

# FAMCOOM

ISSUE

*The Women's Issue*

003

**M+C SAATCHI**  
SPORT & ENTERTAINMENT

*The Pressing Agency*



FOREWORD

The palpable, energetic change being driven by female influence across every sector from the sport, entertainment and lifestyle spaces we operate within to, increasingly, the corporate boardroom made the choice of topic for this edition of our Fancom report series inevitable.

Welcome to 'The Women's Issue'.

This is the year the Lionesses and the Red Roses reigned supreme and delivered record viewership and attendance, Grace Wales-Bonner was named the Creative Director of Menswear at Hermes and, as I write, Lily Allen's new album is dominating the cultural agenda with her signature candor.

This real-time wave of female-forwardness offers marketers the opportunity to support, enhance and invest in a future increasingly defined by women.

At M+C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment this is exactly what we are doing.

In announcing our recent acquisition of Women's Sport Group (WSG), a specialist advisory business across media rights, broadcast and content production, data & insight, brand partnerships and strategic consultancy, we are demonstrating an investment in driving positive change across the industry.

Cementing our future stake in this market isn't merely about expansion. It is an amplification of our shared mission, combining WSG's commercial expertise with M+C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment's brand-building and storytelling power to drive long-term asset value, and sustainable global growth for clients spanning brands, rights holders, and NGOs.

For decades, the market has often treated women as a singular, monolithic demographic, applying simplistic heuristics to consumption patterns that are actually characterised by highly nuanced social and economic complexity. This report is an acknowledgement that such methods are not merely outdated, they are commercially negligent.

Today, the collective spending power and cultural gravity commanded by women constitute the single most consequential engine of global consumer demand. To misunderstand or underinvest in this demographic is to impose a cap on future growth.

The dissonance we observe across the market is stark. While female artists, athletes, and creators are demonstrably setting the global agenda, much of the marketing and advertising ecosystem tasked with connecting brands to this audience continues to fall short.

This is not solely a failure of representation, it is a failure of diagnostic capability. It suggests that

many organisations are operating with an obsolete data and insight model, unable to grasp the multi-dimensional nature of modern womanhood, from her relationship with wealth and wellness to her redefined expectations of community and success.

We all need to play our part in understanding and reflecting these nuances.

In this report our teams explore some of the ways this can be done and how, as an agency, we have always focused on ensuring this comes through in our work.

Long before the current acceleration of women's influence, M+C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment were instrumental in ushering in the women's fitness era with adidas' fastest growing women's community on Facebook.

Back in 2018 we created Same Goals for Manchester City- a social-first campaign that encouraged girls to pick up a ball, because it's not 'men's football' or 'women's football' when we all have the same goals. It's just football...

With Reebok we launched Perfect Never, a campaign that challenged the notion of perfection. It was fronted by Gigi Hadid, who had her own, complex relationship with the idea and ideals of perfectionism.

For the past three years we've worked with Barclays to deliver equality of opportunity for girls in football through the Barclays Girls Football School Partnerships, as well as creating the Here for Every Goal report, demonstrating the long-term societal impacts of the bank's support for women's and girls football.

We were proud to play a role in the UEFA Euro 2022 tournament, helping to sell out games by reaching new growth audiences. We turned Carnaby Street into a giant fussball table that made heroes of the event's biggest names, delivering blanket media coverage that drove trackable sale of over 700,000 tickets.

We created Reckitt's first ever women's football ad for Dettol's sponsorship of the Lionesses at the same tournament.

For Malibu we created B.A.B.E.S, an awareness campaign against the rising threat and effects of spiking in UK bar and club culture affecting women.

We've campaigned to close rugby's gender awareness gap with O2 and the Red Roses, including creating the first ever wearable data report, the first ever documentary on women's rugby and transforming the matchday experience at Twickenham into a cultural happening with music performances and social-first moments.

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Recently, for UEFA, we created Queenzine, the first ever fanzine for the UEFA Women's Champion's League that taps into the nostalgia of football fanzine culture and provides a platform to hero the female players' dominance on the pitch as well as their passions off it.

And this year, our very own Head of Women's Sport, Jenny Mitton, launched her own organization - Women of Union - providing a professional network for the increasing number of women who work in rugby.

Ultimately, we know that driving structural change through multi-channel marketing is possible, but it requires consistent and long-term commitment to be paramount, not just the immediate response to surface-level trends.

The insights within this document are a product of our people and position, fortified by a leadership team that's over 70% female. That is not a vanity metric. It is a strategic asset.

Opportunity in this space isn't just about sales, nor is it just a way to tick a box on International Women's Day.

It is about the ability for brands to cultivate loyalty, authority, and enduring relevance. It is about benefitting from the incredible power of the modern female zeitgeist.



By Laura Coller,  
UK CEO



EDITOR'S NOTE

# EDITOR'S NOTE



By Ant Firth-Clark,  
Senior Strategist



EDITOR'S NOTE

Brat wins big at the Brits, football and rugby both come home, Lily Allen triggers a global media hunt for 'Madeline'; wherever you look, the enormity of cultural power British women hold in the zeitgeist can be felt.

Across the sport, entertainment and broader pop culture landscape, we're seeing two macro narratives play out, and both of them are female-led. The first is one of growth, whereby we are seeing the astronomical growth of women's sports – with fresh considerations about the Women's Rugby World Cup, the WT20, and the groundbreaking series on the F1 Academy, and news about huge broadcast investments in the Barclays WSL. Oh, and of course the WNBA have become the first women's league to reach a sponsorship value in the \$billions.

The second narrative is that of total domination. In 2024, six-out-of-ten of the best-selling albums were by women. The Eras tour brought such an astronomical impact to global music spending that a new cultural term was introduced to the financial lexicon: Swiftonomics. And be it Beyoncé's most recent iteration into country music, or Olivia Rodrigo introducing her fans to Robert Smith of The Cure at Glastonbury, what's clear is that whatever it is that female talent want to do, or be, their communities will follow – be that as fans, customers, or self-perceived stakeholders. Traditionally male dominated marketing and management machines can no longer keep female talent pigeon-holed. Now that is cultural power in action.

