



Beyond the highlights

The behaviors driving sports engagement on Meta

Findings from a report by National Research Group,
September 2025

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Research approach

Background, objectives, and methodology



The power of Meta in sports

Meta is integral to the way fans experience sports, yet it has lacked concrete data to demonstrate this impact. This study provides that proof, highlighting the strengths and opportunities Meta can display throughout the fan journey.

The research objectives are to:



Illuminate how sports fans live on Meta

and how engagement drives deeper fandom, participation, and purchase



Demonstrate unique brand impact

and demonstrate the unique brand impact Meta has in sports



Showcase cultural relevance

at every sports moment — before, during, and after the game



Quantify a clear edge in sports

in sports vs. TV, YouTube, TikTok, and X



Highlight persuasive data points

that proves Meta is the definitive home for sports fandom and a must-buy for advertisers

A worldwide pulse on sports fandom

Qualitative survey

17 minute

online, mobile-first survey
in native languages

Fielded July 30 –
August 13, 2025

Participants (Total: n=6,007)

Sports enthusiasts, active on at least one Meta platform for sports

- Age 18 or older
- Self-identified sports enthusiast, based on interest in sports and frequency of engagement
- Active people of at least one Meta platform for engaging with sports content

 United States n=1,000	 Germany n=1,003	 United Kingdom n=1,002	 India n=1,001	 France n=1,000	 Brazil n=1,001
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Executive summary



Meta extends the game — and the impact

Meta keeps the game going.

From discovering storylines pre-game to reacting live and reliving moments after the final whistle, Meta is the top platform that monetizes fan engagement beyond the broadcast window.

96%

Meta leads all platforms in engagement before, during, and after live sporting events

TV is passive. Mobile is active.

Fans multitask during live sports, and Meta captures that real-time energy. With mobile-first strategies that meet fans where they are during the biggest plays, background viewing turns into active participation.

47%

of Instagram consumers and **41% of WhatsApp** consumers report higher sports engagement vs. last year – compared to only 36% for traditional TV

Creators and athletes convert connection into action.

Fans follow, engage, and then click, buy, or join — proving partnerships on Meta deliver measurable outcomes. Investing in creator/athlete partnerships on Meta directly fuels these outcomes.

89%

Nearly all of Meta consumers took action after seeing sports content; over a third clicked a sponsor link, followed a brand, or made a purchase

Meta keeps the big-game energy alive

Daily energy, not just at tentpoles.

Highlights, memes, athlete stories, and fan content keep sports culture alive between events — and always-on activations on Meta help brands stay connected to that fan energy.

46%

Nearly half of weekly sports engagement happens outside live games, much of it on social platforms like Meta

One ecosystem. Endless touchpoints.

Fans flow across Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Threads, and Facebook Messenger. Cross-app campaigns offer advertisers a unique continuity unmatched by competitors.

35%

of fans switch between Meta and non-Meta platforms during games — showing mobile-first, active engagement across apps

Meta wins the fan journey.

From discovery to live reactions to post-game highlights, Meta outperforms TV, TikTok, and YouTube on relevance, connection, and commerce.

#1

Meta is the #1 trusted destination for discovering sports products/services (60% vs. 40% YouTube, 29% traditional TV, 13% TikTok)

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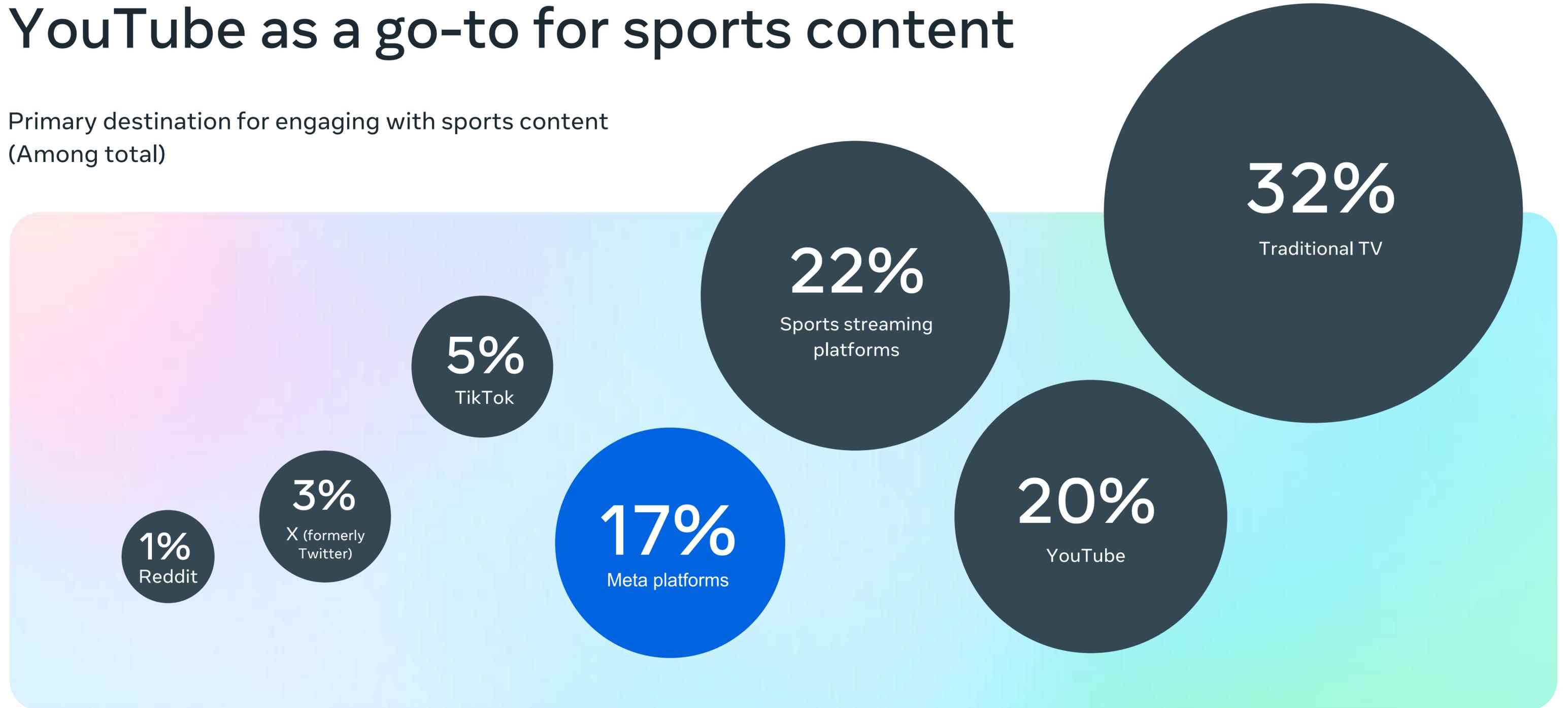
The clear winner:
Meta vs.
everyone else



The clear winner: Meta vs. everyone else

Meta stands with TV, streaming, and YouTube as a go-to for sports content

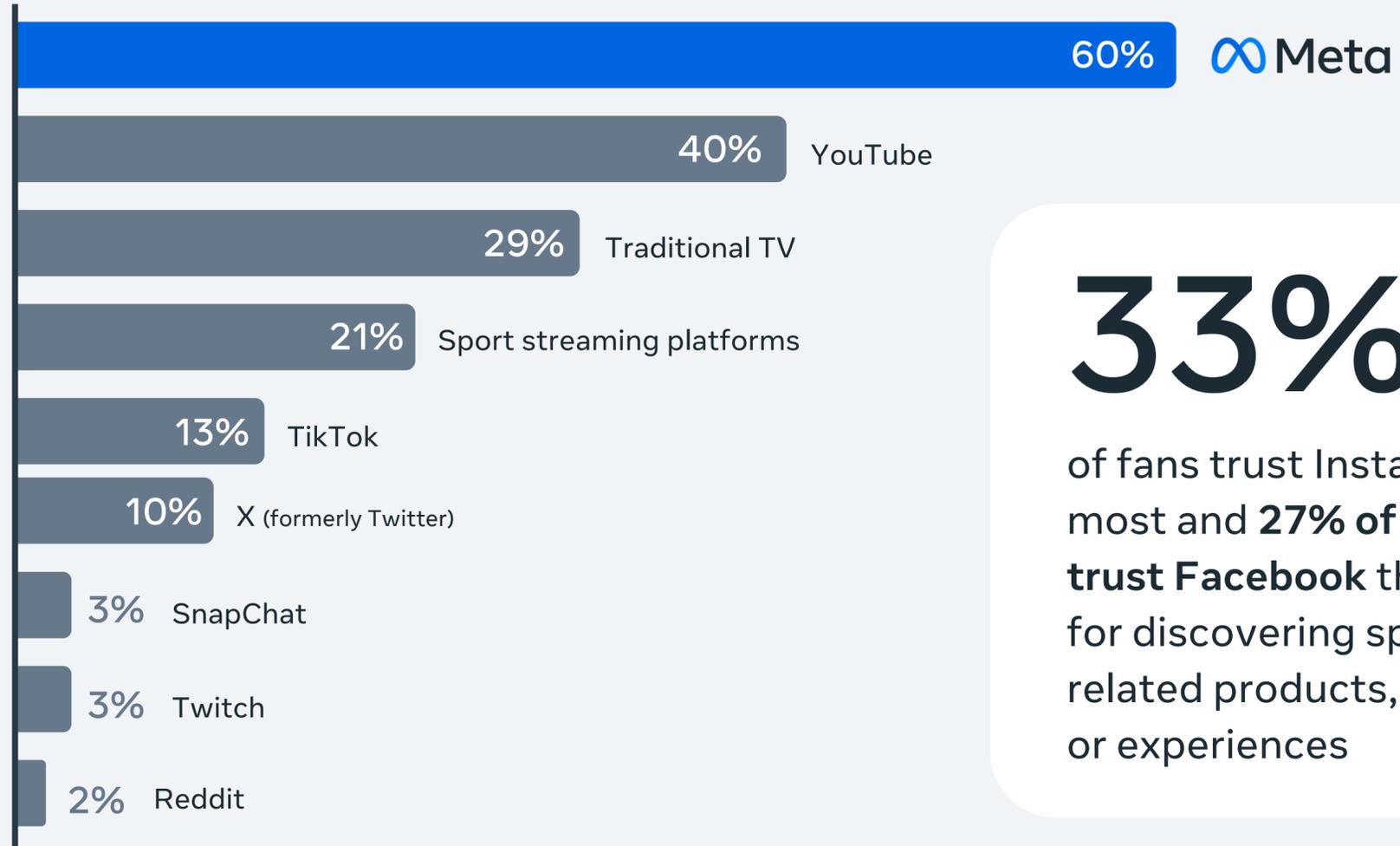
Primary destination for engaging with sports content
(Among total)



The clear winner: Meta vs. everyone else

Meta is the #1 trusted source for discovering sports products, services, and experiences

Most trusted for sports product/service discovery
(Among total, select up to 3)



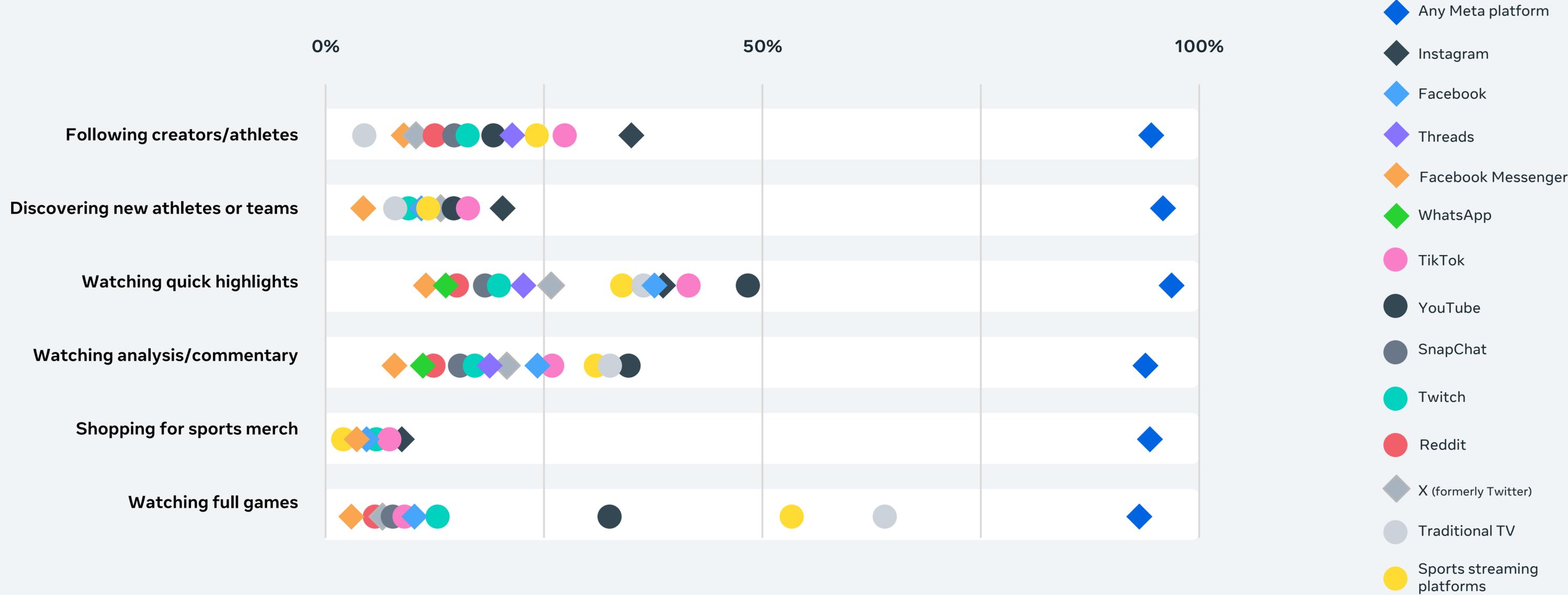
33%
of fans trust Instagram the most and **27% of fans trust Facebook** the most for discovering sports-related products, services, or experiences



