



# #sport on social

League Table 2022

# contents

methodology	<b>4</b>
#SportOnSocial League Table 2022	<b>5</b>
year-on-year comparisons	<b>12</b>
overall performance analysis	<b>18</b>
Facebook	<b>25</b>
Instagram	<b>38</b>
Twitter	<b>51</b>
YouTube	<b>62</b>
TikTok	<b>75</b>



# Welcome to this year's League Table

Jonny Murch, CEO, Redtorch

Welcome to the 6th edition of the #SportOnSocial League Table which measures the social media performance of Olympic International Federations across 2021.

Despite a challenging start to the year, the incredibly hard work of so many in our industry meant that the world of sport was able to re-ignite.

Kudos to everyone who helped deliver the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and other major events under very difficult circumstances.

Disruption to sport in 2021 is reflected by the fact that the number of social posts did not reach levels seen in 2018 or 2019. Nevertheless, creativity overcame broadcast restrictions at Tokyo 2020 to increase engagement rates by 99% compared to 2020.



**Creativity overcame broadcast restrictions at Tokyo 2020 to increase engagement rates by 99% compared to 2020**

Social media continues to have a huge influence in improving marketing effectiveness in sport. It plays a vital role in growing the long-term brand strength of your IF and your sport, and in delivering short-term activations that engage audiences at key moments.

I hope the insights are useful and help inform your future decision making!

# methodology

The #SportOnSocial League Table 2022 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**

\*engagement rate = number of post engagements divided by number of fans

Insights gathered from last year's #SportOnSocial Survey enabled us to weight each social media channel based on the average level of priority for IFs

- **Instagram (35%)**
- **Facebook (25%)**
- **YouTube (20%)**
- **Twitter (20%)**

## Notes

- Data correct as of January 2022
- The analysis of open-source data meant it was not possible to determine whether engagements/views were organic or paid
- 'Followers' have replaced 'Likes' to measure size, growth and engagement rate of Facebook pages
- Instagram Stories and Instagram Reels have not been included in the report as data not available
- Although an overview of TikTok is given in the report, it has not been included in the rankings as most IFs are not yet active on this platform

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 2022

International Federation	2022	2021	Change	International Federation	2022	2021	Change
Badminton World Federation (BWF)	1	2	+1 ▲	International Boxing Association (IBA)	21	32	+11 ▲
Volleyball World	2	1	-1 ▼	International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC)	22	20	-2 ▼
FIFA	3	4	+1 ▲	World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)	23	30	+7 ▲
World Athletics	4	3	-1 ▼	International Hockey Federation (FIH)	24	21	-3 ▼
International Basketball Federation (FIBA)	5	5	0 -	International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF)	25	22	-3 ▼
International Cycling Union (UCI)	6	8	+2 ▲	World Taekwondo (WT)	26	23	-3 ▼
World Archery	7	19	+12 ▲	International Surfing Association (ISA)	27	38	+11 ▲
World Rugby	8	7	-1 ▼	World Curling Federation (WCF)	28	26	-2 ▼
International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI)	9	10	+1 ▲	International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)	29	27	-2 ▼
International Swimming Federation (FINA)	10	15	+5 ▲	International Weightlifting Federation (IWF)	30	28	-2 ▼
United World Wrestling (UWW)	11	9	-2 ▼	World Rowing	31	25	-6 ▼
World Table Tennis (WTT)	12	6	-6 ▼	International Fencing Federation (FIE)	32	29	-3 ▼
International Judo Federation (IJF)	13	16	+3 ▲	World Skate	33	37	+4 ▲
International Gymnastics Federation (FIG)	14	11	-3 ▼	World Sailing (WS)	34	24	-10 ▼
International Ski Federation (FIS)	15	13	-2 ▼	International Luge Federation (FIL)	35	36	+1 ▲
International Handball Federation (IHF)	16	31	+15 ▲	World Triathlon	36	33	-3 ▼
International Tennis Federation (ITF)	17	12	-5 ▼	International Canoe Federation (ICF)	37	35	-2 ▼
International Skating Union (ISU)	18	14	-4 ▼	World Pentathlon (UIPM)	38	39	+1 ▲
World Karate Federation (WKF)	19	17	-2 ▼	International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF)	39	34	-5 ▼
International Biathlon Union (IBU)	20	18	-2 ▼	International Golf Federation (IGF)	40	-	- -



## Ollie's headlines

Ollie Davis, Head of Research and Performance, Redtorch

**“ IHF jumped 15 places to #16 overall and was one of 3 IFs (along with WBSC and ISA) to improve its ranking on each platform**



### ranked #1 overall

through climbing to #1 on Instagram – higher engagements were the result of more content and a real understanding of what fans wanted on the platform



### only Winter IF up in rankings

Beijing 2022 likely to result in all Winter IFs climbing the rankings next year



### ranked #1 on Facebook

high levels of engagement and video views were generated from Flashback series and new video formats that featured athletes from a different perspective



### biggest riser

jumped 15 places to #16 overall and was one of 3 IFs (along with WBSC and ISA) to improve their ranking on each platform



### #1 on Twitter and YouTube

Success on YouTube came through a mix of archive and current tournament content; experimenting with YouTube Shorts attracted younger viewers



### 2nd biggest riser

jumped 12 places to #7 overall with significant improvements on Facebook (#2) and Twitter (#4); high growth and high engagement rates led to this increase.



# interview with Lloyd Green

Head of Communications, Badminton World Federation

## A big congratulations for topping this year's #SportOnSocial League Table! What's the key to your success?

We are extremely excited about this achievement, and it is a culmination of a lot of hard work from the team.

We have been able to bring our vision alive over the past three years and deliver upon our goals. The key to our success has been an improved relationship with the player group that has allowed us to connect fans closer to players than ever before, both on our Anglophone channels and on our Chinese platforms.

This has included a dedicated approach to improving the social media literacy of all players through our Star Creation Programme, in which we have delivered intensive tutoring to a small number of players who have then gone on to share this learning with their peers and teammates.

While we have not had exhaustive resources to create a large-scale content team, we have been smart with our existing resources, and what we have been able to do is intensify the appetite of fans for more content by developing a consistent, accurate, reliable and entertaining content offering.





## interview with Lloyd Green (cont.)

Linked closely to this is an intimate knowledge of the exact types of content our fans enjoy, and how such content is consumed. We are now in a position of constantly increasing the value proposition for fans, so the sport and the players remain relevant. Our fan-first approach to engagement – in which we have explored a more informal voice, particularly on Instagram – has meant our storytelling has become more inclusive to more people.

We look forward to building upon this foundation and working with our badminton community to keep badminton the number one sport on social media.

**You also came #1 on Instagram, sharing more content than any other IF. How did you manage this frequency while ensuring content remained relevant?**

Our frequency of content on Instagram is an indication of the demand from fans. We have enthusiastic, passionate and loyal fans from around the world and all they want to do is be closer to their heroes.

So we embarked on a plan to give fans more of what they wanted. We did not necessarily reinvent the wheel. We focused on the innocent moments, the human touches, which allowed fans to relate to players more. This was simple to execute and very manageable over a 365-day period.



**We are now in a position of constantly increasing the value proposition for fans**





## interview with Lloyd Green (cont.)

Tokyo 2020 was certainly a successful period for us. We were able to capitalise on our raised profile and carried this momentum into a busy Q3 and Q4 where we had several high-profile tournaments. Subsequently, we surpassed the 1-million-follower mark and continued to engage fans 24-hours a day.

### How does social media fit within BWF's wider marketing strategy?

We are very aware of the badminton ecosystem and the commercial value of our social media assets running in parallel to our live delivery of television content to audiences globally.

A thriving social media machine creates further opportunity and awareness for badminton stakeholders and ultimately creates a revenue stream that we can put back into the sport.

As we endeavour to get more children to pick up a badminton racket, the fact we are igniting more badminton conversations online helps us promote the game far and wide.

### What tactical execution from 2021 are you most proud of?

With no spectators at Tokyo 2020, BWF launched a new fan engagement campaign for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The goal was to ask everyone in the badminton community



**We surpassed the  
1-million-follower  
mark and continued  
to engage fans  
24-hours a day**



## interview with Lloyd Green (cont.)

to **#RaiseARacket** on social media for all the players, teams, support staff, officials, volunteers and fans who helped make Tokyo 2020 memorable. The resulting influence saw badminton ranked among the best-performing International Federations in terms of social and digital performance during Tokyo 2020.

### How did you capitalise on the Tokyo Olympics?

Data comparing search trends from Rio 2016 to Tokyo 2020 showed that participation and consumption interest in badminton was at an all-time high – this despite COVID-19 severely impacting the organisation of badminton activities worldwide.

This supported BWF's own research across the past five years into sports consumption trends and the online preferences of our existing community, enabling us to pinpoint the types of communication tools and available technology required to take badminton to the next level digitally.

We were excited, therefore, to leverage this heightened exposure from Tokyo to launch our brand-new mobile app, Badminton4U. The app consolidates our digital assets into a dynamic, user friendly, one-stop-shop solution with an immersive user experience in which the fan is in the pilot's seat of their badminton journey: created with the fan solely in mind.



**Participation and  
consumption interest  
in badminton was at  
an all-time high**



## interview with Lloyd Green (cont.)

The app launched to great success and we look forward to seeing its benefits for many years to come.

### What was your most important learning from 2021?

There is still much that can be improved about player accessibility and player willingness to participate in content activities. We need more players to realise the full potential of an engaged fan base and how they can build commercial opportunities for themselves from this. So, we will continue with our successful education programmes as the success of our digital strategy is closely tied to the visibility and star power of our players.

### What do the next 12 months have in store for BWF on social media?

We are about to expand our content team and roll out our long-awaited 365 content strategy designed to make our channels even more engaging. Fans can expect to see more unique content with their favourite players to showcase a different side to the sport and its characters.



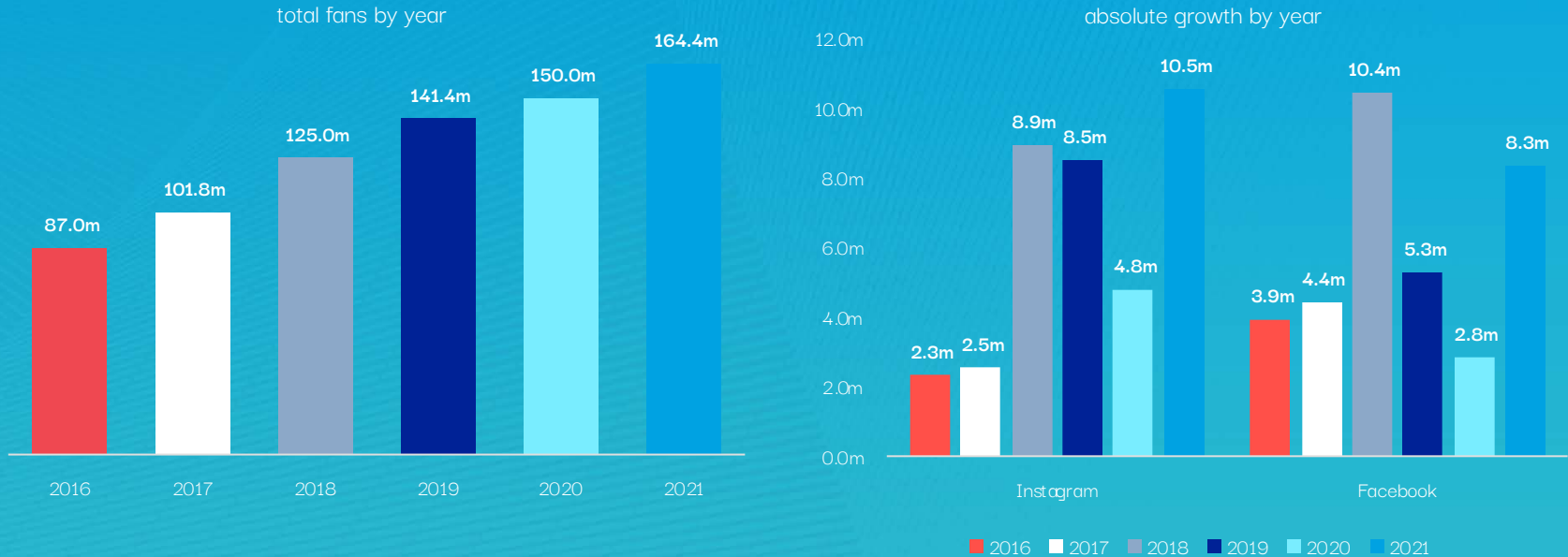
**The app launched to great success and we look forward to seeing its benefits for many years to come**



# year-on-year comparisons

# IFs added 10.5m followers on Instagram – the highest ever annual growth

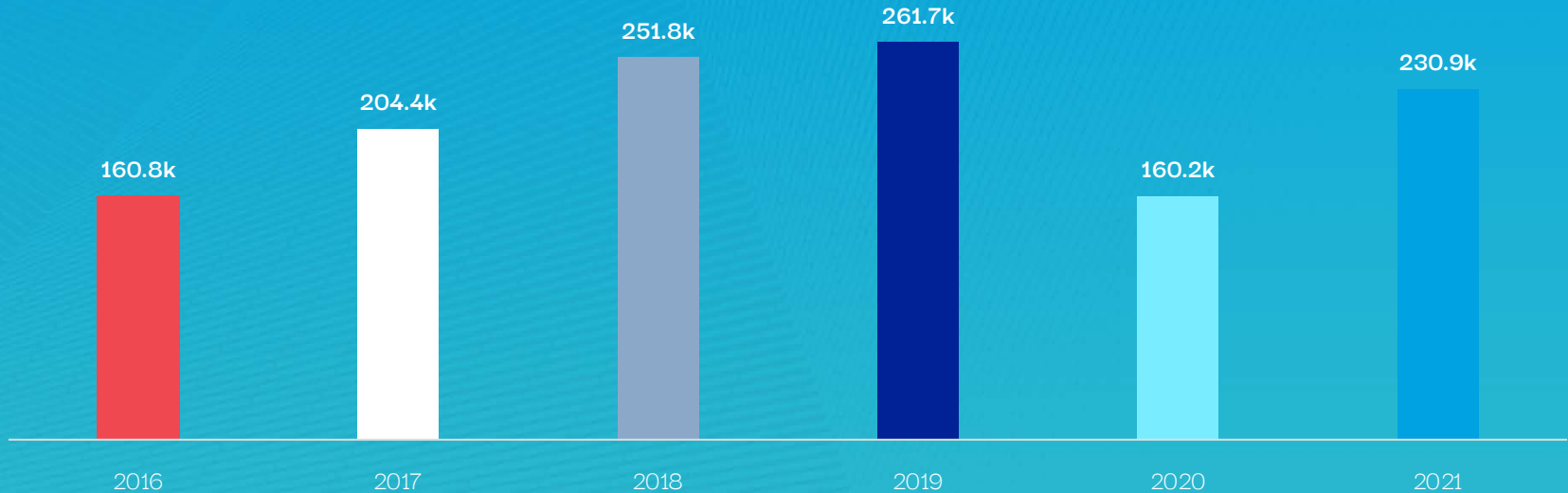
Facebook experienced a 192% year-on-year increase



