



# #SPORTONSOCIAL

League Table 2021

5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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**say hello!**

# welcome to the #SportOnSocial League Table 2021

**Jonny Murch**

CEO, Redtorch



“

*To their enormous credit, IFs managed to increase overall fan numbers.*

”

Welcome to the 5th edition of the **#SportOnSocial** League Table – our best ever!

It reviews the social media performance of Olympic International Federations (IFs) throughout a Covid-hit 2020.

Yes, it was a very challenging year. Most event calendars were cancelled or – as with the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games – postponed.

As a result, content production and engagement levels were down compared with previous years.

As the League Table shows, however, the news was by no means all gloomy.

To their enormous credit, IFs managed to increase overall fan numbers. They did so by adapting, maximising archive video, working more closely with athletes, delivering virtual events, and being increasingly creative in their output.

Moreover, with Tokyo 2020 on the horizon and Beijing 2022 just round the corner, positivity is growing.

In a rapidly changing and somewhat uncertain world, we share your belief that the positive role of IFs on social media is more important than ever.

It will continue to give people hope and inspiration during the current year and into the future.

We do hope you find the League Table useful and informative.

# our methodology

## how we determined the ranking

The **#SportOnSocial** League Table 2021\* ranks every Olympic International Federation (IF) by performance across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

To determine the rankings, our proprietary **#SportOnSocial** Tracker analysed the primary social media pages and handles of all Olympic IFs, as well as the active pages and handles of their specific disciplines and World Championships.

The following metrics were analysed:

- **total fans**
- **absolute growth**
- **growth rate**
- **engagement rate\*\***
- **total engagements**
- **engagements per post**
- **total views**
- **views per video**

- Insights gathered from last year's **#SportOnSocial** Survey enabled us to weight each social media channel as follows:
  - Facebook (30%)
  - Instagram (30%)
  - YouTube (20%)
  - Twitter (20%)
- Notes
  - The analysis of open-source data meant it is not possible to determine whether engagements and views were organic or paid
  - Data correct as of January 2021
  - Instagram Stories and Instagram Reels have not been included in the Report
  - An overview of TikTok and Weibo is given in the Report – they have not been included in the rankings as most IFs are not active on either platform

\*the League Table does not include the International Golf Federation (IGF) as its channels were inactive in 2020

\*\*engagement rate = no. of post engagements divided by no. of fans

DISCLAIMER: Redtorch cannot guarantee the accuracy of analysis of #SportOnSocial and disclaims all warranties – either express or implied – including warranties for merchantability, and fitness for any particular purpose

# #SportOnSocial

## League Table 2021

| International Federation |  | 2021 | 2020 | change | International Federation |   | 2021 | 2020 | change |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|--------|--------------------------|---|------|------|--------|
| <b>Volleyball World</b>  | Volleyball World                                 | 1    | 3    | 2 ▲    | <b>FIH</b>               | International Hockey Federation                 | 21   | 16   | -5 ▼   |
| <b>BWF</b>               | Badminton World Federation                       | 2    | 4    | 2 ▲    | <b>IIHF</b>              | International Ice Hockey Federation             | 22   | 22   | - -    |
| <b>World Athletics</b>   | World Athletics                                  | 3    | 5    | 2 ▲    | <b>WT</b>                | World Taekwondo                                 | 23   | 24   | 1 ▲    |
| <b>FIFA</b>              | International Federation of Association Football | 4    | 6    | 2 ▲    | <b>WS</b>                | World Sailing                                   | 24   | 27   | 3 ▲    |
| <b>FIBA</b>              | International Basketball Federation              | 5    | 1    | -4 ▼   | <b>World Rowing</b>      | World Rowing                                    | 25   | 26   | 1 ▲    |
| <b>ITTF</b>              | International Table Tennis Federation            | 6    | 7    | 1 ▲    | <b>WCF</b>               | World Curling Federation                        | 26   | 28   | 2 ▲    |
| <b>World Rugby</b>       | World Rugby                                      | 7    | 2    | -5 ▼   | <b>ISSF</b>              | International Shooting Sport Federation         | 27   | 31   | 4 ▲    |
| <b>UCI</b>               | International Cycling Union                      | 8    | 13   | 5 ▲    | <b>IWF</b>               | International Weightlifting Federation          | 28   | 14   | -14 ▼  |
| <b>UWW</b>               | United World Wrestling                           | 9    | 11   | 2 ▲    | <b>FIE</b>               | International Fencing Federation                | 29   | 29   | - -    |
| <b>FEI</b>               | International Federation for Equestrian Sports   | 10   | 8    | -2 ▼   | <b>WBSC</b>              | World Baseball Softball Confederation           | 30   | NEW  | - -    |
| <b>FIG</b>               | International Gymnastics Federation              | 11   | 20   | 9 ▲    | <b>IHF</b>               | International Handball Federation               | 31   | 19   | -12 ▼  |
| <b>ITF</b>               | International Tennis Federation                  | 12   | 18   | 6 ▲    | <b>AIBA</b>              | International Boxing Association                | 32   | 23   | -9 ▼   |
| <b>FIS</b>               | International Ski Federation                     | 13   | 15   | 2 ▲    | <b>World Triathlon</b>   | World Triathlon                                 | 33   | 25   | -8 ▼   |
| <b>ISU</b>               | International Skating Union                      | 14   | 12   | -2 ▼   | <b>IBSF</b>              | International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation | 34   | 34   | - -    |
| <b>FINA</b>              | International Swimming Federation                | 15   | 10   | -5 ▼   | <b>ICF</b>               | International Canoe Federation                  | 35   | 30   | -5 ▼   |
| <b>IJF</b>               | International Judo Federation                    | 16   | 9    | -7 ▼   | <b>FIL</b>               | International Luge Federation                   | 36   | 32   | -4 ▼   |
| <b>WKF</b>               | World Karate Federation                          | 17   | NEW  | - -    | <b>World Skate</b>       | World Skate                                     | 37   | NEW  | - -    |
| <b>IBU</b>               | International Biathlon Union                     | 18   | 21   | 3 ▲    | <b>ISA</b>               | International Surfing Association               | 38   | NEW  | - -    |
| <b>World Archery</b>     | World Archery                                    | 19   | 17   | -2 ▼   | <b>UIPM</b>              | World Pentathlon                                | 39   | 33   | -6 ▼   |
| <b>IFSC</b>              | International Federation of Sport Climbing       | 20   | NEW  | - -    |                          |   |      |      |        |



**Ollie Davis**  
Head of Insight

“

*The postponement of events had a huge impact on overall performance. Nonetheless, many IFs were able to work more closely with athletes to engage fans. Here are my headlines from the Report.*

”

## Ollie's headlines

### Volleyball World ranked #1 overall

while also climbing to #1 on Twitter and #1 on Instagram through an analytics-driven, agile content strategy that incorporated players and influencers

### World Athletics remained #1 on YouTube

thanks to substantial fan growth coupled with high-performing archive content and the launch of 'The Ultimate Garden Clash'

### WKF highest-ranked new entrant

1 of 5 new Olympic sports included in the League Table for the first time – and ranked #17 overall

### BWF ranked #1 on Facebook

with a 23% growth rate, over 10m engagements and 358m video views. Achieved through an effective mix of UGC, an extensive Badminton archive, and involving fans in the content creation process

### FIG biggest climber

jumped 9 places to #11 overall significant growth achieved across social media by promoting all disciplines – focussing on historical events, athlete interviews and explanatory content

### FIS highest-ranked Winter IF

improved on Facebook and YouTube and generated one of the highest engagement rates by producing eye-catching content that promoted upcoming events and celebrated their athletes

# 8 tactics used by IFs to engage fans

archive content

fantasy games

athlete stories

virtual events

memes

lockdown challenges

awareness campaigns

compilation videos



“

*The last year has shown that – more than ever – successful content relies on understanding how your brand is positioned within your target audience.*

*Stringing together a series of random tactics very rarely hits, and – when it does – the success is often fleeting.*

*Therefore, the IFs who really shone this year understood that tactics are simply the final part of a bigger brand strategy; diagnosis feeds strategy before strategy feeds tactics.*

*If I could give three essentials to successful content?*

*Be authentic*

*Be consistent*

*Be patient*

”

**Kirby O'Donnell**  
Social Media Manager  
Redtorch



# how **Volleyball World** nailed this year's #SportOnSocial League Table

Ace Ferdinand Asas, Digital Content Manager

*It's been an incredible year on social media for Volleyball World – top of the League Table and 1<sup>st</sup> on Instagram and Twitter. What is key to this success?*

There are plenty of keys for sure! We have a clear road map, an agile content strategy, reliable tools that help us spread our content, a dedicated and unified team, and most of all the support of Volleyball fans from all corners of the world to help us build and continue growing Volleyball World.

*You're very effective at working with players and other influencers. What tips would you give other IFs that are trying to do the same?*

When you approach players and influencers, you have to be very clear what you need from them. Give them that liberty to get creative with you. Allow them to share their feedback on the ideas that you present to them, so it becomes a group project and they can fully say it's also their product. Another thing is, you need to educate them on the power of your brand.

If you post something about them, it gives them more exposure, more reach and more followers. They are benefiting from it as well.



***Kiara the Volleyball dog was one of the year's stand-out content pieces. Why do you think it was so successful?***

The Volleyball World needed a Kiara in the midst of a really challenging year. First of all, she is an amazing and talented Volleyball dog, and most people can agree that she plays better than them, so I think she intrigued a lot of our audience. Overall, her video brings happiness, it makes you smile as you watch it, it makes you appreciate your pets even more.

***What role has technology played in your success on social media?***

With no events, this season has stretched the creativity of our content team. So we made it our goal to leverage different tools for content creation to drive engagement and awareness. Our key criteria in selecting technologies is for it to be agile, scalable and analytics-driven to quickly pick top-performing content and repurpose our content which was critical to achieving our engagement goals.

***You use a lot of archive content. How do you ensure it remains fresh and relevant?***

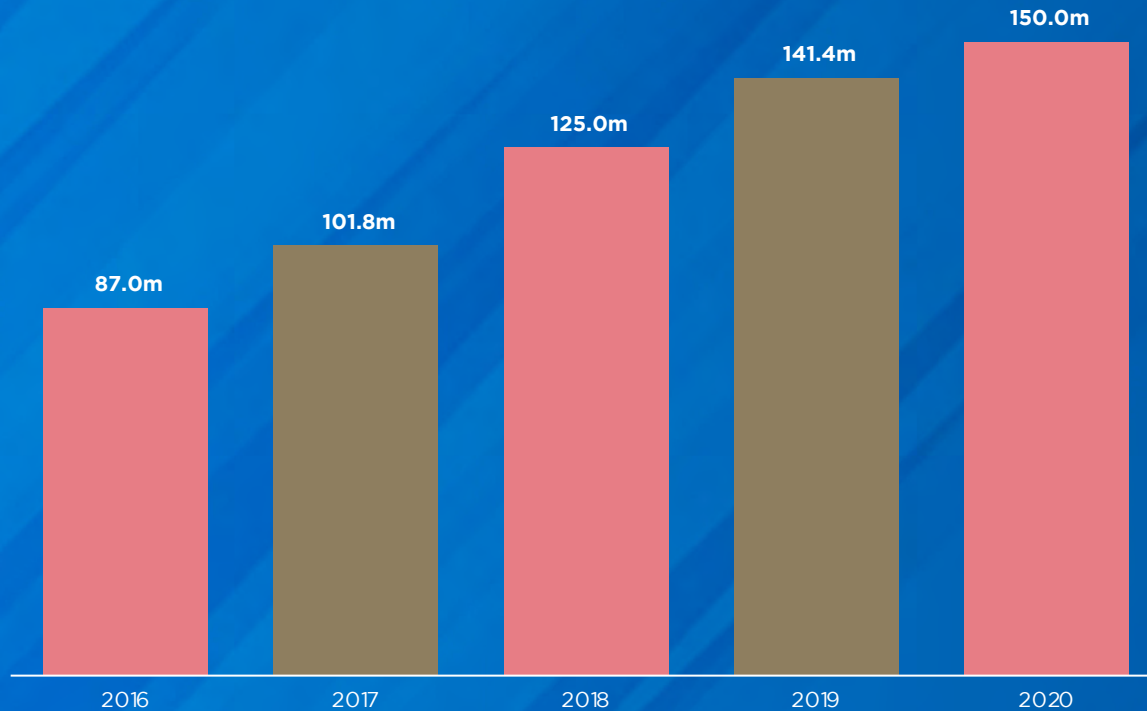
With the pandemic and postponement of all our events, we had to get creative. So we leveraged our archive and created thematics. One great example is we showed matches where the other team was down and made this amazing comeback to win the match. The theme was called 'IT'S ALL ABOUT THE COMEBACK'. During the time we published these videos, we wanted to remind our audience that we are going through this Covid crisis but for sure we will bounce back.