The clear winner: Meta vs. everyone else

Fans rely on Meta across the full spectrum – from discovery to shopping

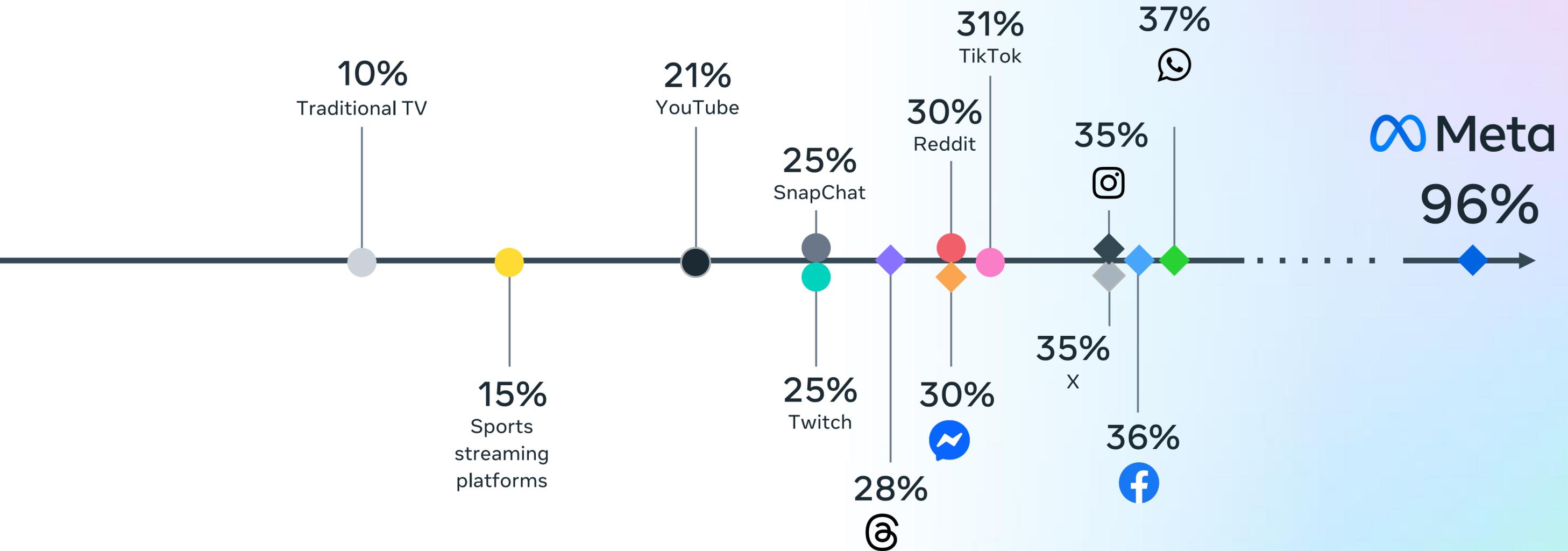
% using each platform for each activity
(Among platform consumers)



The clear winner: Meta vs. everyone else

Meta dominates fan-to-fan engagement

% using each platform to engage with other fans
(Among platform consumers)



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The Meta sports audience



Meta sport fans are diverse, influential and primed to buy

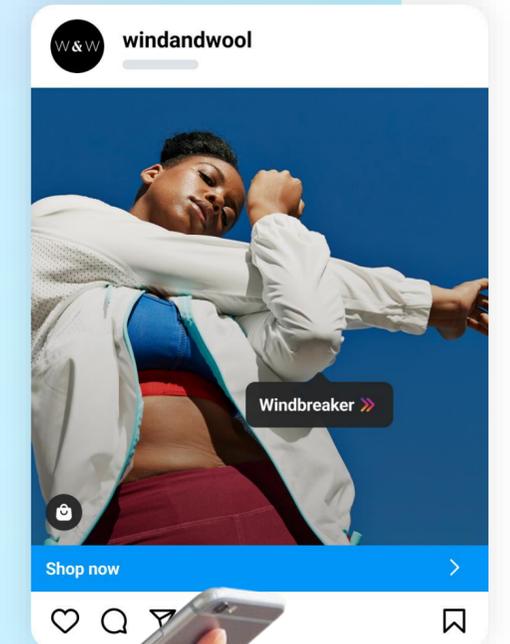
43.6 average age of sports fans on Meta

7.6 average number of sports that sports fans on Meta are interested in¹

86% of sports fans on Meta are the main **decision-makers** for purchases in their home²

64% of sports fans on Meta are “**superfans**”³

42% of sports fans on Meta are a **parent** of a child under 18



Meta sports fans are diverse, influential and primed to buy

Generation

22% Gen Z

31% Millennials

24% Gen X

22% Boomers

Education

High 41%

Med 41%

Low 2%

Income

High 34%

Med 48%

Low 16%

Employment

Employed full-time 53%

Retired 16%

Employed part-time 10%

Self-employed 8%

Student 5%

Unemployed but looking for full-time 3%

Full-time parent, homemaker 2%

Long-term sick or disabled 1%

Unemployed and not looking 1%

Top 5 sports of interest for sports fans on Meta¹

- 1 Soccer
- 2 Olympics
- 3 Fighting
- 4 Racing²
- 5 Basketball

The most passionate and diverse sports fans live on Meta

64%

of Meta sports fans are “superfans”¹ — who are more likely to be deeply engaged, influencing conversations and purchases

Meta connects advertisers with the most passionate sports audiences – fueling both cultural reach and brand outcomes

Meta sports fans are **more likely** to be Hispanic² — a critical, fast-growing audience that over-indexes on sports passion and spending



1. 8-10 on the fandom scale; 2. compared to sports fans overall

Fans on Meta convert passion into purchase, fueling brand ROI



@ 87%

of **Threads** consumers would consider trying a product that their favorite athlete uses

📷 70%

of **Instagram** consumers are more likely to buy a product from a company that advertises in sports

Self-statements:¹

75%

“I would consider trying a product that my favorite athlete uses”

69%

“I am more likely to purchase products from brands that sponsor my favorite athletes or teams”

64%

“I am more likely to buy a product from a company that advertises in sports”

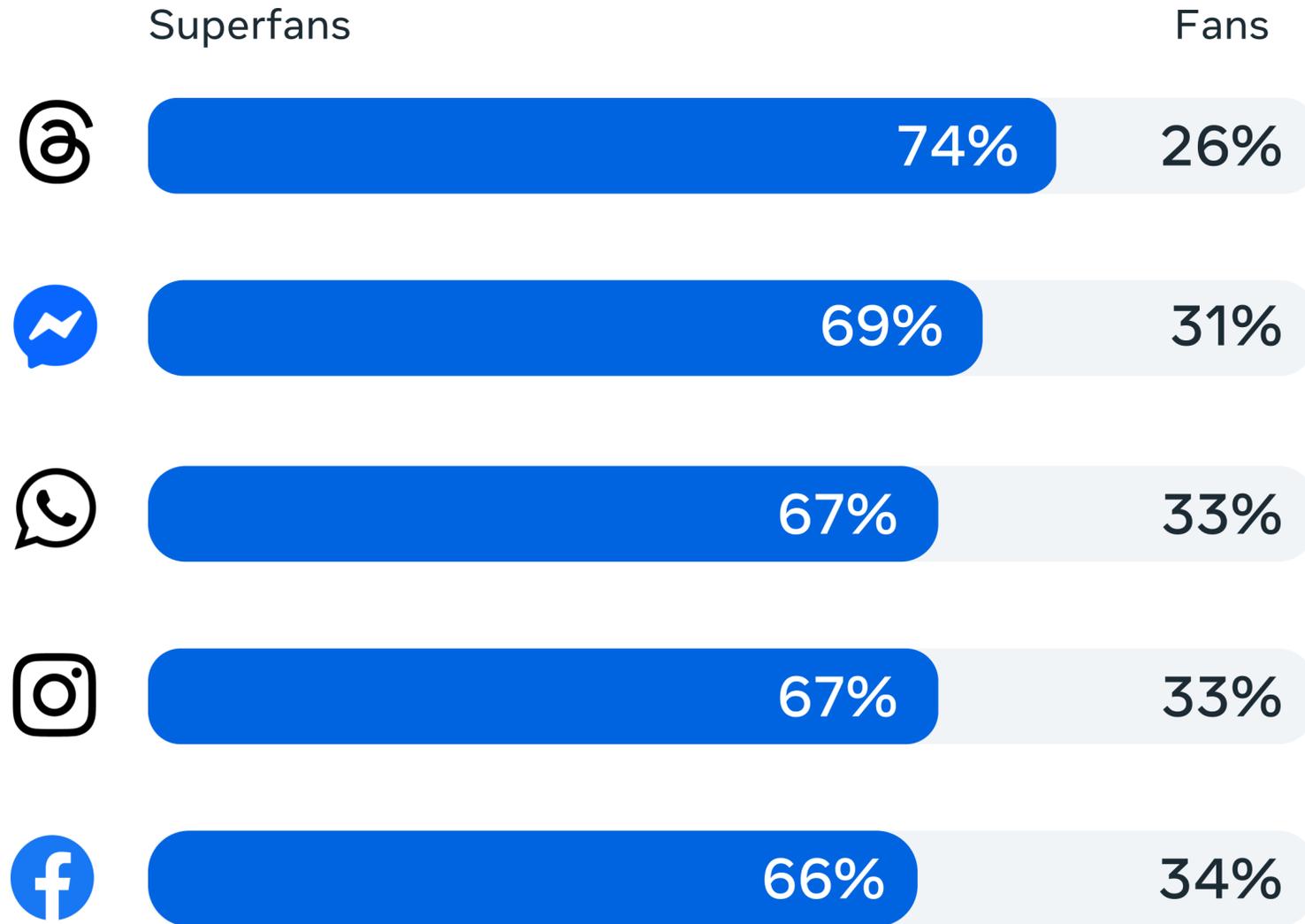
1. T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree among Meta consumers

Meta unites fans across every major sport

Sports interest
(T2B - % somewhat/very interested)
(Among total)

	Total	US	UK	Germany	France	Brazil	India
Soccer	1	5	1	1	2	1	1
Olympics	2	3	2	2	1	2	4
Fighting	3	6	4	5	8	4	3
Racing (F1, NASCAR)	4	7	5	3	7	3	6
Basketball	5	2	9	7	9	5	5
Tennis	6	9	3	6	4	7	9
Running/track	7	11	6	4	5	6	11
American Football	8	1	7	9	10	8	7
Hockey	9	8	10	8	11	9	10
Golf	10	10	8	10	12	11	12
Baseball	11	4	11	11	13	10	13
Lacrosse	12	13	12	12	14	12	14
Pickleball	13	12	13	13	15	13	15
Cricket	14						2
Kabaddi	15						8
Tour de France	16				3		
Rugby	17				6		