# 44% more posts than in 2020

IFs posted 44.2k times on Instagram – the highest ever number on the platform

total posts by year

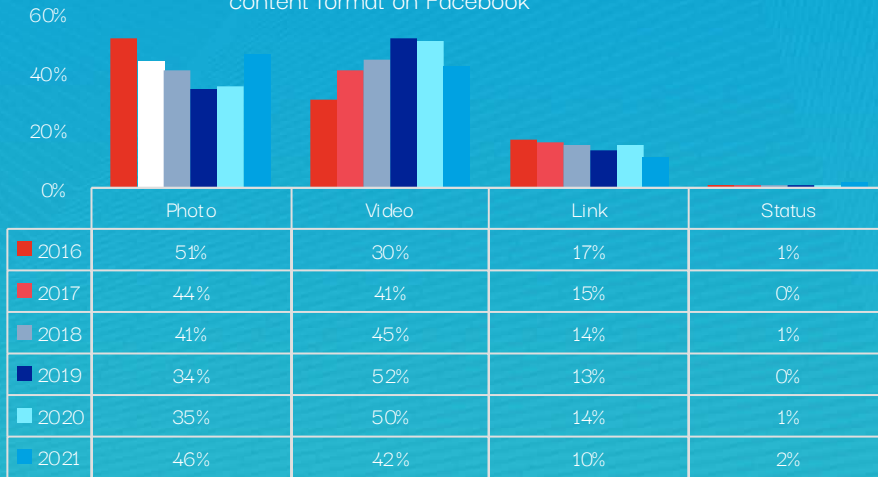


# photo content on Facebook made up 46% of total posts vs only 35% in 2020

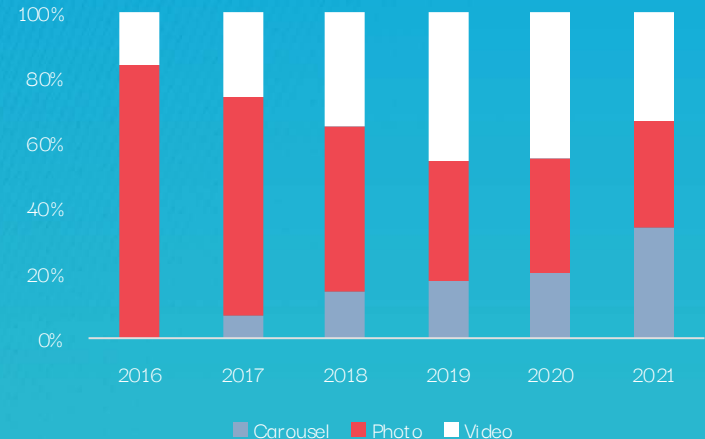
- video content on Facebook represented **42%** of total posts vs **50%** in 2020

- photo content at its lowest on Instagram (**33%** of total), video content represented lowest proportion of total content since 2017

content format on Facebook



content format on Instagram

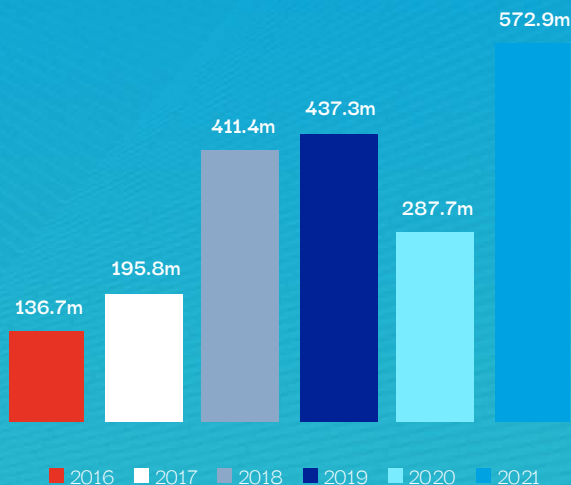


# IFs racked up 572.9m engagements – a 100% year-on-year increase

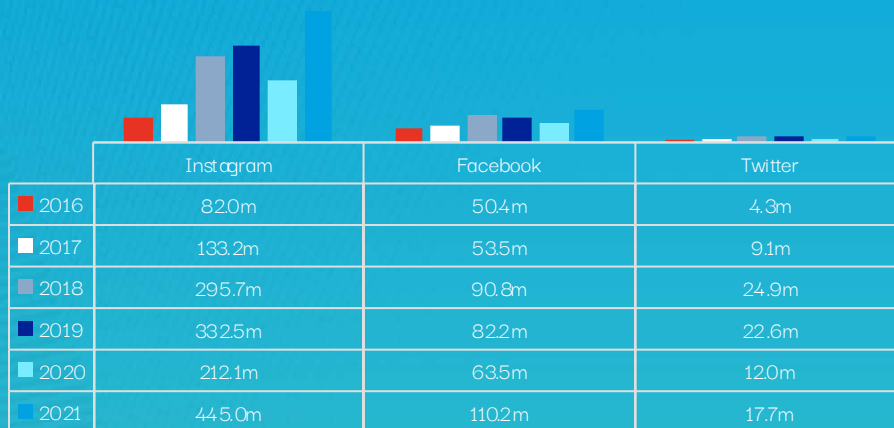
- the highest ever number of engagements was caused largely by IFs producing more content on Instagram than ever before

- Twitter experienced a **47%** year-on-year increase in engagements (**17.7m**) – which was still less than 2018 (**24.9m**) – primarily as a result of less content

engagements by year



engagements by platform



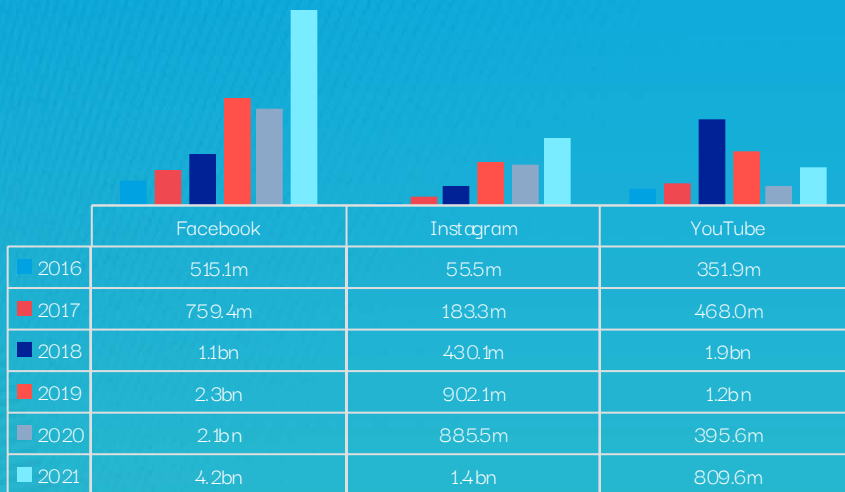
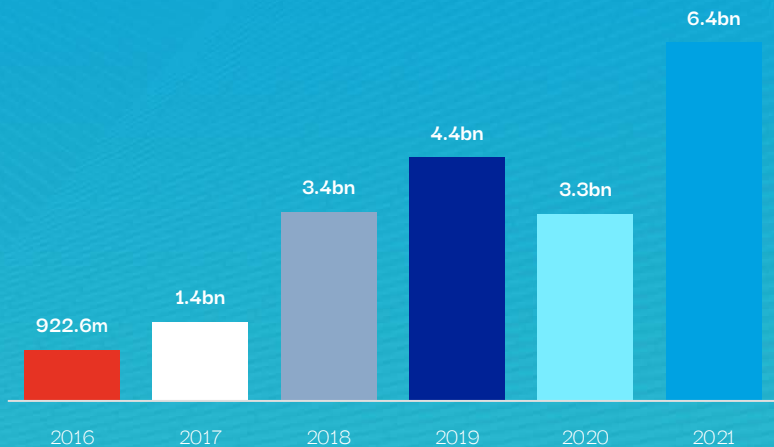


# 92% year-on-year increase in video views – despite video restrictions at Tokyo 2020

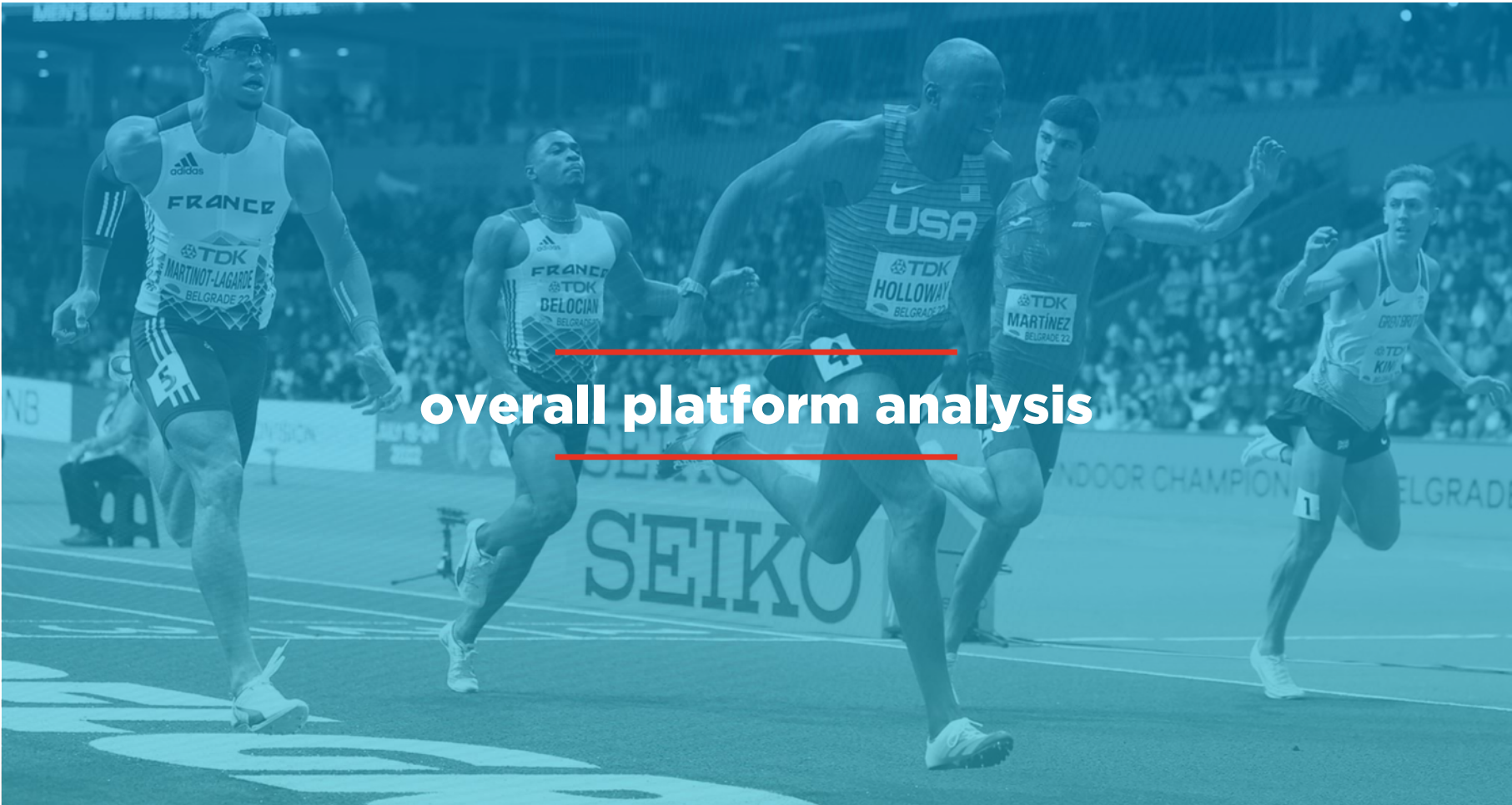
- Facebook and Instagram had highest numbers of video views (**4.2bn** and **1.4bn** respectively) – reasons for increase include highly engaging Olympic campaigns and effective paid media strategies

- YouTube video views were **105%** higher than 2020 but still lower than 2018 (when more video content than any other year)

video views by year



2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

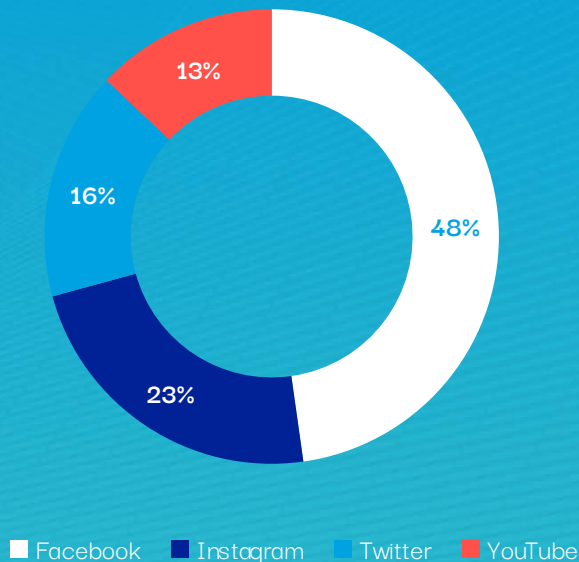


# overall platform analysis

# IFs added 188.8m new followers – an 11% year-on-year increase

23% of all followers were on Instagram – a 19% year-on-year increase

fan breakdown by platform



**32%**

total growth rate on Instagram  
(higher than any other platform)



**8.3m**

new followers on Facebook  
(2nd highest absolute increase)



**4.7m**

new subscribers on YouTube  
– 2nd highest growth rate (**24%**)

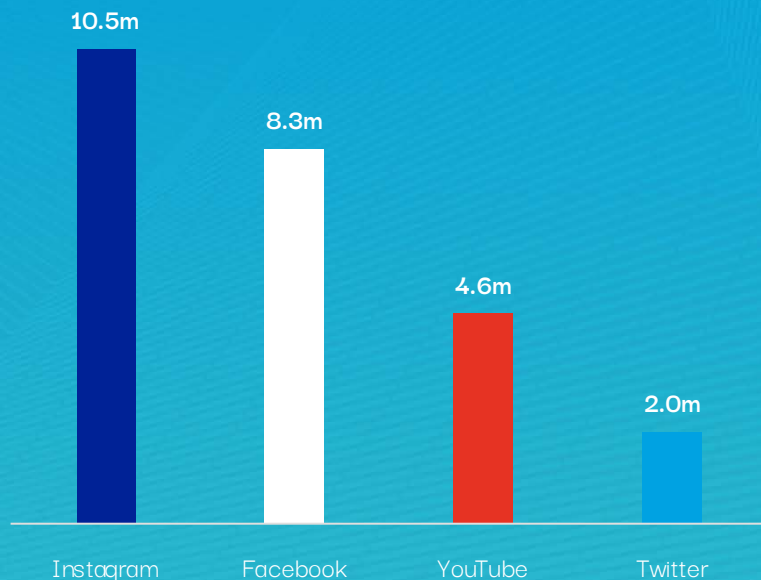


**2.0m**

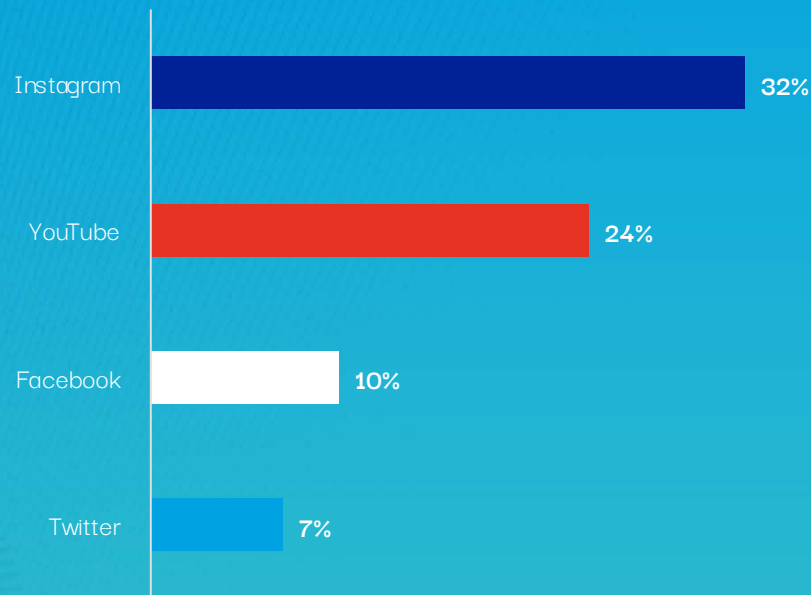
new followers on Twitter – **56%**  
higher than previous year (**1.3m**)