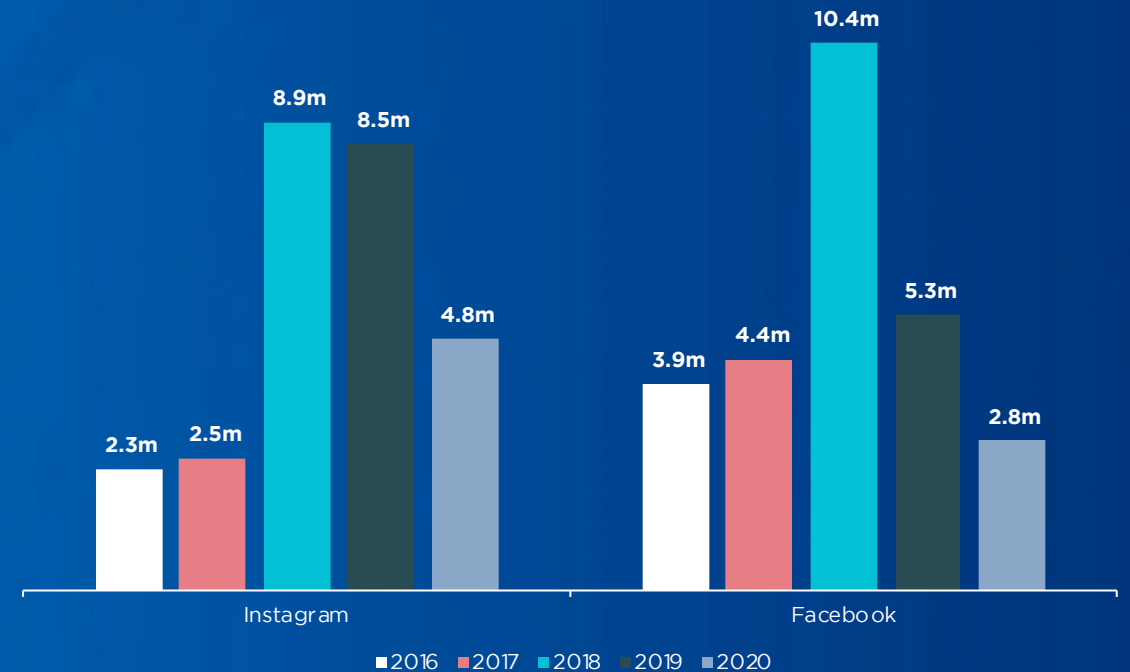
# 5 years of the #SportOnSocial League Table

# number of social media fans grew by **72%** in 5 years

total fans\* by year



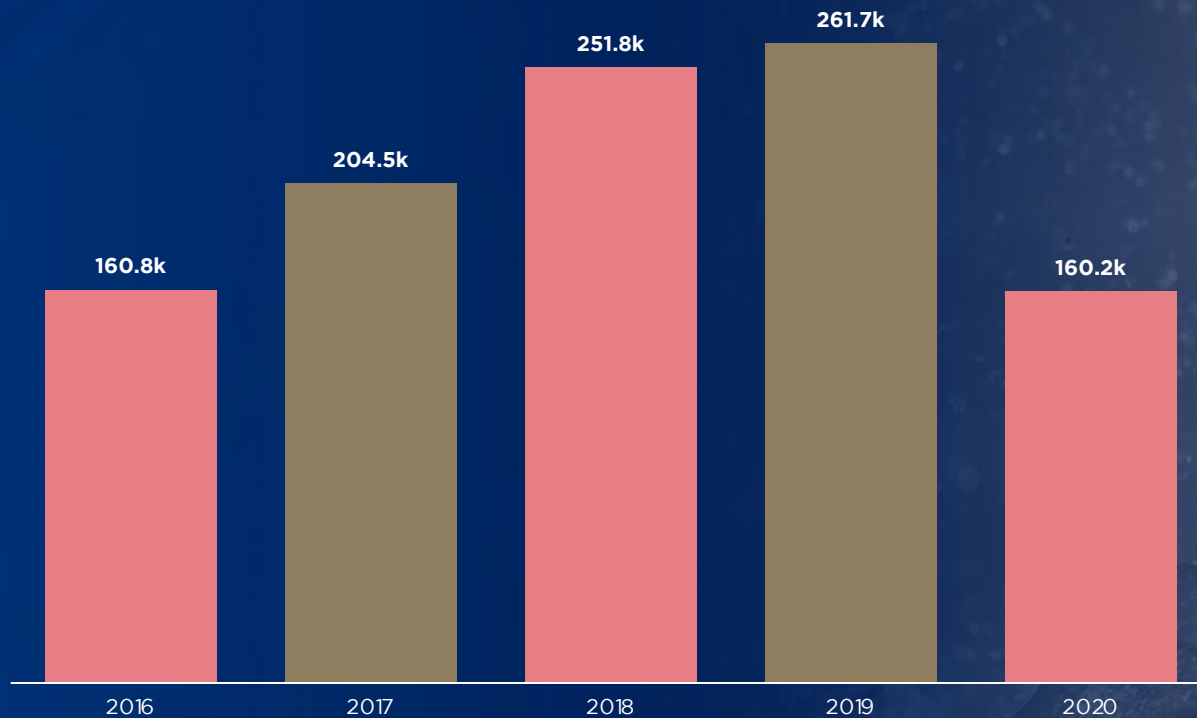
absolute growth by platform



\*on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

# social media posts fell by 39% - lowest total in 5 years

total posts\* by year



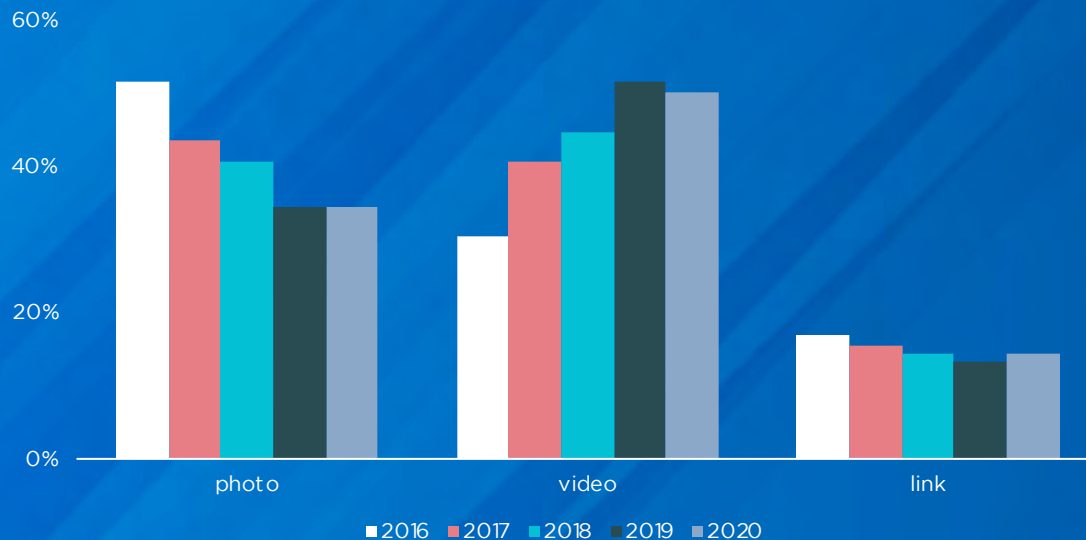
\*on all platforms

# video has become the **main format** on social media

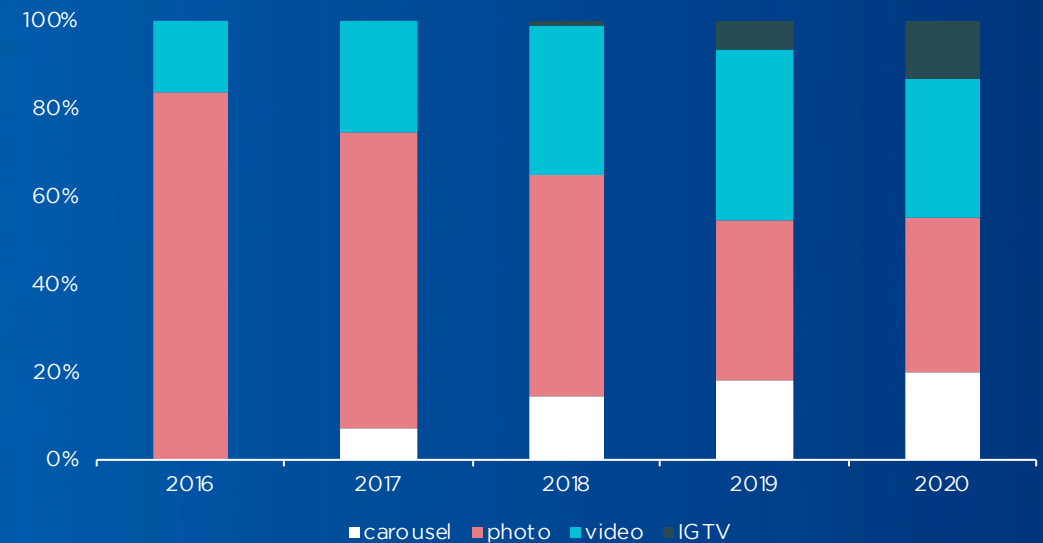
photos represented **35%** of content in 2020 compared to **51%** in 2016

the introduction of carousel and IGTV formats – plus more emphasis on video – has changed Instagram strategies over the last 5 years

## content format on Facebook



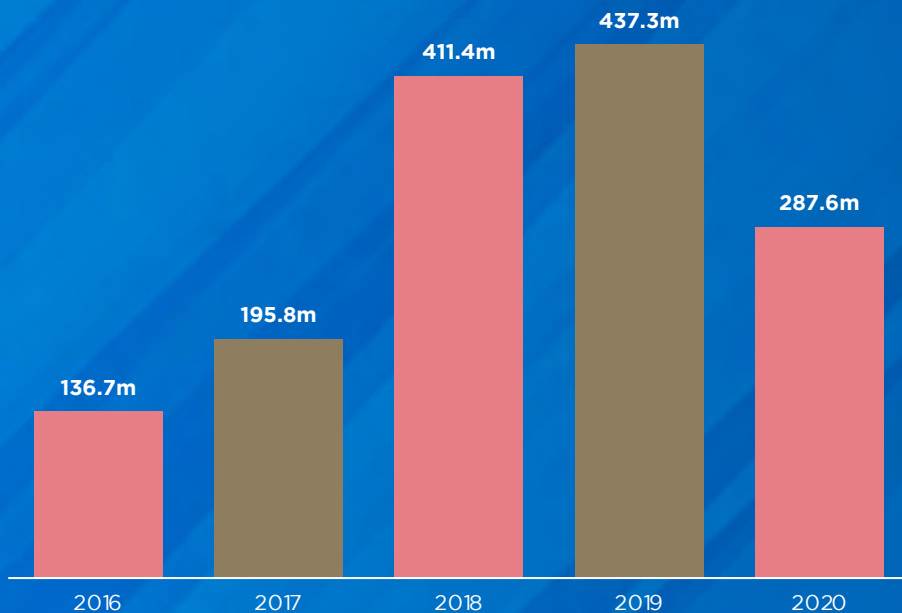
## content format on Instagram



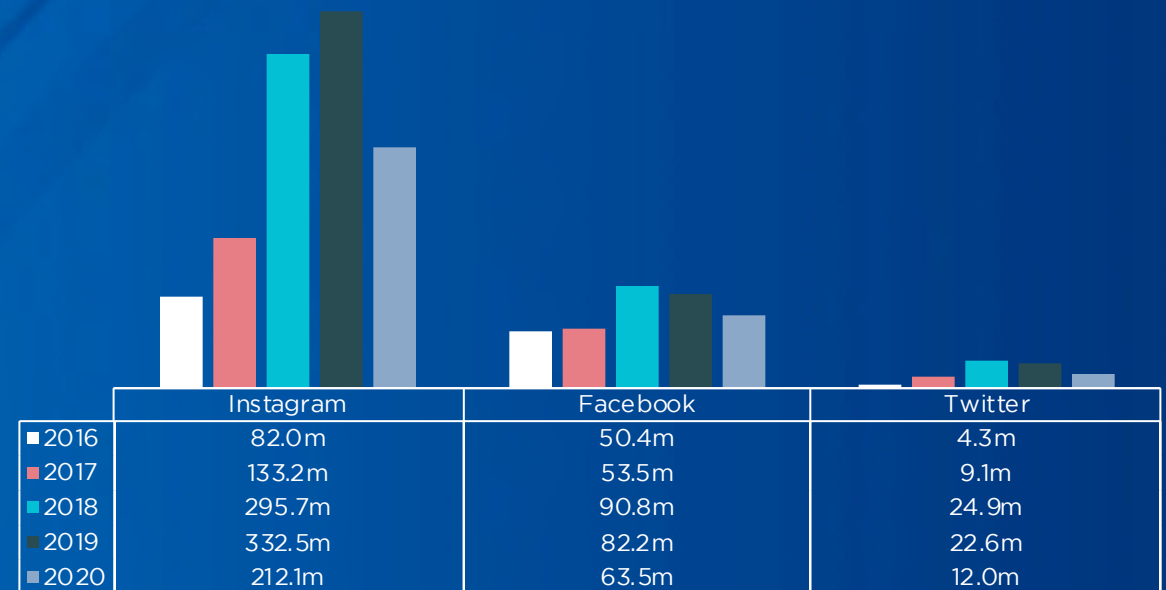
# 1.4bn total engagements in 5 years

engagements fell by **34%** year-on-year. 2020 was the first year Instagram engagements declined while Facebook and Twitter has experienced consecutive annual falls

engagements\* by year



engagements\* by platform



2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

A baseball player in a green jersey and white pants is captured in the middle of a powerful swing on a baseball field. The player is wearing a black helmet with a red brim, red batting gloves, and red socks. The background is slightly blurred, showing other players and spectators. The text is overlaid on the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

# #SportOnSocial League Table 2021

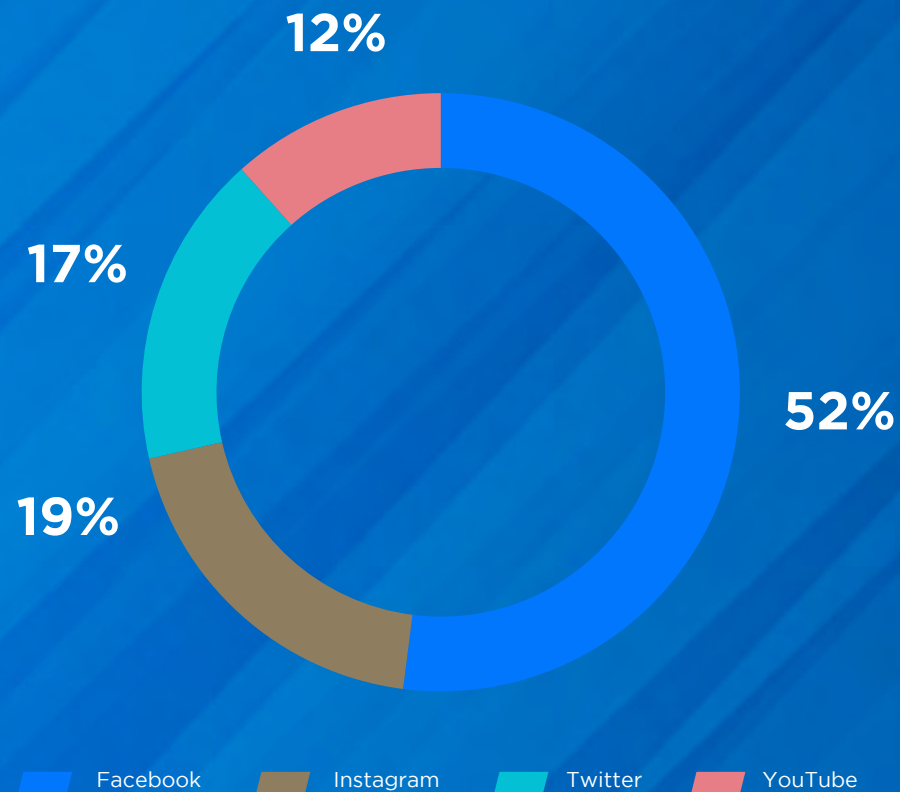
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overall platform analysis

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# total fans = 169.7m - a 7% increase

