

Research and Insights:

New Trends in Sports Fandom

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Five trends redefining the way sports organizations market their brands.

Introduction



When was the last time you went a day without watching a video? On YouTube alone, 500 hours of content are posted every minute—that's 1,250 days worth of content per hour.

The demand for more content has created new challenges for content teams: from resizing videos to fit different platforms, to simply keeping up with the endless demand for fresh content.

With the pace of content creation only accelerating, we analyzed **our own data** from over 500 of the top sports rights holders to uncover what's changed, what's trending, and most importantly—what makes sports fans tick.

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- 02 Vertical wins the views
- 03 The real MVP: In-game clips
- 04 High demand, high supply
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1,250

Days worth of
content per hour.

Short-form just got shorter

In 2013, the launch of a new product from tech giant Snapchat, called “Snapchat Stories” paved the way for a content format that would have a lasting impact on the way we consume content. Those tappable chains of videos have been replicated on the world’s most popular platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp—and are now a staple in the way people consume content.

Similarly, the popularity of TikTok’s swipeable reels launched a new battle for consumers’ attention, pushing the competition to innovate. By November 2024, **YouTube Shorts accounted for over 20% of all videos** on the platform. On Instagram, while still images remain the most common post type, reels drive the highest engagement (nearly 7%) and reach (38%).

The popularity of new formats contributed to a reduction in the average length of content created on the WSC Sports platform by 24%—from just over 1:30 minutes in 2020 to 1:10 in 2024.





Prioritize O&O Channels



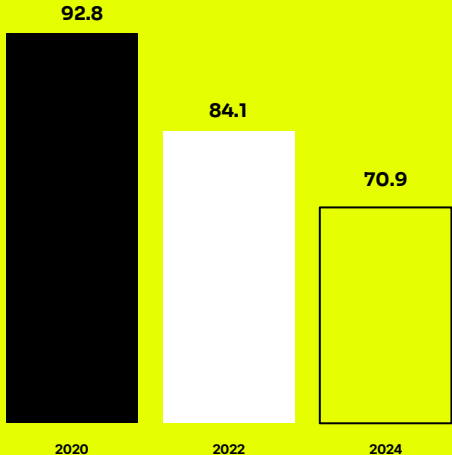
The shift to shorter content formats means teams, leagues, and broadcasters are adapting to mobile-first audiences. Since the NBA launched its Instagram and TikTok-inspired app in 2022, others have followed, making stories and reels essential tools for fan engagement.

Success now requires a multi-channel mindset that looks beyond social media.

Shifting from brand reach to leveraging social platforms as top-of-funnel tools is crucial—driving fans to owned channels where organizations can generate revenue and collect valuable fan data is the best way to offset the rising cost of live sports rights.

Average video length:

01:10



Vertical wins the views

The average adult spends 4.5 hours a day on their phone—and that’s not even counting phone calls. The revolution won’t be televised; it will be streamed, swiped, and tapped through our phones.

While computers and TVs remain the top choice for watching movies, shows, and live sports, mobile devices are quickly becoming the preferred screen, especially for younger audiences.

Vertical video is king. Whether it’s 9:16 stories and reels or the 4:5 format optimized for Instagram, vertical content dominates social media. If you’re creating video for digital platforms, it has to be vertical—but relying solely on social media is a missed revenue opportunity.

This trend is evidenced by a substantial increase in vertical videos created on the WSC Sports platform over the past four years. In the past two years alone, vertical content has doubled.



54% of all videos created
In 2024 were in a
vertical format

The fan funnel: From social, to your O&O

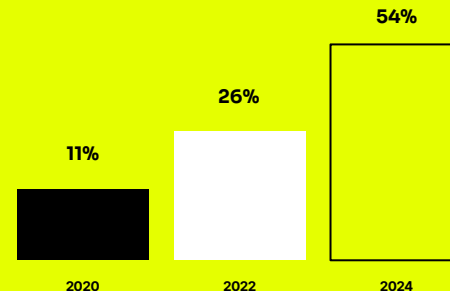
Taking lead from organizations like the New York Knicks, NASCAR, and Australian Open, teams and leagues must start operating like tech companies to market their brands. That means having a proprietary app packed with engaging vertical content—just like users are accustomed to on their favorite social platforms.

But the key difference? It's your ecosystem.

In addition to scores, standings, and news, the app should be a revenue engine, housing ticket sales, merch stores, event registrations, subscription services, betting platforms, and fantasy leagues (where applicable). The future of fan engagement isn't just social—it's strategic. And it starts with owning the experience on mobile.

