WHAT CAN YOUTUBE SHORTS DO FOR SPORTS RIGHTS HOLDERS?



LITTLE DOT SPORT.

What are YouTube Shorts?

Shorts is YouTube's short-form vertical video platform.

Launched in September 2020, its popularity has sky-rocketed in recent months, attracting creators and viewers from across YouTube with its endless feed of algorithmically surfaced videos.

Vertical video formats have become particularly popular amongst younger audiences, thanks largely to their ability to rapidly trigger cultural phenomena by inspiring mimicry and creating wide-scale trends. For publishers and brands, its ability to reach diverse audiences at scale is fast becoming a vital strategic tool.









How sports rights holders can stay ahead of the game with YouTube Shorts:

In the second half of 2022, the Sports Insights team conducted a study in which we analysed a total of

1,430 YOUTUBE SHORTS

across all our Little Dot Sport-managed channels and also used Tubular Labs data to consider trends beyond the channels we manage.

After sifting through the mountain of information, here we unveil some of our top takeaways that could help your sports brand rise above the competition:

01.
Get subscribers fast

02.
Unlock younger audiences

03.
Learn the relationship between Gen Z female viewers and Shorts

04.
Generate higher engagement rates

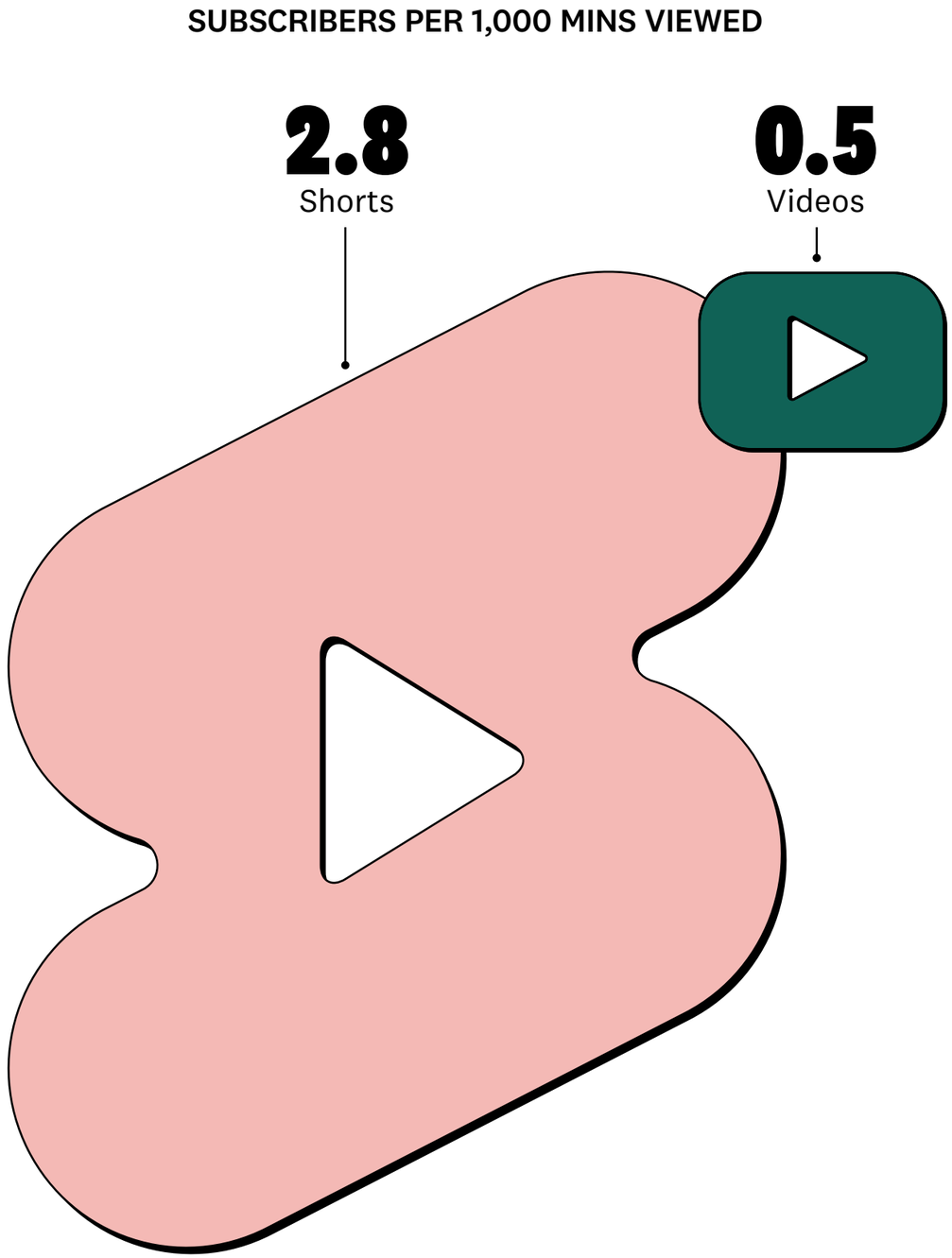
05.
Unlock the power of longer-form Shorts

