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It's All About the Money: Decoding Why Players Engage in Long Sessions Without Breaks

Tracy Schrans

President, Focal Research Consultants

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Overview

- Many play practices and characteristics are understood to be indicators of risk.
- Regulations and safer gambling policies encourage and/or mandate players to engage in certain practices to reduce risk and harm.
- Do these practice preferentially target at-risk or high-risk players?
- What are the implications for delivery of actions or messaging?

Scope – International Collaborative Study

- Secondary analysis of casino slots/EGM datasets
- Co-funded by National Research Council of Canada
- Four countries (UK, AU, NZ, CA)
- Player session data (12 months)
 - 600,000+ slots players
 - Player member surveys (n=12,000+; PGSI & FLAGs)
- ~ 50 million data points



Current Assumptions

Problem: Long play sessions without breaks = Harm

Solution = Introduce breaks to limit continuous play

Why do we believe this?

Evidence Base

- General population studies
- Prevalence studies
- Treatment population studies



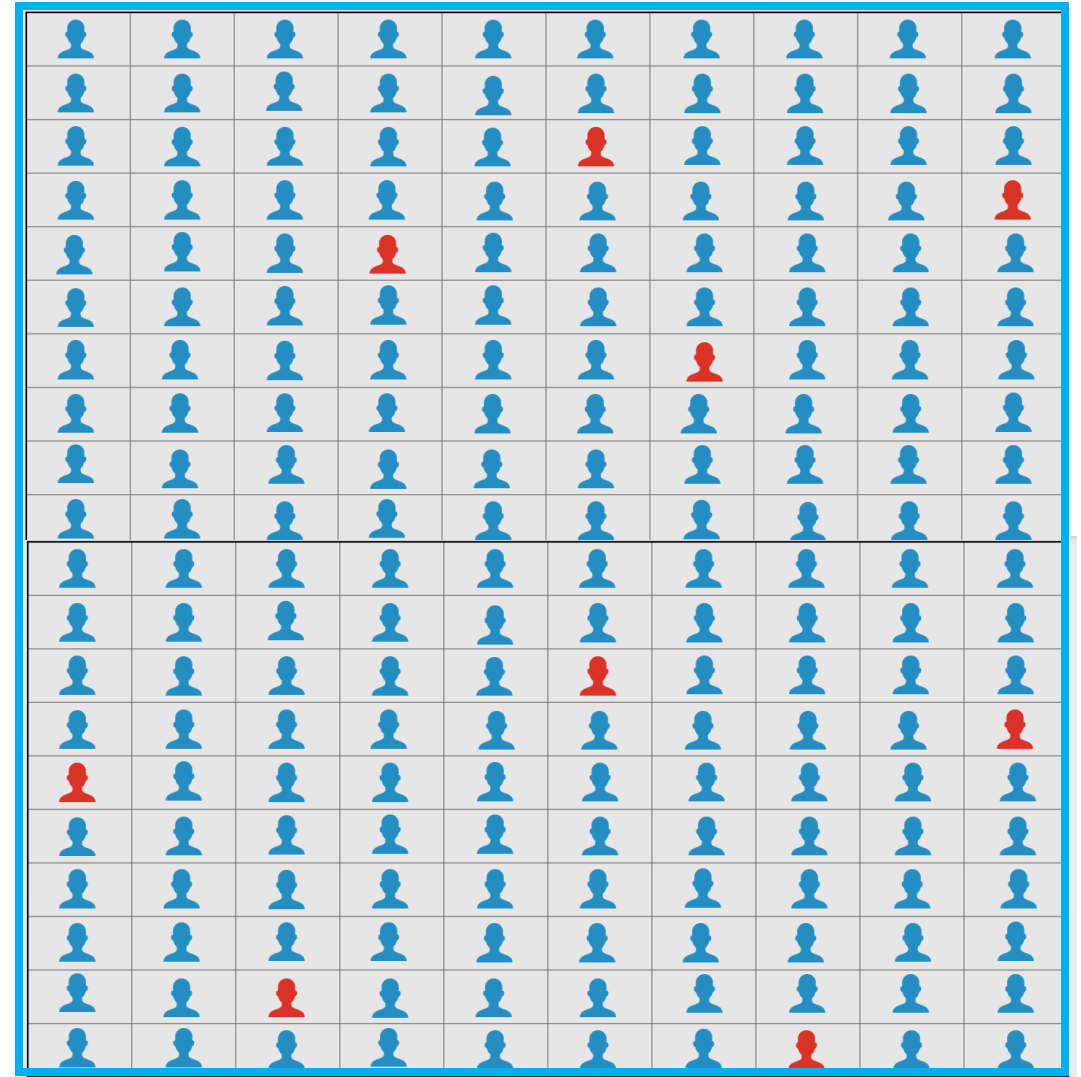
Best Predictors for Finding High-Risk and Problem Gamblers:

1. Product Type
2. Frequency of Play

Sampling Bias

- Low base rate in general population for play of high-risk products and regular players
- Comparison is typically made between casual/recreational gamblers versus High-Risk-PG gamblers.

