

# 2017 Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking

## #OlympicRanking

By

Burson-Marsteller/TSE Consulting

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Burson•Marsteller



tse|consulting  
A Burson•Marsteller Company

## And the 2017 Winner is...

On behalf of Burson-Marsteller and TSE Consulting, we are pleased to publish the 2017 edition of the “Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking.”

Over the years, social media has evolved quite drastically both in how we consume it and moreover its importance within our society and especially within sport. Within our industry it has become an essential tool to engage with fans and especially youth.

This 2017 ranking aims to capture the social media footprint of the international Olympic sport organisations and provides some insightful takeaways.

I truly hope that you enjoy our findings. Make sure to let us know your thoughts by engaging with us at @TSEConsulting and use our hashtag #OlympicRanking.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Haue-Pedersen', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lars Haue-Pedersen  
Managing Director, TSE Consulting  
Lausanne, Switzerland

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## The 2017 Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking

The Olympic flame is burning brightly on social media. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube have become indispensable communication channels for the Olympic Movement including international Olympic sports federations. However, very few federations can share live sporting action from major events and most will concentrate on behind the scenes action around the pitch.



On October 24, 2017, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) broadcast the lighting ceremony of the Olympic flame for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics 2018 live on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube from ancient Olympia, in Greece. Since the 2016 Rio Olympics, the flame has had its own Twitter account @OlympicFlame and the torch relay also has a custom Twitter emoji as it makes its way to Pyeongchang in South Korea.

At the Rio Olympics in 2016, the IOC recorded more than 5 billion social media impressions and now counts 50 million followers across all its social media channels. The IOC is active on the key social media platforms in eight languages and the 40 International Olympic Summer and Winter Sports Federations also all have an active presence on these platforms. While international sports federations have been using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube primarily to engage with their fans and reach new audiences for their disciplines, their engagement on social media also has a commercial dimension as it is one measure that is used by the IOC when it comes to allocating Olympic funds to each sport.



**Kris Krüg**  
@kk



**talking to the vancouver olympic committee about the internets**

5:22 PM - 7 Dec 2006

Incidentally, the Olympic Games were [first mentioned](#) on Twitter more than a decade ago, on December 7, 2006 when social media consultant Kris Krüg (@kk on Twitter) was “talking to the Vancouver Olympic Committee about the internets.” The #Olympic [hashtag](#) appeared a year later in a Twitter discussion about the #Beijing #Olympics.

Burson-Marsteller and TSE Consulting have analysed the social media footprint of the IOC and its 40 international Olympic sports federations (including the new Olympic sports which will debut at the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo), as well as of their presidents and leading executives. This study includes 91 institutional Twitter accounts, 59 Facebook pages, 51 Instagram accounts and 47 YouTube channels, as well as 31 personal Twitter accounts of the heads of international sports federations. The analysis, conducted in November 2017, shows which sports have the largest social media fan base, namely football (soccer), basketball, rugby and cycling, as well as those sports which have a small fan base but enjoy a strong social media presence, namely judo, triathlon and table tennis.

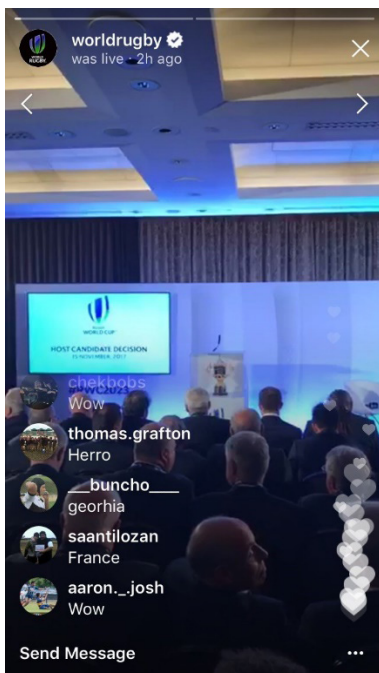
Our analysis also looked at the effectiveness of the social media engagement, i.e., which organisations garner the most shares per post. By reviewing the data, we hope this study can help these federations make the most of their social media presence in the future.

## Executive Summary

Not surprisingly, in this year's edition of the Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is in a league of its own and tops the rankings on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. However, FIFA, the International Football Association, is ahead of the Olympic body on Twitter. The IOC's Olympic Facebook page is the most liked page of any international organisation with 19 million likes, 2.5 times as many page likes as UNICEF. However, on Twitter the IOC's Olympic account trails behind the UN and UNICEF, despite having more engaging content to share.

The Olympic Games – and International sports federations in general – would probably do even better on social media if they were able to share more video footage from the Olympics Games and other sporting events. However, their hands are tied by extremely restrictive social media rules and guidelines that apply during the Olympic Games themselves, as well as by traditional broadcasting agreements with host broadcasters.

Interestingly, a few sports federations share occasional live broadcasts on their YouTube channels, Facebook pages, Periscope and even on Instagram. These are mainly from junior championships from the Curling, Canoe, Judo, Sailing and Volleyball federations. World Rugby used the opportunity to broadcast its announcement of the 2023 Rugby World Cup Host city live on Instagram (which disappeared after only 24 hours).



## Judo Abu Dhabi Grand Slam 2017

LIVE

Share



### Official accounts



Int. Judo Federation @IntJud...

The Olympics, the Paralympics and the Youth Olympics are on Snapchat as are 16 other sports federations, however they do not seem to be very active on the channel and several federations still do not have a Snapchat avatar. The Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) still uses its Snapcode as the avatar on its Twitter channel, however with Twitter's round avatars the Snapcode designed to drive more followers to the platform has become unreadable.

Quite a few Olympic sports federations including Baseball, Basketball, Football, Fencing, Rugby, Skating, Softball, Hockey and Ice Hockey regularly liven up their social media posts with emojis, and most Olympic sports have their own internationally recognised pictographs. Pictographs are icons that resemble a physical object, the Boxing Association (@AIBA\_Boxing) uses the fist-ed-hand sign and the flexed biceps and the Equestrian Federation can choose from three different horse emojis. It makes sense to use these visuals in all social media communications since these icons are now searchable on Instagram. The Basketball Federation (@FIBA) probably makes the best use of emojis, using a small visual icon in almost every tweet. The World Baseball Softball Confederation (@WBSC) even uses the baseball emoji in its Twitter name. FIFA changed its Twitter name to #TheBest including the trophy emoji during the annual FIFA Football Awards in late October 2017.



## International Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

Facebook is the preferred social media channel for sports federations to mobilise and engage with a large fan base. All Olympic sports federations have a presence on the social network with a combined total fan count of almost 44 million people.

Facebook is also the video platform of choice: 42.37 percent of the 43,026 posts published by Olympic sports federations since January 1, 2017 are native videos, live videos or links to YouTube and other videos. The 15,476 videos uploaded natively to Facebook have garnered 64.03 percent of the 43,381,784 interactions (the sum total of comments, likes and shares). On average, videos uploaded natively to Facebook receive 1,795 interactions per post and live videos 1,095 interactions per post. While live video broadcasts only represent 3.36 percent of all the posts, they tend to drive the engagement, generating 20.94 percent of all the comments. Live videos and videos posted natively combined have clocked up a total of 2,895,783,277 video views. On average native videos garner 183,676 views compared to 36,823 for live video broadcasts.

The most popular Facebook post posted in 2017 by an Olympic federation is the 2.30-minute video of Dave Wottle's historic run at the Munich Olympics in 1972. The video post, titled 'Follow the White Cap,' shows his epic 800-metre run catching up to and overtaking the pack after a slow start to finishing first on the finish line. The post has clocked up 1.1 million interactions (comments, likes and shares) including 43,715 'wow'-reactions. The video has been viewed more than 91 million times.



Olympic Channel is with IAAF World Athletics Club and FINA  
These Babies Go For The Gold  
38M Views



Olympic Channel is with IAAF World Athletics Club  
Follow the white cap. #WinningWednesday  
91M Views



The second most popular post is a video of the Baby Games produced specially to promote the Olympic Channel. The hilarious film, showing babies competing in track & field and swimming events has clocked up 38 million views on top of the 691,675 comments and shares, including 33,758 'haha'-reactions.

