




2018 WORLD CUP SOCIAL INFLUENCE REPORT

 A LOOK INTO FOOTBALL
PLAYERS' INSTAGRAM
ACCOUNTS DURING THE
COMPETITION





Index

Index	02	PLAYERS AND TEAMS – RANKING BY FOLLOWERS	24	TEMPORAL ANALYSIS – INTERACTIONS	42
Introduction	03	The leaders	25	Temporal analysis	43
Important notes.....	04	Players with most followers per country	26	Posts and interactions during the tournament .	44
METHODOLOGY AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ...	05	Growing fast	27	MANAGERS – RANKING BY INTERACTIONS	45
Methodology	06	Top 10 players with highest follower growth ..	28	Managers	46
Sample overview	07	Top 5 players with highest follower growth ...	29	BRANDS AND SPONSORS ANALYSIS – INTERACTIONS	47
PLAYERS AND TEAMS – RANKING BY INTERACTIONS	08	Social media rising star	30	Budweiser	48
The triumph of social media	09	Top 10 players with highest follower growth (%)	31	Budweiser man of match award	49
Posts and interactions	10	CONTENTS – RANKING BY INTERACTIONS	32	Official kit sponsors of World Cup teams	50
Players	11	Content is king	33	Nike vs Adidas	51
Top 10 players with most interactions	12	Top 3 images with most interactions	34	Promoted videos by main equipment sponsors	52
Top 5 players with most interactions	14	Top 3 videos with most interactions	35	ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFEDERATIONS – INTERACTIONS	53
Top 100 players with most interactions	15	Top 3 images with highest engagement (%) .	36	Associations and confederations	54
Teams	17	Top 3 videos with highest engagement (%) ..	37	Top 10 association accounts with most interactions	55
Top 10 teams with most interactions	18	FINAL MATCH DAY ANALYSIS – INTERACTIONS AND CONTENTS	38	FIFA and confederations	56
Top 5 teams with most interactions	20	Final match day in numbers	39	Conclusion	57
Interactions per team	21	France top 3 contents with most interactions	40	About Primetag	58
Starting eleven	22	Croatia top 3 contents with most interactions	41		



Introduction

Sport is one of the most significant social phenomena in the World. Football is the most popular sport on the planet, so it's no surprise that football stars are amongst the most famous celebrities.

When an event like the World Cup comes along, gathering all the top football players on the planet in a common location, it's easy to perceive that the activity on social media is to explode

When all eyes are on Russian stadiums, brands tag along and bring their logos to the party

exponentially with fans converging to their idols' digital platforms, eager to follow their every step inside and outside the pitch, to show their support, to celebrate the achievements, and to commiserate on the defeats.

We live in a time when attention is the scarcest resource of all. Accordingly, an event of this magnitude, occurring once every four years, represents a unique opportunity to promote products and services. So, when all eyes are on Russian stadiums, brands tag along and bring their logos to the party. This party used to take place on TV and press, but the World has changed and a big part of the action now takes place online.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup was the biggest tour-

namment ever. The proximity between fans and their idols was unprecedented, making for a more authentic relationship and, in the end, more pleasant and enjoyable to watch the game.



Photo published by the official FIFA World Cup Instagram account after the end of the competition.



Important notes

This study aimed at analysing the behaviour of football players on social media during the World Cup, and assessing the connection they made with fans.

Numerous challenges arise in such a task, and perhaps one of the hardest is to determine which network(s) to monitor. Multiple social networks coexist, globally, with different types of use and geographical impact. We decided to select Instagram because it ranked the highest in our two most important criteria.

Instagram is highly visual, and allows users to quickly share an image or a video that expresses what they're feeling. Instagram is also widely used all over the World, and notably by athletes. No matter the social network selected, there

would always be a downside, as in some countries other social media networks prevail. Instagram minimises this effect.

On Instagram, we monitored several metrics, such as likes, comments, tags. One specific parameter, views, is only available for videos, whereas the number of views of a picture is not made public by Instagram, which has lead us to only consider the number of likes and comments when calculating the number of interactions of a given content. Otherwise, sharing videos would provide an edge over sharing photos, as far as interactions are concerned.

It has been recently detected that the information regarding the number of views is not avail-

able to all videos on Instagram. For this study we collected that information every time it was available, and we used it in this report. It should be noted that the numbers used in this report illustrate the reality publicly made available by Instagram.

All the data used to formulate this report is publicly available data, verifiable by any and everyone on the players' Instagram accounts.

The activity of all the players summoned to represent their countries in the World Cup was observed throughout the entire tournament, even after they were eliminated. The purpose was to prevent their social performance from being affected by their sporting performance.



METHODOLOGY AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS



Methodology

This study was carried out by Primetag with the purpose of monitoring and analysing the content posted/shared by the footballers summoned to the FIFA World Cup 2018, throughout 32 days of competition (even after their own teams were eliminated), i.e., all accounts were monitored throughout the entire tournament regardless of whether the team was in play or not. The analysis involves such metrics as the number of followers, interactions, likes, comments and views, posting frequency, user activity, engagement, time analysis, among others.

This report has analysed all existing official/professional (not personal) accounts of footballers from all national teams in the World Cup. Data collection was carried out on a daily basis

throughout the entire tournament, following a script developed by Primetag.

The engagement rate of the account (E) was calculated by basing the ratio of interactions on the number of followers, using the formula:

$$E = \frac{L + C}{F}$$

where L is the number of likes, C is the number of comments, and F is the number of followers at the end of the World Cup.

Given the volatility of these variables, engagement should be perceived as a relative indicator rather than an absolute one.

The number of interactions (I) is calculated by

adding up the number of likes and the number of comments, i.e.

$$I = L + C$$

SAMPLE OVERVIEW



768

players and managers
participated in the
competition



90%

have an Instagram
account



1.8 M

average number
of followers

689 players have an
Instagram account

13 managers have an
Instagram account



PLAYERS AND TEAMS RANKING BY INTERACTIONS





The triumph of social media

Far from the old status quo, when TV and press were the main existing means of communication, the surge of social networks makes it possible for each player to now own a direct communication channel. Since there are no intermediaries in the process, such channels act as an on-demand tool for them to have unfiltered conversations with their fans.

To be an elite competitive football player is a highly demanding task. Fitness training, physical recovery, opponent analysis and mental preparation are only some of the roles concerning athletic performance a player needs to master.

The "off the pitch" performance has always been important to the perceived image of the ath-

lete. Notwithstanding, with the rise of social media, managing a player's popularity is becoming a duty akin to physical recovery or mental preparation.

The surge of social networks makes it possible for each player to now own a direct communication channel

On the one hand, players can leverage their channels to fuel their teammates or unsettle opponents. On the other hand, their teams expect the best players to pitch in and contribute to the generation of income. Jersey sales, stadium attendance, broadcasting rights and sponsor

fees are some of the revenue sources subjected to impact when a popular athlete is enlisted.

POSTS AND INTERACTIONS



6366

POSTS



990 million

INTERACTIONS



287 million

VIDEO VIEWS



98.6% of the interactions were likes



1.4% of the interactions were comments



Players

All of the top 10 players with the most interactions play for European league clubs – English Premier League (Pogba), French Ligue 1 (Neymar and Mbappé), Spanish La Liga (C. Ronaldo, S. Ramos, Marcelo, P. Coutinho and Rakitic), Italian Serie A (Dybala), and German Bundesliga (James Rodríguez). This asserts the importance of European football in terms of visibility and competitiveness, both internally and externally thanks to competitions such as the Champions League. A higher level of interaction may also derive from the greater internet penetration rate recorded in European countries. Meanwhile, Cristiano Ronaldo has left Spain to play in Italy, and other changes may occur; we considered the information at the beginning of the World Cup, when we started collecting information.

All of the top 10 players with the most interactions play for European league clubs

Half of those top players are European (Portugal, France, Spain and Croatia) and the other half are from South America (Brazil, Colombia and Argentina). The role that football plays and the importance that it has particularly in those countries and leagues naturally leads people to interact more with their idols – especially during such a global event like the World Cup.

Maintaining a consistent posting activity is another major factor when it comes to gaining interactions, which is the case of Rakitic's, who

shared almost 50 posts during the entire competition. However, there are times when a high posting frequency falls short from the power that the level of influence and following an individual has on social media. In fact, Rakitic's story contrasts with C. Ronaldo's and Neymar's reality at the top of the ranking: both players shared less than 30 posts and still got more than 90 million interactions, thus proving their superstar status. Additionally, it's also noteworthy that as France moved on towards the final of the competition, French players' interactions grew accordingly as fans became more active with their idols on social media. Pogba and Mbappé's interactions boosted and then peaked on the day of the Final, thanks to the support and cheering of fans before and after the game, respectively.