## fan breakdown by platform



**17%**

total growth rate on Instagram -  
higher than any other platform



**1.3m**

new followers on Twitter -  
less than any other platform



**3%**

total growth rate on Facebook -  
lower than any other platform



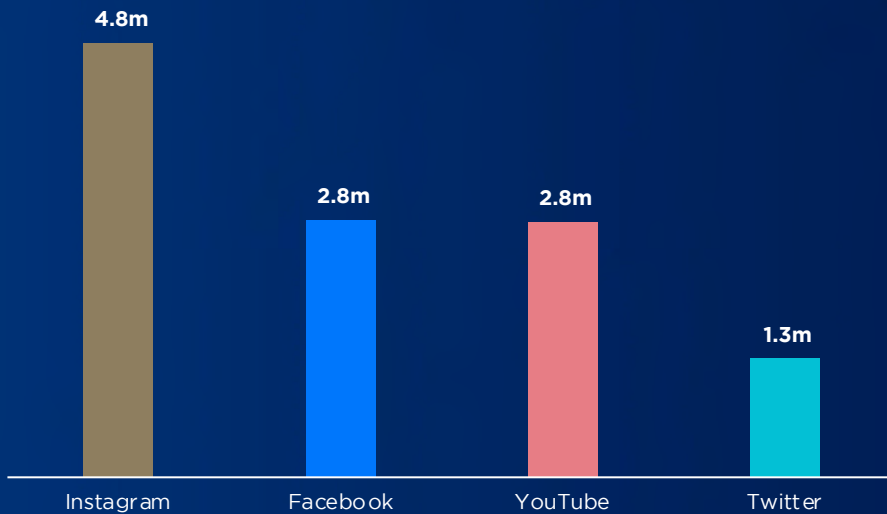
**2.8m**

new subscribers on YouTube -  
2nd highest growth rate (17%)

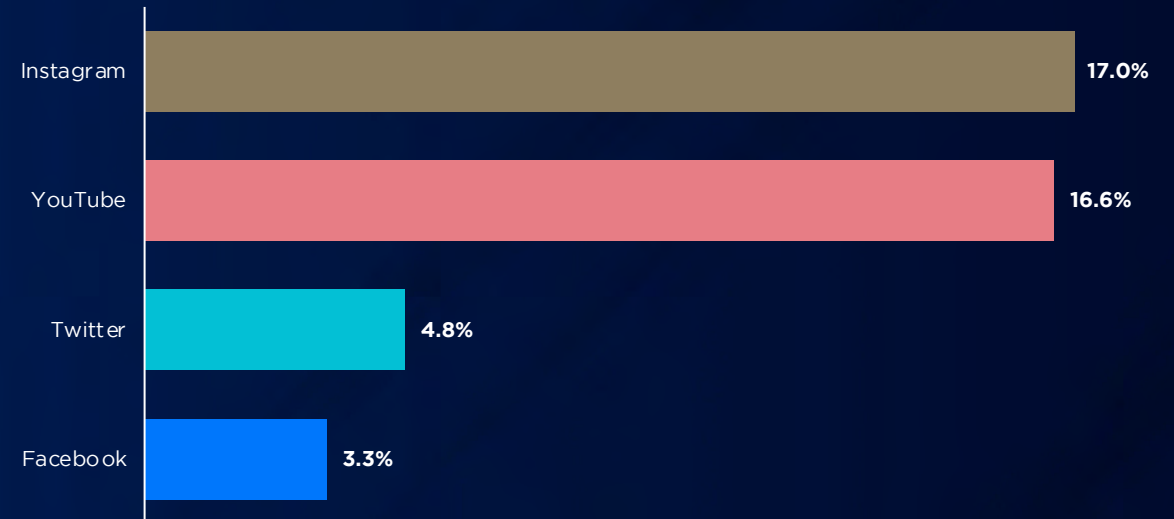


# Instagram followers increased more than any other platform

absolute growth per platform

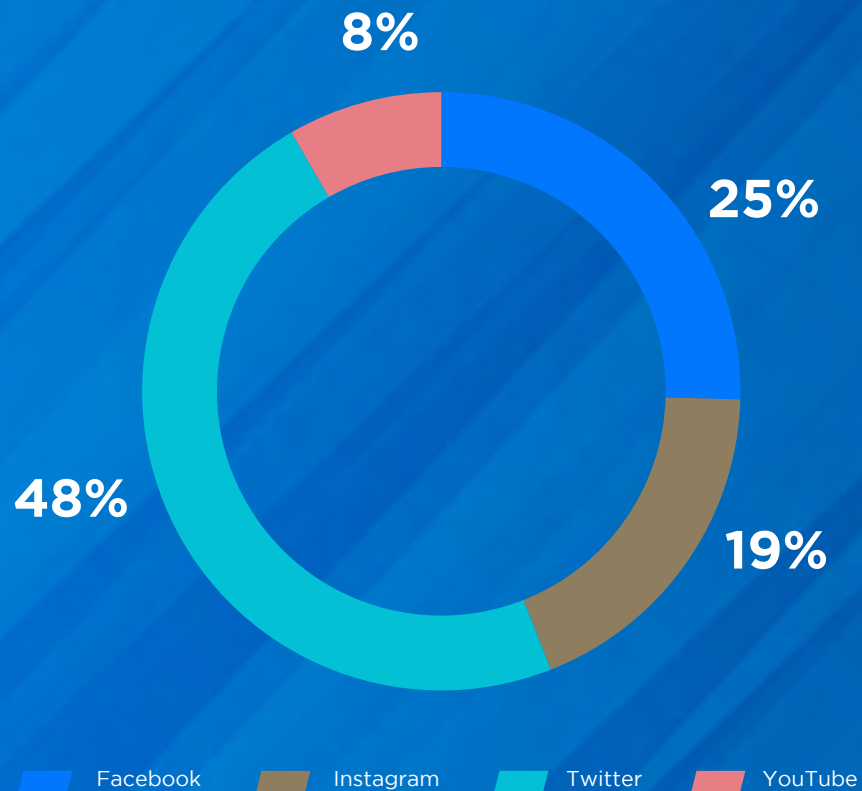


total growth rate per platform



# 160k posts - a 39% decrease

posts by platform



**76k** tweets - **37%** decrease



**41k** Facebook posts - **28%** decrease



**30k** Instagram posts - **16%** decrease



**13k** YouTube videos - **60%** decrease

# 293m engagements - a 33% decrease

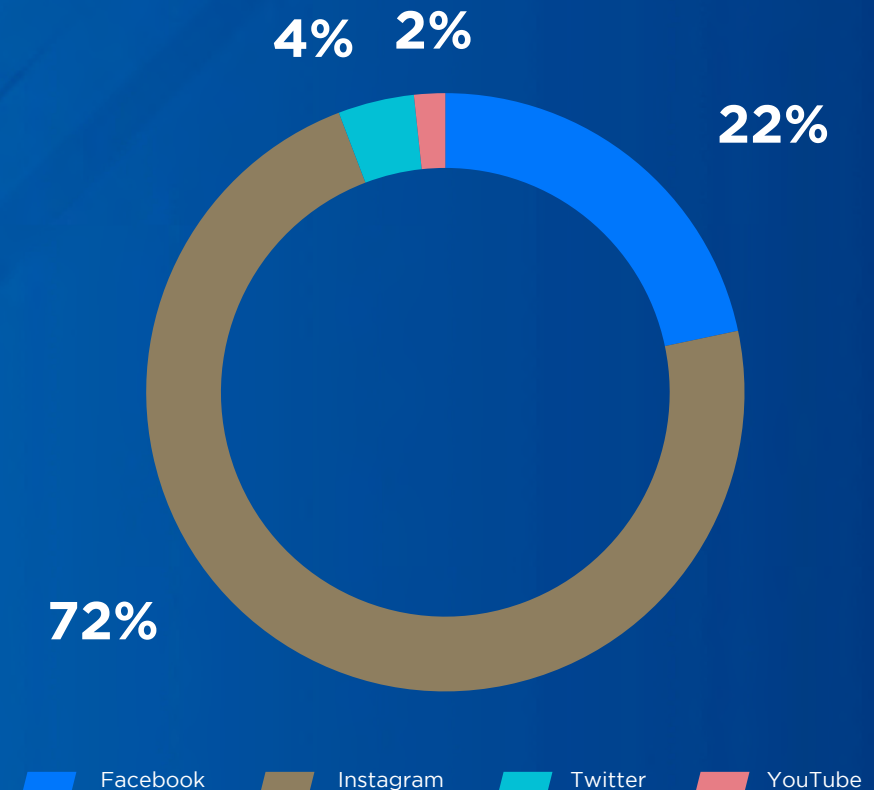
**212m** Instagram engagements - **35%** decrease

**64m** Facebook engagements - **21%** decrease

**12m** Twitter engagements - **45%** decrease

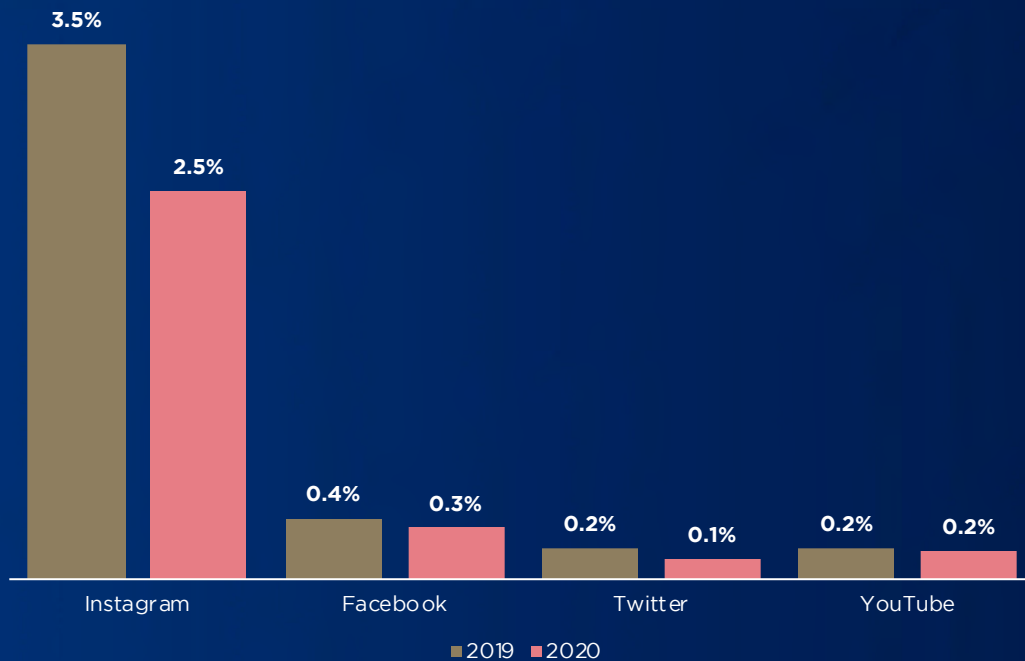
**5m** YouTube engagements - **35%** decrease

total engagements by platform



# engagement rates fell on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter

engagement rate by platform



Instagram remained the top platform by engagement rate

**2.5%**

Facebook engagement rate decreased from **0.4%** to

**0.3%**

fewer live updates and key moments resulted in a halving of Twitter's engagement rate

**0.1%**



# welcoming **IFSC** to the Olympic family

**Marco Vettoretti, Head of Communications**

## *Have you already seen an impact on your social media as a result of your Olympic inclusion?*

The impact on social media has been huge for a few years now, and the increased popularity of the sport itself definitely helped: climbing gyms are popping up everywhere around the world! Our athletes' fanbases keep growing and growing, we can only benefit from that. Climbers are our most important asset, and the main goal on social media is to bring as many of them as possible under the spotlight, get people to know their stories, their personalities.

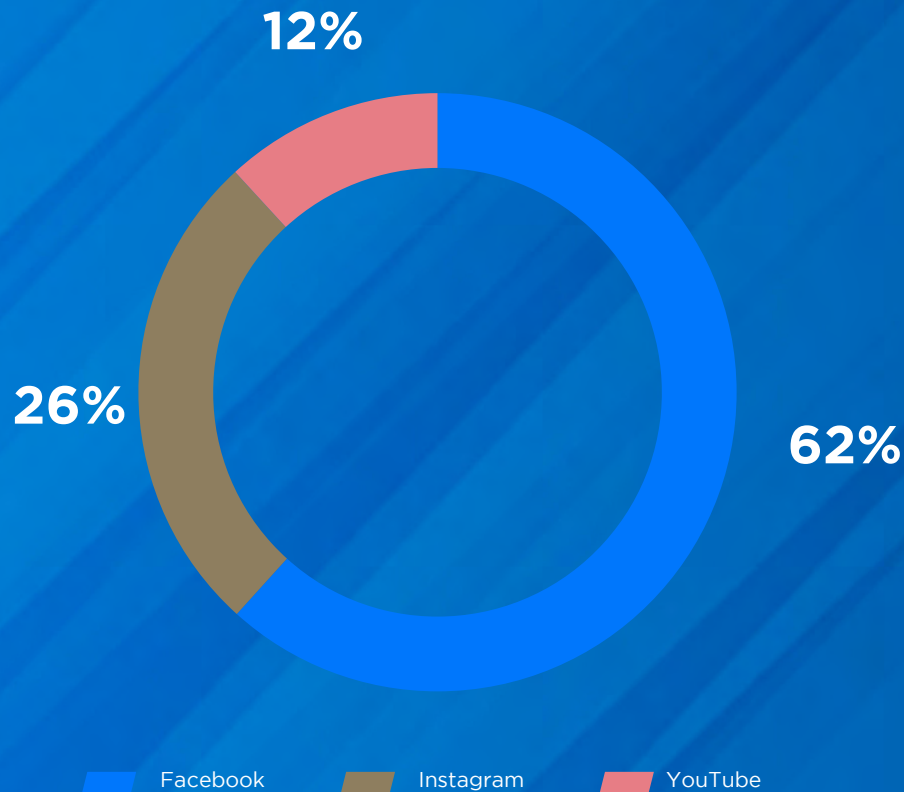
## *What opportunities do you think Olympic inclusion will bring to the sport of Climbing?*

Sport Climbing is a unique sport, and to have it in the Olympic programme in Tokyo 2020 and already confirmed in Paris 2024 is fantastic. Following our debut in Japan, we are confident that many opportunities will arise, on and offline, and we are definitely prepared to catch them.

