

Beautiful Data

—

Women-focused insight from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Redtorch

www.redtorch.sport

28.11.24

Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Redtorch's Beautiful Data collection.

This first edition focuses on female athletes at Paris 2024, transforming data into captivating visual narratives that inform, inspire and spark meaningful conversations. Using our SportOnSocial tools, which turn digital signals into actionable insights, we've uncovered compelling stories behind the numbers.

Each art piece examines the shifting landscape of women's sports – how they are covered, consumed and experienced – to offer fresh perspectives on participation and engagement trends.

By showcasing these changes, we celebrate women's achievements and aim to drive progress toward greater equity in sport.

A full-page background image with a red overlay showing two baseball players in action. One player is on the left, wearing a white jersey with 'SEABER' and the number '51' on the back, in a batting stance. The other player is on the right, wearing a white jersey with 'SEABER' and the number '11' on the back, in a fielding stance. The word 'Coverage' is written in white inside a white rounded rectangle in the center-right of the image.

Coverage

Gender balance in news coverage – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of news coverage at Paris 2024 revealed significant disparities in gender representation across different sports. Using data from Google News, it was found that male events received slightly more attention overall (53% coverage) vs female events (47%). These percentages mask considerable variation between disciplines.

Female-focused coverage was notably high in some sports, e.g. football (87%), table tennis (61%) and skateboarding (67%). Conversely, male-focused articles dominated in sports like tennis (85%), handball (70%) and sport climbing (65%). Several sports achieved near parity in media attention, e.g. wrestling (50%–50%) and field hockey (51%–49%). Interestingly, male-focused articles still prevailed even in sports with strong female participation like volleyball.

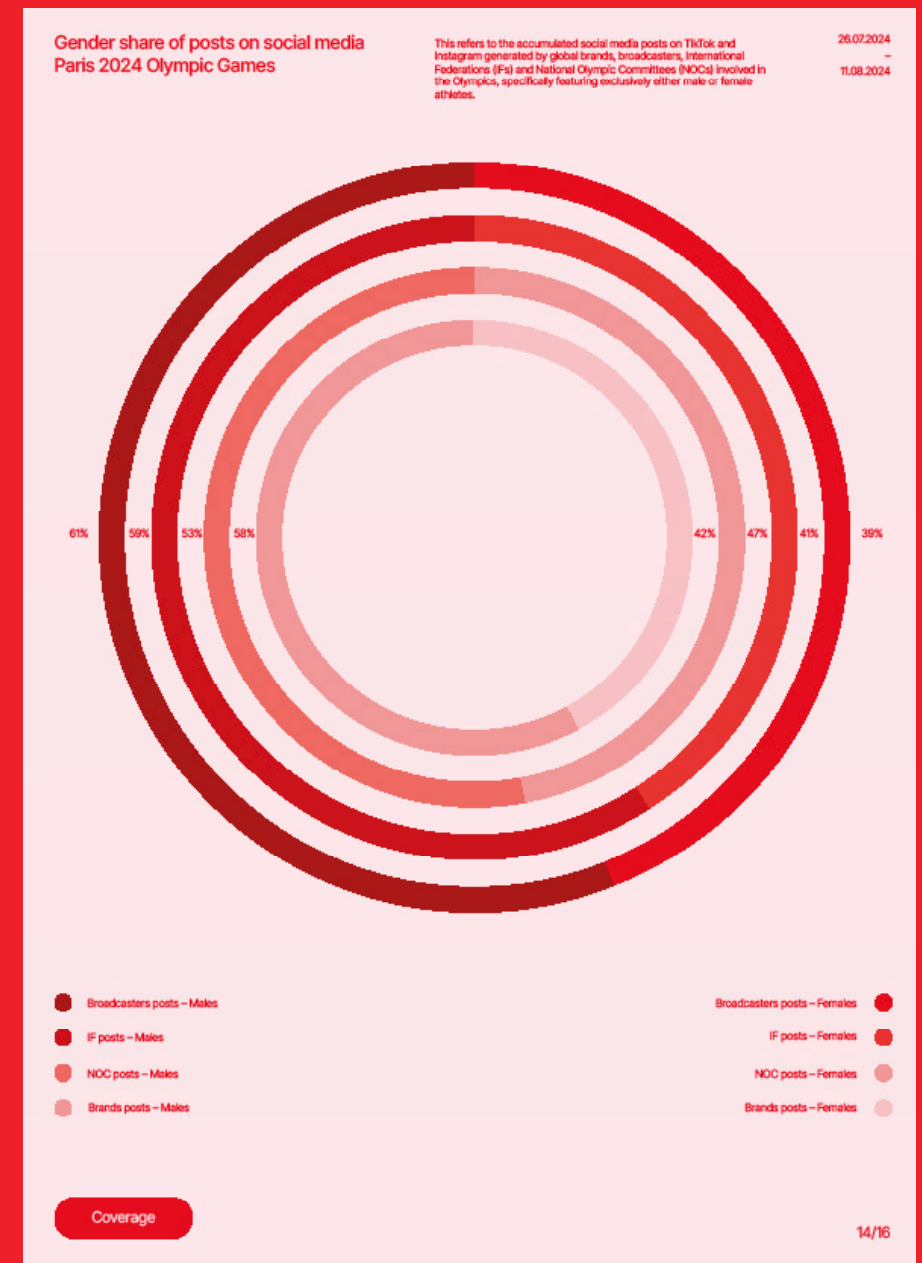


Gender share of posts on social media – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of Paris 2024 social media posts on TikTok and Instagram revealed a consistent gender disparity across various stakeholders: posts featuring female athletes (43%) vs male athletes (57%).

This imbalance was most pronounced in content by global broadcasters: posts featuring female athletes (39%) vs male athletes (61%).

International Federations (IFs) followed a similar pattern, with 41% of posts focusing on female athletes. Global brands showed slightly better representation: 42% of posts focusing female athletes. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) demonstrated the closest male/female balance, featuring women in 47% of their posts.

