



#OlympicRanking

2018 Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking

**By Burson Cohn & Wolfe
Sports Practice**

January 2019

And the 2018 winner is...

On behalf of Burson Cohn & Wolfe sports practice, we are pleased to publish the 2018 edition of the “Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking”.

Social media continues to be a strong driver in communication, as it evolves and grows in importance within society and within the sports industry it has become the go-to- tool to engage with fans and especially with youth.

With 2018 being a year full of events, this ranking aims at capturing the social media footprint of the international Olympic sports organisations and provides some insightful takeaways for the future.

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

Lausanne, January 24 - 2018



Lars Haue-Pedersen
Managing Director, Burson Cohn & Wolfe sports practice

Contents

Executive Summary	3
International Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook.....	5
Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook.....	8
Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook.....	9
Most Liked Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook	10
International Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram	12
Instagram Stories	15
Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram	17
Most Engaged Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram	18
Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram.....	19
International Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter	21
Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter	24
Most Engaged Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter.....	25
Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter	26
Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter	27
Best Connected Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter	28
Most Followed Olympic Officials on Twitter	29
Olympic Media and Journalists on Twitter	30
Olympic Athletes, Teams and Events on Twitter.....	32
International Olympic Sports Federations on Periscope.....	35
International Olympic Sports Federations on YouTube	37
International Olympic Sports Federations on LinkedIn.....	39
For More Information.....	40

Executive Summary

2018 was a bumper year for global sporting events, with the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games in February, the FIFA World Cup in Russia in June/July and the Summer

Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires in October. The 42 Olympic Winter and Summer Sports governing bodies analysed in this study all registered solid growth on all social media platforms since the beginning of 2018, but the question arises, have they taken advantage of the windfall created by these global sporting events?



Source: Public Twitter profiles

The follower count on the 56 Instagram accounts combined grew by more than 51 percent and the followers on the 97 Twitter accounts increased by 24 percent since January 1, 2018. Interactions more than doubled on Twitter and increased massively on Instagram compared to our last study in 2017. On the other hand, fan growth on Facebook was only a modest 15 percent and interactions dropped by half on most pages as the social media platform changed its algorithm.

Obviously, the Winter Olympic disciplines profited most from the Games in PyeongChang. The Korean language @Olympiko account more than quadrupled its followers and the Japanese account @Gorin more than doubled its followers on Twitter

during the month of February 2018, but both accounts are relatively small with 23,755 and 38,397 followers, respectively.

The ISU Speed Skating and the Figure Skating Twitter accounts grew by 27.3 percent and 16.5 percent, respectively, during the period of the PyeongChang Olympics. The follower count of the @OlympicChannel Twitter accounts, which promotes links to live action, grew by 11.5 percent. However, the @Olympics Twitter account, which boasts 6,150,281 followers, only recorded a modest growth of 3.3 percent during the Winter Games.

On Facebook, the page of the International Luge Federation recorded 29.2 percent growth ahead of the World Curling Federation (8.55 percent), ISU Short Track (6.97 percent)

and ISU Speed Skating (6.91 percent) and International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation (6.5 percent). The main Olympics page only had a small growth of 0.84 percent.

On Instagram the World Curling Federation recorded the biggest growth in followers during the Olympics with 71.95 percent ahead of the other winter sports such as Speed Skating, Bobsleigh, Luge, Figure Skating and Snowboard whose accounts grew by 15 percent. The Instagram account of the Olympic Channel grew by 11.85 percent and the Olympic Games added 9.66 percent more followers.

During the 12 days of the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires in October, the Twitter account of the Youth Olympics registered only a small growth of 2.24 percent on Twitter but a massive spike of 41.53 percent on Instagram.

It is hard to say whether the FIFA Twitter accounts registered any significant growth during the 2018 World Cup in June-July since it coincided with the great Twitter purge of fake accounts. Only the @FIFAMedia account registered a modest 3.19 percent increase in followers during the World Cup while all other accounts took a hit during the purge which caused the @Olympics Twitter account to lose 130,000 followers overnight.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is still in a league of its own and tops the rankings on Facebook and Instagram. However, FIFA, the International Football Association, has more followers and subscribers than the Olympics on Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. While FIFA has more followers on Twitter the Olympic account has a better engagement and more interactions on the platform. The IOC's Olympic Facebook

page is the most liked page of any international organisation and has the most interactions. On Instagram the Olympic account has twice as many followers as @WorldRugby but the rugby governing body has registered slightly more interactions since January 1, 2018.

Instagram has become the best platform for fan engagement and an ever-growing number of Olympic sports federations have become active on Instagram stories, sharing behind the scenes snippets at sporting events and engaging their followers with pictures and videos and regular athlete Instagram takeovers.

BCW Sports has analysed the social media footprint of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its 41 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 97 institutional Twitter accounts, 60 Facebook pages, 56 Instagram accounts and 51 YouTube channels, as well as 32 personal Twitter accounts of the heads of international sports federations. The analysis, conducted in December 2018, 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, wrestling 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.

International Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

Facebook is the social media channel where Olympic sports federations have the largest fan base. All Olympic sports federations have a presence on the social network with a combined total fan count of almost 48 million people and a median average of 221,434. However, the engagement has declined drastically since our study in 2017.

Facebook is also the video platform of choice: 46 percent of the 51,804 posts published by Olympic sports federations since January 1, 2018 are native videos, live videos or links to YouTube and other videos. The 21,357 videos uploaded natively to Facebook have garnered 799,162,087 video views. On average, videos uploaded natively to Facebook receive 848 interactions per post and live videos 1,097 interactions per post. While live video broadcasts only represent 4.78 percent of all the posts, they tend to drive the engagement, generating 44.35 percent of all the comments. Live videos and videos posted natively combined have clocked up a total of 1,167,650,267 video views. On average native videos garnered 75,576 views compared to 26,956 views for live video broadcasts.

The @Olympic Facebook page has been quite successful in sharing some of the best historic Olympic moments from past Olympic games. The most popular Facebook post posted in 2018 by an Olympic federation is the 38-second video of Olga Korbut's stellar performance at the Munich Olympics in 1972. The short clip has become the most liked and most shared post with a record number of Love and Wow-reactions. The post has totalled 629,180 interactions (comments, likes and shares) and the video has been viewed more than 26 million times.



The second most popular Facebook post is a repost of the 2.30-minute [video](#) of Dave Wottle's historic run at the Munich Olympics, which had been the most popular post in 2017 already. 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 329,290 interactions at the time of the study and the video has been viewed more than 155 million times. The third most popular [post](#) with 305,837 interactions is a two-minute video collection of falls of Olympic athletes who later rebounded.

FIBA
14 May · 🌐

👉👈 Who do you want to play 1-on-1 with there?



👍👎👉👈 90K 2.7K Comments 11,129 shares

supporters flooded the FIFA Facebook page with over 158,000 comments, most saying “Glory to Ukraine,” after FIFA fined Croatia’s assistant coach for a video in which he used the same slogan after Croatia beat Russia in the World Cup quarterfinal. The online protesters also gave the page the lowest one-star rating and the reviews section has since been disabled.

The Facebook [post](#) which elicited the most sad



👍 Like 🗨 Comment 🔄 Share ⚙ Options 📧 Send in Messenger

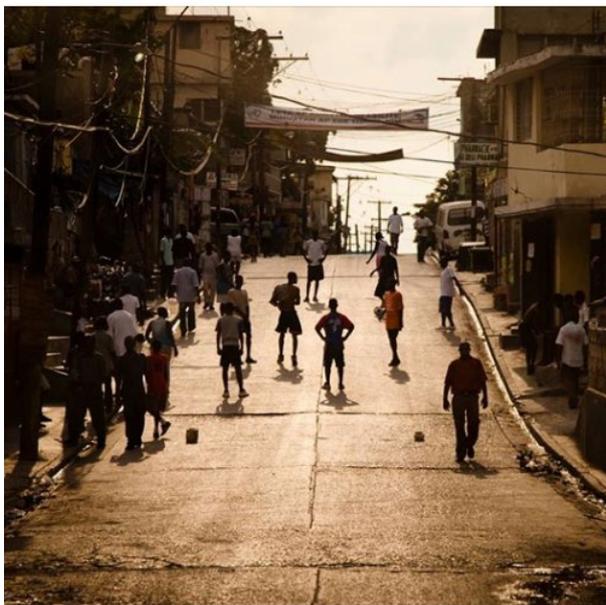
... The International Table Tennis Federation scored a viral hit with the 2-hour long [live broadcast](#) of the European Championships in Alicante, Spain, which has become the fourth most popular post with close to 197,047 interactions.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) made it into the Top 10 Facebook posts with a [picture](#) of a basketball court surrounded by palm trees, asking its followers: Who do you want to play one-on-one? The inspiring post garnered 105,324 interactions.

The innocuous [#FridayFeeling](#) picture of a group of people playing football on a street, posted in July on the FIFA page, has become the most commented FIFA post in 2018 with 16,067 comments and 9,263 angry reactions. Ukraine

FIFA is 😊 feeling awesome.
6 July · 🌐

❤️👉👈
#FridayFeeling



👍👎👉👈 14K 15K Comments 1,109 shares

reactions is picture posted by the International Skating Union in memory of Kazakhstani figure skater and 2014 Olympic bronze medallist Denis Ten who was murdered in a carjacking attempt in July 2018.

The [post](#) which generated the most ‘Haha’-reactions is a hilarious 20 second clip of the Australian football player Elise Kellond-Knight helping her team captain Lisa De Vanna who

clearly struggled drinking from a water bottle at the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics.

It helps to tag athletes, teams or other international sports federations in Facebook posts in order to promote them to a wider audience. Tagging will alert them to the publication and might prompt them to share the post on their own timelines, thereby increasing the reach of each publication.

Several international Olympic Federations have started to promote their Facebook publications including paid partnerships with their respective sponsors. The most popular [post](#) on the @WorldRugby7s and the @RugbyWorld Facebook pages is a video that was sponsored by their main sponsor DHL Rugby. The most popular [post](#) on the @Paralympics Facebook page is a paid partnership with the Samsung bloggers behind the scenes at the athletes' village at the PyeongChang Olympics.

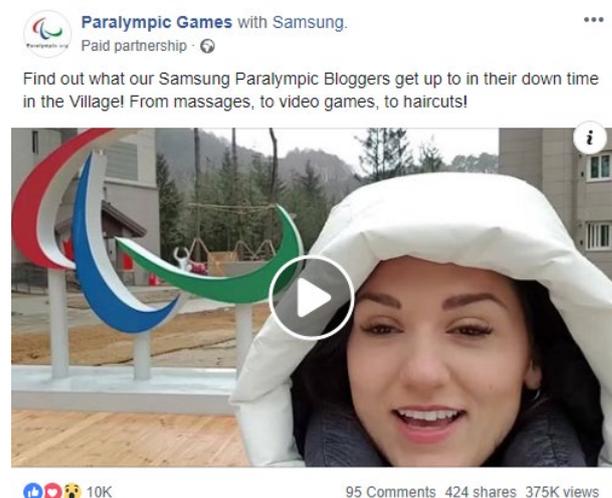


Photo posts, which represent 35.27 percent of all the posts, garner 32.13 percent of the total interactions. Posts containing links to other websites, which represent 18.42 percent of all the posts, garner only 5.36 percent of the total interactions. Simple status posts without any visual have the worst performance, accounting for only 0.07 percent of all interactions with only 84 interactions per post.

Not surprisingly, posts with links to videos on YouTube or other video platforms have the least engagement and only generate 0.22 percent of all interactions and average 90 interactions per post. This confirms that it pays to post videos natively and not simply share links to videos on other platforms. Only 1.36 percent of all the posts are links to YouTube and other video platforms.

Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

The interactions on Facebook have drastically declined for most of the Olympic Sports Federations from 2017 to 2018. Forty-three pages registered fewer interactions in 2018 compared to the same period in 2017.