# IFs gained 10.5m new followers on Instagram – more than any other platform

absolute growth per platform

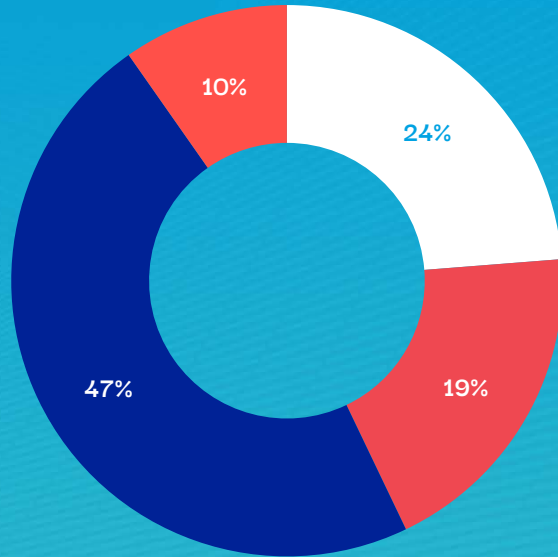


total growth rate per platform



# IFs posted 230k times - a 44% year-on-year increase

posts by platform



■ Facebook ■ Instagram ■ Twitter ■ YouTube



**109k** Tweets



**43%** increase



**55k** Facebook posts



**35%** increase



**30k** Instagram posts



**48%** increase



**22k** YouTube posts



**22k** increase

# IF content received 583m engagements - a 99% year-on-year increase

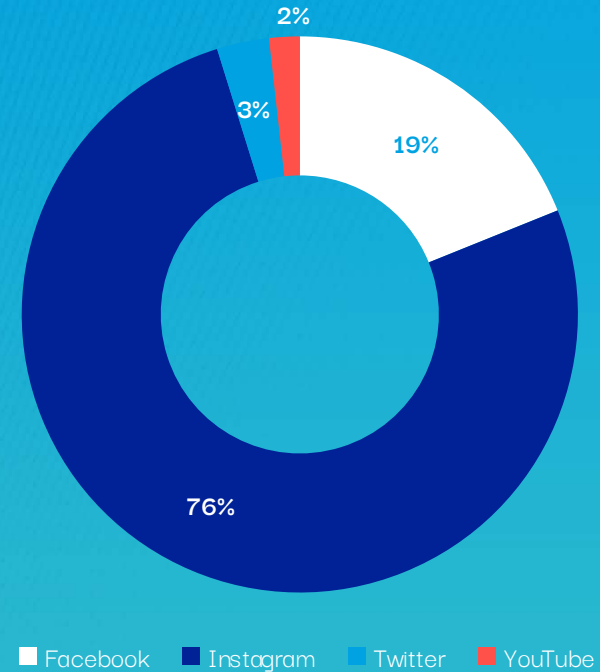
 **445m** Instagram engagements  **100%** increase

 **110m** Facebook engagements  **74%** increase

 **18m** Twitter engagements  **47%** increase

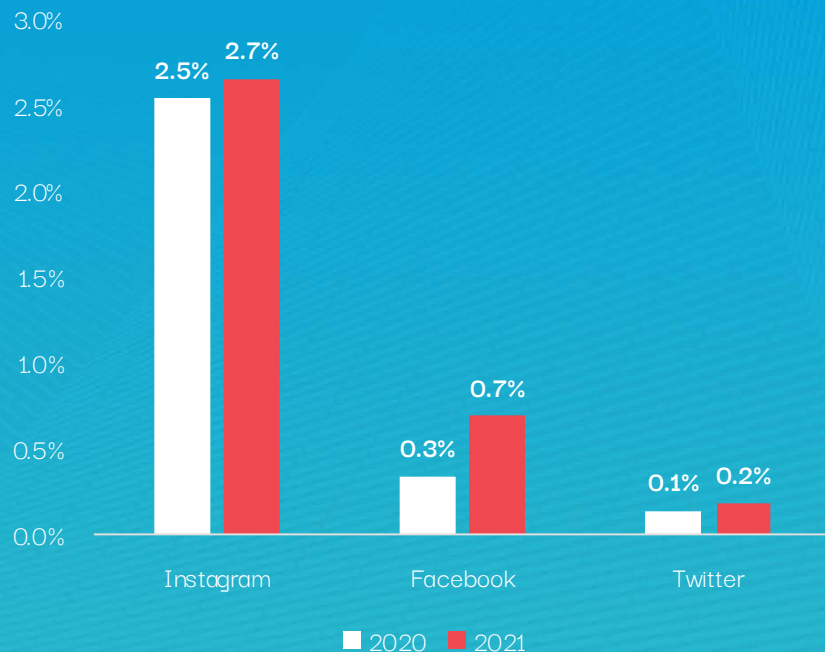
 **10m** YouTube engagements  **110%** increase

total engagements by platform



# engagement rates increased on each platform

engagement rate by platform



Instagram's engagement rate of **2.7%** was the highest of any platform



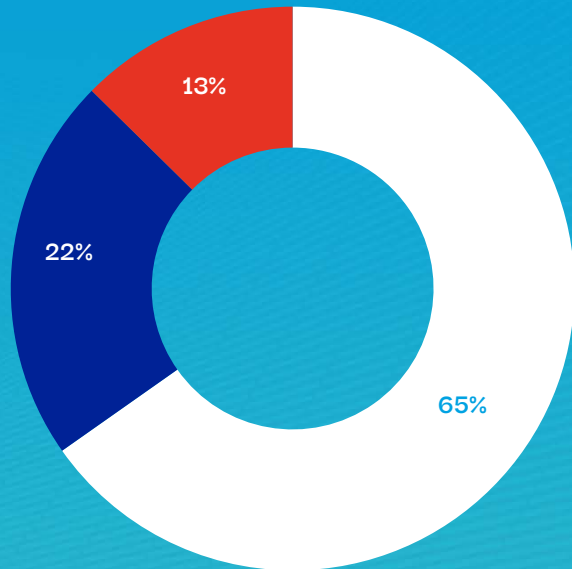
Facebook's engagement rate increase from **0.3%** to **0.7%** (largest year-on-year increase)



Twitter's engagement rate increased from **0.1%** to **0.2%** (the result of Gold medal announcements and record-breaking moments from Tokyo 2020)

# there were 6.4bn video views – a 92% year-on-year increase

views by platform



■ Facebook ■ Instagram ■ YouTube



Facebook experienced a **103%** increase in views and accounted for **65%** of total

↑ **+103%**



Instagram views jumped from **886m** to **1.4bn** a **60%** increase

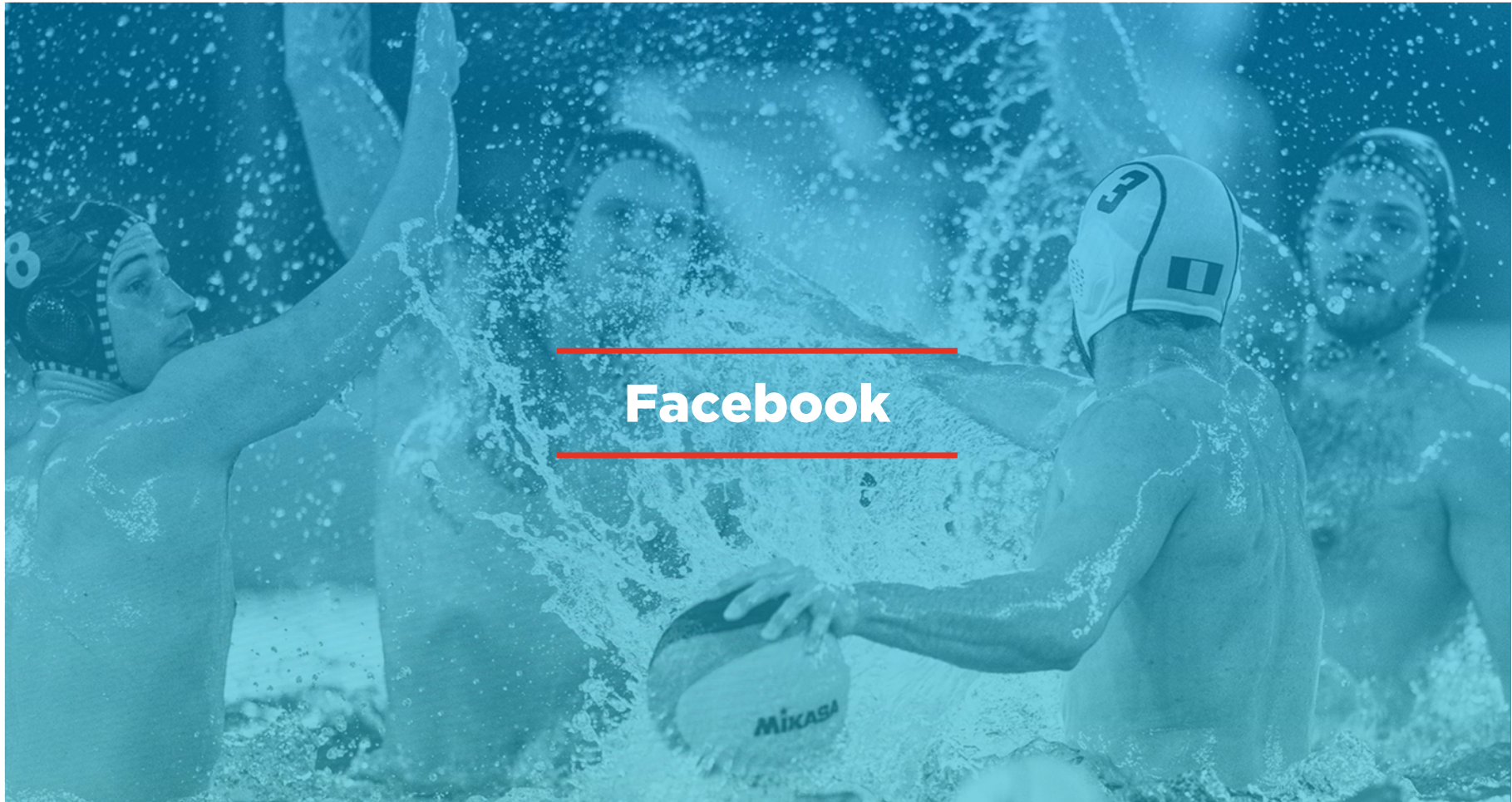
↑ **+60%**



YouTube views rose by **105%** to **810m** (partly due to a **68%** uplift in content)

↑ **+105%**





---

# Facebook

---



# Facebook top 10

## International Federation

2022 2021 Change



International Swimming Federation (FINA)

1 2 +1 ▲



World Archery

2 1 -1 ▼



Volleyball World

3 4 +1 ▲



World Athletics

4 3 -1 ▼



Badminton World Federation (BWF)

5 5 0 -



FIFA

6 8 +2 ▲



World Table Tennis (WTT)

7 19 +12 ▲



International Cycling Union (UCI)

8 7 -1 ▼



International Basketball Federation (FIBA)


9 10 +1 ▲




International Gymnastics Federation (FIG)

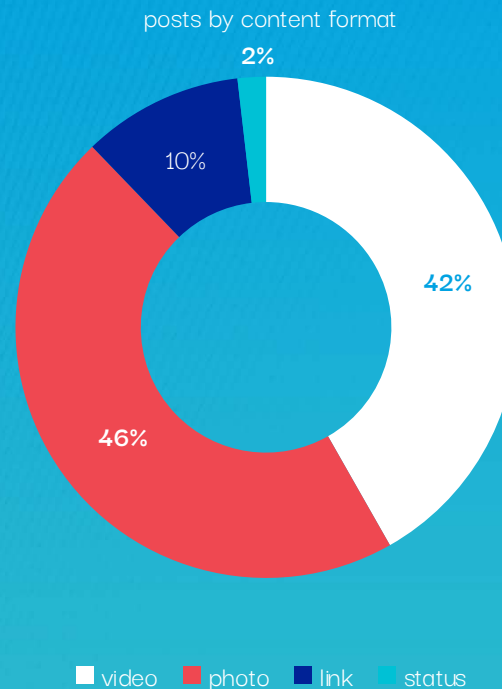
10 15 +5 ▲

# f — IFs posted an average of 2.5 pieces of content a day

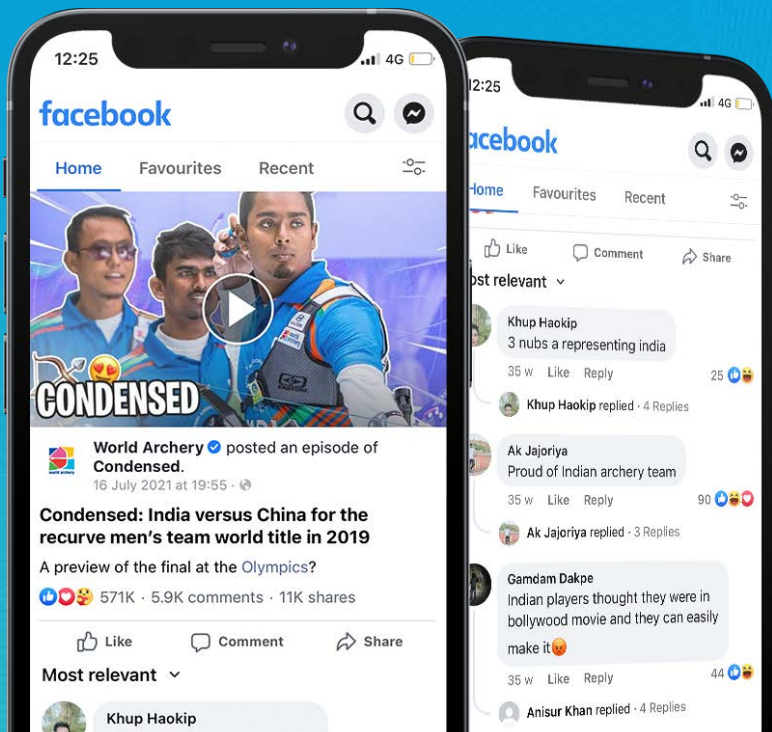
 **46%** of content was photo (**34%** in 2020)

 **42%** of content was video (**50%** in 2020)

 **10%** of content was link (**14%** in 2020)



# f — World Archery increased its following on Facebook by 162%



World Archery gained **622k** followers and achieved the highest growth rate overall (**162%**) **32%** came in the first week of the Olympic Games



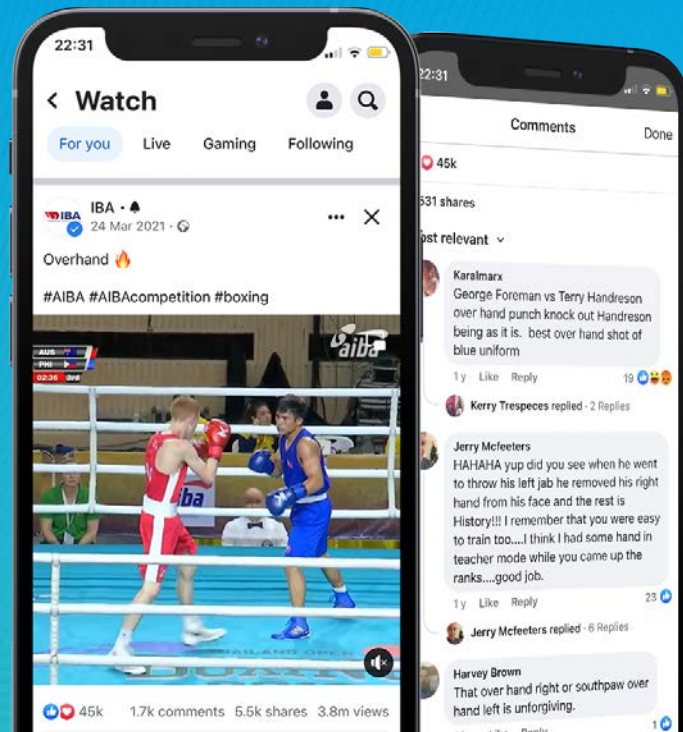
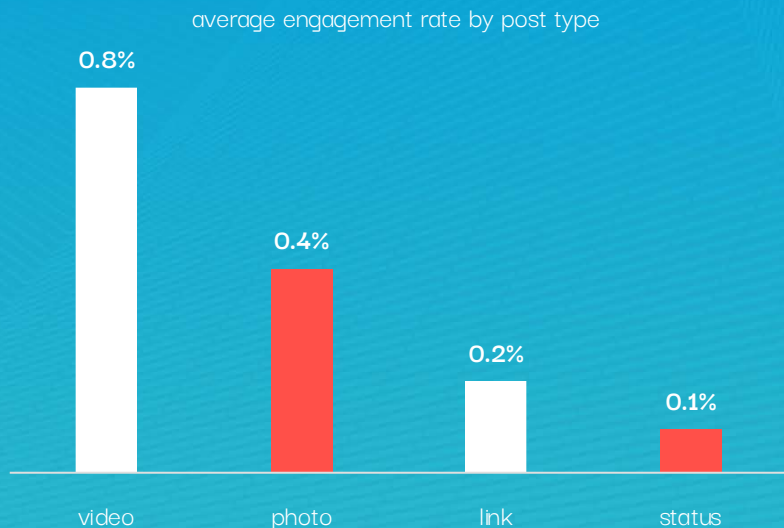
FINA amassed **643k** followers and generated the 2nd highest growth rate (**145%**) **41%** came during the Olympic Games