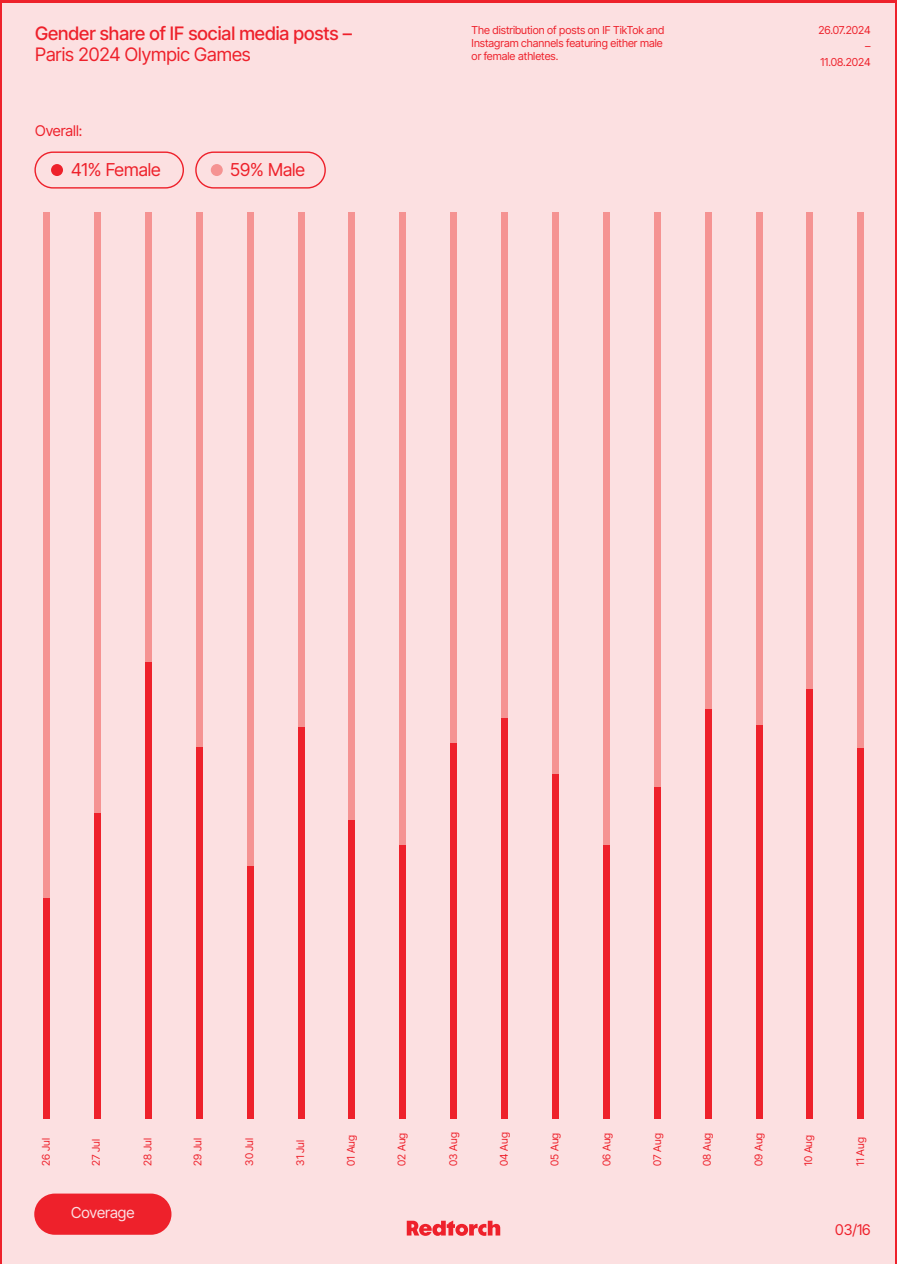


Gender share of IF social media posts – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of the social media activity of IFs at Paris 2024 highlighted a significant gender imbalance.

Male athletes featured in 59% of posts on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram (vs 41% for female athletes). Although on certain days there was a more balanced portrayal (e.g. 28 July, 10 August) the overall trend favoured male athletes. This disparity persisted despite the increasing global enthusiasm for women's sports.

IFs miss opportunities to engage wider audiences and celebrate women's achievements if they are not consistently showcasing female athletes. Social media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and promoting inclusivity.