Meta reaches all fan types at massive scale



36%

are average sports fans



64%

are sports "superfans"¹

89%

consider themselves sports fans, even without watching full games

1. % selecting 8-10 on a 0-10 scale of sports interest

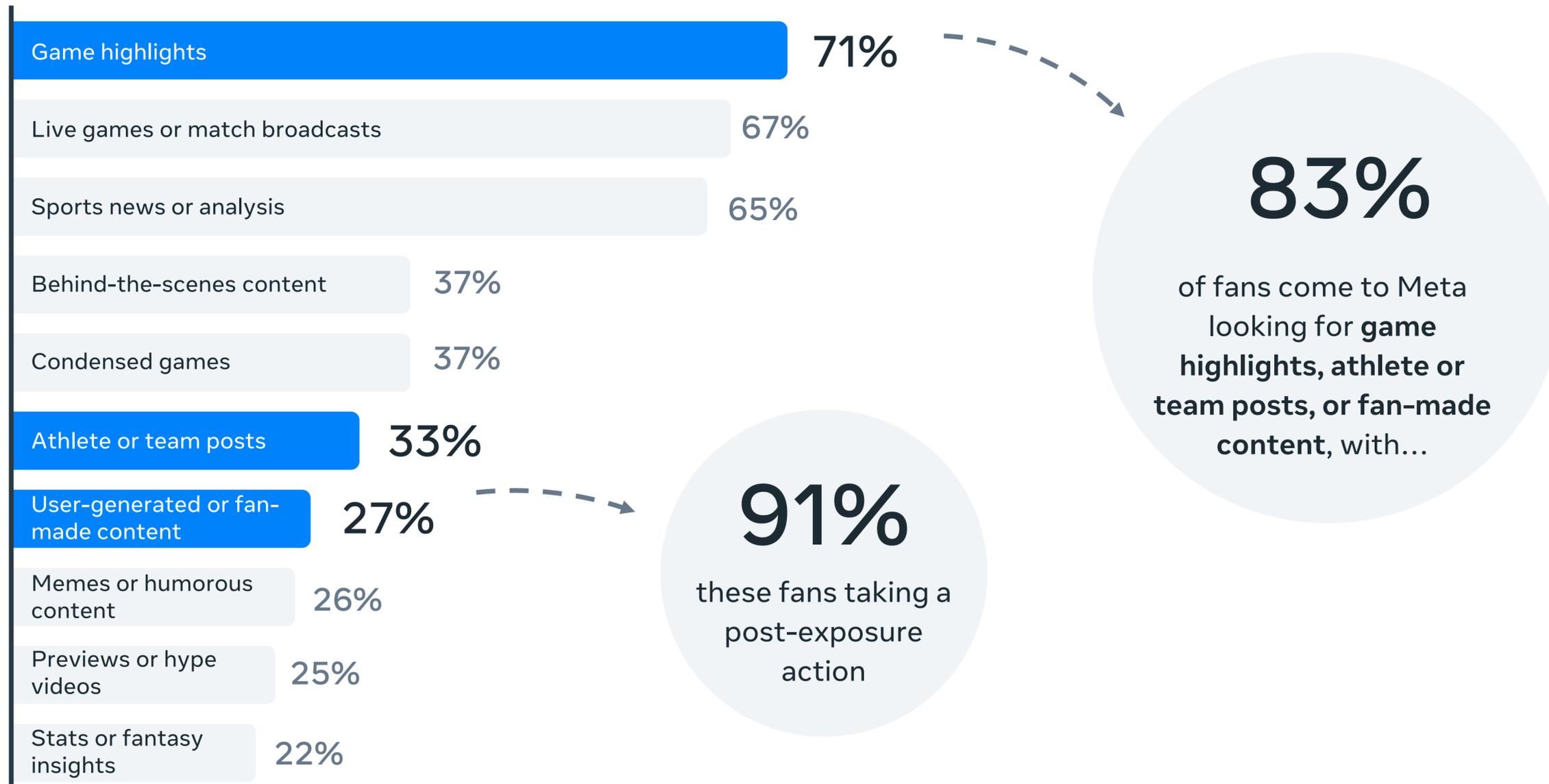
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Content that moves fans to action



Fans come to Meta for highlights, athlete stories and fan content — and

act content sports fans engage with on their primary platform (Among total)



Top 5 actions taken by these fans:

65%

Liked or commented

39%

Re-shared content

38%

Followed a player

38%

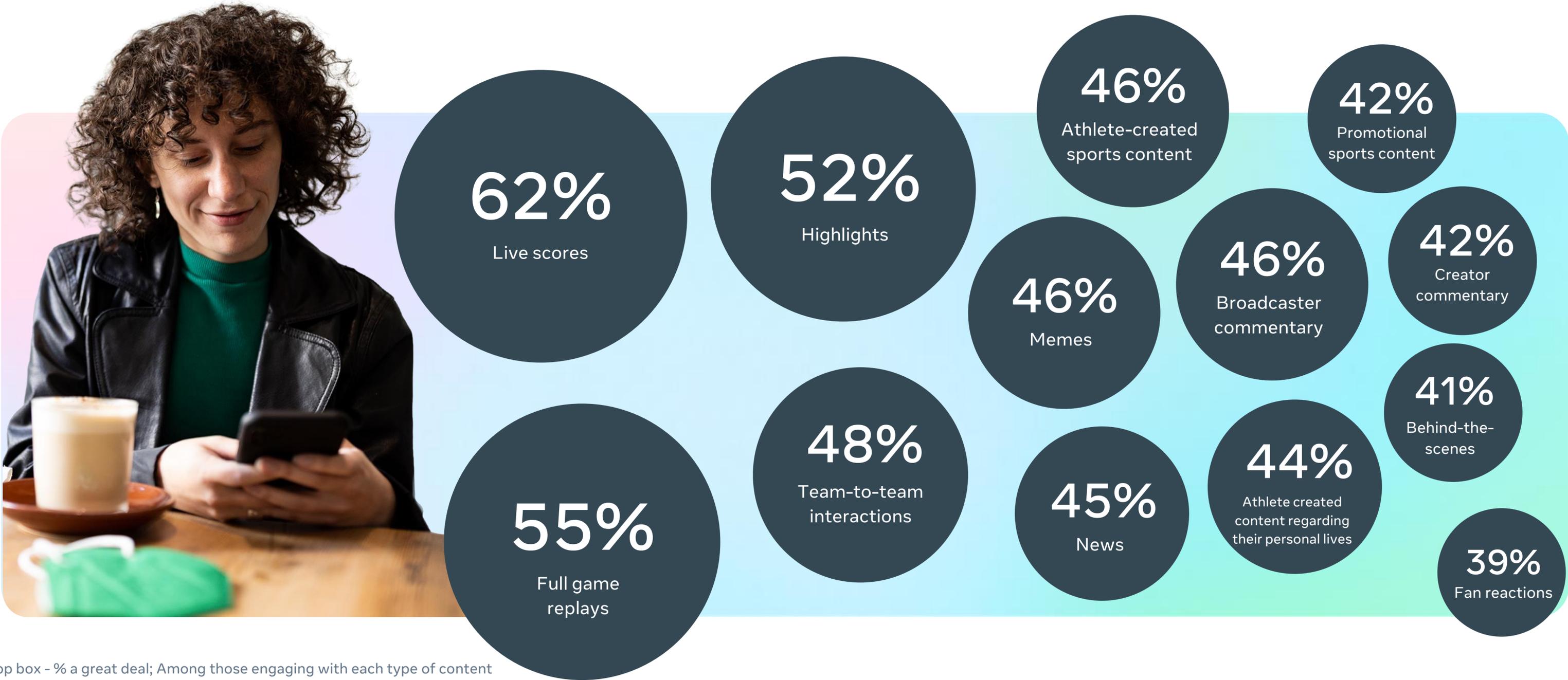
Followed a team

36%

Searched for more sports content

From scores to memes, Meta deepens fandom

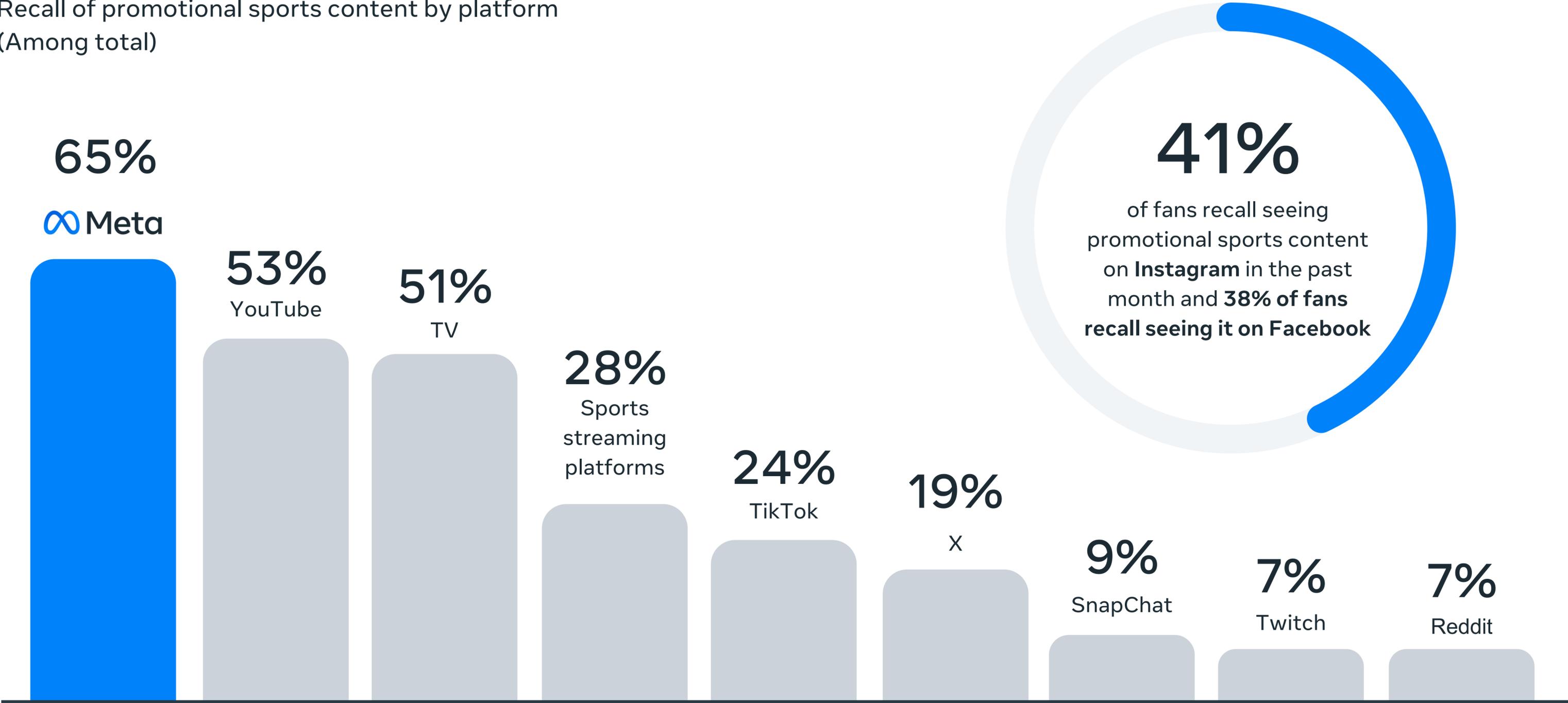
Content influence on sports fandom¹



1. Top box - % a great deal; Among those engaging with each type of content

Meta drives the strongest sports ad recall

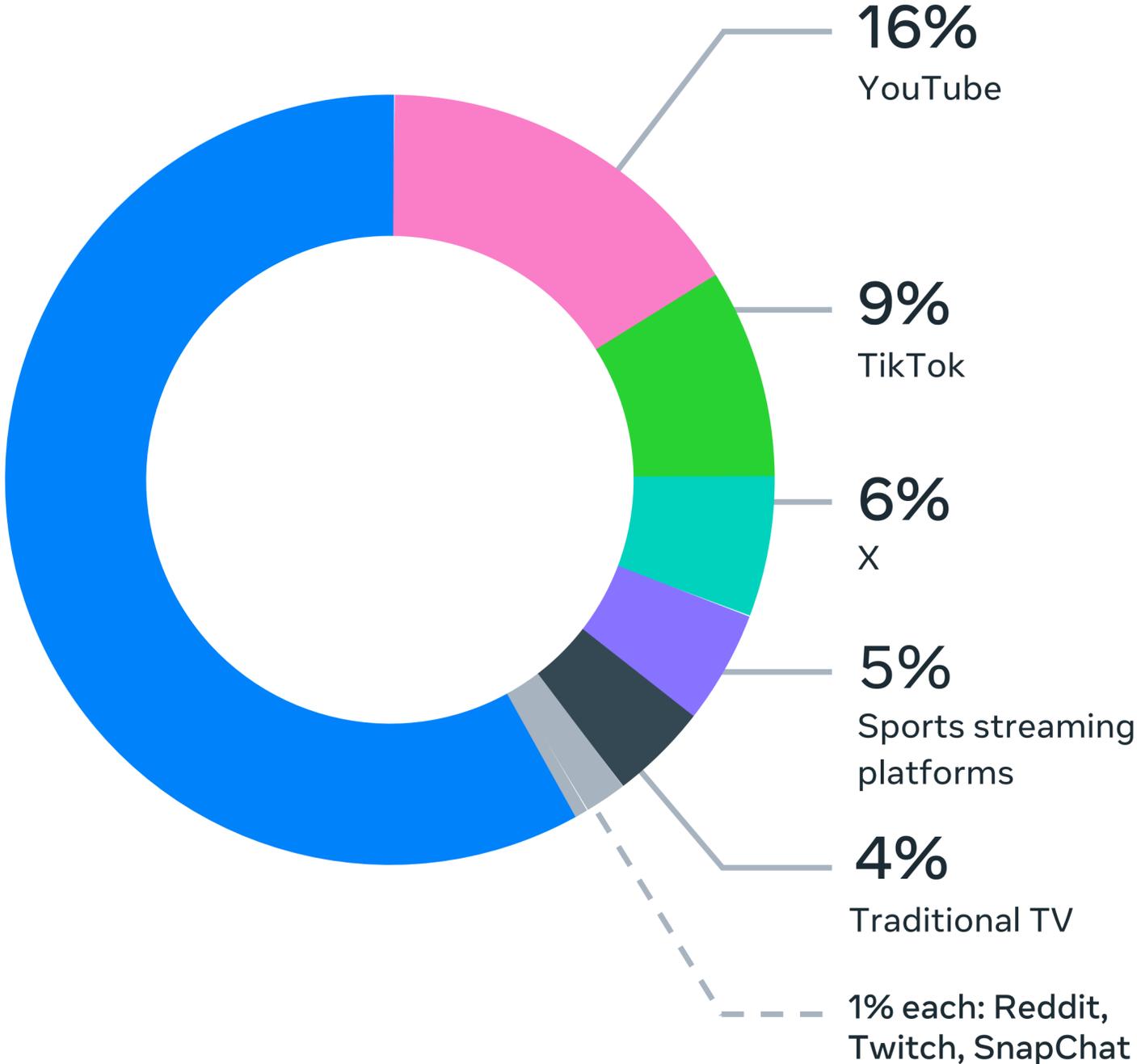
Recall of promotional sports content by platform
(Among total)