TOP 10 PLAYERS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS


1st



SOCIAL MEDIA WINNER
2018 WORLD CUP

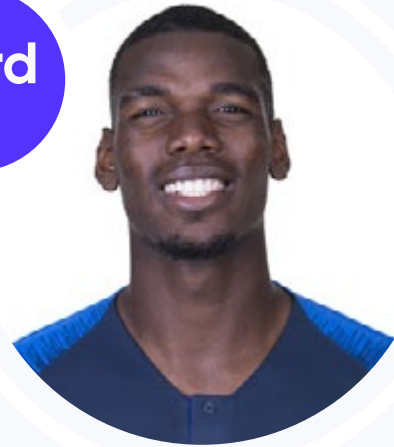
C. Ronaldo
110.0 million
Portugal

2nd




Neymar
97.9 million
Brazil

3rd




Pogba
35.9 million
France

4th




Sergio Ramos
31.1 million
Spain

5th




Mbappé
29.7 million
France

6th




J. Rodríguez
28.1 million
Colombia

7th



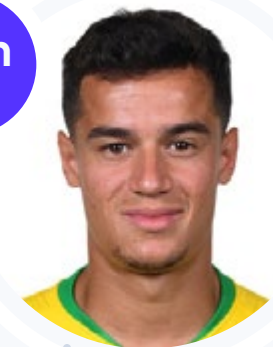
Marcelo
26.5 million
Brazil

8th




Dybala
25.6 million
Argentina

9th



P. Coutinho
25.4 million
Brazil

10th

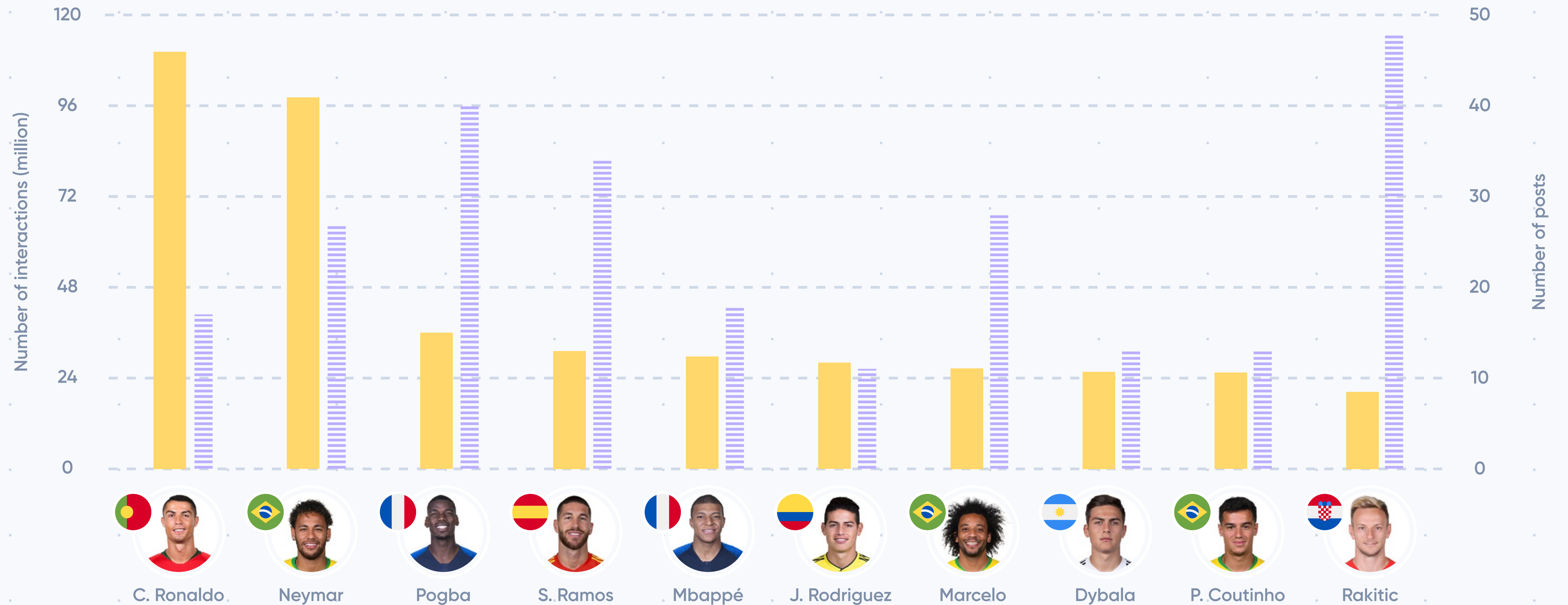


Rakitic
20.4 million
Croatia

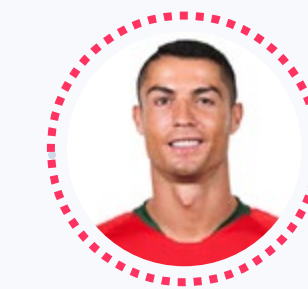
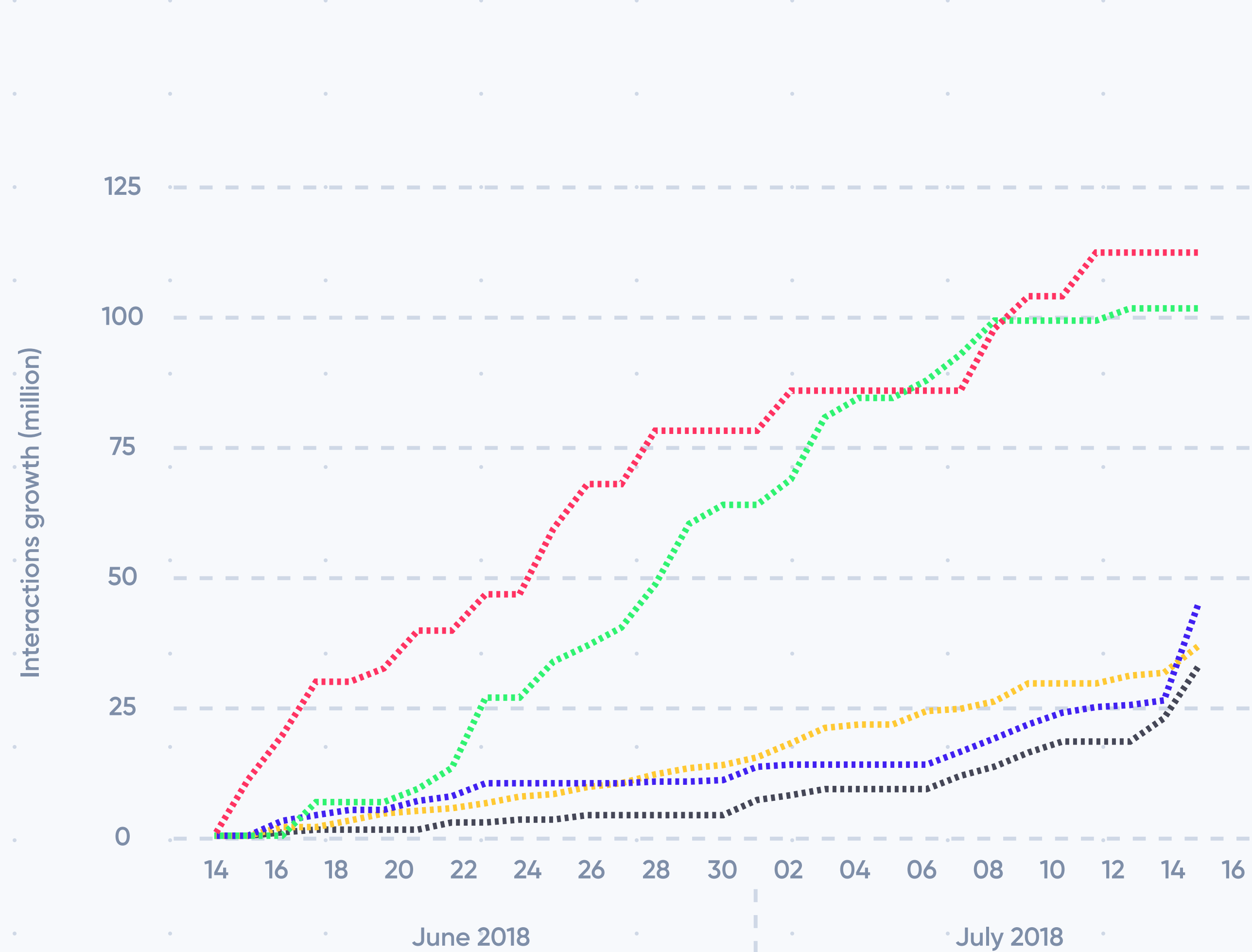
TOP 10 PLAYERS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

Number of interactions (million)

Number of posts



TOP 5 PLAYERS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS



C. Ronaldo

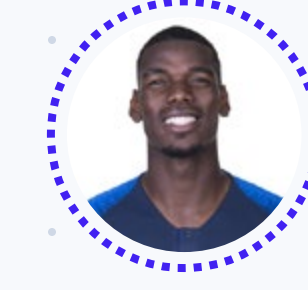
Interactions
(percentage
from total)

11.1%



Neymar

9.9%



Pogba

4.3%



S. Ramos

3.6%



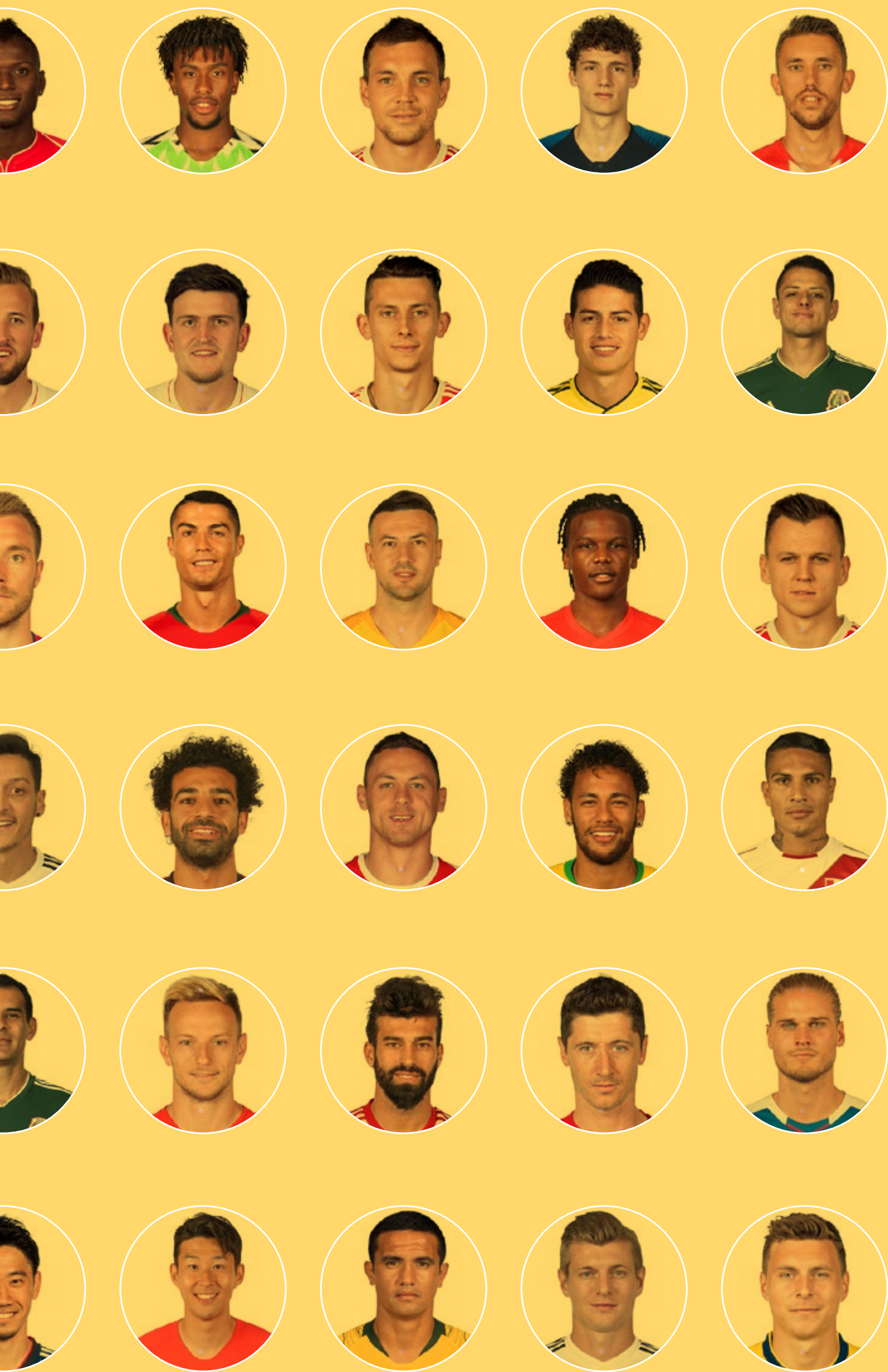
Mbappé

3.1%

TOP 100 PLAYERS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

Position/Player/Country/
Number of interactions (million)

1	C. Ronaldo	POR	110.0	21	Luka Modric	CRO	9.6	41	Miguel Layún	MEX	4.0	61	Vázquez	ESP	2.9	81	Pepe	POR	2.2
2	Neymar	BRA	97.9	22	Jesse Lingard	ENG	9.2	42	Cavani	URU	3.9	62	Kanté	FRA	2.9	82	Fágner	BRA	2.1
3	Pogba	FRA	42.4	23	Artem Dzyuba	RUS	9.0	43	Umtiti	FRA	3.8	63	Marcos Rojo	ARG	2.9	83	Nacho	ESP	2.0
4	Mbappé	FRA	35.3	24	Marco Asensio	SPA	8.2	44	Thiago Silva	BRA	3.8	64	R. Quaresma	POR	2.8	84	Navas	CRC	2.0
5	Sergio Ramos	ESP	31.1	25	Toni Kroos	GER	7.5	45	Cuadrado	COL	3.8	65	André Silva	POR	2.8	85	Brozovic	CRO	2.0
6	J. Rodríguez	COL	28.1	26	Falcao	COL	7.5	46	Mandzukic	CRO	3.8	66	Henderson	EN	2.8	86	Perisic	CRO	1.9
7	Marcelo	BRA	26.5	27	Manuel Neuer	GER	7.1	47	Douglas Costa	BRA	3.7	67	Mascherano	ARG	2.7	87	Ter Stegen	GER	1.9
8	Paulo Dybala	ARG	25.7	28	Andrés Iniesta	ESP	6.9	48	Chicharito	MEX	3.7	68	Mendy	FRA	2.7	88	Achraf Hakimi	MAR	1.9
9	P. Coutinho	BRA	25.4	29	Alisson	BRA	6.5	49	David De Gea	ESP	3.5	69	Kimpembe	FRA	2.7	89	Otamendi	ARG	1.9
10	Ivan Rakitic	CRO	20.4	30	R. Varane	FRA	6.4	50	Mateo Kovacic	CRO	3.3	70	R. Gíslason	ICE	2.6	90	Juan Quintero	COL	1.8
11	Lionel Messi	ARG	19.5	31	De Bruyne	BEL	5.9	51	Sardar Azmoun	IRN	3.3	71	Ochoa	MEX	2.5	91	Benatia	MAR	1.8
12	Griezmann	FRA	18.1	32	Sergio Agüero	ARG	5.7	52	Ángel Di María	ARG	3.3	72	Reza	IRN	2.5	92	Muslera	URU	1.7
13	Isco Alarcón	ESP	14.0	33	R. Firmino	BRA	5.2	53	Dembele	FRA	3.2	73	Casemiro	BRA	2.4	93	Matic	SRB	1.7
14	Harry Kane	ENG	12.3	34	Yerry Mina	COL	5.0	54	Boateng	GER	3.2	74	Farfán	PER	2.4	94	Raúl Jiménez	MEX	1.7
15	Eden Hazard	BEL	11.7	35	R. Rezaeian	IRN	4.7	55	Nagatomo	JPN	3.2	75	Mehdi Taremi	IRN	2.4	95	Loftus-Cheek	ENG	1.6
16	Mesut Özil	GER	11.5	36	T. Courtois	BEL	4.3	56	Hummels	GER	3.0	76	Julian Draxler	GER	2.4	96	Jordi Alba	ESP	1.6
17	Luis Suárez	URU	11.4	37	Granit Xhaka	SUI	4.2	57	Matuidi	FRA	3.0	77	André Carrillo	PER	2.3	97	Sterling	ENG	1.6
18	M. Salah	EGY	11.1	38	Thomas Müller	GER	4.2	58	Shaqiri	SUI	3.0	78	Willian	BRA	2.3	98	Alireza	IRN	1.5
19	Gabriel Jesus	BRA	10.7	39	Dejan Lovren	CRO	4.1	59	Lewandowski	POL	2.9	79	Kevin Trapp	GER	2.3	99	Nabil Dirar	MAR	1.5
20	Rashford	ENG	10.4	40	Batshuayi	BEL	4.1	60	Pavard	FRA	2.9	80	Subasic	CRO	2.2	100	Vedran Corluka	CRO	1.5




Know more

Looking for detailed information about a specific player?

Get in touch.

 research@primetag.com

 00351 211 976 902



Teams

117.9 million likes and comments with a significant growth on the day of the grand finale were not enough for World Cup winner France to bring home the title of “most interactive national team”. Nor were the 414 posts by Croatia – the highest amount of content produced among the top 10. Brazil topped it instead, with 193.8 million likes and comments combined.

In 7 of those 10 countries, the total number of likes and comments surpasses their respective national population.

Neymar, Marcelo and P. Coutinho together amassed more than three-quarters of the tropical country’s interactions and thus contributed to its exponential growth with a total of 68 shared posts between them throughout the tournament. A similar phenomenon is also witnessed with C. Ronaldo, who represents 92% of the entire Portuguese sum. Maintaining the trend of standout players, France owes 56% of its interactions to two players: Pogba and Mbappé.

In 7 of those 10 countries, the total number of likes and comments surpasses their respective national population. Croatia tops everyone with its total of interactions corresponding to 1276.06% of its population. Historic football lovers England and Germany didn’t exceed their countries’ population number.

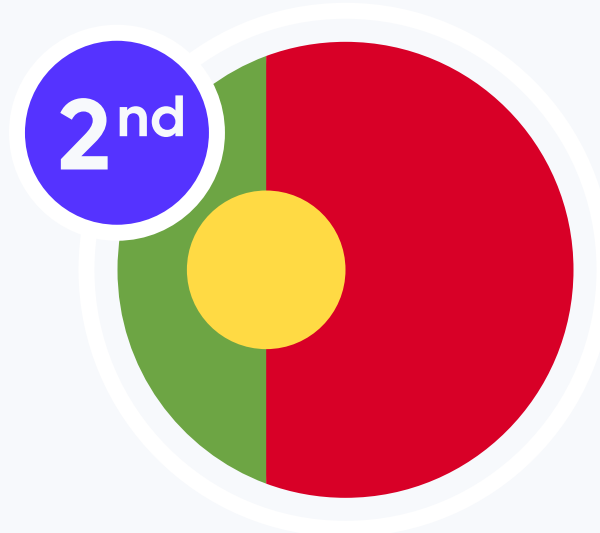
The top 10 nations come from only two continents, making Argentina, Colombia and Brazil an exception to a mainly European dominated field. Increased diversity comes in the form of language: Portuguese (2), Spanish (3) and French (2) dominate the social field followed by German, Dutch and Croatian.

Fun fact: If Cristiano Ronaldo were a country, he would rank 4th – more than 30 million interactions ahead of Spain.

