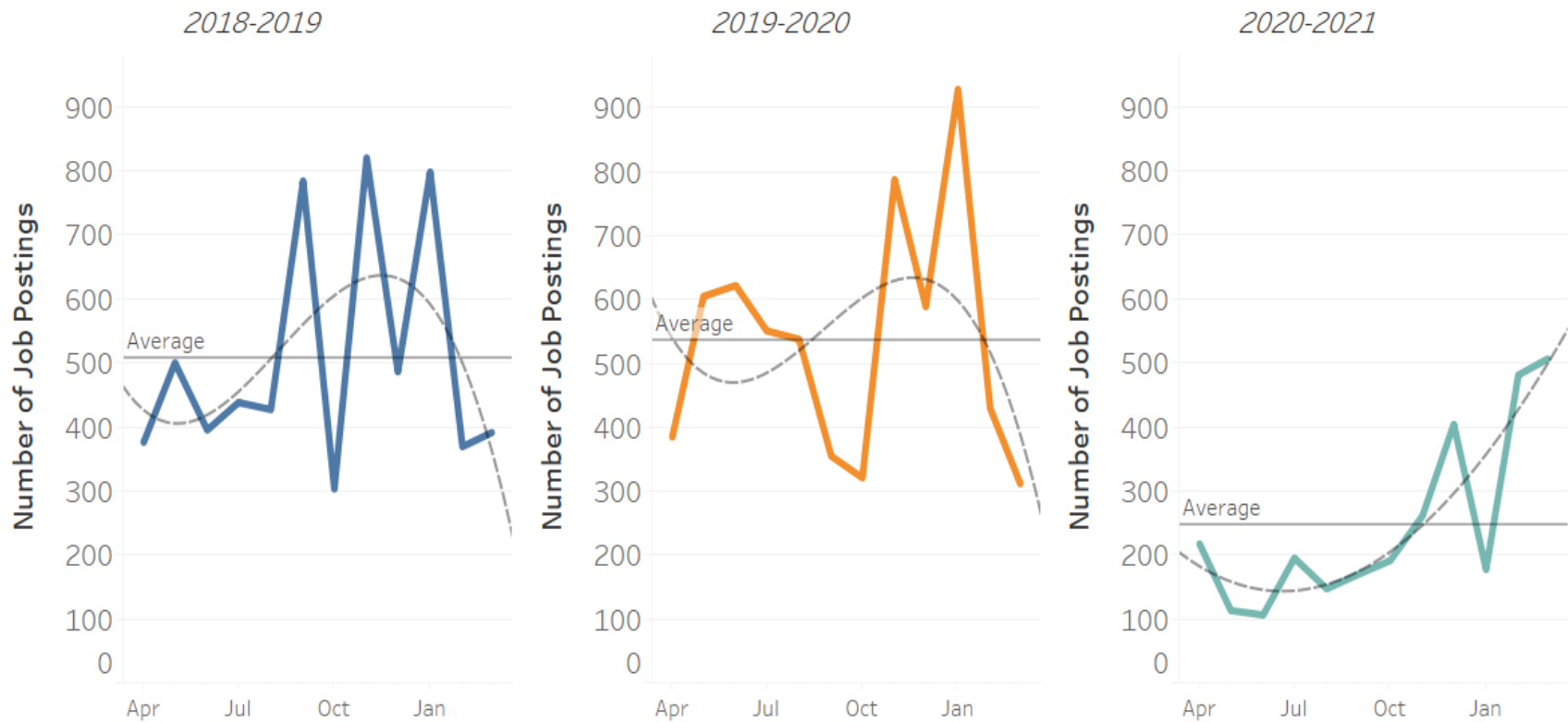
Comparing the Twelve Months Post-COVID-19
Total New Job Postings on Teamwork Online



Comparing April to March Cycle of Job Postings

Compared to the April-March months of the previous two years, these past 12 months (graph on the right) have shown a dramatically different pattern due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2018-19 and 2019-20 cycle shows growth in new job postings from May to January with a steep decline in February and March. In contrast, the 2020-21 cycle showed a continued upward trajectory of new postings starting in July through the end of the cycle in March. This visual displays the typical trends of new job postings on Teamwork Online throughout the yearly cycle.

