



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

Gender Balance in Irish Sports Media

January to December 2025



 isentia

Contents

Project Overview	3
Key Findings	4
Section 1: Research Background and Methods	5
Section 2: Sports News	9
Section 3: Radio Sports Programmes	22
Section 4: TV Sports Listings	27
Section 5: Conclusion	30
Section 6: Appendices	33



Project Overview

The Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport identifies visibility as a key target area, with the objective of increasing the visibility and profile of women's sport and women in sport.

In 2025, Sport Ireland commissioned Isentia to carry out the most comprehensive analysis of national sports media in Ireland to examine how women in sport are represented.

The approach required an assessment of sports coverage as a whole in order to provide context, support comparison, and identify any differences in representation.

The study seeks to measure the overall gender balance in Irish sports media coverage and to determine whether consistent differences exist in the portrayal and framing of men and women.

This project is designed to look at three aspects of sports media in Ireland.



Sports News – In newspapers, radio news sport bulletins, TV news sports segments and online news and sports media websites.



Radio Sports Programmes – Long form radio programmes dedicated to sport.



TV Sports Listings – Sports listings provided by major, free to air broadcasters.

Key Findings

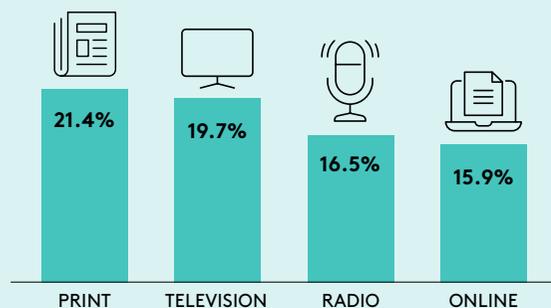
Sports News

18% of all Irish sports news coverage was about women's sport

75% of sports news coverage is focused on just five sports: football, rugby union, Gaelic football, hurling/camogie and golf

15% of journalists within the analysed coverage were women

WOMEN'S COVERAGE ACROSS MEDIA TYPE



TOP MONTH FOR WOMEN'S SPORT



August recorded the highest share of women's sports coverage of any month, at **30%**.

ATHLETE VISIBILITY

Three of the top 20 most visible athletes were women.



Irish athletes **Kate O'Connor, Sarah Healy and Leona Maguire** were the leading women mentioned.

TEAM COVERAGE

Two of the top 20 most visible teams were women's teams.

The **Ireland rugby and football teams** were the 15th & 16th teams mentioned.

Sports Radio Programmes



22% of Irish radio **sports programme coverage** focused on women's sport



TV Sports Listings



16% of **highlighted television listings** were dedicated to women's sport



1 Research Background and Methods



Project Scope and Methodology

This section now describes in detail the methodology used for the three main components of this research.



Sports News – In newspapers, radio news sport bulletins, TV news sports segments and online news and sports media websites.



Radio Sports Programmes – Long form radio programmes dedicated to sport.



TV Sports Listings – Sports listings provided by major, free to air broadcasters.



Sports News



The first aspect of this research has been designed to produce a representative sample of national sports news coverage that is aired or published in Ireland. This research covers all sport related news items including domestic and international sports, Irish and international athletes as well as domestic and foreign leagues and championships.

Sampling

The media sampling included all sport-related media content published in Ireland on specified free-to-air television, national newspapers, national radio stations, and a selection of national online sport media and news websites (see Appendix One). A total of 30,988 stories were analysed for the sports news dataset.

To gather a significant representative sample, the sample was taken from all news content monitored by Isentia and its partners that mentioned a sport across print, online news, radio and television. A randomised sample on a dataset this large ensures a proportional amount from each media type (print, online news, radio and television) based on the volume of coverage they produce.

The analysis of selected national media (rather than all Irish coverage) results in a margin of error, though this is considered to be negligible. This is more likely to impact granular data, due to the potential for certain outlets to have a heightened focus on particular sports, teams or individuals.

However, the overall breadth and longitudinal scope of this report is expected to mitigate the impact of these variations, rendering their impact minimal.

Social media data is excluded from this report due to the varied length, vernacular usage and overall nature of coverage between traditional media and social media spaces. Comparative analysis is therefore unfair between these media types and best-practice analysis should compare findings across two separate datasets.

Analysis

This study involved human analysis of media coverage mentioning sport that was aired or published in Ireland during the sampling period (Jan - Dec 2025). This used a priori design scheme to allow each media item to be coded for a number of predetermined factors, including imagery and language. Each gender mentioned in an item (referred to in this study as “subject”), whether for an individual, a team or a sport, was analysed and coded by a team of human researchers. Multiple researchers were trained and upskilled on the project to ensure inter-coder reliability and consistency.

To consistently and effectively analyse the way that each subject was represented in the media, a coding design was established to assess the coverage of each subject against the same criteria. The criteria focused on the images, language and narratives used, and the source of these markers. The analysis of gender also extended to all sources present in coverage as well the journalists authoring content.

Key criteria included

- **Media information** (including publication, reach, date, length and journalist)
- **Subject information** (who the item is about including their gender and sport)
- **Purpose of coverage** (what has caused the coverage)
- **Imagery** (who the subject of the image is, who are they with and how are they framed)
- **Narratives** (the themes evident in reporting on any of the subjects)
- **Sources** (who is speaking about a subject, their gender, their relationship to the subject and the topics they are commenting on).

The primary source of detailed insights on gender balance derives from the sports news coverage.

Radio Sports Programmes



Radio programming and longer form analysis was identified as an important element of the broader Irish sports media landscape.

For this style of content, we have analysed the gender of the sports discussed across the programmes, as well as the gender of hosts, experts and commentators present in the broadcasts. A total of 4,519 stories were analysed for the sports radio programming dataset across 1,561 hours of coverage. The analysis excluded live sports match broadcasts and also excluded the news radio coverage (e.g. news bulletins) found in Section 2 of this report.

The analysis was undertaken by our team of researchers, who listened to the programmes, and identified the sports and relevant speakers across the broadcasts.

Programmes included:

Media	Programme	Cadence
RTÉ Radio 1	Saturday Sport	Weekly (Saturdays: 2–6pm)
RTÉ Radio 1	Sunday Sport	Weekly (Sundays: 2–6pm)
RTÉ 2FM	*Game On	Weekdays (Monday–Friday: 6–7pm)
Newstalk	Off the Ball	7 days (Monday–Thursday: 7–10pm, Friday: 7–9pm, Saturday and Sunday: 1–6pm)
RTÉ Radió Na Gaeltachta	Spórt an tSathairn	Weekly (Saturdays: 2–6pm)
RTÉ Radió Na Gaeltachta	Spórt an Lae	Weekly (Sunday afternoons, 1.50pm – 6pm)
RTÉ Radió Na Gaeltachta	Spórt an Tráthnóna	Weekly (Saturdays: 7–9pm)

*'Game On' finished broadcasting in Nov 2025. 'Inside Sport' started broadcasting in Nov 2025. 'Inside Sport' was not captured in 2025 analysis but is captured in 2026 data.

TV Sports Listings



To help understand how much space is given to women's sport across live television fixtures, a listing review was conducted based on self-reported information supplied by three major free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters: RTÉ, TG4 and Virgin Media.

Each of these networks provided their sports listings in different formats via their media and communications teams:

- RTÉ provided their full confirmed listing each week, and their weekly sports priorities via their press media centre.
- TG4 provided their weekly sports priorities and full listings each week.
- Virgin Media provided a weekly highlights document where live sports and key programming are listed each week.

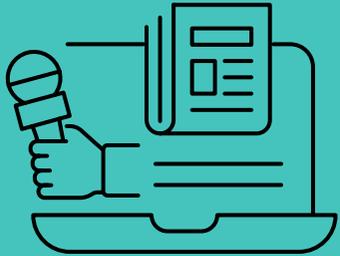
These data sources are all slightly different, but across all three networks, each listing has been categorised according to whether it refers to men's, women's or mixed sports.

Mixed sports in this instance is where it is not an exclusively men's or women's competition. For example, this largely includes horse racing, or the Diamond League (athletics) where the gender of events is not clear.

Where needed, assumptions have been made about the duration of sports fixtures when not directly provided. These have been based on typical broadcast windows for similar sports or where external verification of the listing was possible.

Where the listing data was unclear about the gender of the tournament, this was cross-checked with tournament listings on official sites where available.

2



Sports News





This section presents an in-depth analysis of the presence of women in Irish sports news coverage including newspapers, radio news bulletins and TV news segments. It examines who is featured, how stories are framed, and whose voices are heard.

Two primary measures guide this analysis: Balance and Presence.

Balance is our main measure, and is the percentage of all sports news stories that focused on women’s sport, men’s sport or other genders. A total of 30,988 reports were analysed for part of the study.

Presence is about those who feature in sports news coverage, whether that’s athletes, coaches, administrators or fans, and the percentage of all of these who are women.

Key Findings



18%
of all Irish sports news coverage was about women’s sport



16%
of people present across all sports news coverage were women



75%
of sports news coverage is focused on just five sports, Football, Rugby Union, Gaelic Football, Hurling/ Camogie and Golf

Levels of women’s sport news coverage fluctuated throughout the year from a ▼ **low of 10.7% in January 2025** to a ▲ **high of 30.1% in August 2025**.