Annual Active Players



Distribution of Risk and Problem Gambling

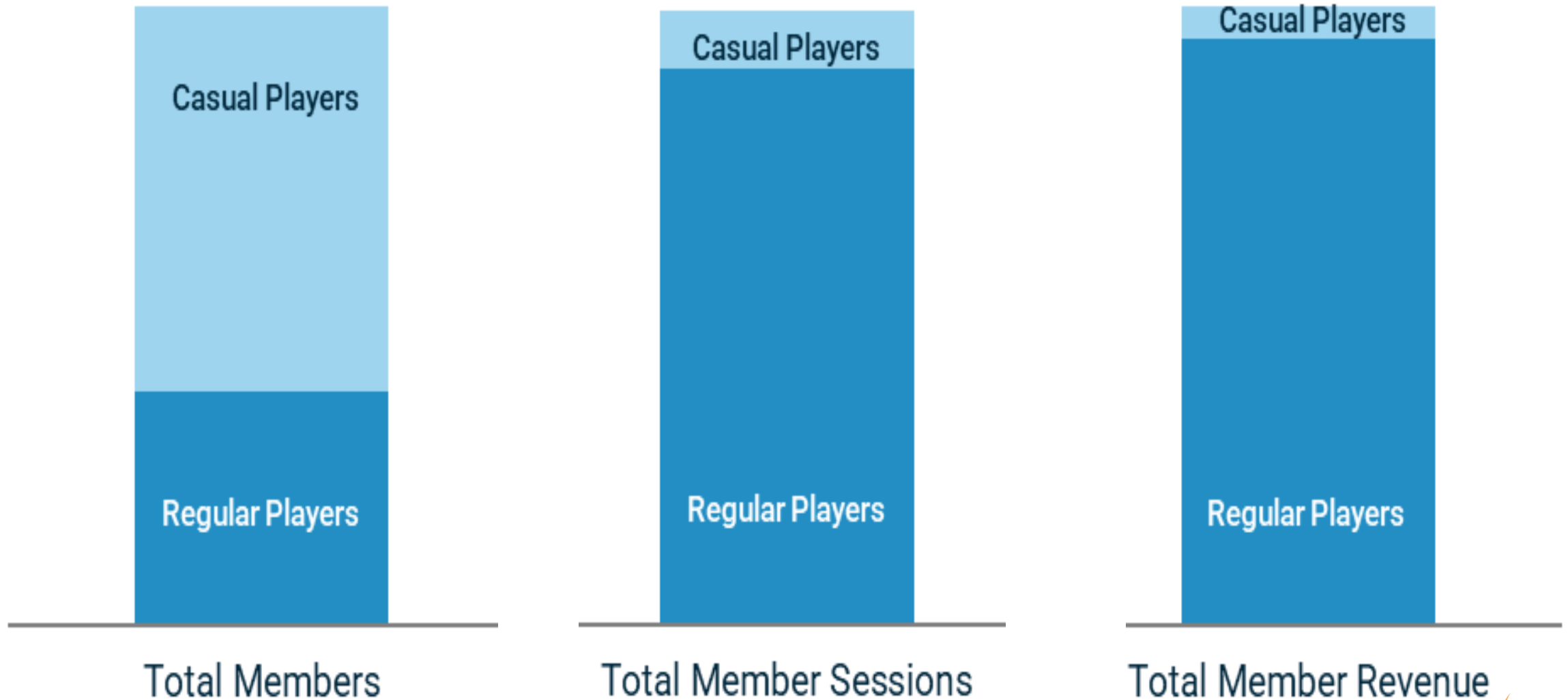
Casual (e.g., 1-5 days per year)

Regular (6+ days)