## *In one word, describe the past 12 months* Challenge.

# video views fell to 3.3bn - a 13% decrease

## views by platform



Facebook experienced a **1%** increase in views (**2.1bn**) and accounted for **62%** of total

**+1%**



Instagram views fell by **2%** (**901m** to **886m**)

**-2%**



YouTube views decreased by **55%** (to **396m**) as a result of **60%** less video content

**-55%**



# #SportOnSocial League Table 2021

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## Facebook analysis

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# Facebook platform top 10

| International Federation |  | 2021 | 2020 | change |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|--------|
| <b>BWF</b>               | Badminton World Federation                       | 1    | 2    | 1 ▲    |
| <b>Volleyball World</b>  | Volleyball World                                 | 2    | 4    | 2 ▲    |
| <b>World Athletics</b>   | World Athletics                                  | 3    | 7    | 4 ▲    |
| <b>FIBA</b>              | International Basketball Federation              | 4    | 1    | 3 ▼    |
| <b>ITTF</b>              | International Table Tennis Federation            | 5    | 6    | 1 ▲    |
| <b>FIG</b>               | International Gymnastics Federation              | 6    | 11   | 5 ▲    |
| <b>FIFA</b>              | International Federation of Association Football | 7    | 12   | 5 ▲    |
| <b>FINA</b>              | International Swimming Federation                | 8    | 18   | 10 ▲   |
| <b>ITF</b>               | International Tennis Federation                  | 9    | 10   | 1 ▲    |
| <b>FEI</b>               | International Federation for Equestrian Sports   | 10   | 3    | 7 ▼    |



# Facebook growth slowed due to less content and smaller media budgets

**1.9x** average daily posts  
32% decrease

**50%** of posts were video  
48% in 2019

**8%** average growth rate  
15% in 2019

**1%** increase in  
engagements per post  
average **440**

**25%** fall in average  
engagement rate  
**0.3%** average engagement rate

**12%** increase in  
views per video  
**23.8k** views per video

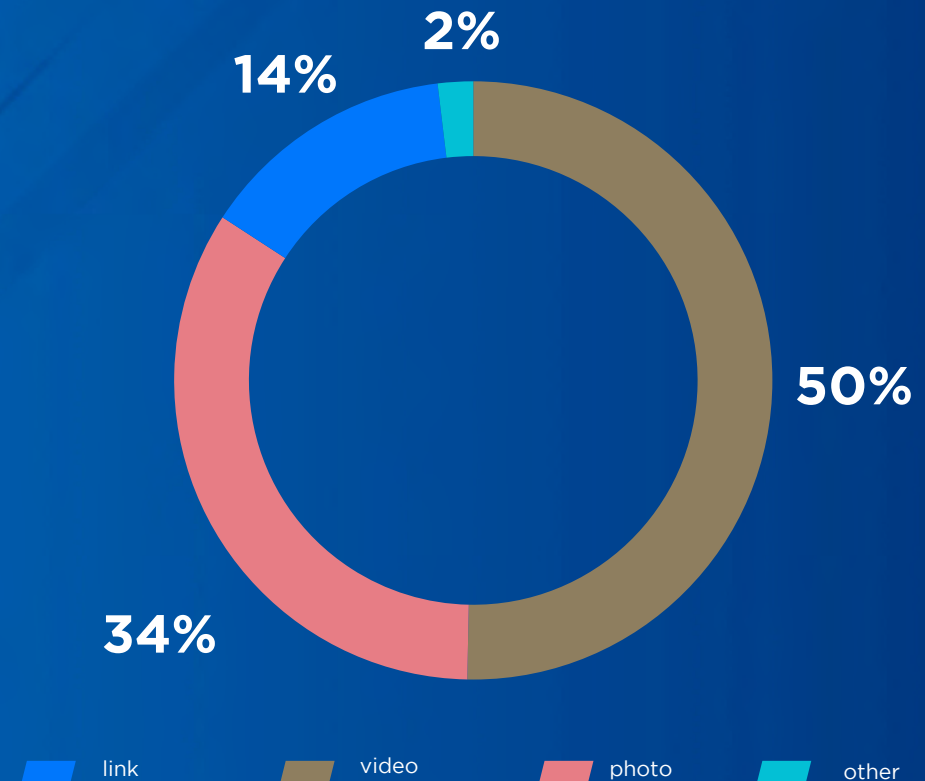
# IFs posted on Facebook an average 1.9x a day

↑ **50%** of content was video (**48%** in 2019)

↓ **34%** of content was photo (**35%** in 2019)

↑ **14%** of content was link (**13%** in 2019)

posts by content format



# FIG fans on Facebook increased **88%**



FIG gained **175k** new fans **(+88%)** and achieved the highest growth rate overall

through adapting a content strategy that focused on promoting all disciplines via archive content and athlete interviews



Volleyball World\* gained **983k** new fans **(+55%)**

**25%** of them in January during Tokyo 2020 Qualifier events



BWF gained **159k** new fans **(+23%)**

February saw the largest fan growth **(20k)** due to the 2020 European Men's and Women's Team Badminton Championships

\*main page



# how **FIG** achieved significant fan growth

Olivier Strebel, FIG Marketing and Communication Director

*FIG experienced significant fan growth on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. What was key to this success?*

When the world was hit hard by the pandemic in March 2020, we had just started our 'Road to Tokyo' campaign. Rather than putting everything on hold, we decided to redirect our efforts to continue promoting our sports online.

Inevitably, we had to re-evaluate our approach during these unprecedented times and developed an 'alternative' content strategy to overcome the challenges and maintain our presence on social networks throughout the year.

Our approach was to divert our energy into devising a content strategy which focused on historical events, athlete interviews and explanatory pieces on the evolution of Gymnastics in the absence of live events. We are in a fortunate position to have a good database of existing content and footage from previous FIG events, and the fact that we have 8 disciplines has been a great help to us ...

... The key for us was to be proactive during a time of high uncertainty. There were many unanswered question marks in 2020 and we had to devise various scenarios led by 'what ifs?'. The pandemic is a test of agility and how quickly an organisation can adapt to challenging situations. I believe our team at FIG has demonstrated this in our digital communication efforts, and will continue to do so.

***What does FIG have planned in the build-up to Tokyo 2020?***

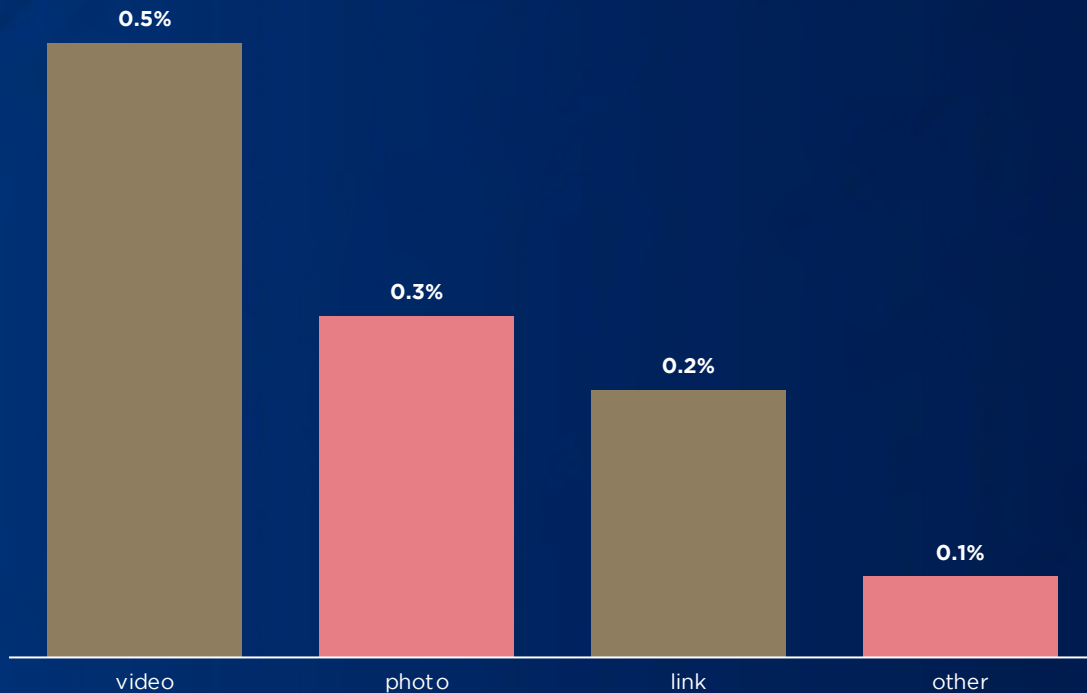
Tokyo 2020 is an important date for us in our calendar and there is huge interest around Gymnastics events. Inevitably, we will have to adapt our strategy to make the most out of this 'new-norm' during the pandemic and ensure we provide good content to our fans and followers around the world while highlighting the important milestones on the Road to Tokyo. Stay tuned and follow us on our FIG Digital Channels to find out more.

***In one word, describe the past 12 months ...***

Great team work, despite the work from home being the new reality!

# video remained the **best format** to engage fans on Facebook

average engagement rate by post type



**0.5%** average engagement rate for video content

**0.3%** average engagement rate for photo content

# reactions dominated engagements on Facebook – 87% of total

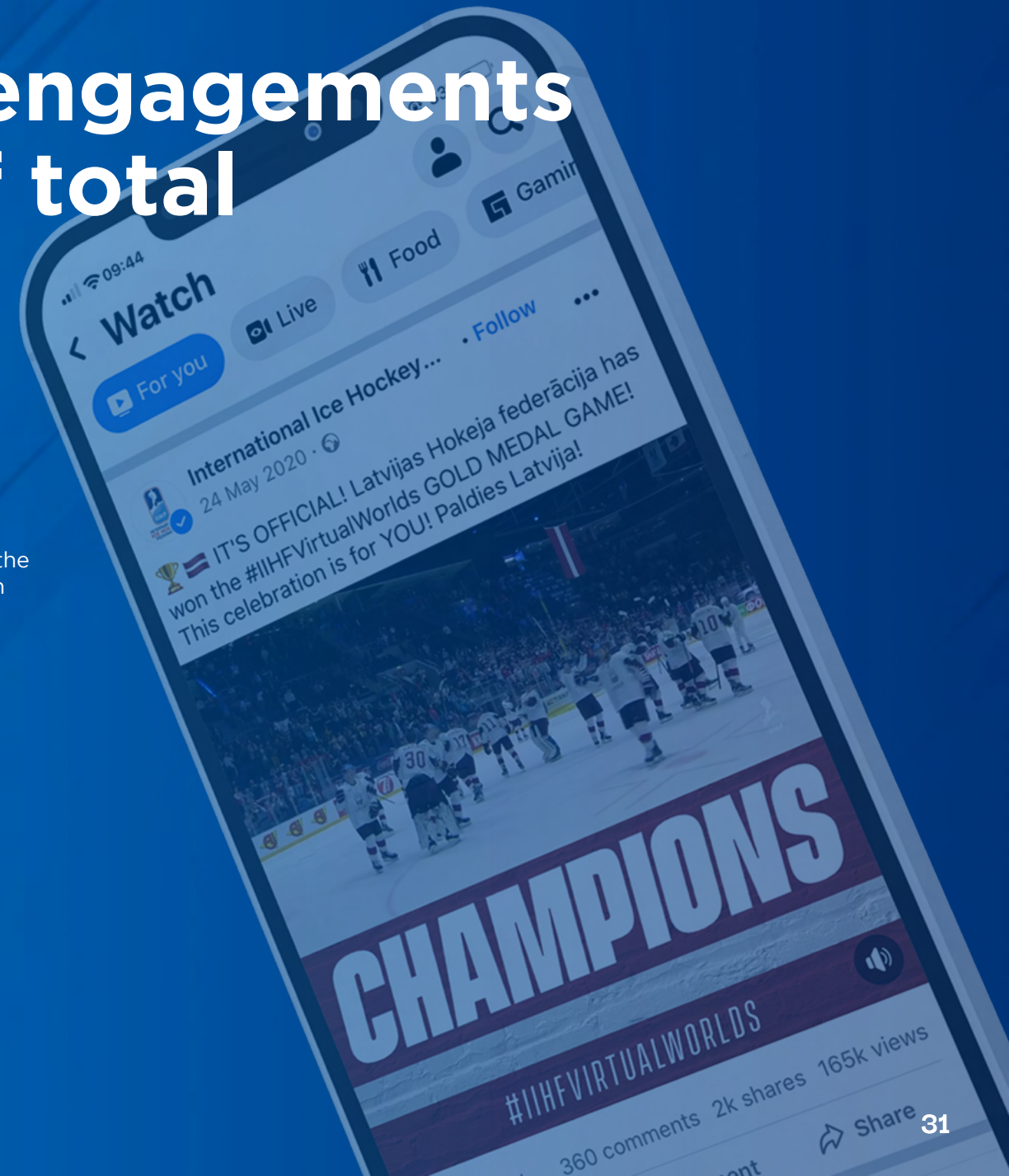
8% of IIHF engagements were comments – higher than any other IF

#IIHFVirtualWorlds, a virtual competition where fans voted to decide which country had the best competition content, was engaging and sparked discussions in the comments section

18% of WBSC engagements were shares – higher than any other IF

61% of shares were from live streams of live and previous championship events

the most popular live streams were from the Women's Softball World Championship 2018 and the Mexican Pacific League in 2020



# 2.1bn video views on Facebook - averaging 23.8k views per video



< Watch

For you Live Food

International Tennis Federation · 4  
19 Dec 2020 ·  
Christmas No.1's - Dylan Alcott



72.6k 1.1k comments 12.4k shares

< Watch

For you Live Food

FEI Vaulting ·  
12 Jul 2020 ·  
Winning Round | Women's FEI Vaulting World  
Finals 2019



J. DERKS  
Carroussel H1  
32.4k 4.5k comments 14.1k shares  
14,177 shares

Most relevant

Andy Cavaliere  
What a sight. Am speechless. This is  
beyond brilliant. That horse had the  
most smooth canter. The girl fab, su  
strength and commitment. That has

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FIFA World Cup ·  
18 Mar 2020 ·  
Top Talent: El Cambio Academy



87.4k 745 comments 7.9k shares 3.3mn views

< Watch

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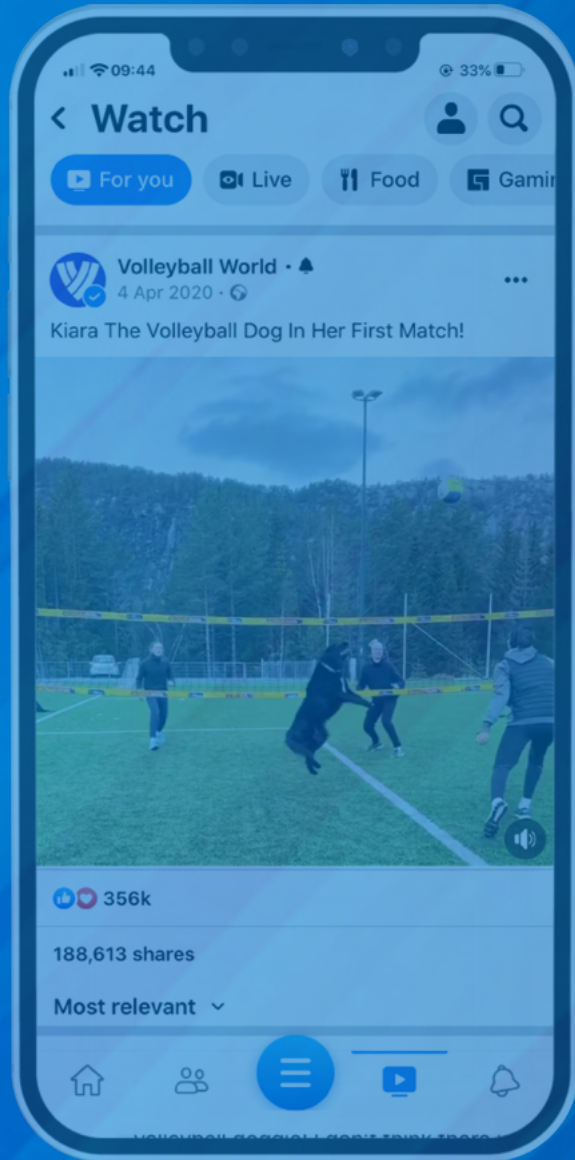
BA · Follow  
3 Dec 2020 ·  
the trash-talking little brother some



Noah's trash...  
3.3k



# 3 IFs generated a combined **1bn** views – 49% of total



Volleyball World\* had **384m** views (**19%** of total)

the 4 most-watched videos generated a total 98m views and were all rallies featuring amateurs, children, or a dog ...