The Facebook page of the International Olympic Committee has seen the biggest drop in engagement, garnering 5,707,657 interactions in 2018 down from 11,191,588 comments, likes and shares in our last study in 2017. The International Basketball Federation, @FIBA, also saw its interactions decline from a total of 7,065,839 interactions in 2017 to 3,800,787 in 2018 and the interactions of the Olympic Channel page dropped from 3,333,005 to 1,805,623 which is due to Facebook’s change of algorithm.



On the other hand, the interactions on the page of the International Hockey Federation (@FIHockey) have increased fivefold, putting @FIHockey into third place. The International Hockey Federation has been promoting some of its posts to reach a larger audience. The pages of the International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld), the Badminton World Federation (@BWFbadminton) and World Rugby have increased by 28,55 and 73 percent, respectively.

Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

All 60 Facebook pages analysed publish on average 2.51 posts per day. The @FIBA.Basketball Facebook page is the most active with 8.16 posts per day, sharing 'all the latest news from FIBA.com' with its 87,385 fans. The other official Facebook page of FIBA with 4,513,721 fans is in sixth place with 4.93 posts per day. The Badminton World Federation @BWFbadminton page places second with an average of 7.23 posts per day. The @OlympicChannel page posts on average 6.89 posts per day. The International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld) and the International Judo Federation (@IJudo) complete the five most active pages with 6.27 and 4.97 posts per day, respectively.

International Olympic Federations on Social Media

Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

POSTS PER DAY / TOTAL POSTS

	FIBA Basketball FIBAbasketball	8.16	2,808
	Badminton World Federation BWFbadminton	7.23	2,488
	Olympic Channel OlympicChannel	6.89	2,371
	International Table Tennis Federation ITTFWorld	6.27	2,158
	International Judo Federation IJudo	4.97	1,710
	FIBA FIBA	4.93	1,695
	International Ice Hockey Federation IIHFhockey	4.78	1,645
	World Curling Federation WorldCurlingFederation	4.62	1,589
	World Athletics Club (IAAF) WorldAthleticsClub	4.6	1,584
	International Hockey Federation FIHockey	4.58	1,577

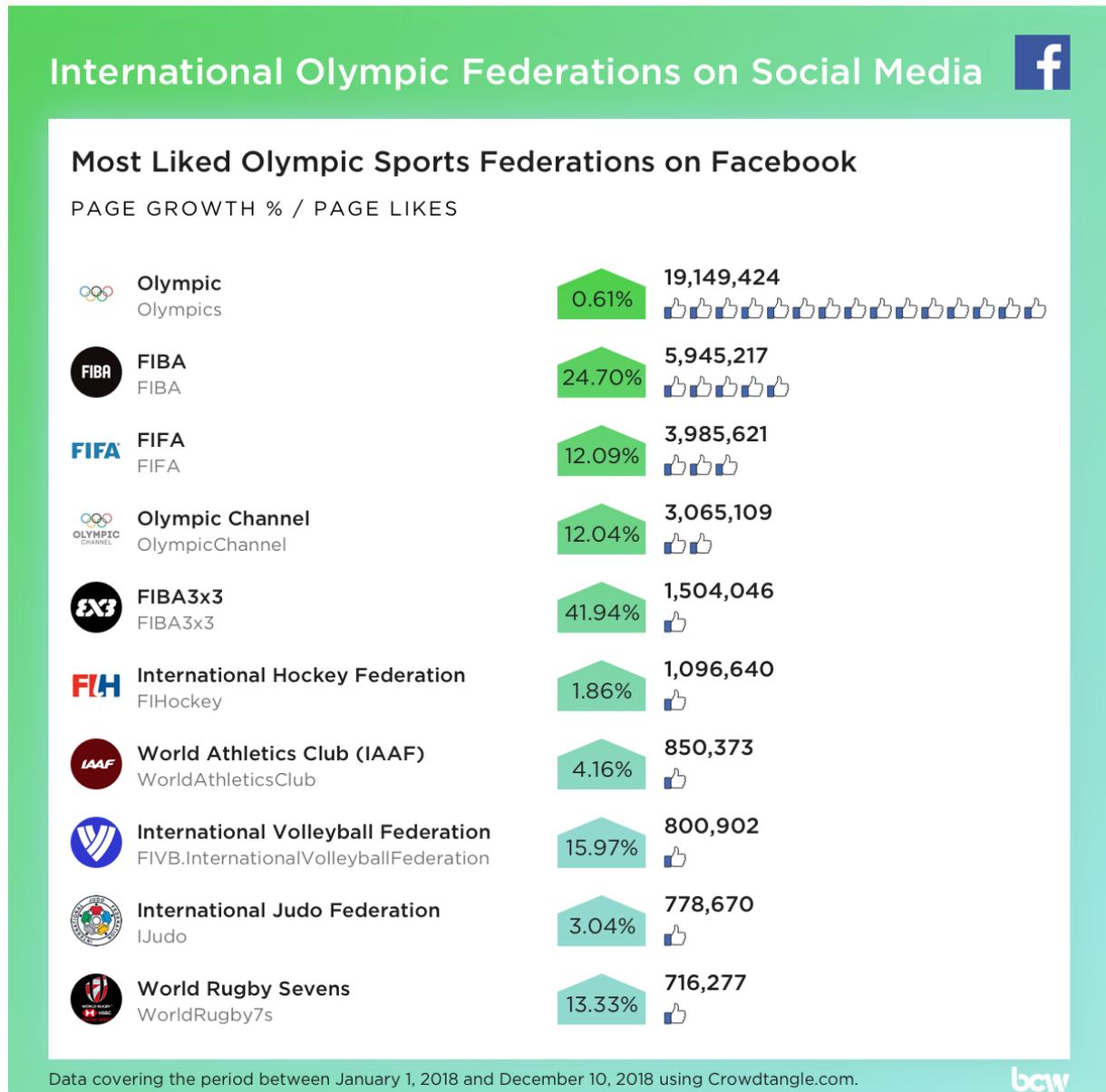
Data covering the period between January 1, 2018 and December 10, 2018 using Crowdtangle.com.

Most Liked Olympic Sports Federations on Facebook

All 60 Facebook pages combined had a total of 48,791,140 likes making Facebook the social network where sports federations have their largest follower base with a median average of 221,434 likes per page.

The International Olympic Committee (@Olympics) has by far the largest Facebook page, with 19,149,424 page likes. The page of the International Basketball Federation (@FIBA) is a distant second with 5,945,217 page likes, but ahead of @FIFA with 3,985,621 page likes.

The IOC's Olympic Channel places fourth with 3,065,109 page likes and the International Hockey Federation (@FIHockey) completes the top five list with more than 1 million page likes.



All pages combined had a growth rate of 15.84 percent since January 1, 2018. The International Tennis Federation has seen its page likes more than double and now boasts 256,266 page likes. Among the 10 most followed pages the Olympic Basketball account, @FIBA3x3, which has recorded the strongest growth of 42 percent moving into fifth place while the main FIBA account has recorded a 25 percent increase of its page likes adding 1,177,410 new fans.

The World Athletics Club (IAAF), the International Volleyball Federation, the International Judo Federation, and the World Rugby Sevens Series complete the Top 10 list of the largest Facebook pages.

Several Olympic sports federations have separate Facebook pages for their disciplines, such as @FIBA and @FIBA3x3, @WorldRugby and @WorldRugby7s. The Cycling Federation (Union Cycliste Internationale) has 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 Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined and Snowboarding) as does the Skating Union (ISU) with separate Facebook pages for Figure Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track.

Forty-four of the 60 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 55,624 check-ins from users and the International Cyclist Union has recorded 10,466 check-ins at its headquarters in Aigle, Switzerland, also home to an indoor cycling track. More than 6,400 Facebook users have checked into the @YouthOlympicGames Facebook page which moved its location to the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino in Nevada, USA. 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.

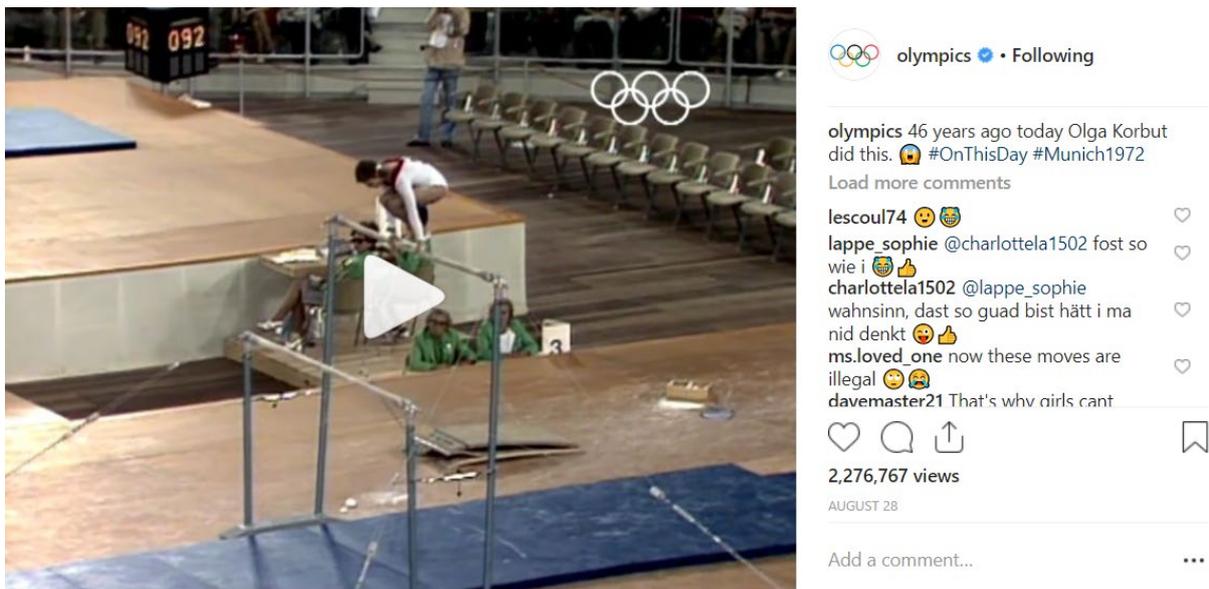
Thirteen pages also allow users to rate their pages. The Softball and Archery federations score 4.9 out of 5, based on 43 and 454 reviews, respectively. The Curling and Karate federations score 4.8 out of 5, based on 122 and 1737 reviews, respectively. The page of the Skating Union (@ISUofficial), on 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. The FIFA Facebook page disabled this page ranking after having hit by a massive protest from Ukrainians during the FIFA World Cup.

The Olympic sports federations often change their Facebook cover pictures to promote upcoming sports events, including the official hashtag of the event. Only 12 pages are using videos as their cover including amazing and engaging slow-motion clips of their respective disciplines.

International Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

As on Facebook, the @Olympics Instagram account has been sharing some of the best and most historic Olympic moments from Olga Korbut's perfect 10 to Simon Biles floor exercises, the historic runs of Dave Wottle and Usain Bolt. Sometimes the clips are only a few seconds long but have had major impact.

These videos are edited to fit the format of the platform, including subtitles to be watched on mute. As on Facebook, the 38-second video of Olga Korbut's performance at the Munich Olympics in 1972 has become the most liked and the most viewed post with 200,965 interactions and 2,219,521 video views.



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 Cycling Union has four accounts for its disciplines, namely @UCI_cycling, @UCI_MountainBike, @UCIbmxfreestyle and @UCIbmxsx, the International Basketball Federation has two accounts for @FIBA and @FIBA3x3, and the International Skating Union has separate accounts for @ISUfigureskating and @ISUSpeedskating. We have not included the @FIFAWorldCup Instagram account which is event-specific.