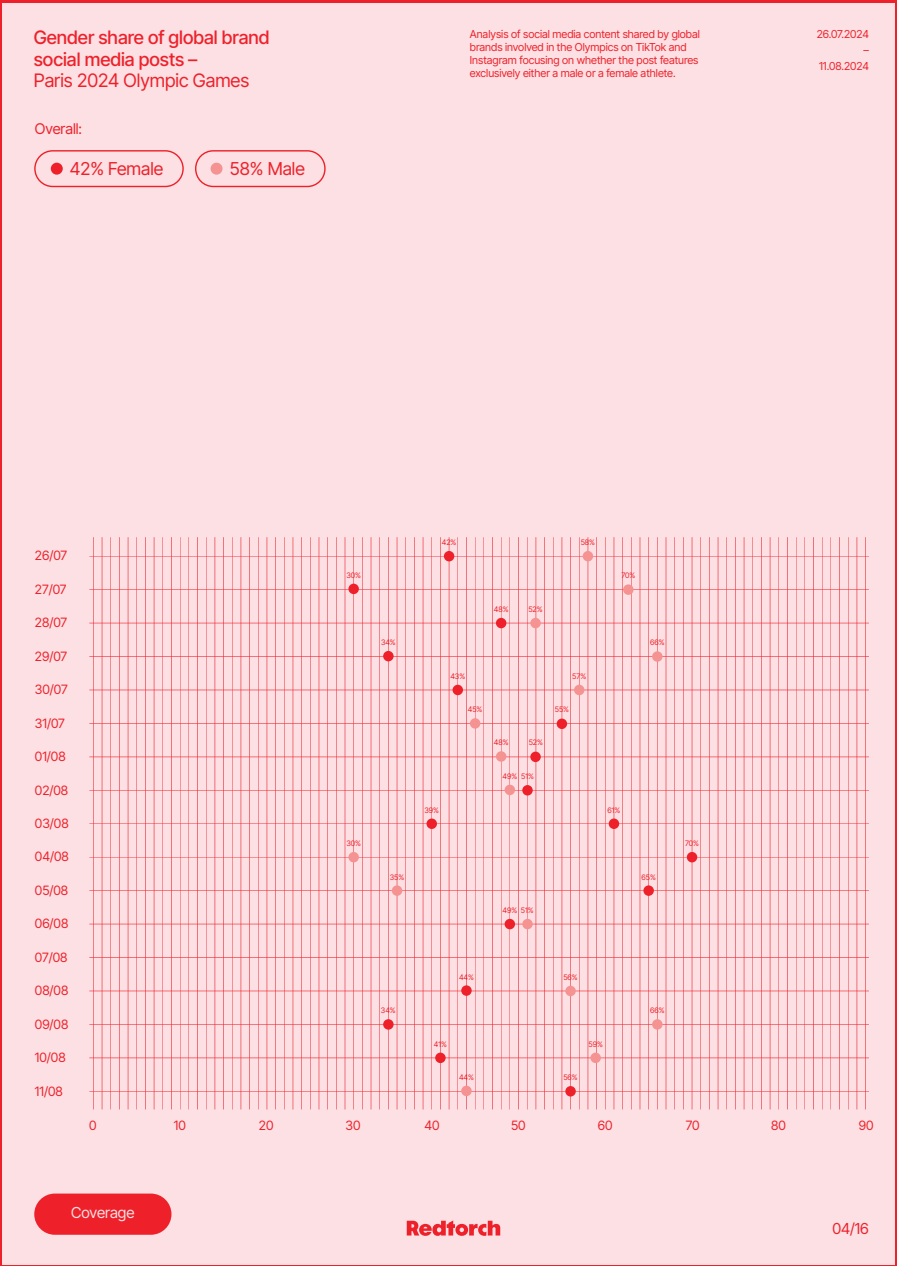


Gender share of global brand social media posts – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of social media posts by global brands at Paris 2024 showed a large gender imbalance in athlete representation.

Male athletes featured in 58% of the content on TikTok and Instagram vs 42% for female athletes. While on some days a more balanced or even a female-leading focus was exhibited, e.g. 1 August (55%) and 11 August (56%), the overarching pattern leaned towards male athletes. Most notably, male-focused posts comprised up to 70% of content on 27 July and 5 August.

This disproportion suggests that global brands may be overlooking opportunities to engage audiences interested in women’s sports.

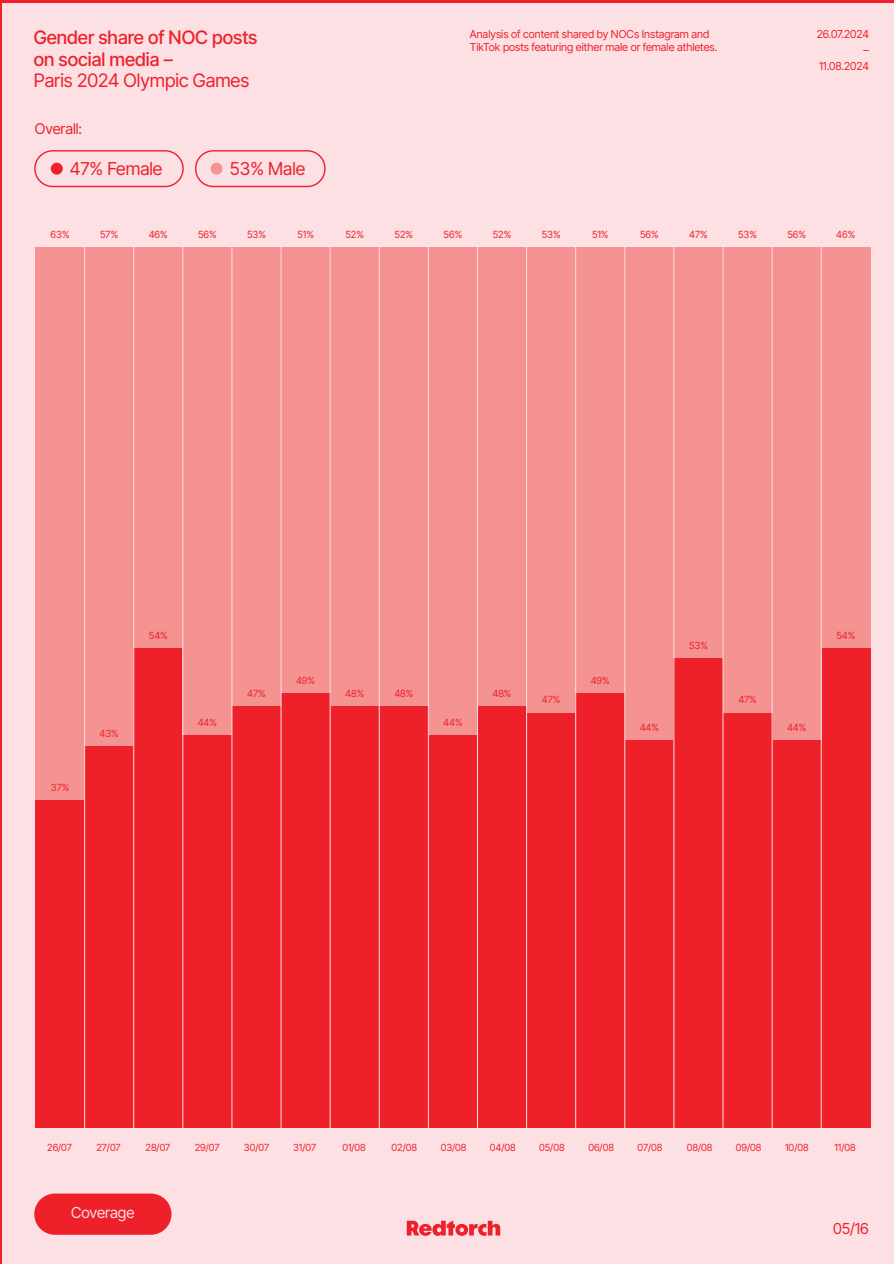


Gender share of NOC posts on social media – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

The social media activity of NOCs at Paris 2024 revealed a fairly balanced representation on Instagram and TikTok of male athletes (53%) vs female athletes (47%).