Meta is the #1 place for fan action

Platform driving most action after promotional sports content is seen (Among total)

 Meta
58%
Meta platforms



Content that moves fans to action

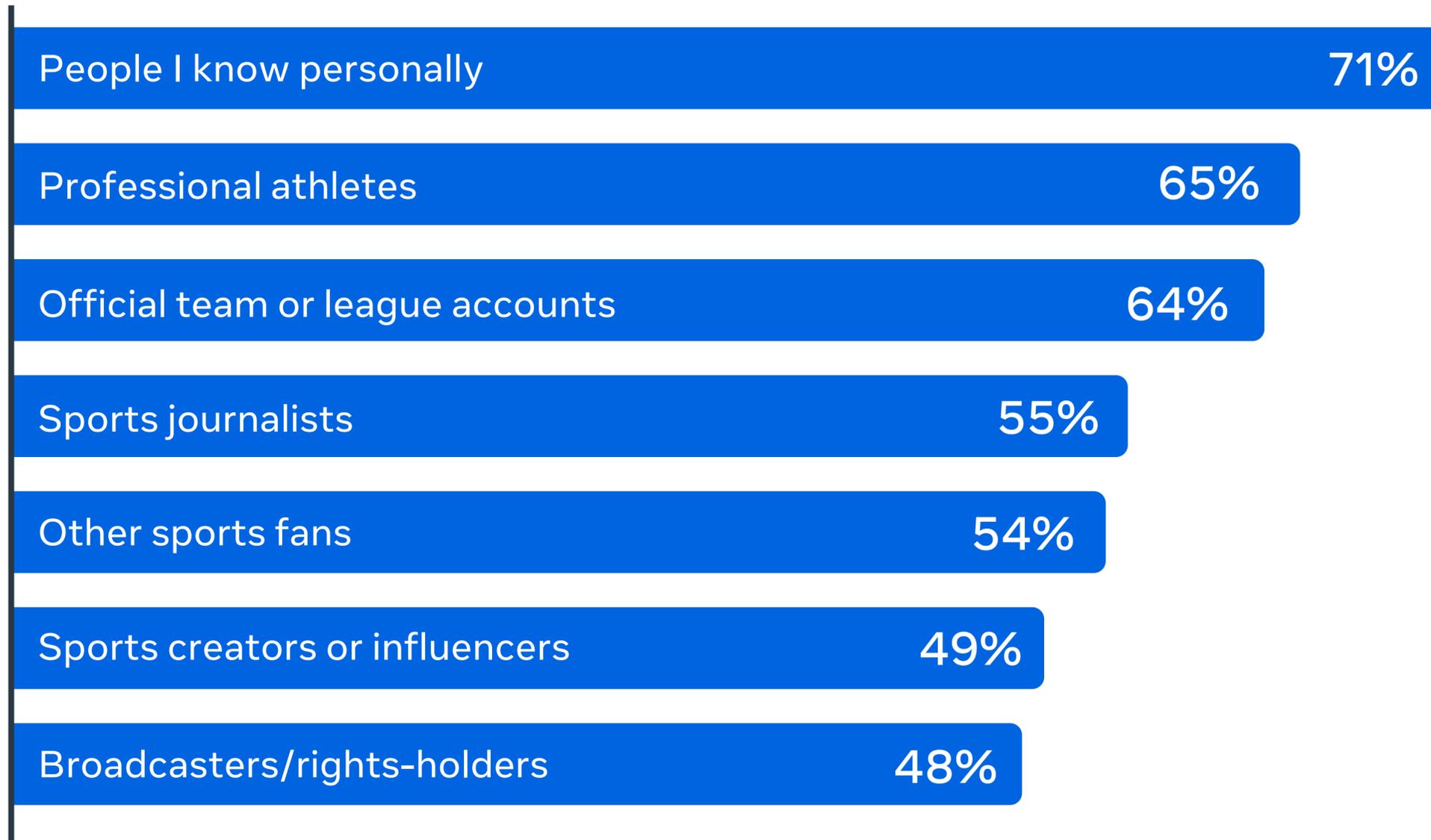
Instagram and Facebook inspire fan action globally

Platform driving most action after
promotional sports content is seen
(Among total)

	Total	US	UK	Germany	France	Brazil	India
Instagram	1	2	2	1	2	1	1
Facebook	2	1	1	2	1	4	3
YouTube	3	3	3	3	4	2	2
TikTok	4	4	5	5	3	3	
WhatsApp	5	10	6	4	6	7	4
X	6	7	4	7	7	6	6
Traditional TV	7	6	7	6	5	8	7
Sports streaming platforms	8	5	8	8	8	5	5
Facebook Messenger	9	8	9	9	10		10
Reddit	10	9	10		12		9
SnapChat	11	12	11		9		11
Threads	12	11	12		11	9	8

Authenticity wins: athletes and friends drive engagement

Engagement drivers¹



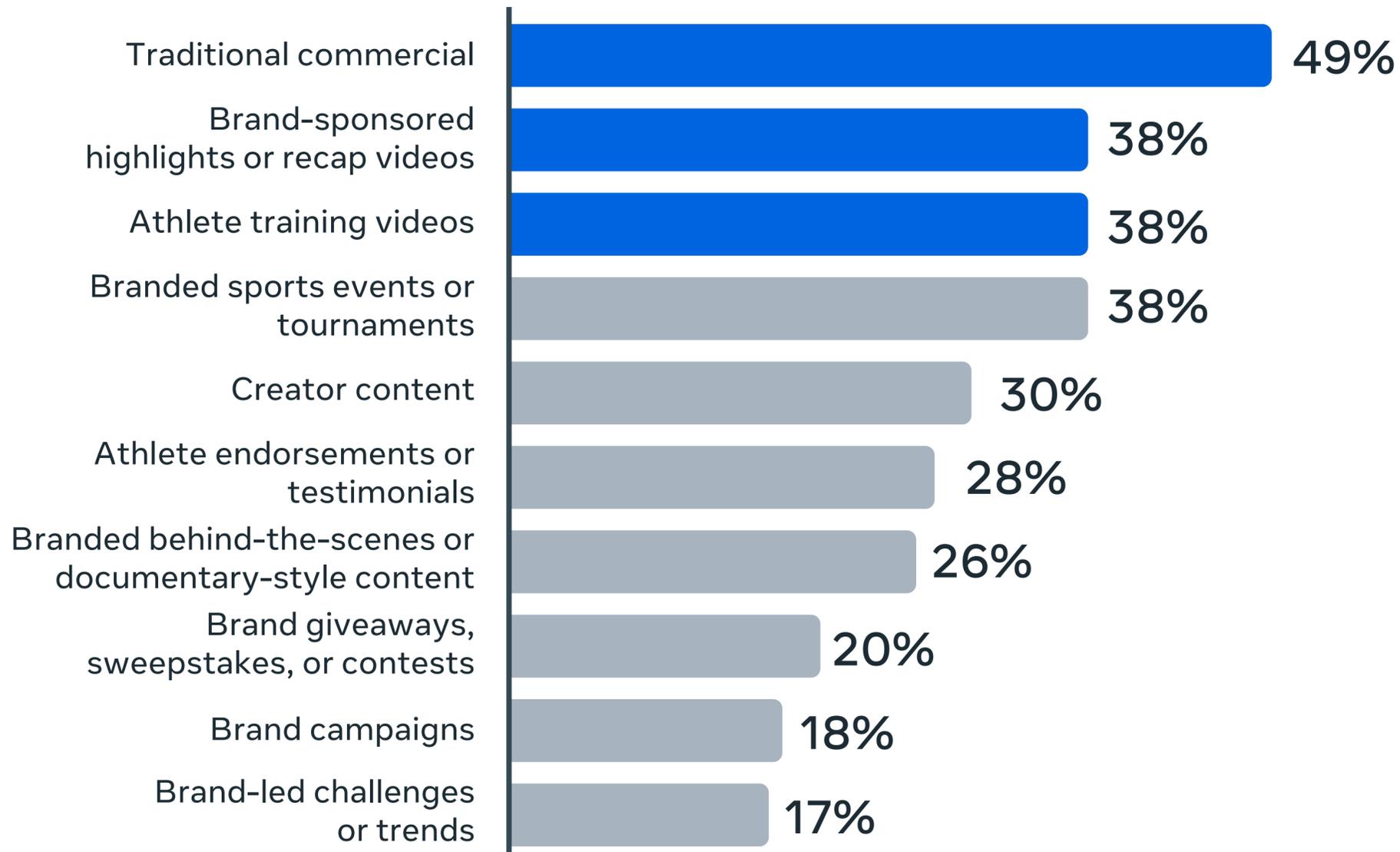
Threads leads across the board

Threads has the highest share of consumers saying each source — from athletes (75%) and creators (61%) to teams (73%), journalists (67%), and even other fans (64%) — drives their sports engagement, outperforming all other Meta platforms.

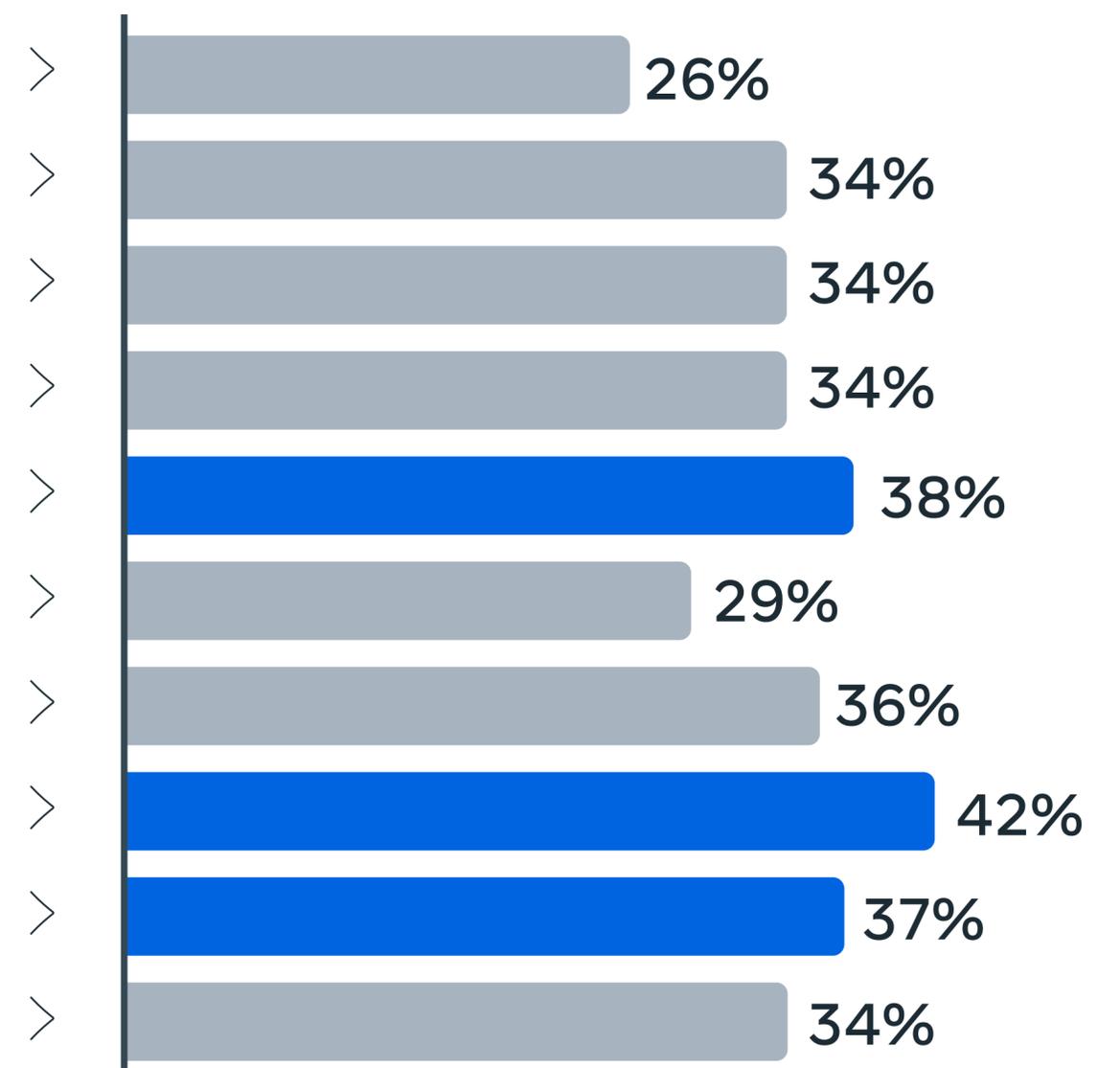
1. T2B - % somewhat/a great deal; Among total