Frequency of Casino Slot/EGM Play

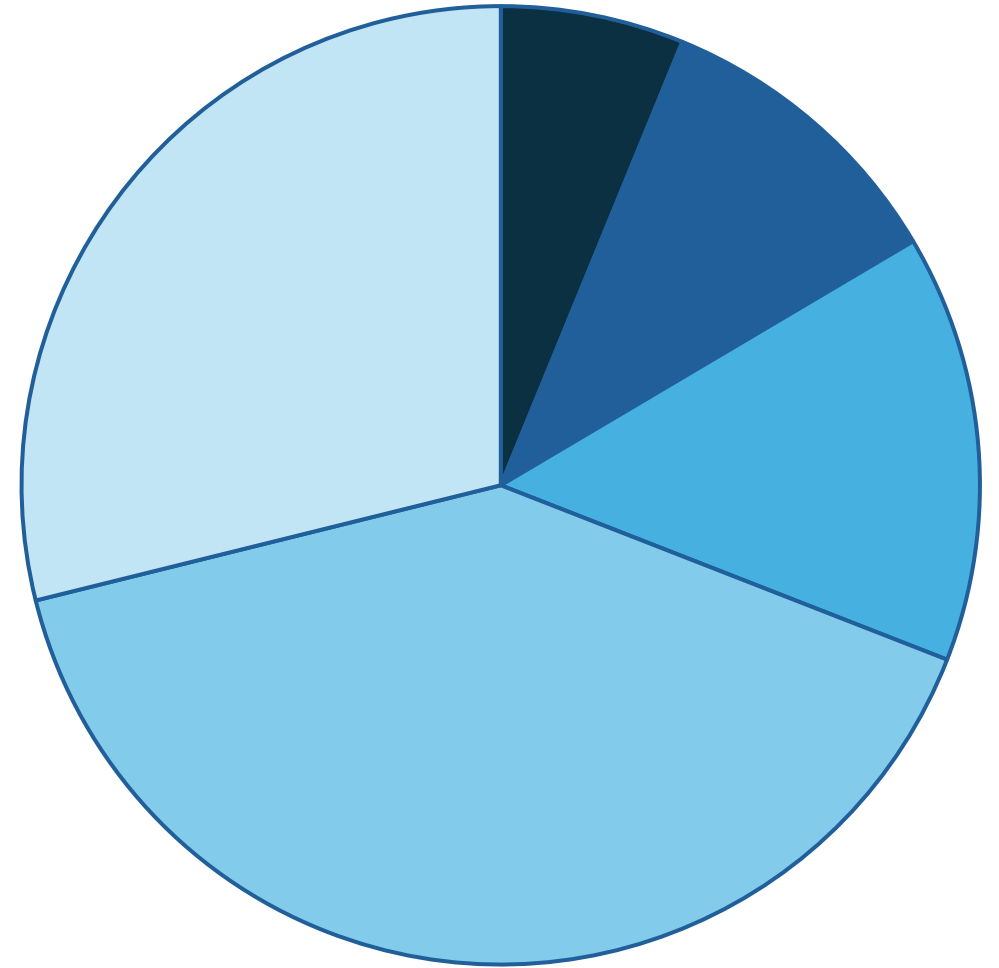
Casual versus Regular Impacts Member Customers



Most Regular Players are Not PGs

- Minority score for problem gambling
- Typically, over half are at low and no-risk.

Need other ways to find risky play patterns among regular players.



Behavioral Keystones

Player Control

1. What to play

2. When to play

3. How much to wager

4. How fast to wager

5. When to stop

Mediating Factors

Examples:

- Resources (e.g., money, time)
- Accessibility
- Game types
- Pay-outs
- Regulations
- Use of tools