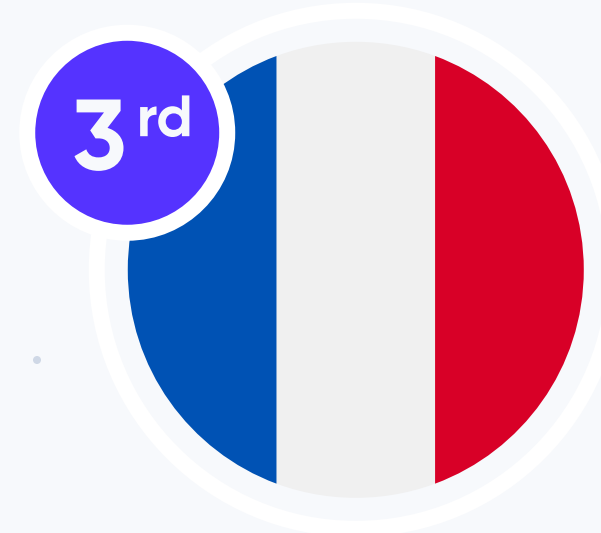
TOP 10 TEAMS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS



Brazil
193.8 million



Portugal
120.6 million



France
117.9 million



Spain
75.5 million



Argentina
68.9 million



Croatia
53.2 million



Colombia
51.7 million



England
48.9 million



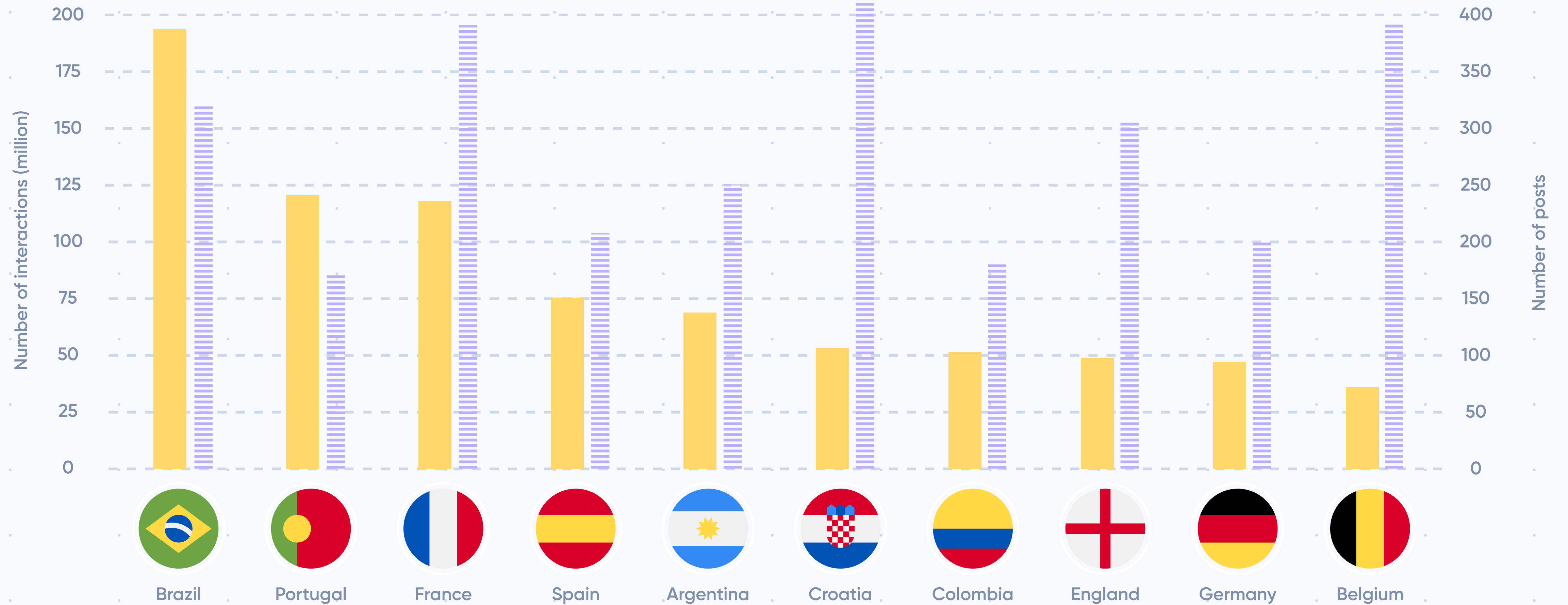
Germany
47.1 million



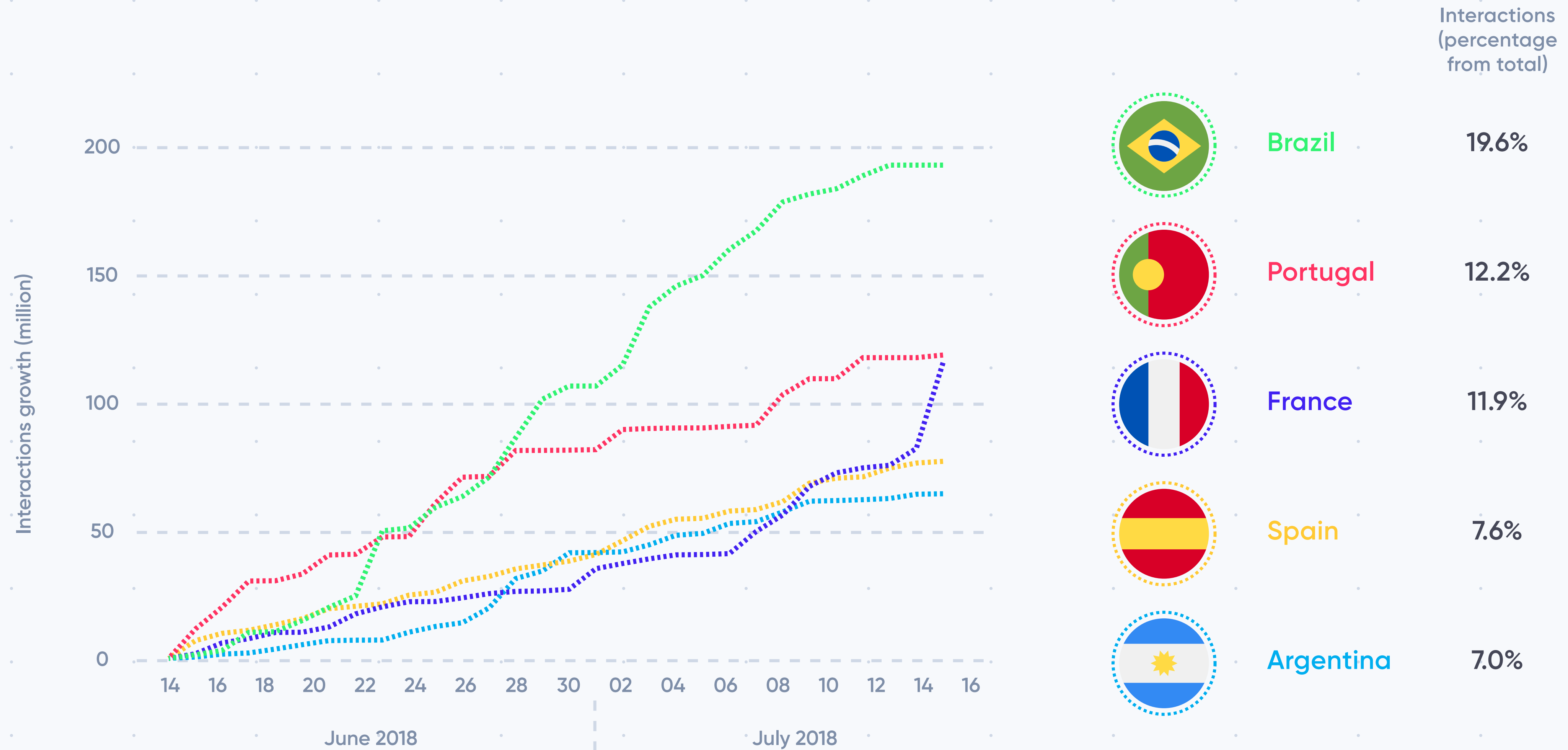
Belgium
36.1 million

TOP 10 TEAMS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

■ Number of interactions (million)
 ▨ Number of posts



TOP 5 TEAMS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS



INTERACTIONS PER TEAM





Starting eleven

This is the most influential starting eleven of the World Cup, i.e. the eleven players with the highest number of interactions throughout the competition for each position in the field – goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders and forwards. It is interesting to find unique insights that go beyond the obvious such as one of the most influential defenders being an almost unknown player in Western football – the Iranian Ramin Rezaeian – whose shared content got almost 5 million interactions.

Ramin's model career and wide-ranging audience may be the reason for the high level of interactions

He is the only Asian player to make it to this starting eleven, but he plays in Europe along with the remaining ten players and the only one from the featuring 11 to play in the Belgian league, namely for KV Oostende. Additionally, Ramin takes part in advertising campaigns as a model on a regular basis, suggesting that his model career and its wide-ranging audience may be the reason for the high level of interactions.

Another interesting finding was that concerning Colombian and FC Barcelona defender, Yerry Mina, with 5 million interactions. Colombia was defeated by England in the knockout round in a very tight game where England was within minutes of getting to the quarter-final until it conceded a goal thanks to Yerry Mina, which sent the

South Americans to extra-time and, ultimately, penalties. Yerry Mina was later considered one of the stars of the Colombian team.

Germany faced a similar scenario after being eliminated during the group phase following a defeat with South Korea, posing as one of the biggest shocks in the competition's history. Nevertheless, Manuel Neuer managed to keep his audience engaged throughout the competition and made it to the podium as the most influential goalkeeper in the competition with more than 7 million interactions.

STARTING ELEVEN WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

Number of interactions (million)





PLAYERS AND TEAMS RANKING BY FOLLOWERS





The leaders

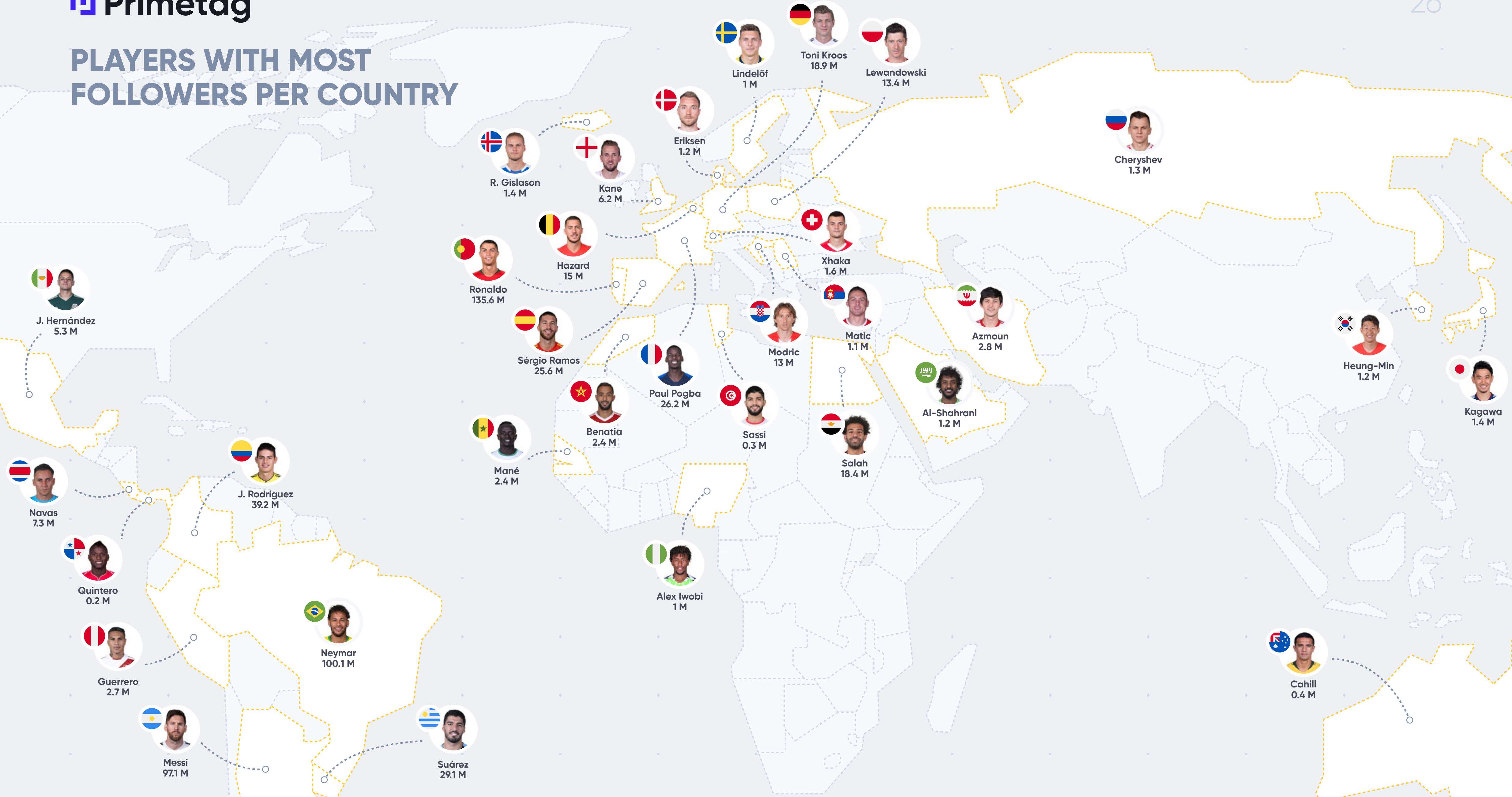
The map shows the most influential players in their home country based on the number of followers at the end of the World Cup. This analysis was carried out before and after the competition and it showed that there were only two countries whose "social media leader" changed: Iceland – following the exponential growth of their rising star, Rúrik Gíslason – and Nigeria, thanks to Alex Iwobi's – Arsenal FC player – jump to 1 million followers.

Another interesting finding shows that only 3 out of 32 "social media leaders" featuring on the map still play in their home countries – Sérgio Ramos in Spain for Real Madrid CF, Harry Kane in England for Tottenham Hotspur FC and Yasser Al-Shahrani in Saudi Arabia for Al-Hilal Saudi FC. The remain-

ing went on to play in more competitive leagues: The English Premier League, the Spanish La Liga, and both the German Bundesliga and 2. Bundesliga are the most dominant in this analysis, covering 25 out of 32 featured players.