Although daily percentages fluctuated, the differences were generally minimal compared to other areas of Olympic coverage.

On 28 July and 11 August, female athletes were prominently featured (54% of posts); male athletes dominated on 26 July (63% of posts) and 10 August (56% of posts). These variations indicate that while NOCs are making strides towards gender parity, there is still room for improvement.



Gender share of global broadcaster social media posts – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

The Instagram content of global broadcasters at Paris 2024 uncovered a significant gender disparity in athlete representation.

Male athletes featured in 61% of posts, female athletes in 39%. Despite days when female athletes took centre stage, e.g. 1 August (73%) and 30 July (69%), the overall trend once again favoured male representation. On 4 August, for instance, male-focused content constituted 82% of posts.

Such inconsistencies suggest that broadcasters lacked a consistent strategy for promoting female athletes, even amidst their notable performances and increased interest in women's sports. This imbalance indicates missed opportunities to engage a broader audience and advance gender equity in sports media.



A person wearing a white helmet with 'ENZ' and a crown logo is swimming in the ocean. The image is overlaid with a teal color filter. The word 'Engagement' is written in white inside a white-outlined rounded rectangle on the right side of the image.

Engagement

Gender split of social media posts & engagement by competing athletes – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of the personal Instagram and TikTok activity of athletes competing at Paris 2024 reveals notable patterns in gender representation and audience engagement.

Female athletes were slightly more active on social media (53% of posts) vs male athletes (47%). This increased activity corresponded with higher audience interaction: female athlete posts generated 54% of total engagements vs 46% for male athletes.

These observations indicate that female athletes not only share more content but also connect more effectively with audiences, possibly reflecting the growing global enthusiasm for women's sports and the unique perspectives female athletes offer on social media platforms.



Gender share of social media engagements – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Social media engagements on TikTok and Instagram at Paris 2024 revealed an encouraging trend towards stronger audience engagement with female athlete content. Overall, 53% of engagements were on posts featuring female athletes vs 47% for male athletes.

This trend is evident across multiple stakeholders, particularly NOCs where 65% of engagements focused on female athletes. Global broadcasters also saw higher engagement with female-focused content (54% female vs 46% male). However, IFs presented a contrasting picture, with 60% of engagements from male athlete posts, aligning with the higher share of IF male-focused content.

The disparity between engagement levels and post distribution (where male athletes dominated with 57% of posts) suggests untapped potential for leveraging content about female athletes. Stakeholders, e.g. brands, broadcasters, and IFs, could benefit from rebalancing their content strategies to reflect audience interest and drive further engagement.

Gender share of social media engagements
Paris 2024 Olympic Games

This refers to social media engagements on TikTok and Instagram posts by global brands, broadcasters, International Federations (IFs) and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) involved in the Olympics, specifically on posts featuring exclusively only male or female athletes.

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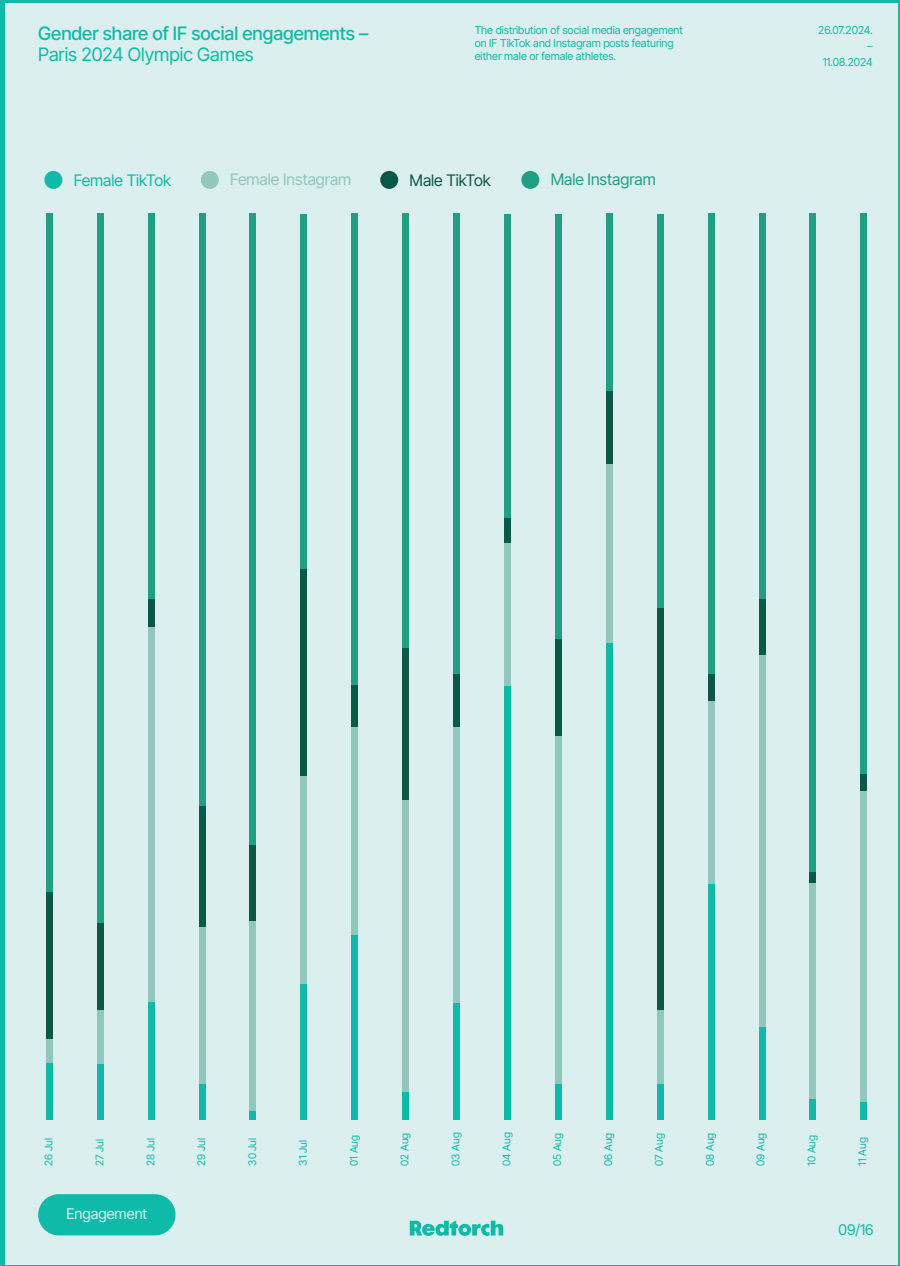


Gender share of IF social engagements – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of social media engagement with IF TikTok and Instagram posts at Paris 2024 revealed interesting patterns in gender representation.