In 2018, the 56 accounts have shared 27,871 posts which have garnered 112,204,227 interactions, making Instagram the social network where the sports federations have the most engagement. All accounts combined have 9,154,327 followers an increase of 51 percent making Instagram the fastest growing social media network. Two thirds of all the Instagram posts shared by Olympic Federations in 2018 are photo posts and the remaining third are video posts which garner on average 4,539 interactions compared to 3,755 interactions for regular photo posts and not counting the video views. The 9,645 videos shared since January 1, 2018 have collectively been viewed 320,207,839 times with an average of 33,199 views per video.

The @Olympics account is the most successful on Instagram: 18 of the 20 most popular Instagram posts and 17 of the 20 most viewed Instagram videos are from the @Olympics Instagram account. Two posts from the International Basketball Federation complete the top 20 list including this [video](#) of Kobe Bryant promoting the 2019 FIBA World Cup which has become the sixth most popular post with 73,879 interactions.



The 10th most viewed [video](#) is a clip from the Cuban wrestling documentary shared by @UnitedWorldWrestling with 527,127 views asking its followers "What wrestling nations should we visit next? Comment below!"

The short [video clip](#) posted by the @WorldKarateFederation of France's Gwendoline Phillipe at the 2018 European Karate Junior Championships in Sochi has become the 12th most watched video on Instagram with 483,141 views. And the [video](#) of the Japanese female team on the side lines of the Karate 1 Premier League in Paris 2018 has become the 20th most watched video, which goes to show that you don't always need live sporting action.

The [picture](#) of the @Santini_Cycling jersey signed by the current Road World Champion Peter Sagan shared by @UCI_cycling has become the Instagram post with the most comments, garnering 6,251 comments, because followers were asked to "Comment below to enter the draw for a chance to win it. ».



The International Basketball Federation @FIBA organized a similar contest giving away a basketball to those who follow @FIBA: « Do you want to win the new @Moltenbasketball of the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup 2018? #FIBAWWC Like this post, follow @FIBA & tag 3 of your basketball friends in the comment section below! ».

A number of Olympic Sports Federations are encouraging fans to comment or like their posts such as the International Athletics Federation, @IAAF_Athletics, which [asked its fans](#) to vote for their athlete of the year 2018 with a thumbs up. The @WorldTriathlon Federation celebrated its 200,000 followers on Instagram by [asking them](#) to choose their favourite moment and comment with the score of 1-10 on each of the 10 most liked Instagram posts. Engaging fans and followers is vital to increase engagement.

Several sports federations have used fun and humorous posts to entertain their followers, which works very well. The International Table Tennis Federation, @ITTFWorld, shared a hilarious black and white [video](#) from the 1930s entitled: #TrickshotSunday where a player played against himself.

The World Rowing Federation @WorldRowingOfficial shared an entertaining [six-picture stream](#) of a rower capsizing after his run at the 2018 rowing world championships in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.



Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories are all the rage and the best way to stay top of mind of your followers. 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, a location, a poll or question stickers and often encourage viewers to ‘swipe up’ to read more on external websites.

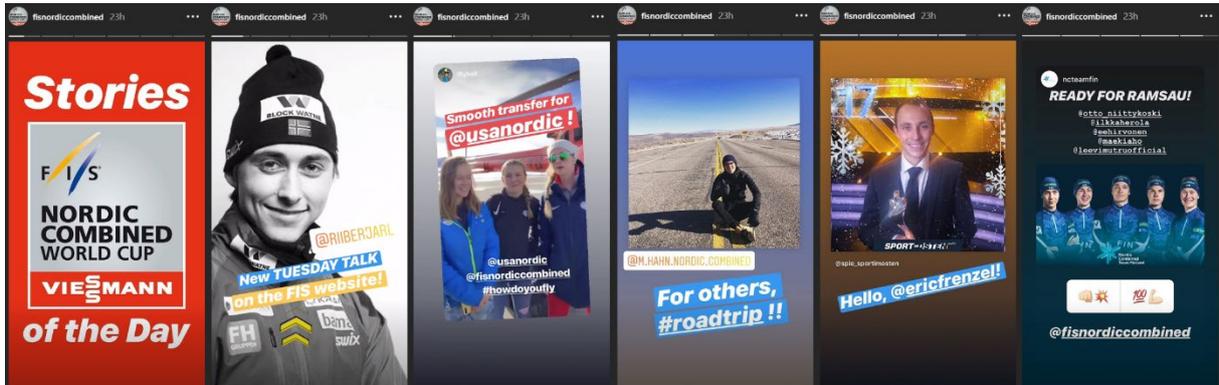
Forty of the 56 Instagram accounts of Olympic Sports organisations are regularly posting Instagram Stories. These collections of photos and videos are displayed on top of a user’s news feed and it is the one of the best ways to engage followers. There are no public statistics about Instagram Stories and it is impossible to tell how many people have viewed them, however they tend to drive engagement with fans.



Instagram Stories generally disappear after 24 hours, however when posted as a highlight on the profile they will stay visible for everyone. A number of sports federations have created specific Instagram highlights for each of their events, such as the account of the @YouthOlympics which boasts [highlights](#) for each of the 12 days of the competition in Argentina giving a glimpse of the activities of the athletes at the games and promoting the live stream or articles on the Youth Olympic website.



The @Olympics account has given followers a [sneak peek](#) into the leisure activities of the athletes in the Olympic village at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, tagging some of the athletes in the slides which allows them to re-share the picture in their own Instagram stories.



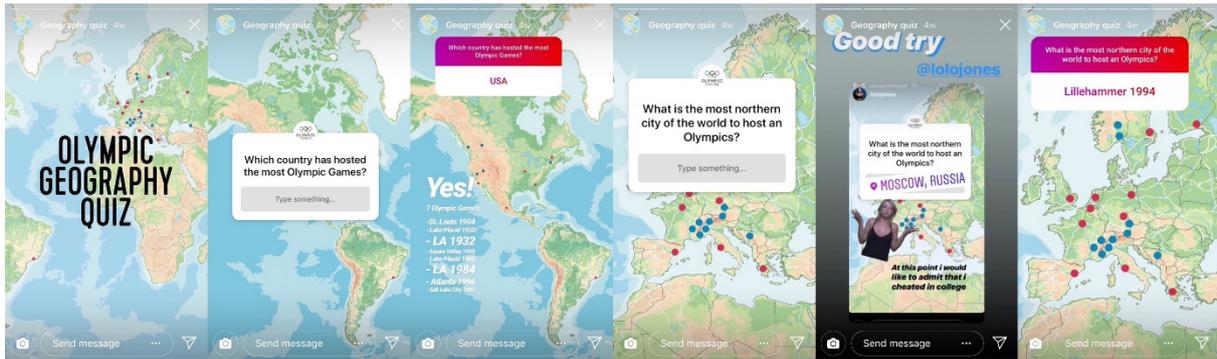
The International Skiing Federation regularly reports Instagram stories from their athletes' training activities which is a smart way to engage with their athletes, including a mention of their main sponsor.



A few sports federations occasionally hand the accounts over to their athletes for an Instagram takeover. The Russian Swimmer and world junior record holder Andrei Minakov was the star of the @OlympicChannel, dispensing tips on warming up and engaging the followers with questions about their favourite swimming styles.



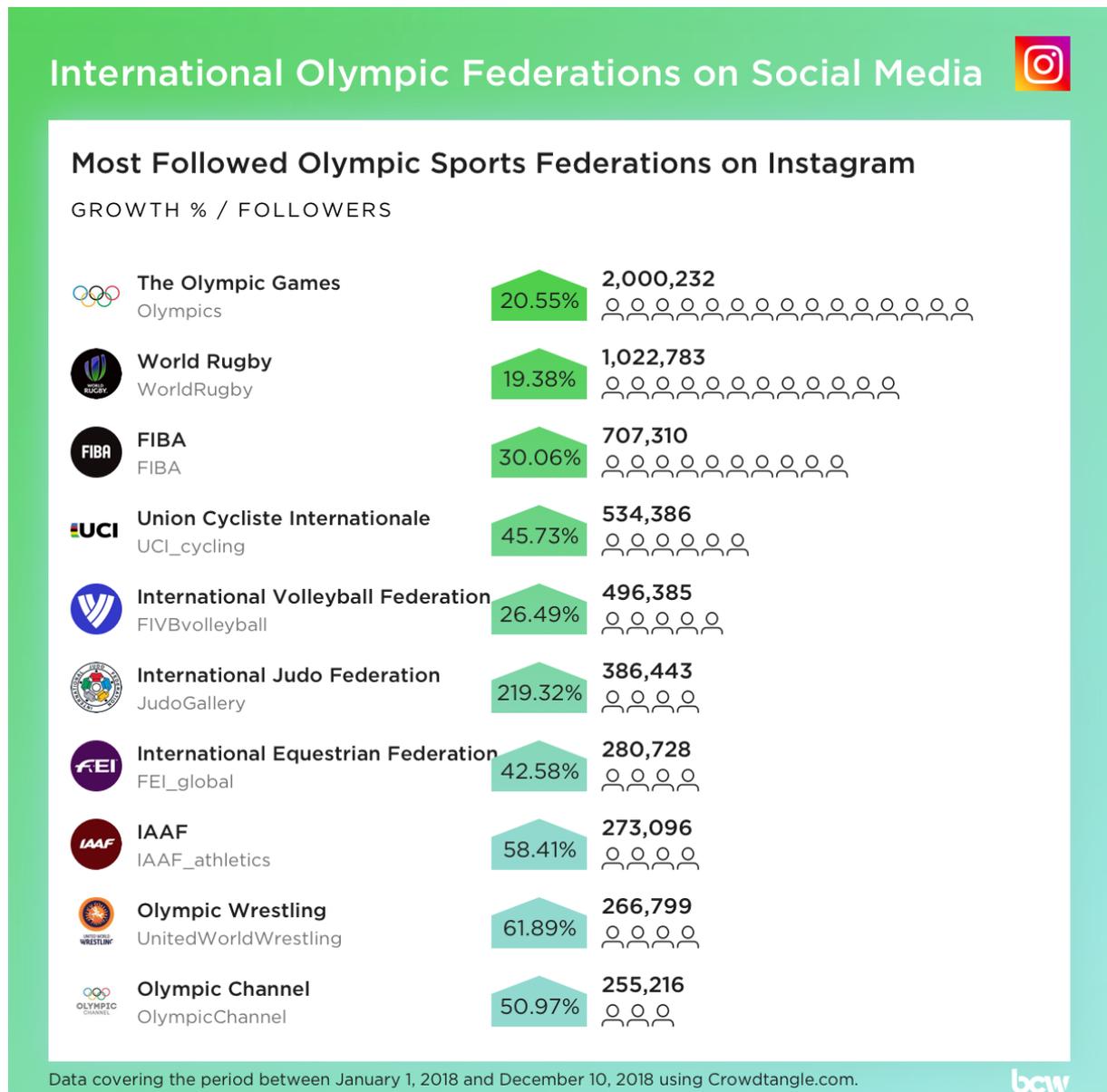
Instagram Stories are the best and safest way to conduct interviews since no one can publicly comment on the posts and questions can be vetted before reposting. The International Table Tennis Federation organized an executive Q&A with its CEO, Steve Dainton, answering questions about the sport and planned changes.



The @OlympicChannel organized an engaging [geography quiz](#) about the history of the Olympics from the country which has organized the most Olympic Games to the northern and southernmost host city.

Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

Instagram is the fastest growing social network for all Olympic sports federations. All Instagram accounts combined have 9,154,327 followers and an average growth of 52 percent since the



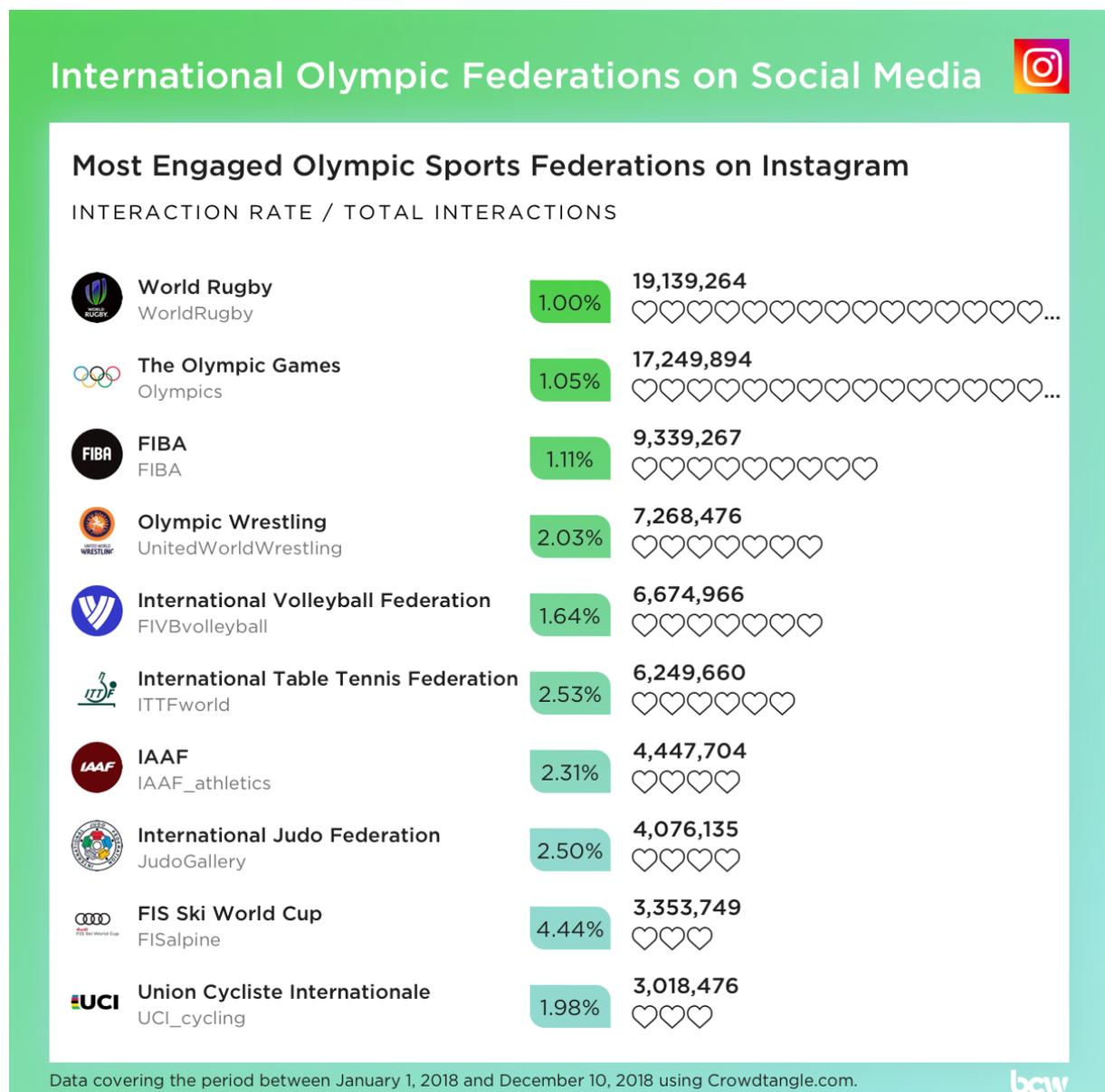
beginning of 2018. The International Olympic Committee is by far the most followed sports organisation with 2,000,232 followers and has seen an increase of 21 percent on the @Olympics Instagram account.

The IOC has almost twice as many followers as the World Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) with 1,022,783 followers and almost three times as many as the International Basketball Federation @FIBA with 707,310 followers.

Among the 10 most followed accounts, the International Judo Federation (@JudoGallery) has doubled its followers since January 1, 2018. The International Judo Federation (@IAAF_Athletics), Olympic Wrestling (@UnitedWorldWrestling) and the @OlympicChannel all have witnessed a follower growth of more than 50 percent.

Most Engaged Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

All Instagram accounts combined had 112,204,227 total interactions (comments and likes) in 2018 with an average of 2,003,647 interactions per account, almost twice as much as in our 2017 study.



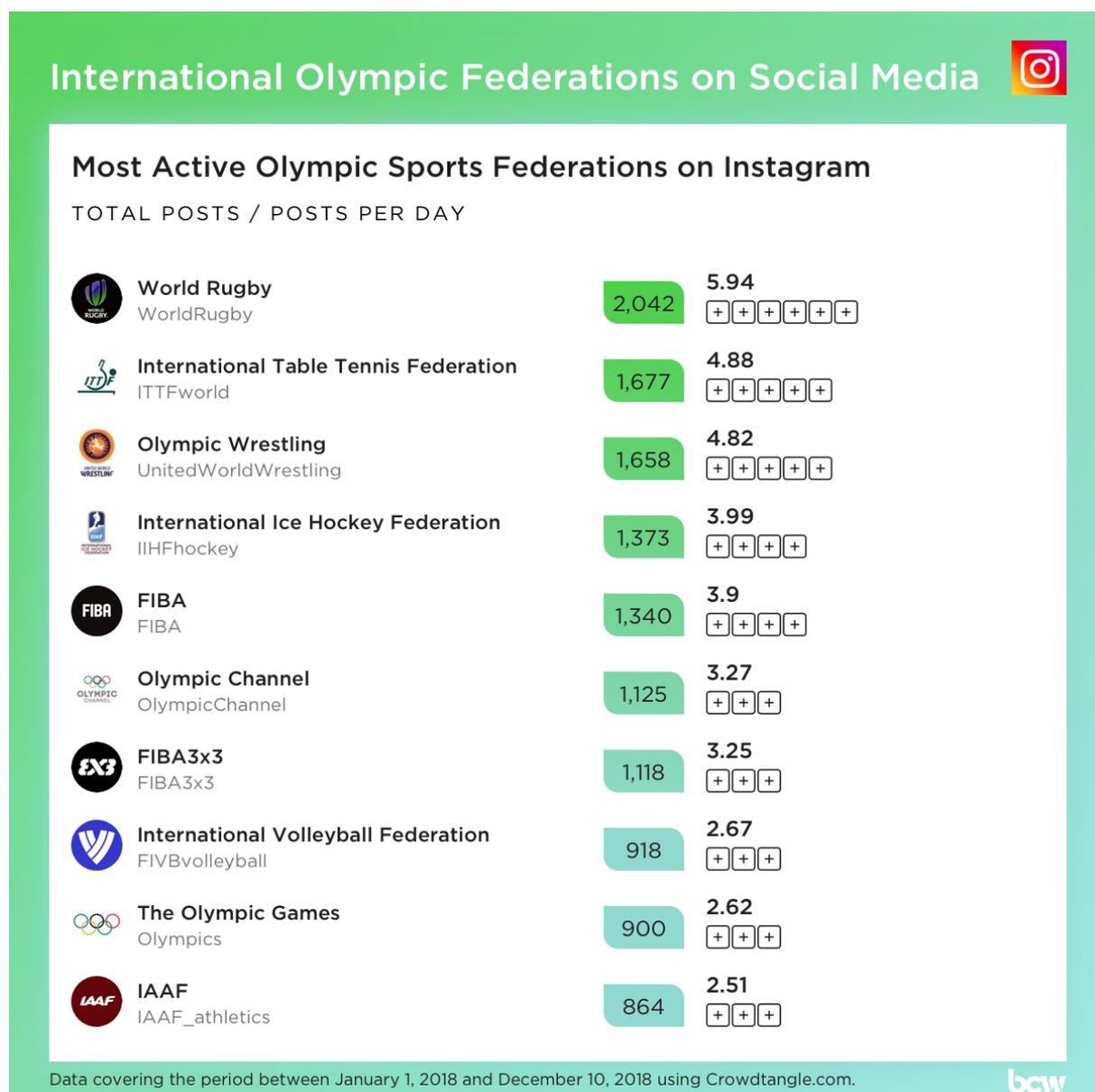
The World Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) registered 19,139,264 interactions on its Instagram account and ranks first ahead of the @Olympics with 17,249,894 total interactions. However, in terms of interactions per post, the Olympics recorded 19,167 interactions, more than double as much as @WorldRugby with 9,373 average interactions per post.

With 9,339,267 interactions the International Basketball Federation is in third place. United World Wrestling and the International Volleyball Federation round out the top five with 7,268,476 and 6,674,966 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 since the beginning of 2018, at 4.44 percent. The Instagram accounts of FIS Ski Jumping and the International Luge Federation have the best interaction rate of all sports federations with 10 and nine percent, respectively.

Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Instagram

The 56 Instagram accounts studied post on average 1.45 posts per day. The World Rugby Federation (@WorldRugby) is the most prolific sports federation on Instagram, averaging 5.94 posts per day.





The International Table Tennis Federation (@ITTFWorld) and United World Wrestling (@UnitedWorldWrestling) post more than four times per day. The International Ice Hockey Federation (@IIHFHockey), the International Basketball Federation (@FIBA), the @OlympicChannel and @FIBA3x3 post more than three times per day and have all shared more than 1,000 posts since the beginning of 2018.

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 42 Winter and Summer Sports governing bodies have an active presence on the platform, with a combined total audience of 33,876,842 followers and a median average of 31,800.

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 10 languages with a total following of 21,063,758 followers. FIBA also tweets in French and Spanish and World Rugby maintains separate Twitter accounts in French, Japanese and Spanish. The IOC totals 8,749,100 followers on its 19 Twitter accounts, tweeting in eight languages.

The IOC Twitter accounts dominated on Twitter in 2018 since 18 out of the 20 tweets with the most interactions were shared by the @Olympics account and all feature EXO, the nine-member South Korean boy band which literally rocked the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The 15 most popular tweets were all sent during the closing ceremony on February 25, 2018 with a memory from each of the band members adding more than 50,000 new followers to the account. The five-second looping [video](#) of EXO leader Suho putting on the Olympic glasses has 208,682 interactions and more than half a million video views.

Interestingly, the two others which make it into the Top 20 list of the most popular tweets are from the Olympic Japanese language account @gorin which both celebrate the 1000th gold medal in the Winter Olympic history won by Japanese figure skater Hanyu Yasunori at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympics.

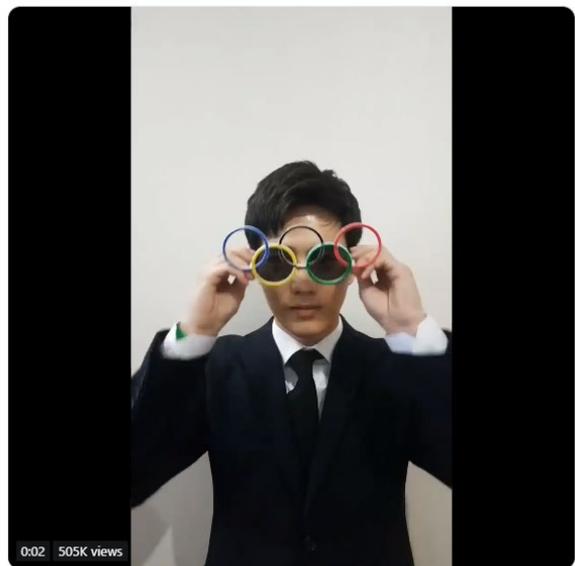


Olympics ✓
@Olympics

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[SUHO] The Olympic glasses are the best!
[#PyeongChang2018](#) [#Olympics](#)
[@weareoneEXO](#)
[#EXO](#)  [#엑소](#)
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9:02 AM - 25 Feb 2018



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[#PyeongChang2018](#) [#olympics](#)

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6:52 AM - 17 Feb 2018



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Congratulations, Luka Modric 
Winner of #TheBest FIFA Men's Player 2018

#FIFAFootballAwards



9:56 pm - 24 Sep 2018

Only nine out of the 100 most popular posts are from other Olympic sports federations. The [tweet](#) announcing Croatian striker Luka Modric as the winner of the best FIFA Men's Player award 2018 comes in at 40th position of the most popular tweets with 57,070 interactions.