Only 3 out of 32 "social media leaders" still play in their home countries

PLAYERS WITH MOST FOLLOWERS PER COUNTRY





Growing fast

C. Ronaldo is the undisputed leader of the social media. Not only is he the most popular football player in the World, but he is also able to increase the lead by growing at a staggeringly higher rate than anyone else. It is thus safe to say that while his career as an athlete may be in a downturn, his popularity keeps on rising.

Neymar is, however at a lower scale, a similar phenomenon. Will the Brazilian player ever be able to take over once the leader steps down? Or will his younger teammate in Paris – the new French star, Mbappé – steal his thunder at number 2? His growth trajectory is quite promising, and although he is one step behind when it comes to the number of followers, he benefits from being almost seven years younger. Taking

a closer look at Mbappé, his growth exploded on the 29th, rocket style! France's performance helped fuel that spaceship, and he reached the 3rd position regarding the absolute growth of followers just before the competition's final whistle.

Will Neymar ever be able to take over once the leader steps down? Or will Mbappé steal his thunder at number two?

Rúrik Gíslason – the Icelandic player – represents the archetype fairy tale story of the tournament. Rúrik's social "rags to riches" story starts on the

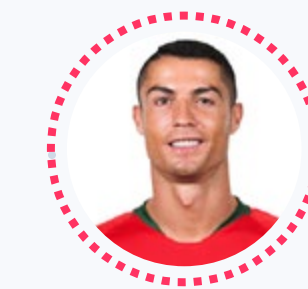
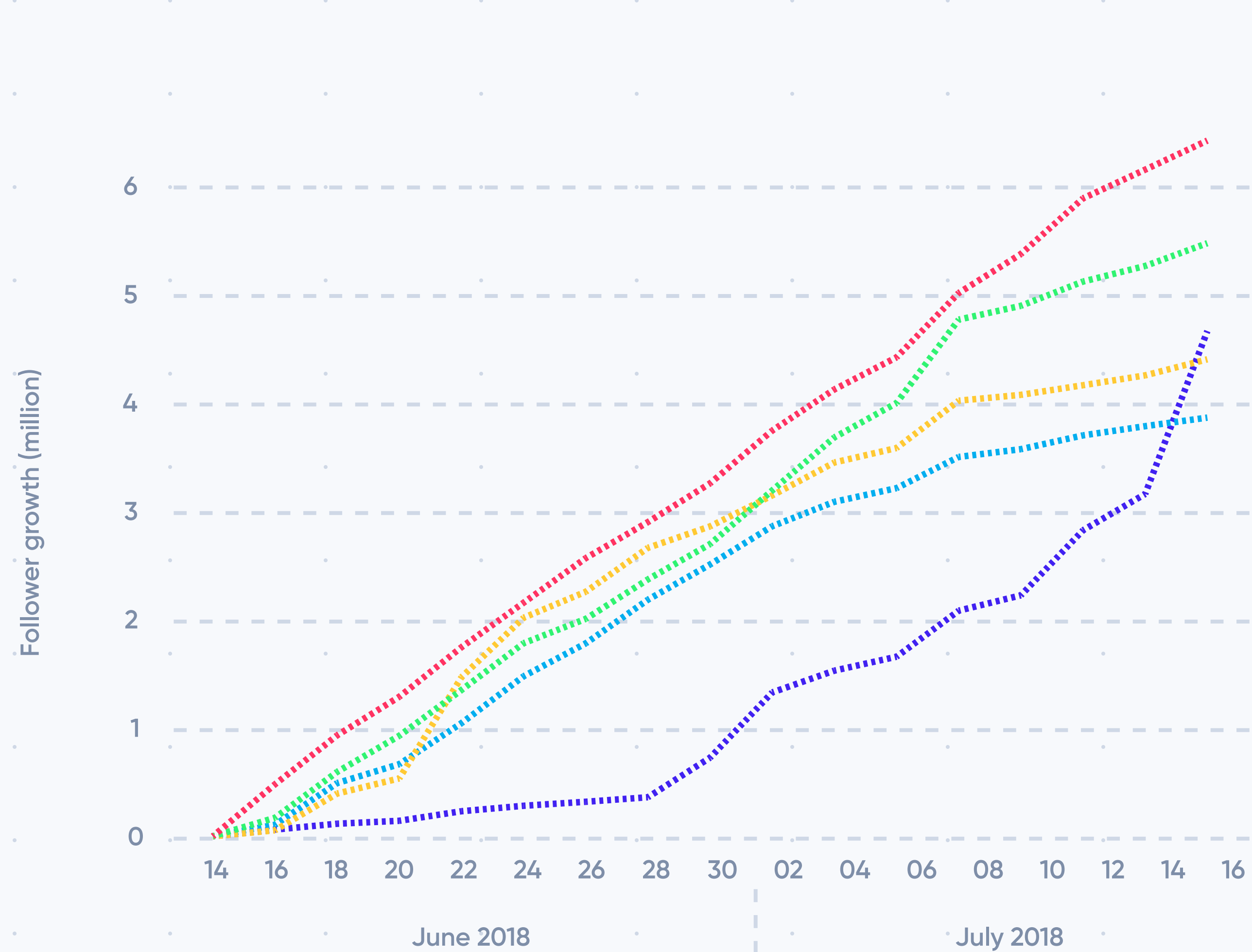
first match of the group phase. Iceland's debut was against none other than the powerful Argentina. The "off the pitch" moment happened when Iceland's coach decided to bring the handsome Rúrik Gíslason to the game. Virtually unknown in the football elite, he played the second half of the season in Germany's second division – the 2. Bundesliga. However, playing on a World stage gave him superstar status and made him the favourite amongst the female audience. The number of followers on his Instagram account tripled, from 37k in the 3 hours that followed the match, reaching 230k by the end of the day. From that moment on he was unstoppable and became the tournament's sensation, reaching the mark of 1.3 million followers by the end of the competition.

TOP 10 PLAYERS WITH HIGHEST FOLLOWER GROWTH

Follower growth (million)



TOP 5 PLAYERS WITH HIGHEST FOLLOWER GROWTH



C. Ronaldo

Follower growth (million)

6.4

Follower growth (percentage)

5.0%



Neymar

5.5

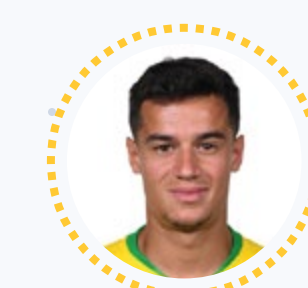
5.8%



Mbappé

4.6

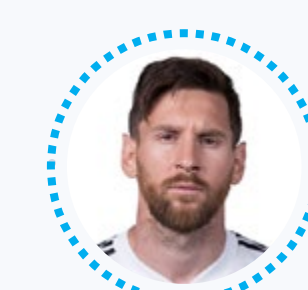
53.7%



P. Coutinho

4.4

34.7%

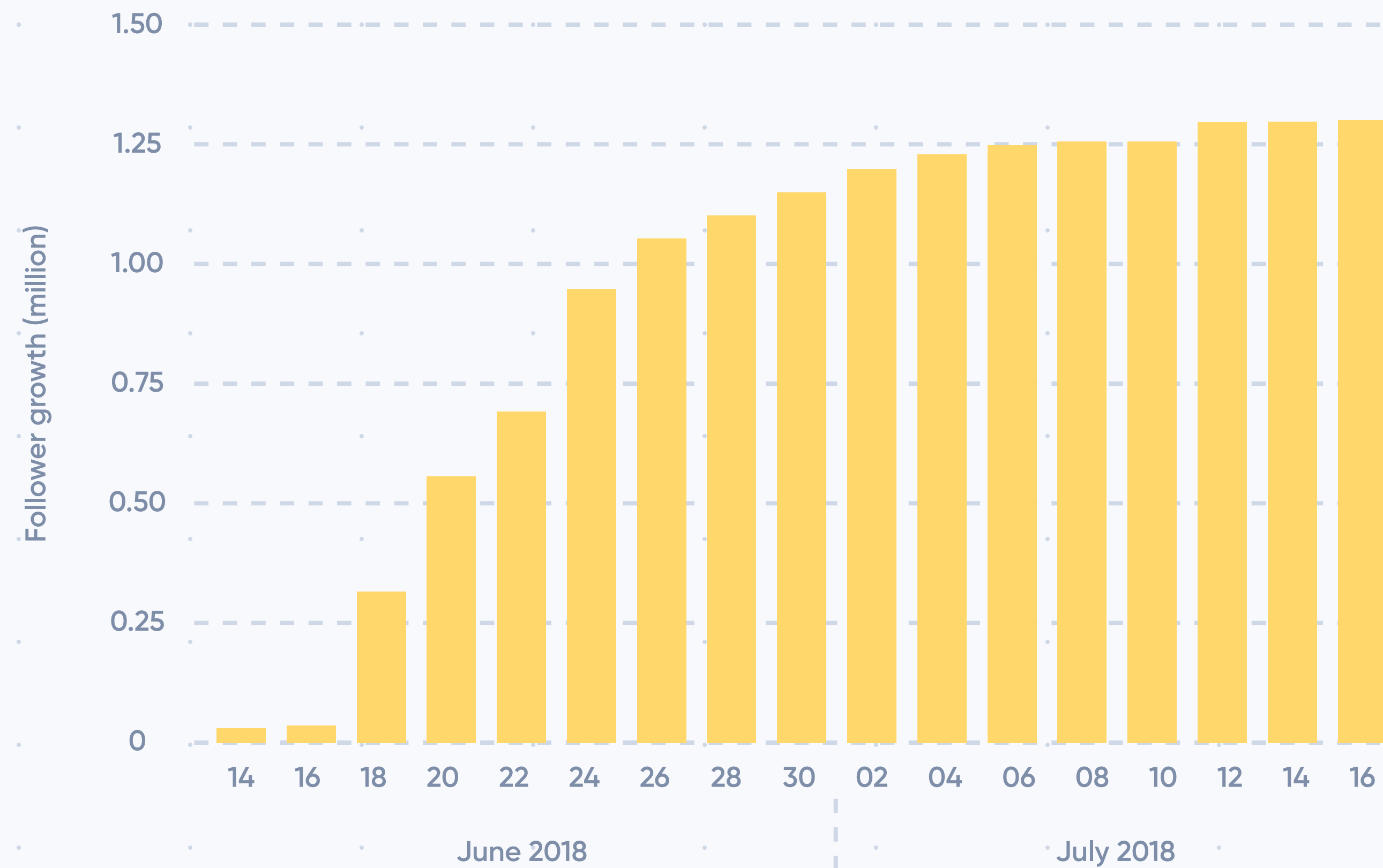


Messi

3.9

4.1%

SOCIAL MEDIA RISING STAR



R. Gíslason
1.3 million
FOLLOWER GROWTH

Start of the competition: 31,584
 End of the competition: 1,376,476

TOP 10 PLAYERS WITH HIGHEST FOLLOWER GROWTH (%)



1st



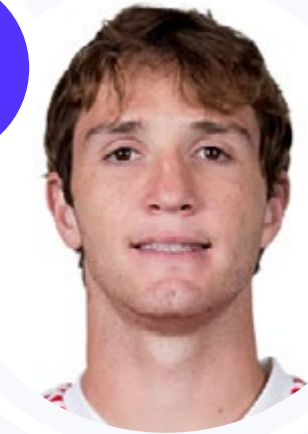
R. Gíslason
4258%
Iceland

2nd



Subasic
1648%
Croatia

3rd



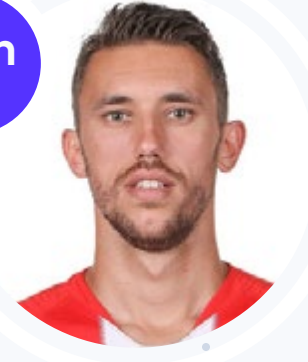
M. Fernandes
1620%
Russia

4th



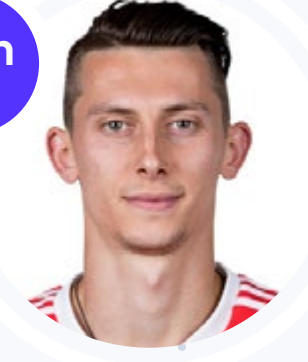
Pavard
1132%
France

5th



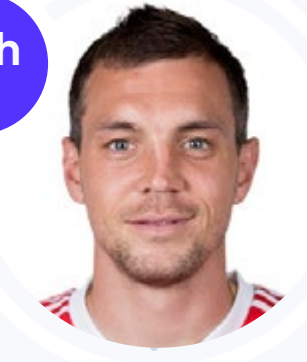
Pivacic
949%
Croatia

6th



Kutepov
669%
Russia

7th



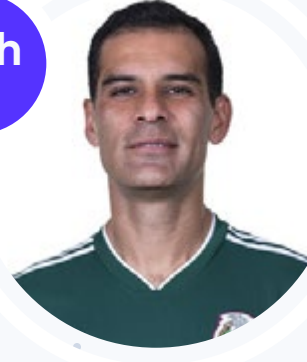
Dzyuba
621%
Russia

8th




Boyata
580%
Belgium

9th



R. Marquez
571%
Mexico

10th



Maguire
533%
England

CONTENTS RANKING BY INTERACTIONS





Content is king

During the World Cup, the athletes resort to their social media accounts to share what's going on with their life and in their minds. It's a way of letting their fans take part in those moments and live what the athletes are living.

The athletes resort to their social media accounts to share what's going on with their life

Sometimes it's about celebrating a goal or a victory. Other times, it ends up being unrelated to football, like relaxing with family and friends at the beach, hanging out at music concerts or

simply playing with their kids. For the purpose of the following ranks we selected only the publications that were football related, despite the fact that we observed all posts of the athletes during the World Cup.

Of all the images and videos published by players during the tournament, Cristiano Ronaldo's photo with his family, enjoying his well deserved vacations, is the one with most interactions, with a total of 11,145,780 likes and comments.



Photo published by Cristiano Ronaldo after Portugal team' elimination from the tournament.