06.
Mistakes to avoid

07.
Benefit from evergreen

08.
Embrace Shorts, without neglecting videos

01. Get subscribers fast.



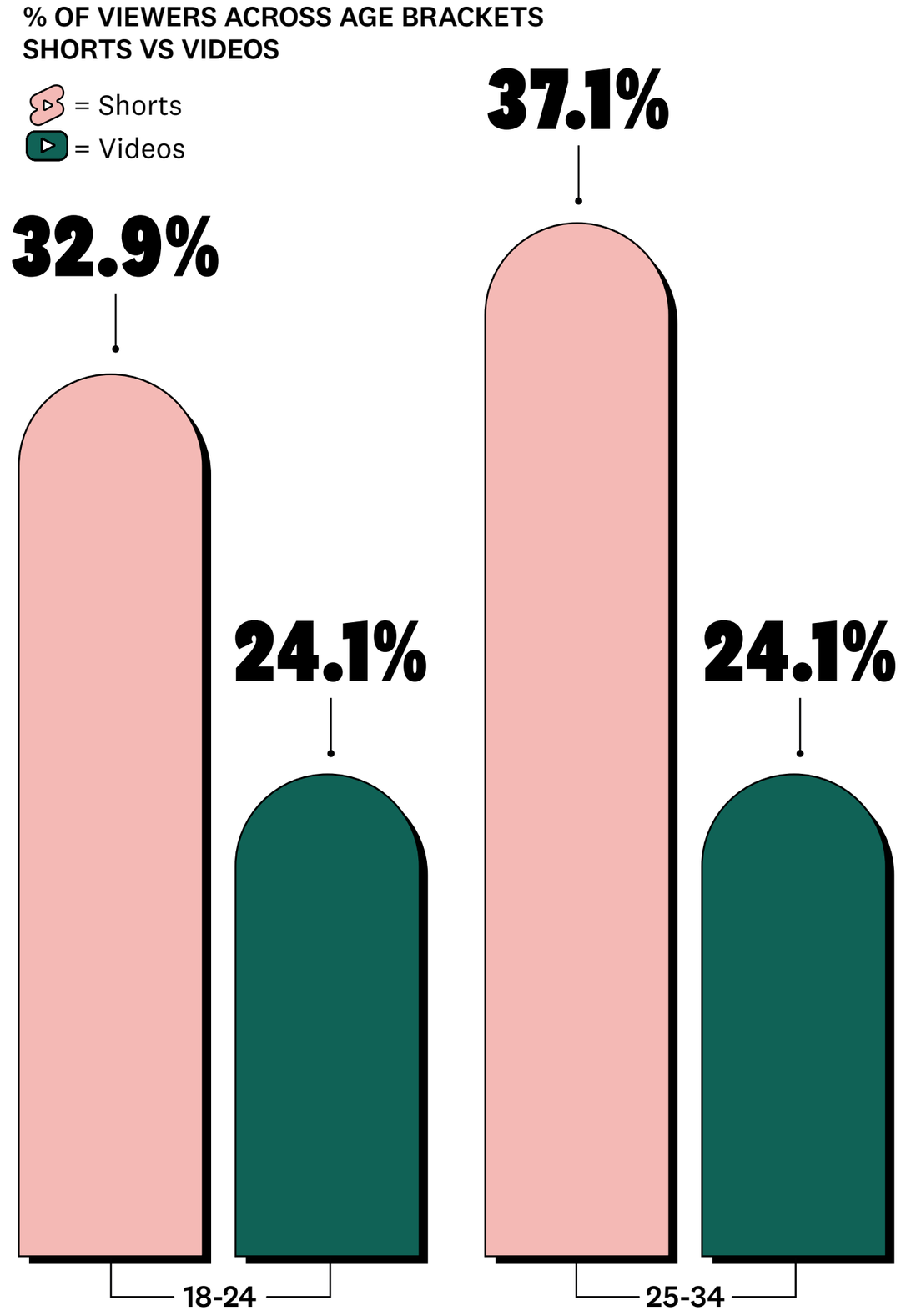
Shorts attract subscribers 5x faster than videos

Shorts are more likely to be seen by new audiences. On-subscriber views make up 87.1% of views for Shorts across LDS Sport channels, compared to 83.8% for videos.

