

Part 1



**trends across
the planet**

sports culture



Welcome to Momentum's Trends Across The Planet (TAP): Sports Culture Edition – Part 1

Sports culture revolves around the shared interest of a favorite team, sport or athlete. In the digital age, shared interest connects generations and cultures and lives where they can watch, like and comment together. The fandom experience is evolving, and the connection and pride only get stronger with the tools and spaces available.

In this Sport Culture TAP edition, we'll show you how sports fans across generations are connecting with each other and their favorite sports personalities, from Gen Alpha's consumption of live streaming to Gen Zers' and Millennials' desire to spend more time outdoors, the common thread is an effort to connect.

Whether through screens or at run club, people are connecting through physical activity, watching through the eyes of online personalities and tuning in to emerging leagues.

Let's not forget about sports personas—they're still just as important, catching the eyes of new audiences through various channels and forums. Popular discourse is grounded in connection, but with a window to a new interest.

You'll learn more about these three macro trends in "The Evolving Fandom Connection," Part One in our two-part Sports Culture Trends Across The Planet series.

Emerging Trends in Sports Culture: The Evolving Fandom Connection

1. New Gen Attention
2. Stories First, Sports Second
3. Connections on the Court (and Off)



01

New Gen Attention

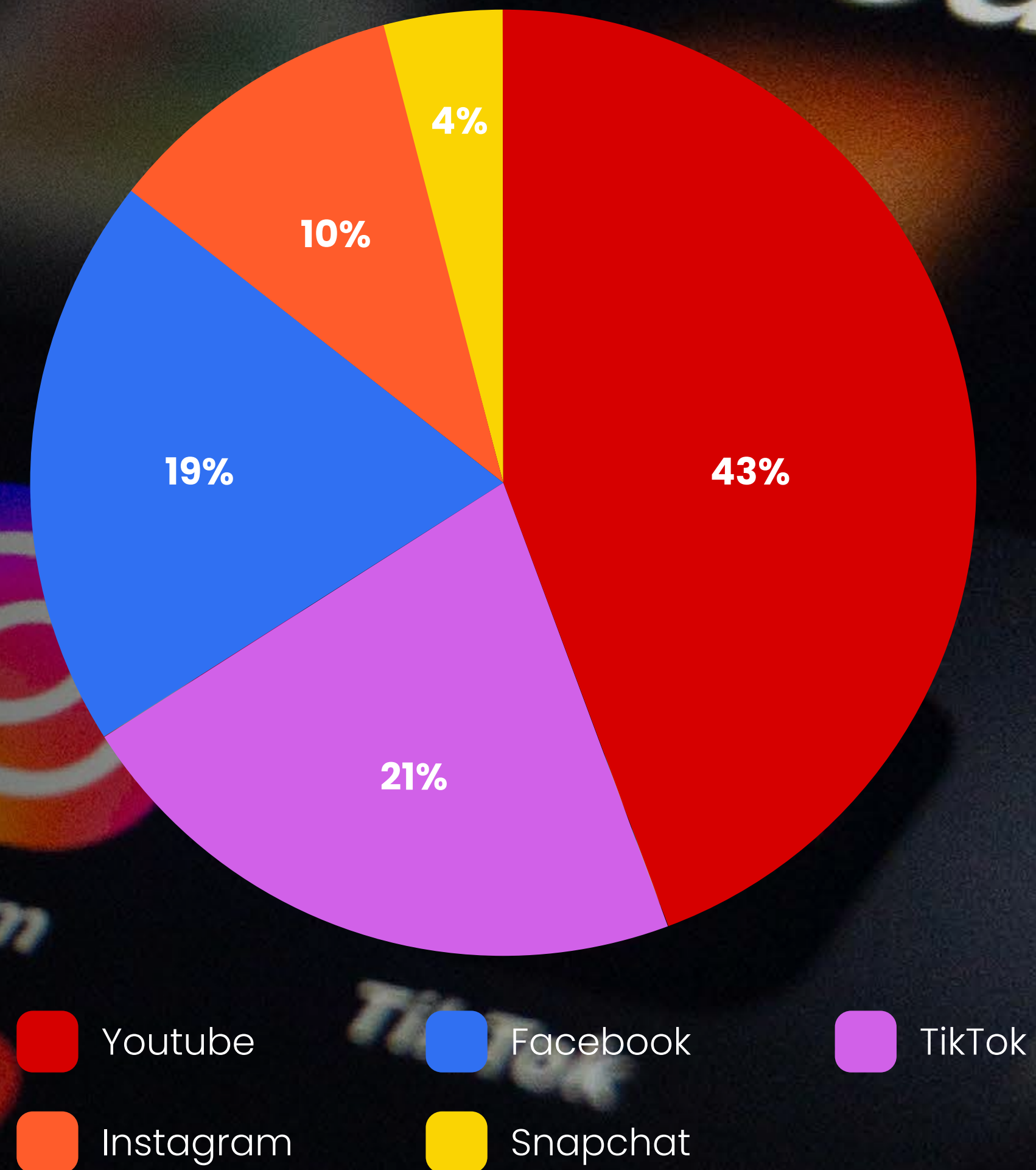


**Gen Alpha interacts
with sports through
live streaming and
social media content.**

Users aged 8–12 mostly favor YouTube over other social platforms

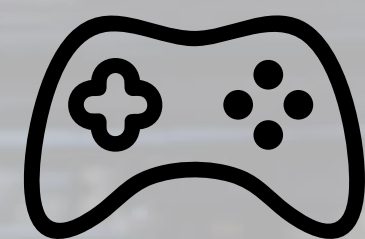
Besides the evident long-form content consumed, **more than 30% of users aged 8–12 watch YouTube Shorts for more than 2 hours per day.** The relationship between YouTube and Gen Alpha connects to their personal interests. YouTube reigns for its various content types—there's something for everyone.

U.S Kids' Favorite Social Media Platform or App



**26%**

Of Gen Alpha's main reason for using social media is to watch/follow sports

**42%**

Of Gen Alpha parents say their child is interested in watching professional sports