BWF had **358m** views (**17%** of total)

'highlights' content from previous years – repurposed in themes such as **#MondayMotivation**, **#FridayFeeling** and 'Can you remember this rally?' – generated the majority of views

3 of the top 20 most-watched videos were branded and in association with a BWF partner

FIBA had **265m** views (**13%** of total)

repurposing funny and skilful videos from other accounts was a popular tactic to drive video views

a 'Must Watch' playlist included compilations of high-profile players and historic moments



# how **BWF** took this year's League Table by storm

Lloyd Green, Communications and Media Manager

## *What has been the key to your success?*

Our main strategy has always been to increase the level of interaction between fans and players. We had exciting things planned for 2020 to help us achieve this.

COVID-19 meant we were forced to reevaluate processes and shift goalposts to continue to deliver on this strategy.

As a result, we leveraged the elements below to optimise our performance:

- rise of player User Generated Content in Badminton in 2020 – prior to 2020, this was not something that we had a large volume of – our players were quite reserved in producing their own content
- extensive use of Badminton archive to keep the sport relevant
- greater peer-to-peer interaction on social media among playing group; we were able to empower players to engage more with each other through certain campaigns
- increasing the social media literacy of the playing group via practical social media tutoring of players, who in turn shared their knowledge gains and upskilling with their peers
- involving our fans in the content creation process

### *You produce a lot of content – how do you ensure that it is always of high quality?*

This has been one of the most difficult things for us to manage. We had a number of key upgrades to resources and personnel that were put on hold and heavily impacted by COVID-19. No longer were we getting the social media production house that we had planned for. So instead, we kept things simple.

We empowered others to create the content for us – players and influencers –and we became the gatekeepers. We also maximised our use of the archive and focused on using what we had available to us instead of creating anything new from scratch. These were resource-friendly solutions and gave fans the one thing they were demanding – to be able to watch Badminton again.

We also had our **#BWFTotalRecall** campaign in which we simply plug-and-played LIVE reruns of full matches from our vault. Prior to this, there had been very little exposure to videos of matches from the 80s, 90s and early 00s, so the fans loved seeing their heroes of the past.

This approach was also successful for our partners and our branded content solutions. For ‘Guess Who Wins’, we took archive material, added a point of interaction mid-video, thus adding a new dimension to an old piece and stimulating higher-than-average engagement on something that had already had one life-cycle.

# #SportOnSocial League Table 2021

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## Instagram analysis

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# Instagram platform top 10

| International Federation |  | 2021 | 2020 | change |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|--------|
| <b>Volleyball World</b>  | Volleyball World                                 | 1    | 3    | 2 ▲    |
| <b>BWF</b>               | Badminton World Federation                       | 2    | 6    | 4 ▲    |
| <b>FIFA</b>              | International Federation of Association Football | 3    | 5    | 2 ▲    |
| <b>UWW</b>               | United World Wrestling                           | 4    | 7    | 3 ▲    |
| <b>World Athletics</b>   | World Athletics                                  | 5    | 4    | 1 ▼    |
| <b>FIBA</b>              | International Basketball Federation              | 6    | 2    | 4 ▼    |
| <b>World Rugby</b>       | World Rugby                                      | 7    | 1    | 6 ▼    |
| <b>ITTF</b>              | International Table Tennis Federation            | 8    | 10   | 2 ▲    |
| <b>FEI</b>               | International Federation for Equestrian Sports   | 9    | 13   | 4 ▲    |
| <b>UCI</b>               | International Cycling Union                      | 10   | 14   | 4 ▲    |

# engagements and views per post increased despite less content

**1.4** average number of daily posts  
1.8 in 2019

**32%** of posts were video  
40% in 2019

**24%** average growth rate  
69% in 2019

**46%** increase in engagements per post  
4.0k average engagements

**29%** fall in average engagement rate  
2.5% average engagement rate

**55%** increase in views per video  
17.5k average views

# Instagram **growth** higher than any other platform



World Skate doubled its size (**+31k**)

**30%** of these new followers came in March 2020



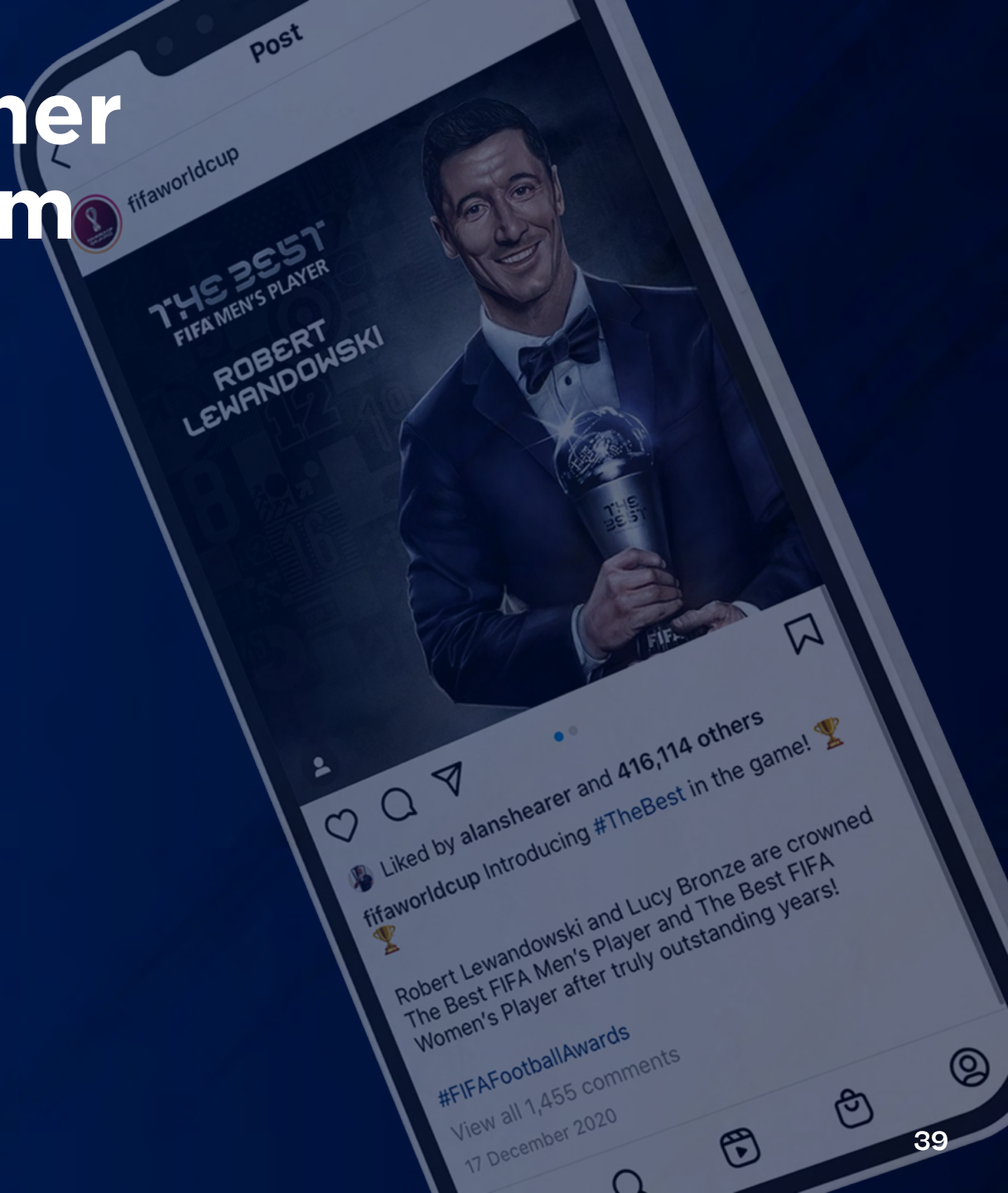
BWF experienced an **88%** growth rate (**208k** new fans)

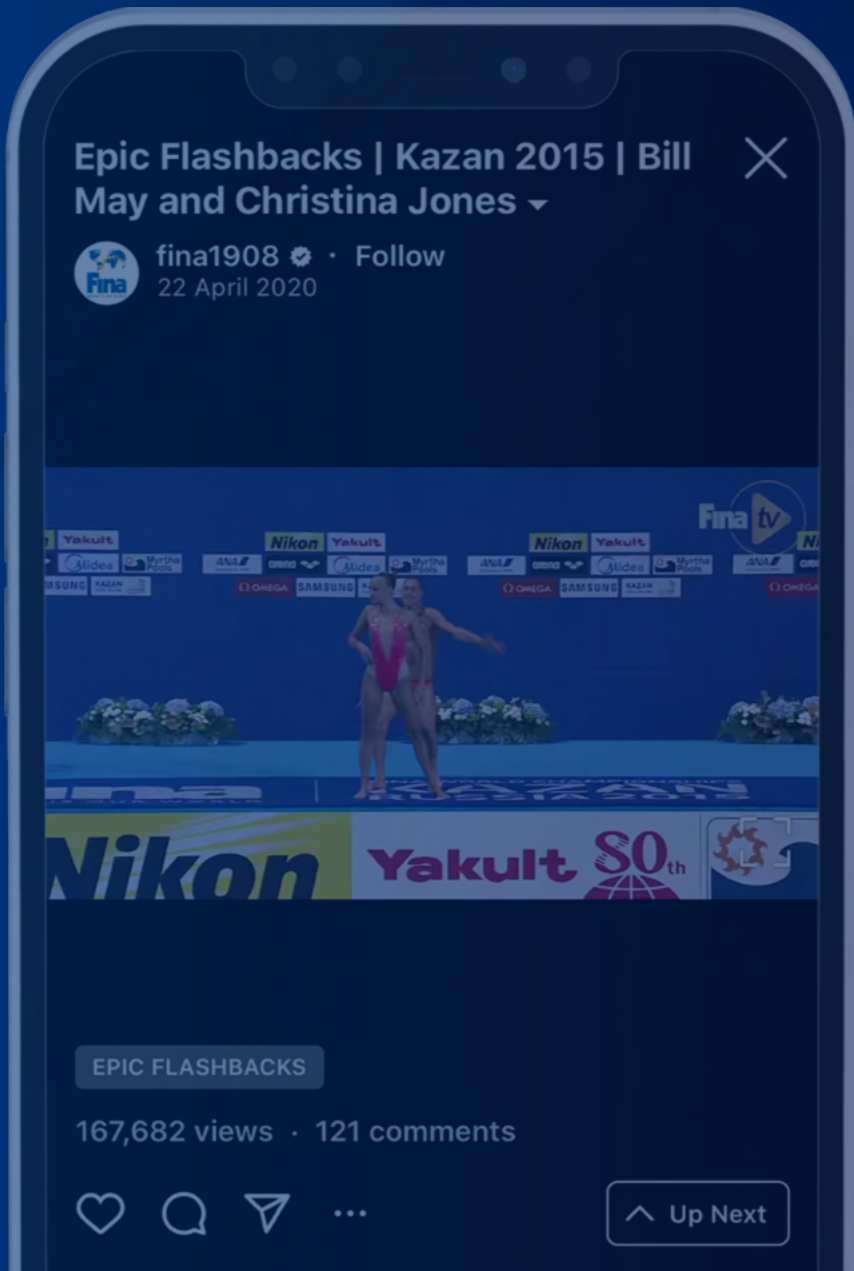
the biggest spike came in March 2020 at the All England Open



FIFA\* gained **2.2m** new fans

the biggest increase came in in December 2020, coinciding with The Best FIFA Football Awards™





# 13% of Instagram posts on IGTV – a 7% increase

↑ all IFs used IGTV in 2020 – a 74% increase

FINA published 35% of its Instagram content on IGTV

including a series called Epic Flashbacks and several campaigns that focused on the personal lives of athletes through short interviews, Q&As and challenges

24% of Volleyball World\* content was through IGTV

top performing content included match replays, a player-of-the-week series, and Volleyball anime Haikyu!!, the highly popular manga series that returned to Japanese TV networks in 2020