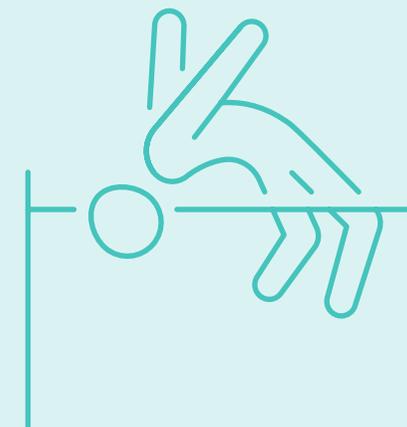
Athletics is the second most visible sport in women’s sport news coverage while it is the eighth most visible sport in male sport news coverage.



Two of 20 most visible teams in sports news coverage were women's teams



Three of 20 most visible athletes in sports news coverage were women, with **Kate O'Connor** being the third most visible athlete in sports news coverage.





2.1 Key Findings Sports News Analysis

All sports news coverage

Of the 30,988 analysed pieces of Irish sport news coverage, 18% was about women's sport. Meanwhile, 16% of all people present in reporting were women, including athletes, teams, coaches, officials and fans.

18%

Of all Irish sports coverage analysed was about women's sport

16%

Of people present across all analysed sports coverage were women

Journalist gender presence

Women accounted for 15% of all sports journalists within the analysed coverage and were 1.5 times more likely than male journalists to cover women in sport.



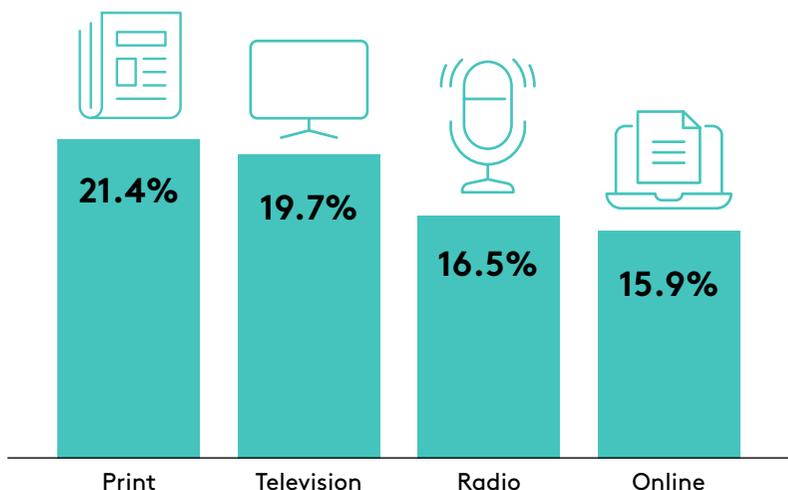
15%

Of journalists within the analysed coverage were women

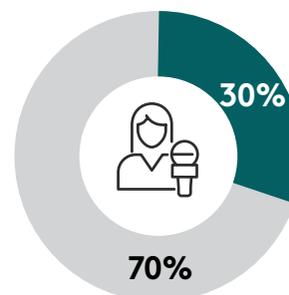
1.5x

Women journalists were over 1.5 times more likely to report on women's sport

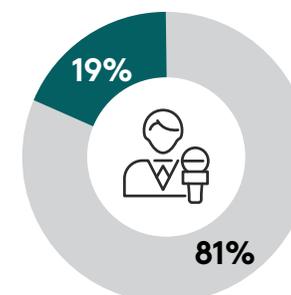
Women's coverage across media type



Women journalists reported on:



Male journalists reported on:



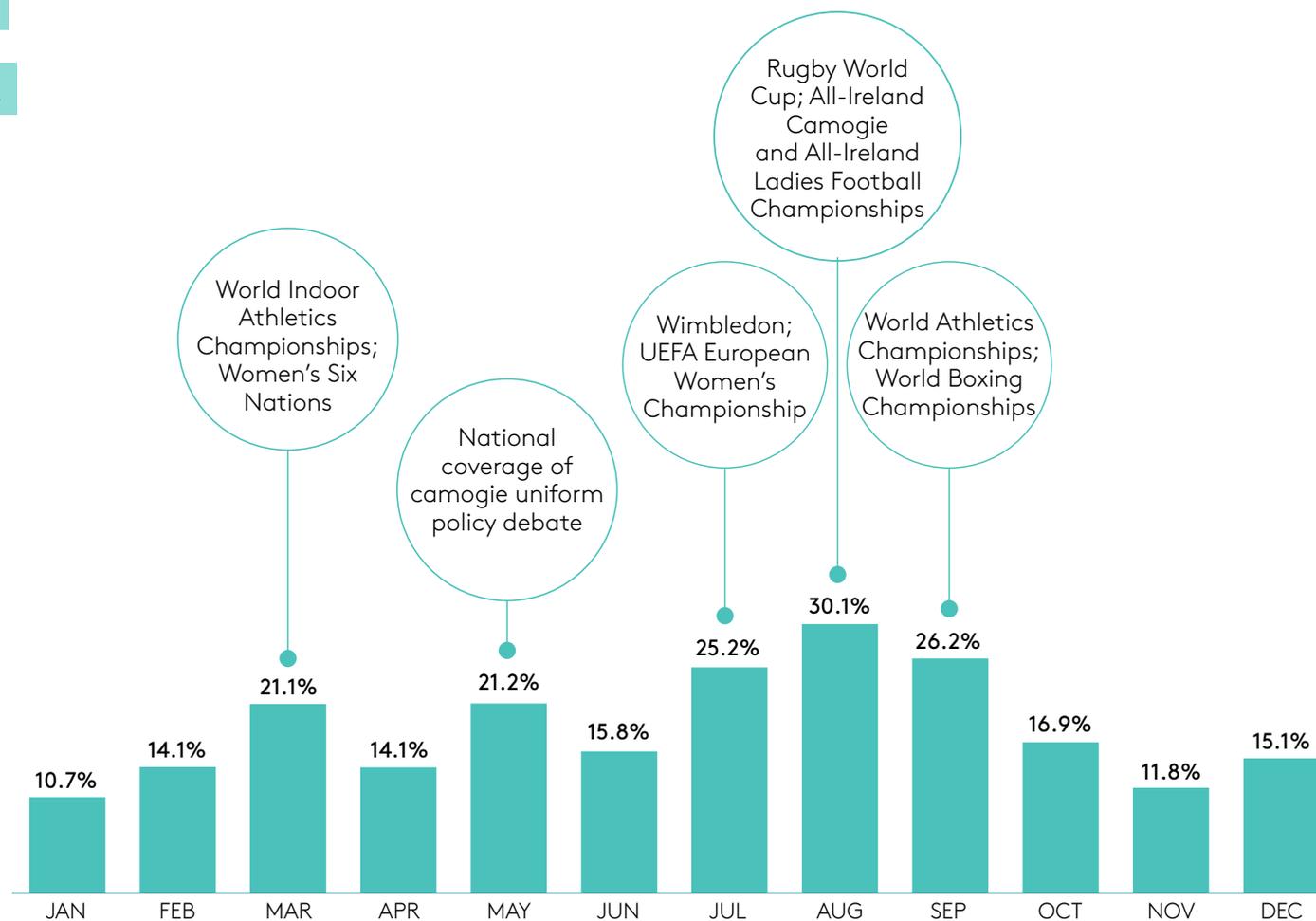


2.2 Monthly gender balance trend in sports news coverage

Events are a central feature of sports coverage, with gender balance varying around periods of major fixtures.

This chart shows the percentage of analysed sports coverage each month that focused on women's sport. Shifts in gender balance largely followed the timing of major events in the sporting calendar, with 91% of women's sports coverage referencing a specific event or tournament (slightly ahead of 87% for men).

Women's coverage reached its highest point in August, when several major events took place, including the opening of the Rugby World Cup and the finals of the All-Ireland Camogie and All-Ireland Ladies Football Championships.