WCF's growth rate of **128%** (**65k** followers) was the highest of any Winter IF

The highest daily growth (**1.6k**) came on the final day of the 2021 World Men's Curling Championship

# video remained the best format to engage fans on Facebook



# — 91% of total engagements on Facebook were reactions



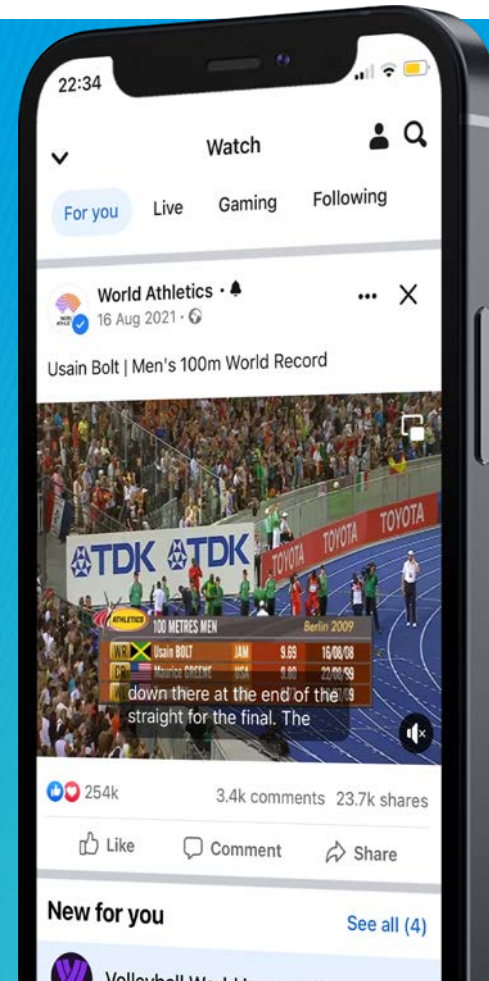
Top posts by reaction included funny UGC content and archive content that evoked excitement /surprise



Top posts by comment included winning moments, epic fails and questions posed to fans

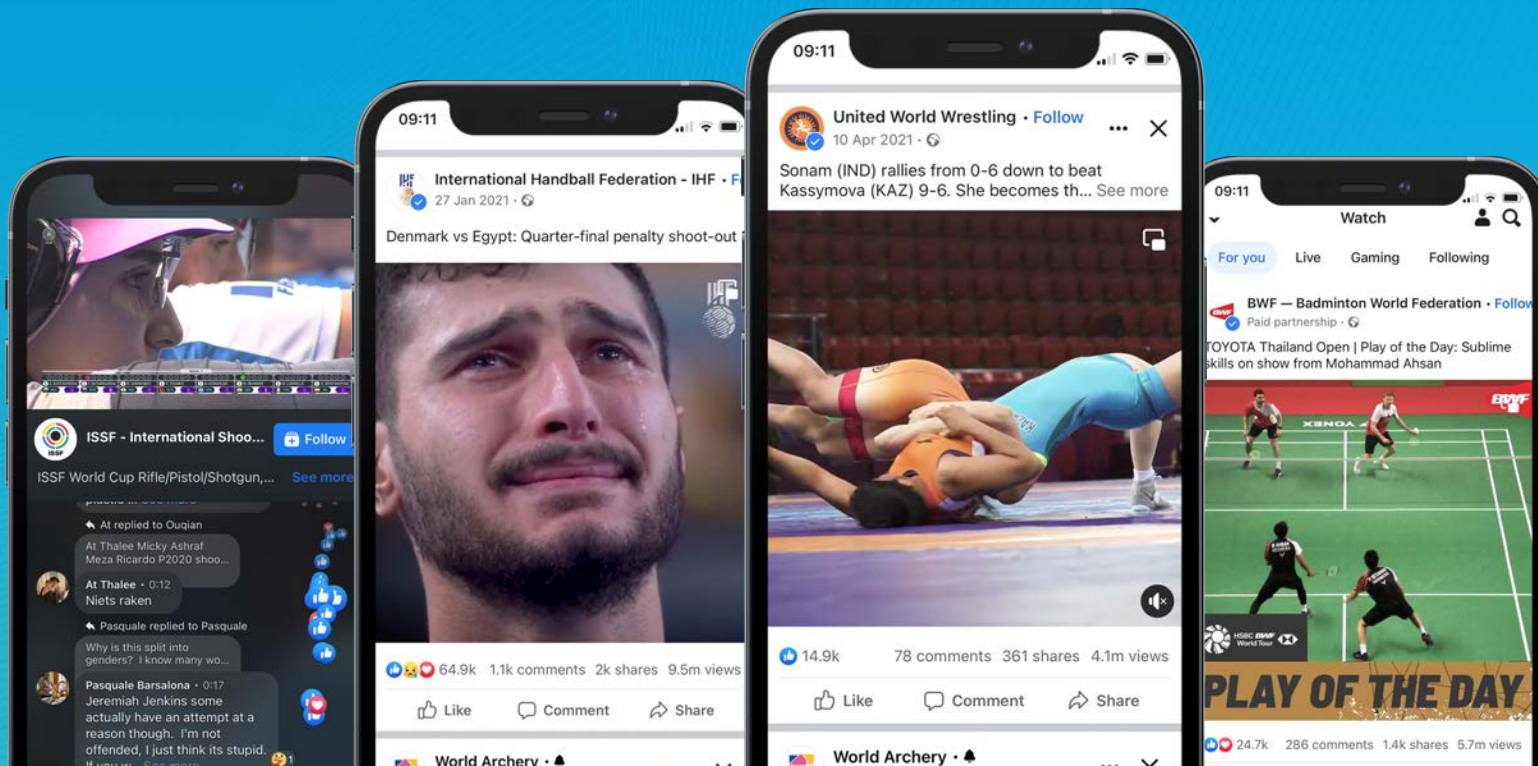


Top posts by share were videos, some of which were recreational content reposted from other related accounts

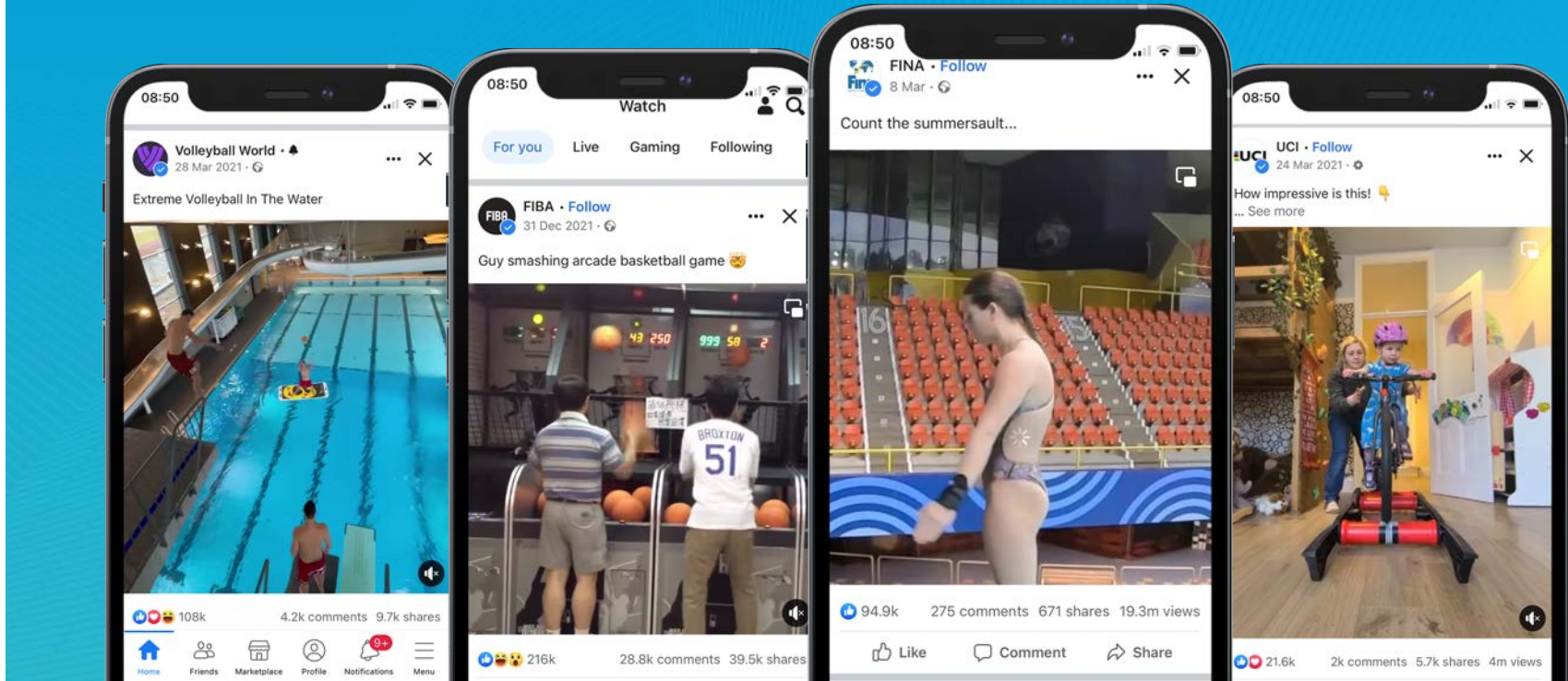


# f — 4.2bn video views on Facebook

- the most watched videos typically featured footage from events

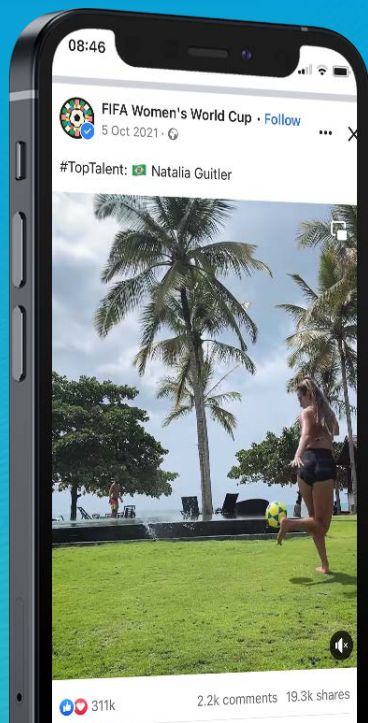


# 📍 — outside of competition, video views were generated from reposting UGC content





# f — 2.7bn total views were generated from the top 5 IFs (64% of total)



**FIFA**

FIFA had **1.1bn** video views (**26%** of total)

The top 2 videos by view were part of the #TopTalent series on the FIFA Women's World Cup page

Slow-motion videos (#SloMoSaturday) accounted for half of the top 10 videos by view



Volleyball World had **517m** video views (**12%** of total)

**91%** of videos produced were over 3 minutes long, however the most watched videos were reposted from other accounts and included funny/inspirational moments



FIBA had **399m** video views (**10%** of total)

The most viewed videos were reposts, including impressive shots from recreational players in different environments

# f — content posted during Tokyo 2020 outperformed other IF content posted in 2021

content created by IFs during  
Tokyo 2020 accounted for:

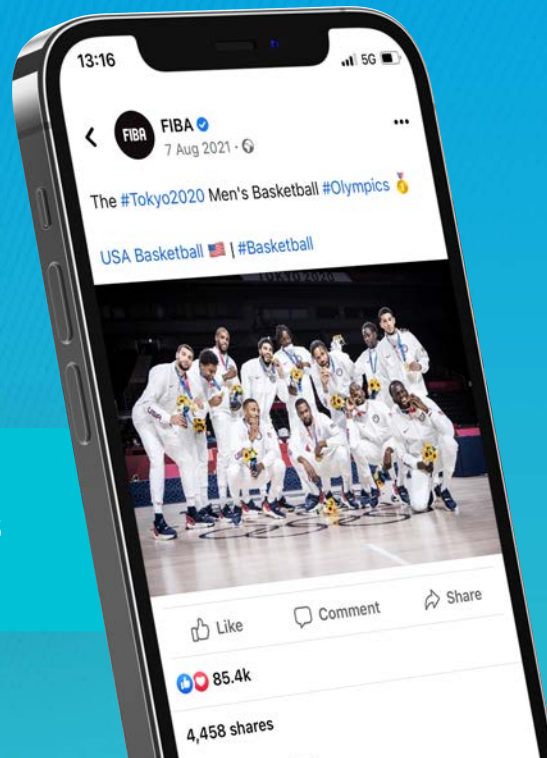
**26%**  
of total growth  
(**2.2m** new followers)

**19% higher**  
engagement rate  
(**0.82%** vs **0.69%**)

**17%**  
of total  
engagements  
(**19.2m** engagements)

**6%**  
of total views  
(**266.2m** views)

**14%** of  
total posts  
(**7.9k** posts)





# interview with Luca Fasani

Digital Manager, FINA

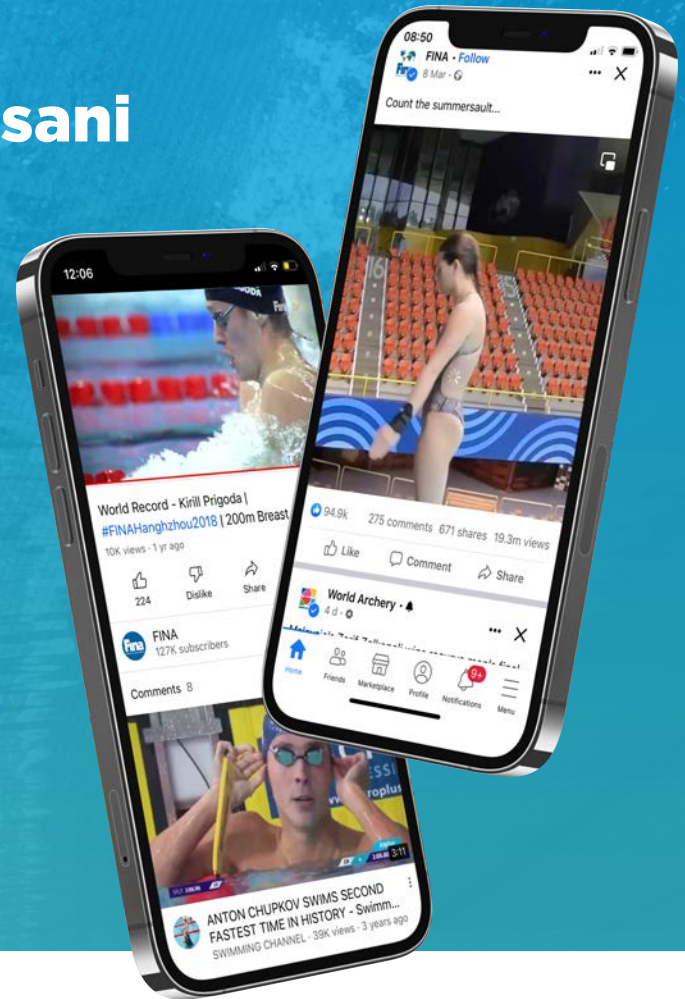
## FINA ranked #1 on Facebook. What has been the key to your success on the platform?

Our success on Facebook is the result of a new digital strategy implemented right before the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. With specific regard to Facebook, we keep reviewing how we produce digital content to intercept the latest trends and changes in the algorithm.

It's an ongoing process that aims to provide the right content at the right time.

Facebook is still the social media platform with the largest global community and its target audiences continue to be very attractive for many businesses. I am confident that the META ecosystem will keep offering a wide range of solutions for sport entities to engage with multiple audiences.

Holding a solid presence on Facebook today is a good starting point for the future digital transformation of FINA.