Outcomes

Frequency

Expenditure

Bet Rate

Intensity

Length of Play

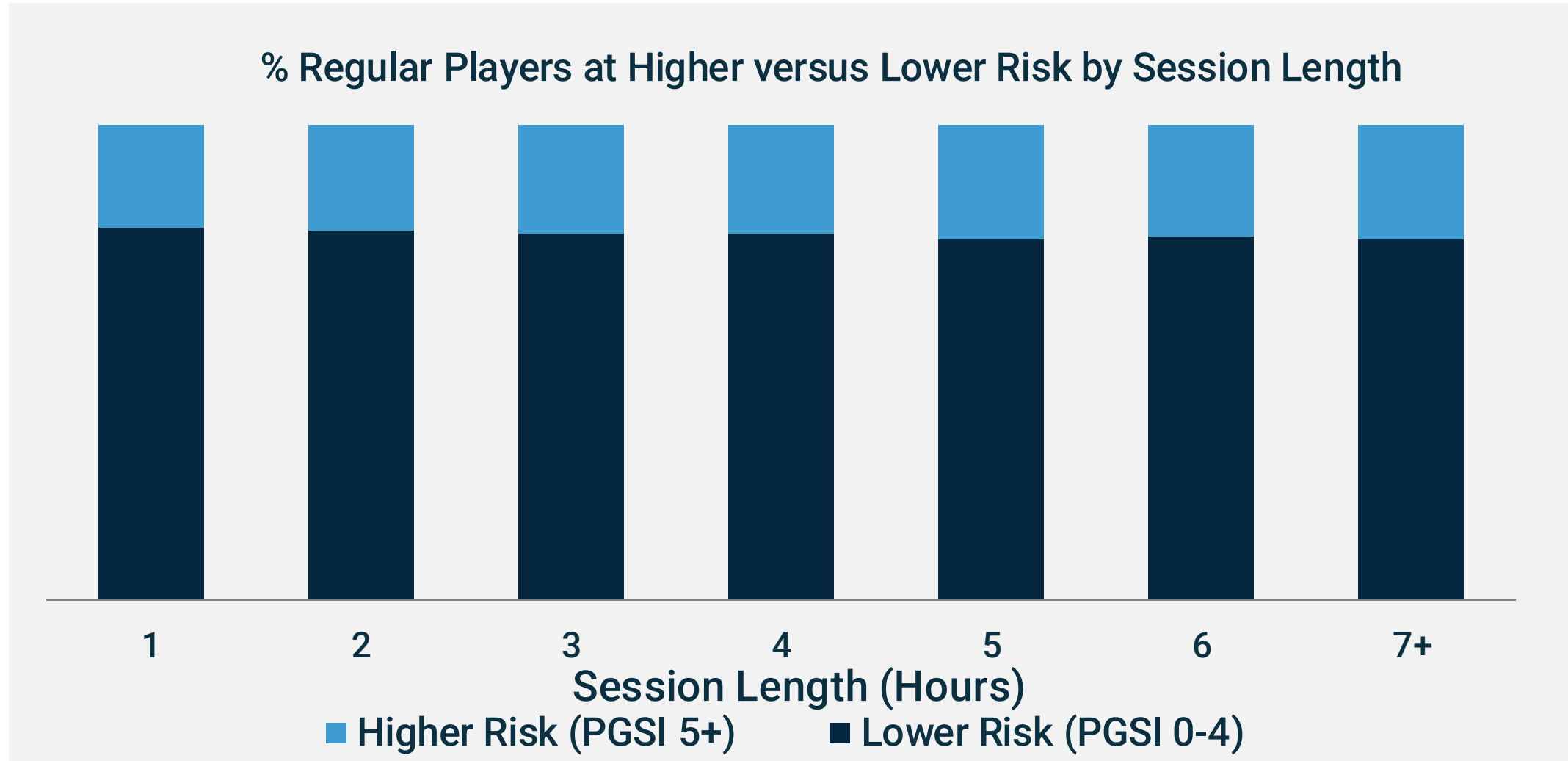
Exploratory Analysis

- Data sets were first converted into sessions
- Generated for examining results on a per player and per session basis.
- Compared session outcomes between players who stopped versus continued play across hourly intervals.

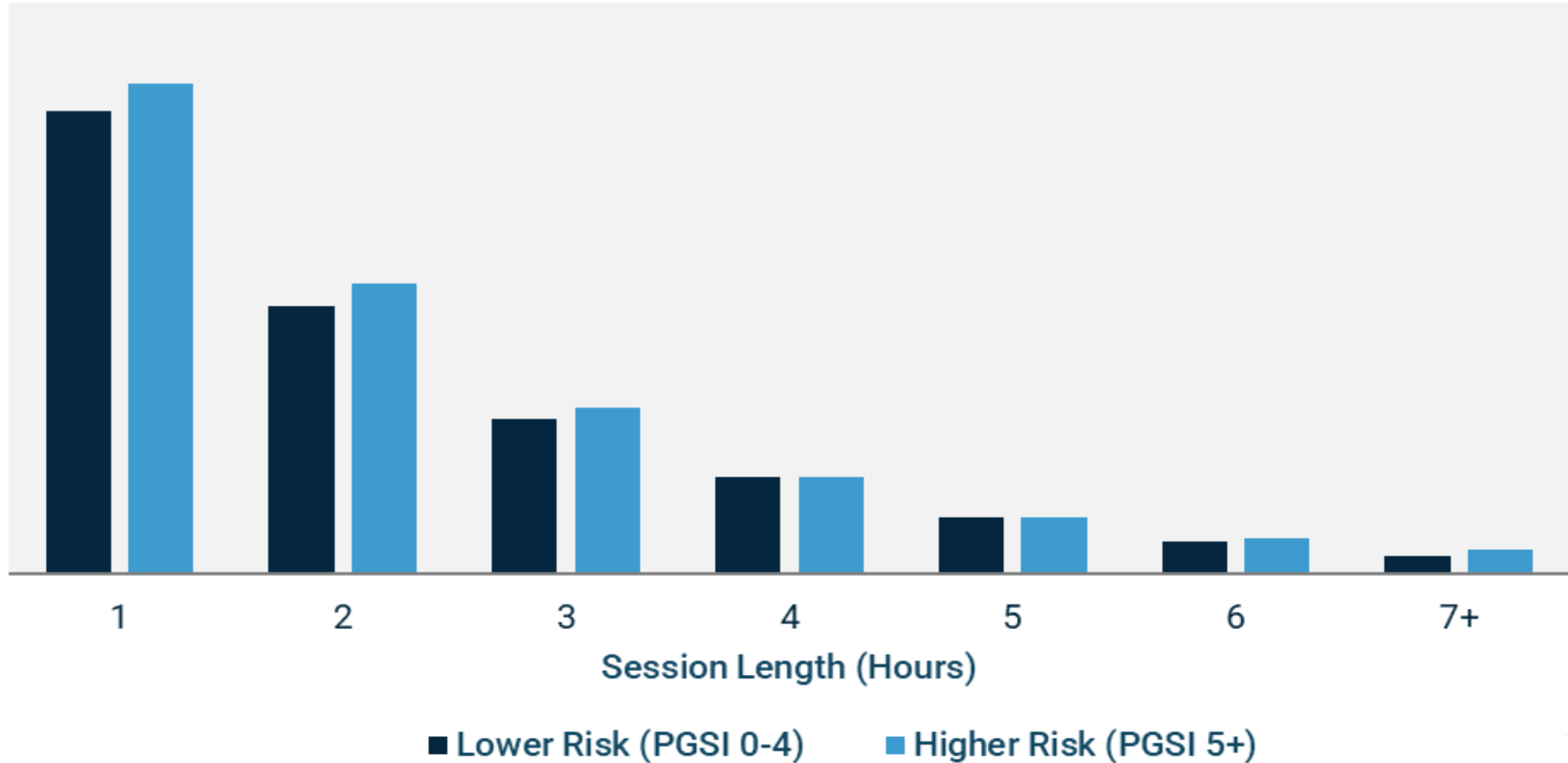
No difference in frequency or session length by player