The [tweet](#) about the death of Kazakh figure skater Denis Ten has sadly become the most popular post on the @ISU_Figure Twitter account with 31,548 interactions.

The [tweet](#) awarding the FIFA World Cup 2026 to Canada, Mexico and the U.S. has become @FIFAMedia's most popular post with 28,379 interactions.

The FIFA World Cup dominated the Twitter activity in June 2018 and the International Judo Federation found an elegant way to be part of it,



ISU Figure Skating 
@ISU_Figure

Follow

The ISU is deeply saddened by the news from media in Kazakhstan announcing the passing of Figure Skater Denis Ten. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Denis' family, friends and fans across the world.



3:03 pm - 19 Jul 2018

[highlighting](#) the judo moves during the England-Panama game with the caption: « *Who's enjoying the judo in Russia?* »

Due to stringent restrictions on showing video action from sporting events, many sports organisations have started to feature the passion of their fans. In this regard, the most popular [tweet](#) of the UCI Mountain Bike Twitter account are two fans cheering using bicycle frames at the 2018 Mountain Bike World Cup in Lenzerheide, Switzerland.

The most popular tweet on the World Rugby Sevens Twitter account is a picture of a fan disguised as an avocado and the caption: « Best. Costume. Ever. »

Despite being text-driven, Twitter has morphed into a visual network and most sports federations attach a photo or video to each tweet. Since Twitter is mainly used as a news feed 43 percent of the total tweets posted in 2018 are tweets with links to other websites. These link tweets have garnered on average 83 interactions (retweets and likes). A quarter of the total tweets posted are tweets with native videos embedded which have garnered 271 average interactions, representing 33.79 percent of all interactions.

Tweets with photos only represent a fifth of all the posts, but they do perform best with an average of 467 interactions per tweet, representing 45 percent of the total interactions. Only eight percent of all the tweets are plain text tweets, without any visuals, generating 84 interactions on average. Tweets with links to videos on YouTube and other video platforms generate the least engagement with a mere 24 interactions per post on average.

 **Int. Judo Federation** 
@IntJudoFed Follow 

Who's enjoying the judo 🇷🇺 in Russia?

#WorldCup #ENG #PAN #ENGPAN



2:57 pm - 24 Jun 2018

 **World Rugby Sevens** 
@WorldRugby7s Follow 

Best. Costume. Ever. 🥑

#Sydney7s



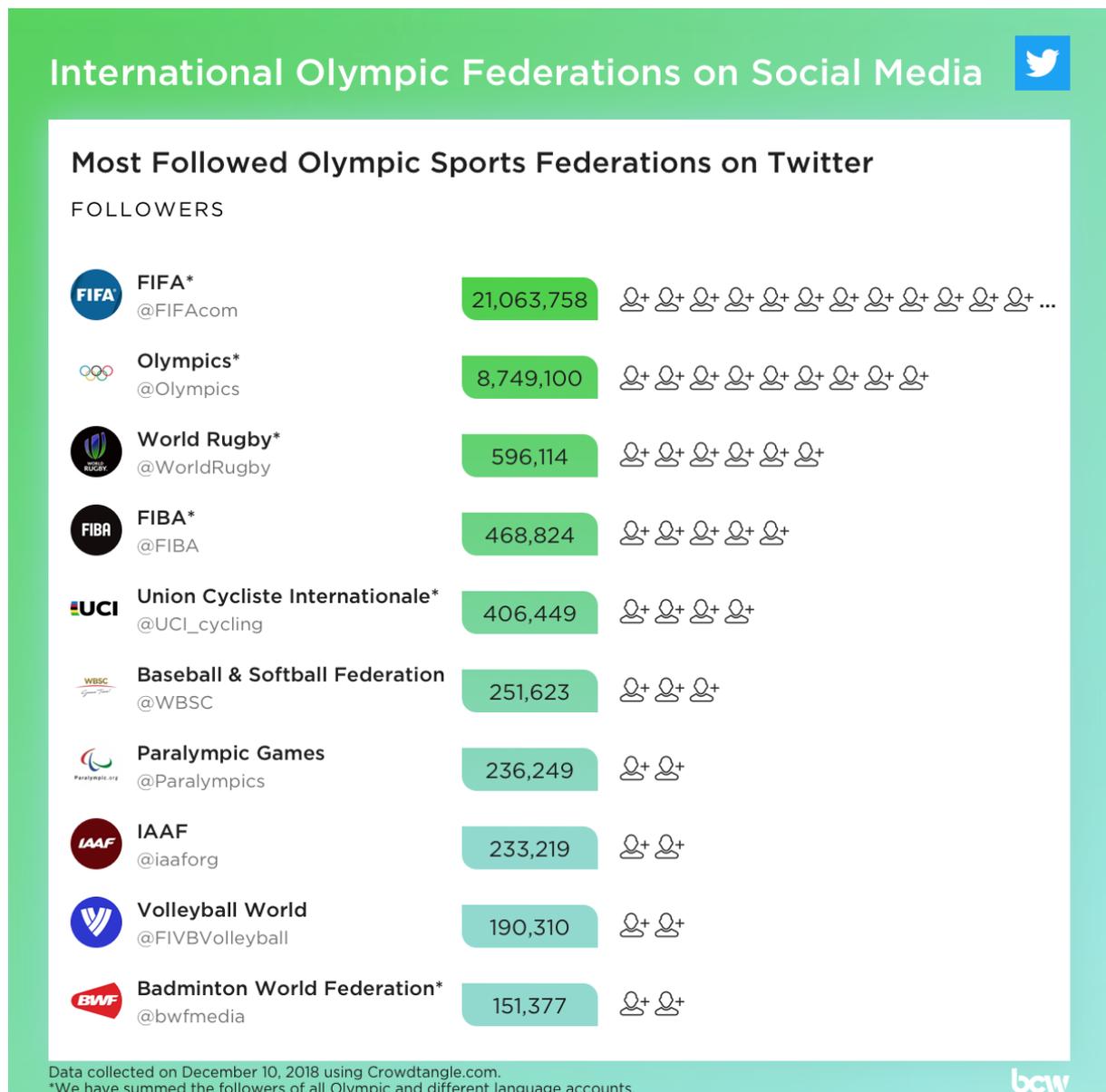
8:28 am - 27 Jan 2018

Most Followed Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

FIFA and the Olympics have an impressive footprint on Twitter underscoring the global appeal of football and the Olympic movement.

FIFA maintains Twitter accounts in 10 languages, namely Arabic, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Hindi and Chinese accounts with a combined following of 21,063,758. However, the four latter ones have been dormant for several years.

The International Olympic Committee totals 8,749,100 followers on its 19 Twitter accounts, tweeting 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. And since the Rio Olympics the @OlympicFlame has a Portuguese account @ChamaOlimpica.



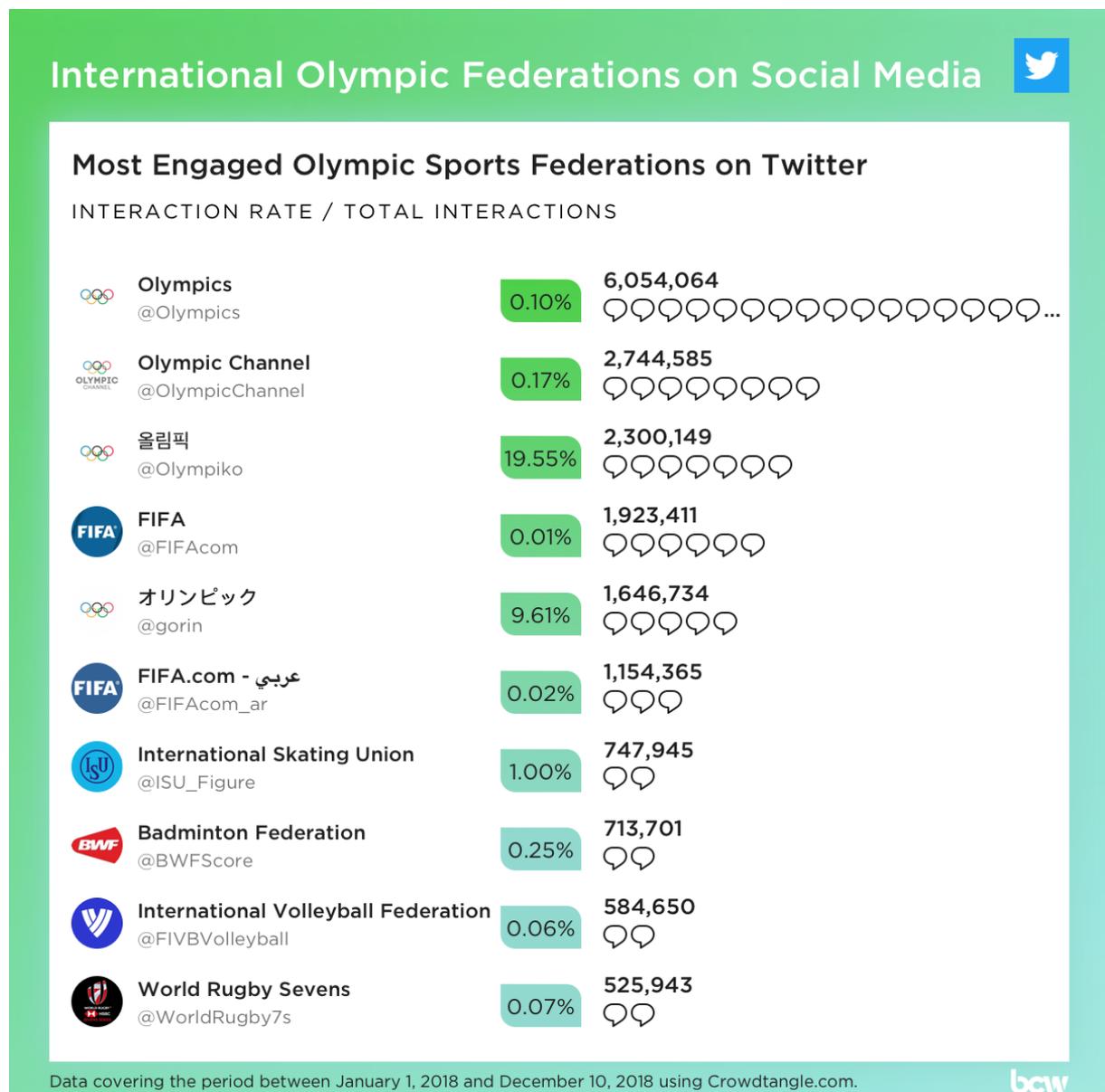
However, FIFA and the IOC have recorded only a modest growth on their flagship accounts @FIFACOM and @Olympics of six percent while the average growth rate of all accounts in 2018 was 24 percent. Thanks to the PyeongChang Olympics the Korean language Olympic account @Olympiko has quadrupled its follower count and the Japanese language account @gorin has doubled its

follower count. However, their respective audiences are comparatively small with 23,755 and 38,397 followers, respectively.

World Rugby is a distant third with 596,114 followers. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and the International Cycling Union complete the top five list with 468,824 and 406,449 followers, respectively.