## interview with Luca Fasani (cont.)

### What tactics have you put in place to receive such high engagement rates on Facebook?

The 2021 season was the first real 'comeback' after the pandemic; our athletes were finally back to compete after such a difficult period. It was the first time we could finally talk about what we know best: our six aquatic sports.

The fact the epic flashbacks are still attractive means our message was well received, but it's now time to move on and plenty of new epic moments will feature in the 2022 season.

In the second half of 2021, we also introduced new video formats to feature athletes from a different perspective; great comments were shared for our video production at the FINA World Swimming Championships 2021 in Abu Dhabi.

### How did Tokyo 2020 benefit your social media performance and what learnings did you take that you can apply to future campaigns?

We knew that the Tokyo 2020 Olympics Games would have had a positive effect by amplifying our reach and enabling our content to be seen by a wider audience around the world.



**Holding a solid presence on Facebook today is a good starting point for the future digital transformation of FINA**



## interview with Luca Fasani (cont.)

The Olympic Games are a global event and every sport business benefits from this special edition in Tokyo. Sport lovers were eager to see our athletes compete, celebrate, cry, and eventually become legends. Athletes are the real protagonists of our sport, and their stories represent the ideal narrative for a successful message to be spread on social media.

My takeaway from Tokyo 2020 is that we did well, but we could have done even better. The potential of this event and its capacity to bring people together is massive and we are already looking forward to Paris 2024.

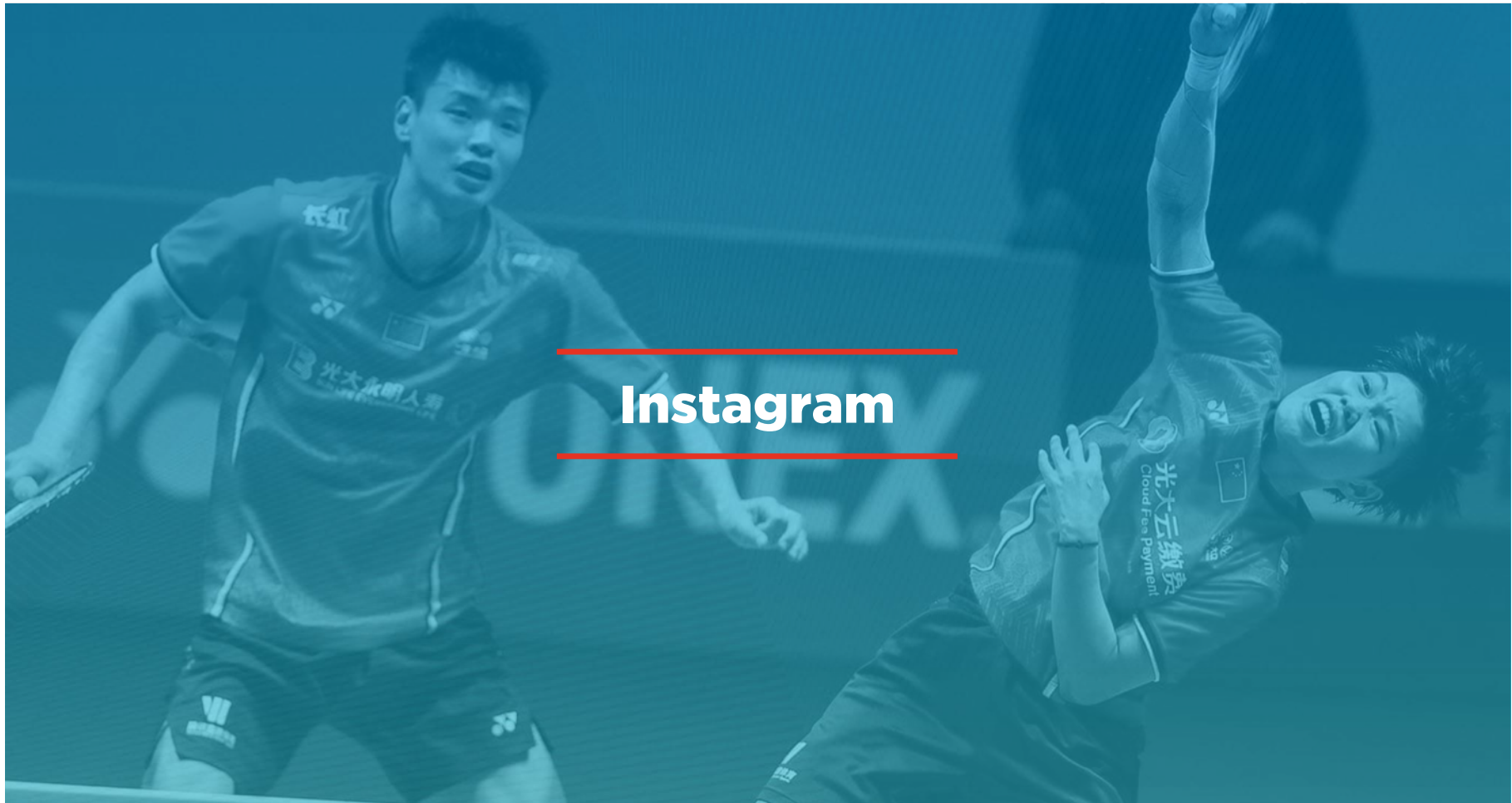
### Does FINA have any tactical changes lined up for its social media strategy?

FINA is going through a process of reforms and the digital transformation is one of the main pillars. I wouldn't talk about changes, but additions and brand-new projects that will impact our social media strategy as well.

We want to collaborate more and better with our athletes; as mentioned, they are at the heart of our content production but we also look forward to more engagement with our National Federations in the near future.



**We want to collaborate more and better with our athletes; as mentioned, they are at the heart of our content production, but we also look forward to more engagement with our National Federations in the near future**



# Instagram

# Instagram top 10

 Badminton World Federation (BWF)	1	2	+1	▲
 FIFA	2	3	+1	▲
 Volleyball World	3	1	-2	▼
 United World Wrestling (UWW)	4	4	-	-
 World Athletics	5	5	-	-
 International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI)	6	9	+3	▲
 International Judo Federation (IJF)	7	13	+6	▲
 International Cycling Union (UCI)	8	10	+2	▲
 International Basketball Federation (FIBA)	9	6	-3	▼
 World Rugby	10	7	-3	▼

# growth rate on Instagram increased by a massive 47%



**2.1**  
average daily posts  
(**50%** increase)

**34%**  
of posts were carousel  
(**20%** in 2020)



**47%**  
higher average growth rate  
(from **24%** to **35%**)

**36.3k**  
new followers on average  
(**26.1k** in 2020)



**increase in engagement rate**  
(from **2.5%** to **2.6%**)

**13%**  
increase in views per video  
(**19.7k** average views)



# Instagram growth higher than any other platform



BWF's growth rate of **142%** was the highest of any IF (**633k** new followers)

Major tournaments were a huge catalyst for growth, including: the Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2021, the 2020 Summer Olympics, and the rearranged TotalEnergies BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2020



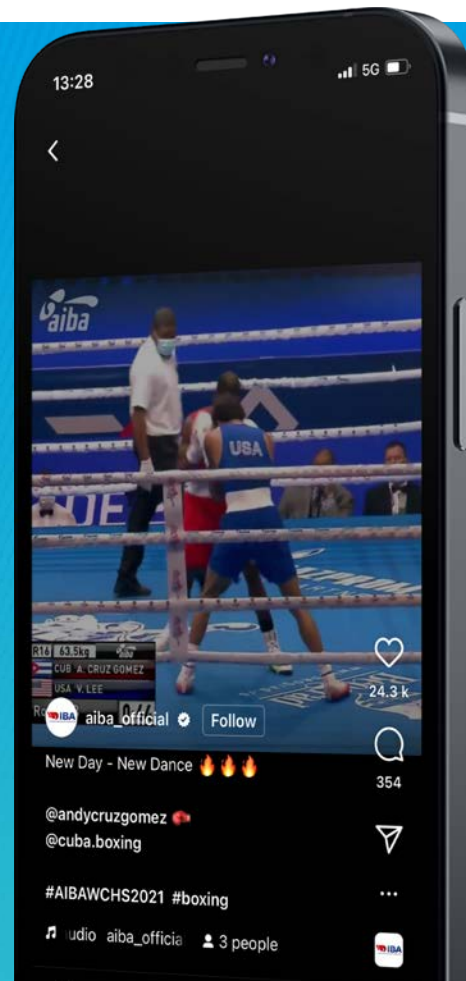
World Athletics gained **1.2m** new followers (**116%** increase)

**25%** of its growth came during the 2020 Summer Olympics; **165k** new followers coincided with several Continental Tour meetings towards the end of April



IBA followers grew from **110k** to **218k** (**97%** increase)

**21%** of total growth (**22.1k**) came during the 2021 IBA World Boxing Championships in Belgrade, Serbia



# 📱 — content type was split evenly between carousel (34%), photo (33%) and video (33%)

Carousel represented the largest proportion of content (**34%**); in 2020 it was the smallest. Carousel was the most popular content type for 15 IFs (4 IFs in 2020)



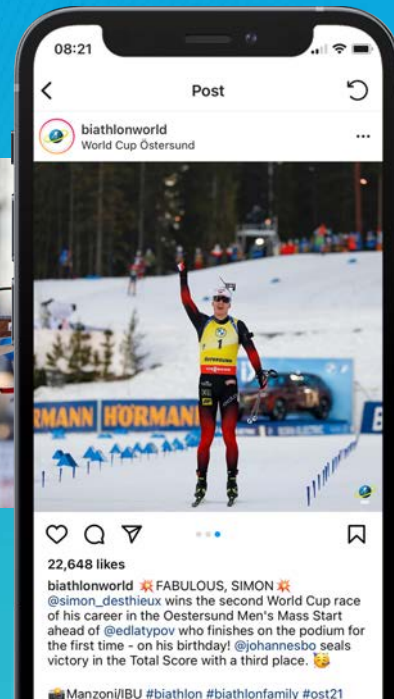
**71%** of IBU content was carousel

Carousels were used to show athlete stories leading up to victories and to congratulate retiring athletes on outstanding careers



**60%** of both FIBA and Volleyball World content was carousel

These IFs used carousels to showcase a selection of photos from key events as well as posing questions to fans, encouraging them to pick their favourite location, team or character



# 📱 — carousel posts remained the most engaging content type

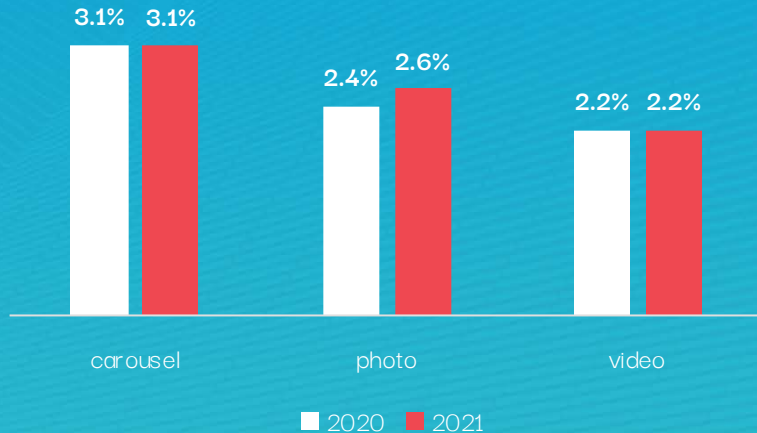


BWF generated high engagement rates on carousels through funny and cartoon-edited celebrations

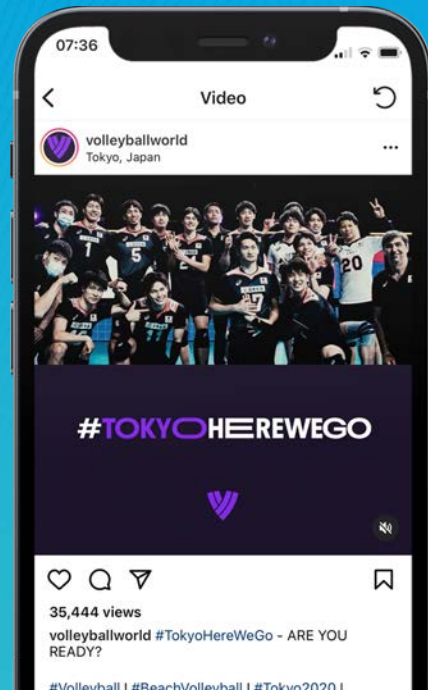
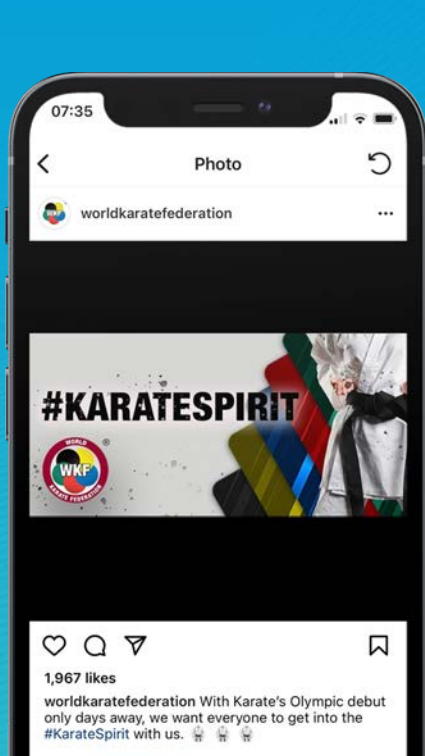


WKF experienced success on carousels with themed graphics that showcased gold and silver medallists from the Olympic Games

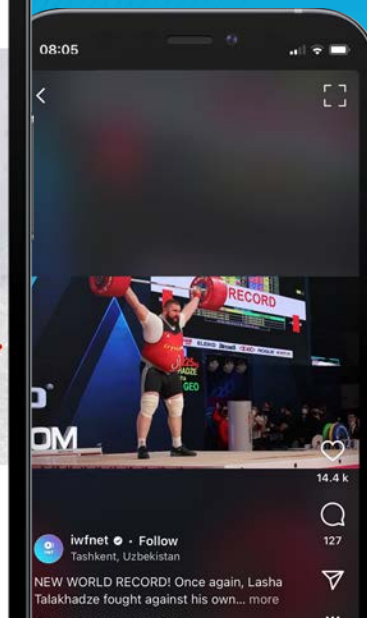
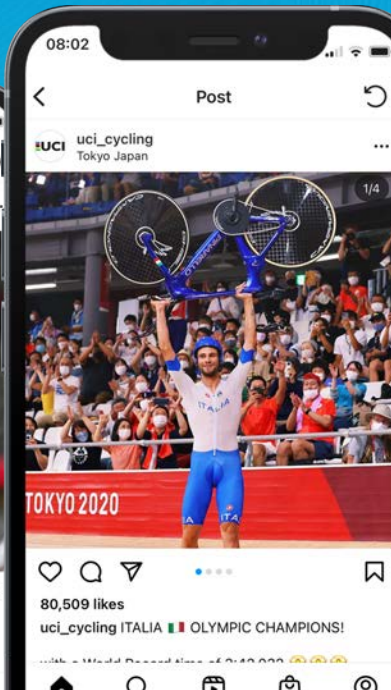
engagement rate by post type



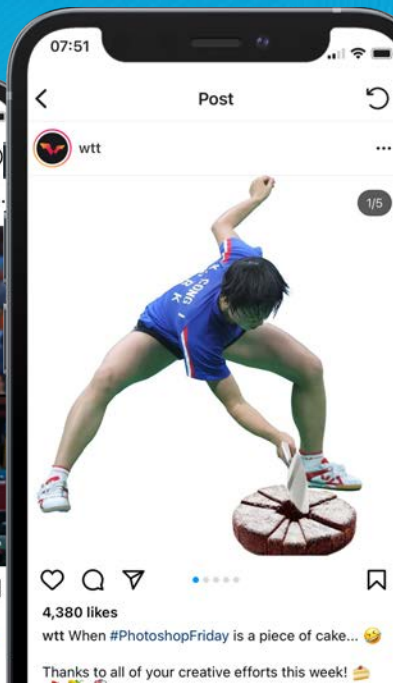
# IFs used the Olympic spotlight to increase their share of voice among new target audiences