Women's Gender Balance Monthly Trend 2025



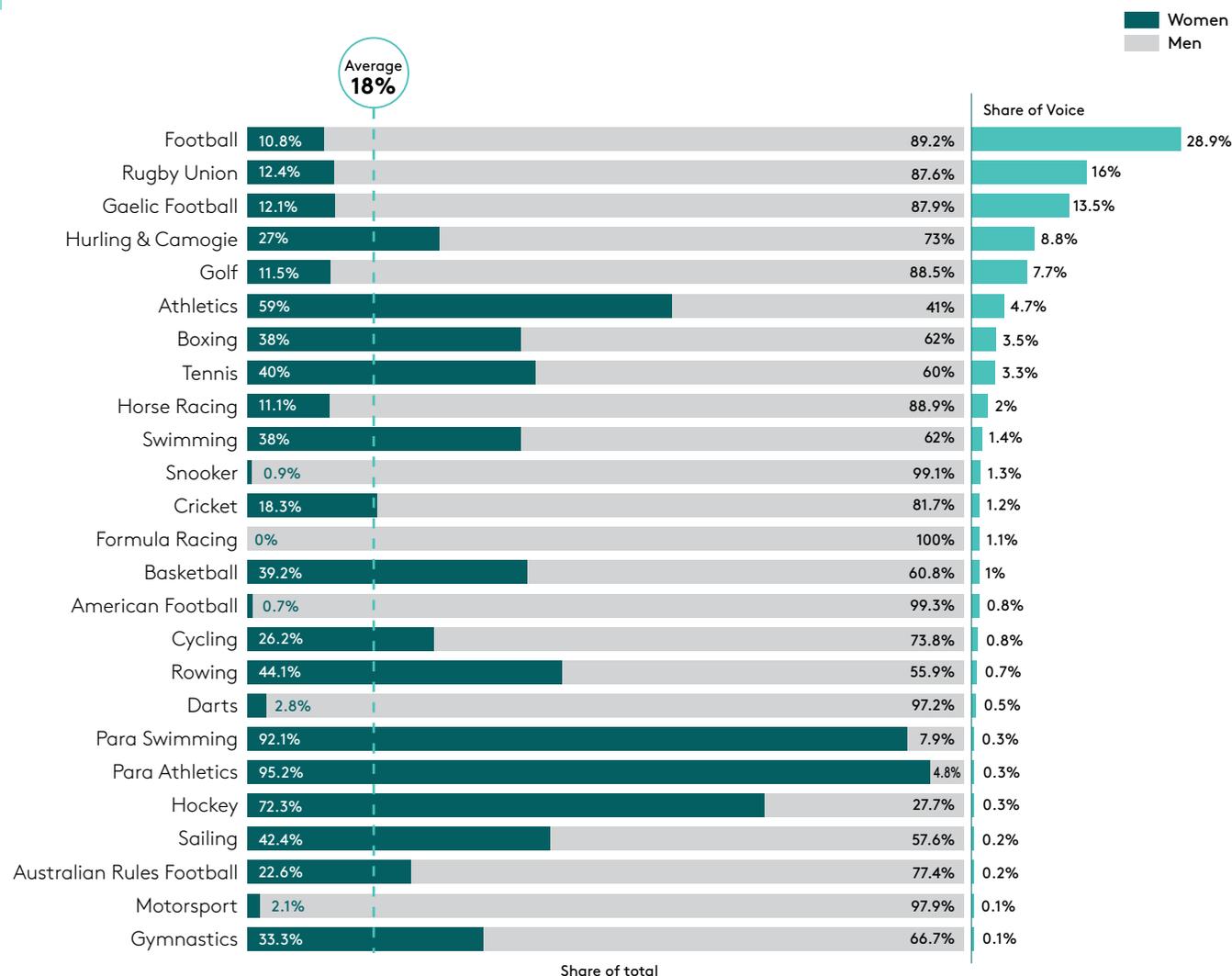
2.3 Gender balance of sports news coverage by sport

A small number of team sports with established men’s competitions play a major role in shaping gender balance.

This chart shows the gender balance for each sport – that is, the percentage of stories that focused on women’s sport or men’s. It then shows how much media coverage each sport received, as a percentage of all sports stories.

Football, rugby union, Gaelic football and hurling/camogie were the leading sports by volume, together accounting for 67.2% of analysed sport news coverage in 2025. Coverage of these team sports focused primarily on long-established men’s tournaments, with women making up less than 13% of coverage in the top three sports but 27% of coverage in hurling/camogie. The difference here is partially attributed to coverage of the camogie uniform policy debate that occurred in May 2025. When the top five sports are considered, including Golf, they make up 75% of all sports news coverage.

Outside of these top five sports, women were more visible. Strong performances by women contributed to increased visibility sports such as **athletics, boxing, rowing, para-swimming and para-athletics** recording shares close to or above parity. However, these individual sports each accounted for less than 5% of the total coverage, with many closer to 1%, limiting their impact on the overall gender balance.





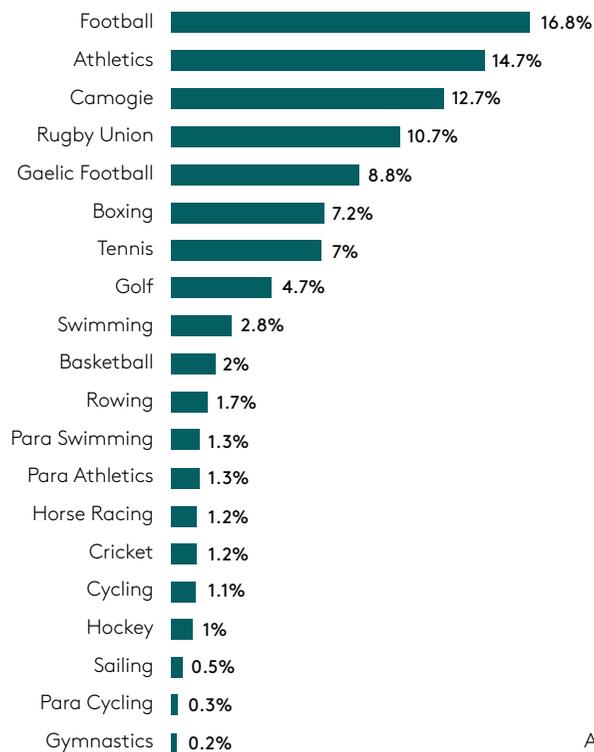
2.4 Most visible sports by gender in sports news coverage

Women's sport had significantly less coverage overall, but greater diversity in the sports covered.

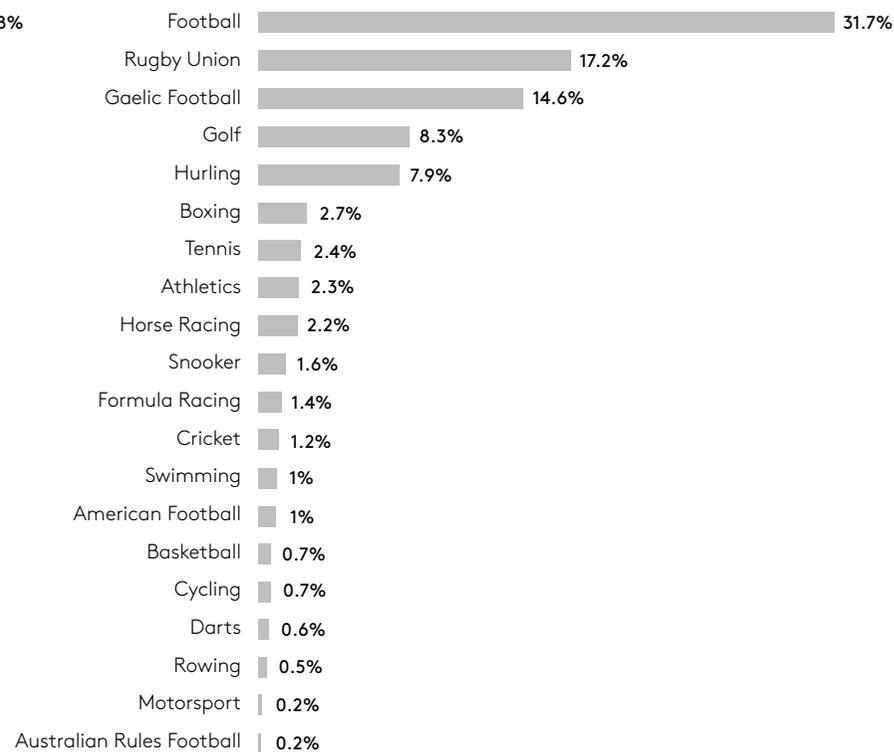
These charts show how sports news coverage differs by gender. The top sports in women's coverage appear on the left, men's on the right.

Football was the leading sport for both women and men but was far less dominant in women's coverage (16.8%). Instead, attention was spread more evenly across other sports, including athletics, camogie and rugby union, supporting a more varied narrative around women's sport.

By contrast, men's coverage was more heavily concentrated around the top five sports, with football alone accounting for close to one-third (31.7%) of men's coverage analysed.