TOP 3 IMAGES WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

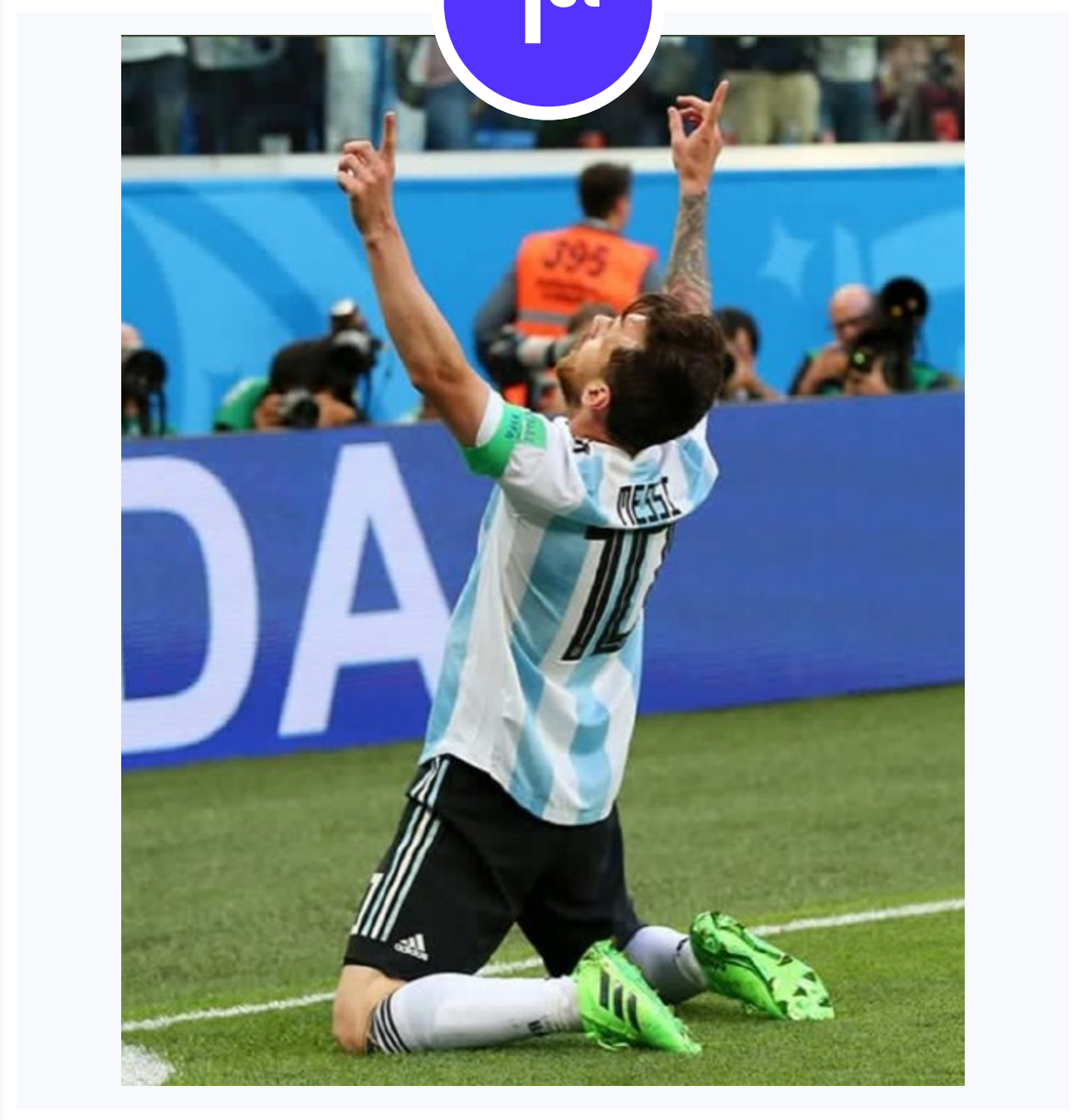
(interactions = likes + comments)

2nd



C. Ronaldo
10.1M interactions
15/06/2018
Portugal

1st



Messi
10.1M interactions
27/06/2018
Argentina

3rd

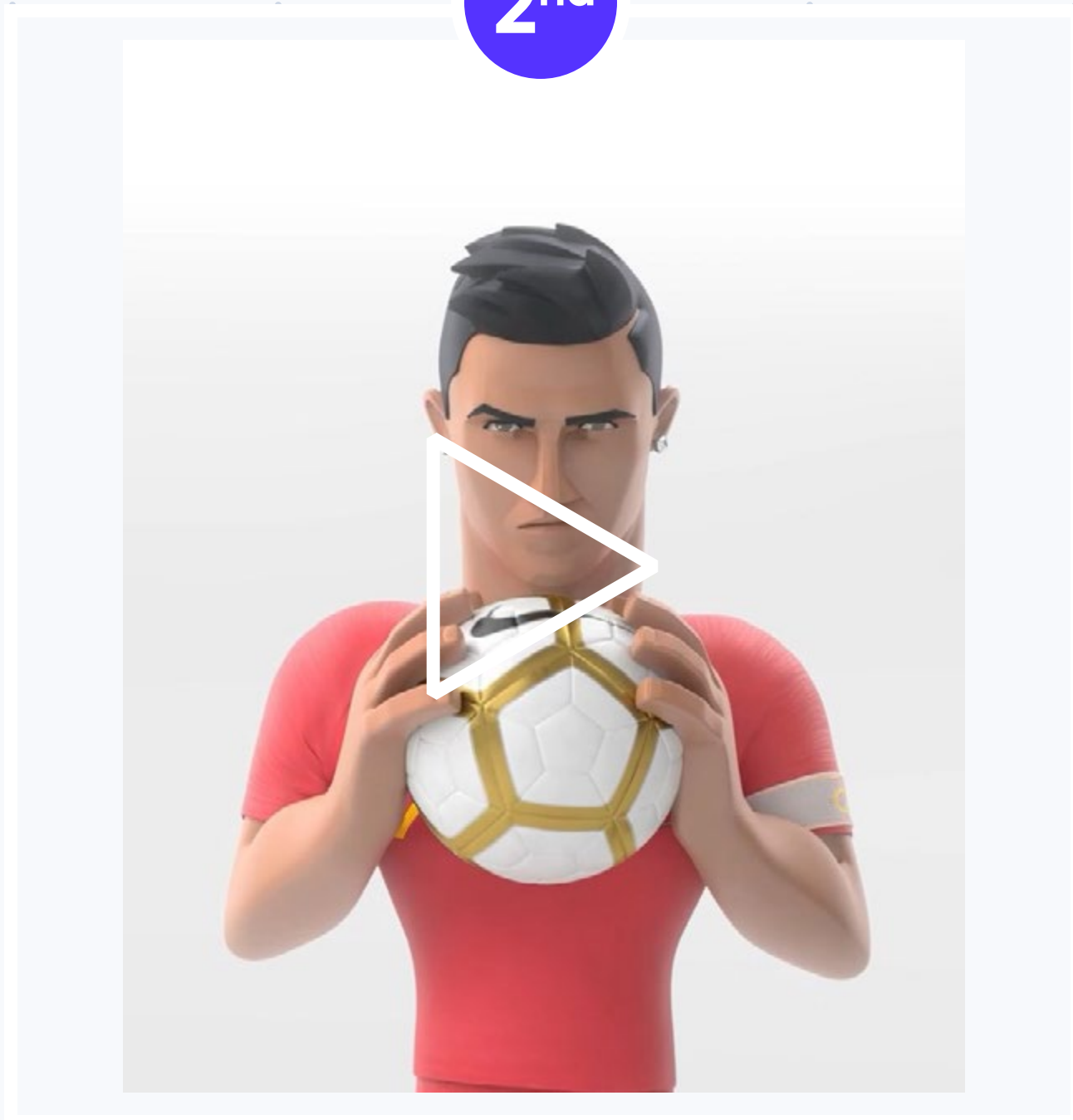


C. Ronaldo
9.5M interactions
24/06/2018
Portugal

TOP 3 VIDEOS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

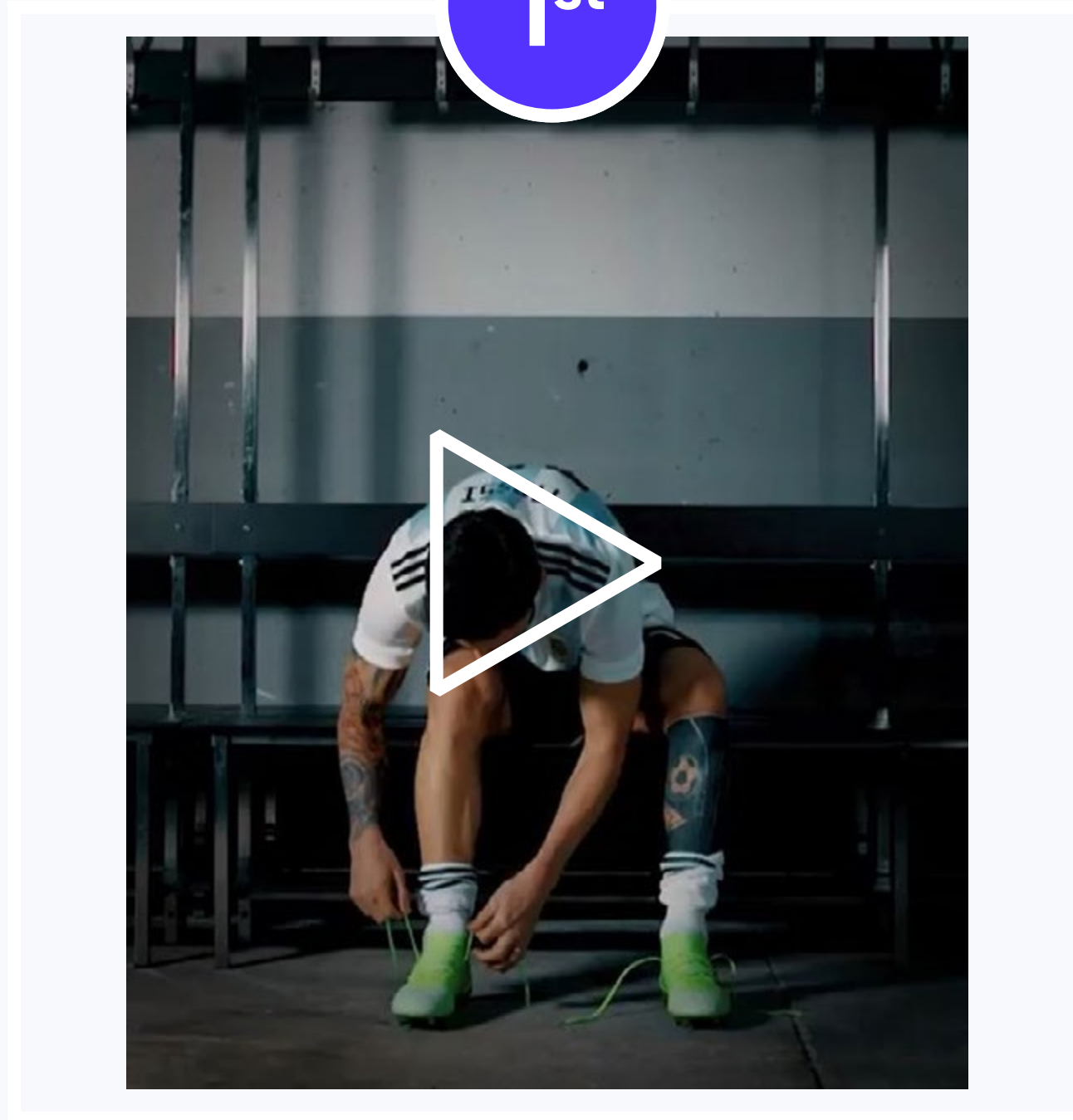
(interactions = likes + comments)

2nd



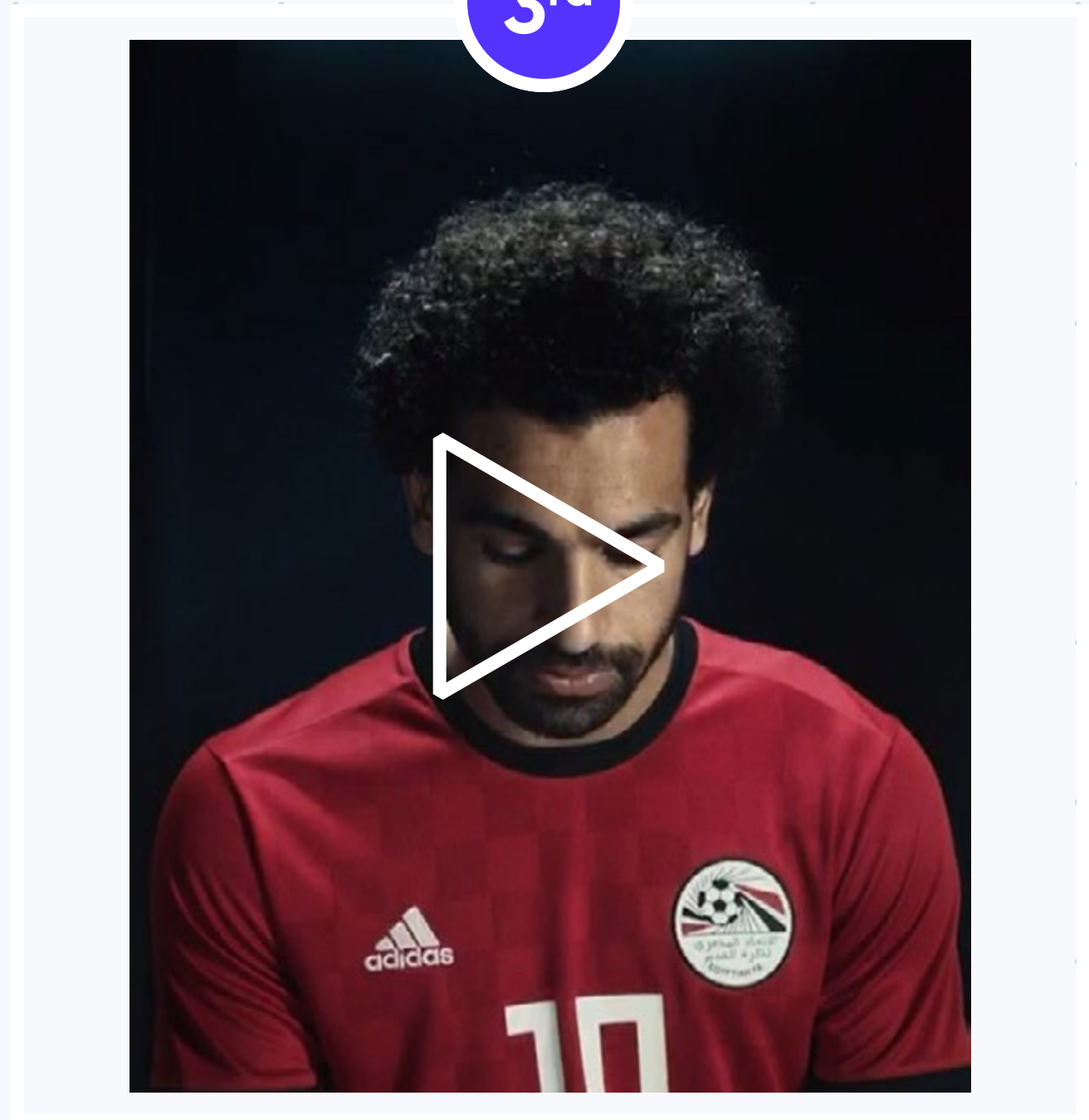
C. Ronaldo
2.4M interactions
19/06/2018
Portugal