\*main page

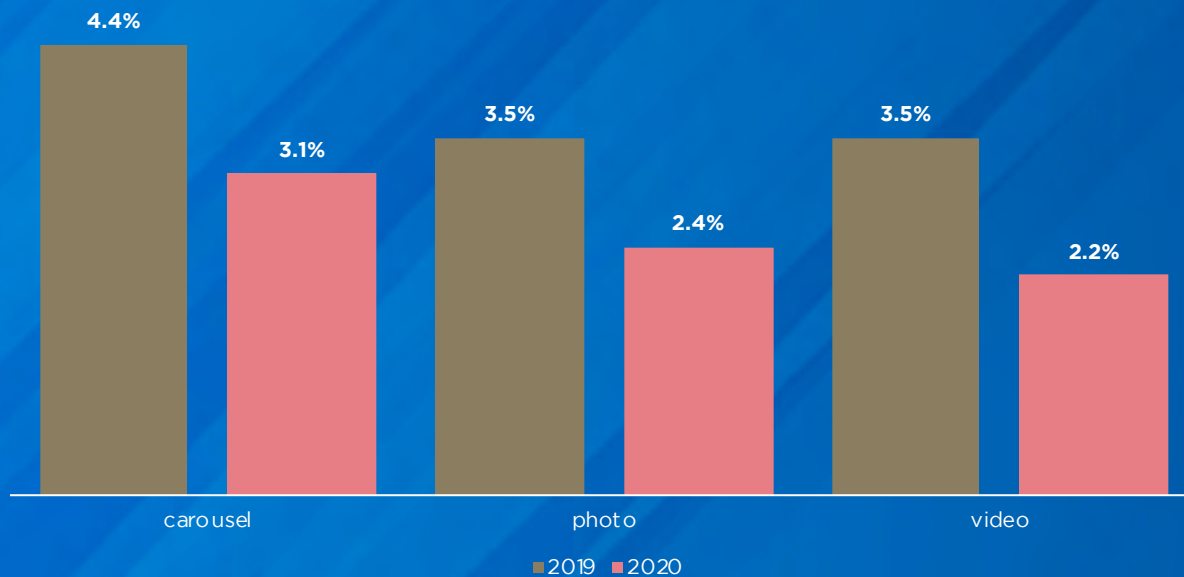


# carousel posts saw highest engagement rate on Instagram

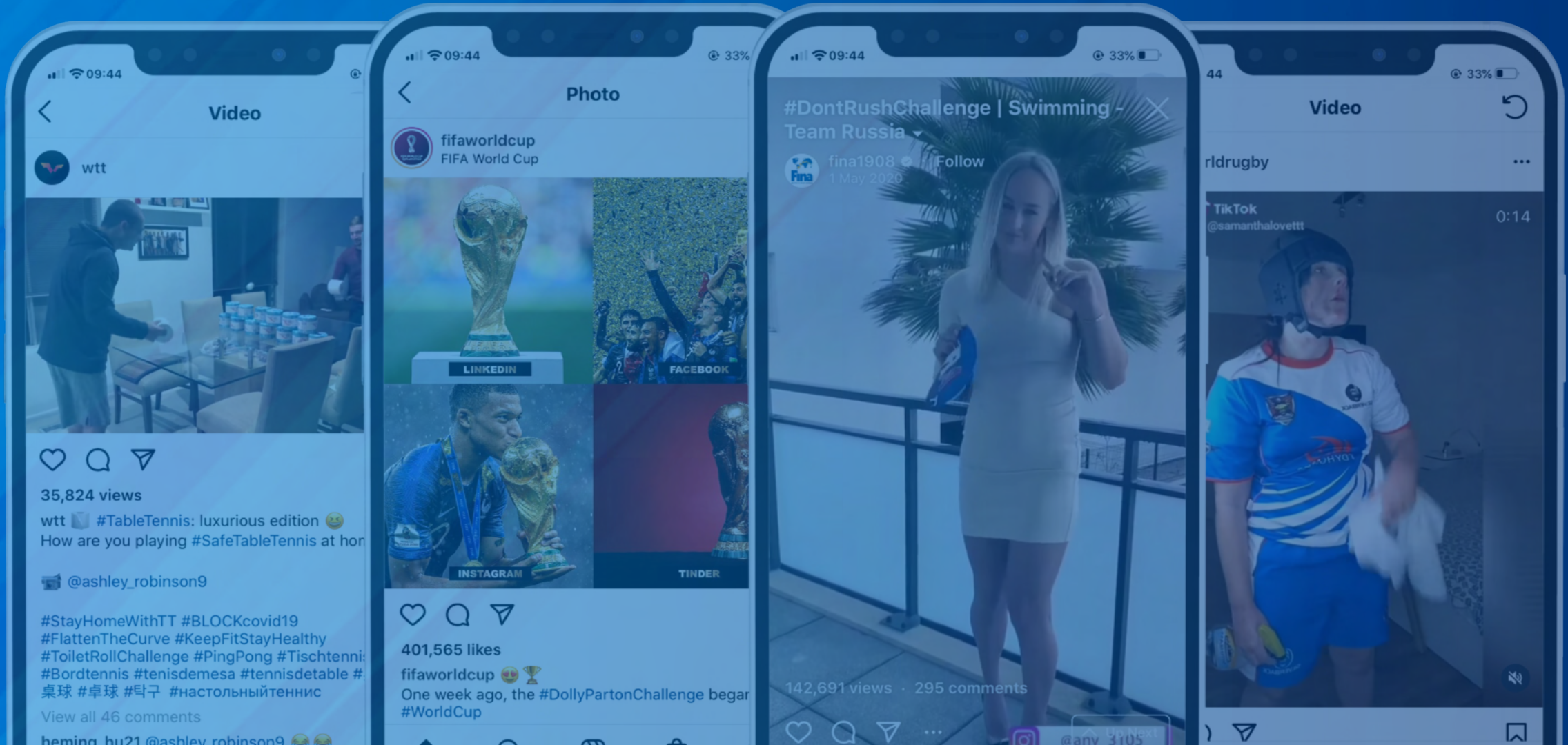
carousel posts were used to tell visual stories and included flashback content from previous events

FEI generated a high engagement rate for carousel posts by using an average 8-10 images that focused on inspirational stories and highlights from memorable events

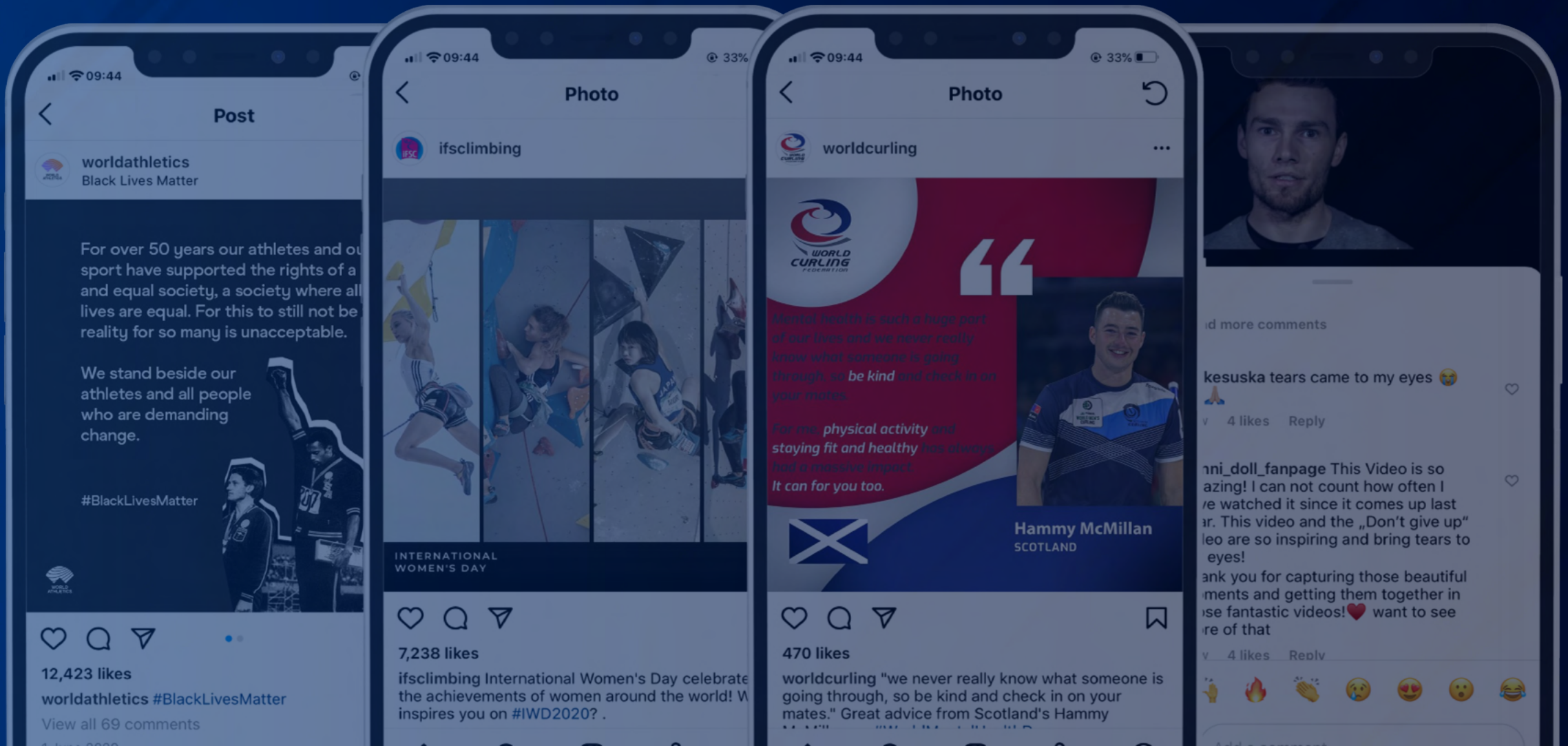
## engagement rate by post type



# global trends enabled IFs to show their **personalities** and to reach new audiences



# IFs used Instagram to **support** social issues



# 6 IFs each generated over **100k** Instagram comments

through the effective use of quizzes and games, **UWW** generated one of the highest number of comments per post

4 of the top 5 posts by comments related to the fantasy wrestling tournament  
**‘Wrestling Legends vs. Stars’**



# 3 IFs each generated 100m+ Instagram views

Volleyball World had **259.6m** views (**29%** of total)

highlights from previous events accounted for the majority of video content, but humorous and inspirational content featuring athletes, influencers and children generated the most views

FIFA had **164.0m** views (**19%** of total)

**#FridayFails**, **#WorldCupAtHome** and 'tag a friend' content accounted for over half of the 34 videos that each generated over 1.0m views

FIBA generated **102.5m** views (**12%** of total)

by repurposing archive content with new captions to produce compilation videos, birthday messages and throwback content





# how FIS became the **top-performing** winter IF

Jenny Wiedeke, Communications Manager

## *What was key to your success?*

Together with our rights holder *Infront*, we developed an ‘Always On’ social media strategy. We primarily have weekend events and previously were very full of content during the weekends, but then didn’t have much to contribute during the week. We have now moved to using the early week for posts that celebrate our athletes, promote the upcoming weekend events and give fans daily content throughout the season.

## *How do you ensure your content cuts through the digital noise?*

We established an eye-catching design for all of our posts so when users are scrolling through their feeds, they immediately recognize a FIS post. We are also quite selective in what ultimately gets posted. After watching the engagement rate on various kinds of posts throughout the last few seasons, we know what fans engage with and schedule those posts for our prime time.

## *How will you approach social media in the build-up to the Beijing Winter Olympics?*

First and foremost, we will share athlete stories and get people interested in the individuals under the helmets. We have an established Behind-the-Scenes series, which after 10 years are still one of our most popular digital offerings. Additionally, we will produce Olympic-specific interviews with the athletes in their Olympic preparations. We did athlete series for both PyeongChang and Sochi, and found it was great not only in the build-up to the Olympics but also as content if one of the featured athletes had success.



# #SportOnSocial League Table 2021

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## Twitter analysis

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# Twitter platform top 10

| International Federation |  | 2021 | 2020 | change |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|--------|
| <b>Volleyball World</b>  | Volleyball World                                 | 1    | 5    | 4 ▲    |
| <b>BWF</b>               | Badminton World Federation                       | 2    | 1    | 1 ▼    |
| <b>ISU</b>               | International Skating Union                      | 3    | 3    | - -    |
| <b>UCI</b>               | International Cycling Union                      | 4    | 7    | 3 ▲    |
| <b>FIFA</b>              | International Federation of Association Football | 5    | 8    | 3 ▲    |
| <b>ITTF</b>              | International Table Tennis Federation            | 6    | 6    | - -    |
| <b>ITF</b>               | International Tennis Federation                  | 7    | 11   | 4 ▲    |
| <b>IBU</b>               | International Biathlon Union                     | 8    | 15   | 7 ▲    |
| <b>World Rugby</b>       | World Rugby                                      | 9    | 4    | 5 ▼    |
| <b>FIS</b>               | International Ski Federation                     | 10   | 13   | 3 ▲    |



# the lack of events damaged Twitter's ability to act as a **live feed**

**3.2x** average number of daily posts  
5.6 in 2019

**6%** average growth rate  
11% in 2019

**2.8k** average fan growth  
5.6k in 2019

**31%** fall in engagements per post  
an average of **36** engagement per post

**engagement rate halved**  
0.1% average engagement rate



# average **growth** rate on Twitter = 6%

↑ Volleyball World experienced the highest growth rate (**18%**) and 2nd highest absolute growth (**38.2k**)

largely as a result of the Continental Olympic Qualifiers – fans engaging with posts after Turkey and South Korea both confirmed their qualification

↑ FIL grew their Twitter account by **16%** year-on-year with spikes during the 2020 FIL World Luge Championships in Sochi, Russia and the start of the 2020-21 Luge World Cup in Innsbruck, Austria

↑ ITF saw a **14%** uplift in followers one period of growth coincided with the Davis Cup draw that was shared live on Twitter

# FIFA had most Twitter engagements per post

## leveraging key FIFA moments

FIFA generated **636** engagements per post, with 7 of their 20 most-engaged with tweets related to Cristiano Ronaldo reaching 100 international goals

## birthday messages

**31%** of the top 100 tweets recognised the birthdays of current and former legends of the game through archive footage

## campaign content

**#WorldCupAtHome** enabled FIFA to open up its digital archive and allowed fans to vote on which matches should be re-broadcast

a total of over **750k** Twitter votes were cast to determine the matches





# ISU remained Twitter's highest IF by engagement rate

## high-profile athletes drove big engagements

Japanese figure skater, Yuzuru Hanyu was mentioned in 6 of the 10 most engaged-with tweets

## making the most of events with behind-the-scenes content and highlights

despite event cancellation throughout 2020, ISU capitalised on events in February – particularly the 2020 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Seoul, South Korea and the ISU Short Track Speed Skating World Cup in Dresden, Germany

## and the winner...

ISU's inaugural Skating Awards brought together Figure Skating fans from around the world to celebrate the very best in their sport

the campaign built up engagement across the Skating community, resulting in twice as many video views on Twitter than average



# how UCI improved on every platform

Zack Cooper, Social Media Editor

## *UCI improved its #SportOnSocial ranking on each social media platform. What was key to this success?*

Despite being a very small team, I'd like to think that we know our audience well which allows us to implement a content strategy that we know will resonate with our fans. One huge change for us over the past twelve months has also been our focus on visual marketing, especially when it comes to event coverage. We have tried to develop a modern and brand-centric visual identity on social media to drive audience engagement. Building on the visual aspect, we have then tried to go deeper when it comes to storytelling and highlighting key profiles within our sport, whether that be elite or amateur.

## *UCI events have started to return. What are you doing differently on social compared to pre COVID?*

With a huge reduction in events last year, we delved deeper into our archives and adapted this content across our various platforms. From re-playing past live streams to creating short-form content, our archives, despite being fairly limited, helped us to continue to engage fans. Since the start of the pandemic, we have also orientated our content to promoting unity and togetherness within the Cycling world under the **#CyclingUnited** hashtag. UGC content has played a huge part in this shift.