Most Engaged Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

Thanks to the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, the Olympic Twitter accounts have registered the most interactions in 2018. The @Olympic account tops the list with 6,054,064 interactions since the beginning of 2018. The @OlympicChannel is in second position with 2,744,585 total interactions. The Korean and the Japanese language accounts both make a strong showing with 2,300,149 and 1,646,734 total interactions, respectively. Both language accounts have stellar interactions rates (calculated by the total number of interactions divided by the number of posts and the average number of followers) of 20 and 10 percent.



The English and Arabic FIFA accounts have clocked up more 1.9 and 1.1 million total interactions in 2018 which is, however, fewer than in 2017.

The Twitter accounts of ISU Figure Skating, the Badminton World Federation @BWFScore, the Volleyball World and World Rugby Sevens complete the Top 10 list of the accounts with the most interactions.

Most Active Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

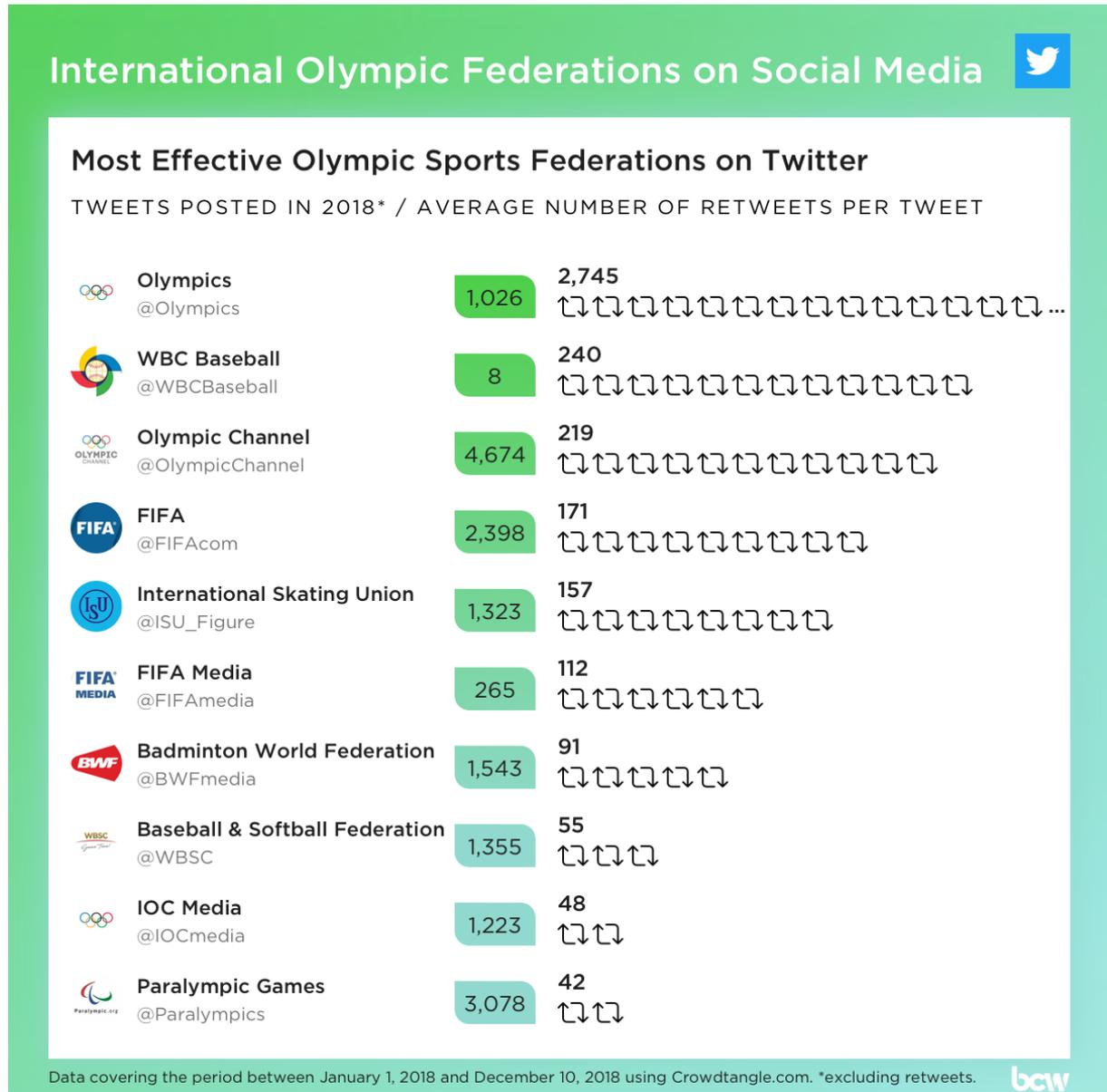
The @BWFScore Twitter account, the official tournament match-by-match score account of the Badminton World Federation, has become the most active account of all Olympic sports federations, posting on average 20 tweets per day. The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) is a close second with 18 tweets per day, ahead of the Olympic Channel’s Twitter account with an average of 14 tweets per day. FIFA and FIBA which were very active on Twitter in 2017 have drastically reduced their daily Twitter output averaging seven and nine tweets, respectively. In comparison, the @Olympics Twitter account tweets on average three times per day.



Not surprisingly, the Twitter streams of sports federations are highly active during sporting events. During the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games, the @Olympic account peaked with 90 tweets on the opening day, February 9, and the account of the YouthOlympics spiked at 46 tweets on the opening on October 7, 2018. The @FEI_Global had a record activity spikes of 193 tweets and @FIVBVolleyball posted 136 tweets on a single day.

Most Effective Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

The @Olympics Twitter account leads the rankings with 2,745 average retweets per tweet, more than 10 times as many as WBC Baseball which has only posted eight tweets in 2018 and the Olympic Channel which garnered 219 average retweets per tweet but has posted four times as many tweets as the @Olympic account. @FIFAcorn is in fourth position with 171 average retweets per tweet ahead of the ISU Figure Skating with 157 average retweets.

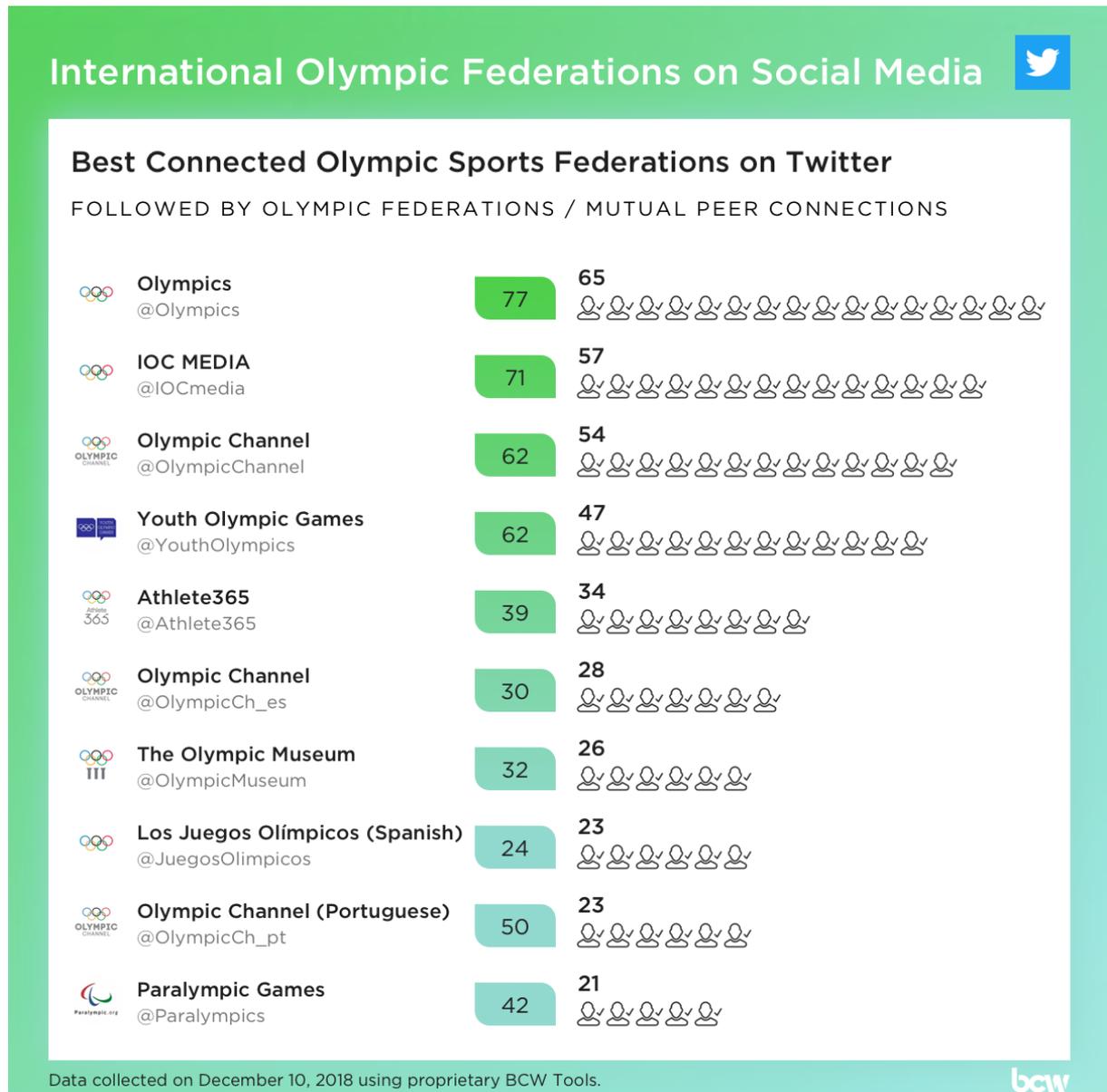


FIBA, FIFA, the IOC and UCI Cycling also run separate media news Twitter accounts. The @FIFAMedia account has 288,016 followers and an average of 112 retweets per tweet, twice as many as the @IOCmedia account with 48 average retweets per tweet.

The @IOCmedia account serves to promote the activities of its President Thomas Bach, with a respectable 266,886 followers. And finally, the IOC maintains bespoke Twitter accounts for Olympic athletes @Athlete365, the @OlympicMuseum and the @YouthOlympics. The latter has seen a decline of 3.53 percent of its followers despite the 2018 Youth Olympic Games as Twitter has purged fake followers.

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 tenth position in terms of mutually following other Olympic sports federations. The @Olympics and @IOCMedia accounts are mutually following 65 and 57 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.