In the same breath, we're seeing how the marketing and advertising industries are often missing the mark in how they connect to the modern-day female. Sure, there's some (massive) unicorns: SKIMS, JACQUEMUS, adidas. But looking more broadly, it's clear women are finding a profound disconnect between their needs and realities, and the ways the industry wants to portray – and speak to – them. In a recent global study by The Collective, it was reported that while 91% of women value brand authenticity, nearly half of women surveyed believe marketing still leans on outdated stereotypes. And when, in 2025, we're still seeing coded, sexualised ads about blonde women with blue eyes having 'good jeans'... Do. You. Blame. Them?

It's not new thinking that better marketing comes from razor-sharp understanding of the cultural nuances, needs and contexts of different groups of people. But the staggering truth is, even for a group that is literally ~50% of the population, with two-thirds of the world's spend in their pockets, the insights we're using simply aren't real or relevant enough.

So the question is, why is it that our cultural spaces can excel at connecting with the modern-day female en-masse, but the marketing and advertising sectors – another arguably significant force in culture – can still miss the mark by so much?

Once again, we tasked the sharp minds at M+C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment to explore the nuances of what it takes to authentically connect with women today in the spaces they care about, along with what it will take to play an additive and impactful role within women's culture and all the power and energy it holds. And whereas we're not pretending to have all the answers, some clear needs have emerged for brands – be it the double-downing of investment (and trust) in women's culture; the willingness to promote the full multi-dimensional aspects of female identity (rather than one tiny part of it); and to really deep it when it comes to speaking to the nuanced needs of 21st century womanhood.

So grab your boards and come paddle out with us. The women's wave is huge, it's powerful and it ain't going nowhere – it's time we all started learning how to surf it properly.



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## BOXING-OUT

Women have been traditionally boxed-in to unfair standards, pressures and expectations around behaviour and appearance – especially in spaces considered not traditionally ‘for them’. Now, women are inspiring fans by breaking away from convention and showing their full unapologetic selves, with intersectional interests and identities and everything that comes with it.

### What this means for brands:

When partnering with female talent in marketing, success won’t come from keeping them pigeon-holed to what they’re known for. Brands today need to embrace and genuinely showcase the full, multi-dimensional and intersectional identities of women, and in doing so, will connect with fans and followers with a deeper kind of authenticity.

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## WELCOME TO THE SHOW

As women’s sport and the stories around it gain better exposure and promotion, we’re seeing a swell of new fandom that’s serving to markedly grow the space. As this grows externally, so should the representation and power of women behind the scenes charged with making it visible.

### What this means for brands:

By actively investing in, elevating, and amplifying women’s sport and culture – be it through on-screen exposure or the women behind the scenes – brands will not only help grow female-led culture, but be celebrated as a result.

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## GETTING REAL

Be it the sport/entertainment moments themselves, or how they’re marketed, it’s clear women’s culture is not being approached with enough nuance to really be impactful for the interests and needs of today’s discerning talent or fan.

### What this means for brands:

When marketing towards – and designing experiences and events for – the modern female consumer, success will require a shift away from overworn generalisations about women and towards more culturally nuanced thinking about their perspectives, interests and shifting needs.

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# LE BEAUT SPORTIF

By Jenny Mitton,  
Managing Partner and  
Women's Sport Lead

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What does an athlete look like?

Not too long ago, the answer was shaped by a male-defined aesthetic.

Masculine. Strong. Homogenized.

The sporting world was built as a masculine domain, so for many years, female athletes looked to replicate this aesthetic. Driven by the practicality of competing in oversized men's kit which hid the female form (women's kits didn't become the norm until around 2019) combined with the pressure female athletes felt to hide their femininity so they could be taken seriously as professional athletes.

In the 2000s we saw athletes begin to challenge this aesthetic through fashion, with Serena Williams at the forefront taking on tournament officials on their archaic view on how a female athlete should dress.

Then in 2024 we saw a new shift when beauty took hold of the Paris Olympic Games.

Female athletes at Paris brought femininity to the forefront, showcasing how beauty plays a role in their performance.

Championing this shift was Ilona Maher, a Team USA Rugby 7's player who unapologetically competed wearing a red lip. As criticism came, she responded with #beastbeautybrains and created a movement that celebrated how power, femininity and personality could co-exist (through big tackles, red lipstick and bold captions on social media). Her femininity wasn't a distraction from her athleticism; it was part of the performance. Her edge. Her identity.

Maher wasn't alone. GRWM posts from athletes flooded social feeds and transcended sports. From Olympians including Simone Biles, to basketball with WNBA stars like Angel Reese and football with Lioness Ella Toone.

Suddenly sport was no longer being influenced by culture, it was driving it. Unlike the men's space, women's sport isn't confined by long-standing defined traditions and exists in a more fluid and evolving space where consumers can explore adjacent passions, like beauty, with greater authenticity.

Beauty brands have started taking note.

e.l.f. Cosmetics became the official makeup and skincare partner for both the WNBA and NWSL; Clinique became a partner of the Red Roses; and New York Liberty's mascot 'Ellie the Elephant' secured a deal with nail brand Essie. Find her on TikTok and you'll see why.

It's clear that female athletes bring an unapologetic relationship to beauty into sport – a connection which is opening doors for brands to enter arenas where they may not have felt they belonged before. It marks an exciting turning point for the future of sponsorship within women's sports, the types of brands that will be involved, and the distinct culture that can flourish as a result.

In the realm of women's sport, beauty brands have a rare opportunity to be the driver of a cultural shift. Moving society from an aesthetic-driven definition of femininity towards a more empowering movement that celebrates authenticity and self-expression.