World Rugby scored a viral hit with a [video of the haka](#) of the Black Ferns during the Women's Rugby World Cup 2017, which is as impressive and forceful as the male version.

Photo posts, which represent 36.21 percent of all the posts, garner 27.37 percent of the total interactions. Posts containing links to other websites, which represent 20.92 percent of all the posts, garner only 4.37 percent of the total interactions. Simple status posts without any visual have the worst performance, accounting for only 0.04 percent of all interactions with only 81 interactions per post.

The picture post that received the most interactions was shared by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), a [group picture](#) featuring LeBron James, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Lindsay Whalen, Kyrie Irving, Marc Gasol and Paul George to celebrate FIBA's partnership with Nike. Tagging the outfitter and some of the athletes, who have millions of fans, obviously helped promote the post. [The second most popular picture](#) post also was posted by FIBA, thanking its 4 million fans on Facebook.

The basketball federation knows how to engage its fans. FIBA organized a four-hour live video, asking its fans to vote for the most versatile player ahead of the European Basketball Championships 2017. The live video showing still pictures of the five players was continuously updated with the reaction count below.

Not surprisingly, posts with links to videos on YouTube or other video platforms have the least engagement and only generate 0.55 percent of all interactions and average 181 interactions per post. This confirms that it pays to post videos natively and not simply share links to videos on other platforms.

**FIBA** was live.  
11 May · 🌐

Who is the most versatile player heading to FIBA #EuroBasket2017?

- ♥️ Giannis Antetokounmpo
- 😂 Dario Šarić
- 😱 Nemanja Bjelica
- 😞 Jonas Mačiulis
- 😡 Tornike Shengelia

[go.fiba.com/EB17](http://go.fiba.com/EB17)

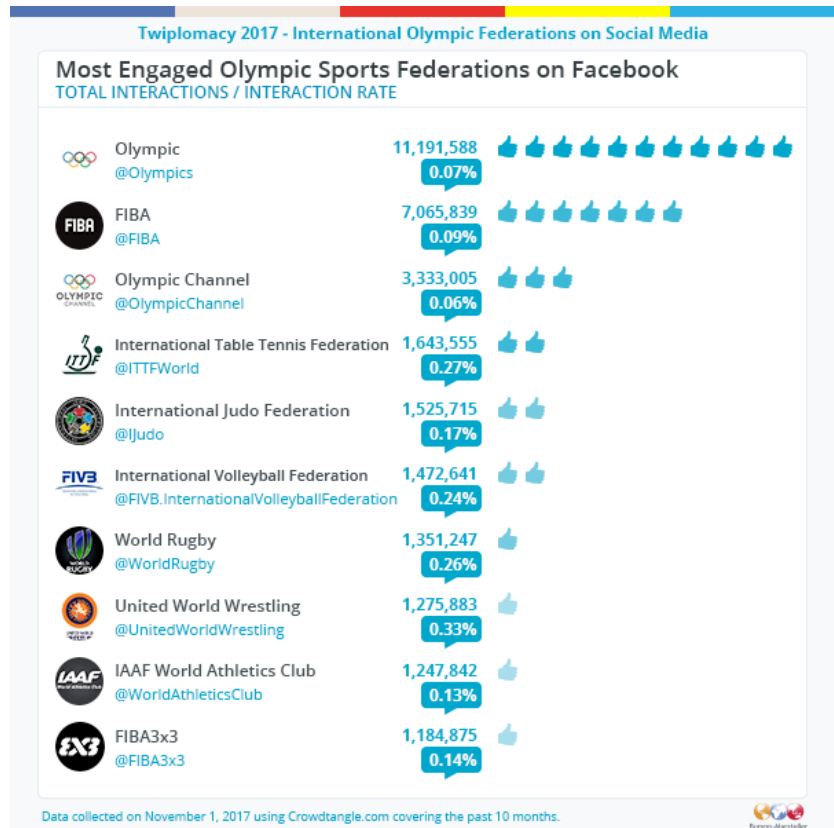
Like Page



## Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

The Facebook page of the International Olympic Committee has garnered by far the most interactions, with 11,191,588 comments, likes and shares over the past eleven months. The International Basketball Federation, @FIBA, is in second position with a total of 7,065,839 interactions ahead of the @OlympicChannel with 3,333,005 interactions.

It is interesting to note that the Facebook pages of seemingly smaller sports, such as the International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld), the International Judo Federation (@IJudo), the International Volleyball Federation (@FIVB) and @Wrestling make it into the Top 10 of the most engaged Olympic sports federations with respectable interactions rates.



## Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

All the 59 Facebook pages analysed publish on average 2.39 posts per day. The @FIBA.Basketball Facebook page is the most active with 9.39 posts per day, sharing 'all the latest news from FIBA.com' with its 85,532 fans. The other official Facebook page of FIBA with 4,513,721 fans is in third place with 6.63 posts per day. The @OlympicChannel places second with an average of 7.46 posts per day.

The International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld) and the International Judo Federation (@IJudo) are also among the 10 most active with 5.21 and 4 posts per day, respectively, which does seem to increase the engagement as we have seen in the previous graph.

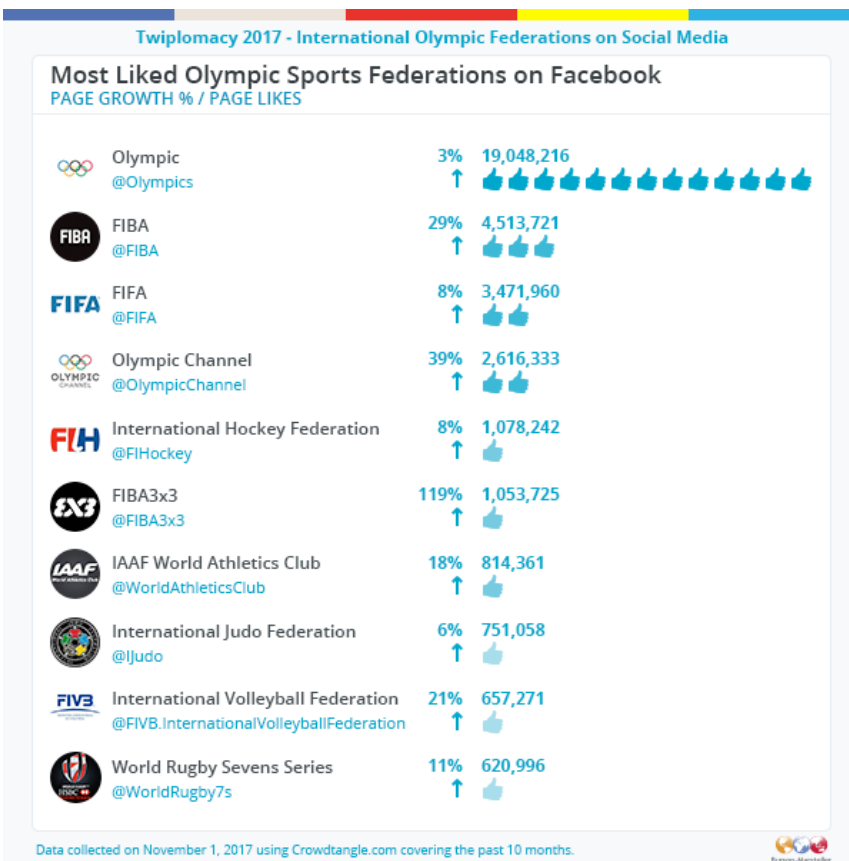


## Most Liked Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

The International Olympic Committee (@Olympics) has by far the largest Facebook page, with 19,048,216 page likes. The page of the International Basketball Federation (@FIBA) is a distant second with 4,513,721 page likes, but ahead of @FIFA with 3,471,960 page likes.

The IOC's Olympic Channel places fourth with 2,616,333 page likes and the International Hockey Federation (@FIHockey) completes the top five list with more than 1 million likes.