2X

increase in vertical
videos from 2022-24



The real MVP: In-game clips

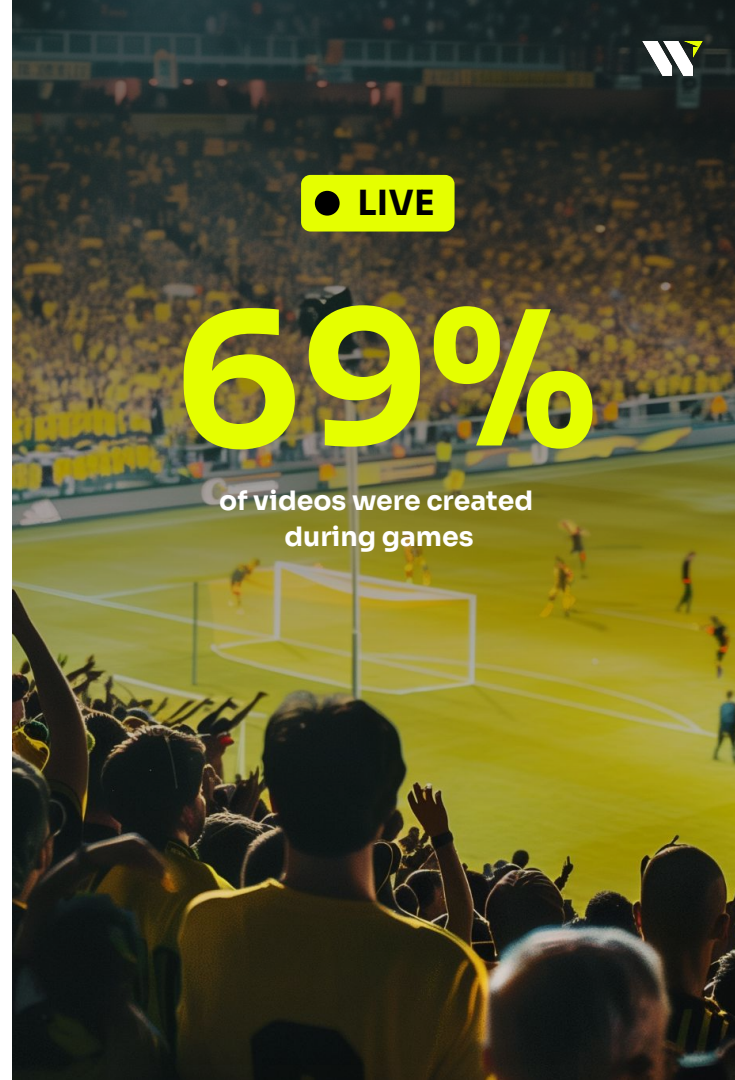
With plenty happening outside the window of live games, the thrill of competition is still *the most* compelling content. But today's fans, are tuning in on multiple devices.

Check out the results from a recent survey by [PwC](#) where they asked sports fans about **their habits while watching live games**:

- 1% do nothing but watch the game itself
- More than two-thirds are on social media
- 47% surf the web or play video games

Effectively, one highlight can become five unique videos, tailored to reach fans on their platform of choice to complement the live game broadcast.

On the WSC Sports platform, the vast majority of the total amount of videos were created while the game was being played.



Keep excitement going after the game

While the game is happening on TV, the community, conversations, and culture are all on social media.

Game content in the form of highlights, recaps, top plays, player compilations, and more keep the conversation going after the final whistle, and increase the lifetime value of customers aka “the fans”.

Building out a rich content library ensures that you’re able to market your organization every day of the week, and allows you to easily access the biggest moments to share with fans again in the future.



Match Highlights (multi duration)



PSG player highlights



PSG team highlights



LOSC team highlights



LOSC player highlights



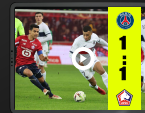
Goalkeeper saves



All goals



Game recap



“Last time they met”

High demand, high supply

A recent survey conducted by the B2B PR and marketing agency, 10Fold, found that nearly all marketing teams reported creating more content than ever before.

Demand is only increasing, and sports content in particular has the highest value of any type of content.

The trend is highlighted even more by the dramatic increase in numbers. More than half of respondents reported a 3-10X increase in content production compared to the previous year.