This kind of cultural power is the holy grail for brands – coveted by many, achieved by few. When a brand connects in a way that truly matters to its audience, it builds relevance, salience and meaning, the foundations of lasting business impact.

And frankly, when female athletes and women show up as their whole selves, everyone wins.



ARTICLES



MORE



THAN

By Ade Daramola,  
Senior Account  
Executive



MUSIC

ARTICLES

Multi-GRAMMY award winning rapper Megan Thee Stallion has never shied away from sharing who she is outside of music. Staying true to herself and her interests has only made her fanbase grow stronger, especially by tapping into more niche communities and markets. As the 'Otaku Hot Girl', her passion for anime has been at the core of her creative vision, as seen in her music videos, song sample choices and Instagram content in general.

From cosplaying as her favourite anime characters to presenting an award at the 2024 Crunchyroll Anime Awards in Tokyo, Meg's recent brand collaboration with Airbnb - the curation of an 'Otaku Hottie experience' - is another example of how authentic brand collaborations can come out of genuine passions.

More often than not, female artists are seen as one-dimensional, defined solely by their music. However, what Megan Thee Stallion reveals to us is that when brands look at female talent as multifaceted individuals, they can unlock meaningful, authentic ways to connect with more audiences. It's not just about music, it's about recognising the whole person and the full range of cultural spaces they can open up - sometimes connected and sometimes unexpected.

There's something uniquely satisfying about a brand collaboration that feels both unexpected and spot on - and recognising 'the whole' is a

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FANBASES KNOW  
EVERY DETAIL ABOUT  
THEIR FAVOURITE  
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BRANDS DO TOO

key part of this. To celebrate The Sims 4's 25th anniversary, EA hosted a 25-hour livestream featuring Doja Cat and Latto. Whilst Doja's gaming credentials were already known due to her chaotic GTA V streams during lockdown, Latto's involvement surprised fans but can be traced back to a short IG story post from her where she shared images of her 'simself' and her Sims 4 gameplay. It's all part of a wider shift: from Charli XCX's BRAT-ified H&M party for London Fashion week, to Grimes' love of coding and gaming seeing her join the cast of Cyberpunk 2077 - brands are finally starting to tap into the female artists' intersectional interests, working with them not just as talent, but as genuine 360-collaborators.

Artists never stop evolving, never stop seeking to shift public perception of what they're known for. Take Rihanna. Her move into fashion and beauty wasn't a side hustle. It was a critical move to reshape the idea of what Rihanna the artist represents, based on her 'other' passions. From the Beyhive, to Barbz, to Swifties, fanbases know every detail about their favourite artist, and it's about time that brands do too. Because, as we're seeing, the real magic and potential of success in artist-brand collaborations may not come from partnering with them on what they're already known for, but what they want to be known for next.

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ARTISTS NEVER STOP  
EVOLVING, NEVER STOP  
SEEKING TO SHIFT  
PERCEPTION



**“THESE WOMEN AREN'T STEPPING OUT OF SPORTS TO FIND THEMSELVES, THEY'RE REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG WITHIN IT.”**

For decades, women in sport have carried the weight of needing to be taken seriously. That pressure often came with a cost; hiding parts of themselves that felt “off-brand” for an athlete, to challenge centuries of misogynistic stereotypes.

Female athletes had to prove they were serious enough to be there: fierce competitors, single-minded, hyper focused. Any glimpse of traditional femininity in a sporting landscape was seen as a distraction from portraying their athletic prowess. While male athletes were celebrated for their personality and passions, women were expected to mute theirs. To prove themselves in their sport, women often felt forced to downplay everything else. Male athletes can pose in Calvin Klein underpants, but God forbid women do the same.

But today, a new generation of athletes is rewriting the rules. Not just of play, but of presence.

Take Mary Fowler, who became the first women's footballer to walk the runway at Paris Fashion week for L'Oreal, joining global icons like Kendall Jenner, Gillian Anderson, and Helen Mirren. In a moment that merged sport and style on one of fashion's biggest stages, Mary showed that this world is welcoming football with open arms. Her presence on the runway wasn't about stepping outside of sport; it was a powerful reminder that female footballers can be cultural icons both on and off the pitch.

Or Leah Williamson, who led the Lionesses to historic victory and then became a face of Gucci and Aime Leon Dore, showing a new generation that you don't have to pick between boots and loafers. Williamson isn't asking permission to be seen as a cultural force, she simply is one.

Naomi Osaka's skincare line and fashion partnerships, alongside her candid conversations about mental health and identity, have made her as impactful off the court as on it.

These women aren't stepping out of sports to find themselves, they're redefining what it means to belong within it. They're proving that peak performance and individuality can go hand in hand. **Because they shouldn't have to choose.**

Society has long positioned women's interests as “lesser,” as soft, unserious. But that hierarchy is crumbling. Especially among Gen Z and Gen Alpha, where identity isn't singular, it's layered. These audiences don't compartmentalise their passions, and they don't expect their idols to either. They follow players over teams. They want to see the playlist and the match day. The skincare routine and the training montage. The individuality behind the stats. The net result of welcoming the ethos of a multi-passion individual, the more you break the stereotype of what a sport fan should look like – which is critical; Sport is for – and should be for – **everyone.**

The rise of female athletes embracing their full selves – whether that's through TikToks, tunnel fits, fashion campaigns, or advocacy work – isn't a gimmick, it's a cultural truth. And it's what makes them relatable, followable, and marketable. It's also what is opening up traditionally excluded brand industries e.g. beauty, to a world of sport sponsorship that now 'just makes sense'.

For brands looking to authentically connect with women's sport, the opportunity lies in showing up for the whole, multidimensional personality of athletes – not just their performance highlights. And that's because fans don't just want to see athletes compete, they want to see them *thrive*.





# The FAST LANE is FEMALE

By Noëlla Neffati,  
Business Director

Something is shifting gears in motorsport and it's not just on the track.