The Olympic Basketball account, @FIBA3x3, which has seen its Facebook fan numbers more than double since January 1, 2017, has made it into sixth place. The World Athletics Club (IAAF), the International Judo Federation, the International Volleyball Federation and the World Rugby Sevens Series complete the Top 10-list of the largest Facebook pages.



Several Olympic sports federations have separate pages for their disciplines such as @FIBA and @FIBA3x3, @WorldRugby and @WorldRugby7s. The Cycling Federation (Union Cycliste Internationale) has had three Facebook pages, its main account plus mountain biking, and BMX Supercross. The International Skiing Federation (FIS) has created separate Facebook pages for each of its six disciplines (Alpine, Cross Country, Freestyle, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, and Snowboarding) as does the Skating Union (ISU) with separate Facebook pages for Figure-skating, Speed skating, and Short track, besides its main page @ISUofficial.

41 of 59 pages surveyed have seen 'check-ins' from Facebook users at their location, whether they are fans of the page or not. The Olympic Museum at the Quai d'Ouchy in Lausanne has seen check-ins from users almost double from 25,000 in 2016 to 46,051 in 2017. More than 6,000 Facebook users have checked into the Winter Youth Olympic Games, held in 2016 in Lillehammer, Norway and still the official location of the @YouthOlympicGames Facebook page.

In general, international sports federations don't see very much foot traffic at their various head offices. However, 3,262 people have checked-in at the headquarters of the World Taekwondo Federation (@WorldTaekwondo1) in Seoul, which is also listed in the category 'Martial Arts School' on Facebook. The page of the International Skating Union (@ISUofficial) is still listed as an 'Ice Skating Rink' although the Lausanne-based organization does not have an ice skating rink open to the public.

Nevertheless, adding an address and a check-in option for corporate Facebook pages is an efficient way to spread the page to a larger audience and international sports federations would be well advised to add their street address to their pages.

Eleven pages also allow users to rate their pages. The Softball and Archery federations score 4.9 out of 5, based on 31 and 322 reviews, respectively. The Curling and Karate federations score 4.8 out of 5, based on 68 and 1200 reviews, respectively. The page of the Skating Union (@ISUofficial), on the other hand, only scores 1.4 out of 5 as it has been hit by a wave of negative ratings during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics with 1,100 one-star ratings.

Twenty-eight pages also allow user posts and user generated pictures on their respective Facebook pages. The drawback of allowing visitors' posts on Facebook pages is that they are generally unmoderated and often prone to spam.

The pages of the International Skiing Federation (FIS) are also interesting in that they feature the main winter sports sponsors, Audi and Viessmann, in the avatars, which is one of the most visible items of any Facebook page. Most other pages avoid overt branding in their Facebook identikit and simply show the official logo of the respective federation.

The Olympic sports federations often change their Facebook cover pictures to promote upcoming sports events, including the official hashtag of the event. Twenty pages are using videos as their cover including amazing and engaging slow-motion clips of their respective disciplines. In October 2017, the Olympic page used its cover picture to highlight the lighting of the Olympic flame for the PyeongChang Winter Olympic games.



## Case Study – What Does it Take to be a Winner?

### *The International Basketball Federation's guiding principles to a successful social media strategy*

*Over the years, FIBA has dedicated a lot of time and resources into establishing a successful social media strategy. As such, they have generously shared the guiding principles that have contributed to their success:*

1. **Develop a fan-centred strategy.** Putting fans at the heart of FIBA's activities has been key to its digital and social media strategy for over five years. All of the content published is based on how the fan-base will react once it is posted. It is of high importance for FIBA to constantly receive feedback from its fan pool in order to be able to adapt and create relevant content.
2. **Be tech-savvy.** . It is worth highlighting how much video content has become a key area of focus, with the main objective being focused on making this content as visible and as consumable as possible. This has manifested itself in two ways:
  - a. FIBA strives to be forward-thinking about its video clip distribution strategy, by allowing its fans to consume their favourite sport on the move – no matter where and when - and by publishing it faster than anyone else;
  - b. FIBA developed a large scale, multi-platform and multi-destination live streaming offering on social media that shows all the second-tier competitions (more than 1,500 games a year). It is a move that has paid off handsomely. Indeed, in 2017, 38 million fans around the world tuned in to watch their favourite players and teams represent their respective country - a 100 percent increase in views compared to 2016.
3. **Involve your stakeholders.** FIBA believes it can be stronger by empowering the basketball family. With that in mind, it has given its stakeholders access to all existing tools and content. This in turn allows stakeholders to further enhance their own social media channels while showcasing the best of what FIBA's events have to offer to audiences that it would normally not reach. FIBA's latest social media campaign greatly illustrates the positive impact of such action. "This Is My House," which is aimed at promoting the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Qualifiers, was highly successful in reaching out to a bigger audience after FIBA provided a custom-made and ready-to-use content to its national federations and media partners.

## International Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

The Olympics Instagram account regularly shares short and entertaining videos from past Olympic Games. These videos are edited to fit the format of the platform including subtitles to be watched on mute. Clips of sporting action tend to perform very well on the platform.

Almost all Olympic sports federations have a presence on Instagram and some have several accounts for each discipline, such as the International Skiing Federation with separate accounts for @FISalpine, @FISCrosscountry, @FISfreestyle, @FISnordiccombined, @FISskijumping, and @FISsnowboard. The International Basketball Federation has two accounts for @FIBA and @FIBA3x3, the International Skating Union has separate accounts for @ISUFigureSkating and @ISUSpeedskating. Surprisingly, the International Tennis Federation does not have a presence on the platform and we have not included the @FIFAWorldCup Instagram account which is event-specific.

Over the past 11 months, the 51 accounts have shared 20,454 posts out of which almost three quarters (72.18 percent) are photo posts which have generated 60.14 percent of all the interactions (the total of comments and likes). More than a quarter of all the posts, 27.83 percent, are video posts which have generated 39.86 percent of all interactions. Video posts tend to perform better on Instagram and have received 275 interactions per video post compared to 160 average interactions for photo posts. The 5,688 videos shared since January 1, 2017 have collectively been viewed 166,200,221 times with an average of 29,219 views per video.

The World Karate Federation posted the most watched video by an Olympic sports federation in 2017. The [video of a karate training session](#) garnered 3 million views. The [second most watched video](#), watched more than 1 million times, was also posted by the Karate Federation and shows an exchange where it is difficult to spot who marked first. The World Wrestling Federation has several [Instagram videos](#) among the [most watched videos](#) showing wrestlers throwing each other into swimming pools.

Among the 10 most watched videos is the [video of Sports Climbing](#), a new Olympic sport, with 42,536 interactions (comments & likes). The 60-second video posted on the @Olympics Instagram account presents the different disciplines of Sports Climbing, which will make its entry at the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, and has garnered more than half a million views.

The second most popular Instagram post is a [photo collection](#) of the gold, silver and bronze medals of the upcoming Olympic Winter Games 2018 in Pyeongchang, posted on the @Olympics Instagram account which garnered 48,592 interactions.



## Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

All Instagram accounts combined had 65,511,105 total interactions (comments and likes) with an average of 1,284,531 interactions per account. The World Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) registered 11,030,542 engagements on its Instagram account and ranks first ahead of the International Basketball Federation with 8,434,884 interactions and the @Olympics, in third place with 7,588,512 interactions. The International Volleyball Federation and United World Wrestling round out the top five with 5,200,366 and 2,904,373 total interactions, respectively.

Of the top 10, the @FISAlpine account has the best interaction rate, which is the number of interactions divided by the number of posts and the average number of followers over the past 11 months, at 4.28 percent. The International Pentathlon Union (@theUIPM) has the best interaction rate of all sports federations with 11.02 percent on its 178 posts but it only has 3,217 followers.



## Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

The 51 Instagram accounts studied post on average 1.31 posts per day. The International Basketball Federation (@FIBA) is the most prolific sports federation on Instagram, averaging 5.10 posts per day. The International Ice Hockey Federation (@IIHFHockey), the Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) and @FIBA3x3 post more than three times per day and have all shared more than 1,000 posts since the beginning of 2017.