## *What social media platforms will be key to UCI over the next 12 months?*

It's the platform in the minds of a lot of social media professionals at the moment: TikTok. I will be the first to admit that our initial launch on the platform wasn't quite what we expected. However, we still believe in its potential to promote cycling to a completely different audience and showcase cycling for what it is: diverse, fun, skilful, and often quite surprising!



**#SportOnSocial  
League Table 2021**

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**YouTube analysis**

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# YouTube platform top 10

| International Federation |  | 2021 | 2020 | change |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|--------|
| <b>World Athletics</b>   | World Athletics                                  | 1    | 1    | - -    |
| <b>Volleyball World</b>  | Volleyball World                                 | 2    | 2    | - -    |
| <b>FIFA</b>              | International Federation of Association Football | 3    | 5    | 2 ▲    |
| <b>World Archery</b>     | World Archery                                    | 4    | 9    | 5 ▲    |
| <b>FIG</b>               | International Gymnastics Federation              | 5    | 14   | 9 ▲    |
| <b>BWF</b>               | Badminton World Federation                       | 6    | 4    | 2 ▼    |
| <b>World Rugby</b>       | World Rugby                                      | 7    | 3    | 4 ▼    |
| <b>FIBA</b>              | International Basketball Federation              | 8    | 7    | 1 ▼    |
| <b>ITTF</b>              | International Table Tennis Federation            | 9    | 6    | 3 ▼    |
| <b>ISU</b>               | International Skating Union                      | 10   | 10   | - -    |

# subscribers to IF YouTube accounts increased by **2.8m**

**19%** average growth rate  
50% in 2019

**60%** fall in  
videos produced  
from **33.2k** to **13.4k**

**55%** decrease in video  
views of new content  
from **887.9m** to **395.6m**

views per video  
increased by **10%**  
from **23.0k** to **25.2k**

engagement rate  
remained at **0.2%**

channel views fell by **26%**  
from **1.8bn** to **1.3bn**



# virtual events successfully replaced the lack of live events



World Athletics grew their number of YouTube subscribers to **432.0k** (**95%** increase)

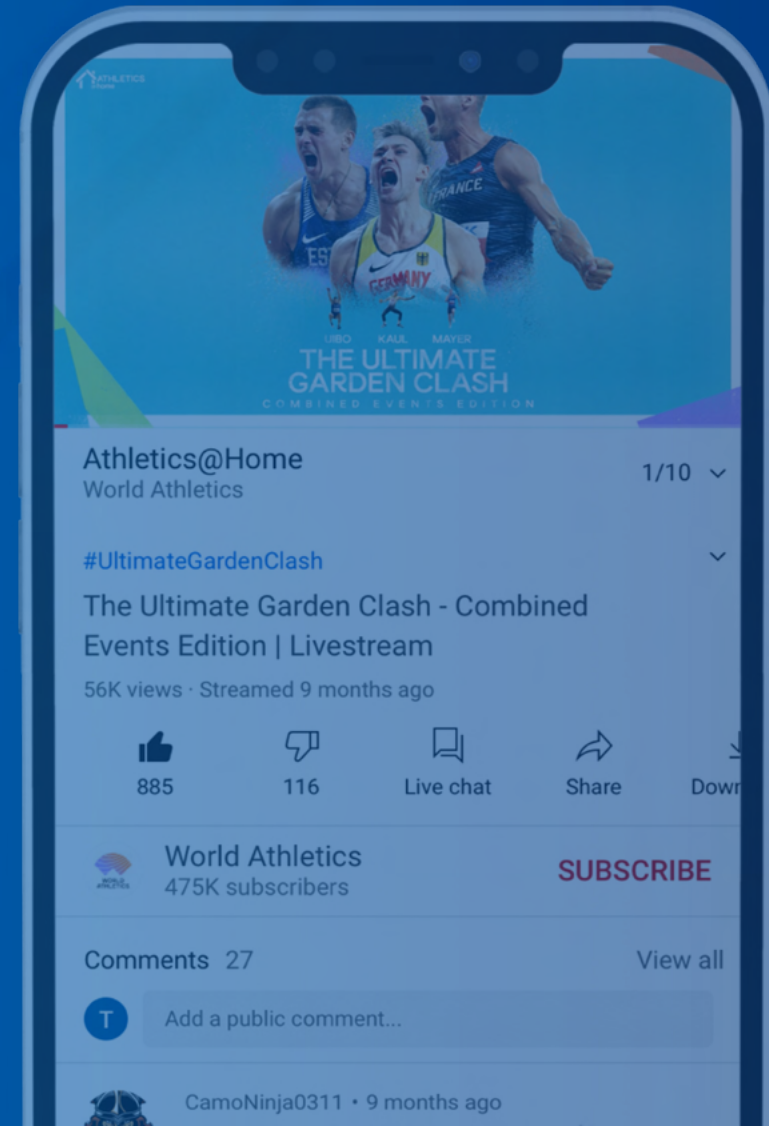
World Athletics repurposed highlights from previous world championships and launched 'The Ultimate Garden Clash' – a virtual tournament where athletes competed against each other. Live streamed on YouTube, it generated huge worldwide media coverage



World Archery grew by **87.0k** subscribers (**40%** increase)

fans flocked to the channel to watch 'Lockdown Knockout' – a remote tournament that helped fill the void in the events calendar

matches were filmed with mobile phones and a live broadcast was produced



# 3 IFs produced 40% of all YouTube videos

UWW produced **2.3k** videos – more than any other IF and **17%** of the total

**45%** of UWW videos coincided with February's 2020 European Wrestling Championships in Italy

a 'Stay Strong, Stay at Home' playlist was produced: it included compilation videos and athlete stories

FIBA were responsible for **13%** of all videos (**1.8K**)

driven by live coverage and highlights from national, regional and continental events

the inaugural FIBA Esports Open 2020 and replays from classic matches filled in for the lack of events during the summer months

ITTF produced **1.3k** videos

most were event highlights posted at the beginning and end of 2020

gaps were filled with full replays of classic matches streamed as part of the **#ITTFsmashBack** campaign



# 3 IFs accounted for 47% of YouTube views

## FIFA's most-watched videos were dominated by #WorldCupAtHome

11 of the 20 most-viewed videos came from this campaign, with 6 of the matches coming from the 2018 World Cup in Russia

other most-watched videos included the Official Film from two World Cups, a live stream of the Best FIFA Football Awards 2020, and compilation videos of some of the world's greatest players

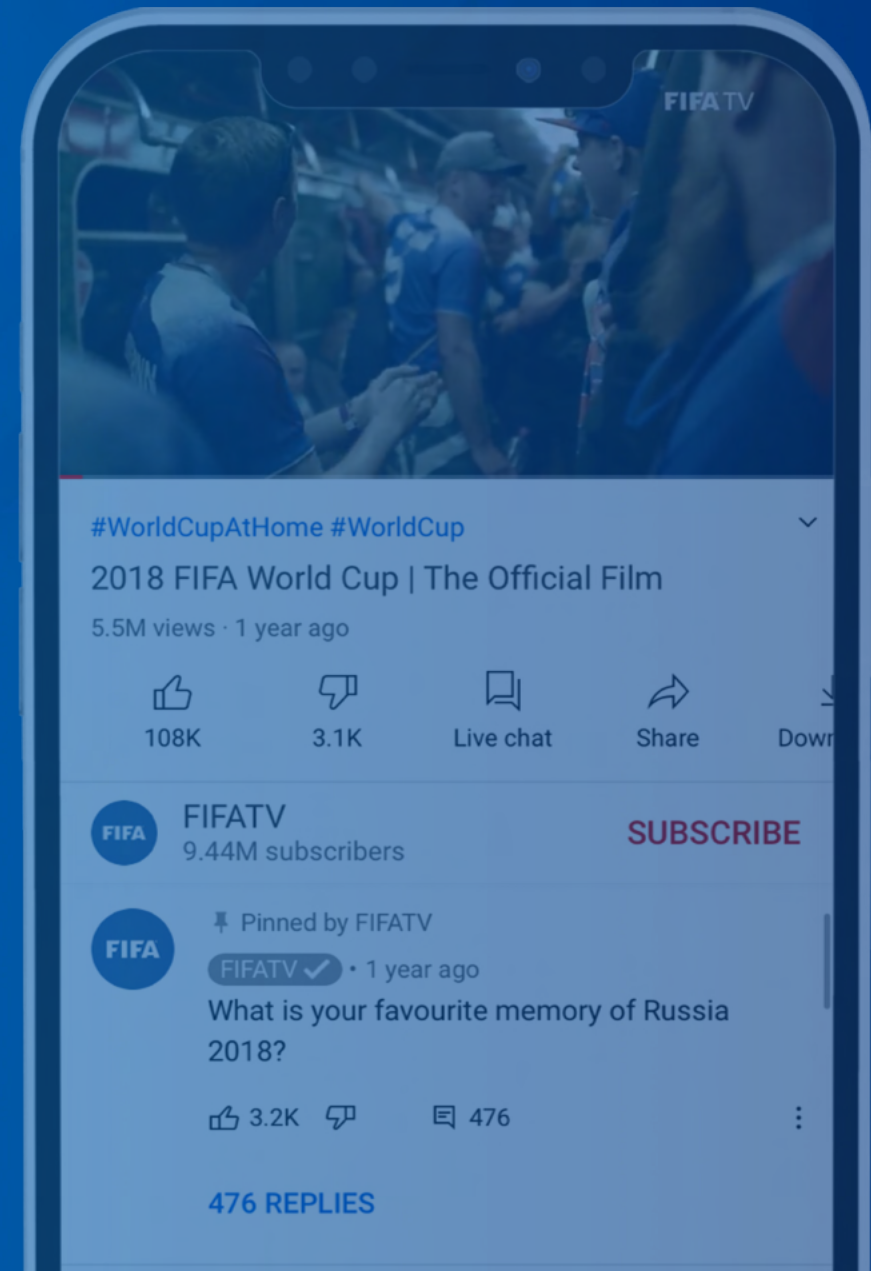
## Tokyo Qualifiers were a key driver for Volleyball World's video views

9 of the 20 most-viewed videos included live coverage or highlights from Tokyo Volleyball Qualification events

the remaining most-viewed videos were full match replays, typically from previous Women's tournaments - China and Japan featured most frequently

## live streaming led the way for BWF

14 of the 20 most-viewed videos came from the 2020 All England Open, in which the channel live streamed matches to countries where broadcast rights were not sold



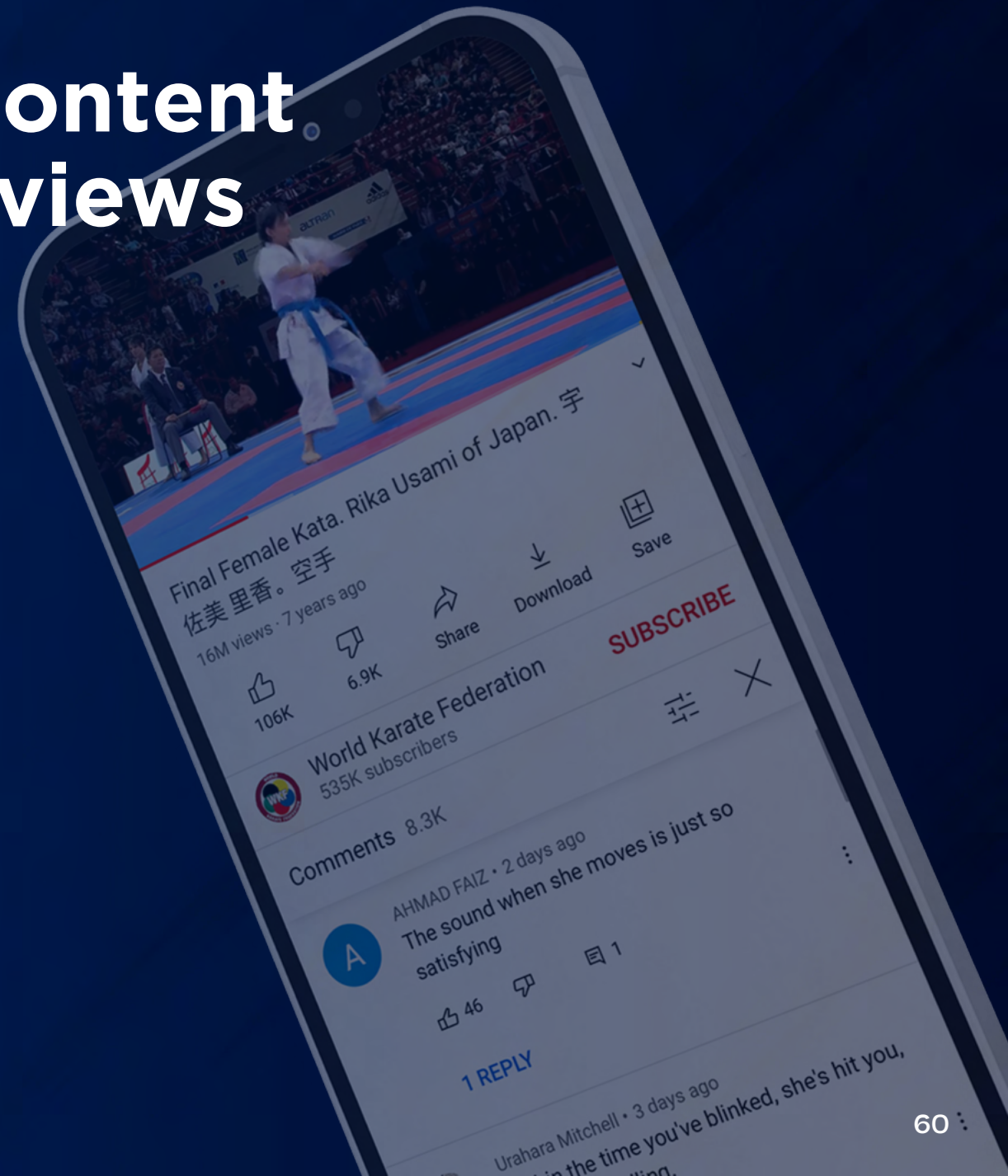
# IFs relied on archive content to generate YouTube views

only **30%** of views came from videos created in 2020 – a decrease of **50%** from 2019

WKF had **22.6m** views from content uploaded before 2020

the 'Decades Best' series, which featured the biggest moments in recent Karate World Championships, drove traffic to the YouTube channel

the home page 'Popular Upload' playlist includes 12 of their most-viewed videos of all time – appealing to new and existing subscribers





# A deep-dive into WTT's fan-focused strategy

Matt Pound, Director, World Table Tennis

## *What was the rationale for rebranding to WTT?*

WTT was created to be the commercial and events company of the ITTF, with a mission to place players and fans at the core of its business in order to catapult Table Tennis to the forefront of global sports business. We aim to do this through delivering world-class entertainment events, engaging fan-centric content and innovations such as the more modern field of play, in-house TV production and a fresh new approach of presenting Table Tennis.