F1 Academy didn't crash onto the scene with fanfare. It started quietly in 2022, almost cautiously. A structural fix for a long-ignored problem in motorsport. But in 2025, it's no longer sitting on the sidelines. It's picking up speed, culturally, commercially, and emotionally. This isn't just about racing. It's about rethinking who gets seen, who gets funded, and who gets to dream.

With 'F1: The Academy' now streaming on Netflix, that shift is out in the open. For many, it's their first real look at a world that's been evolving in the background. It's not even that the story is perfectly packaged, but it's important because it's finally being told.

We've seen this play out before. Just look at women's football. Not long ago, it was considered niche, even risky. Now? It's one of the fastest-growing sports on the planet. The 2023 Women's World Cup generated over \$570 million in commercial revenue and reached a global audience of more than 2 billion people, nearly doubling the reach of the 2019 edition. Across Europe, the UEFA Women's Champions League is breaking records left and right, and the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland overtook the record-breaking 2022 finals as the highest-attended tournament in the competition's history. Fans are showing up. And brands like Heineken, who've long played a role in the men's game, have been investing meaningfully in the women's side for years. Because they saw what was coming.

And the audience is here. Women now make up 41% of F1's global fanbase – up from a

reported 32% in 2017, with the fastest growth coming from Gen Z. Drive to Survive flipped the script, 46% of its viewers are now women. On the track, the pipeline is finally taking shape. In 2024, Jamie Chadwick's karting initiative brought over 450 girls into the sport, a 1,900% increase. Similarly, F1 Academy's "Discover Your Drive" program led to a 265% surge in female participation in the British Indoor Karting Championship. And more of those girls are making the jump to single-seaters.

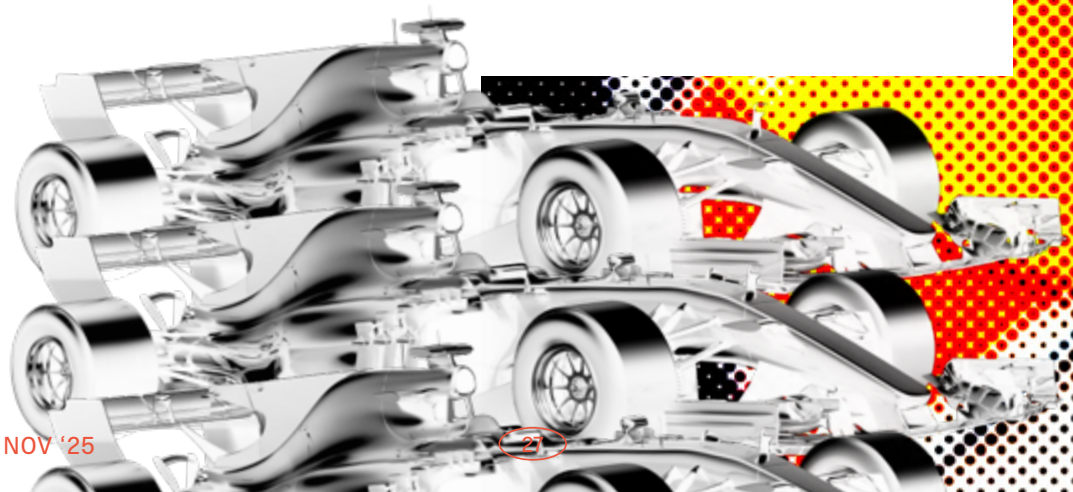
But visibility is everything. Generations of boys grew up with Lauda, Prost, Schumacher, Hamilton. Girls also deserve to be inspired by their own role models.

This is where brands come in.

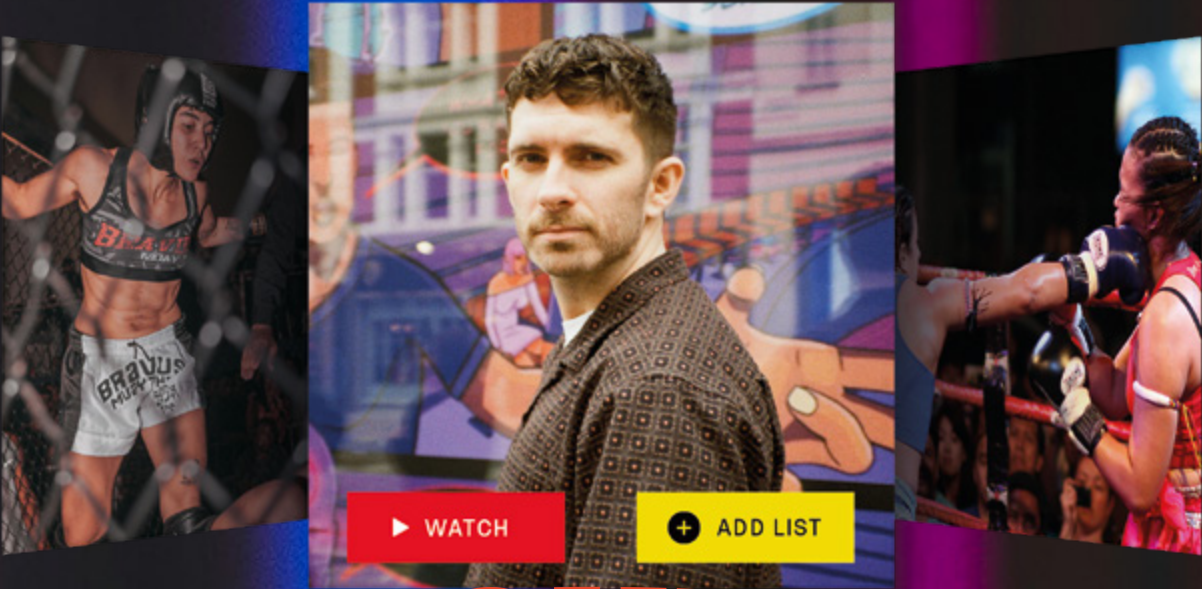
The ones investing early aren't just buying space. They're shaping what the sport becomes and who sees themselves in it. Because this isn't just a shift in sport. It's a shift in fandom. New voices. New heroes. New reasons to care. People aren't watching for results alone. They're watching for meaning. And in 2025, the smartest move a brand can make isn't chasing what's already polished, it's showing up where the story is still being written.