Risk Category for Regular Players	Average Number of Sessions per Month	Avg Session Length (Hours)
No Risk	3.4	2.8
Low Risk	3.5	3.1
Moderate Risk	3.7	3.2
High-Risk	3.5	3.1
Problem	3.9	2.9
Baseline	3.5 Sessions	3.0 Hours

No Optimal Session Length to Identify Risk



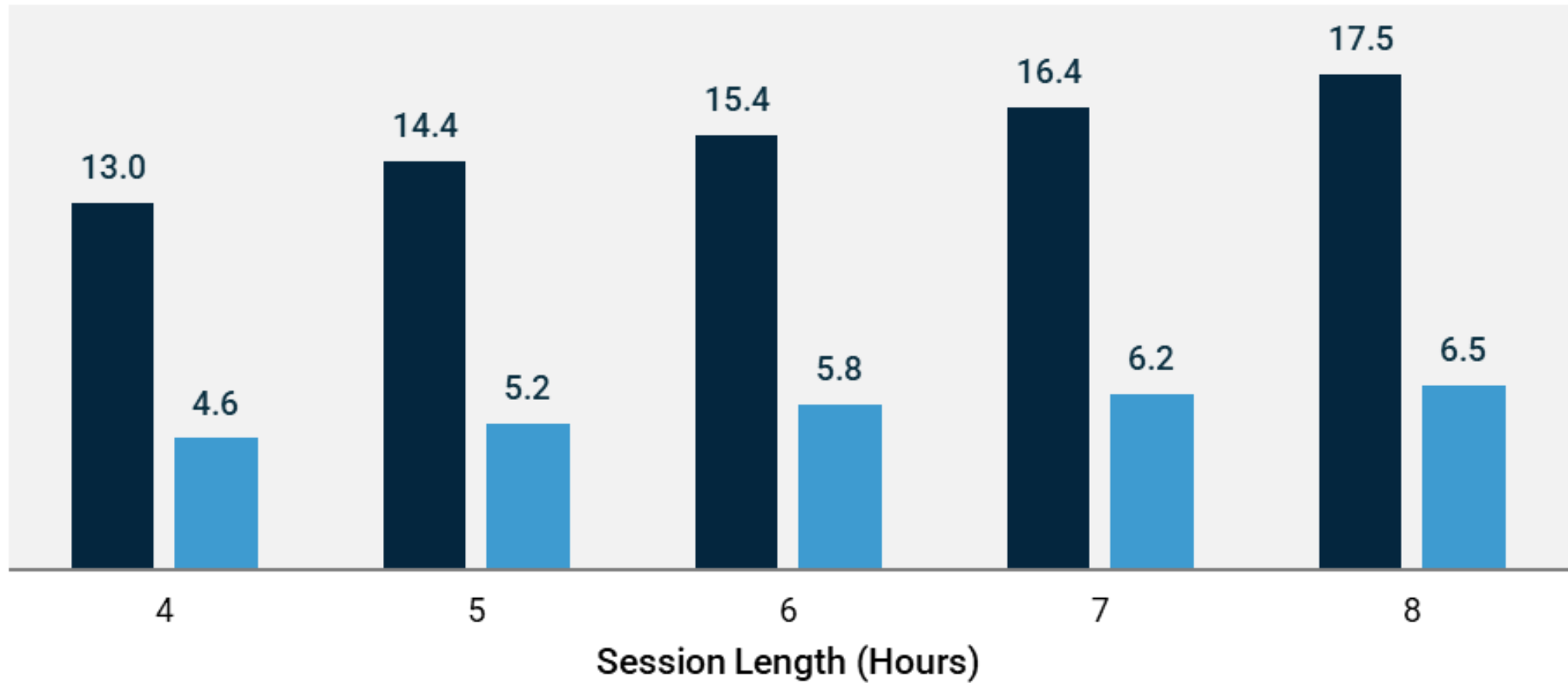
Higher and Lower Risk Players equally likely to engage in long continuous sessions of play