Most Visible Sports within Women's Coverage



Most Visible Sports within Men's Coverage



2.5 Most visible athletes in sports news coverage

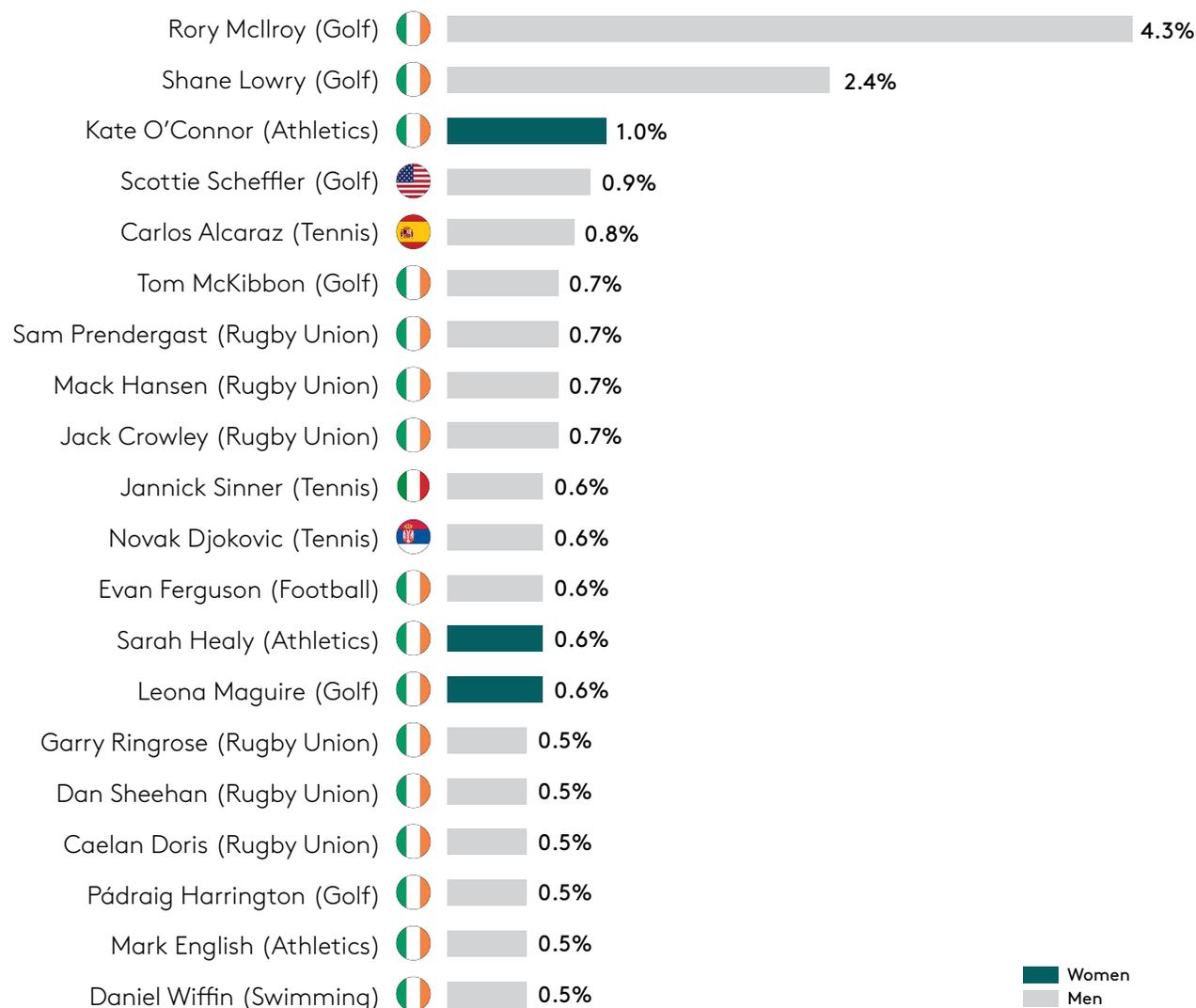
Women's visibility centred on Irish athletes at major international competitions, with success most often driving the highest levels of coverage.

This page shows the leading athletes by how often they were mentioned in sports news from January to December 2025.

Three women appeared among the 20 most visible athletes by volume of coverage. All three were Irish athletes competing internationally in athletics and golf, with coverage centred on major international events and performance outcomes. In particular, the prominence of Kate O'Connor aligned with podium results at international athletics competitions.

This pattern extended beyond the top 20, with women's presence continuing to centre on Irish athletes competing in major competitions. Irish athletes such as Sharlene Mawdsley, Katie McCabe, Rhasidat Adeleke and Katie Taylor appeared just outside the top 20, with visibility similarly linked to strong performance.

While Irish representation and success also shaped visibility for men, they were not consistently required for men to feature prominently. Men appeared more frequently in the top 20, with visibility linked not only to major competition success but also to international profile, provincial competition and emerging or selection narratives.





2.6 Most visible teams in sports news coverage

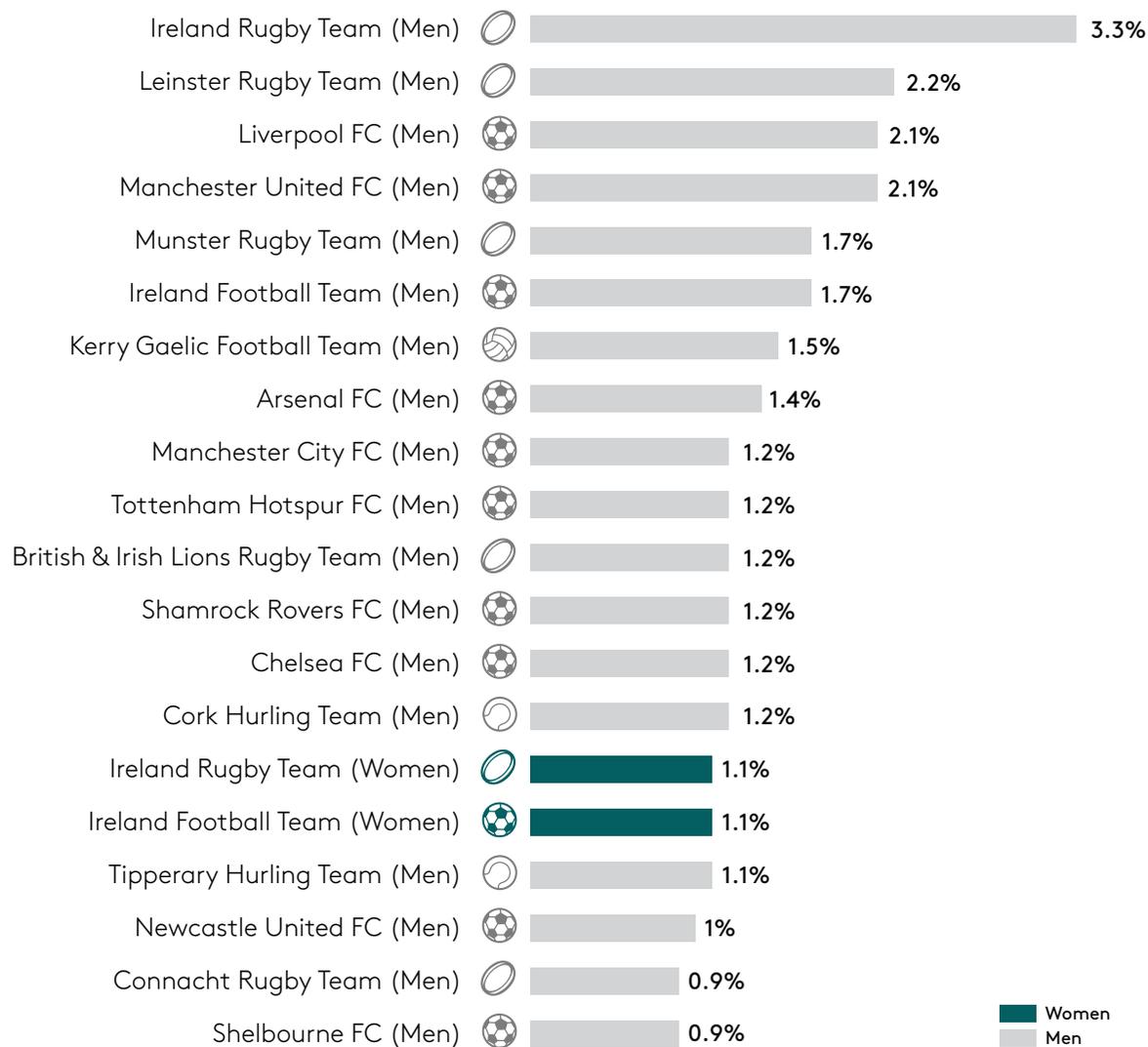
Women were more visible as individual athletes than as teams, with women’s presence among the most visible teams limited to national representative sides.

This page shows the leading teams by how often they were mentioned in sports news from January to December 2025.

Only two of the 20 most visible teams were women’s teams, both Irish national sides in rugby and football. By contrast, men’s teams featured more frequently and across a wider mix of competition levels.

Camogie ranked as the third leading sport within women’s coverage, yet no camogie teams appeared among the 20 most visible teams. This suggests that debate around uniform policy was not accompanied by sustained visibility for individual teams.

This imbalance persisted beyond the top 20, with only four women’s teams appearing among the 50 most visible teams overall (with the Cork camogie team at 34th, and the Galway camogie team at 48th).





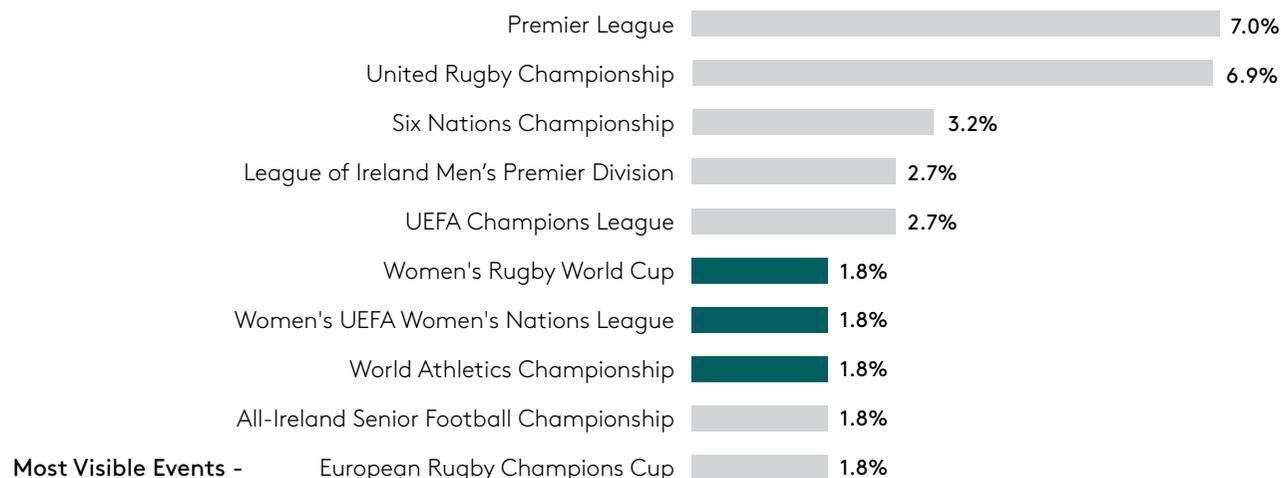
2.7 Most visible events in sports news coverage

Events featured slightly more often in women’s reporting, with 91% of women mentioned in direct connection with a specific event or tournament, compared to 87% of men.