F1 Academy is a signal. A chance to get involved before it hits the mainstream. The brands waiting for packed grandstands and headlines will be too late. The smart ones are already here while the seats are still being built.

The fast lane is female.  
And it's about to leave you in the dust.







# A FIGHTING CHANCE

By Reece Fatuhi,  
Account Director



The trajectory of women's professional sport has fundamentally shifted. It's no longer just about securing a sponsor or an independent broadcast deal; it's about gaining *effective access* to mass audiences. This summer provided compelling evidence that when global platforms and rights holders utilize their massive existing footprints – i.e. their hundreds of millions of subscribers – they create an unprecedented opportunity to grow not just viewing figures, but the culture and economic viability of the entire women's landscape.

Digital giants are breaking down traditional barriers for fans – such as high costs, fragmented viewing, and poor scheduling – by treating women's sport not as a niche product, but as a valuable engagement tool to grow and retain their audiences. By making women's sport available to millions of homes, they are actively building the future of the women's game, giving it more than a fighting chance.

The most recent proof of concept arrived in July with boxing's first-ever all-women's professional card, hosted at Madison Square Garden and streamed globally on *Netflix*. The event, featuring the third epic fight between Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano, shattered records with 6 million global viewers – a 4x rise compared to their previous fight on DAZN PPV three years earlier. The strategy was simple and effective: the fight was available to anyone with an existing Netflix subscription at no additional cost. Placing a major sporting event in front of a global audience of over 300 million existing subscribers moved the event beyond its core boxing fanbase – captivating a much wider, curious audience who simply tuned in because the effort (and cost) required was minimal.

This is part of a wider strategic shift across different sports and territories. In European football, long-term, high-quality investment

is being validated: *Sky Sports* significantly increased its commitment to the Women's Super League (WSL), guaranteeing 118 matches on its platforms. The commitment to mass access is expanding across the continent. *Disney+* recently secured a five-year pan-European deal for the UEFA Women's Champions League (UWCL), making matches available to all subscribers at no extra charge. This follows the successful example set by *DAZN*, who significantly grew the competition's visibility by streaming matches for free on YouTube. The *BBC* also secured free-to-air rights for the same tournament in the UK. Similarly, *Amazon Prime's* exclusive deal with the WNBA in North American basketball demonstrates that the world's biggest companies view women's leagues as premium, must-have content that can drive customer acquisition and retention.

The common thread is the decision by major brands and rights holders to invest more into the space than they immediately take out, solely in the name of growth. This investment grants the sport and its talent access to their vast, existing audiences. It offers a lesson to all platforms; your audience is an asset that can help drive impact for cultural issues that matter to your brand.

What this summer has proven is a re-invigorated formula for cultural growth: **mass accessibility creates mass demand**. This formula creates the foundation for evolving women's sports from a high-growth sector into a cornerstone of global sports culture.

All that's left now is for the world to watch.



ARTICLES

By Tash Jaworski,  
Senior Experiential Producer

SO, WHO

REALLY IS

RUNNING

THE SHOW?

ARTICLES

Picture this – a freezing warehouse six days before a major brand launch. Ankle-deep in artificial turf, juggling multiple client calls and the tech has just crashed. Twenty minutes before global media and influencers arrive for a 360-degree immersive preview experience. To many, it might look like chaos. But it's just another day on the job for an event producer; delivering culture-defining experiences that are on time, on budget, and (most importantly) on message. Often, those event producers are women.

Over the last few years, we've seen huge feats of production spectacles from Taylor Swift and Beyoncé; Adele prove she can get people to fly from all over the globe to a purpose-built 'world' in Munich, just to see her perform; an entire generation painted slime green by Charli XCX; and Billie Eilish showing younger people they don't need to conform. Behind each one of these happenings is an army of (predominantly) women who are creating, strategizing, building and making real the moments that are truly shifting culture.

According to the IBTM Global census, women comprise 73% of the experiential and events workforce – yet only 16% of them hold leadership positions. Despite their deep involvement in planning, executing and innovating, many of these women remain behind the scenes, driving and delivering the work. These figures aren't just tailored around events. Similar patterns are visible across media, advertising, and creative production, where women consistently innovate and lead behind the scenes, quietly but powerfully evolving the direction of these industries without having headline roles.

Women's contributions to events go far beyond logistics or execution. They embed empathy, responsibility, and authenticity into the DNA of every campaign, event and activation so it resonates with audiences – ultimately shaping them into emotionally intelligent and culturally relevant experiences.

From sober day parties, to women's safety measures at events, to a greater focus of wellness and wellbeing as part of the broader

music festival offering, there are many examples in how women are introducing micro shifts to experience status quos, implementing ways that make spaces more inclusive to the shifting (or previously ignored) needs of attendees.

What's clear is that when women bring themselves to the designing of brand activations, logistics coordination, or audience experiences, they are already demonstrating leadership daily, in some cases without formal acknowledgement. Perhaps the entire industry needs to expand its definition of what leadership means. Talent isn't limited to titles, and influence doesn't always come with a lanyard.

**“According to the IBTM Global census, women comprise 73% of the experiential and events workforce – yet only 16% of them hold leadership positions.”**

To build a truly sustainable and forward-thinking creative industry, we must recognize leadership in all its forms – not just in boardrooms, but across all surfaces. Women have long been at the heart of experiential storytelling. At the same time, it's essential to acknowledge that the most transformative brand experiences are shaped by the collective efforts of diverse teams – men and women working side by side, each bringing vision, resilience, and creativity.

After all, the future of the industry doesn't just depend on technology or budgets—it depends on the people designing it from the inside out, for audiences who are shifting their expectations constantly and progressively.