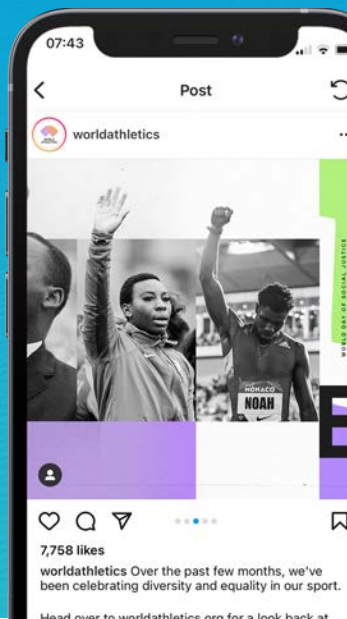
# 📱 — event-related content, such as record-breaking moments and gold medals, generated substantial engagements



# 📱 — while more IFs than ever before used humour to engage fans



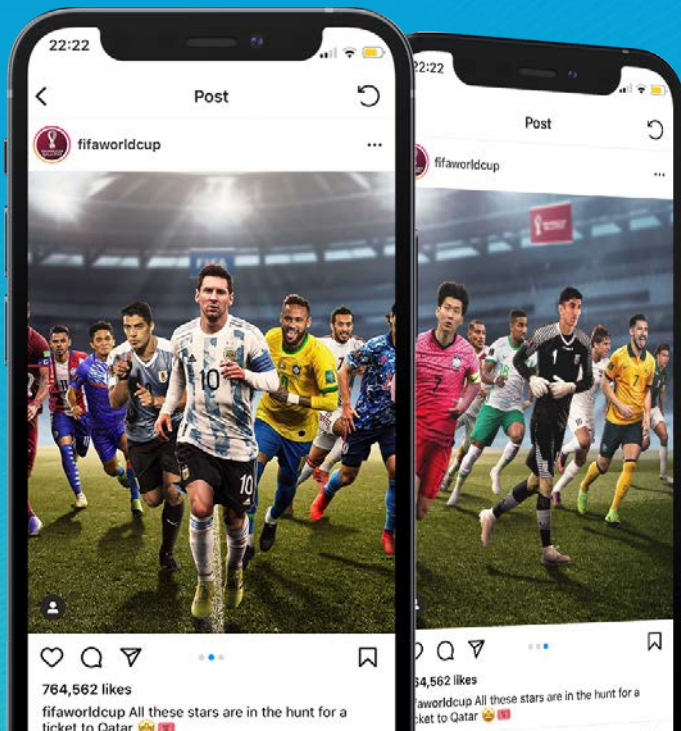
# 🌍 — there was an increased focus on diversity and inclusivity





# 9 IFs each generated over 10m engagements

**445m** total engagements



**FIFA 24%** of engagements came from FIFA (**108.5m**)

**95** of the top **100** posts by engagement were from FIFA accounts

**8** of the top **10** posts included Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo



**18%** came from BWF (**81.6m**)

**70%** of the top 50 posts (excluding FIFA) were from BWF



**12%** were from UWW



**4%** were from each of Volleyball World, ITF and FIBA

**34%** of the top 50 posts were produced during the 2020 Olympic Games

the top **2** most engaging posts in 2021 were from ITF and BWF, both featuring gold medallists from Tokyo 2020



# 6 IFs generated over 75m views each

1.4bn total engagements



**FIFA 28%** of views came from FIFA (**399.4m**)

**14%** of views came from World Rugby (**198.1m**) and BWF (**195.2m**)

**84** of the top **100** most viewed videos were from FIFA

- the top 10 were archive footage and throwbacks
- a carousel showing Germany's 7-1 win against Brazil in the 2014 World Cup generated the most video views (**12.5m**)



World Rugby produced **38%** of the top 50 most viewed videos (excluding FIFA)

**20%** were from UWW

**10%** were from each of BWF, FIBA and ITF

- Only 5 of the top 50 videos were produced during the 2020 Olympic Games
- 2 of the top 3 most viewed videos in 2021 were 'Own The Moment' posts by ITF at the Paralympics

# 📱 — content posted during Tokyo 2020 outperformed other IF content posted in 2021

content created by IFs during Tokyo 2020 accounted for:

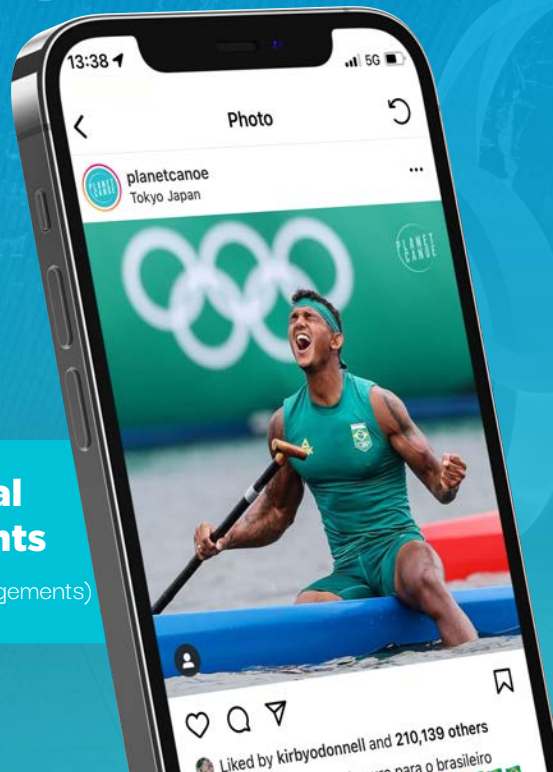
**9%**  
of total views  
(**134.5m** views)

**17% of**  
total growth  
(**1.7m** new followers)

**19%**  
higher  
engagement rate  
(**3.15%** vs **2.66%**)

**16% of**  
total posts  
(**7.1k** posts)

**19% of total**  
engagements  
(**84.4m** engagements)






Twitter



# Twitter top 10

## International Federation

2022 2021 Change

	Volleyball World	1	1	0	-
	Badminton World Federation (BWF)	2	2	0	-
	World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)	3	17	+14	▲
	World Archery	4	23	+19	▲
	International Cycling Union (UCI)	5	4	-1	▼
	World Athletics	6	12	+6	▲
	International Skating Union (ISU)	7	3	-4	▼
	FIFA	8	5	-3	▼
	International Basketball Federation (FIBA)	9	14	+5	▲
	International Tennis Federation (ITF)	10	7	-3	▼

# engagements per post increased by 75%



**4.8**  
average  
daily posts  
(**49%** increase)



**15%**  
average  
growth rate  
(**6%** in 2020)

**7.7k**  
new followers  
on average  
(**2.8k** in 2020)



**70%**  
increase in  
engagement rate  
(from **0.10%**  
to **0.17%**)

**75%**  
increase in  
engagements  
per post  
(**63** engagements  
on average)

# IFs experienced an average growth rate of 15%



BWF experienced the highest growth rate (**65%**), amassing **104.2k** new followers, the 2nd highest after FIFA (**1.4m**)



ISA gained **7.9k** new followers (**51%** growth rate) of which **32%** (**2.5k**) came during the 2021 ISA World Surfing Games in El Salvador



IHF accumulated **12.6k** new followers (**31%** growth rate) and had the 4th highest number of tweets

The 2021 World Men's Handball Championship in Egypt was responsible for **38%** of IHF's total growth

# 🗨️ — 16% of all tweets included #Tokyo2020 and the best-performing were related to medal winners



# 🗨️ content posted during Tokyo 2020 outperformed other IF content posted in 2021

content created by IFs during Tokyo 2020 accounted for:

**14%**  
of total growth  
(**289.8k** new followers)

**19%** of  
total posts  
(**20.1k** new followers)

**17%**  
higher  
engagement rate  
(**0.21%** vs **0.18%**)

**25%** of total  
engagements  
(**4.4m** engagements)





# WBSC popularity on TV was reflected on Twitter

**WBSC**

The Japan vs USA Baseball Gold Medal Game was Japan's most watched sports event at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics Games

The success of the Japan team resulted in strong growth on Twitter for WBSC and significantly higher levels of engagements during the Games

**47** of WBSC's top 50 best-performing tweets were from the Tokyo 2020 Olympic period

**19** posts were from 7 August, the day of the Japan vs USA Olympic Final

**41** featured Japan

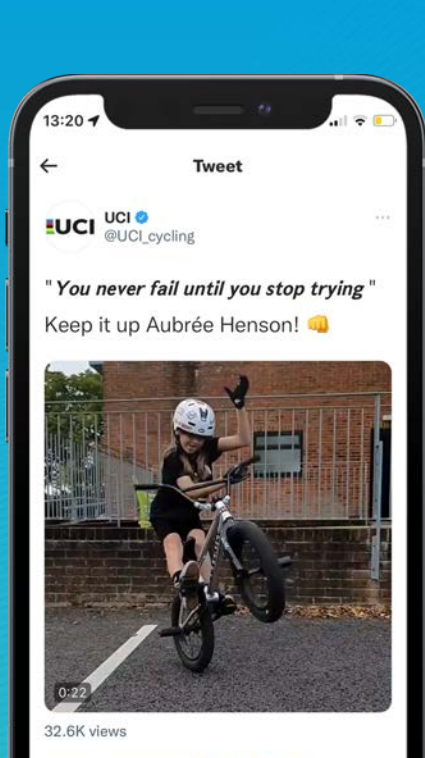
**11** featured USA

**11** were written in both English and Japanese

**36** featured emojis



# 👁️ — human-interest content helped IFs stay relevant outside of competition





# interview with Chris Wells

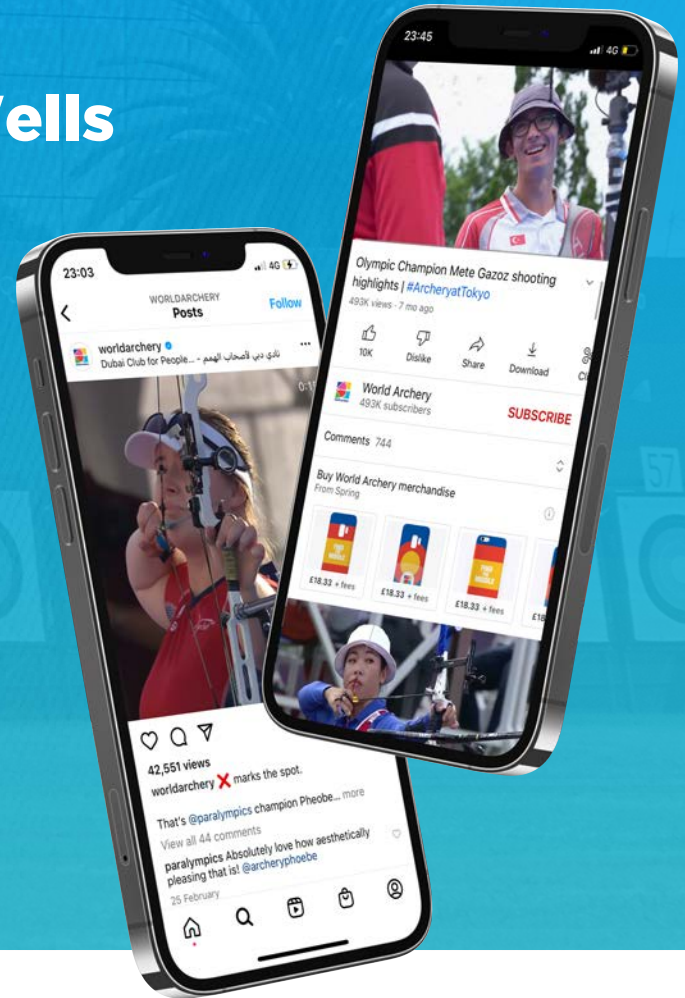
Head Of Communications, World Archery

**World Archery climbed 19 places on Twitter in this year's League Table. Have you changed anything in your strategy to achieve this success?**

We developed more bespoke graphics for the platform but this wasn't only for Twitter. There was just a lot of unrealised potential and the platform's demographics actually track well with archery's audience demographics.

**What tactics did you utilise to drive growth and engagement during the Olympics?**

We built a campaign that started a month or so before the Games, collecting content that could be used to create an ecosystem in the lead-up, during and after the Olympics, with a particular focus on video. It's the first time we've really successfully leveraged archive – and it's the perfect time to do it when you have little video availability during the event itself. It was all based around three key pillars:





## interview with Chris Wells (cont.)

explaining what was happening, hearing from athletes, and giving a comprehensive and visual guide to the key news from the Games. For the first time, we didn't really view the lack of video as a hinderance – more an opportunity to get creative and focus on what will help people enjoy the Olympics. I even got my old film camera out for the first time in a few years, took advantage of the fast development services in Japan, and posted some snaps from that on social. I'm not a good photographer but they performed alright.

### Were there learnings from your strategy during the first 3 stages of the Archery World Cup or Olympics that you took into the World Cup Final?

During the World Cup, we experimented with a bunch of different video formats using archive – and assessing the impact in retention in the analytics on each platform. It gave us a real understanding of what worked and why, enabling us to take advantage of the general spike in interest during the Olympics.



**We didn't really view the lack of video as a hinderance – more an opportunity to get creative and focus on what will help people enjoy the Olympics**



## interview with Chris Wells (cont.)

**Three of World Archery's top 5 tweets during the World Cup featured Indian athletes.**

**Have you adapted your social media strategy to target specific audiences that are more engaged with the sport?**

This is not a new thing. Across all forms of media, we target key markets that are ready for growth. We also target more explanatory or general content to markets that have little archery activity. The goal is to develop worldwide, obviously, but not every territory is at the same stage – and that must be taken into account. India is key for us, not just because of the population but because of the talented athletes and the growing participation community.

**You also performed really well on Facebook, finishing #2 overall. What's the key to your success on the platform?**

Targeting and analytics! Understanding what and why things work – and for which audiences – and being able to replicate those. We've developed some video formats that worked really well this past year. They probably won't work as well in 2022, but we'll continue tinkering to ensure we're still engaging people – because that's ultimately what drives the statistics.

**What tactical executions from 2021 are you particularly proud of?**

The statistics we achieved during the Olympics were incredible – but it's also something we could never control. The only thing we can control is how prepared we are to take advantage of the spike in public interest in sport during major events like this. The plan we had worked – though on reflection, there are still obvious and huge holes. Archery hasn't suddenly become the most popular sport on the planet, nobody's under that illusion. But if we're always able to take advantage of global, regional or national spikes in interest, we're going to continually put the sport in the public eye. That's the real success story for us.