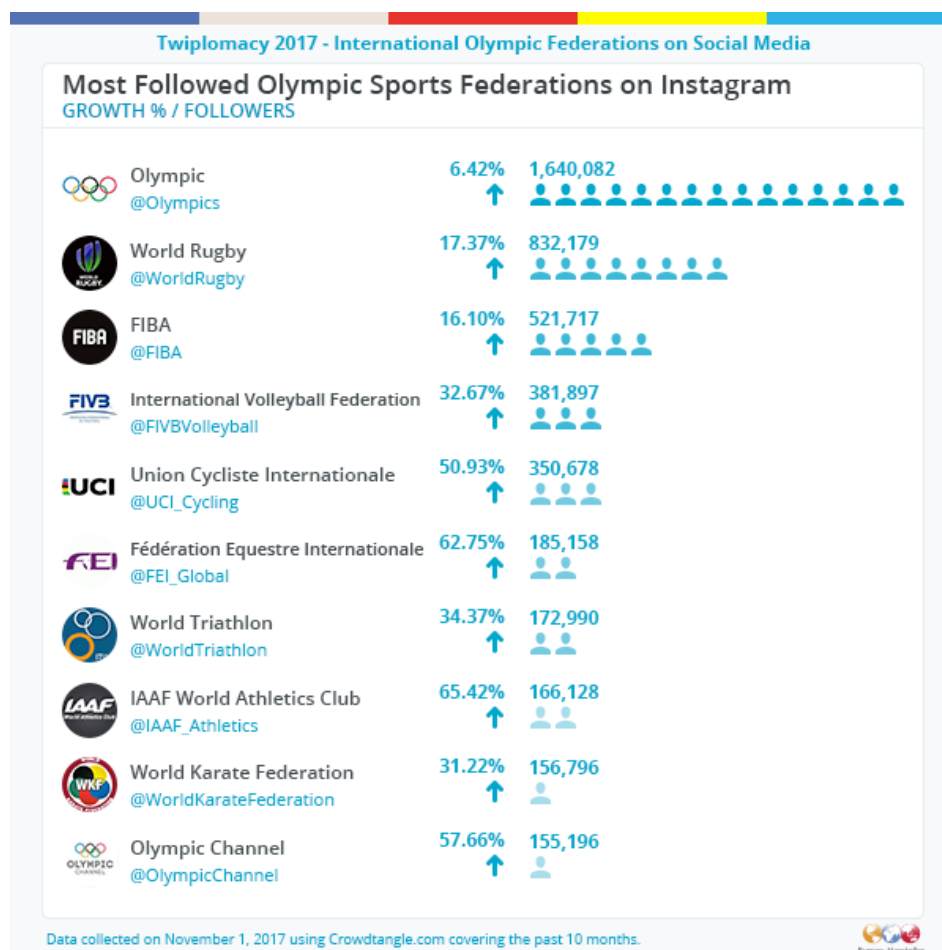
The International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld), United World Wrestling (@UnitedWorldWrestling) and the International Volleyball Federation (@FIVBVolleyball) post on average twice a day, which has clearly helped them to be in the top 10 of the most engaged sports federations above.

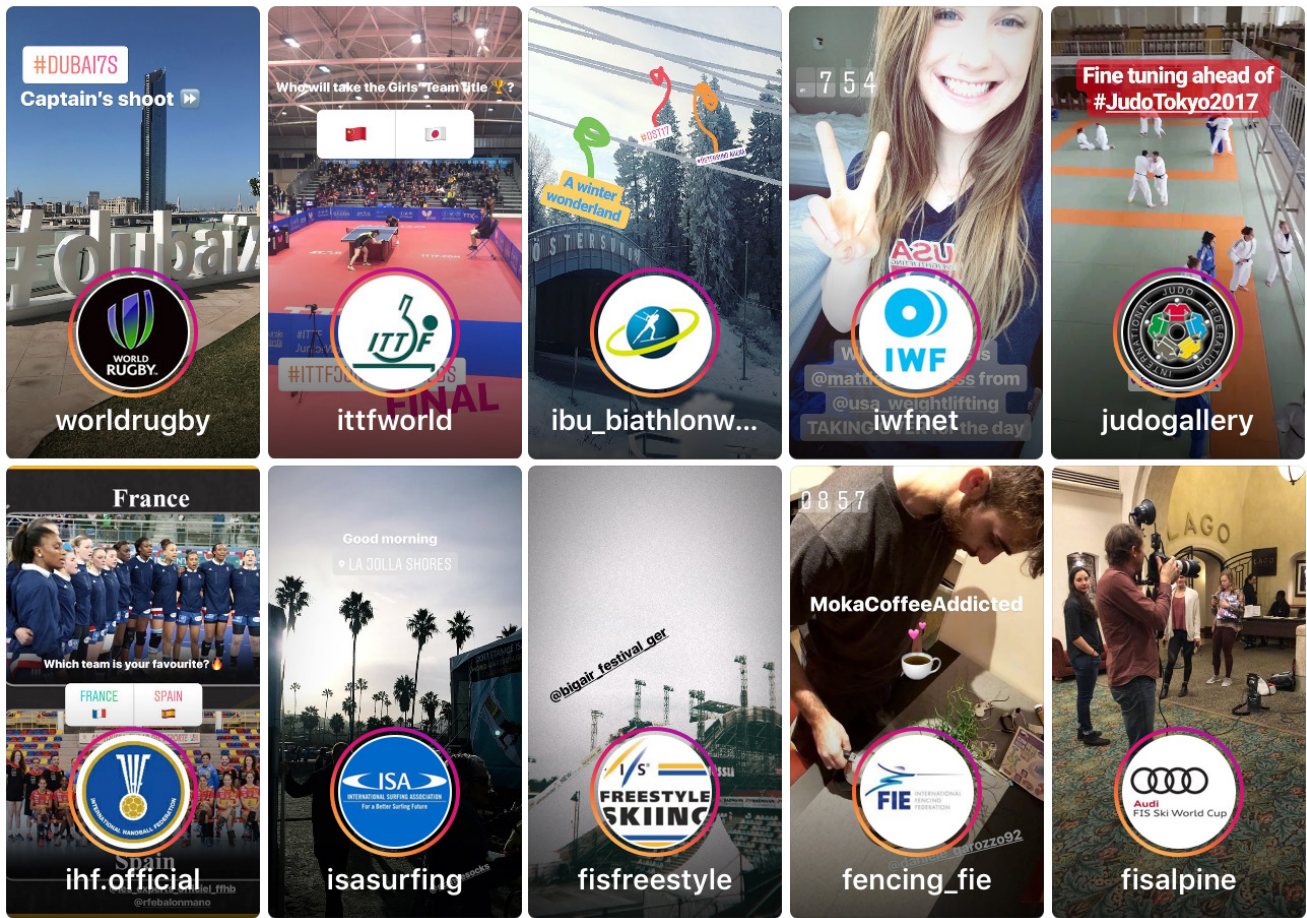


## Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

All Instagram accounts combined have 6,405,471 followers and an average growth of 19.20 percent since the beginning of 2017. The International Olympic Committee is by far the most followed sports organisation with 1,640,082 followers on the @Olympics Instagram account. The IOC has almost twice as many followers as the World Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) with 832,179 followers and three times as many as the International Basketball Federation @FIBA with 521,717 followers.

All organisations enjoy healthy growth rates and the average growth of all pages stands at 19.20 percent since January 1, 2017. Among the most followed accounts, the International Athletics Federation (@IAAF\_Athletics), the International Equestrian Federation (@FEI\_Global), The Olympics (@OlympicChannel) and the International Cycling Federation (@UCI\_Cycling) accounts all have witnessed a follower growth of more than 50 percent.





## Instagram Stories

Many Olympic Sports organisations are now also posting daily Instagram Stories which disappear after 24 hours. These collections of photos and videos are displayed on top of a user’s news feed and it is the one of the best ways to stay top of mind and relevant for your followers. There are no public statistics about Instagram Stories and it is impossible to tell how many people have viewed them. Instagram Stories are also among the safest social media posts since no one can publicly post comments on them.

Instagram Stories are great for sharing ‘behind the scenes’ pictures or videos from training sessions. These stories are often rough around the edges with shaky videos and annotated pictures, but they can be tagged with other Instagrammers, add a location to the story, add a poll and encourage viewers to read more on external websites.