# PIXEL PARITY

By Hannah McKeown,  
Junior Strategist



Here's one of my favourite gaming facts:

1996 was the year that saw the launch of powerhouse franchises like Super Mario 64, Diablo, Resident Evil, Tomb Raider, Quake – games that the self-proclaimed 'real gamers' would consider "God-tier" titles.

But in that same year, one game outsold them all: Barbie Fashion Designer.

The games targeted towards women have historically been looked down on and regarded as not a real form of the art. As for women gamers, it's not seen as a legitimate interest without heavy vetting on if they enjoy gaming through a male lens.

While gaming used to be a gender-equal passion, since the video game crash of the 1980's, the majority of games shifted to solely marketing to boys and men. It saw the rise of 'Yorkie'-style marketing slogans like 'Game Boy Advanced - For Men'; ads all created to appeal only to boys and men.

And even now, there's a very online backlash which connects women gaming to woke marketing, and I've even witnessed prominent women-bashing in recent advertisements from one of the largest gaming headset brands.

But amidst all this, a generational shift is happening under our noses. Gen Alpha are quietly, unconsciously dismantling gendered play. The rise of platforms like Roblox and Minecraft – often dubbed the "metaverse" – are attracting mass numbers of young people to gaming at an earlier age, and who are continuing to play into their teens.

These massively multiplayer online games (MMO's) thrive on their open structure, accommodating diverse playstyles for all genders – fostering stronger social connections and reducing stigma between people of varying identities.

Crucially, these platforms empower diverse creators, including a growing number of prominent women. Their fluidity allows for

cross-play, legitimising previously overlooked "women-centred games." For example, Roblox's "Dress to Impress," reminiscent of Barbie Fashion Designer, gains significant cultural legitimacy when male creators, like Caseoh with his large audience, engage with it – even if, initially, ironically.

So, is Roblox the sole saviour of women in gaming? Not just yet. However, for the rest of us, there are many things to learn about how brands can speak to all gamers – not just the loudest ones or the stereotypes. Beyond this being the right thing to do, it's also what makes the most commercial sense.

Brands can talk to women with not only women-heavy titles such as Sims and Stardew Valley, but also through varied playstyles such as playing Baldur's Gate 3 for the romance options, or Monster Hunter solely for the fashion. All of which can be scoffed at by the "traditional gamer" but are legitimate games and playstyles that their communities want brands to validate further through immersive and tactile experiences which at their most basic look like events and merch.

Targeting women in gaming, and in wider marketing, requires taking women's culture seriously, not as something less. The cultural issues with gaming show how brands need to be mindful of coded, sexist marketing, as it can have consequences on passions and wider culture for years to come. But also, most recognise any shift in approach to inclusion, even if authentically targeting real change, will always need to be a gradual journey between brands and their audience. It's never overnight.

Finally, what the likes of Roblox shows us is that the future's bright. I'm confident today's status quo will give way to an exciting new generation who have, albeit unknowingly, already started on their quest to overhaul and re-imagine what genuinely inclusive cultural spaces of the future look like.





# THE POWER OF HER ROUTINE

By Laura Flesch,  
Account Director

In 2025, the way women engage with sport, wellness, and performance is more intentional than ever. Across communities – online and IRL – there's a shift in how we show up for ourselves and each other. It's not just about hitting a PB or winning a medal. It's about the daily rituals that create consistency, balance, and resilience.

Whether it's a morning run with friends, a mindful recovery session, a group playlist before game day, or a voice note check-in after training – these moments are where performance is quietly built. We see it during big cultural events like the Women's Euros or the Rugby World Cup, where the conversations are just as much about emotion, wellbeing and connection as they are about sport.

But there's a tension; much of the mainstream narrative still doesn't reflect this. It reduces women to old binaries – either the driven elite athlete or the soft-focus "wellness girlie". What gets missed is the full reality: performance and lifestyle aren't opposites. For many of us, they're one and the same. Wellness isn't what happens after the work – it is the work. And when it's built into our routines, it creates an ecosystem that supports not just better sport, but stronger, more sustainable lives.

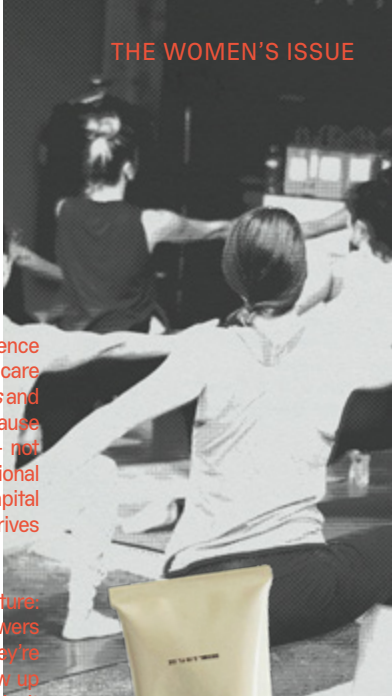
This mindset isn't limited to sport – it reflects a broader shift in how women are building cultural capital. Not the abstract kind, but the kind rooted in ritual, community, and emotional resonance. The kind that moves millions. Alex Cooper's \$125M SiriusXM deal wasn't just about

a podcast; it was about turning lived experience into a cultural engine. Rhode made skincare part of pre-game prep. adidas' *You Got This* and Skims partnering with the WNBA work because they speak to *shared*, everyday routines – not isolated achievements. That's what traditional performance narratives miss: cultural capital isn't built solo. It's collective. And it's what drives real brand relevance today.

This is the new reality of female-led culture: wellness isn't a break from ambition – it powers it. And rituals aren't just personal habits: they're cultural signals. For brands looking to show up meaningfully in this space, the opportunity isn't in trying to create a viral moment – it's in aligning with the rhythms women already live by.