As a result, Shorts are more likely to be viewed by non-subscribers. This makes them highly effective for converting new fans to subscribers: per 1,000 minutes watched, Shorts gain 2.8 subscribers, compared to 0.5 on Videos - a significant difference.

The major reason for Shorts' subscriber success is the relative prominence of the "Subscribe" button in the Shorts feed.

02.
Unlock younger audiences.



18-34 over index strongly for shorts vs videos

70% of all Shorts viewers from the data set were between the ages of 18-34, compared to 48% on traditional YouTube videos. Shorts are generating a much higher proportion of viewing from both 18-24 and 25-34 age brackets when compared to Videos. For 18-24s, Shorts draw in 33% of views from 18-24s (vs 24% on Videos), and as much as 37% from 25-34s (24% on Videos).

So, if you've been struggling to attract younger audiences - Shorts is a very good place to start!

03.
Gen Z female viewers big on Shorts.

18-34 female viewers over-index on Shorts

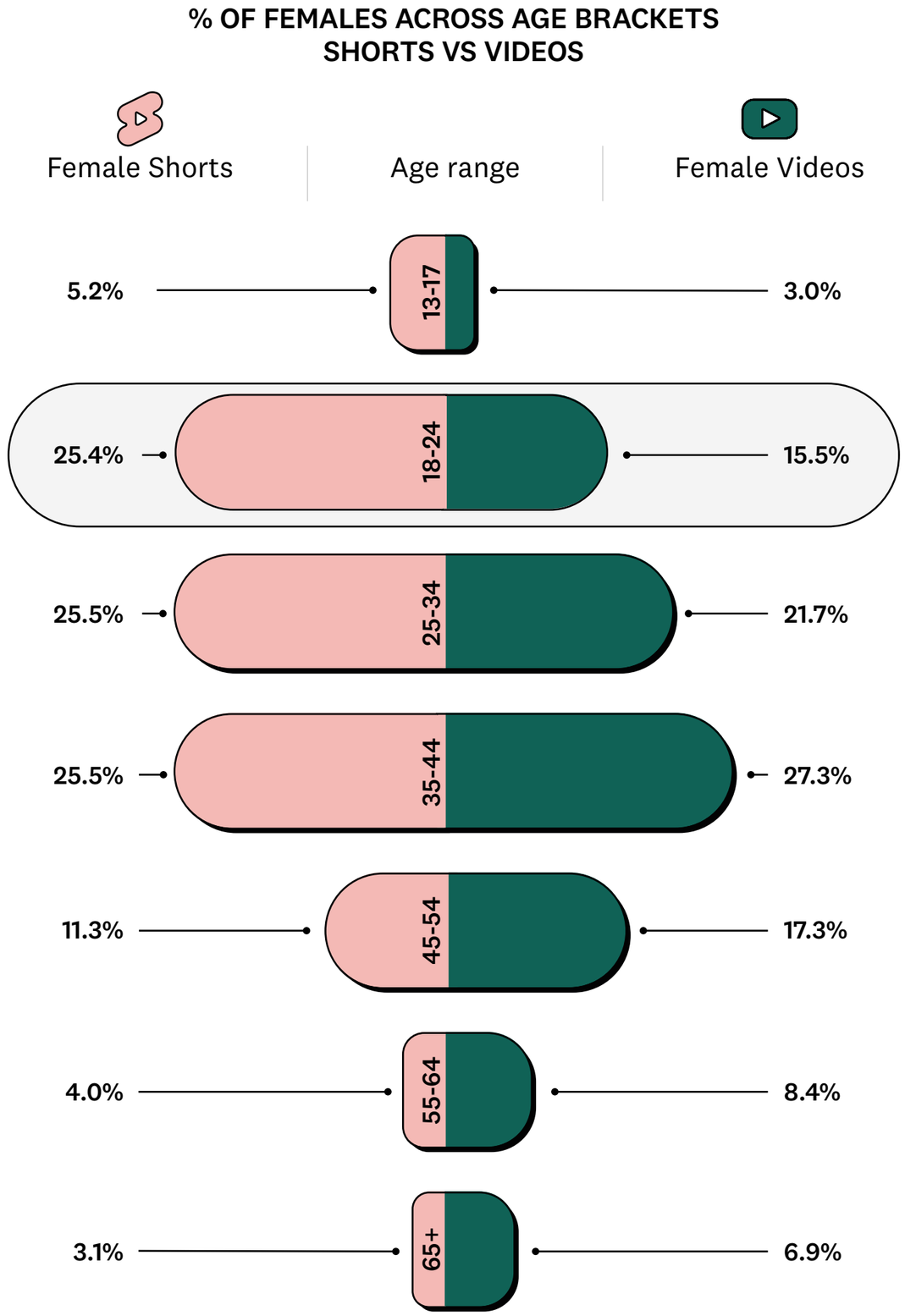
We know a big challenge sports brands can face is connecting with female fans.