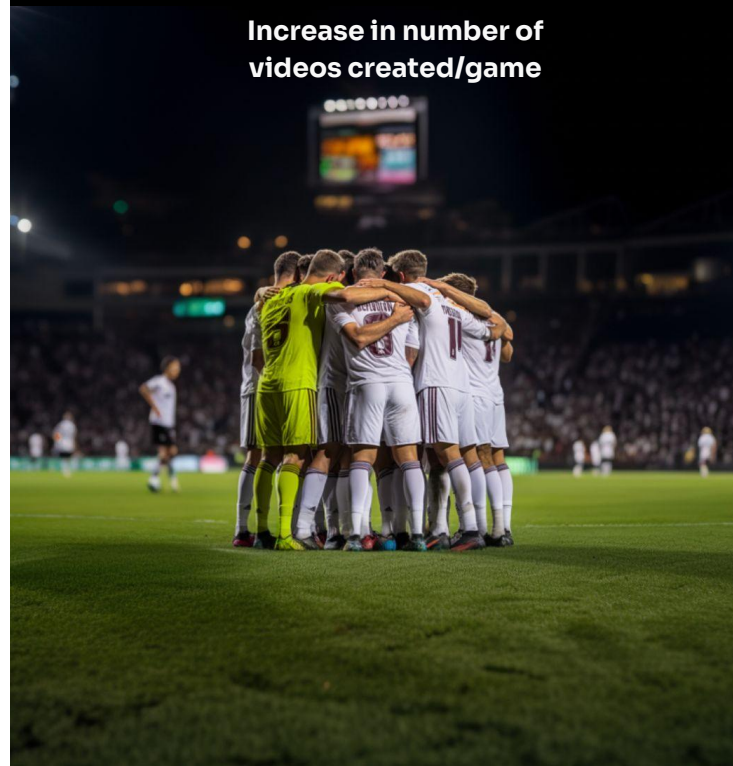
Newly popular platforms like TikTok, which only a few years ago featured little to no sports content, now advertise as a new '[home for sports fandom](#)', where fans from around the world can access their favorite sports, and learn about new ones.

The general increase in content mirrors the data pulled from WSC Sports users. Compared to 2020, they're created 97% more content from each game in 2024.



97%

**Increase in number of
videos created/game**



Create new stories, to reach new fans

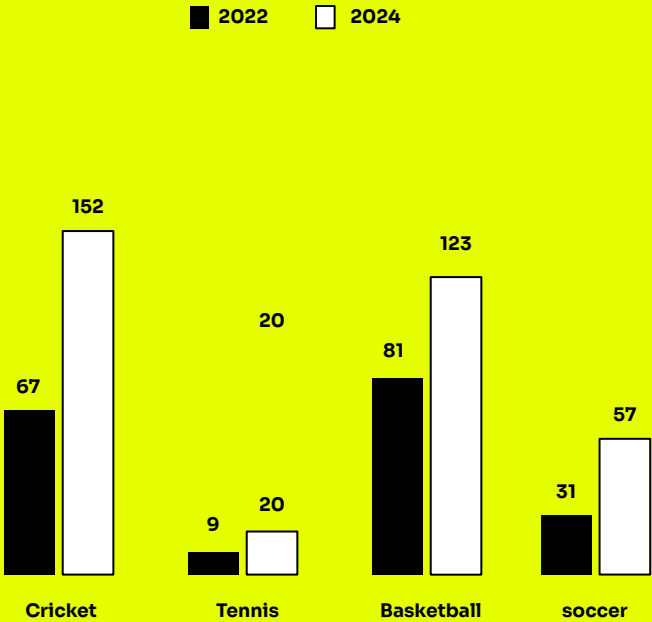


Today’s fans are so connected that even amateur sports clips have potential to be seen around the world. But it’s not just a global fanbase rights holders should consider, it’s different types of fans. From casual fans, to superfans—different content caters to different types of audiences.

That means creating as many stories as possible from a single game to cast the content net as wide as possible.

They can focus on individual players, the whole team, top plays, international players, fantasy lineups—the possibilities are defined only by your imagination. The best part, a lot of these stories are evergreen and can be repurposed later on to engage fans.

Number of videos per game



Key takeaways

Creating dozens of videos from every competition is impossible without automation. And as sports fans continue to consume content at a record pace, it's no longer a 'nice to have'.

Most importantly, rights holders need to build-out their own digital ecosystems, and leverage social media and other top-of-funnel tools and platforms to drive fans into it.

Only then can rights holders tap into invaluable fan data and insights, that will enable them to build stronger relationships with their fans.

A look back at the numbers:

- 1:24 seconds: the average length of a video in 2024
- 97% increase in amount of content being created
- 54% of all content was a vertical video
- 71% of videos were created automatically using AI