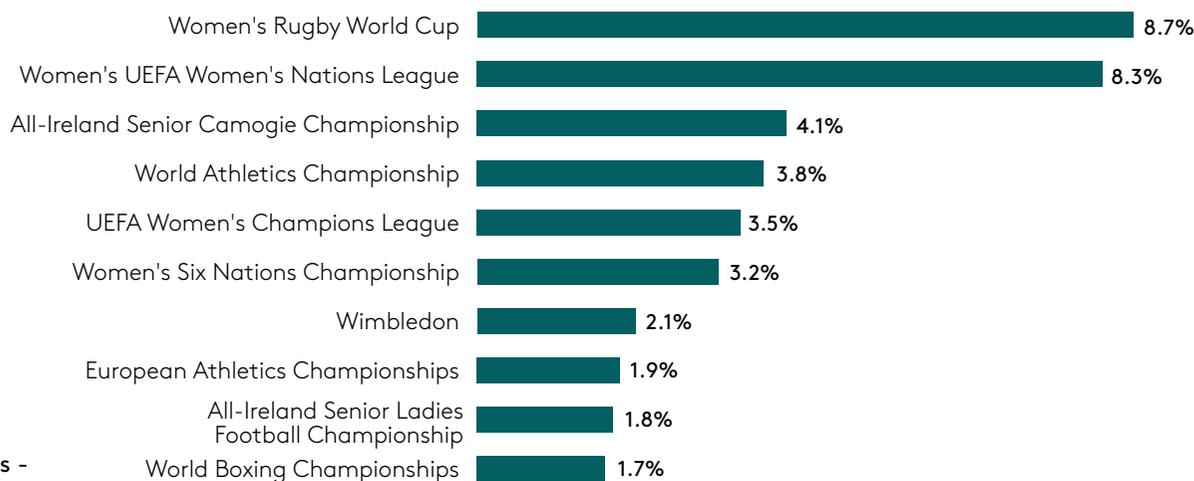
These charts show the most frequently mentioned events or tournaments across the analysed coverage, as well as within coverage of women’s sport specifically.

The men’s football Premier League was the most referenced event in coverage, appearing in 7.0% of reporting. Its long season contributed to sustained media attention for men’s sport across the year, with only a brief lull in June and July, following the end of the season

■ Women
■ Men



Most Visible Events - Overall



Most Visible Events - Within Women's Coverage



2.8 Most visible sources in sports news coverage

Sources

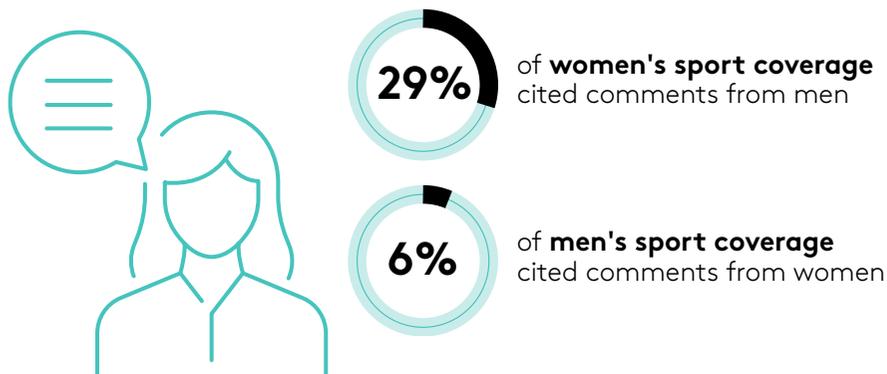
Sources are people quoted in a story. This can include athletes, coaches, family, fans, officials, or administrators. These have been analysed for gender (where available), their relationship to the subjects, and what they were commenting on.

Women's and men's sports stories were **equally likely** to be told with sources included.

In coverage that quoted a source, women athletes **spoke for themselves** more than men.

Commentary from women

Almost one-third of coverage about women's sport quoted male voices – yet in men's sport, women's voices were largely absent.



Women athletes' roles in coverage

Women athletes were nearly one third more likely than men to speak for themselves in coverage.

When women appeared as additional voices rather than the primary subject, they were most often cited in immediate on-field roles, such as teammates or team captains. Men, by contrast, were more often quoted in roles outside the immediate field of play, including as coaches, officials, supporters or experts.

More sport coverage cited women as:



Teammates



Team Captains

Less sport coverage cited women as:



Coaches



Officials



Fans/
Supporters



Experts,
pundits
or former
athletes



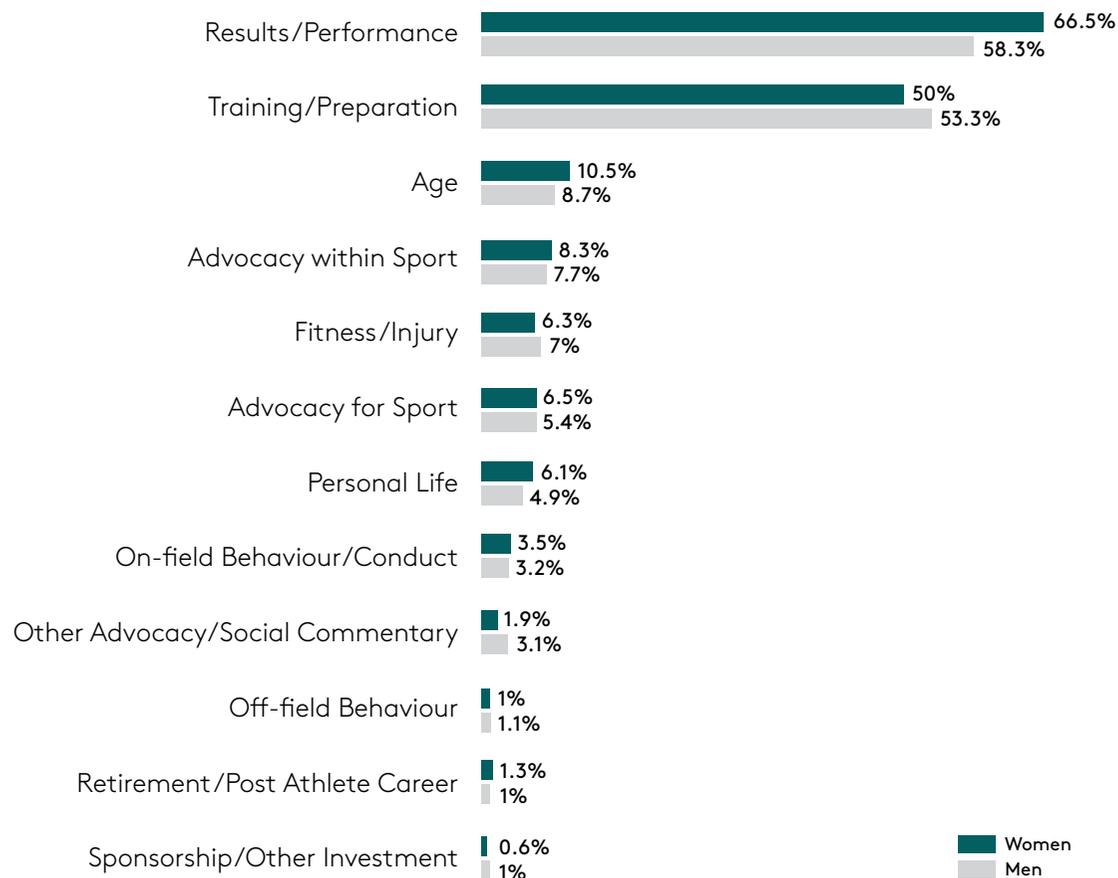
2.9 Leading topics in sports news coverage

Results and performance dominated coverage for both men's and women's sport, with a slightly stronger emphasis in reporting on women.

This chart shows the top 12 topics conveyed in men's and women's sports coverage. Multiple topics can apply to a single story or subject.

While this focus on women's performance is positive, reporting on male athletes and teams more often extended beyond results to include deeper insights into professional performance, such as training, preparation, fitness and injury.

Slightly more women's coverage also discussed advocacy within sport (for example, pay parity, abuse, uniform policy, better management of concussion) than men's. Though the camogie skort debate was a key event that promoted women's advocacy within sport, men's advocacy within sport was also frequently discussed in terms of concussion and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy.