Posts featuring female athletes accounted for approximately 51% of total engagement, slightly surpassing those featuring male athletes (49%).

Engagement levels varied significantly across different days. On some occasions, female-focused posts received exceptionally high interaction (up to 94% of engagements). Conversely, there were days when male-focused content dominated e.g. indicating fluctuating audience interests. Nonetheless, the overall trend highlights the potential of featuring female athletes more prominently.



Gender share of global brand posts social media engagements – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of social media engagements with content shared by global brands connected to Paris 2024 provided insightful findings.

Although male athletes received a slightly higher overall engagement (53% male vs 47% female), brands posted less frequently about female athletes. Interestingly, when female athletes were featured, their posts often garnered significant engagement, sometimes surpassing those featuring male athletes.

Gender share of global brand posts social media engagements – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

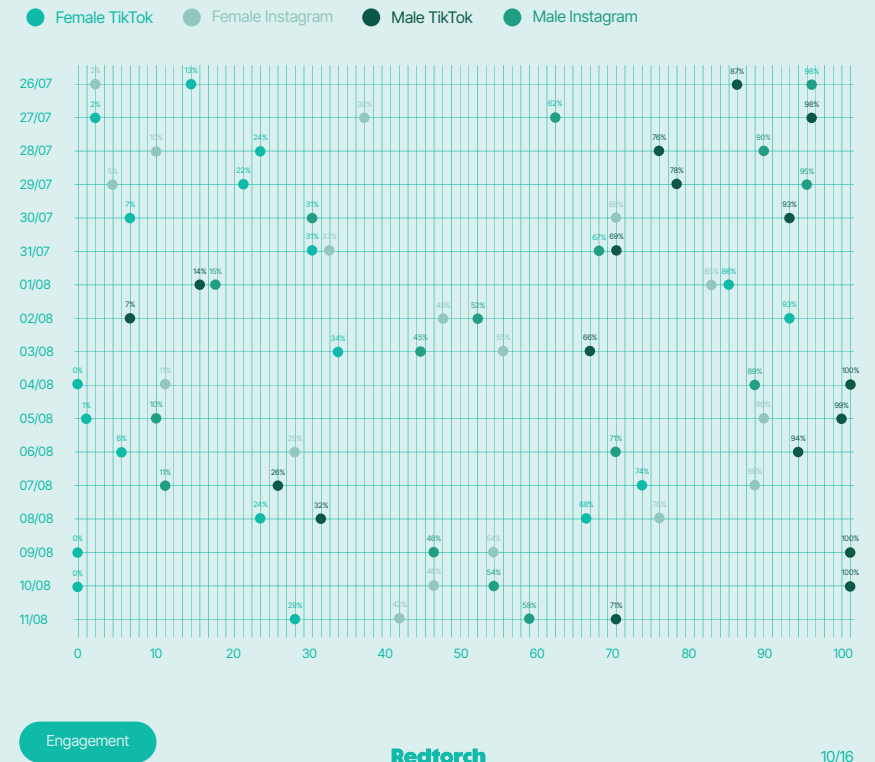
Analysis of social media engagements generated by global brands involved in the Olympics on TikTok and Instagram, focusing on whether the posts feature exclusively either male or female athletes.

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Overall:

47% Female

53% Male

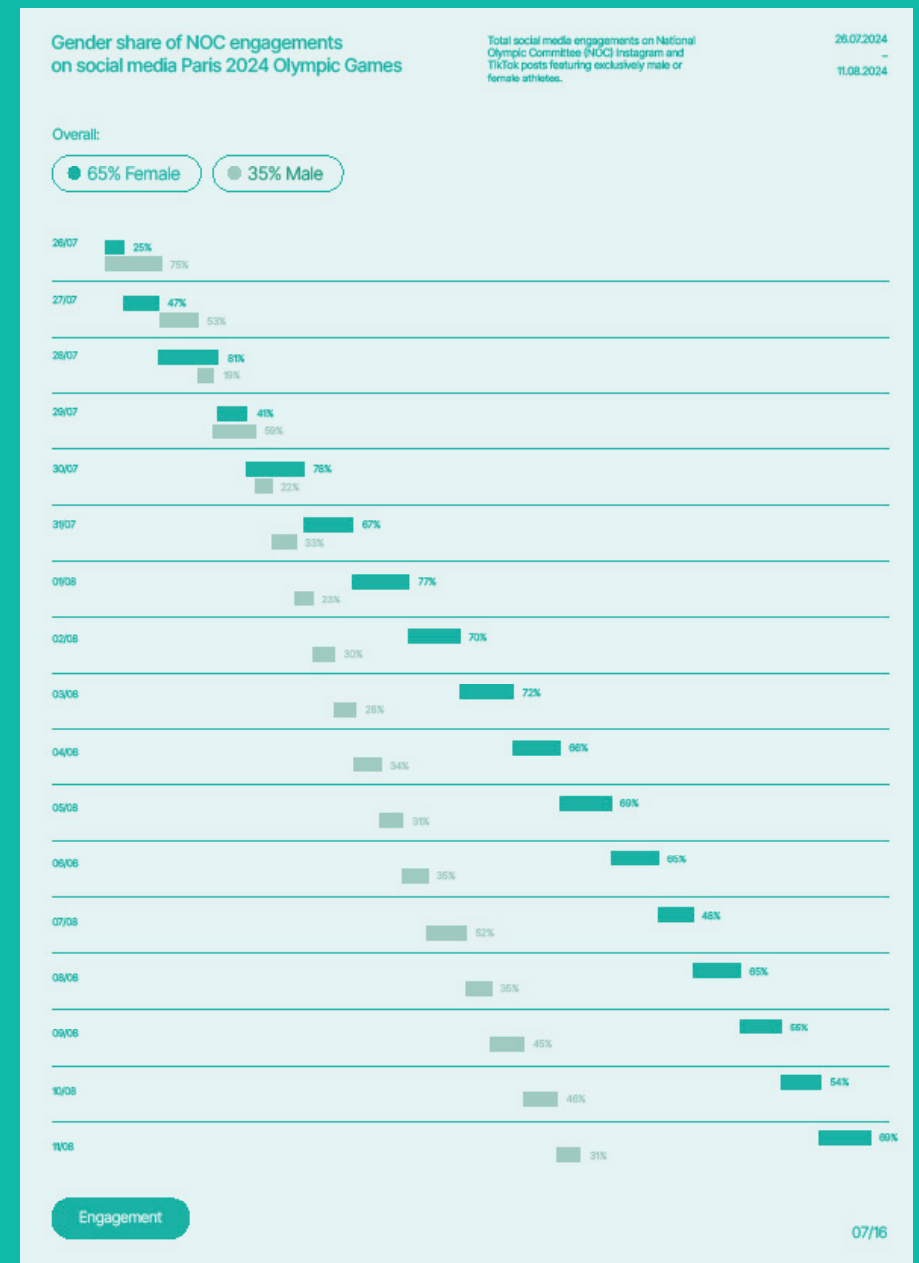


Gender share of NOC engagements on social media – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of how audiences interacted with NOC social media posts at Paris 2024 revealed a compelling trend.

Although posts featuring male and female athletes were nearly equal in number, those showcasing female athletes received a significantly larger share of engagements (65% vs 35% for male athletes).

Throughout the Games, female-focused posts consistently outperformed male-focused ones in terms of engagement. On 28 and 30 July, for example, engagements on posts featuring female athletes soared to over 78%. This demonstrates a strong audience interest in content about female athletes.



Gender share of global broadcaster social media engagements – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of Instagram engagements with content from global broadcasters at Paris 2024 uncovered an intriguing pattern.

Despite female athletes being featured less often, posts about them gained higher overall engagement (54%) vs 46% for male athletes.

On specific days, such as 1 August, engagements on posts about female athletes soared to 93%. At other times male athlete content had higher engagement.



Consumption by age & gender – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Paris 2024 content consumption highlighted a near-balanced gender split, with males comprising 51% of viewers and females 49%. Nevertheless, the overall balance masks notable fluctuations across specific age groups. Younger audiences show a male skew, particularly at age 18 (60%). This trend continues into midlife, with male athletes maintaining a slight majority in most age brackets between 20 and 45. Conversely, female viewership gains prominence in later years, peaking at age 65 where women account for 68% of consumers.

Such a gender variation reflects shifting interests across different life stages. While males dominate younger and middle-aged demographics, female engagement surpasses males in older age groups, particularly from ages 64–74. These trends suggest that content strategies should be tailored to appeal to the stronger male viewership in younger age brackets and leverage the significant interest among older female audiences.

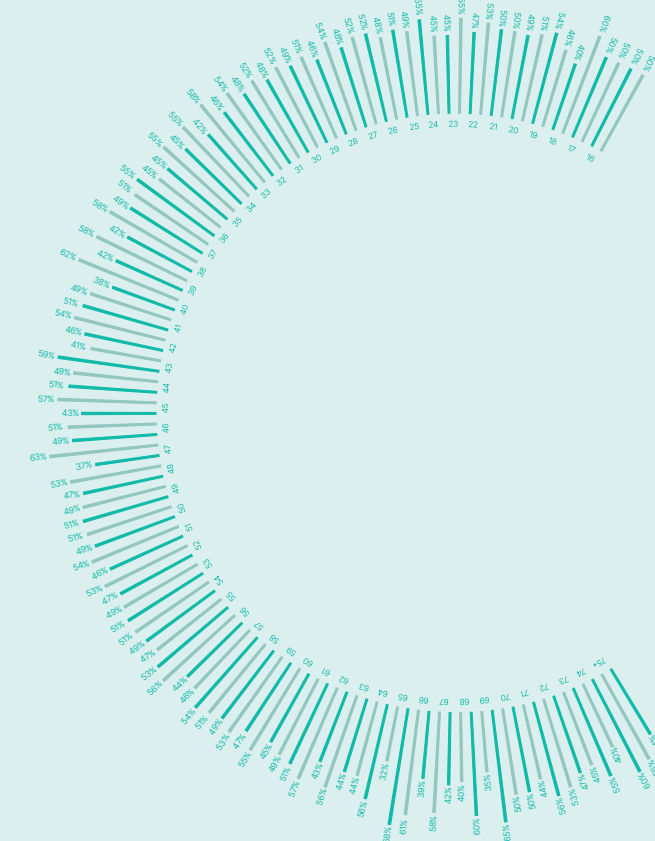
Consumption by age & gender – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of Olympic Games viewership and content consumption by age and gender, exploring how different demographics engage with the Games.

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Overall:

● 49% Female ● 51% Male



Engagement

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A monochromatic blue-toned image featuring a person in a dynamic, athletic pose, possibly a dancer or gymnast, with arms raised. The person is surrounded by numerous floating, semi-transparent objects including various fruits like apples and pears, and geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The background is a light blue gradient with horizontal lines. A white oval frame encloses the word "Participation".

Participation

Participation rates in sports & exercise among non-Olympic sport consumers – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of the participation rates in sports and exercise among individuals who were not active consumers of Olympic sports revealed an intriguing gender dynamic. Women made up 60% of non-consumers who engage in sports and exercise vs 40% for men. This suggests that, despite not being regular followers of Olympic sports, women are more likely to participate in physical activity.