1st



Messi
3.8M interactions
29/06/2018
Argentina

3rd

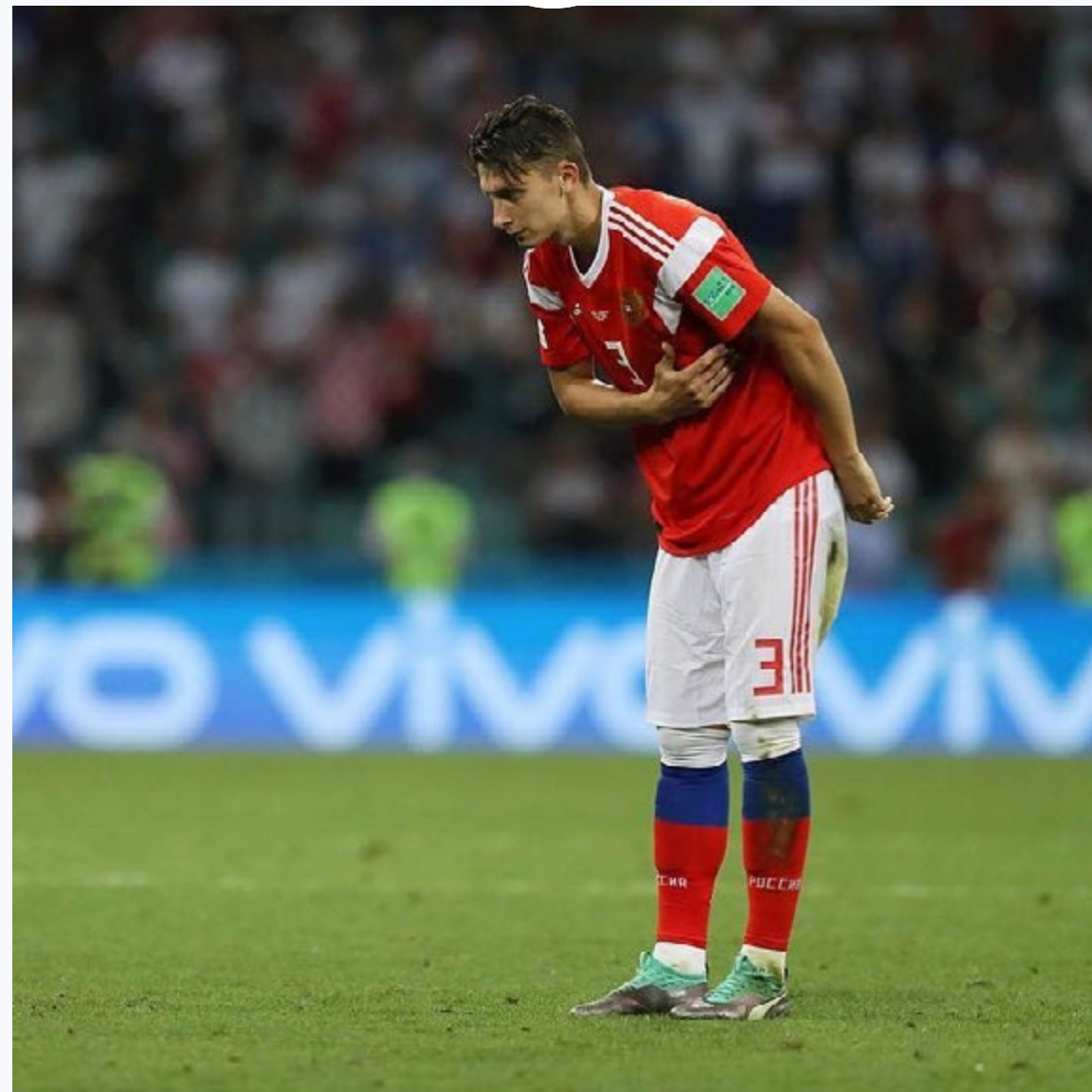


M. Salah
2.3M interactions
18/06/2018
Egypt

TOP 3 IMAGES WITH HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT (%)

(engagement = likes + comments divided by the total number of followers)

2nd



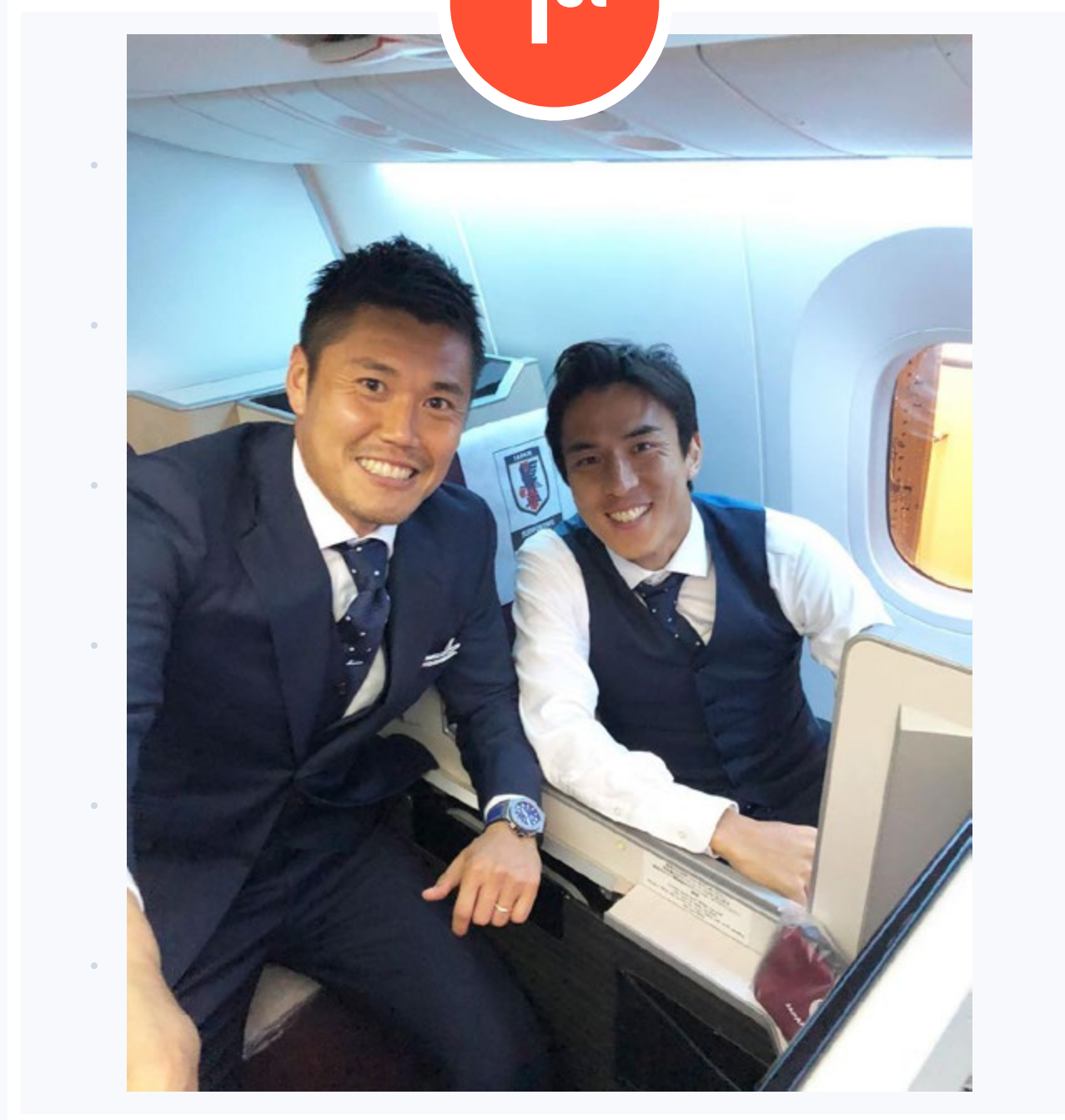
Ilya Kutepov

101%

08/07/2018

Russia

1st



Eiji Kawashima

104%

04/07/2018

Japan

3rd



Makoto Hasebe

92%

03/07/2018

Japan

TOP 3 VIDEOS WITH HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT (%)

(engagement = likes + comments divided by the total number of followers)

2nd



Ahmed Musa

49%

22/06/2018

Nigeria

1st



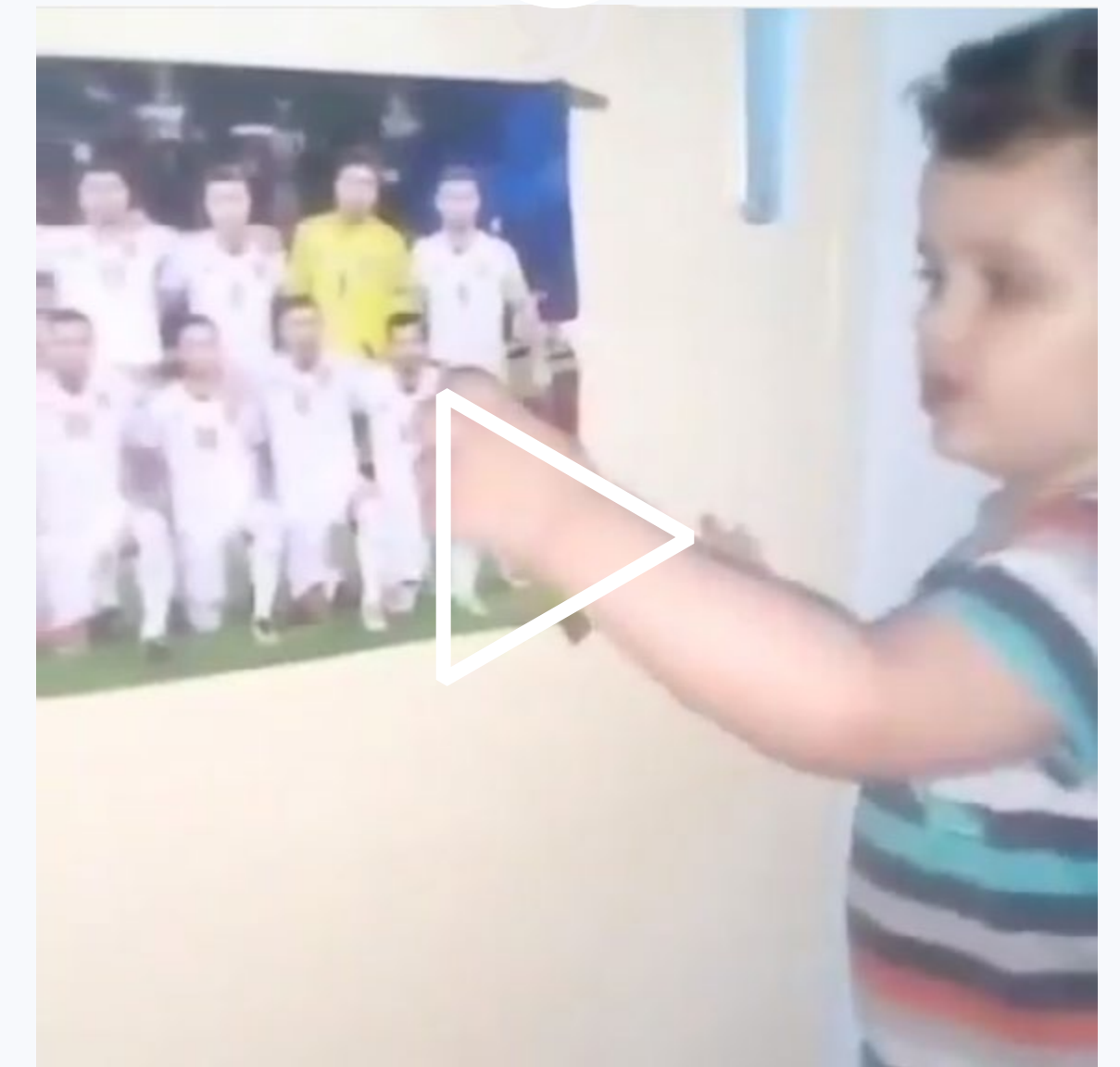
Jimmy Durmaz

104%

24/06/2018

Sweden

3rd



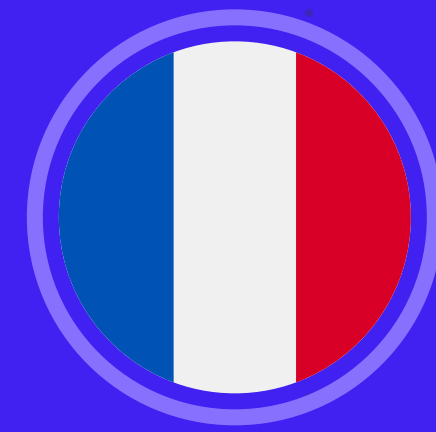
Vladimir Stojković

42%

24/06/2018

Serbia

FINAL MATCH DAY IN NUMBERS



FRANCE

4 - 2



CROATIA

POSTS

67

32

INTERACTIONS

83.9%

16.1%

ENGAGEMENT

11.8%

21.6%



FINAL MATCH DAY • FRANCE
TOP 3 CONTENTS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

(interactions = likes + comments)

2nd



Griezmann
3.6 M interactions

1st



Mbappé
4.9 M interactions

3rd



Mbappé
3.2 M interactions

FINAL MATCH DAY • CROATIA
TOP 3 CONTENTS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS

(interactions = likes + comments)

2nd



Rakitic
0.8M interactions

1st



Rakitic
1.7M interactions

3rd



Rakitic
0.7M interactions



Temporal analysis

As expected, the day of the final match between France and Croatia generated the most interactions: 255 posts exceeding 53.4 million comments and likes. The most significant portion of these interactions belonged to France. However, Croatia generated a higher engagement. On the day of the grand finale, Mbappé and Rakitic were the leading performers of their respective countries.