---



# YouTube

---

# YouTube top 10

## International Federation

2022 2021 Change

	Volleyball World	1	2	+1	▲
	Badminton World Federation (BWF)	2	6	+4	▲
	FIFA	3	3	0	-
	World Archery	4	4	0	-
	World Athletics	5	1	-4	▼
	International Basketball Federation (FIBA)	6	8	+2	▲
	World Rugby	7	7	0	-
	International Swimming Federation (FINA)	8	26	+18	▲
	United World Wrestling (UWW)	9	15	+6	▲
	International Skating Union (ISU)	10	10	0	-

# IFs increased content production on YouTube by 68%



**24%**  
average  
growth rate  
(**19%** in 2020)

**28.6k**  
new subscribers  
on average  
(**14.2k** in 2020)



**68%**  
increase in  
content  
(**22.5k** vs  
**13.4k** videos)

**7%**  
increase in  
views per video  
(**8.2k** in 2020)



**37%**  
increase in total  
channel views  
(**1.8bn** vs **1.3bn**)

**105%**  
increase in  
video views from  
content produced  
in the year  
(**809.6m** vs  
**396.6m** views)



# 9 IFs each amassed 100k new YouTube subscribers

**FIFA** FIFA experienced a **19%** increase, generating **1.8m** new subscribers



Volleyball World gained **521k** new subscribers (**54%** increase)



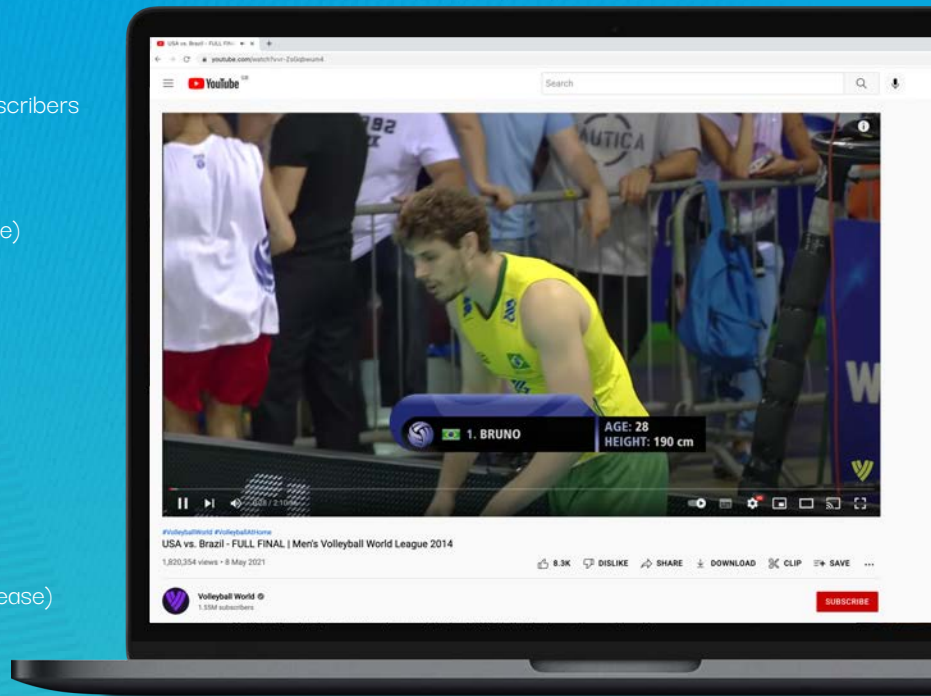
BWF grew by **30%** (from **1.6m** to **2.1m** subscribers)



FIBA gained **325k** new subscribers across 2 channels



World Athletics amassed **286k** new subscribers (**45%** increase)



# 5 of the top 10 most popular videos were from FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers



**79%** of FIBA videos came from their main channel and **21%** from FIBA 3x3, generating **57.9m** views in total

The top 10 most viewed videos were all footage of full matches, 5 of which featured American athletes

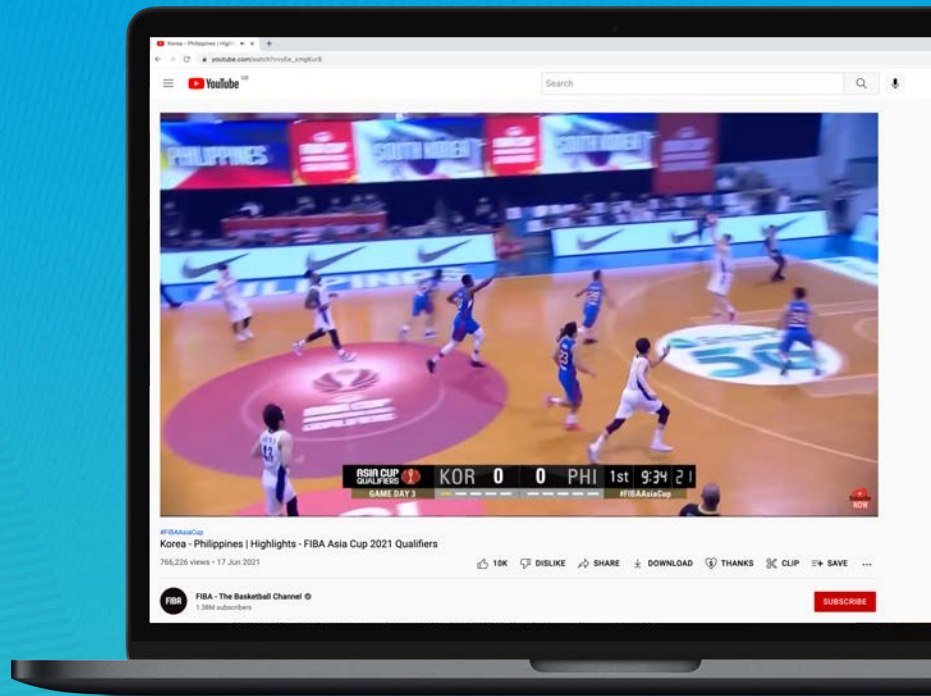


UWW produced **2.1k** videos (**9%** of total), generating **15.6m** video views

BWF uploaded **2.0k** videos to YouTube (**9%** of total), resulting in **165.3m** views



The top 2 most viewed videos featured Indonesian athletes at the BWF Thomas Cup, generating a combined **5.2m** views



# 75 videos amassed 1.0m+ views, of which ...



**52%**

FIFA



**15%**

World Archery



**8%**

Olympic Qualifiers



**72%**

match/event highlights



**25%**

full match/event



**12%**

YouTube shorts



**8%**

live streams



**69%**

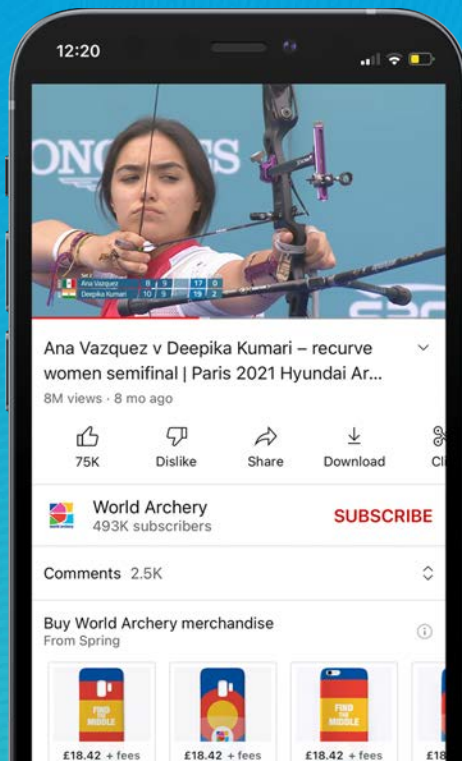
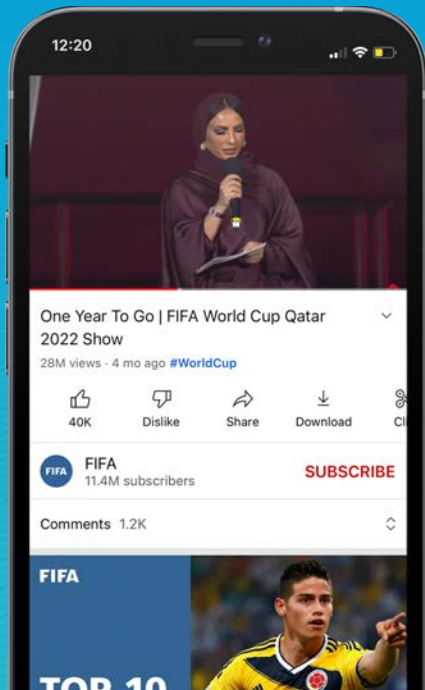
featured competition footage



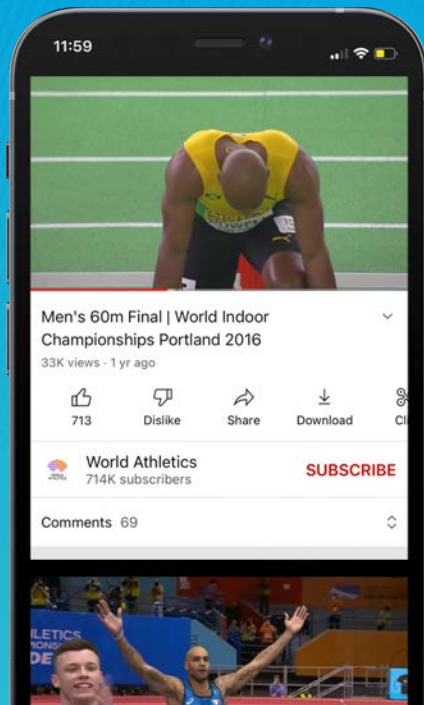
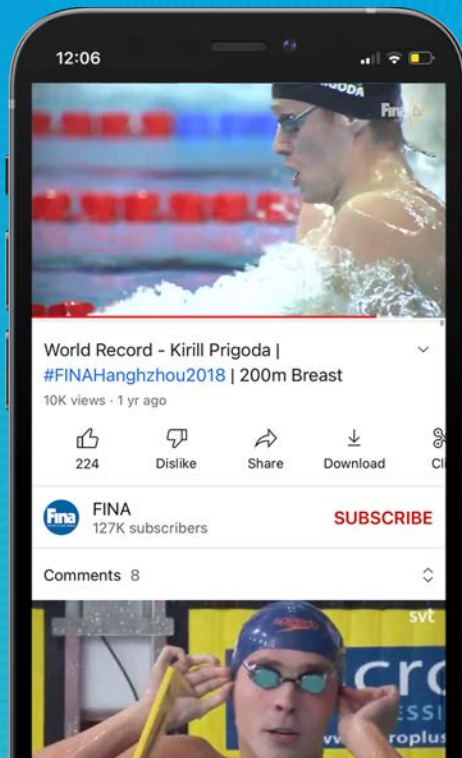
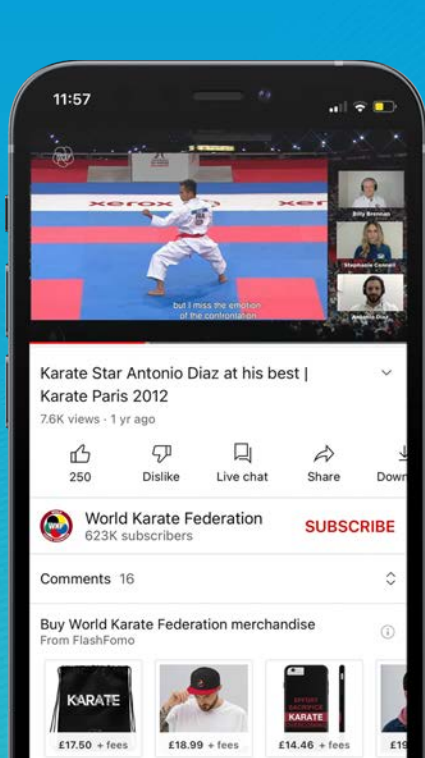
**13%**

featured skills/goals

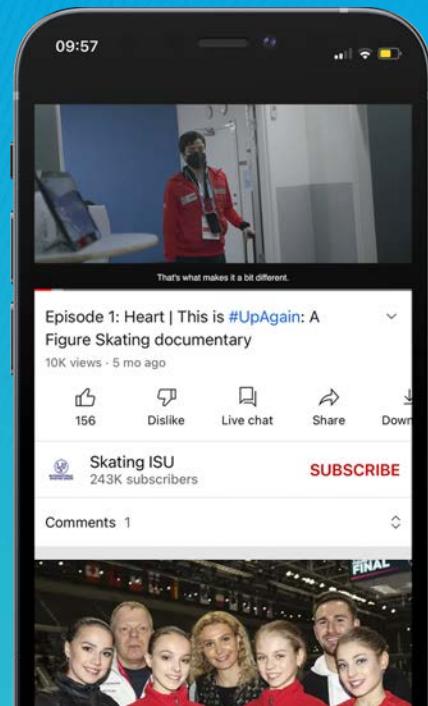
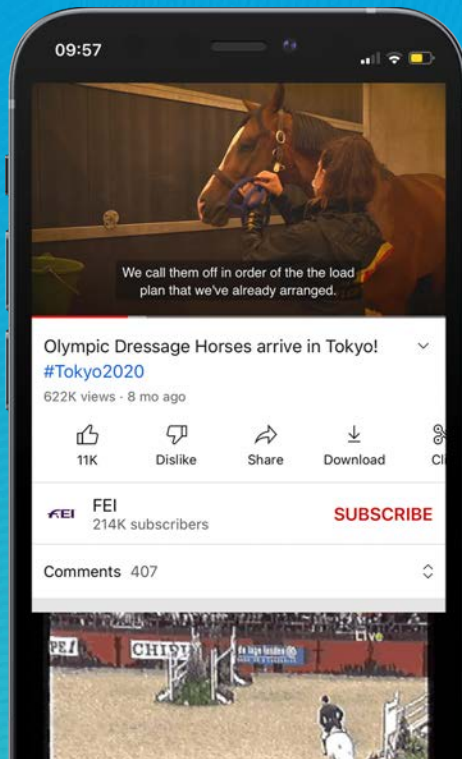
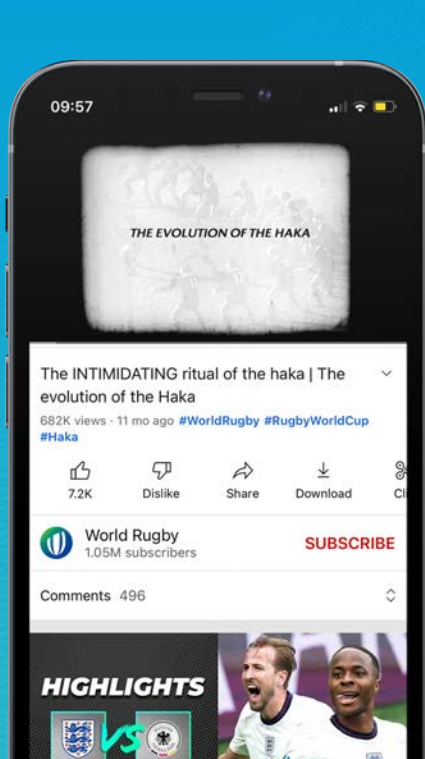
# the 3 most watched IF videos on YouTube in 2021



# IFs made full use of archived event footage



# and produced informative content through documentaries



# content posted during Tokyo 2020 compared with other IF content posted in 2021

content created by IFs during Tokyo 2020 accounted for:



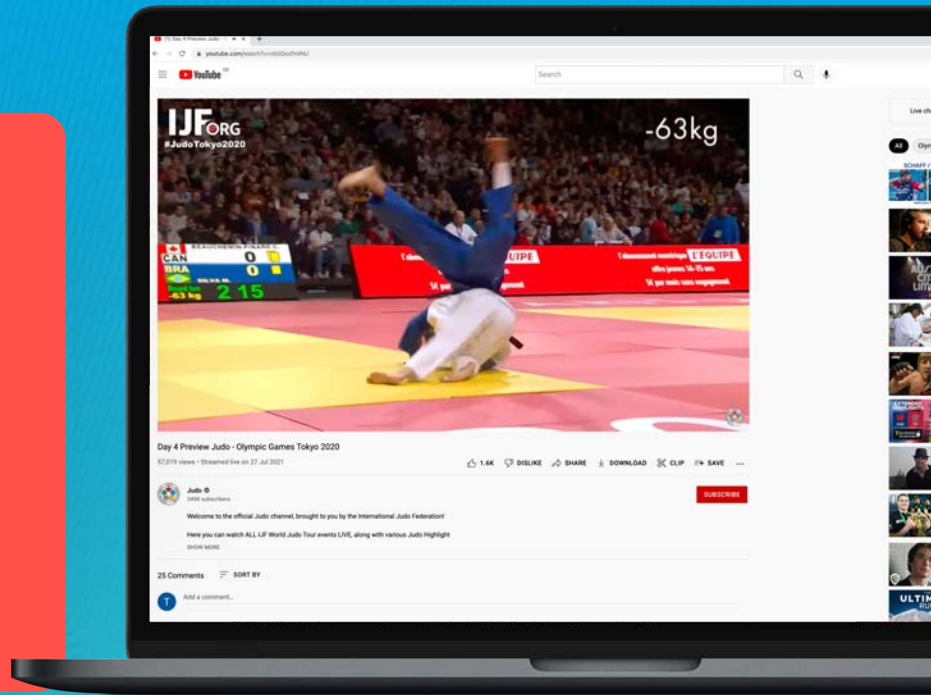
**11% of total growth**  
(**536.1k** new followers)