## *How have your fans responded on social media to the rebrand?*

After our Macau exhibition event last November where the world got its first taste of WTT and after our first official event in Doha, there has been a very positive response to the rebrand, especially regarding the refreshed look and feel, the new social media content and the field of play. We are looking forward to rolling out more innovations and more fresh ideas as the year unfolds and we are able to roll out all our events tiers which will elevate further the engagement with fans.

### ***How did the rebrand impact your social media strategy?***

We spent some time thinking about the tone and voice of each platform with the aim of making both the sport and players more relatable and accessible. We've been creating more engaging types of content that the fans have embraced such as additional behind-the-scenes content, FIFA-style stats cards, player language exchange sessions.

### ***What advice would you give sports that are considering a similar type of rebrand?***

Carefully consider what has yet to be done within your sport and choose partners who understand and can identify with your raison d'être.

### ***What's next for WTT?***

Given the current pandemic landscape, we hope to build on our COVID-free event success from the WTT Contender series in Doha, to the next event tier of WTT Champions that takes place in China in May.

We have soft-launched a website and the next step is to launch our app and continue to put social and digital at the heart of everything we do to continue to establish our brand in the market.

### ***How will you use the Tokyo Olympics to capitalise on the new WTT brand?***

We have events planned ahead of the Tokyo Olympics and after. The last Olympics captured **1bn** TV viewers across Table Tennis alone. We hope that the combination of a successful Table Tennis event in Tokyo being cross promoted with our WTT brand will bring about a new and wider audience to the sport.

### ***In one word, describe the past 12 months ...***

Innovative



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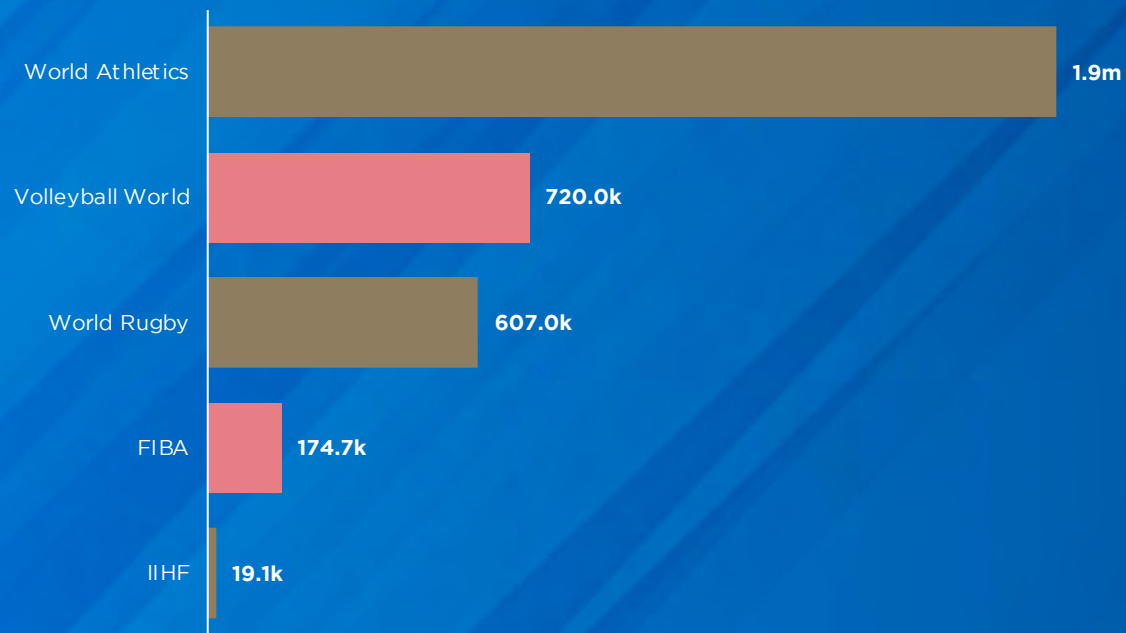
# TikTok

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# 11 IFs are active on TikTok with an average 8.5k followers

World Athletics have the most followers (**1.9m**) and the highest number of likes (**66.3m**)

## Top 5 IFs\* by TikTok followers







# IFs have amassed over **100m** likes

Volleyball World has the 2nd highest number of likes (**15.9m**)

the majority of TikTok videos were of great volleyball plays and viral UGC

Volleyball World use both original sounds and trending music in their TikToks

World Rugby has generated **13.5m** likes

its best-performing content is repurposed archive content with relevant captions and TikTok edits



# why **TikTok** is perfect for sport

**Olly Roland-Jones, Brand Partnerships, Sports, TikTok**

## *Why is now a perfect time for sports to be on TikTok?*

TikTok is fast becoming a home of fandom and sport culture. It's a place where fans anywhere in the world can connect with their favourite teams, clubs, players and events, as well as create their own sporting content like memes and goal celebrations. You can see the love on the platform with 39 billion views on **#sports** and almost 94 billion on **#football** content.

This is the year of sport on TikTok. We're excited to be an official partner of UEFA EURO 2020 – the first time a digital entertainment platform has sponsored a major tournament for UEFA. Through its partnership with UEFA, TikTok is looking to cement its reputation as the home for football fans to share their passion for the game.

As an official partner, TikTok will provide a place where fans can follow their favourite football content creators, share the best TikTok football content, and create their own special moments, reactions and celebrations around the tournament.

Our community loves to celebrate sport in creative ways, and I can't wait to see how they engage with all the unmissable content we expect for the UEFA EURO 2020.

In addition to the incredible amount of content created by our community, we're seeing many more national and club football teams coming on to the platform, quickly achieving amazing success and leaning into the trends on the platform. We're also seeing an increasing number of players join the fun and tell their own stories – on TikTok they can showcase their creative expression, let loose, and be their authentic selves.

### ***How does TikTok differ from other social media platforms?***

So, I'd start by saying we're not a social media platform, we're an entertainment platform. But it's not just for entertainment that people turn to TikTok for; they come to learn something new, to acquire a new skill, or simply get inspired to do something they've never done before.

Despite being a relatively new app, TikTok has received an amazing reception from people around the world, showing that everyone is a creator at heart. From day one, our mission has been to inspire creativity and bring joy, cultivating a safe space for positive, creative expression. The way we do that is by:

- first, making it easy and fun to express yourself. We give people incredibly easy-to-use, inventive and fun ways to add sounds, music and visual effects to videos shot right on your phone - making it easy and quick to bring ideas to life.
- second, we recommend videos to you based on what, rather than who, you like. The For You feed is the feed of videos you first see when you open TikTok - and the way it works is by learning what you enjoy so you can find more of it easily, from creators you don't follow and might never have heard of, and it helps you discover challenges, trends, music and memes that you never otherwise would have done. That unique way of recommending content is how creators on TikTok can go viral without having a single follower
- third, we bring people and communities together through original, witty and creative trends and memes that are programmed on the Discover page of the app - surfacing the best of what the community is enjoying, and responding to what's happening in the world and in culture

### ***What is key for sports to be successful on the platform?***

Sport on TikTok is all about passion. Sports content can be framed by a variety of emotional triggers - inspiring, funny, emotive, creative - and this makes it a perfect category to capitalise on our users' story-telling capabilities.

One thing to remember is that we're a sound-on platform, so the sounds of sport are key. This can take a number of forms, from passionate moments becoming even more emotional through our immersive sound-on environment to the example of the F1 channel, which does an amazing job of showcasing the conversation between driver and mechanic during a race.

*If you could give just one piece of advice to a sport considering a presence on TikTok, what would it be?*

Get started! Your first piece of content likely won't be your best performing, but that's fine. Try to establish your own tone of voice and work towards delivering content that is increasingly native to the platform. Where possible, join in with the latest trends and be an active part of the incredible TikTok community.

*What have you got up your sleeve for Tokyo 2020?*

TikTok is such an exciting place to be at the moment, whatever sport you're in – particularly as we gear up for an incredible summer of sports. From Wimbledon to UEFA EURO 2020, and of course this year's summer Olympics in Tokyo, there will be so many high-stake sports moments for the world to watch and love.

To mark one year to go until the Tokyo Olympic Games last year, TikTok teamed up with Team GB to challenge people to get active with fun, physical TikTok workout challenges that people could try at home. Via the **#TeamGBGames** challenge, top Team GB athletes, including snowboarder @Aimee\_Fuller, hockey player Sam Ward and Taekwondo star Mahama Cho, set challenges for the community to try, including handstands, juggling and some unique press-ups. The hashtag gained more than **538m** views.

There's plenty to more to come from us before the Games itself, so watch this space.

*In one word, describe the next twelve months for TikTok ...*

Groundbreaking

# 10 tips for success on TikTok

ensure your content is a good mix of created, co-created and curated

create and engage with hashtag challenges

music is the beating heart of TikTok

you don't need an entire production crew

make friends at TikTok HQ

capitalise on the Creator Fund

(really) understand how to use Paid

get to grips with the algorithm

it's essential to use TikTok Creators

don't obsess about how often you post



“

*Your TikTok plan doesn't need to be complicated, but it does need to be incredibly specific to the platform.*

*You've heard the phrase 'one size fits all'?*

*Well, when it comes to TikTok – one size most certainly doesn't fit all. That video you created for Facebook? Won't work on TikTok. Your latest Instagram Reel? Won't work on TikTok. Your last Tweet ... well, you get the idea.*

*While these tips can't tell you precisely what your TikTok plan should be, it can tell you 10 things you absolutely have to know for it to be successful.*

”

**Alex Ross**  
Director  
Redtorch



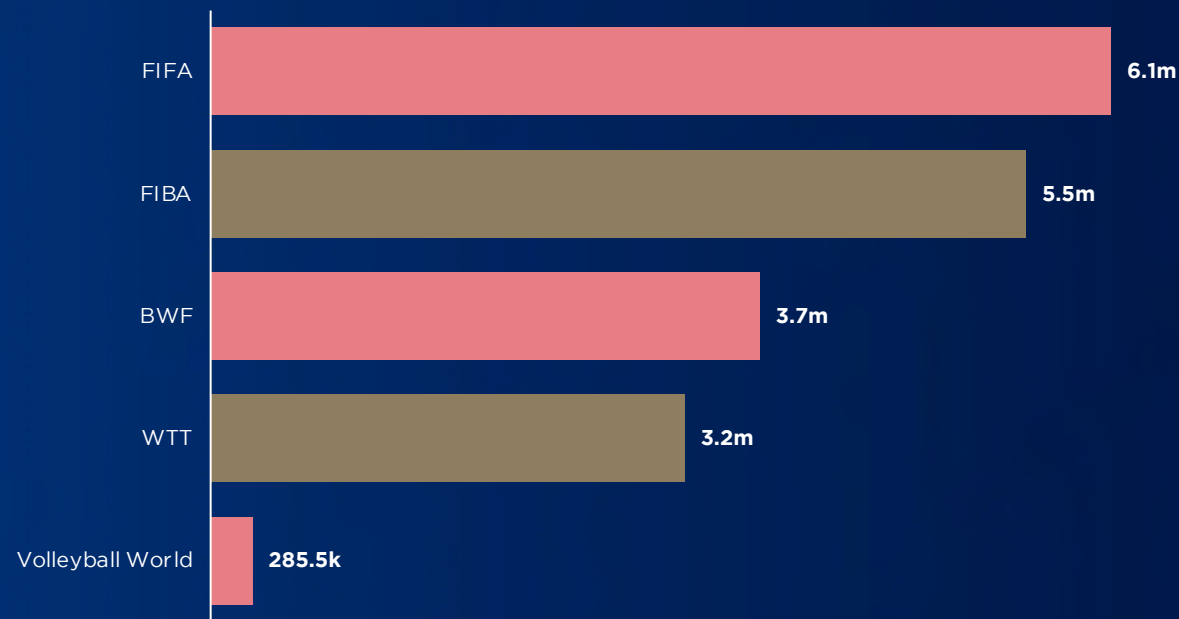
微博 wēibó

# 19 IFs are active on 微博 wēibó with an average 73.0k fans

FIFA has the highest number of fans on their main Weibo page (**6.1m**)

FIFA and FIBA both have World Cup pages; the latter also has a page for their 3x3 discipline and the Asia Cup

## Top 5 IFs\* by Weibo fans





# 9 considerations before launching on 微博 wēibó

Guy Horne, Managing Director, H&A Media

## **1. What is your China strategy?**

IFs need to have an agreed communication strategy. This should specify key themes for all communication and marketing engagement in China.

## **2. Weibo account operation**

It is not possible to operate a Weibo account effectively from outside of China. There are logistical difficulties operating via a VPN to access the Chinese internet eco-system and practical difficulties confirming logins via a Chinese SIM card. Culturally, having your Chinese communications person in the market and following trends, allows for the creation of unique content and involvement on hot topics that resonate.

## **3. Registration and verification**

Even in Chinese, Weibo's verification process is a challenge. To get the account finally registered requires a significant amount of compliance paperwork and takes around 6-8 weeks.

## **4. Brand profile**

Each account has its own profile page. This can be styled to match the identity, look and feel of the organisation.



## ***5. Content posting***

There are certain elements that can be repurposed from Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, but not all themes in western social media resonate in China. Be prepared to create your own content at live events or focus on a China-specific theme.

## ***6. Will Chinese athletes participate?***

Weibo is the platform they are fully familiar with. Chinese athletes will participate, with appropriate approvals from coaches or the national association. Chinese athletes will speak in public and if you can bring the National Association on board with posts that celebrate the athletes, this will ensure a long-lasting cooperation.

## ***7. The inside track***

Weibo also offers a means of communication with Chinese sports officials in a more informal and direct way. With Chinese officials reluctant to use email or even access non-Chinese hosted websites, this is often the most reliable channel of communication.

## ***8. How does Weibo support broadcasting of your event?***

It works extremely well. For the last three Olympic and Paralympic Games, CCTV-5 has shared world feed clips and interviews with Weibo to allow fans access to compelling short-form content. Weibo is designed to complement existing digital and linear live broadcast platforms in China.

## ***9. Will it help attract Chinese brands and potential host cities for my sport?***

Weibo offers a range of tools for sponsor visibility. From lucky draws and competitions to ticketing, merchandise and e-commerce. For potential host cities, it is a powerful showcase and means to attract visitors to events.

For more information, please contact [guyhorne@horneassociates.ch](mailto:guyhorne@horneassociates.ch)



# say hello

Redtorch is a multi award-winning marketing agency trusted by the biggest brands in the world of sport.

We provide clear, data-driven insights and creative solutions to help our clients understand, grow and engage digital audiences worldwide.

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**check out our website** [www.redtorch.sport](http://www.redtorch.sport)