Despite the overarching trend among female viewers that they opt to watch Videos over Shorts, when we isolate the 18-24 audience, this trend is reversed:

18-24 female viewers represent 25% of total Shorts views, compared to 15% of total video views.

YouTube Shorts are a game-changer when it comes to reaching female sports fans! With such a significant female viewership, it's clear that shorts can be a powerful tool to increase the reach and impact of sports content among women.

It also presents the opportunity for emergent Women's Sporting federations such as WSL and The Hundred to continue to grow and build their platform.

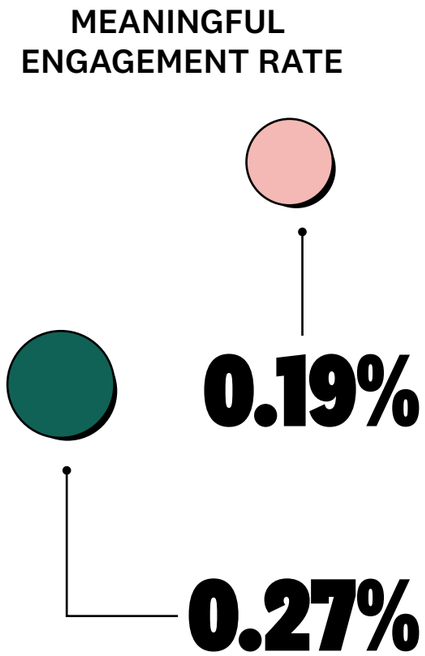


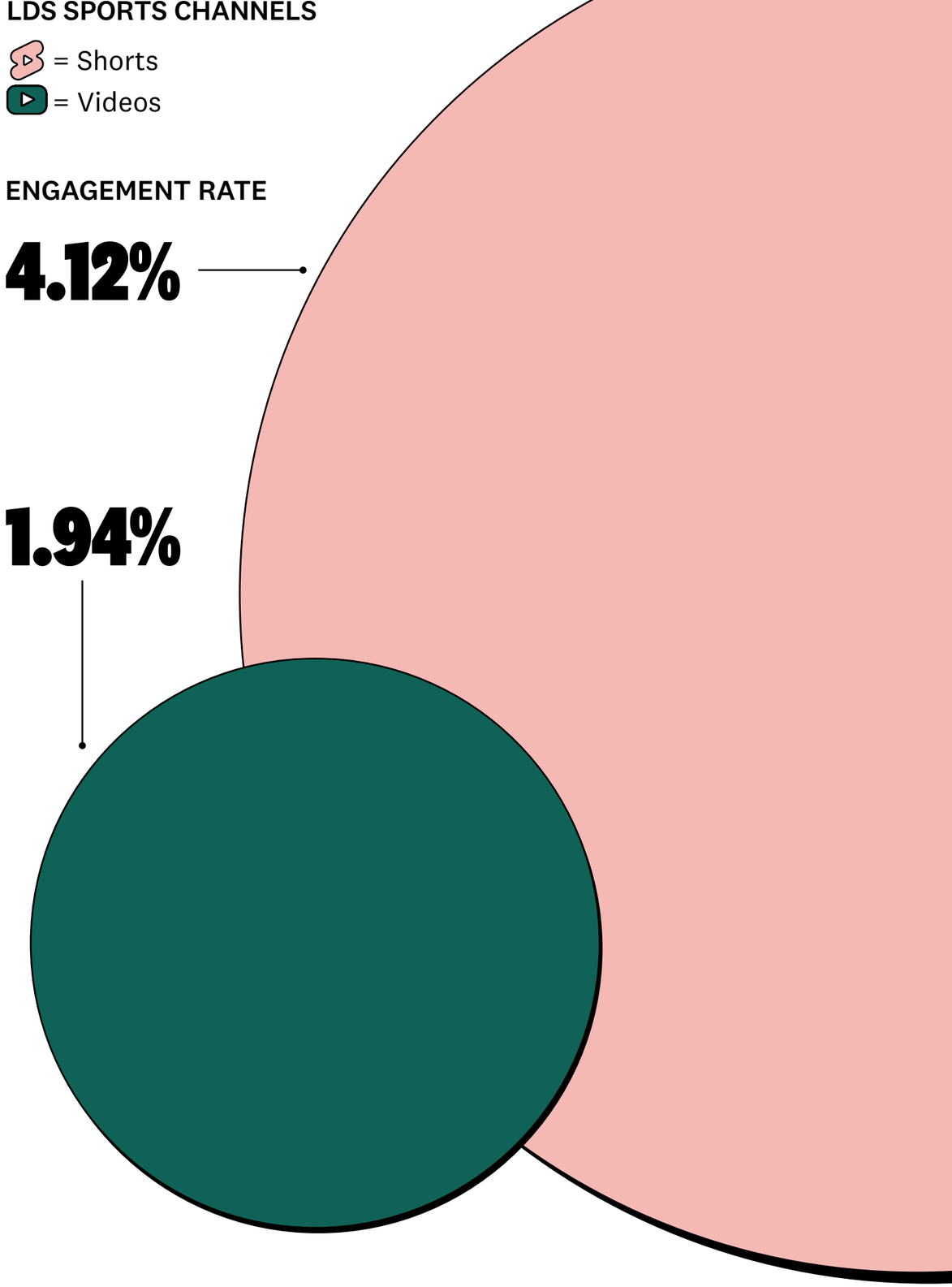
04.
Shorts generate higher engagement rates than videos, but...