Creator-led and branded content on Meta beat traditional ads, moving fans to buy

Promotional sports content seen in the past month¹



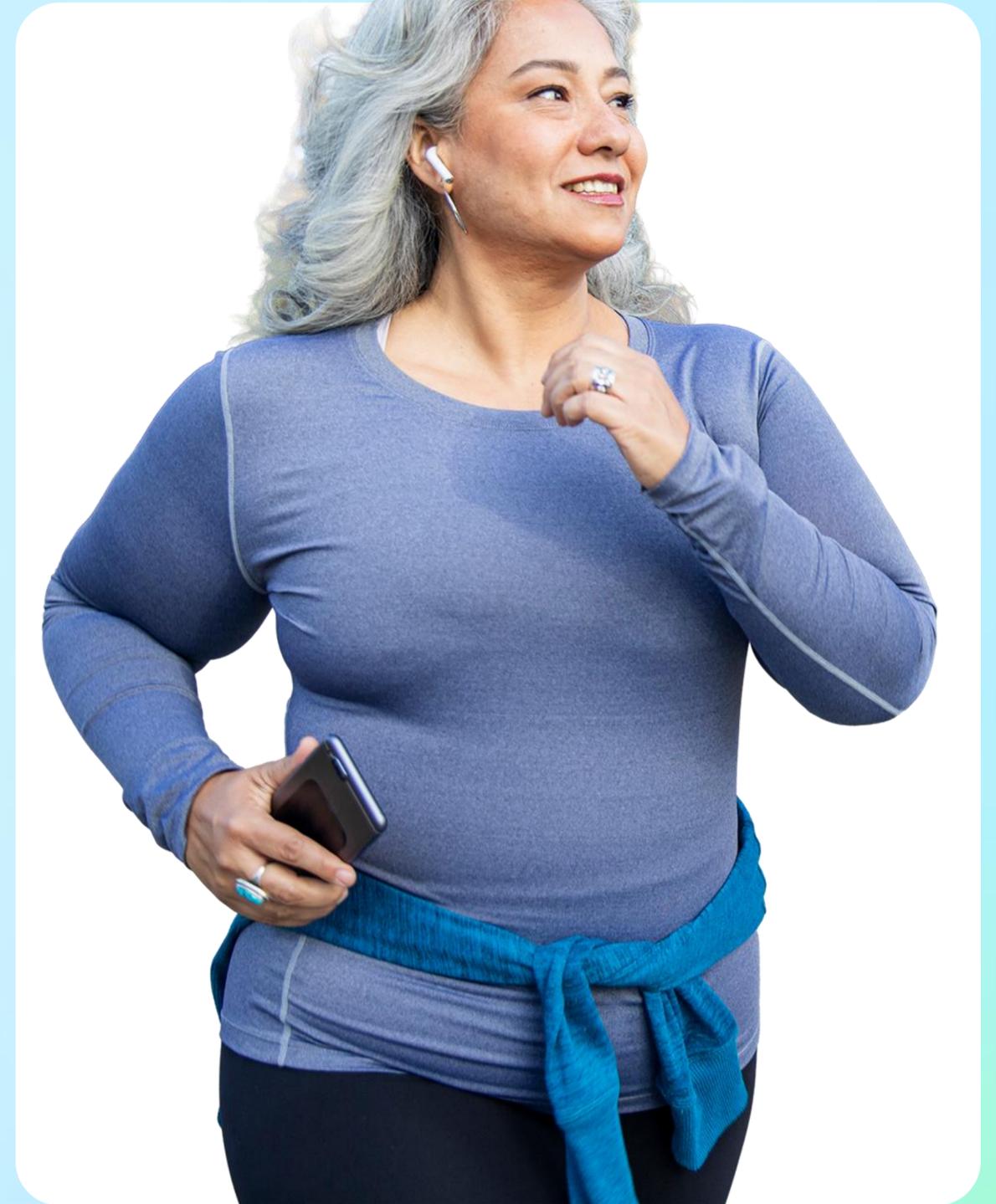
Content influence on purchase decisions²



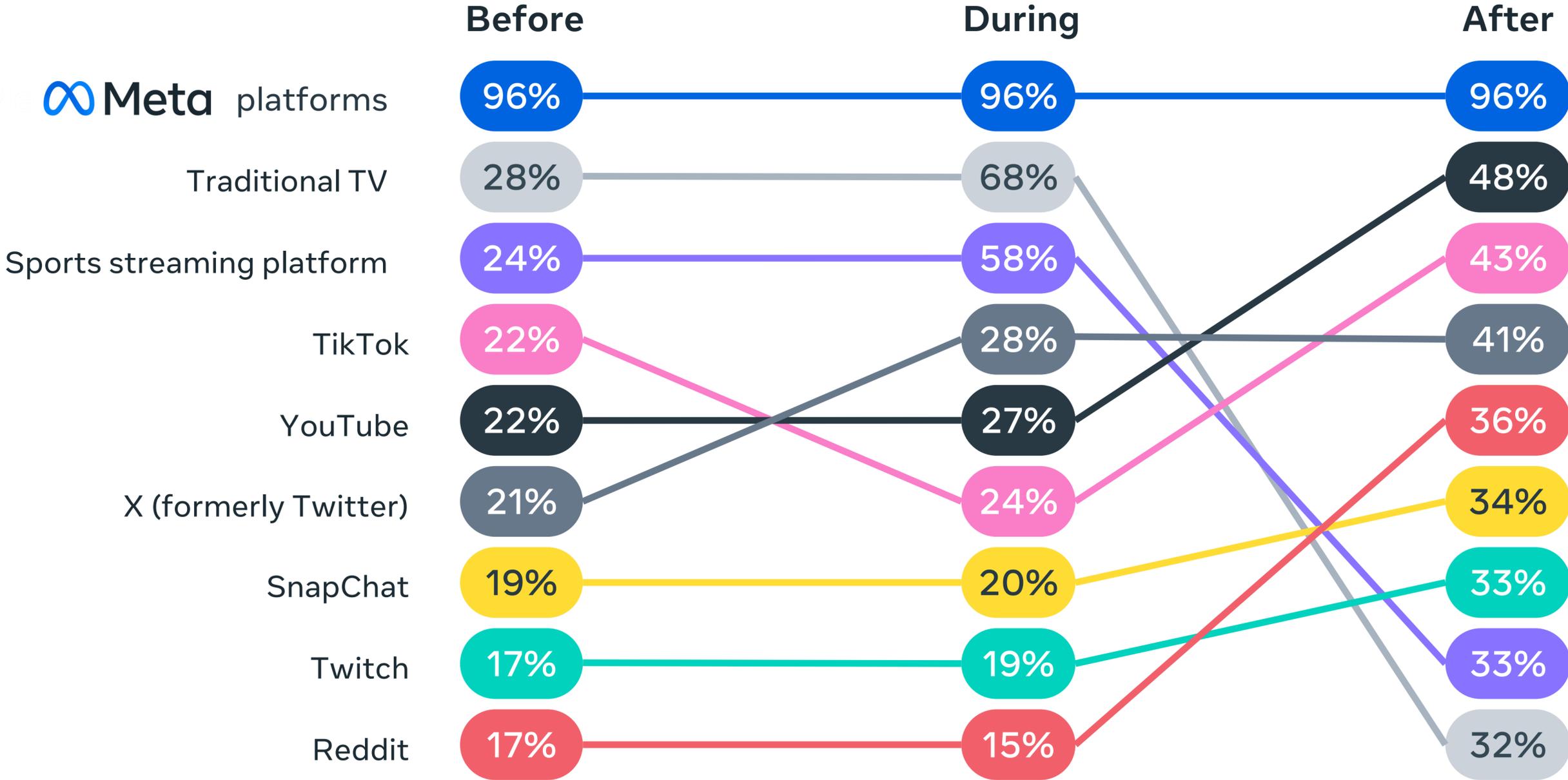
1. Among those seeing promotional sports content in the past month; 2. Top box - % a great deal; Among those seeing each type of content in the past month

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Meta powers the fan journey

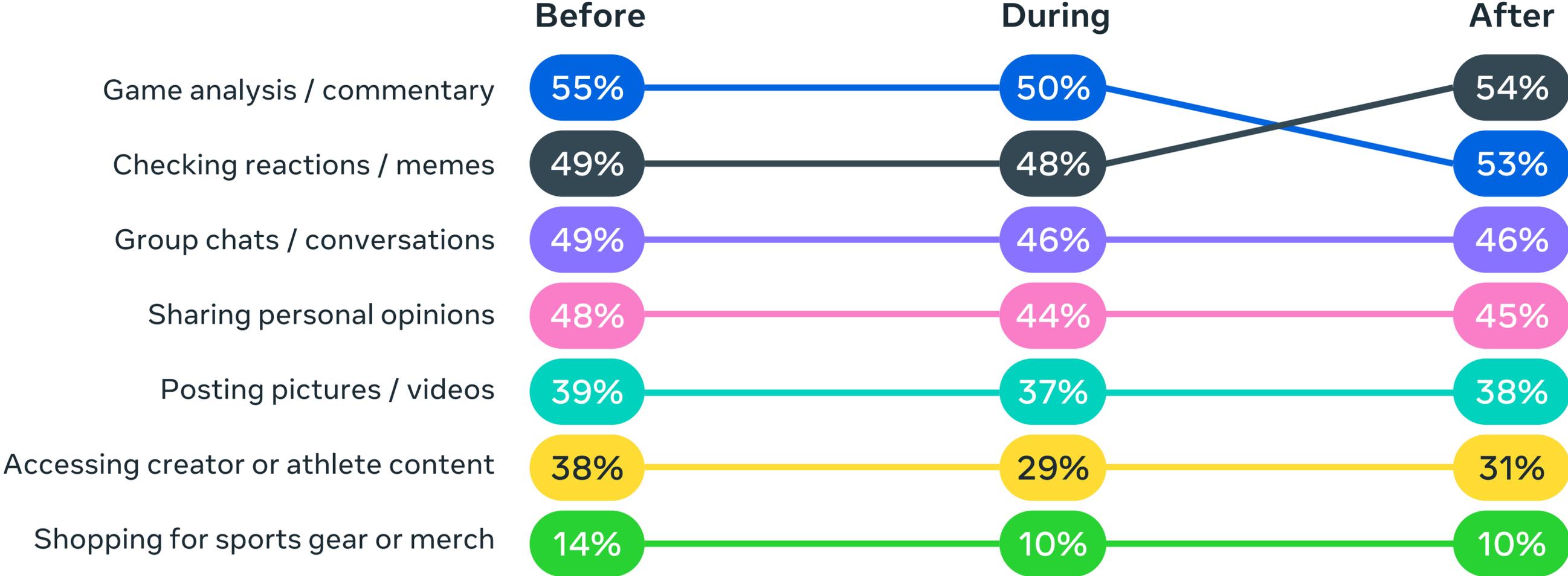


Meta leads platform engagement before, during and after live sporting events



Meta extends the “game window” with conversation and commerce

Reasons for using Meta before, during or after games (Among those using Meta during each phase)



Where and when is the action happening?