World Rugby shared the draw for the 2023 Rugby World Cup host country live on Instagram and shared the build up to the event as an Instagram story. The final element of the story is now the public post on its Instagram feed.



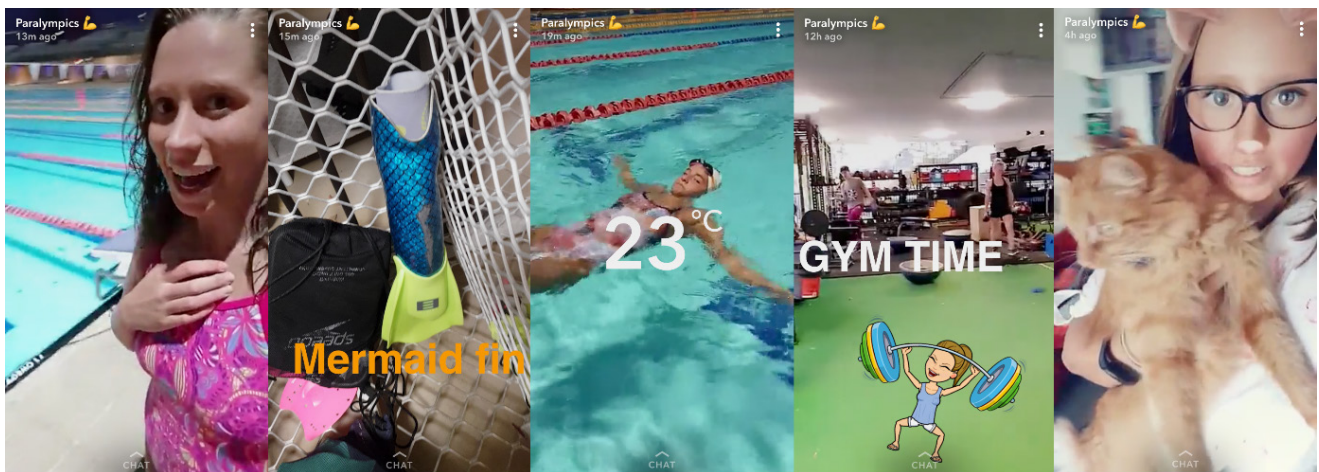




## International Olympic Sports Federations on Snapchat

We have identified 19 international Olympic sports federations with Snapchat accounts, but activity is limited to say the least. Possibly because of the introduction of Instagram Stories, the use of Snapchat seems to be on the decline among Olympic sports federations. Snapchat does not make any follower numbers or story figures public, which is probably useful since there is no need to compete for followers.

In September 2017, the @Paralympics gave its Snapchat account to Australian Paralympic swimmer Monique Murphy who chronicled a day in her sporting life between studying and training in the pool. The International Basketball Federation even trialled Snapchat Spectacles and shared the result on [Twitter](#).



## International Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

Twitter has become an indispensable social media news feed for Olympic sports federations and it is also allowing sports federations to create valuable connections with influencers and other stakeholders. All 40 Winter and Summer Sports governing bodies have an active presence on the platform, with a combined total audience of 30,945,347 followers, almost twice as much as in our last study conducted in 2016.

The International Cycling Union (UCI), the Skiing Federation (FIS) and the Skating Union (ISU) have also set up bespoke Twitter accounts for each of their disciplines. Most federations tweet in English, the lingua franca of Twitter; however FIFA has set up bespoke Twitter accounts in Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Russian and Spanish with a total following of 19,309,646 followers. FIBA also tweets in French and Spanish and World Rugby maintains separate Twitter accounts in French, Japanese and Spanish.

Despite being text heavy, Twitter has morphed into a visual network and most sports federations attach a photo or video to each tweet. Tweets with pictures attached perform best for international sports federations, with an average of 224 interactions per tweet. Photo tweets make up 19.58 percent of the 75,459 tweets sent since January 1, 2017 and generate 39.23 percent of the 8,419,076 interactions.

The two most popular tweets posted by Olympic sports federations in 2017 are two tweets posted by the International Amateur Athletics Federations (@IAAForg).

Both tweets encouraged followers to 'Retweet to vote for the Male World Athlete of 2017.' The tweet featuring Qatari high jumper Mutaz Essa Barshim (@MutazBarshim) was retweeted 162,415 and the tweet featuring Kenyan 1500-metre runner @ManangoiElijah clocked 102,505 retweets. The example shows that it always pays to engage your followers with a call to action.

Tweets with videos uploaded natively on Twitter generate 186 interactions on average. Tweets with native video represent 16.67 percent of all tweets shared and have generated 27.76 percent of all interactions. Tweets with links to videos on YouTube and other video platforms only generate 26 interactions on average.

The @Olympics account received 21,870 interactions (likes & retweets) with the video of Dave Wottle's historic run at the Munich Olympics in 1972. The Olympics' [most retweeted post](#) to date features a video clip from the closing ceremony of



RT to vote [@mutazbarshim](#) as Male World Athlete of the Year 2017.

[#AthleticsAwards](#) voting closes at 12pm BST on 16th October.



1:00 PM - 5 Oct 2017

162,077 Retweets 14,809 Likes



RT to vote [@ManangoiElijah](#) as Male World Athlete of the Year 2017.

[#AthleticsAwards](#) voting closes at 12pm BST on 16th October.



1:00 PM - 5 Oct 2017

102,484 Retweets 5,221 Likes



the London 2012 Olympics, posted on the day of the Rio 2016 closing ceremony.

The stringent, self-imposed social media guidelines prevent the IOC, sports federations and athletes from sharing any moving images from the Olympic Games and other prime sporting events. The Olympic channels would surely become more popular if more short-form video were shared on their social media channels. The @Olympics account often shares historic highlights from past Olympic games, but the IOC's social media team has found other ways to engage its followers. Its second most popular tweet is a GIF of the Olympic Gold Medal asking its followers to retweet for luck.

Almost half of all the tweets shared (47.30 percent) are tweets linking to other websites, which normally include a visual as well as the first paragraph of the shared article. However, these link tweets only generate 29.54 percent of all interactions and garner on average 70 interactions.

Plain text tweets register the worst performance, generating 23 interactions on average. However, 12.20 percent of all the tweets shared by international sports federations are straight text updates, generating only 2.49 percent of all interactions. However, even straight text updates can be effective and the tweet from @FIFAMedia announcing the decision of the FIFA Council on a 48-team World Cup as of 2026 was retweeted 5,924 times.

Almost all international sports federations have been verified by Twitter and feature the blue verification mark. The @Cycling, @Gymnastics and @Wrestling Federations have also secured the name of their respective disciplines on Twitter. Having the name of the sport as the Twitter handle is more than simply a vanity URL; through their Twitter and they therefore become part of every discussion making them leaders in the conversation. The @Archery, @Rugby and @Biathlon Federations could easily claim the Twitter handles of their respective disciplines which are currently suspended.

The Archery, Curling, Rowing, Rugby, Sailing, Taekwondo and Triathlon Federations have added 'World' before their respective discipline to underscore the global nature of their sports federation. Other federations simply use their acronym as the Twitter handle, which risks not being easily understood by outsiders to their sport. For the announcement of the best FIFA player awards in October 2017, FIFA changed its Twitter profile, promoting #TheBest.