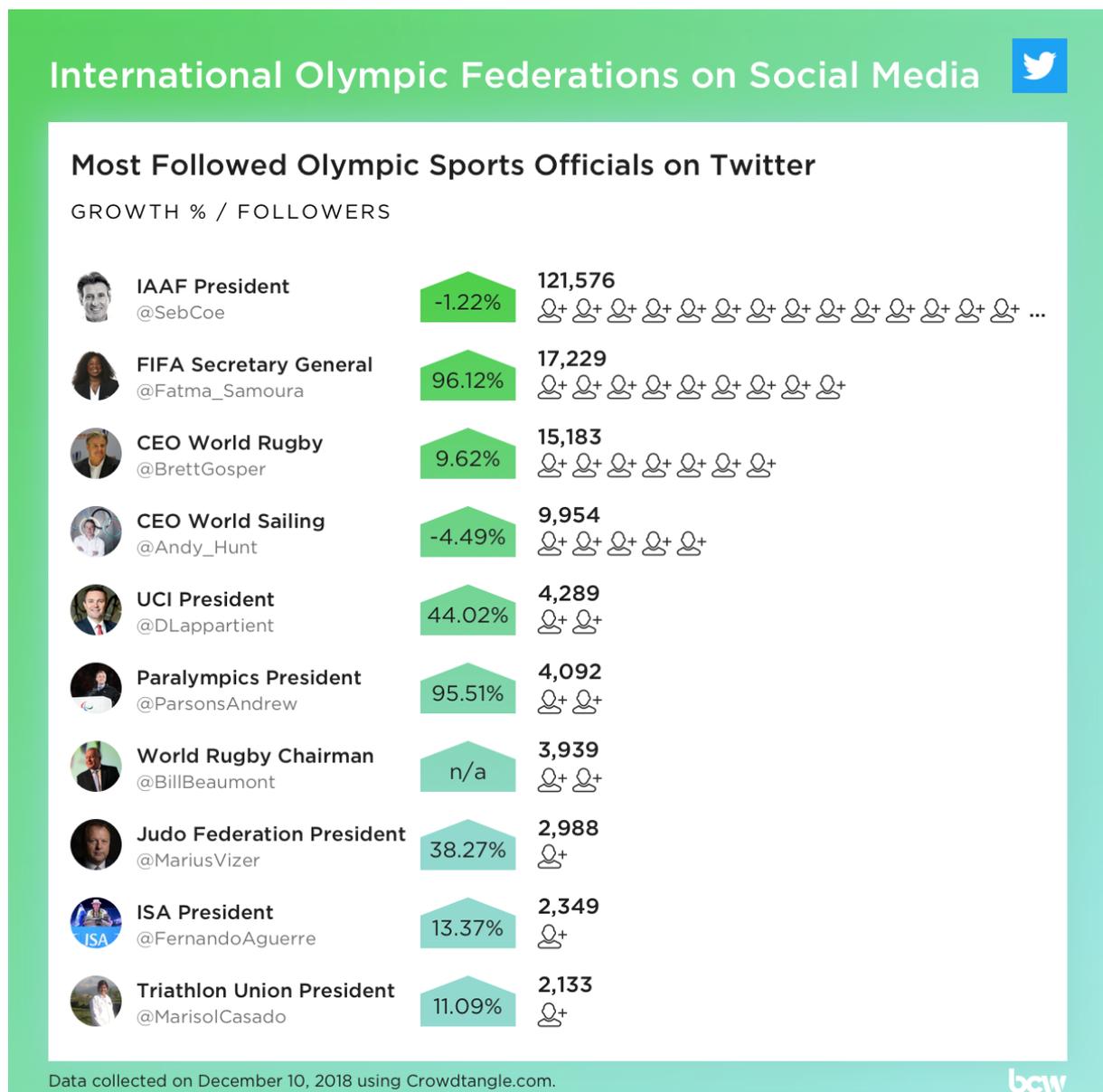


Outside of the IOC accounts, it is the international Hockey Federation (@FIH_Hockey) which is the best-connected Olympic sports federation, mutually following 20 other federations. The International Equestrian Federation (@FEI_Global), the International Shooting Federation (@ISSF_Shooting) and World Archery (@WorldArchery) are mutually following 17 other federations.

Most Followed Olympic Officials on Twitter

The presidents and executives of 32 of the 42 international sports federations have personal Twitter profiles – and only 18 of these are active. Sebastian Coe (@SebCoe), the President of the International Athletics Federation (IAAF), is by far the most followed organisation leader with 121,576 followers. The Olympic gold medallist Coe joined Twitter in 2009 as President of the London 2012 Organising Committee, which he used to build his international profile.

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura has climbed into second position, doubling her number of followers year-on-year to 17,229 ahead of Brett Gosper (@BrettGosper), the CEO of World Rugby with 15,183 followers. Andy Hunt (@Andy_Hunt), the CEO of World Sailing and UCI President David Lappartient who complete the Top 5 list.



These sports leaders are all dwarfed, however, by Joseph Blatter (@SeppBlatter), the former head of FIFA, who has more than 2.4 million followers on his Twitter account. Gianni Infantino, his successor at FIFA, 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. 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 50 and 45 international sports federation accounts, respectively. The NBC Olympics Twitter feed is in third position followed by 38 international sports federation accounts.



The Twitter channel for the IOC's Young Reporters (@IOCReporters) is the most followed by sports federations, ahead of BBC's sports reporters Ollie Williams and Nick Hope.

International Olympic Federations on Social Media



Journalists Most Followed by Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

FOLLOWED BY OLYMPIC SPORTS FEDERATIONS

	IOC Young Reporters @IOCReporters	19	
	Ollie Williams @OllieW	16	
	Nick Hope @NickHopeTV	15	
	Ed Hula @EHula_ATR	13	
	Karolos Grohmann @KarolosGrohmann	13	
	Nick Butler @NickJMButler	13	
	Nick Zaccardi @NZaccardi	12	
	Alan Abrahamson @AlanAbrahamson	11	
	Alain Lunzenfichter @ALunzenfichter	11	
	Brian Pinelli @Brian_Pinelli	11	

Data collected on December 10, 2018 using proprietary BCW Tools.

Olympic Athletes, Teams and Events on Twitter

The most popular Olympic athletes followed by the International Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter are sprinter Usain Bolt, tennis star Novak Djokovic, footballer Neymar and French slalom canoeist and head of the organizing committee for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, Tony Estanguet.

International Olympic Federations on Social Media

Athletes Most Followed by Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

FOLLOWED BY OLYMPIC SPORTS FEDERATIONS

	Usain St. Leo Bolt @UsainBolt	22	
	Novak Djokovic @DjokerNole	20	
	Neymar Jr @NeymarJr	19	
	Tony Estanguet @TonyEstanguet	19	
	Cristiano Ronaldo @Cristiano	18	
	Michael Phelps @MichaelPhelps	18	
	Sergey Bubka @Sergey_Bubka	18	
	Claudia Bokel @ClaudiaBokel	17	
	Rafa Nadal @RafaelNadal	17	
	Roger Federer @RogerFederer	17	

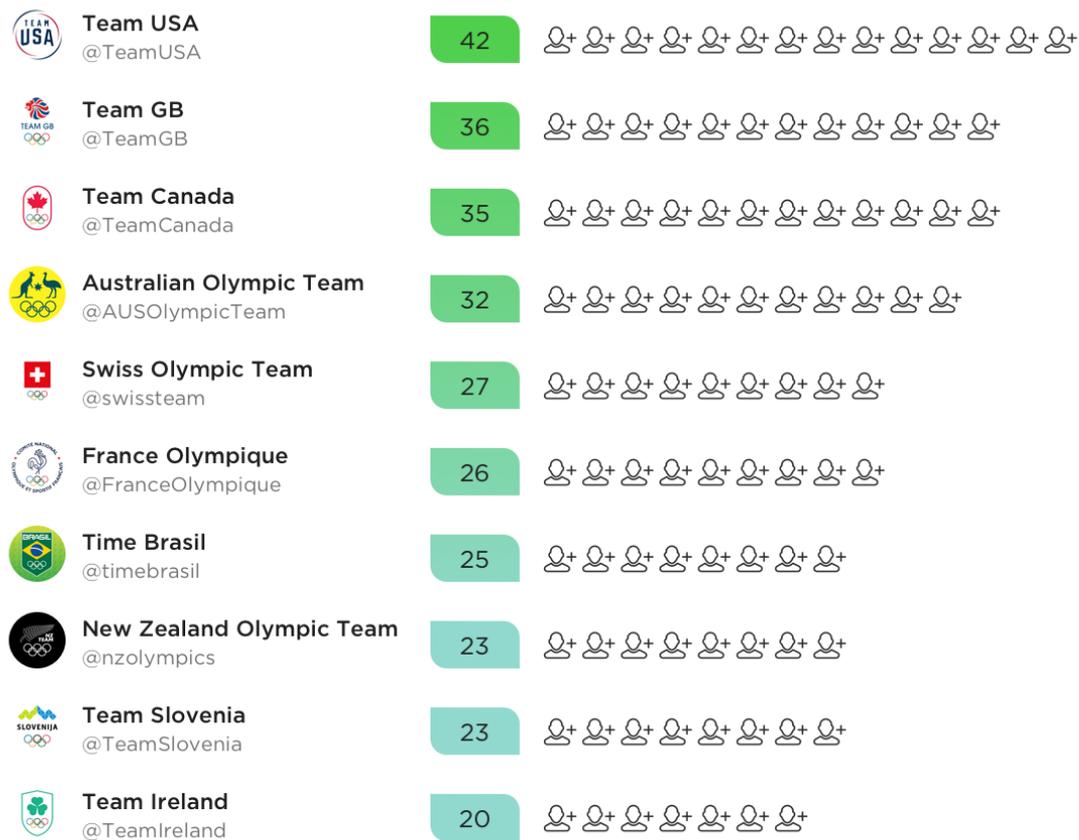
Data collected on December 10, 2018 using proprietary BCW Tools.

Many of the national teams have their own social media accounts and Team USA is the most followed by other Olympic Federations ahead of Team GB and Team Canada. The Australian and the Swiss Olympic Teams complete the Top 5 list. Interestingly, the Refugee Olympic Team @RefugeesOlympic is followed by 17 Olympic Federations.

International Olympic Federations on Social Media

Teams Most Followed by Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

FOLLOWED BY OLYMPIC SPORTS FEDERATIONS



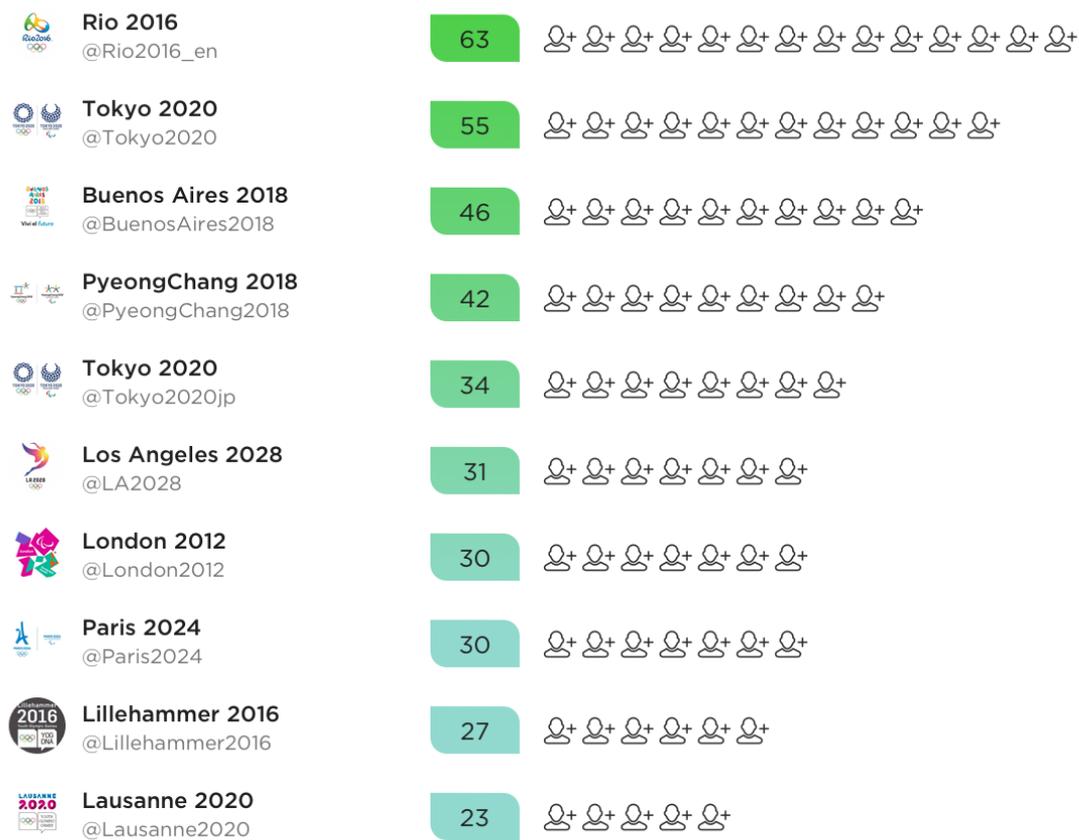
Data collected on December 10, 2018 using proprietary BCW Tools.