Shorts have a 2x higher engagement rate compared to videos (4.13% vs 1.94%)

Demonstrating that they are a powerful tool for engaging fans.

However it is worth noting that when it comes to meaningful engagements (comments and shares), they actually fall behind video content. This suggests that long-form is still more effective at fostering a deeper level of connection to your audience.



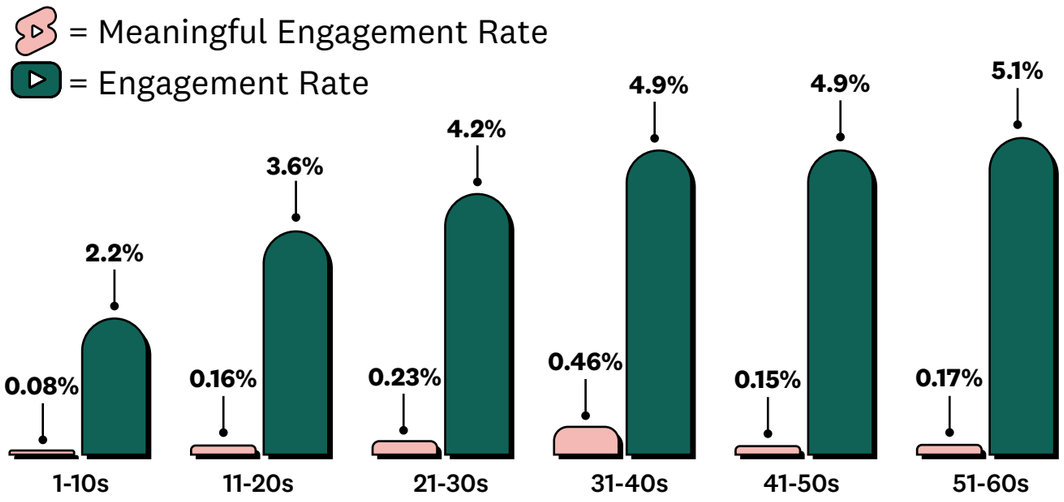


05.
Make sure viewers stick around for more than 30 secs.

Shorts attract subscribers 5x faster than videos

A similar engagement trend is evident when we look at the performance of different Shorts length categories. Shorts between 31-60 seconds have the strongest rates of overall engagement, while 31-40 seconds has 2x higher meaningful engagement rate than any other length. Shorts over 51 seconds in length have the highest overall engagement rate of any category.