Mediating Factors

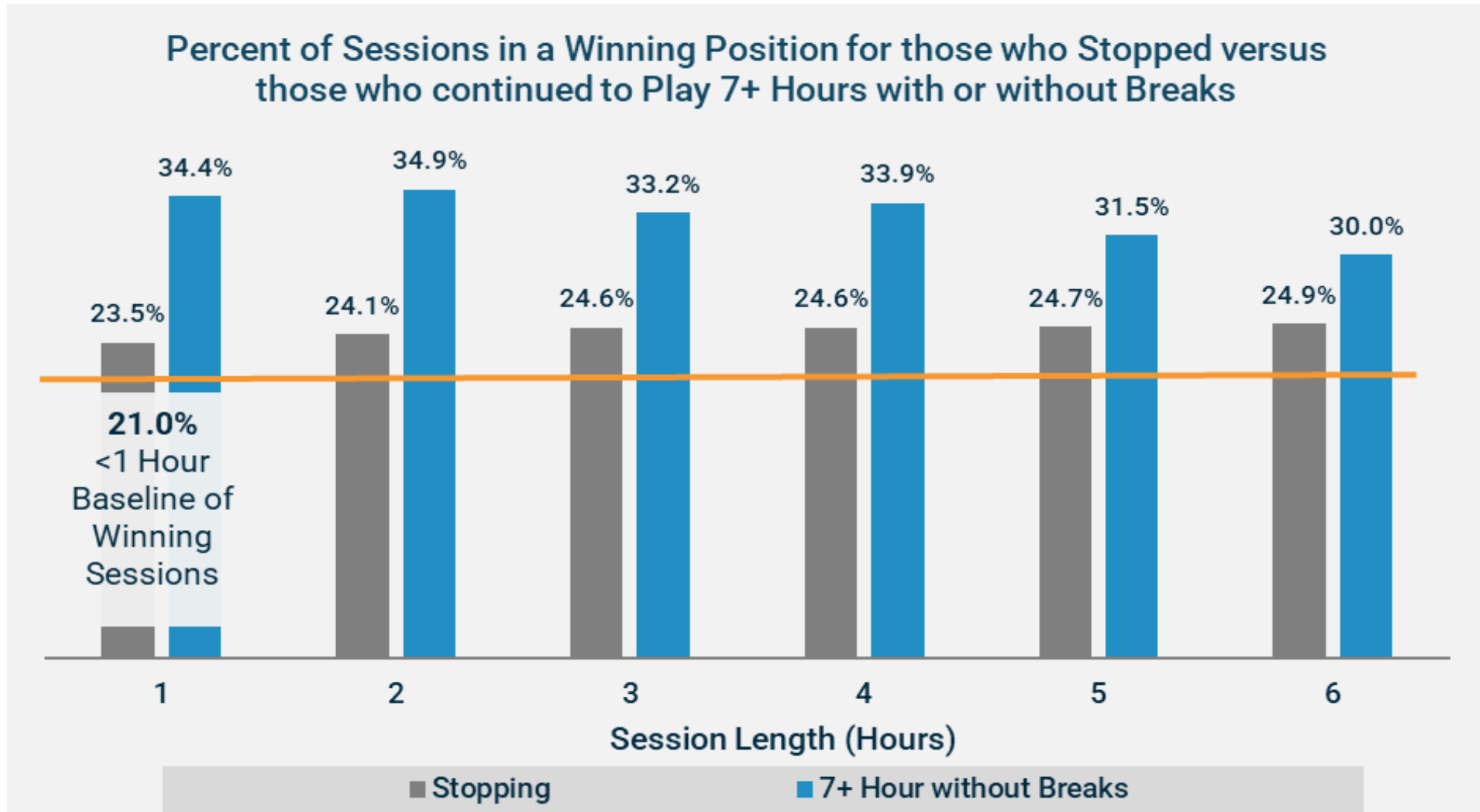
- Examined win/loss position, rate of return, and machine session activity on continuous play decisions within a single play session.