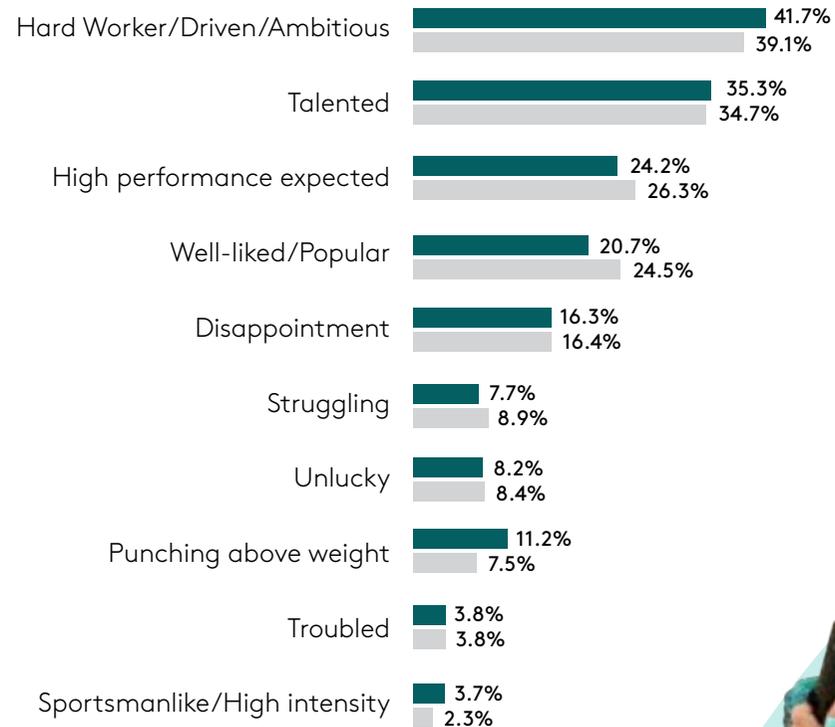
2.10 Leading narratives in sports news coverage

Coverage of women's and men's sport shared many of the same core narratives, with subtle differences in how success was framed.

This chart shows the top 10 narratives conveyed in relation to women and men subjects in sports coverage.

Attribution of talent was broadly consistent across both genders. However, women's achievements were slightly more likely to be presented as earned, with coverage emphasising hard work, punching above weight and integrity.

Men's coverage more often treated high performance as expected, particularly within football and rugby union.



■ Women
■ Men





2.11 Imagery in sports news coverage

This section examines the overall gender balance in imagery, including image composition and the ways subjects are contextualised.

There were minimal differences between images of women in sport compared with men. Composition and contextual trends were largely consistent across genders, with a stronger emphasis on action shots and athletes being pictured alongside their peers and competitors.

Images of both women and men were predominantly situated within a sporting context, with athletes most often shown wearing uniforms or training gear.

There was minimal evidence of problematic or sexualised imagery for either men or women.

Women
Men

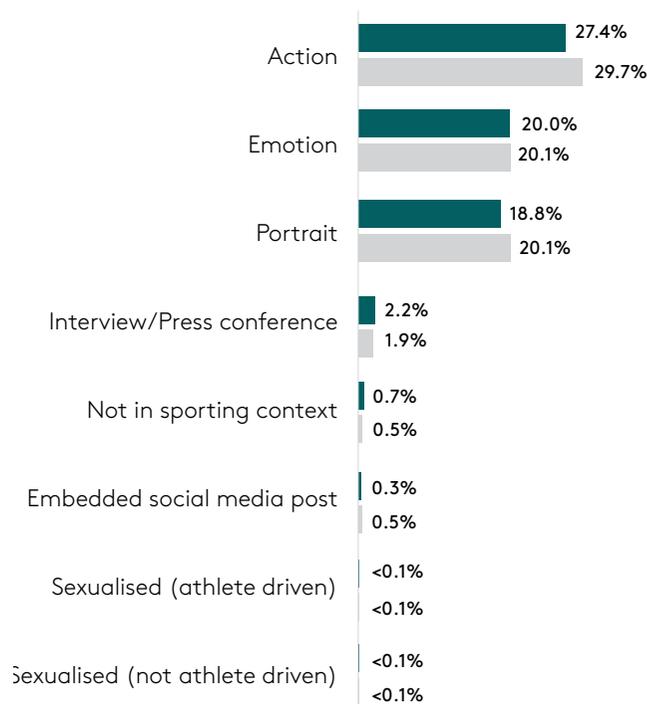


Image Context

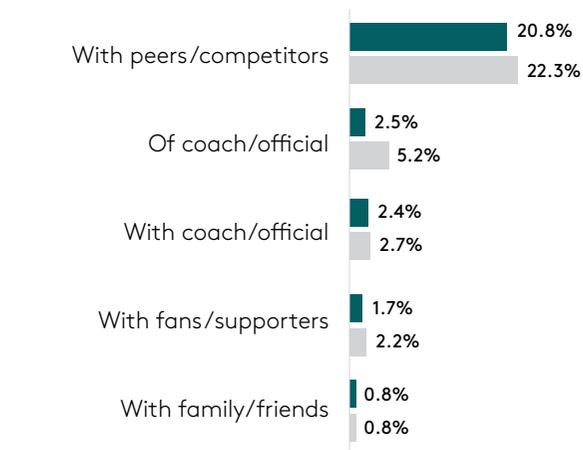


Image Composition

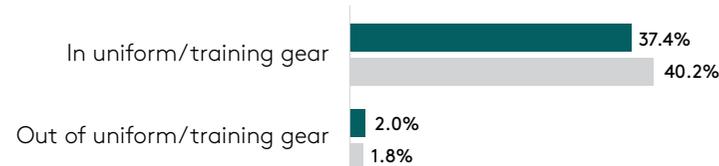


Image Appearance

3



Radio Sports Programmes

This section looks at Irish radio sports programmes, focusing on how women's sport is covered across more extensive broadcasts. This includes live radio shows with in-depth analysis, interviews and panel discussions.

This study examines which sports receive attention, who is given airtime as hosts or commentators, and how the balance of voices reflects broader patterns in sports media. As with the news bulletin analysis, balance is our key measure – that is, the percentage of stories that are focused on women's sport.



3.1 Key findings: Radio sports programmes

All radio sports programmes

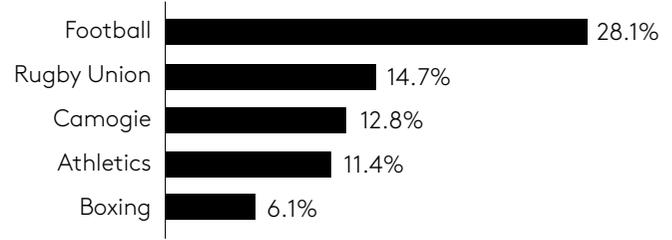
This data is separate from radio news and analyses over 4,519 stories across 1,561 hours of coverage.

22% of all radio sports programming was about women's sport. This is 4% higher than in sports news coverage.



Top sports in women's coverage

Football was the leading sport across radio programmes, consistent with the news analysis. This reflects how deeply it is embedded within Irish sporting culture and its central role in shaping the visibility of women's sport.



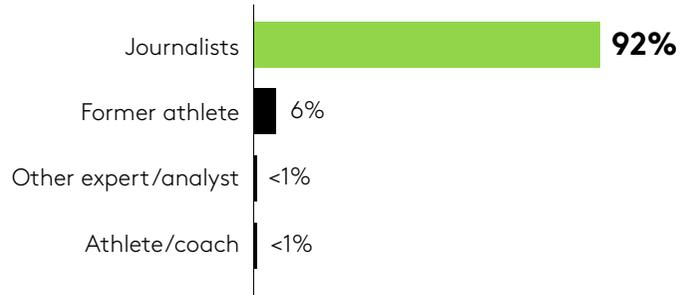
Gender balance of all radio voices

13% of those who spoke on radio sports programmes were women, either as a journalist or external contributor.



The role of women in radio programmes

Among women speakers in radio sports programmes, the majority contributed in **journalist roles**, such as presenting stories. Expert analysis was also provided, though occasionally, by former athletes.



Women were more likely to discuss women's sport on the radio than their male peers.

Women journalists and contributors allocated **24%** of their discussion time to women's sport, compared to **17%** for male journalists and contributors.