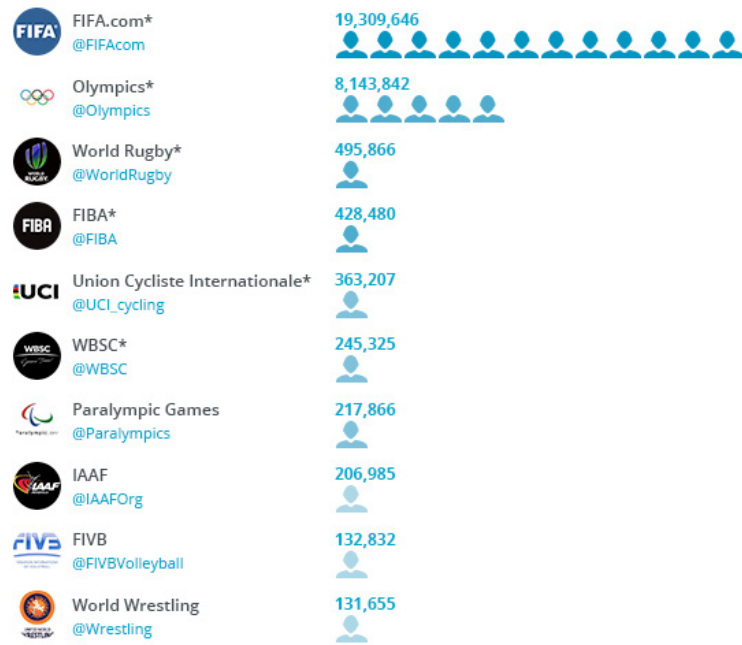


Follow the white cap. #OnThisDay  
#Munich1972 @iaaforg



6:49 pm - 2 Sep 2017

**Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter**  
FOLLOWERS



Data collected on November 1, 2017 using Crowdtangle.com. \*We have summed the followers of all Olympic and different language accounts.

## Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

Underscoring its global appeal, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) maintains a total of 19 Twitter accounts with a combined following of 8,143,842 and its flagship account, the @Olympics, has 5,636,268 followers. The IOC tweets in eight languages, namely Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The @OlympicChannel, a Twitter account ‘where the Games never end,’ is available in English, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish.

The IOC also runs a separate @IOCMedia account to promote the activities of its President Thomas Bach, with a respectable 115,249 followers. The media account as well as the account for the @OlympicFlame have been available in

English and Portuguese since the 2016 Rio Olympics. And finally, the IOC maintains bespoke Twitter accounts for athletes @AthletesHub, the @OlympicMuseum and the @YouthOlympics

This IOC’s impressive total is, however, dwarfed by @FIFACOM which boasts 19.3 million followers, more than twice as many as the IOC. World Rugby is a distant third with 495,866 followers. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and the International Cycling Union complete the top five list with 428,480 and 363,207 followers, respectively.

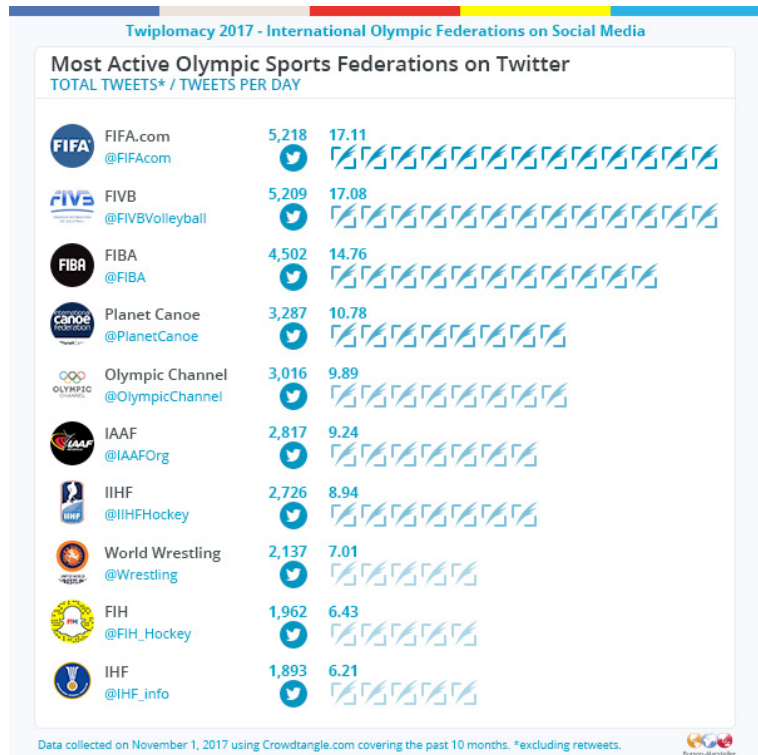
## Most Engaged Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

Since the beginning of 2017, @FIFACOM has clocked up 2,303,603 interactions (retweets and likes) on its Twitter account, more than twice as many as the World Baseball Softball Confederation with 1,110,450 total interactions on the @WBCBaseball account. The International Athletics Federation (@IAAFOrg) is in third place with 668,958 ahead of the @Olympics and @FIBA with 571,751 and 561,643 interactions, respectively. Among the Top 10 accounts @ISU\_Figure has the best interaction rate, calculated by the total number of interactions divided by the number of posts and the average number of followers) with 0.934 percent, ahead of @WBCBaseball with 0.579 percent.

## Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

The extraordinary engagement on FIFA's Twitter account can be explained by its activity. @FIFACOM is the most active of all Olympic sports federations, posting on average 17.11 tweets per day. The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) is a close second with 17.08 tweets per day, ahead of the International Basketball Federation in third position with 14.76 tweets per day. In comparison, the @Olympics Twitter account only tweets 1.59 tweets per day. Given the success of the Olympic tweets in terms of retweets, it remains to be seen whether the strategy of posting less is more effective than flooding the Twitter stream.

Not surprisingly, the Twitter streams of sports federations are highly active during sporting events. During the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, @FIVBVolleyball posted 220 tweets on a single day and @FEI\_Global and @WorldTriathlon had a record activity spikes of 231 tweets. During the remainder of the year, these federations use Twitter as the official newswire of their respective sports, with tweets sent around the clock, 24/7.



## Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

The verdict is out as to whether hyperactivity on Twitter leads to better engagement on the platform. The World Baseball Softball Confederation (@WBSC), which has one of the best interaction rates, is number one considering the average number of retweets per tweet. The @WBSC Twitter account has only 245,325 followers, but each of its tweets is retweeted on average 386 times. The @Olympics Twitter account is in second position with 339 average retweets per tweet, more than twice as many as @FIFACOM which has twice as many followers.

The International Athletics Federation (@IAAForg) is in third place with 142 average retweets per tweet.

## Best Connected Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

Twitter is also a useful tool to make connections with influencers, journalists, the media and other sports federations. Not surprisingly the IOC Twitter accounts are central knowledge hubs, given that the Olympics are mutually following most other international sports federations. Nine of the IOC accounts are among the 10 best connected sports organisations and the @Paralympics are in ninth position in terms of mutually following other Olympic sports federations. The @Olympics and @IOCMedia accounts are mutually following 64 and 54 sports federations, respectively. Mutually following each other means that the social media teams can use Twitter's direct message facility to send messages longer than 280 characters to their counterparts.

Outside of the IOC accounts, it is the international Hockey Federation (@FIH\_Hockey) which is the best connected Olympic sports federation, mutually following 18 other federations. International Shooting Federation (@ISSF\_Shooting) has 17 mutual connections, International Equestrian Federation (@FEI\_Global) and World Archery (@WorldArchery) are mutually following 16 other federations.

## Most Followed Olympic Officials on Twitter

The presidents and executives of 23 of the 40 international sports federations have personal Twitter profiles – and only 17 of these are active. Sebastian Coe (@sebcoe), the President of the International Athletics Federation (IAAF), is the most followed organisation leader with 123,151 followers, ahead of Brett Gosper (@brettgosper), the CEO of World Rugby with 13,565 followers and Andy Hunt (@Andy\_Hunt), the CEO of World Sailing. The Olympic gold medalist Coe joined Twitter in 2009 as President of the London 2012 Organising Committee, which he used to build his international profile.