**40%**

Of teens follow live streams, gaming or celebrity content

Content

IShowSpeed's IRL Streams

With over 60 million YouTube subscribers, IShowSpeed has become a platform for both emerging sports leagues and massive international sports tournaments.

His uncensored, unedited commentary during his watch-along live streams garnered over 100 million views during the FIFA World Cup 2026™—all while never showing the actual action of the game.

Speed also had a hand in platforming Baller League, a 6v6 30-minute soccer league with teams managed by iconic athletes, social media stars and entertainment figures. The league appeals to the growing appreciation for short-form content enjoyed most by younger audiences.



GAME TIME 🌐 MANAGER SPEED 🌐 SPEED UNITED VS SUPER NIÑOS 🌐 BALLER LEAGUE WEEK 4 🌐



irl Flag Football Game ft. Tom Brady, Joe Burrow and more 🌐

Partnership

Bundesliga on YouTube

German soccer league Bundesliga partnered with established sports content creators and commentators Mark Goldbridge of That's Football and Gary Neville of The Overlap to reach younger audiences that weren't tuning into live matches.

Viewers could watch a live broadcast of the matches from the creators' channels—with the commentary and reactions their viewers enjoyed, of course. The league's CEO framed the strategy as a cultural bridge to introduce new fans to the league with hopes to convert general interest into lasting fandom.

By the tenth matchday, **57% of viewers on the YouTube channels were aged 13-34**, significantly younger than the average UK soccer fan, who is averaged at 40.2 years old.

THE OVERLAP

**BUNDESLIGA**

Partnership

Kai Cenat x Nike

Kai Cenat quickly rose to becoming the most followed streamer on Twitch. His comedic commentary while playing role playing games and NBA 2K has made a large impact on Gen Alpha slang and culture.

His high-energy, celebrity connections and influence have catapulted him into the digital zeitgeist. So much so, that Nike partnered with the star streamer to connect with Cenat's young audience.

The first-of-its-kind collaboration featured a pre-order shoe release of the Air Max 1 "Low Poly." The shoe was announced through Cenat's Twitch live stream. Nike acknowledges the power of a comedic voice that has risen due to his personality.