**6% of total engagements**  
(**595.0k** engagements)



**5% of total videos**  
(**1.0k** videos)

**5% of total videos**  
(**43.2m** views)





# interview with Ace Ferdinand Asas

Digital Content Manager, Volleyball World

**A big congratulations for ranking #1 on YouTube in this year's #SportOnSocial League Table! Have you changed anything in your strategy to achieve such success?**

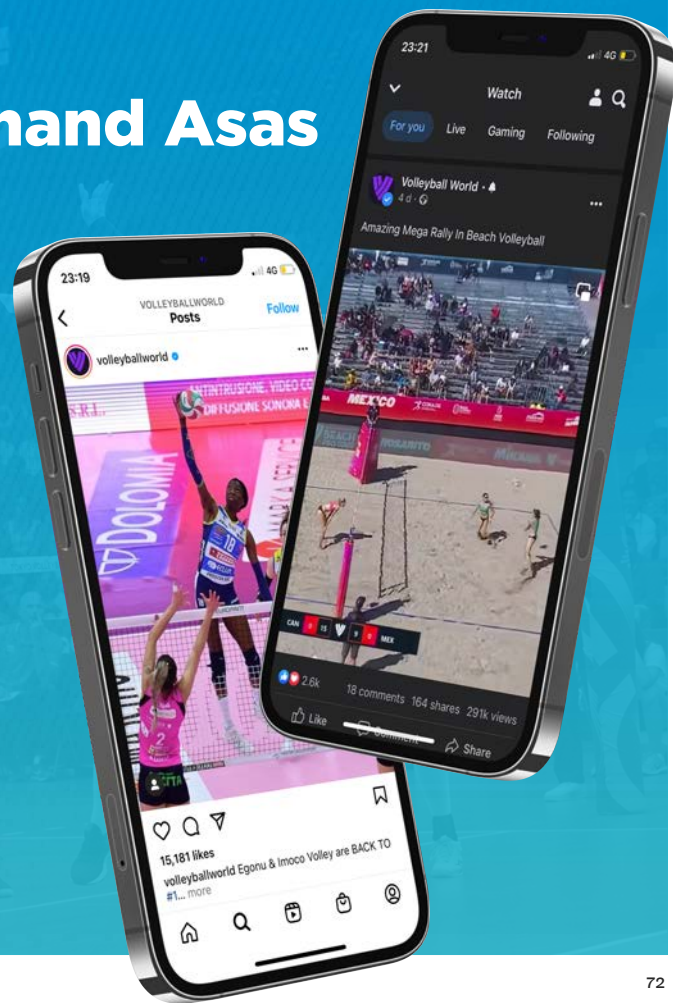
Quality over quantity is our key for growth and success on YouTube! We want to entertain our viewers without overwhelming them with a flood of content. The mix of archive and current tournament content also perfectly satisfies the needs and preferences of our fans and viewers.

**What made you experiment with YouTube shorts and is this something you will continue to incorporate into your strategy?**

Always keen on trying out new features (which also explains the success on TT as well)

YouTube Shorts is a great way to make use of the synergies that the trend towards vertical formats brings on all social media platforms. Volleyball as a primarily vertical and dynamic sport with spectacular actions and game changes that are understood and celebrated even by newbies. YouTube Shorts is definitely a promising tool to get the attention of younger viewers on the platform itself.

Athletia is a great partner who shares the same philosophy.







## interview with Ace Ferdinand Asas (cont.)

**Live streams also performed well. Do you think there is any particular reason for this?**

Generally, a huge trend for live content on YouTube.

Watch Time of livestreams on YouTube has more than tripled between Jan 2020 and Dec 2021

Not only livestreams but livestreams from youth tournaments – that is indeed special as no volleyball superstars are competing in these tournaments. Our fans and viewers loves live action from their favourite team!

Sometimes, it's their own national team and sometimes a totally different one. But youth tournaments enable fans of teams that are not yet playing in the major international tournaments to cheer on and watch live – that's a great opportunity!

Huge opportunity to serve niches (e.g. Italian league).

Consumption via TV is increasing, and TV is the best device for live streams.



**Quality over quantity is our key for growth and success on YouTube!**



## interview with Ace Ferdinand Asas (cont.)

**Your most viewed video was USA vs Brazil – Men’s Volleyball World League from 2014. How do you decide on which archive content to repurpose?**

We focus on past duels that are legendary: Be it because of the teams involved, who are favourites for the title, or because of the thrilling match itself. We know which teams are particularly popular on our channel and then choose the most exciting matches to entertain our fans to the maximum.

**What tactical executions that have performed well are you looking to continue with going forward?**

The most essential tactical executions last year were to react on tournaments as quick as possible, to stay relevant even in tournament gaps by using high-quality archive material, and to consider the insights of YouTube Analytics in our content strategy.

**How did you leverage the Olympics to grow your social media following?**

- The Olympic Games are an awesome chance for niche sports to gain awareness and popularity!
- Live Coverage of the Olympic Qualifiers was already a success and gained relevance again during the Olympics
- Identification of potential finalists and most popular players in general
- Publication of relevant content before the Games even started so viewers find our content first when they search for it

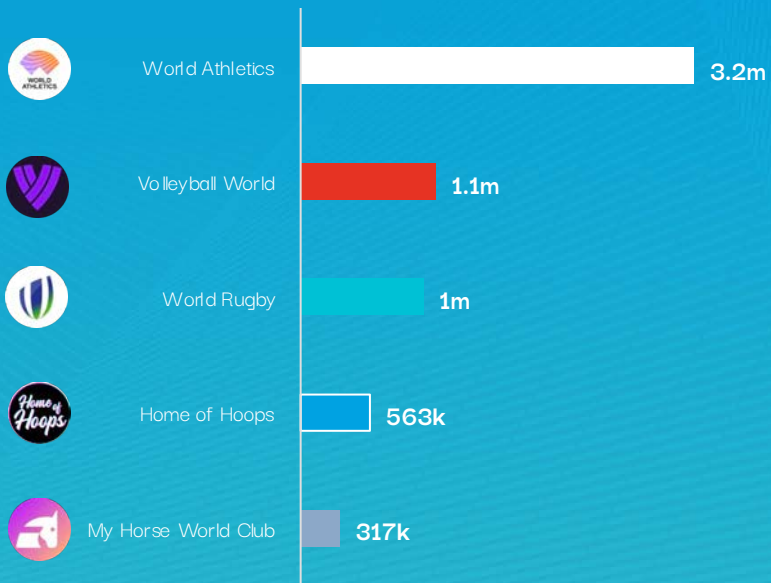


# TikTok

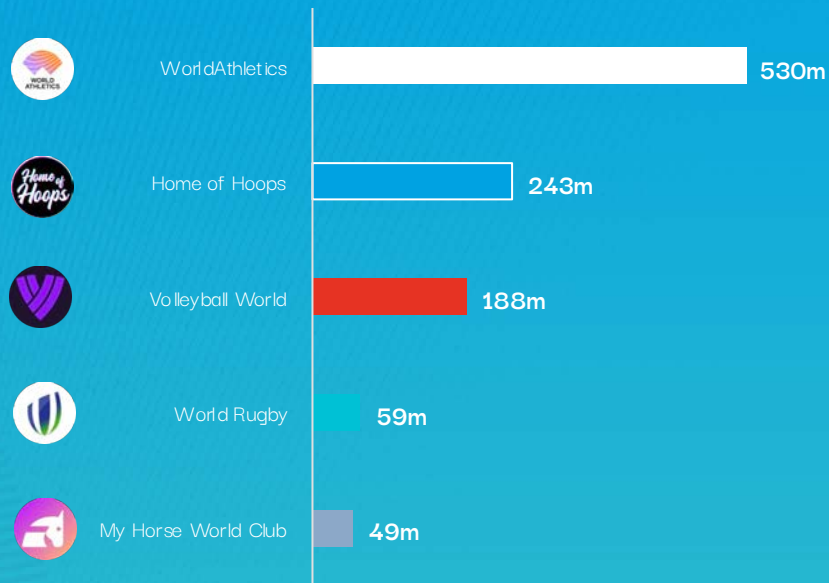


# top 5 TikTok accounts

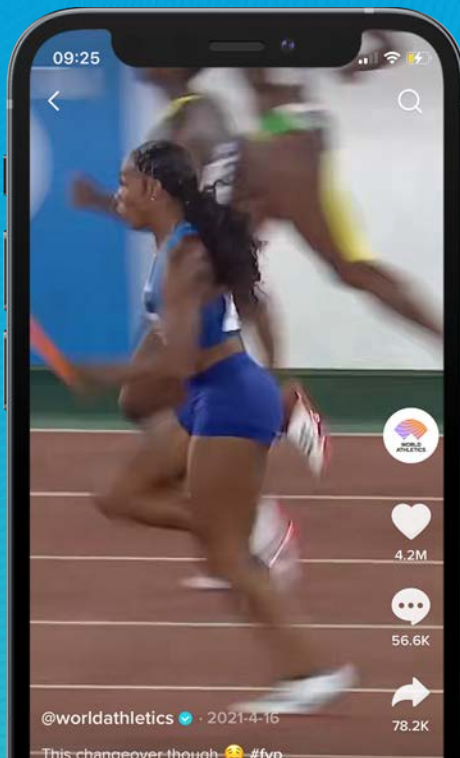
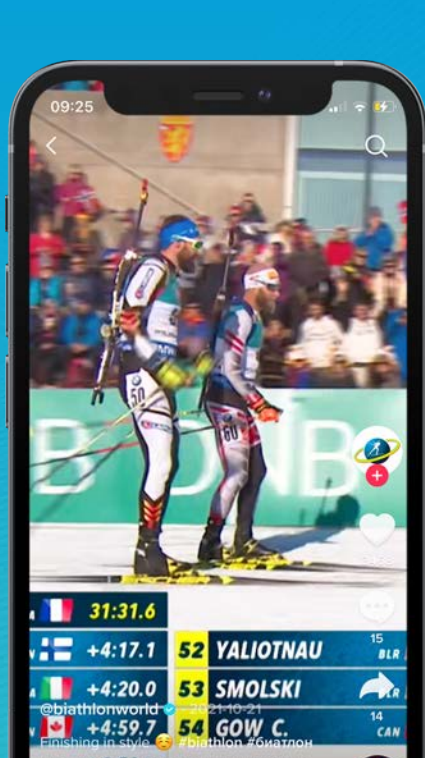
## followers



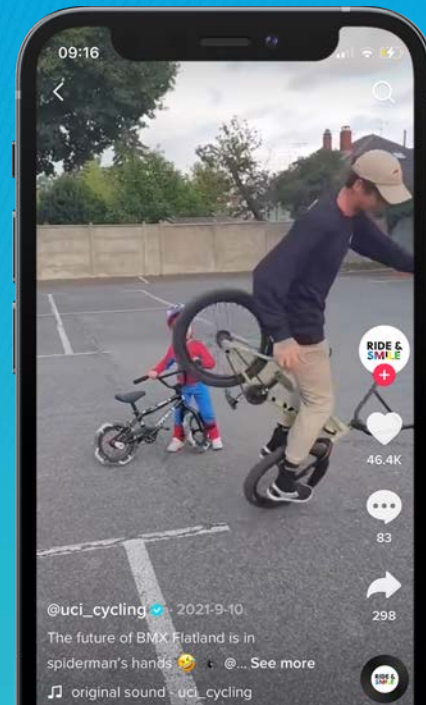
## views



# IFs used TikTok to deliver emotive and narrative focused event content



# 📌 — while fun-filled and light-hearted moments drove engagement outside of event time





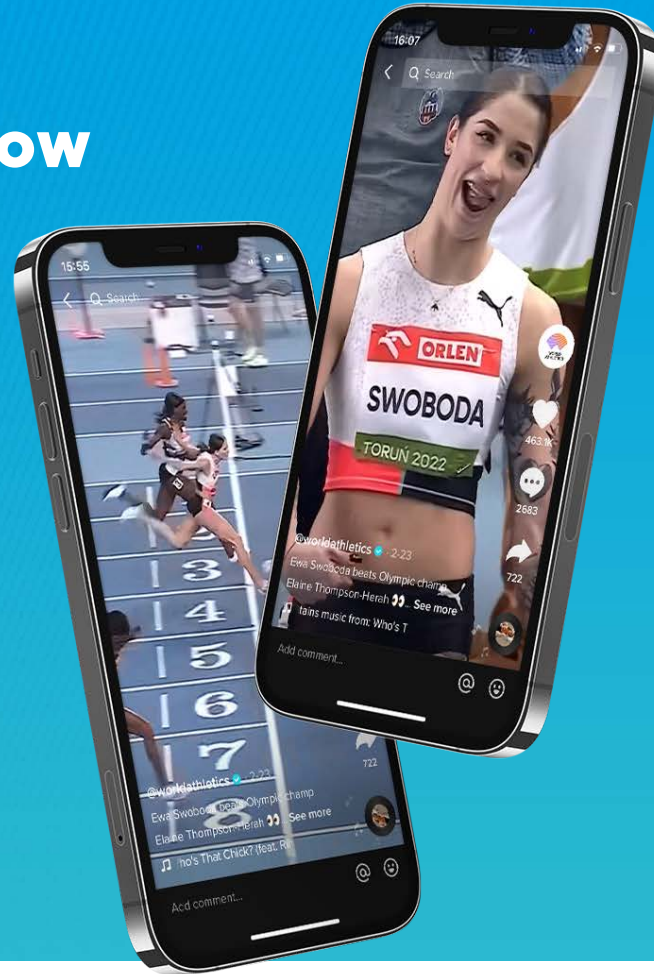
# interview with Ben Harlow

## Digital Innovation Manager, World Athletics

**World Athletics has more followers and video views on TikTok than any other IF. Why do you think the community has reacted so positively towards your content?**

I think it's a combination of two things: representation and TikTok's algorithm. Athletics is an incredibly diverse sport, showcasing men and women equally, all races, shapes and sizes. Despite these athletes performing like superhumans, the range of diversity makes it so much more relatable, and our most popular videos follow this trend: one featuring a female Jamaican shot putter, the other a Japanese men's relay team. It's just something different to the traditional sporting model and I think the world, and particularly Gen-Z, are ready to embrace that.

Regarding the algorithm, before TikTok existed there were no platforms that centred the user experience around content you don't actively choose to follow. In the past, on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, we've sometimes struggled to reach our potential fans. But with TikTok, the For You Page connected us with these unknowing fans. Often, we get comments like "I love this sport, what is it?", people are athletics fans without realising, and TikTok's algorithm has been a key part of facilitating that.





## interview with Ben Harlow (cont.)

### How much of your content is planned and how much is reacting to trends?

Barely any content is planned, sometimes we have a very loose schedule to build hype around events but the majority of TikToks are made on the day they're posted. The social media landscape, particularly TikTok, changes so quickly.

To be successful on TikTok you really must be a fan of it yourself, only then will it give you the nuanced understanding required of what sounds to use, what trends to jump on, and what's appropriate for you as an organisation.

### How is your TikTok strategy different from your strategy on other social media channels?

To follow from my last answer, the key difference is the lack of forward planning. A lot of what we post is acting on the trends of that day/week, and whilst we still do that on other platforms, it's almost impossible to have a monthly content plan dedicated to TikToks that'll go on to perform successfully.

The other key difference is our tone of voice. On TikTok we really let it all hang out, it's our most informal and playful platform. It gives us the opportunity to crack jokes with fans, make fun of ourselves, and really lean in on pop cultural references that otherwise may not be appropriate on other platforms.





## interview with Ben Harlow (cont.)

### What advice would you give an IF looking to launch on TikTok?

Three pieces of advice:

1. Spend time on the app before posting your first TikTok. Enjoy the app as a user and your knowledge, understanding and content quality will improve tenfold.
2. Try not to take it too seriously and don't overthink it, often our best-performing content is something thrown together in 30 minutes on the fly as opposed to something more well thought out.
3. When using TikTok on your personal account or IF account, always save sounds whenever you hear something catchy. It's so useful to have a catalogue of sounds you can refer to when you need to put something out quickly.



**It's almost impossible to have a monthly content plan dedicated to TikToks that'll go on to perform successfully**



## say hello

We're an evidence-based research, digital and social media agency dedicated to improving marketing effectiveness in Olympic sport.

**call** +44 (0) 207 036 8080

**email** [hello@redtorch.sport](mailto:hello@redtorch.sport)

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