These sports leaders are all dwarfed, however, by Joseph Blatter (@SeppBlatter), the former head of FIFA, who has more than 2.5 million followers on his Twitter account which has been dormant since 2015. Gianni Infantino, his successor, does not have



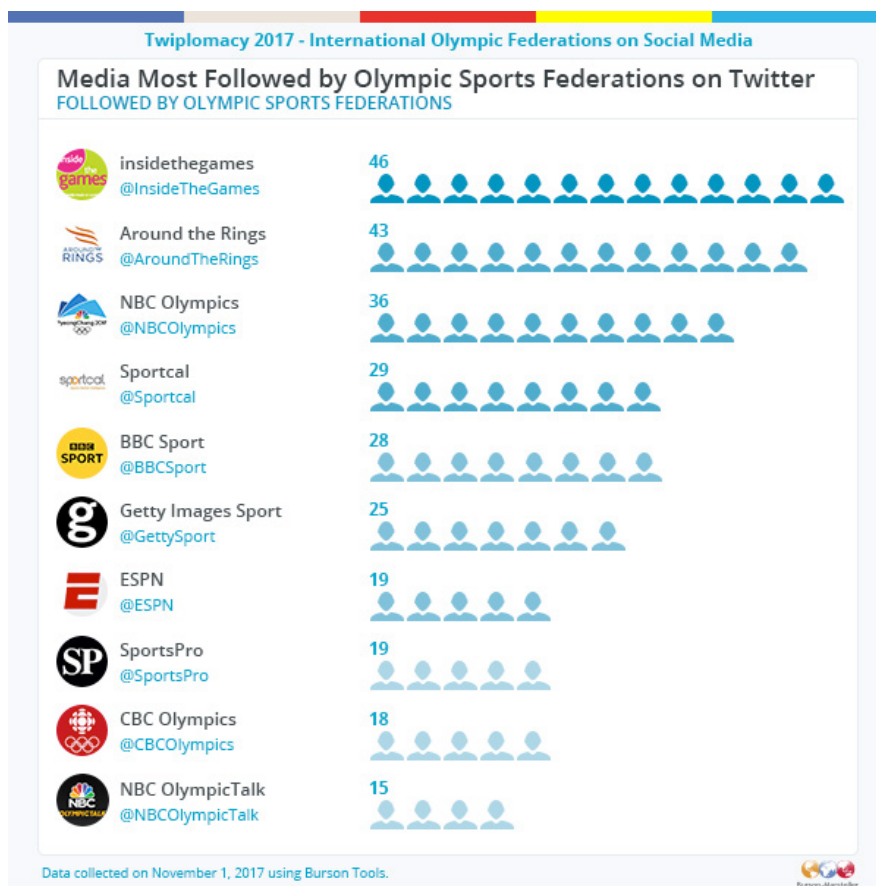
an official Twitter presence, but there are at least 10 fake and parody accounts in his name. Having an official personal presence on Twitter would immediately avoid unnecessary confusion. Presidents do not need to be active daily, but their presence helps to amplify their sport on social media, as the example of Sepp Blatter has shown.

## Olympic Media and Journalists on Twitter

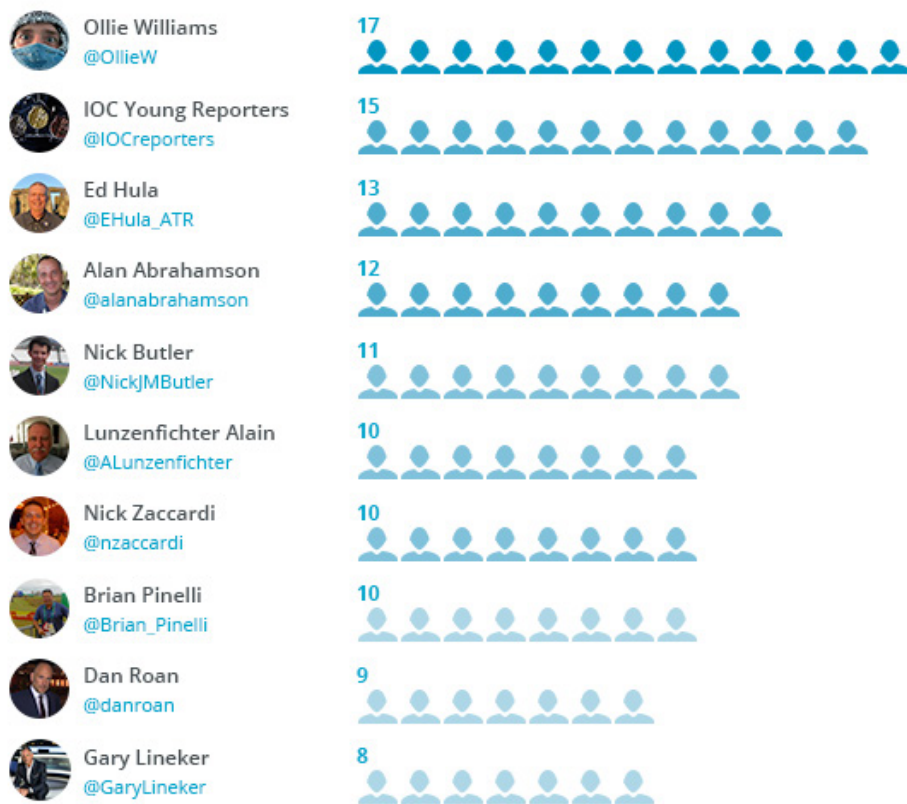
Sport and media have always had a symbiotic relationship; one does not exist without the other. And now with the impact of social media outlets, especially Twitter, specialist sports media have an even greater impact as their stories are seen by readers and viewers almost instantaneously.

The Olympic sports news website insidethegames.biz is the most followed media organisation ahead of its rival Around the Rings, followed by 46 and 43 international sports federations, respectively. The NBC Olympics Twitter feed is in third position followed by 36 international sports federations.

Based on these rankings, the BBC’s sports reporter Ollie Williams is the most followed journalist by sports federations, ahead of Ed Hula, founder of Around the Rings and sports writer Alan Abrahamson from 3 Wire News.



### Journalists Most Followed by Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter FOLLOWED BY OLYMPIC SPORTS FEDERATIONS



Data collected on November 1, 2017 using Burson Tools.





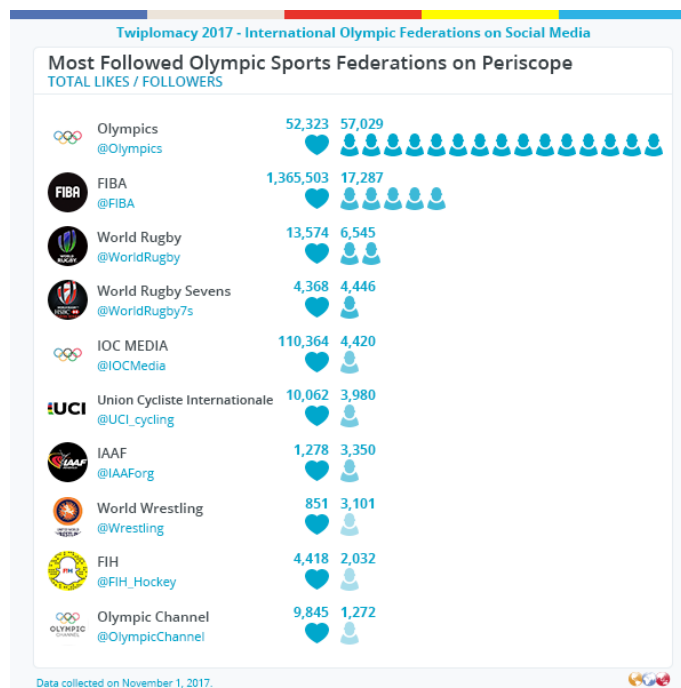


## International Olympic Sports Federations on Periscope

Thirty-five Olympic sports federations have activated their Periscope channels, Twitter’s live broadcasting tool. However, only 25 federations are active on the platform.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) garnered 57,029 followers and 52,323 likes, namely with the live broadcast of the lighting of the Olympic Flame for the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang in late October 2017. The broadcast was also streamed live simultaneously on the Olympic Facebook page and its YouTube channel.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has been live-streaming entire games of the under 20 and under 16 competitions and its broadcasts have generated 1,365,503 likes and 17,287 followers. The World Rugby Federation is in third place of the most followed Periscope channels with 6,545 followers. @WorldRugby shares mainly live announcements and press conferences rather than any sporting action.