France and Belgium's semi final match on the 10th of July brought together almost 44 million interactions (43,858,495).

The 27th of June showed the second highest number of interactions (49,179,194), justified by the caption of Messi's goal celebration against Nigeria and Cristiano's sponsored post by Nike Football.

The Round of 16 peaked on the 2nd of July at the hands of Latin America: the expectation for Brazil vs Mexico, from the supporters and players on both sides, monopolised the attention of the Instagram community that day. The total number of likes and comments reached 46,639,747.

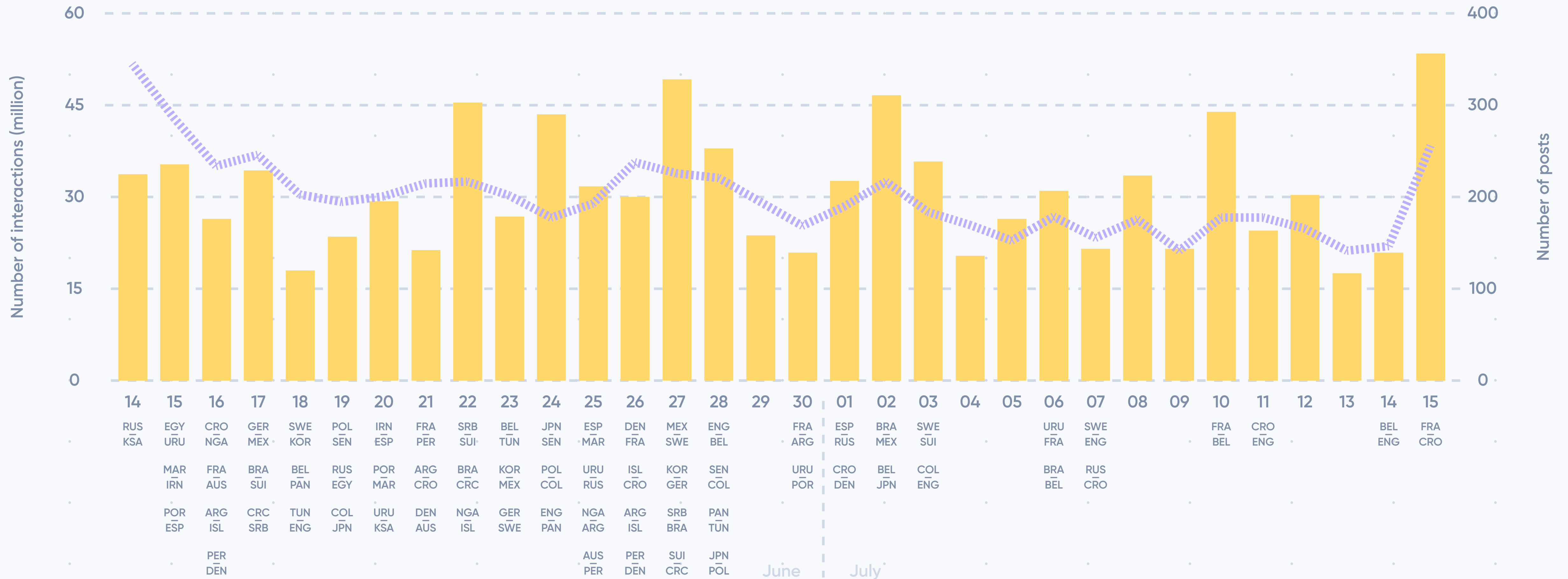
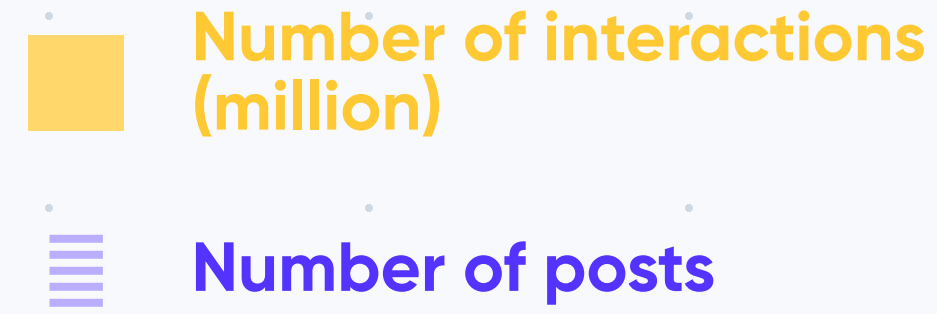
On the day of the grand finale, Mbappé and Rakitic were the leading performers of their respective countries

On the 22nd of June Instagram boomed again with a post from Cristiano, featuring him and his teammates on the pitch. While celebrating

their historical victory against Argentina by 3–0, Modric said: 'What a great night for Croatian football!'

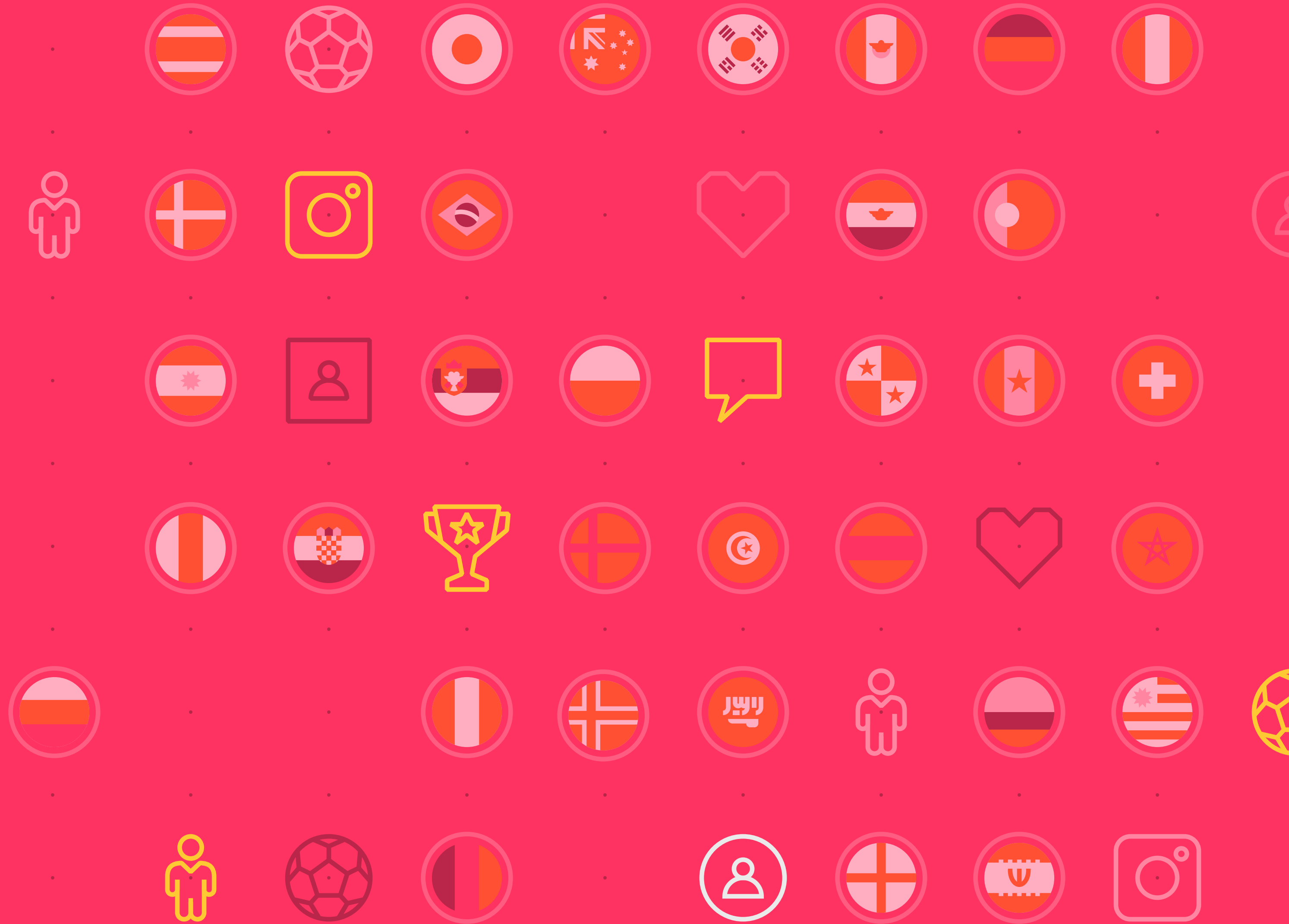
Neymar and Suarez's birthday wishes to Leo Messi were undoubtedly firm contributors to yet another standout day on the 24th of June in the social field (43,481,617 interactions). So was Cristiano's Nike-sponsored video: "Leaving home on the 12th was the hardest thing I ever did... but I believed. Believe." he claimed in the copy.

POSTS AND INTERACTIONS DURING THE TOURNAMENT





MANAGERS RANKING BY INTERACTIONS



Managers

While younger players see more value in Social Networks for direct interaction with fans and sponsor opportunities that may come, managers are often less inclined to embrace the world of social media. A big generational gap between both roles is suspected to be at the core of this matter.

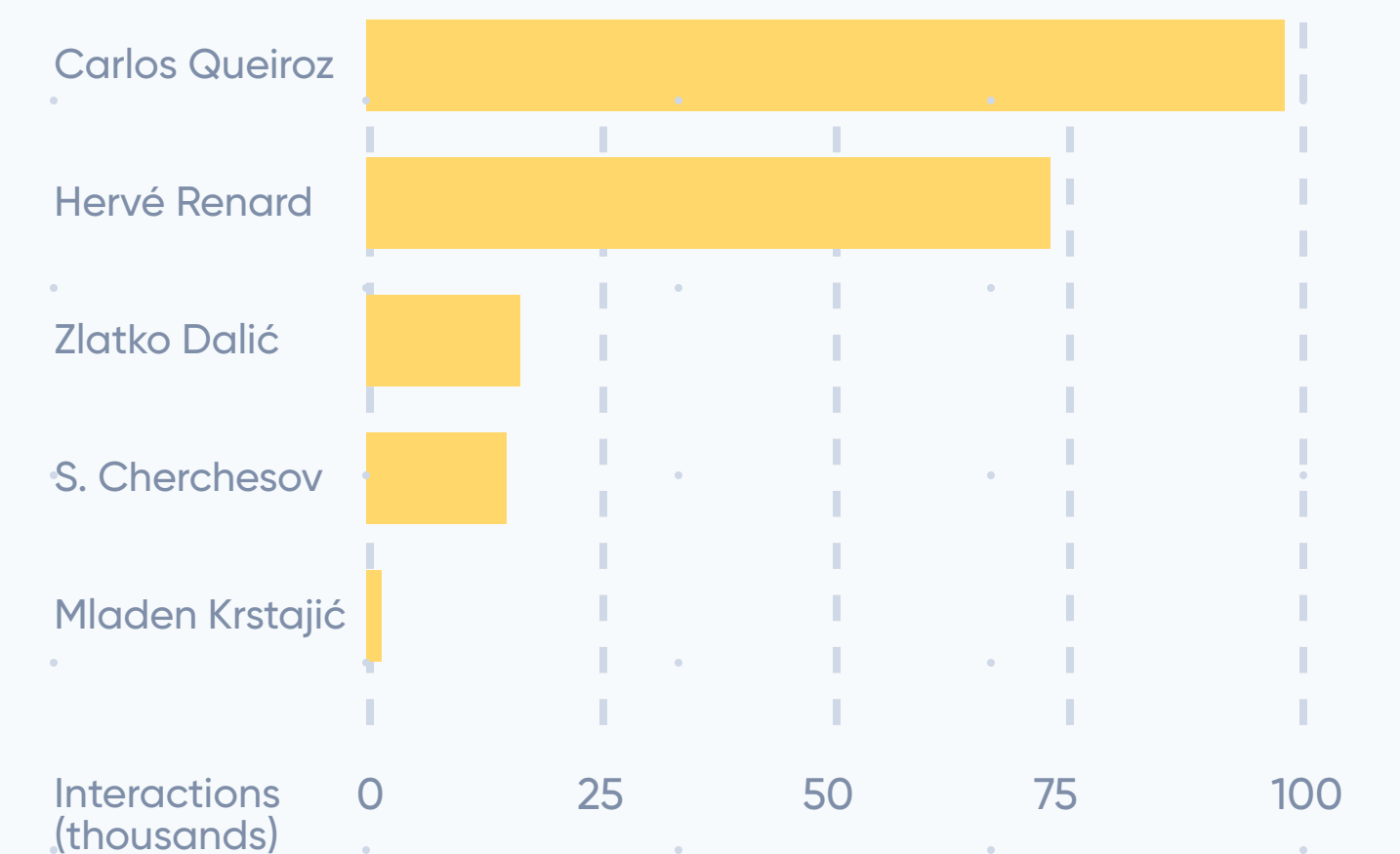
The 2018 World Cup had several standout moments concerning the players' young age; the French team that ruled in Russia had an average age of 26, and Kylian Mbappé became the youngest player since Pelé to score in a World Cup final. As much as managers are live representations of football values that so many brands crave to be known for, it is not that common to see these entities working together, especially on social media.