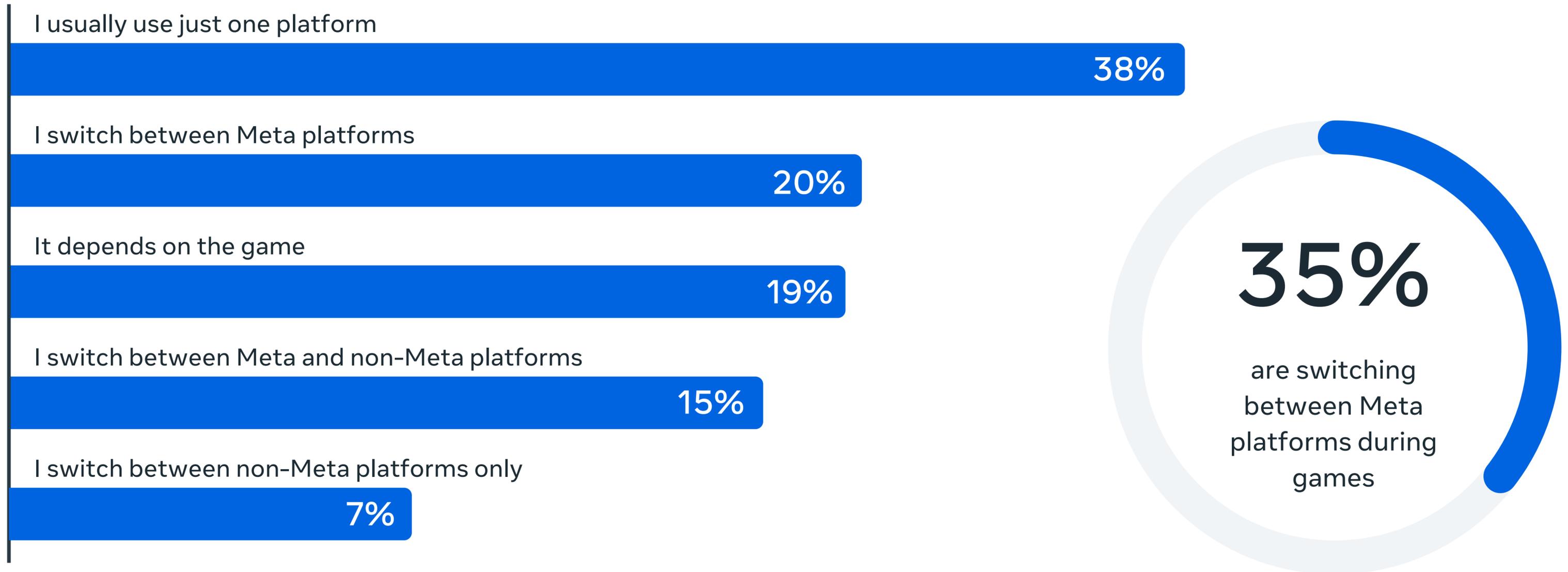
Before the game is when Meta consumers are most likely to check out creator or athlete content and shop for sports gear or merch



After the game is when Meta consumers are most likely to check reactions / memes

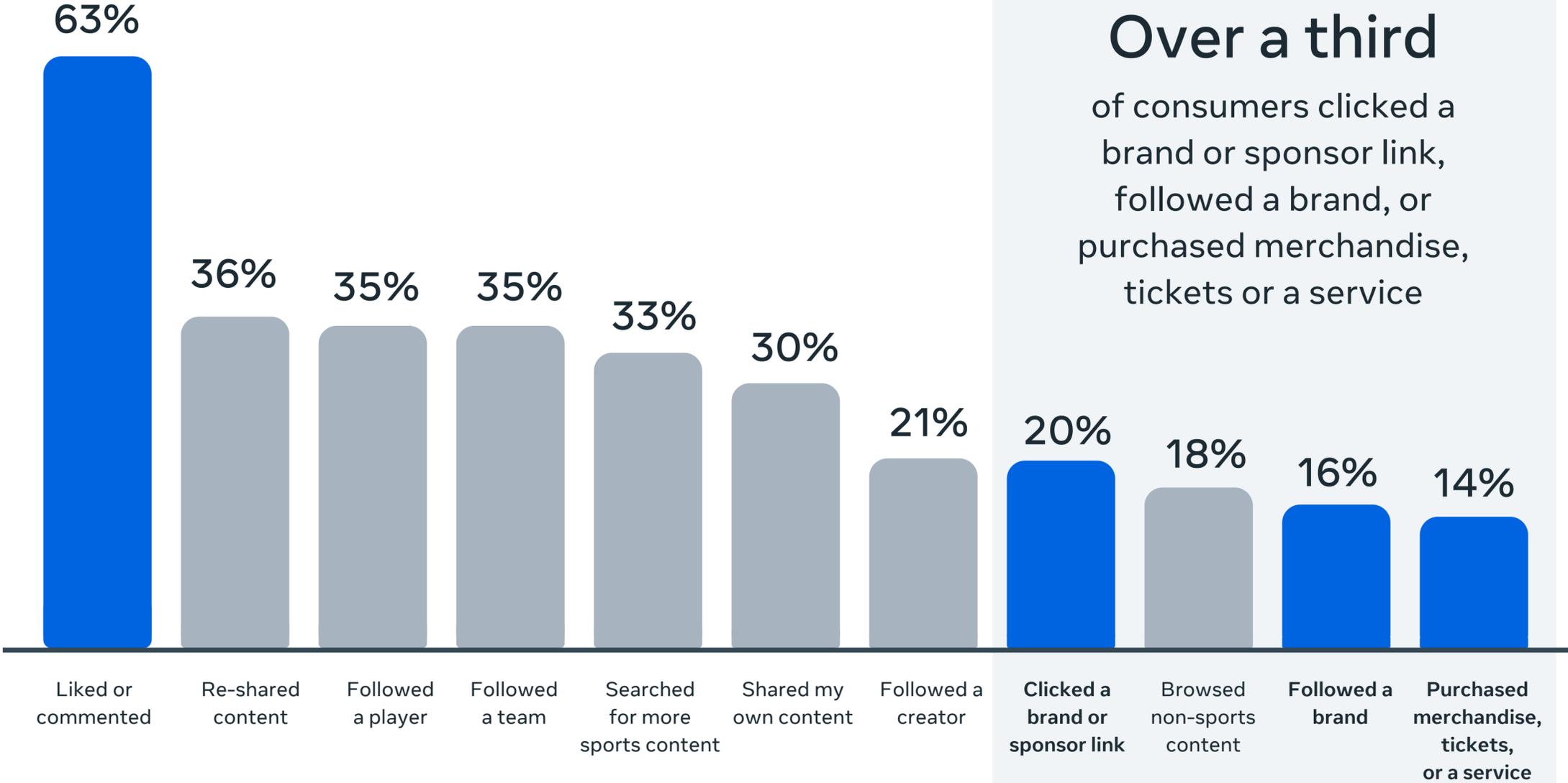
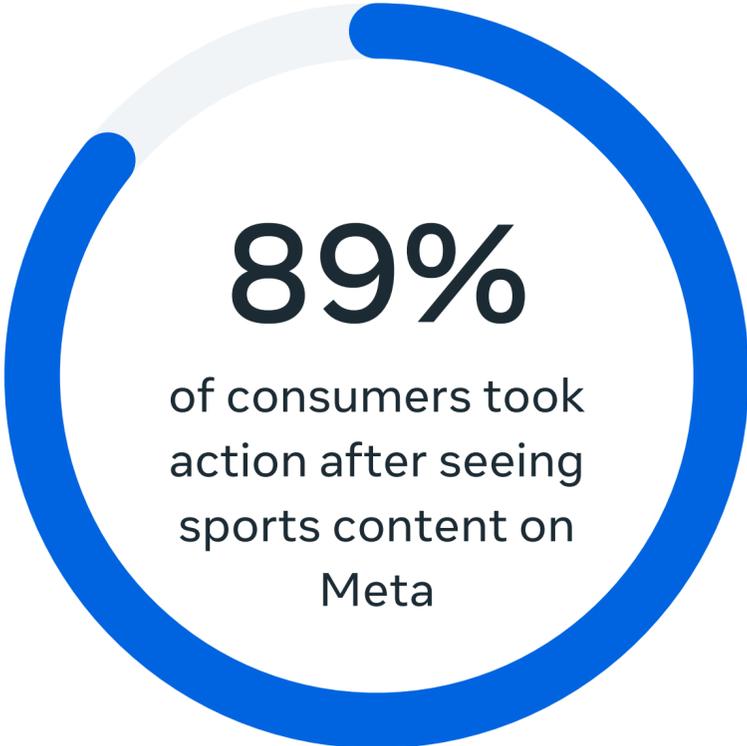
The Meta ecosystem keeps fans — and brands — connected throughout the game

Cross-platform use during live games (Among those using platforms during live sports games)



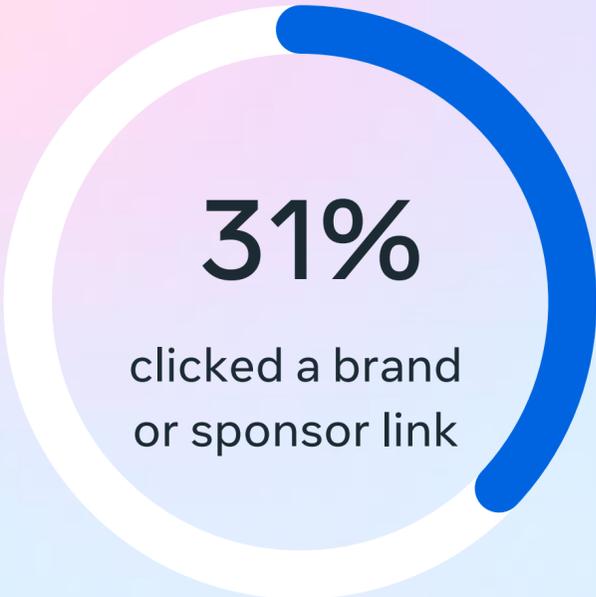
Nearly all fans act on Meta: 1 in 4 buy or click

Actions taken after seeing sports content on Meta
(Among total)



Fans following athletes/creators on Meta drive brand action: nearly 1 in 4 make a purchase

Of fans who follow sports creators or athletes on Meta:



Aqua Running Shoes
\$90

Social media transforms big sports moments into meaningful fan connections

Big moments

Unforgettable milestones, epic highlights, and jaw-dropping plays shared online instantly pull fans closer to the sport.

“Watching Neeraj Chopra win Gold at the Olympics on social media was so inspiring and that moment connected me deeply to the sport.”

-IN, Female, 27yo

“The last time the Georgia Bulldogs won the championship it was pretty cool because all my friends from school are huge UGA fans and it was kinda like we were all celebrating and talking about highlights from the game for days afterwards.”

-US, Male, 37yo

Fanbase engagement

From celebrating thrilling victories to sparking conversation, fans connect more deeply with other fans by sharing these moments online.

“When the Lionesses won the European final, there were lots of celebrations on social media. It felt like I was part of a huge, happy community.”

-UK, Female, 54yo

“I did a post during the Superbowl and was just asking who people were rooting for and it got a ton of fun engagement. It was a fun way to feel connected during the game!”

-US, Female, 36yo

Athlete connection

Direct interactions with athletes — from reposts to personal shoutouts — create unforgettable moments that make fans feel part of the experience.

“When I went to a sports game and met an athlete that I was watching, I posted a video of him and he reposted it and followed me. That made my whole week.”

-US, Male, 25yo

“A long time ago, I got one of my then best friend's favorite female MMA fighters to shout him out for his birthday.”

-US, Female, 43yo

Personal bonds

Major sports moments become deeply personal memories when celebrated and discussed with family and friends on social media.

“When Corinthians won the São Paulo championship, right after the match, I sent a message to relatives and saw and posted stories on Instagram about what happened.”

-BR, Male, 25yo

“When my Dallas Cowboys were playing and we were having a blast on Facebook with my friends who were for the other team.”