Play fewer machines on average

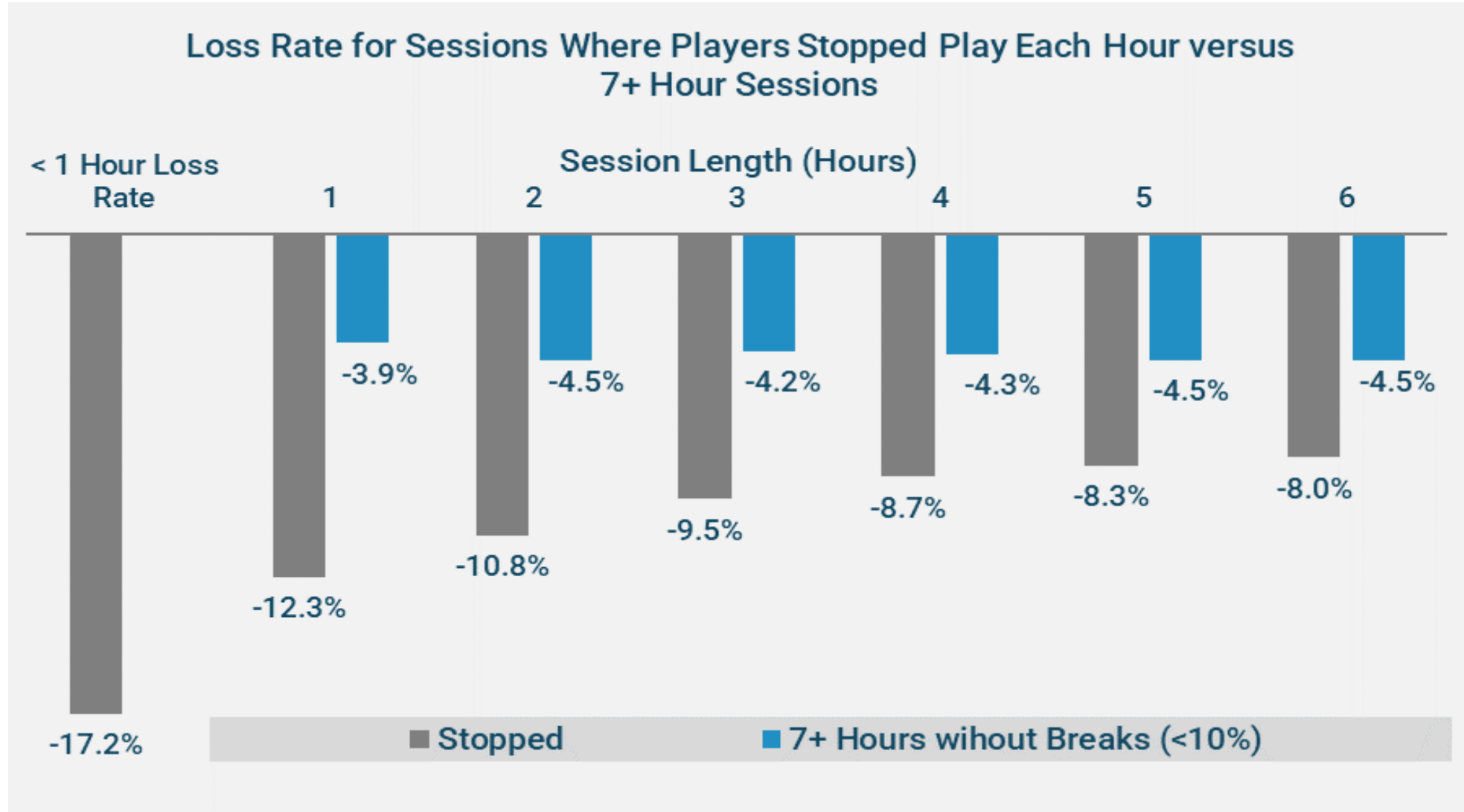


■ With Breaks (>10%) ■ Without Breaks (<10%)