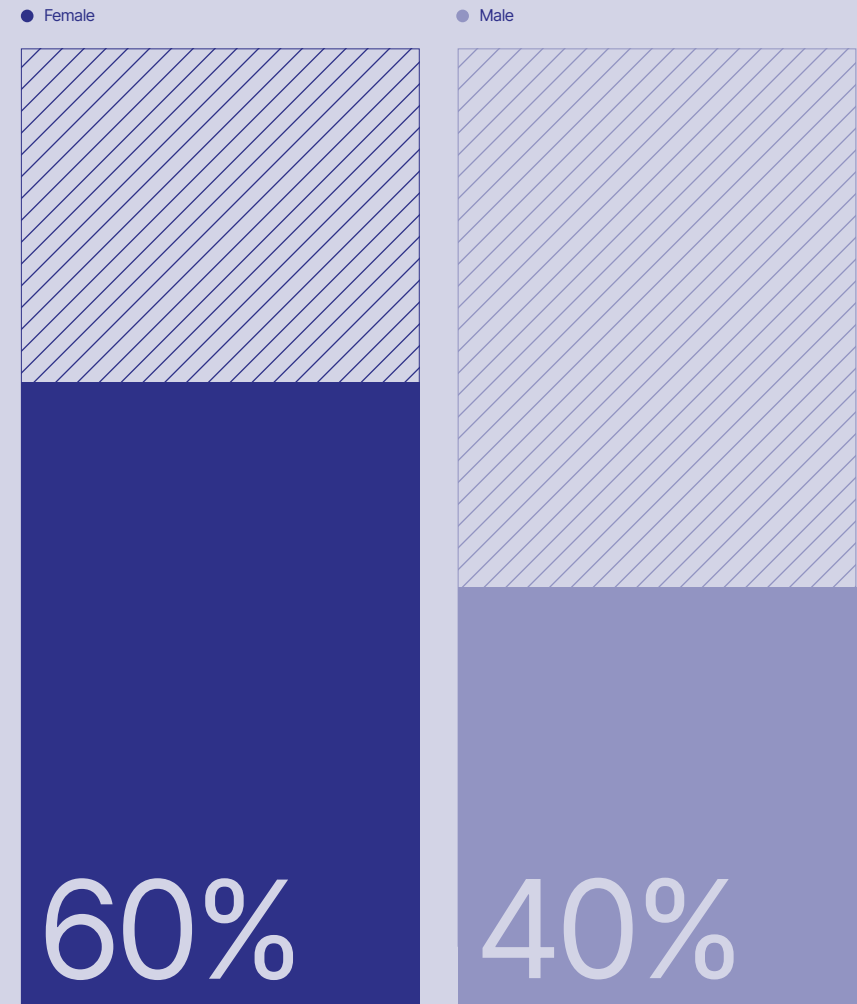
This insight challenges traditional assumptions about male-dominated sports participation and highlights a growing opportunity to engage women through different narratives and pathways.

With the rise of diverse fitness movements and community-driven sports initiatives, the focus can shift to addressing the interests and needs of this audience segment.

Participation rates in sports & exercise among non-consumers of Olympic sports – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of participation rates in sports and exercise among males or females who did not consume Olympic sports.

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Participation

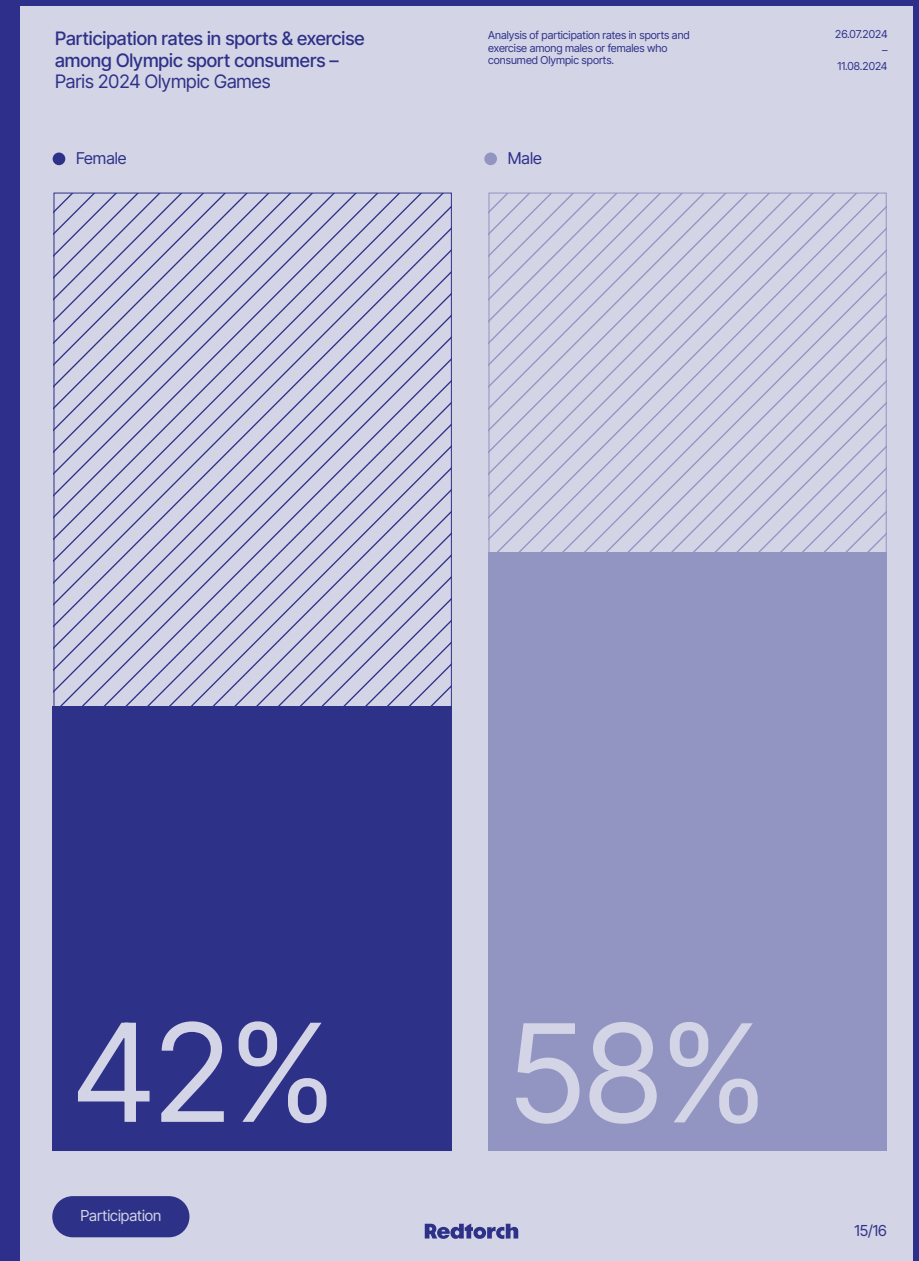
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Participation rates in sports & exercise among Olympic sport consumers – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of participation rates in sports and exercise among consumers of Olympic sports revealed a notable gender imbalance. Men made up 58% of active participants vs 42% for women. This disparity may be influenced by the lower media coverage and visibility of female athletes and events, which limits role models and relatable narratives for potential female participants.