Comparing the Twelve Months Post-COVID-19
Total New Job Postings on Teamwork Online



Layoffs, Furloughs, and Pay Cuts

Beyond the impact of COVID-19 on new job postings, the pandemic had a significant effect on organizational budgets. An analysis of media reports catalogued the prevalence of layoffs, furloughs, and pay cuts publicly announced across the Big Five professional sports and Power 5 intercollegiate athletic departments. We collected media reports from March to September 2020 and found that at least 42% of Big Five professional sports organizations and 60% of Power 5 college athletic departments engaged in pay cuts, furloughs, or layoffs.

	N	N Affected	Pct. Affected	Pay Cuts	Full-Time Furlough	Full-Time Layoff	Part-Time Layoff
MLB	31	20	65%	7	8	4	3
NBA	30	14	47%	4	2	9	3
NHL	30	21	70%	11	9	9	1
NFL	32	2	7%	2	2	2	1
MLS	26	5	19%	5	1	1	2
Power 5 College Sports	65	39	60%	34	9	11	3
Total	214	101	47%	63	31	36	13

A Note on Methodology

Data was collected from new full-time job postings on Teamwork Online every two weeks from March 15, 2018 to April 30, 2021. Part-time jobs, internships, and professional development and volunteer opportunities were excluded. The process of acquiring this data was done using a python script to scrape details of jobs on the website. The data scraping process starts with using Anaconda Navigator to access Jupyter Notebook. Anaconda Navigator is a desktop graphical user interface (GUI) that allows the user to launch applications and easily manage conda packages, environments, and channels without using command-line commands. The Jupyter Notebook is an open-source web application that allows the creation and sharing of documents that contain live code, equations, visualizations, and narrative text. The python script is comprised of eight separate chunks of code that acquires vital information about each job posting, including job level (entry-level, manager, director, VP), the number of jobs on each page, job category (i.e., marketing, sales), job identification number, sport, position, location, result name, unique result URL, and date for each job. The final chunk scrapes all the job levels using a for loop and saves it to a comma-separated values file (.csv). Duplicate job entries are removed by comparing the unique job identification number. Only the original entry is retained in the data set. The final step is to add the following information to the .csv file for each job using a defined data entry protocol: department, type of organization, sport, and league.

It is important to recognize this methodology's limitations in drawing conclusions about jobs in the sports industry. First, not all jobs in the sports industry are posted on Teamwork Online. Other sports job websites exist like Work in Sports and Front Office Sports, and jobs are also commonly posted on LinkedIn. However, it is reasonable to assume that Teamwork Online is an industry leader and recognized by many as

a reputable source of information regarding job opportunities. Second, changes in organizations that contract with Teamwork Online to post jobs could account for some year-to-year changes in job postings. Third, multiple people may be hired from one job posting. For example, one job posting could result in the hiring of ten inside sales reps. Thus, the metric used herein is job postings, not the number of people hired.

The sources that were used to collect data on job losses and pay cuts were the EBSCO Database, Google News Search, Feedly, and news outlets from the cities where the teams are located. There were four main categories of job loss/cuts that were classified as Pay Cuts, Full-time Furloughs, Full-time Layoffs, and Part-time Layoffs. Pay cuts explained that employees were given a reduction in wages but retained their job roles in that organization. Full-time furloughs explained employees who were given less hours to work in that organization which then decreased their wages. Full-time layoffs described full-time salaried employees who lost their jobs and exited the organization. Part-time layoffs explained game day workers who lost their jobs who were on an hourly wage base. The date of the news posting was monitored as well so we had an accurate timeline on when the job losses occurred. The timeline of the research goes from March of 2020 through September of 2020.

Recommended Citation

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<https://blogs.iu.edu/iupuisii/2021/05/03/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-sports-job-market-in-the-united-states/>