SPORTS CHANNELS

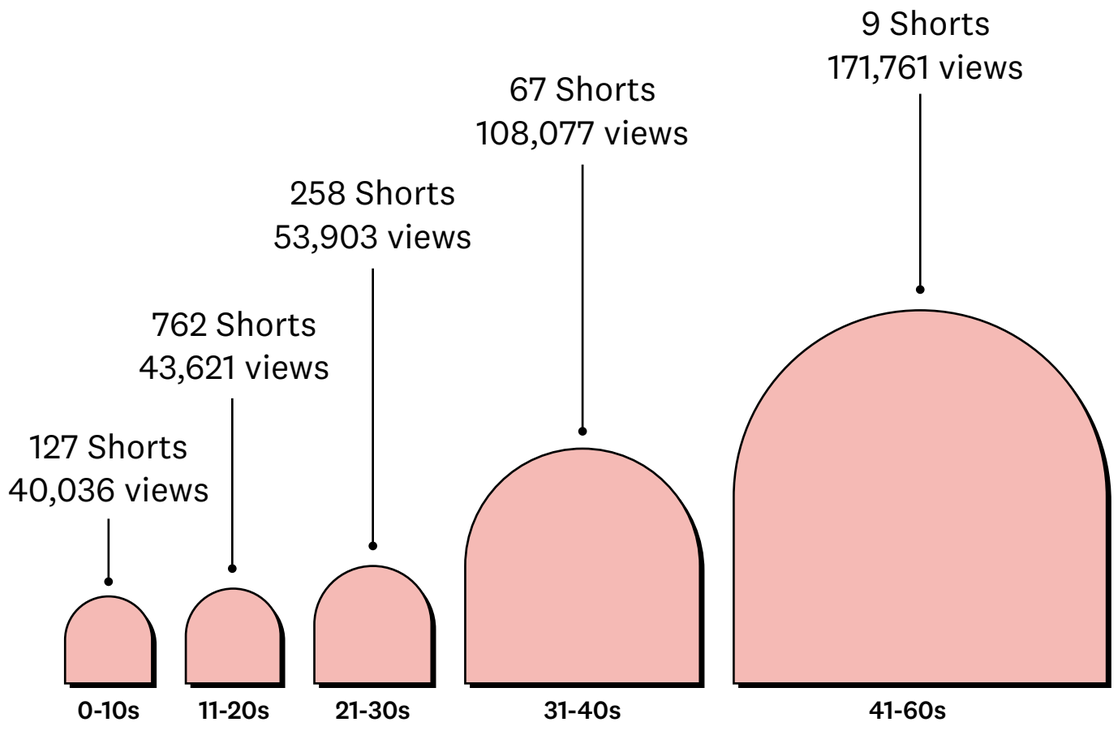


The biggest factor in Shorts performance is how long viewers are watching for.

Shorts that deliver over 30 seconds of view duration get 4.4x more views than Shorts delivering less than 30 seconds, with a steep jump in average views in the 31-40s bracket compared to the 21-30s bracket. So, if your Short is 10 seconds in length, it needs to be watched 3x through on average to achieve the same level of performance; whereas if your Short is 60 seconds you need to be retaining people until at least the 30 seconds mark. This should be a good steer when it comes to editing and clip length choices.

Shorts with over 30 seconds average view duration perform more than 4x better.

AVERAGE VIEWS BY AVERAGE VIEW DURATION OF SHORTS ANALYSED



06.
Don’t make this mistake.



Why sports publishers should avoid posting your TikToks as Shorts

Our team of content creators, editors and superfans are borderline obsessive about tagging the content we work with, meaning we can spot editorial trends quickly and make effective adjustments to our partners’ content.

Unedited clip

Not subtitled

No music

Match clip

Bespoke for Shorts

As a result, our editorial research revealed that bespoke Shorts content deliver 18x more viewers than repurposed Shorts from long form videos.

Bespoke Shorts with no subtitles and no music far outperformed Shorts that were made up of pre-existing content from other platforms like TikTok accompanied with music and text.

Some strong performing content types from our own work include:

> Match clips. Don’t over think it! Clips of incredible match action with little to no editing work wonders on Shorts

> Reversioned originals. Take your best long-form original content and create bespoke, vertical-friendly versions for Shorts, moments you may have missed.

> Shorts are perfect for those funny and unexpected moments that wouldn’t make the standard highlights reel

07. Evergreen and effective.

18-34 female viewers over-index on Shorts

When comparing viewing across the first 30 days of publishing, sport-focused YouTube Shorts seem to perform better as time goes on.

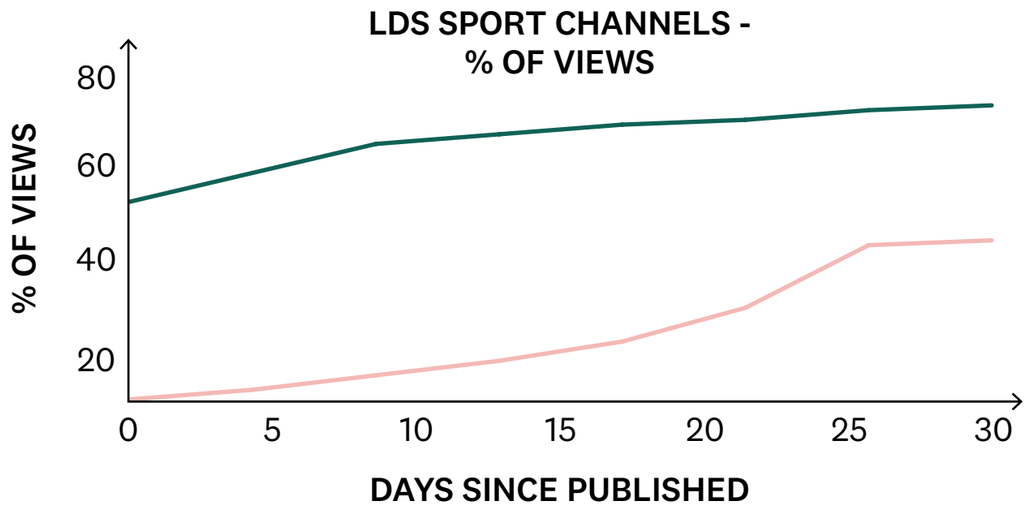
On the other hand, video content appears to plateau.