-US, Female, 54yo

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Meta is the
definitive home
for sports
fandom



Meta captures the growing share of fan time beyond the live game

Mean sports engagement time breakdown (Among total)



46%

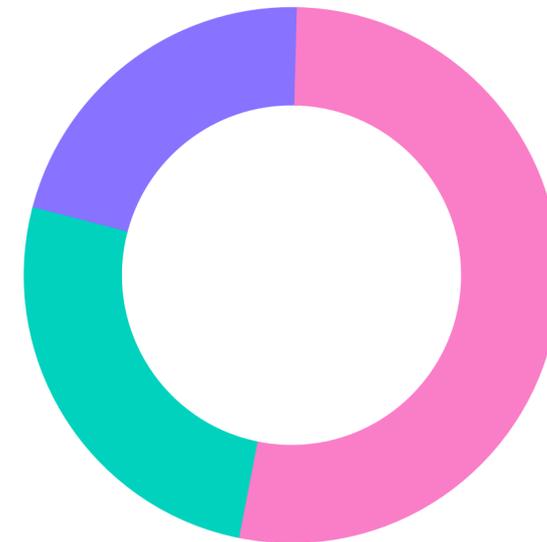
of sports engagement happens outside of watching live or recorded games

21%

Other sports-related activities

25%

Engaging with non-game sports content on social platforms



54%

Watching live or full recorded games

Fans turn to Instagram for real-time, visual sports updates and direct athlete access



Direct athlete access

“I can follow specific athletes and gain insight into their daily lives.”
-US, Male, 31yo

“I like to follow the athletes' routines in real time through stories.”
-BR, Female, 18yo

“I prefer Instagram for sports content because it offers quick, visually engaging updates and allows me to interact directly with athletes and other fans in real time.”
-US, Male, 34yo

“[I like to] follow famous athletes and their activities.”
-DE, Male, 29yo



Stories and reels

“Stories and Reels keep you updated in real time. Athletes and teams post directly after games, from practice, or even from the locker room.”
-DE, Female, 33yo

“I see a lot of reels that have sports in them and I'll get most of my news there.”
-US, Male, 21yo

“Reels, live stories, and interactive features like polls and comments make [sports content] easy to follow.”
-IN, Female, 20yo



Visually engaging

“Instagram is a visual platform, which allows athletes, teams and leagues to share engaging and dynamic content.”
-BR, Female, 20yo

“It's easy to use, visually appealing and great for staying updated with trends.”
-IN, Female, 20yo

“Instagram is a highly visual platform, ideal for effectively showcasing sports content (such as photos and videos).”
-IN, Male, 23yo



Team interaction

“[There are] multiple people from my favorite college football team to engage with, plus the coach often posts on Instagram.”
-US, Male, 79yo

“I follow my soccer team, and I've been involved with people from other teams. It's the platform I use the most.”
-BR, Female, 61yo

“I like the access this gives me into each team and their players.”
-UK, Female, 42yo

Fans rely on Facebook for community, easy access and constant sports news updates



Friends and family

“I use Facebook primarily because it's where most of my friends and family are, making it easy to stay connected.”
-IN, Male, 44yo

“It is my most visited app daily so I get the chance to stumble on my friends' posts on sports.”
-US, Female, 47yo

“I can visualize with friends and family for added enjoyment.”
-FR, Female, 27yo

“[I like] contacting friends online and having a banter, commenting and enjoying together.”
-UK, Male, 61yo



Sports content

“I follow all my sports platforms on Facebook so any and all sports news pops up as soon as I open Facebook. Quick access and always something new to see.”
-US, Female, 24yo

“Facebook has groups for sports that keep me well updated.”
-US, Female, 26yo

“I get a lot of feeds from sports that are related to the ones that I like through Facebook.”
-US, Male, 72yo

“I browse it all day and follow various sports pages and content.”
-BR, Male, 29yo



Ease of use

“[I have] easy access on the phone I always have next to me.”
-FR, Female, 38yo

“It's easy to use and the videos are short usually. Sometimes they're long but you can fast forward them.”
-US, Female, 26yo

“[I like] the easy interface and quick availability of sports updates.”
-IN, Female, 25yo

“[It's] easy to use with lots of sports and athlete content.”
-US, Male, 72yo



Information and news

“It's my go to platform for all news and keeping up with the world including the sports world.”
-US, Female, 68yo

“[I like] the amount of official pages with tons of information.”
-US, Male, 61yo

“I follow a lot of football and other sports pages. The information is published quickly.”
-FR, Female, 36yo

“[I like] checking out the football club I support for news.”
-UK, Female, 42yo

Fans choose WhatsApp, Messenger, and Threads for connection, conversation and quick updates



Chatting and video calling

“WhatsApp is the best social app and I always get connected with my family and friends and do chats and video calls with them.”

-IN, Female, 39yo

“It’s more fun to me because I have lots of contacts to chat with there.”

-UK, Female, 29yo

Direct sharing

“We send results and highlights of goals and beautiful moments.”

-BR, Male, 38yo

“It’s quick and makes it easy to share content and even talk to people on the sport’s technical team.”

-BR, Male, 38yo



Familiarity and habit

“It is just my go to.”

-US, Female, 36yo

“I’ve been using this platform for years.”

-US, Male, 61yo

Connection to friends/family

“It’s the way I communicate with my friends.”

-FR, Male, 69yo

“It connects all my acquaintances.”

-DE Female, 48yo

“Facebook helps me keep me connected with my friends and family through messenger app.”

-IN, Male, 36yo



Conversational communities

“Communities or influencers dedicated to sports content on Threads that provide more in-depth and relevant information than other platforms.”

-IN, Male, 20yo

“A lot of speculation of what’s to happen during each game.”

-US, Female, 55yo

Quick information

“Quick updates on scores and news.”

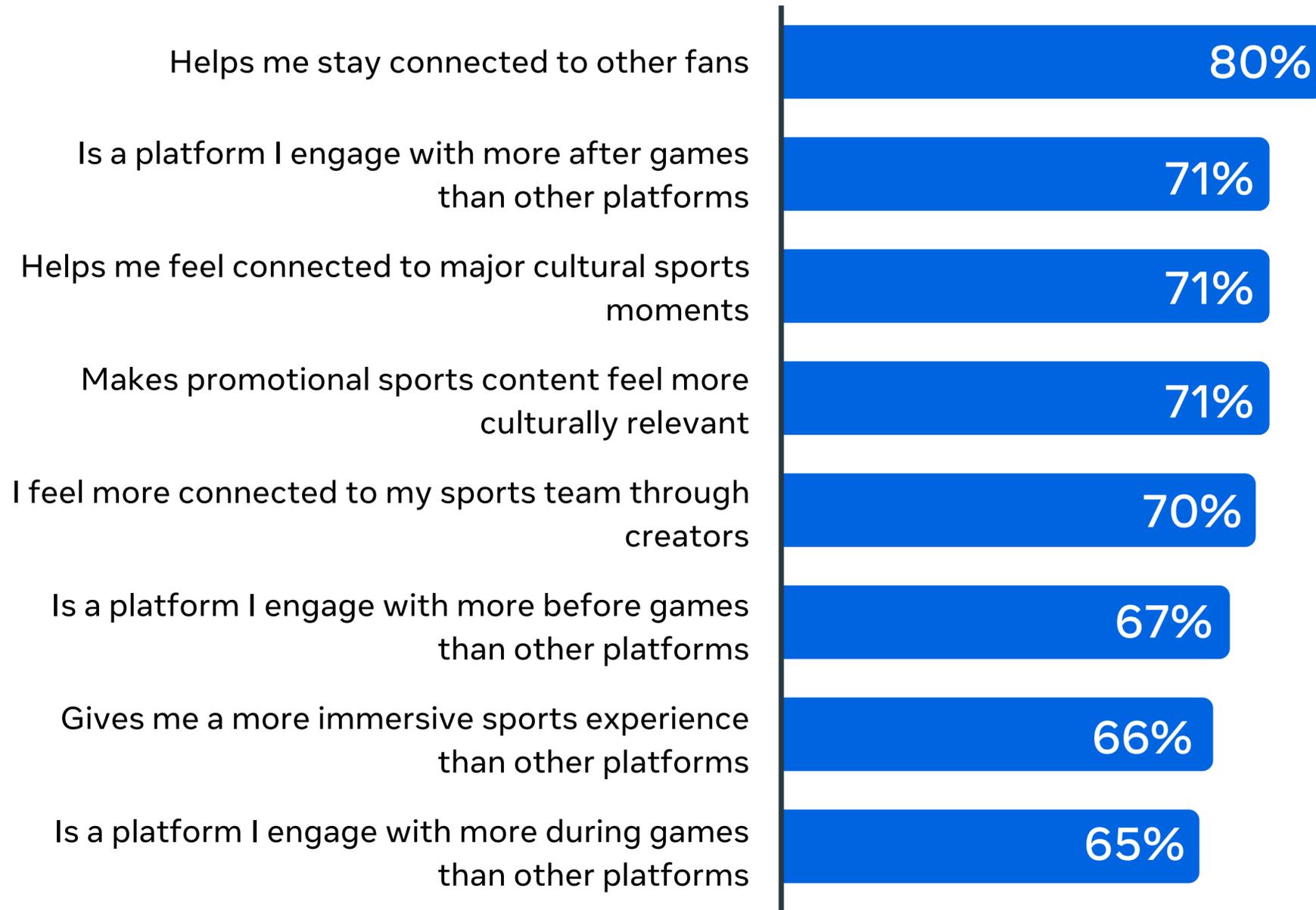
-US, Female, 55yo

“Easy to use and lots of good information.”

-DE, Female, 32yo

4 in 5 say Meta keeps them connected to other fans

Platform associations¹



73%

agree that **Instagram** helps them stay connected to other fans

67%

agree that **Instagram** helps them feel connected to major **cultural sports moments**

67%

agree that **Instagram** makes them feel more connected to their team through **creators**

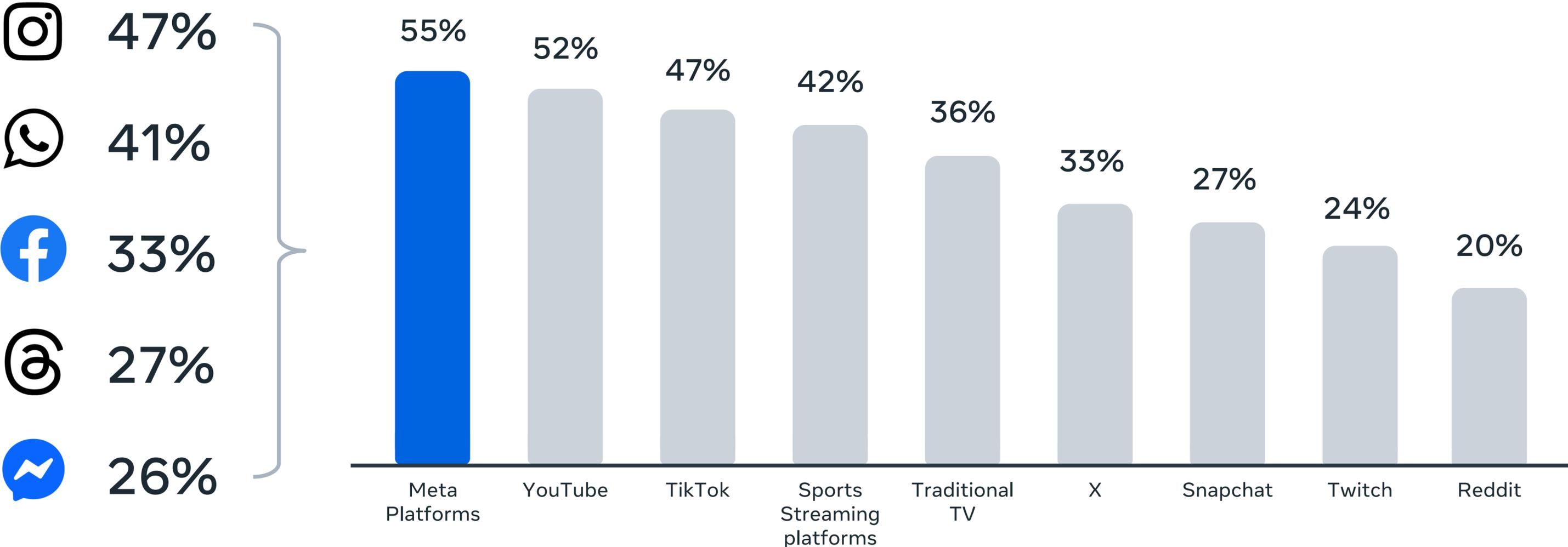
67%

agree that **Instagram** makes promotional sports content feel more **culturally relevant**

1. T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among total

Momentum is building: sports engagement on Meta continues to climb vs. one year ago

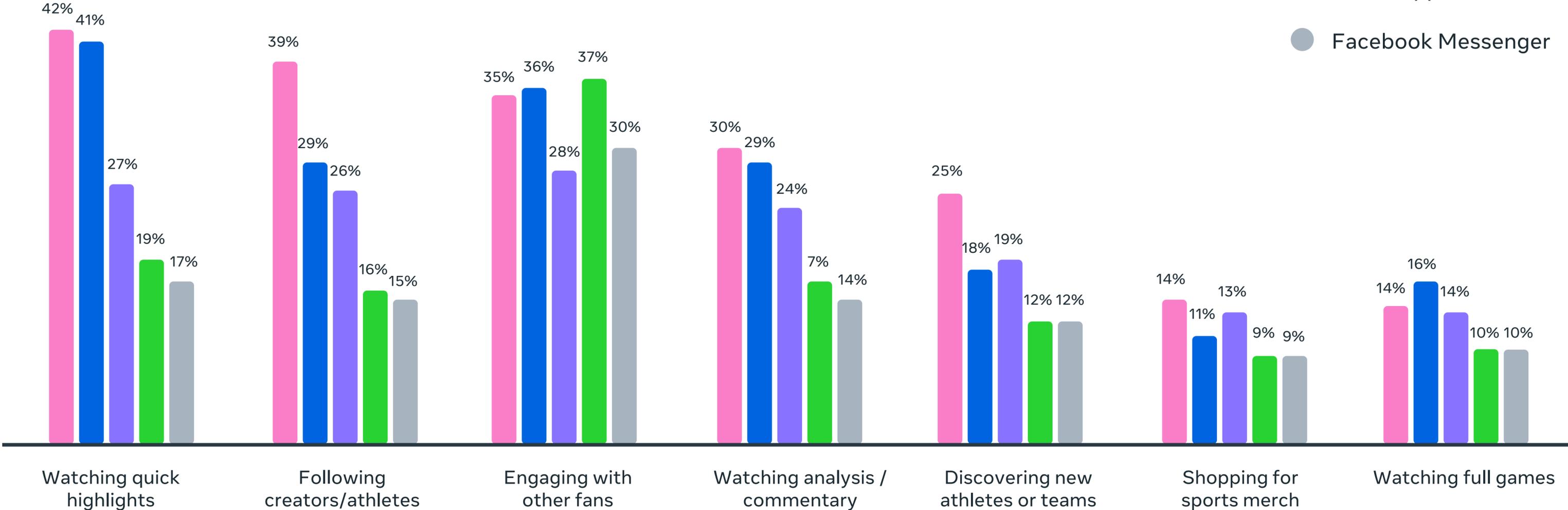
% reporting increased sports content engagement on each platform vs. one year ago (Among platform consumers)