That might mean creating content that fits seamlessly into a post-run scroll, or building activations that enhance, rather than interrupt, existing communities. It's about understanding that women's relationship with sport and wellness is layered – emotional, social and strategic. And showing up with respect for that full spectrum.

Because here's the truth: performance doesn't start on the track, or in the gym. It starts in the routine. In the care we show ourselves and each other. In the playlists, the rituals, the recoveries. In the connection. That's where culture is being built, us women are so damn good at it. And brands that can tap into that rhythm will earn something better than attention – they'll earn our trust.





ARTICLES

By Charlie Smith,  
Associate Director

RECLAIMING  
MOTHER  
NATURE

ARTICLES

This spring, female Norwegian climber Kristin Harila became the fastest person – man or woman – to scale all 14 of the world's eight-thousanders, taking the title from Nepalese climber Nirmal 'Nims' Purja MBE of 14 Peaks fame.

This is one headline in a wave of extraordinary women dominating extreme outdoor sports. And they're not doing it for applause, but for purpose. Netflix's Mountain Queen Lhakpa Sherpa, the first woman to summit Everest ten times, is driven by the desire to provide a better future for her daughters. Closer to home, Devon native Laura Crane has gone from 'Love Island surfer girl' to the first British woman to ride the 60-foot waves of Nazaré in Portugal. A career in professional surfing once dismissed as unrealistic, the realisation of her dream is now a milestone in British surf history.

A source of inspiration, these stories don't exist in isolation. Women are reshaping every corner of outdoor sports culture, redefining what success looks like, and, in doing so, shifting the conversation and becoming the role models needed to engender confidence in the next generation. They're reminding us that the future of outdoor sports isn't forged by force and singular domination, but by quiet resilience, purpose, and community.

This hasn't always been the case. The world of outdoor pursuits has been male dominated for as long as we can remember, with systemic misogyny running deep (plus ça change). From heritage brands deeply rooted in rugged individualism and conquest, to female surfers being appreciated more for how they look in a bikini rather than their skill as athletes.

We don't have to look back too far to find articles from the nineties vilifying the female adventurer. When Alison

Hargreaves tragically lost her life summiting K2 in 1995, media such as The Scottish Herald diverted attention away from her accomplishments and toward outrage for her having also been a mother. It illustrates the clear cultural collective anxiety felt for mothers stepping out of a 'traditional' role and dominating in something adventurous and 'extreme'. All this without even scratching the surface of the wider inclusivity issue that is far more intersectional and complicated than gender itself.



But times are changing. The distinct leadership qualities women are bringing to the outdoors – adaptability, inclusivity, collaboration – are ushering in a new era for female-led adventure culture. Ever since COVID, the micro-community scene has boomed, with examples including Marnie Rays surf retreats, Love Her Wild, Gutsy Girls and Black Girls Hike – each of them, at once, tackling loneliness, safety in outdoor pursuits and the accessibility to explore these passions. They are symbols of global sisterhood and decentralised power, micro reflections of what's going on in culture more widely.

It's clear the interest and passion for adventure pursuits and aesthetics (such as gorp core) have skyrocketed – and this creates a range of opportunities for brands. Ask yourself how you can connect your brand and products with adventure culture. It could be ATL creative; you might collaborate

with influential creators in the space to help get their work made and into the world – like what Dometic did with renowned adventure film-maker Kitale Wilson; or it could mean getting involved with communities at the grassroots level and helping them to thrive – which will build authentic advocacy from its members as a result.



ARTICLES

By Tasha Bains,  
Senior Account Executive

# It's girl not gURL

ARTICLES

Women-led micro-communities have been on the rise over the past few years, giving people the chance to connect over shared interests and hobbies. There's a real craving for in-person connection, something grounded and local. Whether it's a run club, book swap, or supperclub, these spaces are helping people form real friendships and feel at home in cities where they might otherwise feel anonymous.

Gen Z, in particular, is rejecting traditional nightlife in favour of "Grandma Hobbies", activities that slow us down and help us reconnect. I'm guilty of this myself (Gen Z rep!). One of my favourite "grandmacore" hobbies is growing my own cut flowers. It's my way of stepping back from a fast-paced life and doing something tangible. And I'm not alone. Thanks to more flexible work (yay), lots of us have more time to explore things we love.

That's where women-led micro-communities come in. They're creating welcoming, IRL spaces for women to explore their hobbies, build friendships, and form meaningful connections, beyond the dreaded nighttime scroll. These groups turn individual passions into shared experiences, offering real support and belonging. Especially for women of colour, who are often excluded from mainstream wellness and creative spaces, these communities can feel like a rare kind of home.

One example I love is Babes on Waves, a platform for WOC making waves in creativity and business. Their "Busy Babes Club" hosts events like saunas and ice baths, wellness activities that haven't always been accessible or comfortable for WOC. Another fave is 2sday Supper Club, which brings women together through curated dinners to celebrate creativity and empower each other through shared interests (and a great meal).



These communities are also shifting how we view influence. It's less about followers, more about intentional connection. Word-of-mouth is making a comeback, and brands are noticing. Bicester Village teamed up with Diet Paratha for a flower arranging workshop, connecting a WOC-founded community with a shared hobby and a meaningful experience. The V&A x Muslim Sisterhood and Priya Ahluwalia x GANNI collabs also show how brands are finally beginning to meet communities where they are championing hobbies and not diluting them.

**Women-led micro-communities are redefining connection in 2025. They're rejecting clout culture in favour of authenticity.** For women, especially women of colour, they offer rare spaces of safety, creativity, and empowerment. If brands want to connect meaningfully, they need to show up with care, consistency, and real support, not just an offer to activate during International Women's Day or Black History month. **Communities are becoming more authentic investments for brands over influencers.**

I collect trainers, arrange flowers, and obsess over a good tablescapes. I even posted about it on TikTok, and to my surprise, people started asking if they could come to my supperclub. So maybe I've accidentally started my own micro-community. Everyone's carving out their own little space, and it doesn't have to be about brand deals or going viral. It's just about sharing what you love with others who get it. **Women-led micro-communities aren't just a trend; they are the blueprint for cultural influence and connection in the years to come.**





ARTICLES

COPY:

MEN'S.