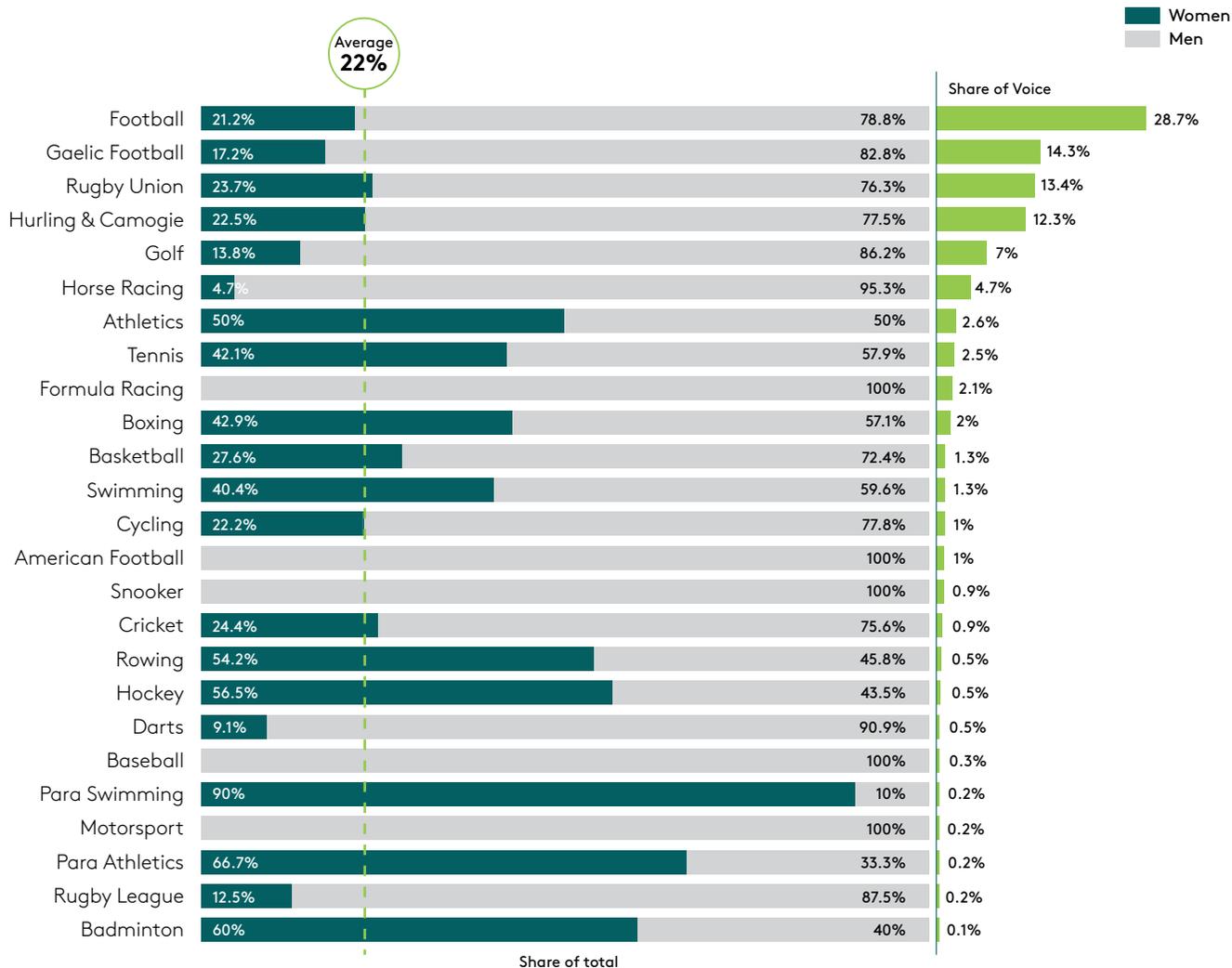
3.2 Gender balance of the most-covered sports in radio programmes

Radio programmes recorded a higher overall gender balance due to increased reporting on women within the leading three team sports.

This chart shows the gender balance for each sport – that is, the percentage of stories that focused on women’s sport or men’s. It then shows how much media coverage each sport received, as a percentage of all sports stories.

Consistent with news coverage, football, rugby union and Gaelic football were the leading sports by volume, together accounting for over half of analysed radio stories (56.4%).

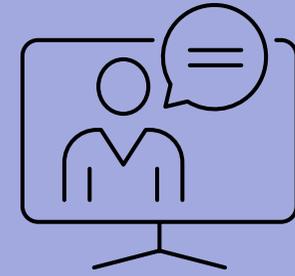
However, women’s share of reporting within these sports was notably higher on radio than in news reporting, particularly in rugby union and football, where women’s coverage was close to double the levels recorded in news coverage.







4



TV Sports Listings

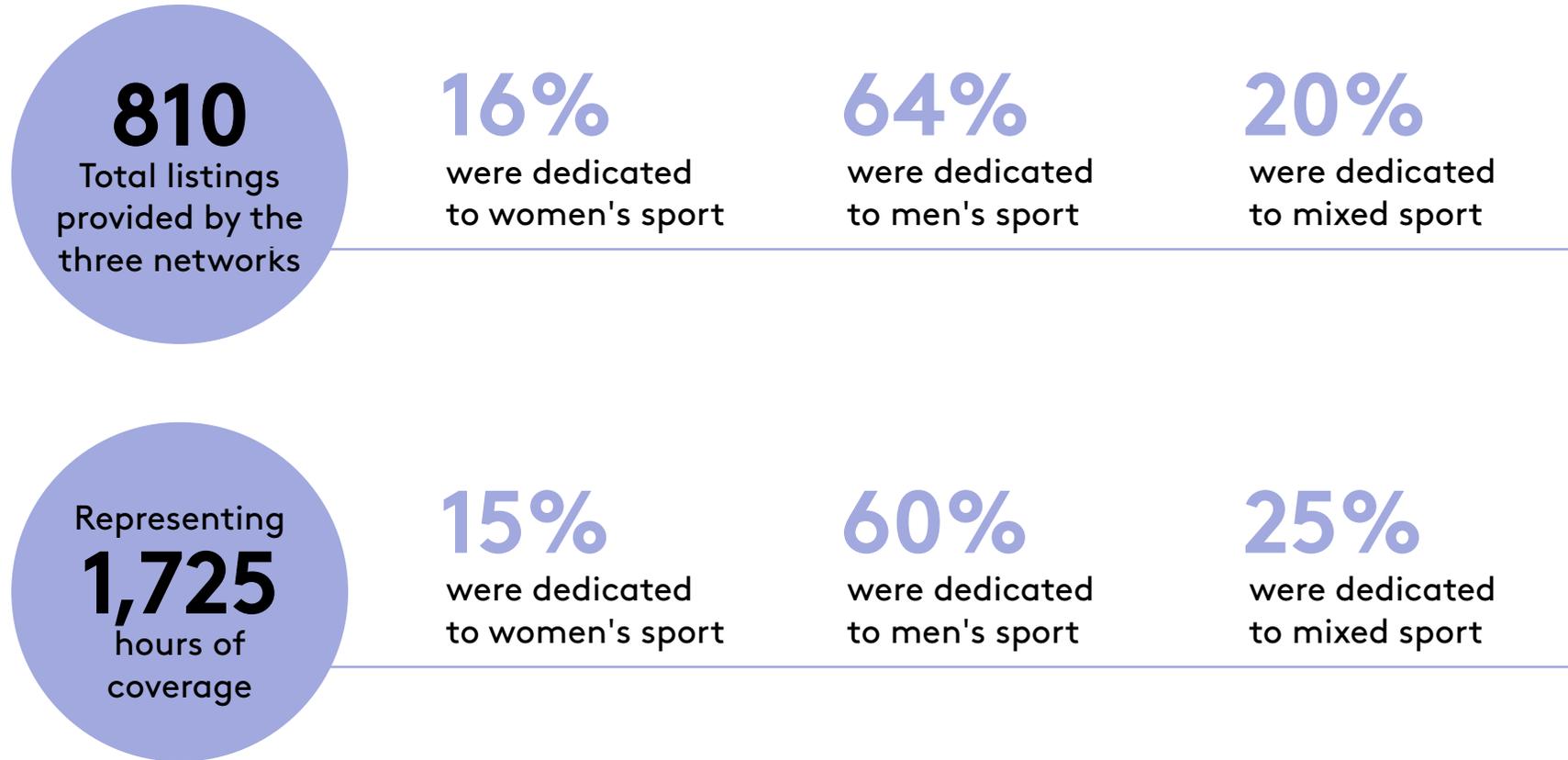
This section examines scheduled sports listings across three major free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters: RTÉ, TG4 and Virgin Media.

This analysis utilises priority listings and sports highlights provided by the media outlets and looks for the amount of space dedicated to women's sport in these listings, as well as the gender of hosts, presenters and commentators where available.

This analysis is based on the information provided by each of the networks, including weekly sports priorities, live broadcasts and highlights in discrete formats. These documents were analysed for how much programming was clearly labelled as women's sport to give us a proportion of programming that was listed as women's sport, and the indicative hours broadcast based on these listings.



4.1 TV sports listings analysis



Mixed sports in this instance is where it is not an exclusively men's or women's competition. For example, this largely includes horse racing, or the Diamond League (athletics) where the gender of events is not clear.

5

Conclusion



This report highlights both the challenges and opportunities in the coverage of women's sport in Ireland.

The data shows clearly that women remain significantly underrepresented in Irish sports media. While the study finds limited differences in how female and male athletes are portrayed when they are covered, the central issue is one of visibility. Despite exceptional performances and achievements at home and abroad, women's sport continues to receive far less coverage than men's.





These findings can support a clear direction for action. Sport and media organisations can work together to increase the visibility of women's sport. While media companies play a crucial role, Sport Ireland recognises that achieving genuine gender balance in sports media requires a system-wide approach. Everyone from Government to National Governing Bodies, coaches, managers, venues, event promoters, and the public can all have a part to play in creating the conditions for balanced coverage.