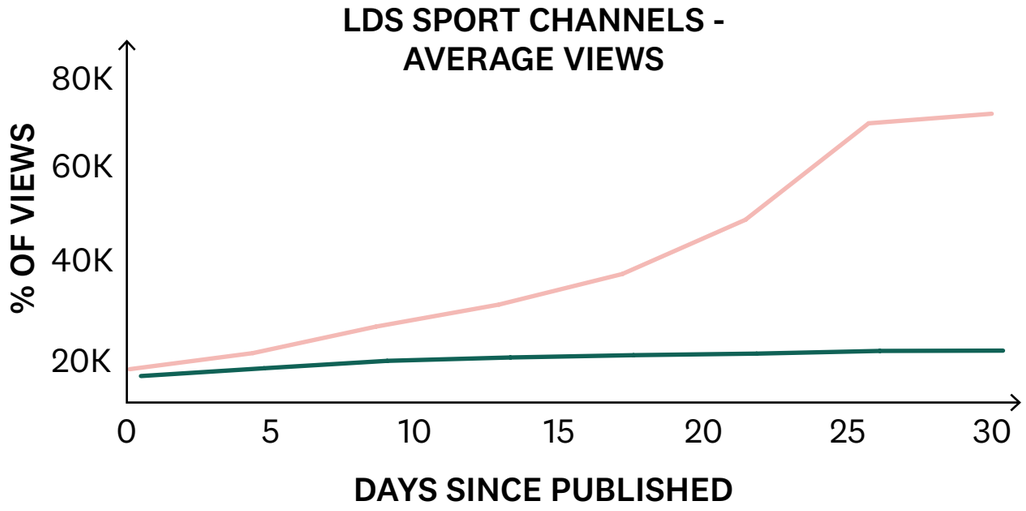
Long-form videos in Sport, such as highlights or match shoulder content, have a short shelf life with the bulk of their views appearing in the first 5 days.

On the other hand, Shorts which focus more on entertainment and less on the matches themselves achieve a more evergreen performance. Shorts views grow at a more consistent rate and continue growing after 30 days.

Additionally, when continuing to monitor over a longer time frame (outside 30 days), Shorts continue generating views at an exponential rate. 30 days after publishing, Shorts have 4x as many views as they had on Day 1, compared to only 1.4x on Traditional Videos.

= Shorts
= Videos





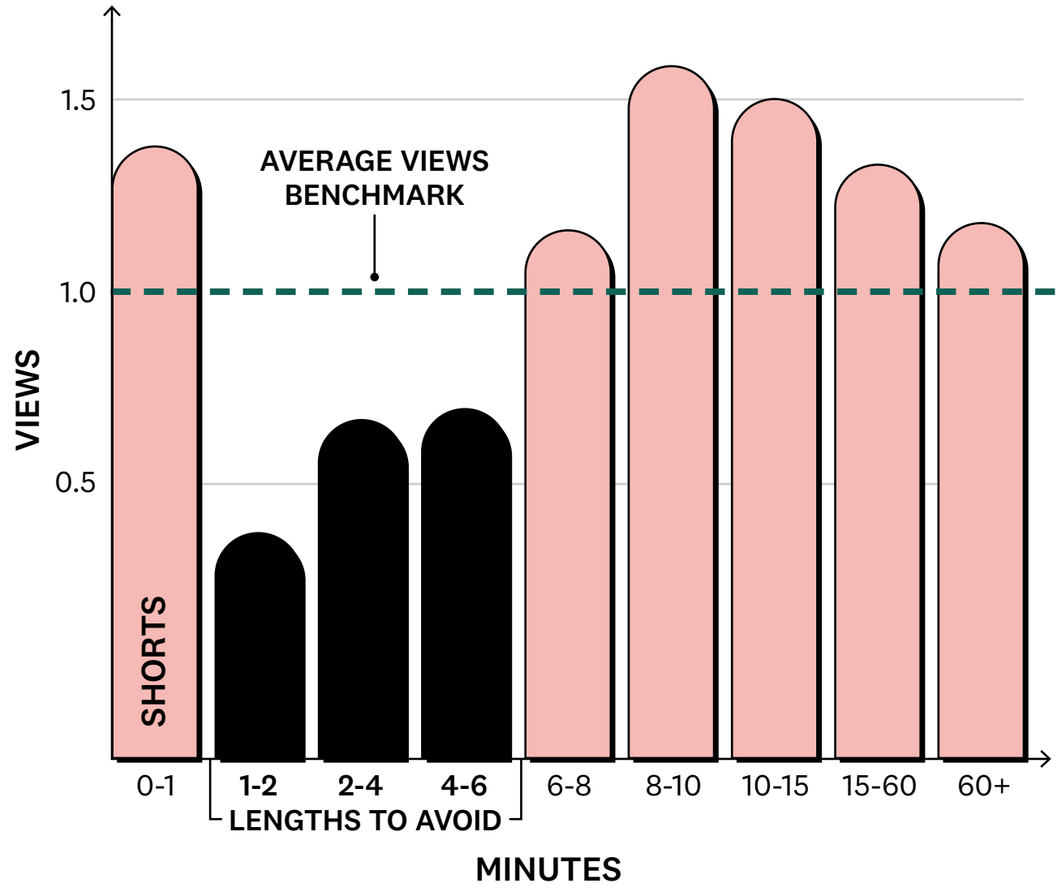
08. Embrace Shorts, without neglecting video.