02

Stories First, Sports Second

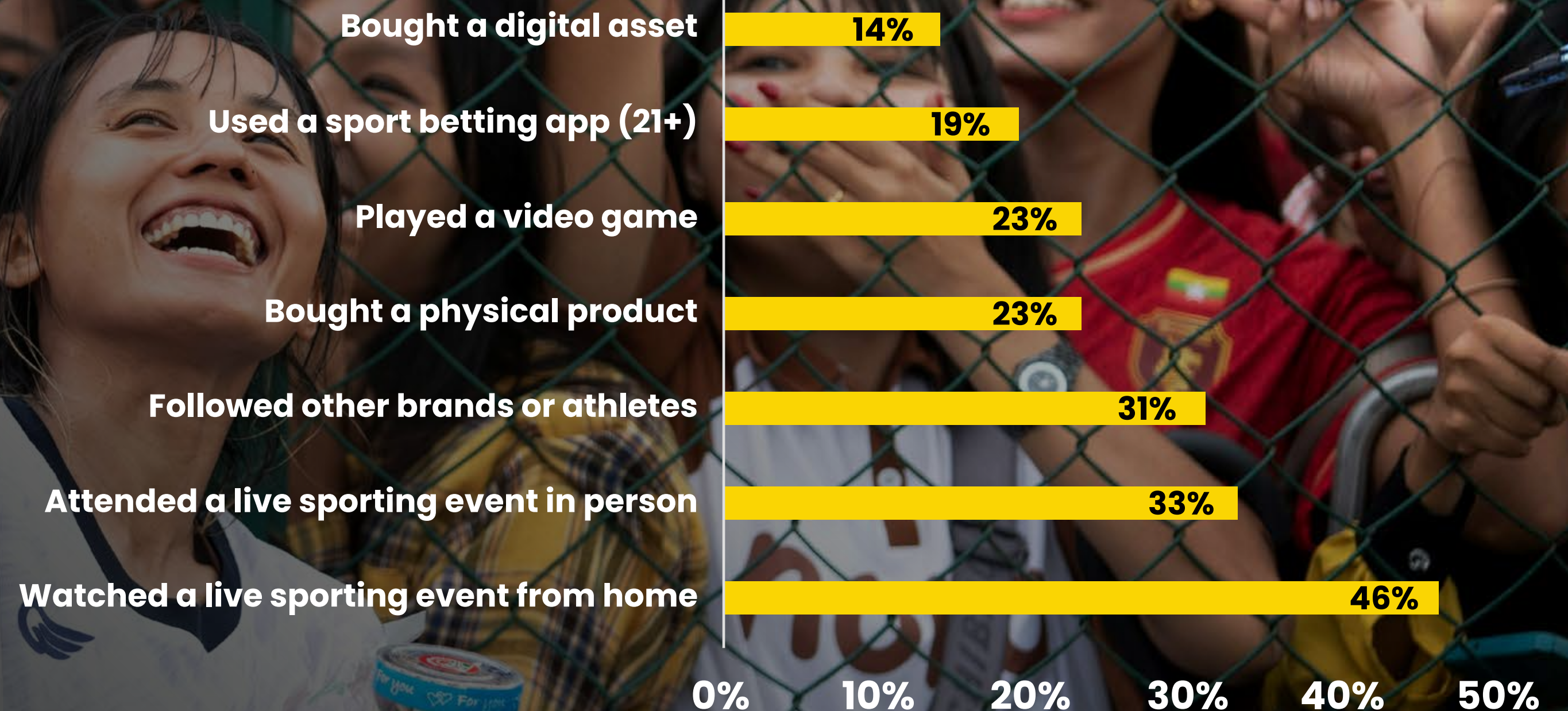


Content showcasing athlete personalities and team dynamics engages new audiences.

Following athletes on social media influences Gen Z sports fans to evolve their place in fandom

Young sports fans invest in the emotional storytelling to then make purchases and watch live, connecting with the **72% of people who say they trust individuals more than institutions.**

Gen Z Sports Fans' Actions After Following a Professional Athlete on Social Media



**62%**

Of Gen Z sports fans continue to follow their favorite athletes even when they are traded

**68%**

Of survey respondents say it's important to access exclusive content/behind-the-scenes information

**70%**

Of survey respondents say it's important to learn more about their favorite athlete off the playing field/court

Content

Erling Haaland

The Norwegian star player capitalizes on his personality to create shareable moments. His content varies from soccer DIMLs to vlogs, reaction videos and gaming content.

Since joining YouTube in 2025, **Haaland has amassed over 4 million subscribers, doubling since the conclusion of the FIFA World Cup 2026™**. His content is not exclusive to his athletic skills. Haaland’s content strategy aims to reach non-sports fans who are interested in comedic lifestyle entertainment.

Cases like this show that audiences are drawn to genuine personalities, and are seeking authentic content. Whether they relate or are seeking escapism, pro athletes differentiate themselves as players who bring various audiences to match days.

Source: YouTube





Erling Haaland ✓

@erling • 2.45M subscribers • 60 videos

The official YouTube Channel for Erling Haaland ...more

[Instagram](#) and 4 more links

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VideosShortsPlaylists

LatestPopularOldest



Norway's Texas Takeover! | Erling Haaland World Cup Vlog

4.6M views • 4 days ago



Norway Invades America! | Erling Haaland World Cup Vlog

3.8M views • 13 days ago



Erling Haaland in a Kiwi jersey



Erling Haaland running on a field



Erling Haaland in a Kiwi jersey



Erling Haaland in a Kiwi jersey



Erling Haaland in a Kiwi jersey



Erling Haaland in a Kiwi jersey

Partnership

Road Trippin' Show

Founded in 2017 by NBA champs Richard Jefferson and Channing Frye, and sports journalist Allie Clifton, and joined later by Kendrick Perkins, they talk all things basketball on their podcast.