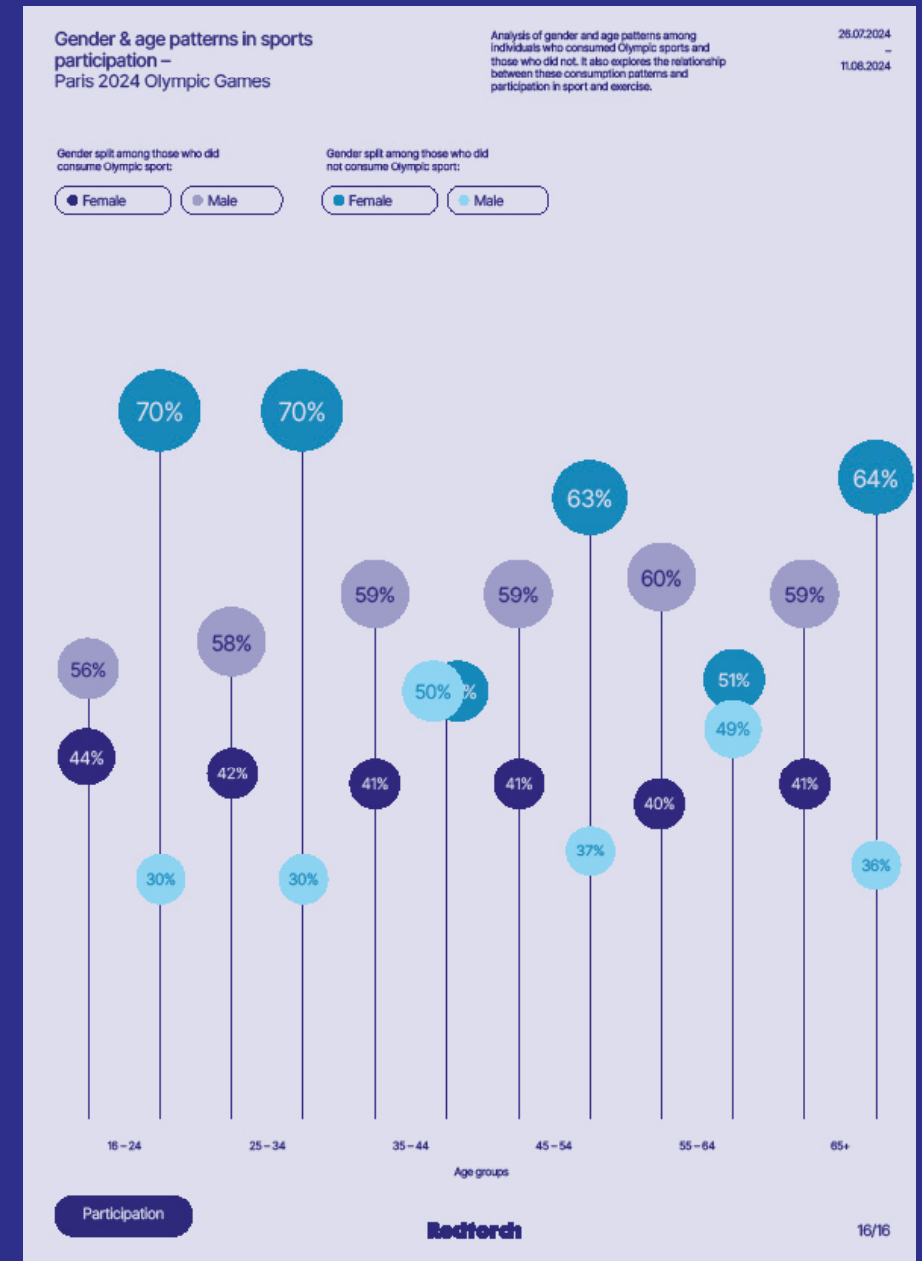
Despite the growing popularity of women's sports, the underrepresentation of female athletes in Olympic coverage could deter women from fully engaging as consumers or participants in Olympic sports.



Gender & age patterns in sports participation – Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Analysis of participation rates in sports and exercise among both consumers and non-consumers of Olympic sports revealed significant gender differences, with notable variation across age groups. Non-consumers of Olympic sports are predominantly female (60%), with younger age groups (16–24 and 25–34) skewing heavily female at 70%. This trend shifts in older demographics, where participation rates become more balanced, e.g. 35–44-year-olds (50% male, 50% female).

Conversely, among Olympic sport consumers, men dominate participation rates at 58% overall, increasing in older age groups. Participation among 55–64-year-old Olympic sport consumers, for example, was 60% male vs 40% female. The underrepresentation of female athletes and events in Olympic media coverage may be a contributing factor, limiting role models and inspiration for women to engage with sports as consumers.



Addressing disparities in media coverage, social content and engagement at Paris 2024 reveals opportunities to unlock new commercial value, broaden audience reach, and inspire greater participation across all levels of sport.

Championing balanced representation for female athletes doesn't just enhance audience engagement, it strengthens brand impact and meets the growing demand for inclusivity in sport. By celebrating women's achievements and amplifying their visibility, we can create a virtuous cycle that benefits athletes, fans, brands, and the entire sports community.