Different content lengths achieve drastically different results when it comes to average views. Taking a score of “1” as the average view benchmark, lengths that rise above that score are considered high performers, while those that score below 1 are falling short.

The data reveals that Shorts (0-1 mins long) have surged to become the third highest performing content length on YouTube.

But don’t count out the longer videos just yet! The sweet spot for video performance still lies in the 8-15 minute range. It’s clear that both short and long-form content have their place in the YouTube ecosystem.

YOUTUBE VIEWING PERFORMANCE VS VIDEO DURATION - LDS SPORT



In Summary.



Shorts are a hugely powerful tool when it comes to engaging with new audiences and driving growth to your channel, and they now have a proven track record as a major player in the vertical video market - which has previously been dominated by TikTok.

While on the surface both YouTube Shorts and TikTok may look the same, it is important to make sure your content is bespoke and made specifically for the platform you are posting on, as content without proper consideration will struggle to have an impact.

YouTube Shorts provide an easy and accessible way to reach younger audiences, boost subscriber numbers, and increase engagement rates. With the potential to create evergreen content and the platform's continued growth, YouTube Shorts presents an opportunity for sports brands to expand their reach and connect with their audience in a new and exciting way.

Simplicity is key, let the content do the talking, and try to steer clear of captions, subtitles and over animation. Despite the name "Shorts", your content needs to be reaching an average view duration of over 30 seconds for you to truly see the benefit, any shorter and you will need to rely on your audience viewing your content a repeated number of times!

Looking to take your sports brand to the next level?

Contact us today to develop winning strategies that leverage YouTube Shorts and other digital platforms to help you connect with your audience and achieve your business goals.



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And why not check out our latest Digital Connections Score? A bespoke social health check which provides a clear and definitive view on what drives meaningful audience engagement and sustained growth to deliver measurable business objectives.

Our unique scale and expertise.

700+
DIGITAL CHANNELS

540M
HOURS OF WATCH TIME EVERY MONTH FOR OUR PARTNERS

9BN
ORGANIC VIEWS

Our vast scale means we have unique relationships directly with the social platforms, unparalleled insights on how to build audiences, and we're able to quickly spot platform optimisations to help our partners achieve their business objectives.

We create and manage social content for over:

More about Little Dot Sport.

Little Dot Sport, award-winning digital content agency and media network Little Dot Studios' specialist sport label, is dedicated to helping sports brands realise the potential of every sporting moment through digital content creation, distribution and monetisation.

As leaders in premium entertainment and sustainable digital marketing for sports brands, broadcasters, distributors and sports rights holders, Little Dot Sport enables brands to captivate fans and create conversations through exciting digital content.

Collaborative and strategic partnerships with over 30 clients, including long-standing relationships with Formula E, The FA and ECB. Other partners include; Eurosport, International Paralympic Committee Extreme E, Ascot Racecourse, West Ham United and The Ocean Race.

Little Dot Sport holistically delivers digital content strategy and creation, audience insights, content publishing, media buying and monetisation.

Our services.

01 **Social media & channel management**

We build audiences and understand the unique needs of each platform

02 **Original production & Design**

Our in-house production studio create brand defining long- and short-form video, podcasts, live streams, static & motion design

03 **Paid Media**

We use data to buy paid media more effectively

04 **Monetisation of content through video revenue streams**

We create and nurture social video revenue streams

05 **Insights & Strategy**

We deliver best-in-class strategies and insights









LITTLE DOT SPORT.

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