Instagram is #1 for following and discovering creators and athletes

Sports-related activity participation
(Among platform consumers)

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Threads
- WhatsApp
- Facebook Messenger



App breakdown



Facebook at a glance

Top 3 platform associations

T2B* - % strongly/somewhat agree;
Among Facebook consumers

70% Facebook helps me stay connected to other fans

62% Facebook helps me feel connected to major cultural sports moments

60% Facebook makes promotional sports content feel more culturally relevant

Top 3 types of sport content engaged with on Facebook

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among those using Facebook as their primary sports platform

64% Game highlights

58% Sports news or analysis

44% Athlete or team posts

Gender



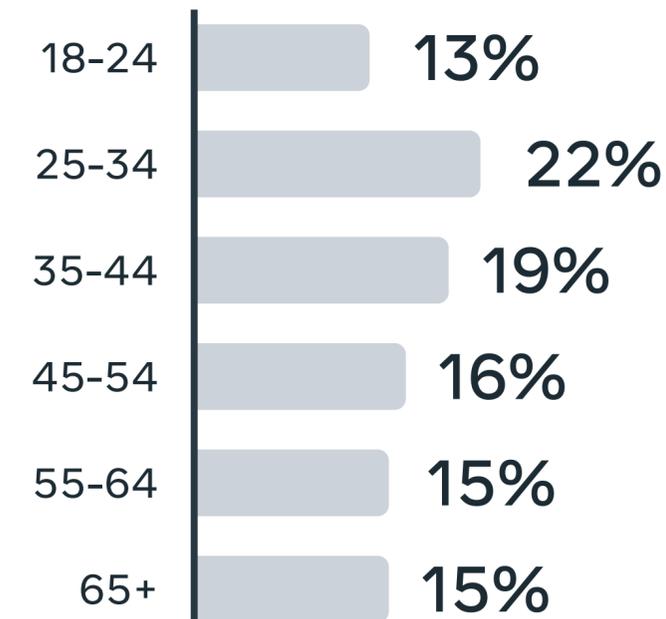
49% Female **51%** Male

Fanbase



66% Superfans **34%** Fans

Age



60% of sports fans feel emotionally invested when interacting with sports content on Facebook
T2B - % somewhat / very much

33% are more engaged with sports content on Facebook compared to a year ago

50% are engaging with Facebook for sports content at least once a day

38% of sports fans recall seeing promotional sports content on Facebook in the last month

22% of sports fans rate Facebook as the platform they are most likely to take action after seeing promotional sports content

11% of Facebook consumers shop for sports merch on Facebook

* T2B refers to "Top 2 Box score", a common method in market research to analyze survey data by combining the highest two responses.

Instagram at a glance

Top 3 platform associations

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree;
Among Instagram consumers

73% Instagram helps me stay connected to other fans

67% Instagram helps me feel connected to major cultural sports moments

67% I feel more connected to my sports team through creators on Instagram

Top 3 types of sport content engaged with on Instagram

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among those using Instagram as their primary sports platform

67% Game highlights

57% Sports news or analysis

56% Athlete or team posts

Gender



51% Female

49% Male

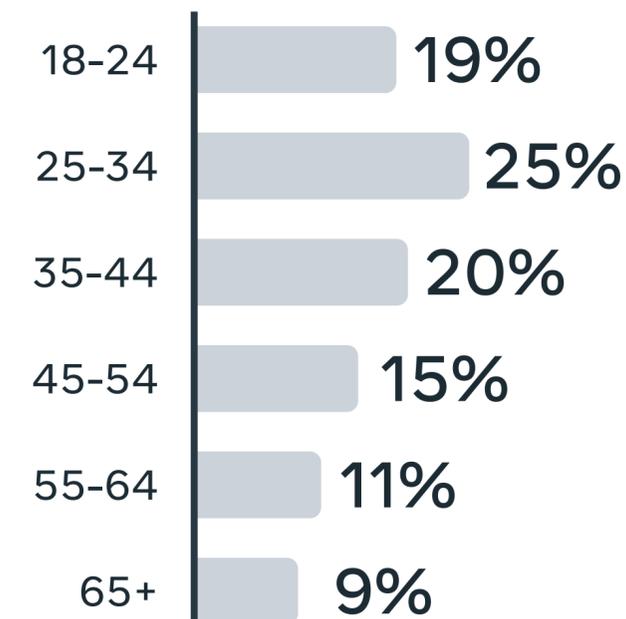
Fanbase



67% Superfans

33% Fans

Age



67% of sports fans feel emotionally invested when interacting with sports content on Instagram
T2B - % somewhat / very much

47% are more engaged with sports content on Instagram compared to a year ago

52% are engaging with Instagram for sports content at least once a day

41% of sports fans recall seeing promotional sports content on Instagram in the last month

25% of sports fans rate Instagram as the platform they are most likely to take action after seeing promotional sports content

14% of Instagram consumers shop for sports merch on Instagram

* T2B refers to "Top 2 Box score", a common method in market research to analyze survey data by combining the highest two responses.

WhatsApp at a glance

Top 3 platform associations

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree;
Among WhatsApp consumers

66% WhatsApp helps me stay connected to other fans

56% I engage with WhatsApp more after games than other platforms

52% I engage with WhatsApp more during games than other platforms

Top 3 types of sport content engaged with on WhatsApp

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among those using WhatsApp as their primary sports platform

47% User-generated content

46% Game highlights

44% Sports news or analysis

Gender



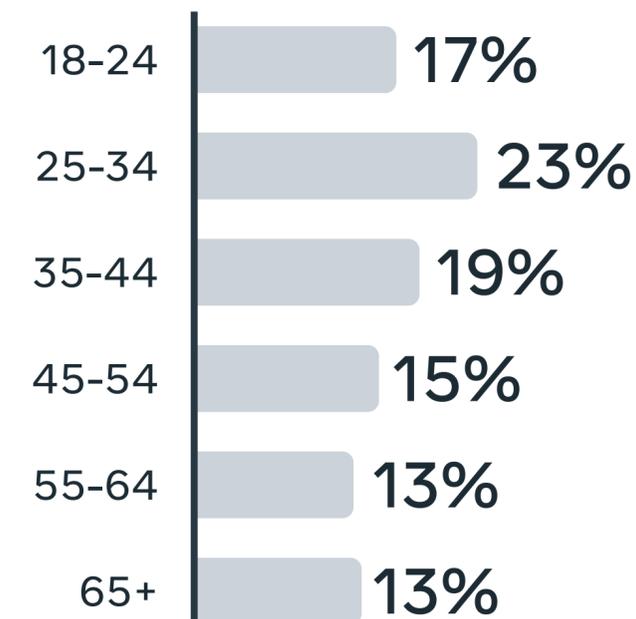
49% Female **51%** Male

Fanbase



67% Superfans **33%** Fans

Age



58% of sports fans feel emotionally invested when interacting with sports content on WhatsApp
T2B - % somewhat / very much

41% are more engaged with sports content on WhatsApp compared to a year ago

50% are engaging with WhatsApp for sports content at least once a day

18% of sports fans recall seeing promotional sports content on WhatsApp in the last month

6% of sports fans rate WhatsApp as the platform they are most likely to take action after seeing promotional sports content

37% of WhatsApp consumers engage with other fans on WhatsApp

* T2B refers to "Top 2 Box score", a common method in market research to analyze survey data by combining the highest two responses.

Facebook Messenger at a glance

Top 3 platform associations

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree;
Among Facebook Messenger consumers

- 64%** Facebook Messenger helps me stay connected to other fans
- 54%** I engage with Facebook Messenger more after games than other platforms
- 53%** Facebook Messenger makes promotional sports content feel more culturally relevant

Top 3 types of sport content engaged with on Instagram

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among those using Facebook Messenger as their primary sports platform

- 62%** Game highlights
- 43%** Sports news or analysis
- 39%** Condensed games

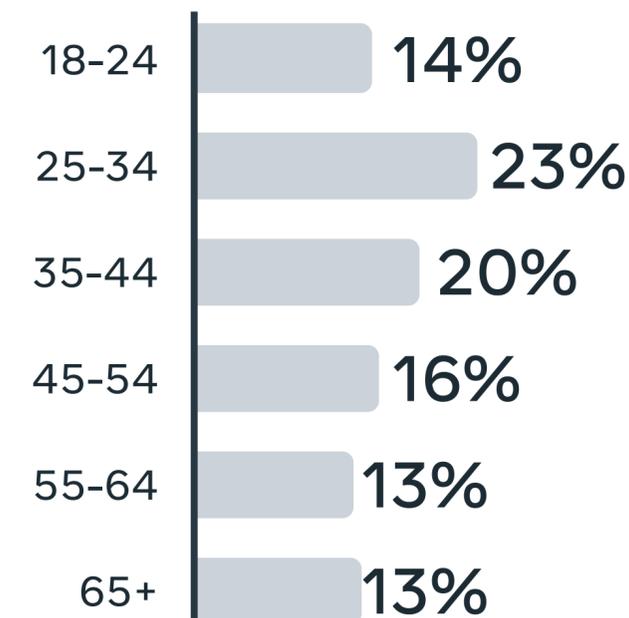
Gender



Fanbase



Age



56% of sports fans feel emotionally invested when interacting with sports content on Facebook Messenger
T2B - % somewhat / very much

26% are more engaged with sports content on Facebook Messenger compared to a year ago

34% are engaging with Facebook Messenger for sports content at least once a day

10% of sports fans recall seeing promotional sports content on Facebook Messenger in the last month

1% of sports fans rate Facebook Messenger as the platform they are most likely to take action after seeing promotional sports content

30% of Facebook Messenger consumers engage with other fans on Facebook Messenger

* T2B refers to "Top 2 Box score", a common method in market research to analyze survey data by combining the highest two responses.

@ Threads at a glance

Top 3 platform associations

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree;
Among Threads consumers

68% Threads helps me stay connected to other fans

64% Threads makes promotional sports content feel more culturally relevant

61% Threads helps me feel connected to major cultural sports moments

Top 3 types of sport content engaged with on Threads

T2B - % strongly/somewhat agree; Among those using Threads as their primary sports platform

56% Memes or humorous content

38% Game highlights

37% User-generated content

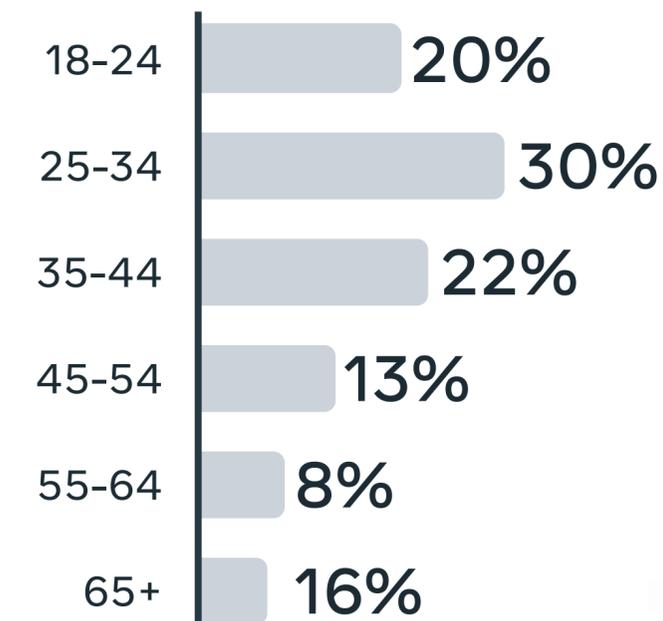
Gender



Fanbase



Age



63% of sports fans feel emotionally invested when interacting with sports content on Threads
T2B - % somewhat / very much

27% are more engaged with sports content on Threads compared to a year ago

15% are engaging with Threads for sports content at least once a day

7% of sports fans recall seeing promotional sports content on Threads in the last month

1% of sports fans rate Threads as the platform they are most likely to take action after seeing promotional sports content

26% of Threads consumers follow creators/athletes on Threads

* T2B refers to "Top 2 Box score", a common method in market research to analyze survey data by combining the highest two responses.

**Every connection is an opportunity.
It's Your World.**