Many World Cup events and each of the Olympic Games have their own social media presence in English and in the local language. The most popular Olympic Games on Twitter followed by the international Olympic Sports Federations are the Rio 2016 Olympics ahead of Tokyo 2020 and the Youth Olympics 2018 in Buenos Aires. The PyeongChang Olympics and the Japanese account of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics complete the Top 5 list.

International Olympic Federations on Social Media

Most Followed Olympic Events by Olympic Sports Federations on Twitter

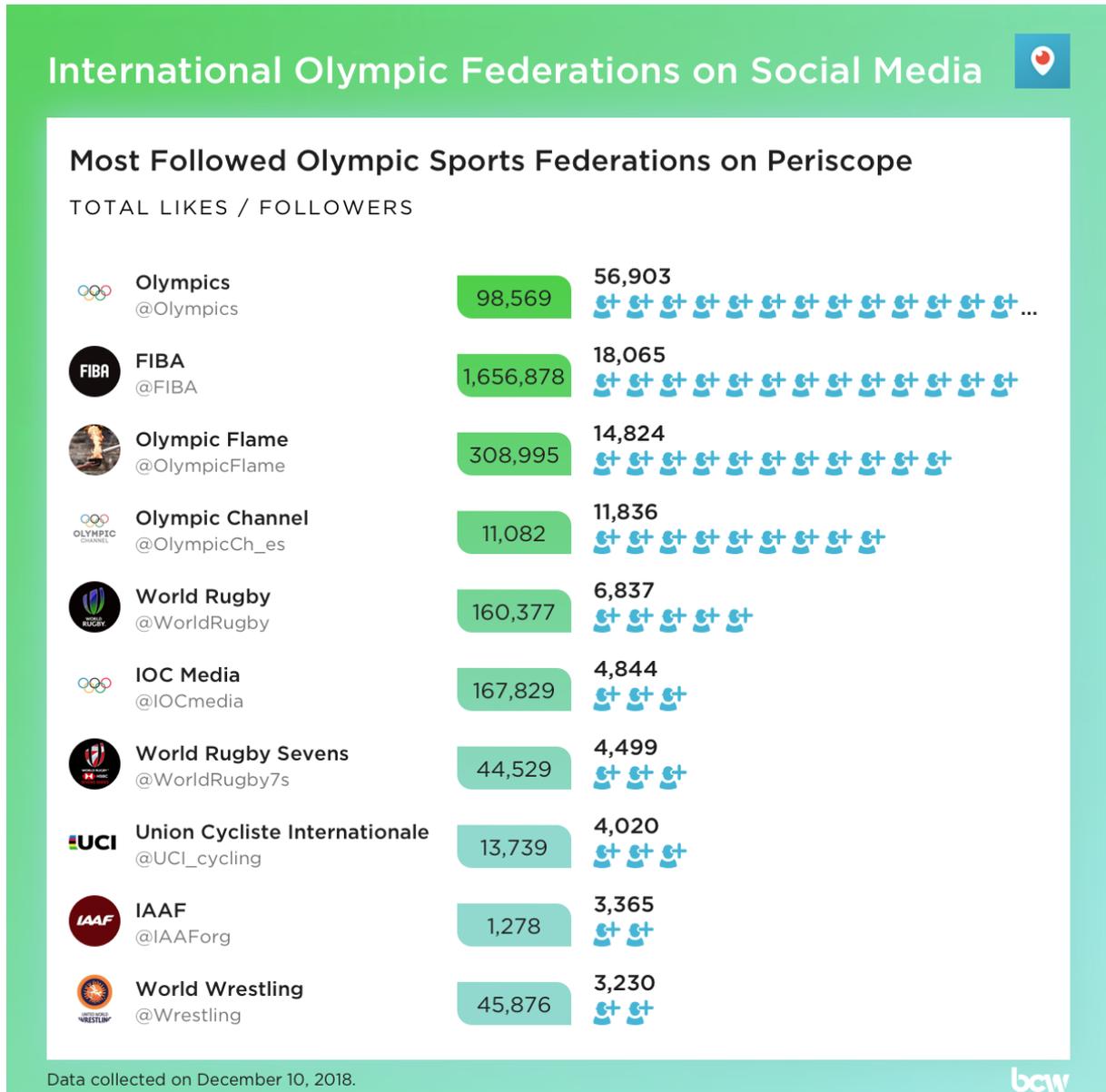
FOLLOWED BY OLYMPIC SPORTS FEDERATIONS



Data collected on December 10, 2018 using proprietary BCW Tools.

International Olympic Sports Federations on Periscope

Twenty-two Olympic sports federations have set up a total of 47 Periscope channels, Twitter’s live broadcasting tool. However, only 35 of these channels are active.



The International Olympic Committee (IOC) garnered 56,903 followers and 98,569 likes with 11 live broadcasts, including the opening ceremony of the Buenos Aires 2018 Youth Olympic Games. The Periscope channel of the Olympic flame is the third most followed channel on the platform with 14,524 followers since broadcasting the torch relay ahead of the Rio Olympics two years ago.

The IOC’s Spanish Olympic Channel made a splash with four live broadcasts of basketball 3*3 matches live from the Youth Olympics in Argentina and the IOC’s Korean language Periscope channel @Olympiko garnered 890,367 likes with the single live stream of the press conference of EXO, the South Korean boy band and protagonists of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics Closing Ceremony.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) is the most successful International Sports Federation on Periscope garnering 1,656,878 likes and 18,065 followers by live-streaming entire games of the



under 18 basketball competitions. The World Rugby Federation has also shared entire games of its under 20 competitions and accrued 6,837 followers.

International Olympic Sports Federations on YouTube

Thanks to the FIFA World Cup 2018 the FIFA TV YouTube channel has become by far the most popular YouTube channel of the 42 Olympic sports federations on the platform.

In 2018 FIFA TV has become the most followed YouTube channel with 7.4 million subscribers, more than twice as many as the Olympic YouTube channel with slightly more than 3 million subscribers. Interestingly the Badminton World TV channel is in third place ahead of the basketball and rugby federations which complete the top five list with more than 400,000 subscribers each.



FIFA TV is also the most effective YouTube channel with a total of 1.9 billion video views and an average of 263,898 views per video. FIFA's audience on YouTube grew significantly in 2018 thanks to the two-minute highlight videos from each World Cup match. The game highlights between Portugal against Spain clocked up more than 67 million views alone.

The videos of the Olympic YouTube channel have been watched a total of 1.5 billion times and on average of 204,030 views per video, placing the channel in second position of the most effective

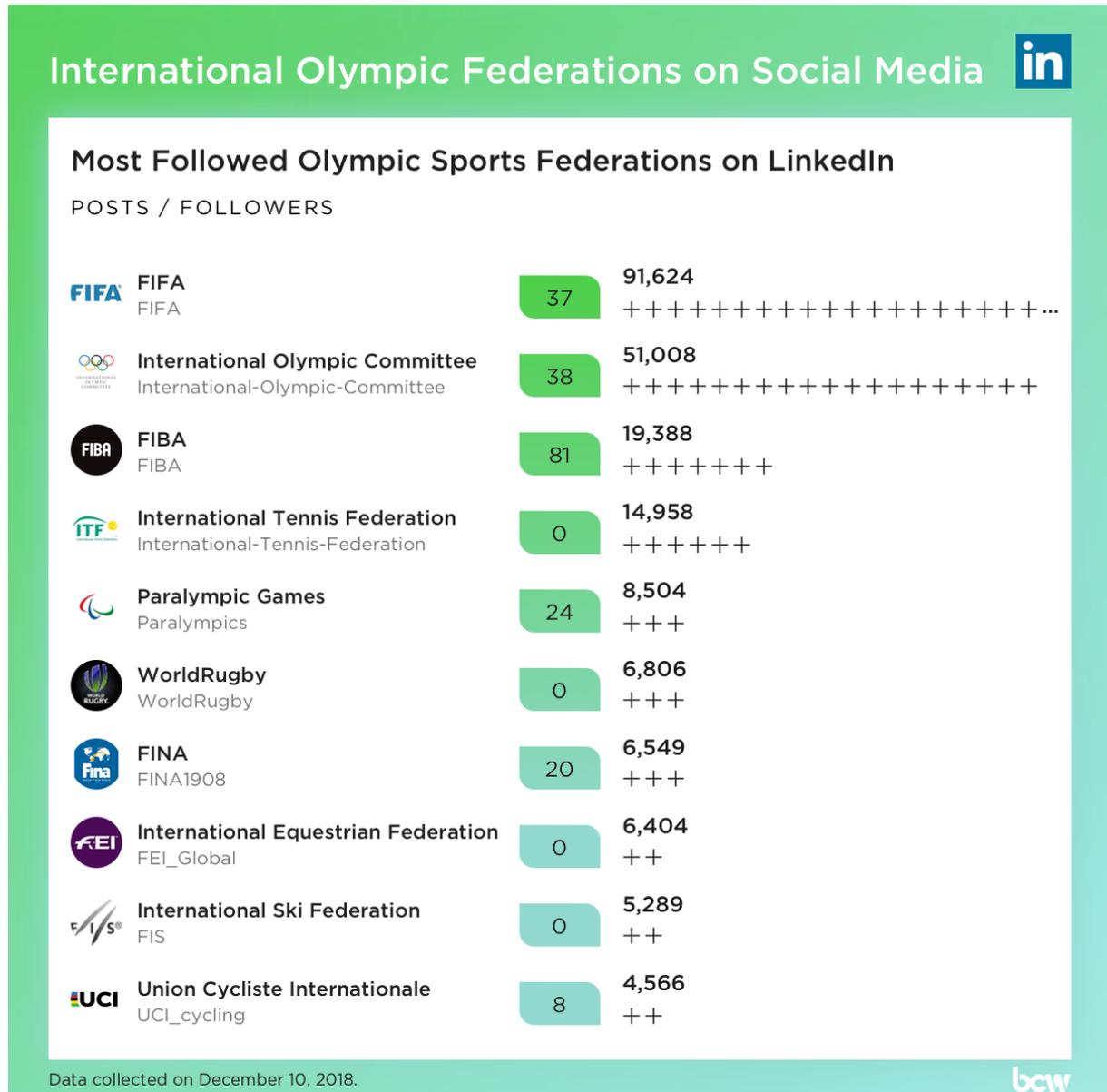
sports federations on YouTube. Most of the videos from the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang are still unlisted and its most popular videos are from the London 2012 Olympic Games. The performance of Rowan Atkinson, aka Mr. Bean, at the London 2012 opening ceremony has become its most watched video with 29 million views ahead of Usain Bolt's 2012 Olympic gold medal 100m run watched 26 million times.

Interestingly the videos of the World Karate Federation average 57,595 views putting the federation in third position ahead of the Badminton World TV and the World Rugby channels which both average more than 32,000 views per video. Especially lesser known sports federations such as the sport climbing and table tennis federations have been able to make an impact on YouTube.



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 recently introduced native video.



Thirty-seven international Olympic sports federations have a presence on the platform, with a total of 249,860 followers and a median average of 1,608 per page. FIFA has more than 91,000 followers on its LinkedIn page having posted 37 updates. The IOC has more than 51,000 followers, more than twice as many as the International Basketball Federation with 19,000 followers.

For More Information

If you want to know more about the 2018 Olympic Sports Social Media Ranking or about how the BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe) sports practice can assist your organisation in improving your social media presence with effective strategy and communications, please contact us.

Matthias Lüfkens

Burson Cohn & Wolfe: Matthias.Luefkens@bcw-global.com

Tanya Heimlich-Ng Yuen

Burson Cohn & Wolfe sports practice: Tanya.Heimlich@bcw-sport.com

Lausanne, January 28, 2019