Usain Bolt Wins Olympic 100m Gold | London 2012 Olympic Games

22,347,192 views

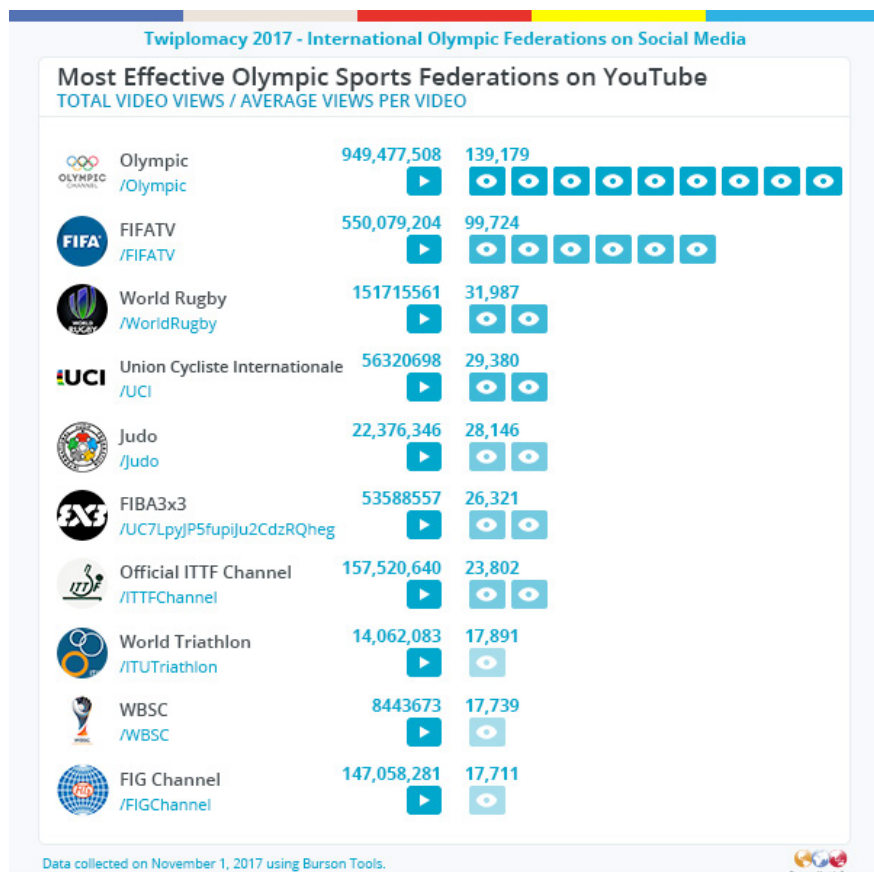
54K 2K SHARE

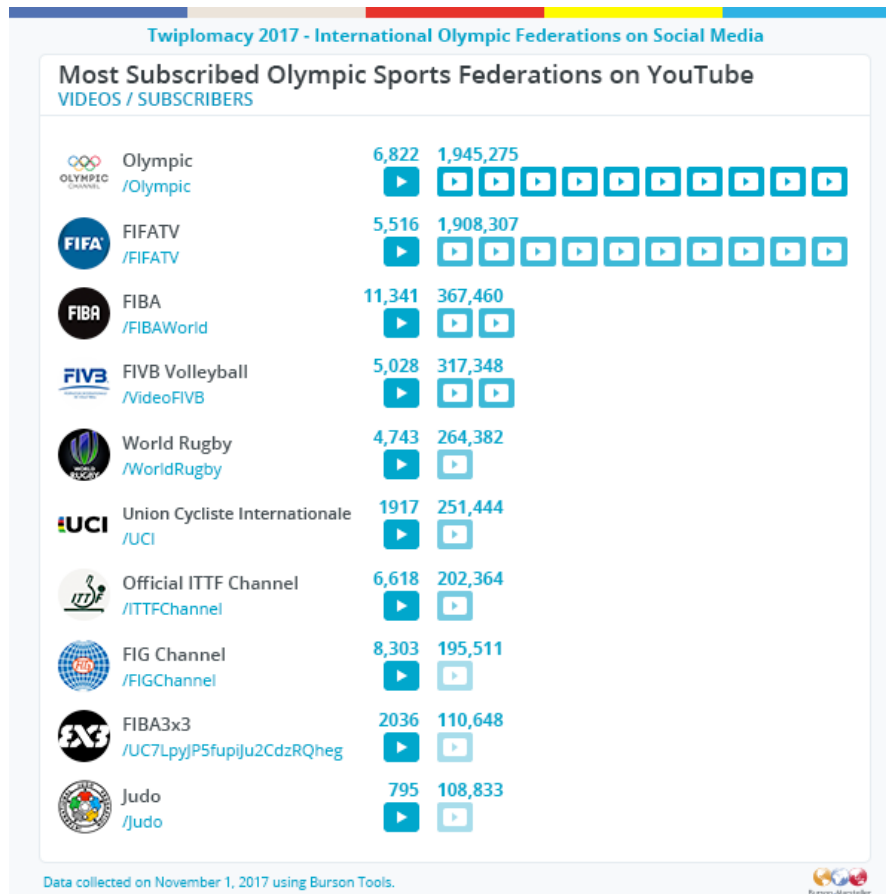
## International Olympic Sports Federations on YouTube

All but four Olympic sports federations have a YouTube channel to host their long-form video content. The Olympic Channel is the most watched YouTube channel, with more than 949,477,508 video views and 1,945,275 subscribers. Each video receives on average 139,179 views and its most watched video, with more than 22 million views, is the 13-minute long footage of the Men’s 100m Final at the 2012 London Olympics. The other most watched Olympic videos are highlights from the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, including the Spice Girls, comedian Rowan Atkins and Queen Elizabeth with Daniel Craig playing James Bond.

The Olympic channel has almost twice as many views as the FIFA TV channel, in second place with 550,079,204 views and 99,724 average views per video. The rugby, cycling and judo federations complete the top five list of the Olympic federation sports channels with the most average views per video. The International Table Tennis Federation scored a viral hit with the 16-minute long video of the “funniest table tennis match in history” which was viewed more than 15 million times.

The Olympic and the FIFA TV channel are both leading in terms of subscribers, each with more than 1.9 million subscribers. The basketball, volleyball and rugby federations complete the top five list with more than 260,000 subscribers each.





## International Olympic Sports Federations on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is often overlooked as a powerful social media channel and few international Olympic sports federations are active on the platform, which only recently introduced native video.

Thirty-three international Olympic sports federations have a presence on the platform, with a total of 167,813 followers and a median average of 1,442 per page. FIFA has more than 60,000 followers on its LinkedIn page having posted 26 updates. The IOC has more than 30,000 followers, twice as many as the International Basketball Federation with 14,000 followers and both have posted 80 updates on the platform. LinkedIn is the least used social network since the engagement is generally much lower than on other social media platforms.





















Only 34 leaders of international Olympic sports federations have created personal profiles on LinkedIn, but none of these are using the platform for corporate communication, posting status updates or long-form content.

## International Olympic Sports Federations on Google+

Thirty-two international Olympic federations still have a presence on Google+. FIFA tops the rankings with 162,230 followers and is regularly active on the platform. World Rugby is in second position with 59,440 followers far ahead of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) with only 4,124 followers. Two-thirds of the federations are not active on the platform and their pages are dormant or inactive.

Twiplomacy 2017 - International Olympic Federations on Social Media

Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on LinkedIn  
POSTS / FOLLOWERS

	FIFA FIFA	26	60,752	
	International Olympic Committee International-Olympic-Committee	80	30,102	
	FIBA FIBA	80	14,715	
	International Tennis Federation International-Tennis-Federation	0	12,923	
	FINA fina1908	1	5,833	
	Paralympics Paralympics	81	5,477	
	WorldRugby WorldRugby	0	4,595	
	International Ice Hockey Federation IIHFHockey	0	3,511	
	Fédération Equestre Internationale FEI_Global	2	3,431	
	Union Cycliste Internationale UCI_cycling	11	3,336	

Data collected on November 1, 2017.



## For More Information

If you want to know more about the 2017 Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking or about how Burson-Marsteller and TSE Consulting can assist your organisation in improving your social media presence with effective strategy and communications, please contact us.

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## Burson·Marsteller

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Lausanne, December 19, 2017