PASTE:

WOMEN'S.

By Sam Hurley, Director



ARTICLES

*"Recognize the worlds of performance, lifestyle, fashion and beauty are intertwining"*

It's always tricky starting an article on women's sport by talking about men's sport, but hear me out.

When it comes to men's sport—at least the established ones like rugby, football, and cricket—you often think of the heritage, the iconic moments stretching back decades: the deeply ingrained rituals, the memories your old man had of his first ever game, and his old man and so on.

Women's sport doesn't necessarily have that to the same extent. Sure, there is history in women's sport, both in monumental sporting achievements and in monumental acts to overcome eye-rolling hegemony.

But is this necessarily a bad thing? That women's sport's rituals, fandoms, leagues, and competitions are all comparatively new?

For me, this is where the opportunity lies, for brands, rights holders, anyone with skin in the game really.

It's in the fact that women's sport isn't held back by heritage, shackled by sentimentalism. And it's the aforementioned organizations who recognize this who will capitalize on the surge in interest in a multitude of different sports. They aren't afraid to do things that are a bit radical, a bit different from men's sport—because they can.

That's not to say that copying and pasting successful formulas from men's sport can't work for women's sport. The women's iterations of the Champions League, Six Nations, EUROS, and World Cups in various sports have all been, and will continue to be, unequivocal triumphs—both commercially off the pitch and for the quality of the action on it.

But there is scope to break out of the established confines of traditional men's competitions and take advantage of the opportunities this gives.

Take the recently announced Women's Lions Tour. A lot was discussed after this year's Men's Lions Tour about whether they should shake things up after a – comparatively – low-key tour to Australia. Maybe a tour of South America? Or a trip to France? The latter would certainly be more accessible and would generate a younger crowd (side note: my parents went on this year's tour and felt young).

But it won't happen; it can't happen. The Men's Lions Tour is so steeped in tradition and history that the regular cycle of Australia–New Zealand–South Africa will never be broken.

But it can for the women. It's a new thing, a new opportunity to establish different traditions, different rituals. Admittedly, they are heading to New Zealand for the inaugural tour, but surely a France tour would be considered for the second.

And it is in this freedom that the opportunity for brands lies. We've seen a rise in new, fresh brands aligning solely with women's teams and activating in new, fresh ways—look at Drip and Tottenham Women or Clinique and the Red Roses. These are not traditional sports sponsors by any means. The brands that recognize the worlds of performance, lifestyle, fashion, and beauty are intertwining in women's sport have the opportunity to capitalize on it and support the broader journey of growth.

Coming back to rugby, the time to do that is now. The Red Roses are off the back of a stadium-sell-out World Cup win. A stadium sold out by new, younger fans – fans who might be looking for something a bit different than “traditional” rugby. Those willing to use this opportunity, to think differently and acknowledge that women's sport isn't about recreating the past, will become a co-author for this inevitable future of sporting culture





# CINDERELLA

## IN DAS

## CLURRB

By Ant Firth-Clark,  
Senior Strategist

I was 17 when I first went to a rave.

An abandoned warehouse in bumpkin Hertfordshire, broken into illegally, filled to the rafters with crusty-types who had been directed to the secret spot via an answerphone message. The free party was run by a Psytrance crew called STS, which stood for Squatter Techno Shit.

But the thing that had struck me most about that night was the idea that there was so much more life to be had, when you cracked on from midnight to light. A behaviour I proceeded to then cultivate and perfect going through my twenties and early thirties, fully swallowed up into the subculture of rave.

But now, as I grunt my way toward my forties, and in spite of my heavily worn club identity. I. Just. Can't. Do. It. Anymore. (Well... nowhere near as much.) Professional responsibilities, physical and mental health, former raver pals now with kids, the price of booze... there are just so many factors at play that if you succumb to a night sesh of subs, you rue the day for the following week.

And it looks like I'm not the only one.

Thing is, I'm not talking about my fellow weary two-steppers. Younger people today have got a completely different outlook. They've re-appraised what makes a life well lived and then looked at us and decided 'that ain't it'.

It's been recently reported how 51% of women like to go to bed early after a night out, 65% would rather have an evening at home, and just 5% claimed that their perfect night involves going dancing with friends. Just some stats which are all pointing towards a decline in interest in partying into the early hours, a trend which is picking up steam – especially amongst younger women – under the cultural description of 'Cinderella Partying', whereby the desire is to go out, and then be home and in bed by midnight.

There's a lot of different forces going on here: a keener focus on holistic wellbeing; the cost-of-living crisis causing people to think twice about a big night out; the ongoing safety issues women disproportionately face like spiking; and then music-related issues such as declining event options owing to the avalanche of small venue closures.

In response, promoters are innovating new ideas and experiences around what a club night can be for the modern-day twenty-something. DJ and producer, Mina, recently set up *Club Soft*, an alcohol-free day party to tackle her increasing discomfort with recovering from late nights, and large, busy crowds. Similarly, Annie Mac set up her event *Before Midnight* to cater to people who didn't want to wait until 2am to see their favourite artist; and, around the world, everything from LA's burgeoning tea party scene to "thermal throwdowns" at sauna/cold plunge venues are illustrations of an active exploration into the space where music and wellbeing collide.

What's clear from this trend is brands seeking to build cultural relevance in music have the opportunity to rethink what their music experiences can look like, so they connect as best as possible with younger people. The endemic nature of alcohol in music means it will always have its place, but this also clearly marks an opportunity for the non-alcoholic and wellbeing sectors to lean in and have a more authentic interaction with music lovers, in a space that has been traditionally very hedonistic.

So there we have it... The soft era is upon us. It's out with the pill and in with the heel. Cinderella is in das clurrb, but she definitely ain't going to the afters.



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