What started as an independently owned podcast is now produced under the iHeart network. Its sponsorship with Fanatics Sportsbook has served them well. The nine-year-old show has seen **nearly 300% audience growth over the last 10 months**, expanding its digital footprint.

Since the partnership, the show now integrates the hosts' own betting picks where picks are exclusively wagered within the Fanatics Sportsbook app.

Source: Forbes | Podcast News Daily





Squad Target: 90+ Total Points

PERK'S PICK  Jalen Duren	RJ'S PICK  Shai Gilgeous-Alexander
ALLIE'S PICK  Desmond Bane	CHANNING'S PICK  Paolo Banchero

-105

Odds and lines subject to change



Partnership

Overtime x ATP

Overtime builds disruptive new sports leagues and IP aimed globally at the next generation of sports fans and athletes, including high school students. Their success has surpassed ESPN, Barstool Sports and Bleacher.

To bring in the next generation of tennis fans, the collaboration aims to build on player-led, behind-the-scenes, short-form content. The Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Overtime have renewed their content partnership for 2026, expanding on a first year that **drew over 80 million views and helped grow the ATP's social following by more than a million.**

It will provide fans with a year-round look at life on the Tour and player personalities, as well as new formats to preview and recap tournaments.



03

Connections on the Court (and Off)

**Athletic spaces have
become a place to form
social ties and community.**

An improved mood and social connections drive sports fans to their favorite sports

Not only does it lift their mood, but they get to relate to other fans. When asked to define their reasoning for their favorite sport, fans cited that it's a means to **connect with people they know or an invite to connect with new people.**

Reasons Sports Fans Like their Favorite Sports

I get to be with people just like me

21%

It's a way for me to connect with my family and friends

26%

I can connect with other people

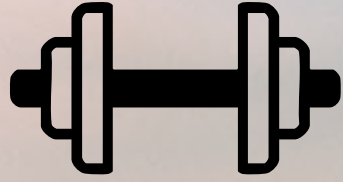
29%

It lifts my mood

42%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

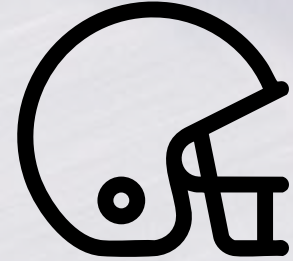


**58%**

Of survey respondents
said they made
new friends via
fitness groups

**80%**

Of Gen Zers and
Millennials report
wanting to spend
more time outdoors

**69%**

Of survey respondents
say being a part of a
fan community has
provided them with a
wider group of friends

Experience

Gatorade's Turf Finder

Gatorade revitalized its brand presence and sales in Mumbai, India, by creating accessible play spaces through its Turf Finder initiative.

Gatorade partnered with Google Maps to analyze two decades of historical urban traffic insights and location data. Initial research found that 79% of people wanted to play, but couldn't find a place to do so.

They created temporary pop-up sports turfs during these precise times, giving inner-city communities immediate access to pitch space before cleaning up to return the streets to the municipal grid.

Local communities engaged, participated and, in many cases, petitioned for the turfs to return.



Experience

Plei Pickup Soccer

The mobile app nurtures pickup soccer communities where strangers get together to connect through what they love most: playing soccer.

The mobile app serves as a marketplace connecting players to pickup games and facilities, solving the constant problem of finding players IRL.

The app-based pickup soccer company launched “2026 for \$6,” offering thousands of games across hundreds of facilities at \$6 each, half the national average for organized pickup, in a bid to convert FIFA World Cup 2026™ enthusiasm into recurring players on its platform.



Experience

On x Erewhon

The sportswear brand has partnered with LA-based cult grocer Erewhon to create a running clothes collection, juices and a wellness club.

Running serves as a major channel for social connection and lifestyle expression, extending far beyond its traditional role in fitness. In a 2025 study on outdoor recreation and leisure, **34% of respondents participate in outdoor recreation and sporting activities to socialize with other people**. Overall, athletic activities have turned into a way for people to build in-person relationships.

Nearly **1 in 5** Gen Zers went on a date with someone they met through exercise. They were **4x more likely** to want to meet people through working out than at the bar.



Thank you for reading!

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