Media agencies and sports editorial teams remain central to this progress. Sport Ireland acknowledges the positive steps taken to date, while also calling for renewed commitment to build on these findings and aspire to global leadership in gender-balanced coverage.



6 Appendices



Appendix 1: Programme and publication list – news analysis

Below are the programmes and publications that were analysed for the news analysis study (Section Two of this report).

PRINT

Irish Daily Mail
Irish Daily Mirror
Irish Daily Star
Irish Examiner
Irish Independent
Irish Mail on Sunday
Irish Sunday Mirror
Sunday Independent
Sunday World
The Herald (Ireland)
The Irish Sun
The Irish Sun on Sunday
The Irish Times
The Sunday Times

Print publications were selected by the following criteria:

- Selected membership of the press council

ONLINE NEWS

balls.ie
extra.ie
independent.ie
irishexaminer.com
irishmirror.ie
irishtimes.com
RTÉ.ie
sportsjoe.ie
the42.ie
thesun.ie
todayfm.com

Websites were selected by the following criteria:

- Ireland is the country of origin
- Websites of print media are included
- Websites must cover all sports, rather than a single sport
- Transactional websites are excluded
- Top three websites listed on similar web (outside of print media inclusion)
- National News outlet

RADIO

NEWSTALK:

Lunchtime Live
Newstalk Breakfast
The Hard Shoulder
The Pat Kenny Show

RTÉ RADIO 1:

Drive Time
Morning Ireland
RTÉ News at One
Saturday with Colm Ó Mongáin
Today with Clare Byrne

RTÉ 2FM:

2FM Breakfast
Weekend Breakfast on 2FM

RTÉ RAIDIÓ NA GAELTACHTA

Nuacht a hAon
Adhmhaidin

TODAY FM:

Ian Dempsey Show
The Last Word with Matt Cooper
Weekend Breakfast with Alison Curtis

National radio stations were selected by the following criteria:

- News bulletins and sport programmes

TELEVISION

RTÉ 1:

RTÉ News: One O’Clock
RTÉ News: Nuacht
RTÉ News: Six One
RTÉ News: Nine O’Clock

RTÉ 2:

NEWS2DAY

TG4:

Nuacht TG4

VIRGIN MEDIA ONE:

News at 12:30pm
News at 5:30pm
News at 7:00pm

National television channels were selected by the following criteria:

- Schedule analysis of news and live sports news bulletins and sport programmes.

Appendix 2: Irish media

Below are the main media organisations featured in this study and their categorisations.

RTÉ: Ireland's public service broadcaster, Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ), holds the largest share of the television market in the country and is funded through a combination of licence fees and commercial revenue. It offers a broad range of television, radio and digital content, including RTÉ One, RTÉ Two, RTÉ Radio 1, RTÉ 2FM and the Irish language radio station RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG), which serves the Irish-speaking population. Its digital platform, RTÉ.ie, is highly visited by Irish audiences, accessed by 24% of the population each week.

TG4: TG4 (originally launched in 1996 as Teilifís na Gaeilge) is Ireland's public service broadcaster dedicated to Irish-language content, publicly funded by the Irish Government. It broadcasts daily programmes like Nuacht, produced in collaboration with RTÉ, sharing visual and editorial resources to provide comprehensive news in Irish. While smaller than RTÉ and the Virgin Media Group, TG4 plays a vital role in preserving Irish-language media.

Bauer Media Audio Ireland: The largest commercial radio group in Ireland, operating eight national and regional stations. It entered the Irish market in 2021 with the acquisition of Communicorp, taking over national stations Today FM and Newstalk. The group is a subsidiary of the wider Bauer Media Group, headquartered in Hamburg. Off the Ball, Ireland's leading sports media brand, is also part of the Bauer portfolio, broadcasting across radio and digital platforms.

Mediahuis Ltd: Ireland's largest distributor of newspapers and magazines, Mediahuis significantly expanded its presence with the acquisition of Independent News & Media in 2019. The Belgium-based, privately owned group publishes several long-standing and prominent titles, including the Sunday Independent, Irish Independent and Sunday World, although Mediahuis is one of several media groups that has articulated a shift to a digital-first approach in recent years. It operates media companies across five countries.

Virgin Media Group: Virgin Media Ireland is a major broadcaster in Ireland, operating four free-to-air channels. Owned by the USA-based Liberty Global, which acquired TV3 in 2015, Virgin Media holds a significant presence in the Irish media landscape. As of July 2023, Virgin Media One holds a 10.62% audience share, making it the second most-watched channel after RTÉ One.

News Corporation: Owned by global media giant conglomerate News Corporation, News UK and Ireland publishes The Irish Sun, a longstanding daily publication in Ireland. The company operates both print and digital platforms, with a strong online presence through thesun.ie. It also operates six radio stations under the Onic brand, including: FM104 and Q102 in Dublin; 96fm and C103 in Cork; LMFm in the North East; and U105 in Northern Ireland.

The Irish Times DAC: The Irish Times media group is independently owned by The Irish Times Trust, a non-profit organisation that ensures editorial independence. Based in Dublin, the group operates the flagship The Irish Times publication and the Irish Examiner, alongside the digital platform irishtimes.com, which was the first online newspaper in the UK and Ireland.

DMG Media Ireland: DMG Media Ireland is a subsidiary of the UK-based Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) group, and operates a mix of digital and print publications. This study focuses on key DMG outlets in the Irish Market, including extra.ie, the Irish Daily Mail and the Irish Mail on Sunday.

Reach PLC: Reach PLC is a publicly traded, UK-based media company that owns the Irish Daily Mirror, Irish Daily Star and their respective websites. Rebranded from Trinity Mirror in 2018 following a series of acquisitions and mergers, Reach now operates over 120 print and online titles across the UK and Ireland.

JOE Media Group: JOE Media Group operates joe.ie, a digital news and entertainment platform targeting men aged 18 to 30 in Ireland and the UK, with content spanning sport, technology and popular culture; and sportsjoe.ie, which focuses on sport. The group is owned by Greencastle Capital, which acquired it in 2020 following a financial restructuring.

Balls Media: Balls Media is an Irish-owned media company specialising in sports-focused content, primarily through its flagship website, balls.ie. Founded in March 2010, the company operates on an advertising and partnership-based business model, delivering a wide range of sports news and commentary tailored to an Irish audience. In 2024, Balls Media launched an Irish-language, sports-focused site, liathróidi.ie.

Journal Media: For the purposes of this study, Journal Media primarily refers to The42.ie, a digital platform offering a broad range of sports journalism. An independent, digital-first publisher based in Ireland, Journal Media operates The42.ie on a subscription-based model.

Appendix 3: Media type distribution by media group

This table reflects the main media organisations and their presence across online, print, radio and television media as observed in this study. For a full list of the programmes and publications, please refer to Appendix One.

Media Group	Online	Print	Radio	Television
Balls Media Ltd	✓			
Bauer Media Audio Ireland	✓		✓	
DMG Media	✓	✓		
Joe Media	✓			
Journal Media	✓			
Mediahuis Media	✓	✓		
News Corporation	✓	✓		
Reach PLC	✓	✓		
RTÉ	✓		✓	✓
TG4				✓
The Irish Times DAC	✓	✓		
Virgin Media One			✓	✓



Glossary of terms

Balance

Balance is our main measure, and is the percentage of all sports news stories that focused on women's sport, men's sport or other genders .

Coverage Driver

An evaluation of what drives media coverage of sport in the first instance, what catches the most media attention and what the media chooses to report on, is crucial. This helps to determine public exposure, or lack of exposure, for different athletes and sports.

Gender

Data is provided on the gender of all subjects and sources mentioned in media coverage (including athletes, teams, coaches, officials and fans), as well as the journalists, experts and commentators involved in its production.

Imagery

Images are analysed for their construction and how they impact on the portrayal of an athlete. For example, who an athlete is pictured with; what they are doing; what they are wearing (uniform/training gear etc.); who else is pictured with, or on behalf of the athlete (manager/coach/other team representative); and the emotional tone of the image.

Journalists

Journalist refers to those who author or present the analysed media content, including presenters, commentators or reporters.

Language

The kind of language used, as well as the context, strength and implied meaning. This can include language used to describe people, incidents or events, as well as specific words and phrases.

Media Content

This study analyses all sport-related media content published in Ireland on specified free-to-air television, national newspapers, national radio stations, and a selection of national online sport media and news websites (see Appendix One).

Narratives/Themes

The themes and patterns in how athletes are reported on, which shape overall representation. It's not just about the words used, there may also be common trends in the types of stories female athletes are featured in.

Presence

Relates to the individuals who feature in sports news coverage, whether that's athletes, coaches, administrators or fans, and the percentage of all of these who are women.

Reports

Refers to specific coverage, such as individual articles or broadcast news reports.

Sports Radio Programmes

Live radio shows, separate from news bulletins, containing in-depth analysis, interviews and panel discussions

Sources

Voices that are quoted directly or indirectly speaking about a subject.

Subject

Refers to the individual athletes, officials, teams or others mentioned in coverage.

Topics

Isentia's analysis tracks specific issues or topics that are referred to in media coverage. Each topic is counted once per media report, but one report will usually discuss several different topics.







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The logo for isentia, featuring a stylized white 'i' icon followed by the word 'isentia' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

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