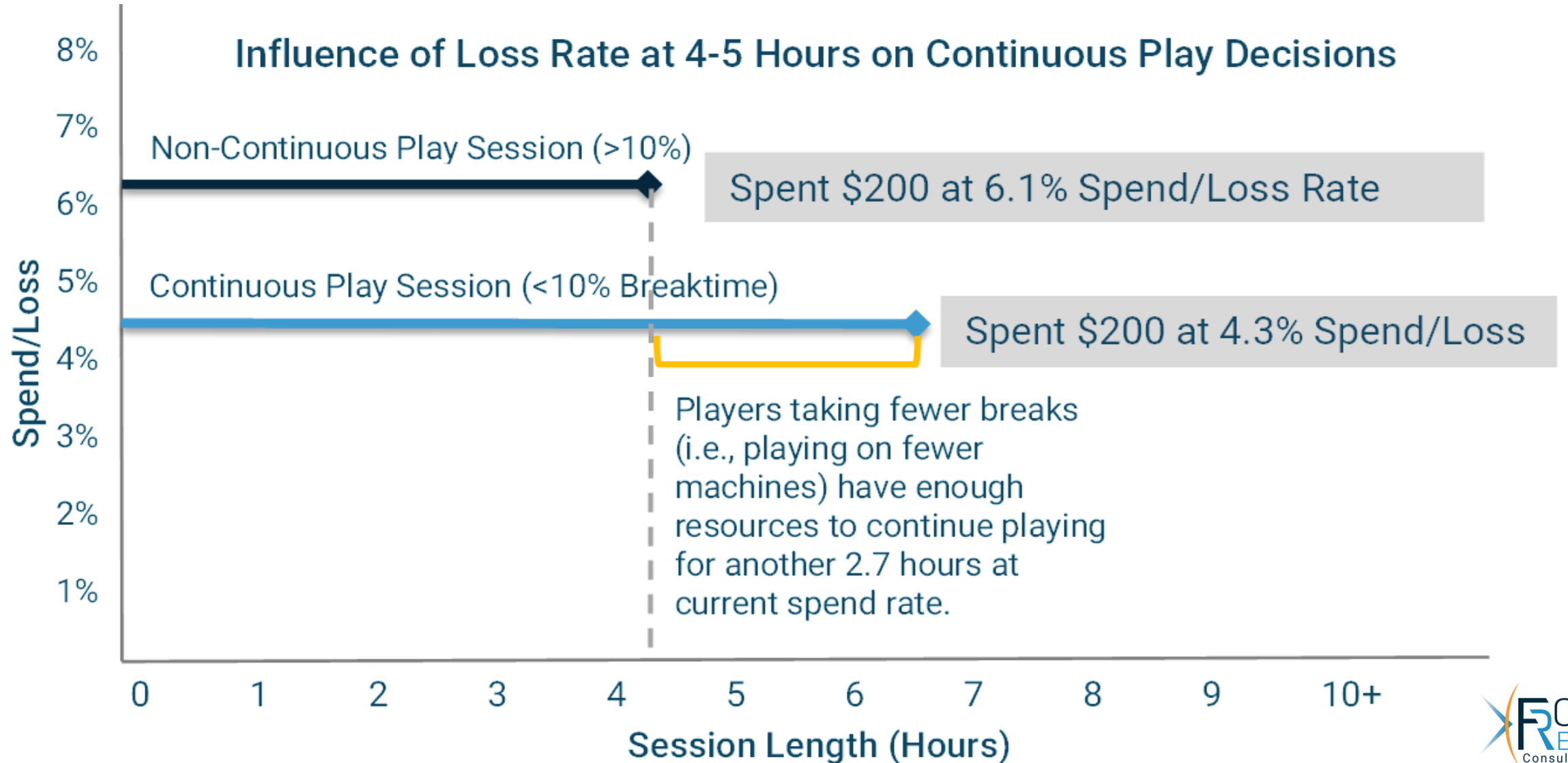
More likely to be in a winning position



Overall have lower loss rates



A lower spend or loss rate means that a player can play longer for the same amount of money



Key Findings for Long Continuous Play

Among Regular Players

- No difference in session length or frequency by risk
- Long continuous session occurred randomly
- Most of those engaging in long continuous sessions will score at lower risk levels
- Related to winning and resources
 - Early wins
 - Reduced loss rates
 - Play on fewer machines
- Associated with increases in play intensity not harm

Implications

- **Long play sessions with fewer breaks occur randomly and are related to customer resources and winning.**
- **Winning appears to pose increased risk for some customers.**
Long continuous sessions are therefore a good proxy for finding those who are likely to be winning so staff can deliver targeted relevant messaging.
- **Targeting safer gambling actions based on continuous play may be helpful for preventative purposes to strategically counter the impact of wins in triggering risky play practices.**

Implications

- **Most triggering events will involve lower risk players for prevention.** Goal is to deliver timely, meaningful messages in a customized and efficient manner to normalize interactions and safer gambling support for all customers.
- **Tailoring messaging to acknowledge when players are in a winning position.** Messages focusing on the random nature of slot machines outcomes or encouraging players to ‘walk away a winner’ may resonate most with those having long continuous sessions.
- **Breaks versus Stopping.** Is taking a break helpful in this situation?

Thank you.

Questions or comments?

Tracy Schrans | Focal Research Consultants
tschrans@focalresearch.com

Co-Investigators:

Dr. Tony Schellinck | Focal Research Consultants

Dr. Melissa Salmon | Focal Research Consultants

Sophie Wang | Focal Research Consultants