Only 13 out of the 32 national team managers have an Instagram account, and not all of those 13 are frequent users: only 9 of them shared posts during the World Cup. A lack of representation on social media gave grounds to Primetag's decision to not use interactions generated by managers' profiles in the general study.

The 116 posts from managers generated 2,494,494 interactions. The average engagement was 25%, implying that a quarter of their audience interacted with the shared content.

The top 3 contents shared by a coach, i.e. the entire podium, are dominated by Carlos Queiroz, Iran's Portuguese coach. Alongside him, Hervé Renard, from the Moroccan team and Zlatko Dalić, from the Croatian team, hold the monopoly

of the top 10 posts in terms of interactions. This can be interpreted as a great opportunity, since there is little to virtually no competition and a higher chance for brands to reach a more mature niche of football lovers.





Budweiser

American lager Budweiser has been the World Cup Official Beer Partner since Mexico 1986. AB InBev, the parent company, described the marketing campaign for 2018 as 'the biggest spend ever'.

Budweiser designed multiple initiatives, both online and offline, to leverage their partnership with FIFA. From the 'Light Up The World Cup' advertising campaign, which shows red beer-delivery drones flying across Russia, to the redemption of promotions, 'e-commerce' and arcade games, going all the way to the release of a 'bot' that provided a range of tools to enhance the fans' experience. Fans were also encouraged to vote for the best player on the pitch every match both on social and brand-owned media,

in the 'Man of the Match' contest, implemented in partnership with FIFA. The prize was a Budweiser branded trophy and extra media exposure.

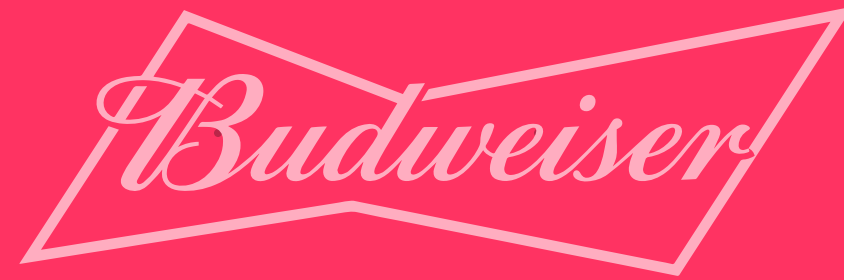
The 'Man of the Match' initiative was particularly well leveraged by Budweiser

#ManoftheMatch-tagged content published by players, FIFA, Budweiser and Federations received almost 8 million interactions on Instagram altogether.

The 'Man of the Match' initiative was particularly well leveraged by Budweiser. Multiple videos were published on Budweiser official Instagram account with the winning players holding the

award, generating a disproportionate number of interactions when compared to other types of content published by the same account over the same period.

BUDWEISER MAN OF MATCH AWARD



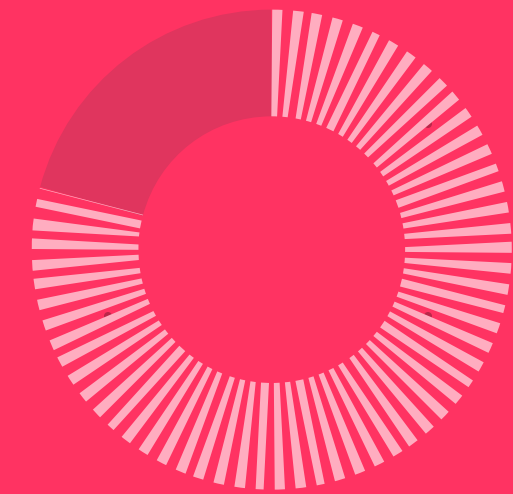
51

contents published by Budweiser during the World Cup



29

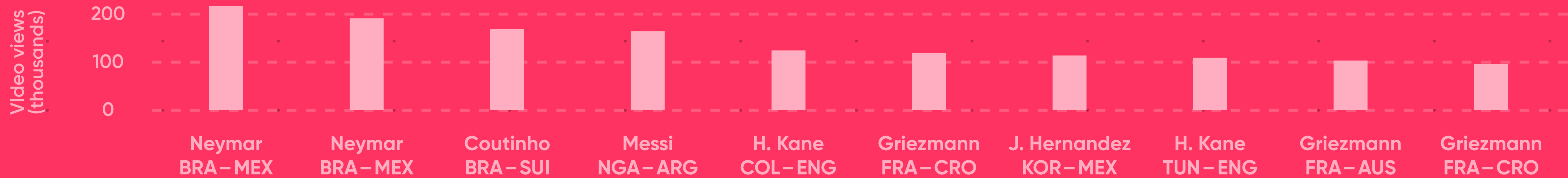
contents related to the Man of the Match Award



79.4%

of the interactions were generated by Man of the Match videos

MAN OF THE MATCH – MOST WATCHED VIDEOS



OFFICIAL KIT SPONSORS OF WORLD CUP TEAMS

Adidas

- Argentina
- Belgium
- Colombia
- Egypt
- Germany
- IR Iran
- Japan
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Russia
- Spain
- Sweden

Puma

- Senegal
- Serbia
- Switzerland
- Uruguay

New Balance

- Costa Rica
- Panama

Errea

- Iceland

Hummel

- Denmark

Nike

- Australia
- Brazil
- Croatia
- England
- France
- Korea Rep.
- Nigeria
- Poland
- Portugal
- Saudi Arabia

Uhlsport

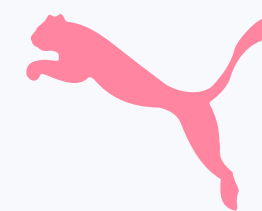
- Tunisia

Umbro

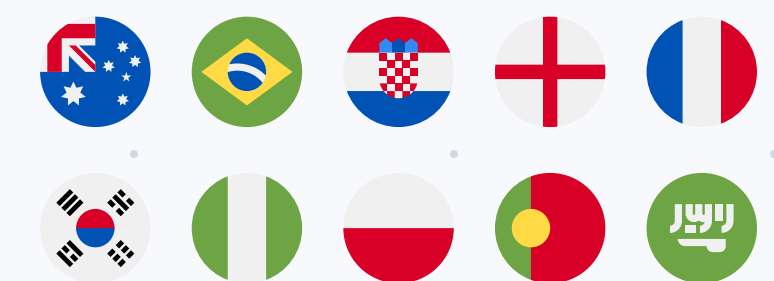
- Peru



other



32 squads





Nike vs Adidas

Nike and Adidas are the two most prominent brands in football. While Adidas is the official sponsor of the tournament, both brands are official equipment suppliers for most of the teams taking part in the competition. Not surprisingly, both brands invested heavily in leveraging the partnerships they have with teams and players.

The two undisputed kings of football, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are sponsored by Adidas

Both brands invested heavily to leverage the partnerships they have with teams and players.

and Nike, respectively. But that's about it in terms of balance regarding athlete sponsorships. Nike has a much more extensive list of sponsored players, which may be explained by the fact that Adidas is the competition's official sponsor.

A few days before the event both brands duelled on Instagram, with their players publishing content related to each brand in a battle for consumer visibility.

Adidas opened hostilities on the 5th of June with most of their star athletes publishing Adidas-related images and videos. This continued over a 3-day period for a total of 29 posts.

Nike fired back with 134 Nike-related media from the 7th to the 11th of June, with the vast majority of

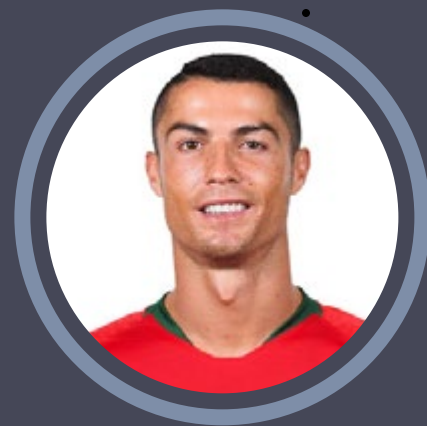
them (more than ninety) being shared on the 7th. In both cases, most of the contents were videos, so, for this analysis, we focused on the video posts only and compared the number of views for each brand.

PROMOTED VIDEOS BY MAIN EQUIPMENT SPONSORS

Contents published between June 5th and June 11th

TOP SPONSORED PLAYERS

C. Ronaldo
5.5 million views



NIKE

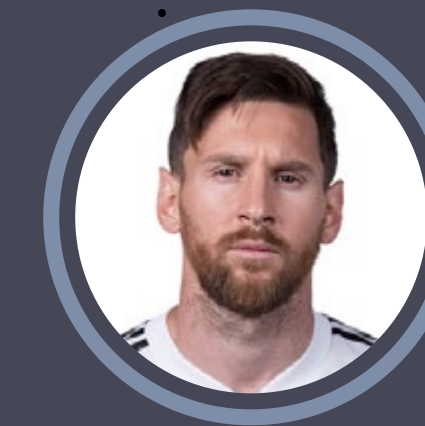
VS



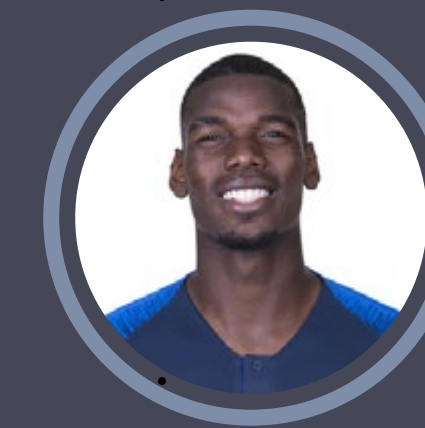
ADIDAS

TOP SPONSORED PLAYERS

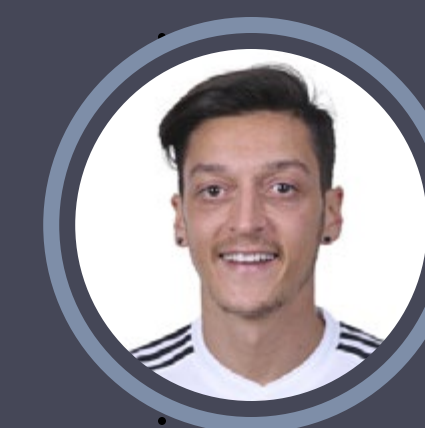
Messi
5.3 million views



Pogba
0.8 million views



Özil
0.6 million views



Neymar
2.3 million views



112

VIDEOS

21

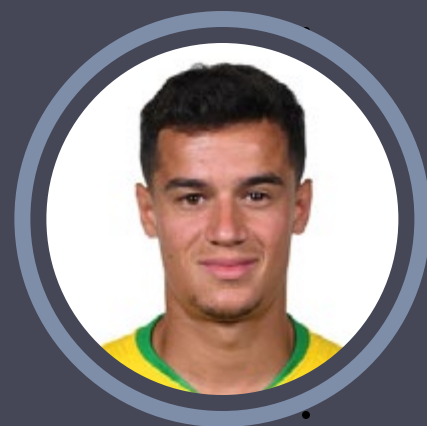
VIDEO VIEWS

22.5M

9.1M

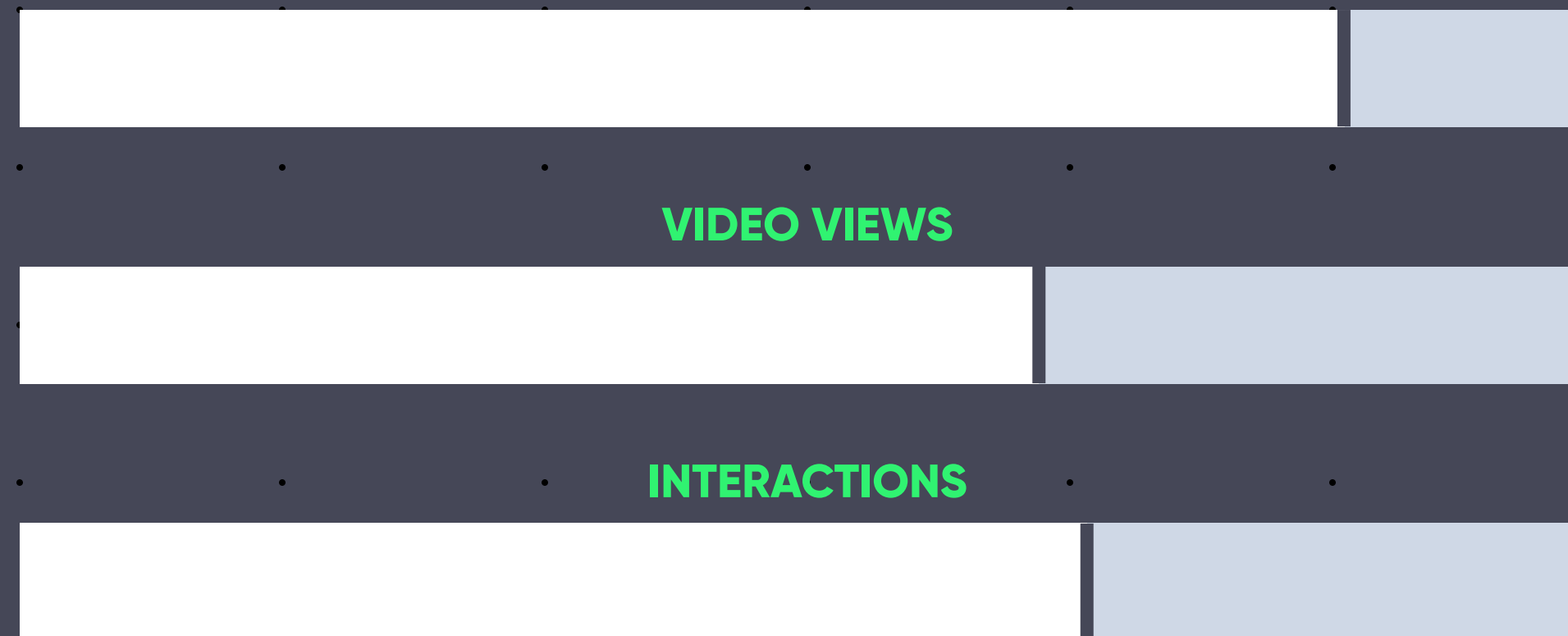
INTERACTIONS

P. Coutinho
1.5 million views



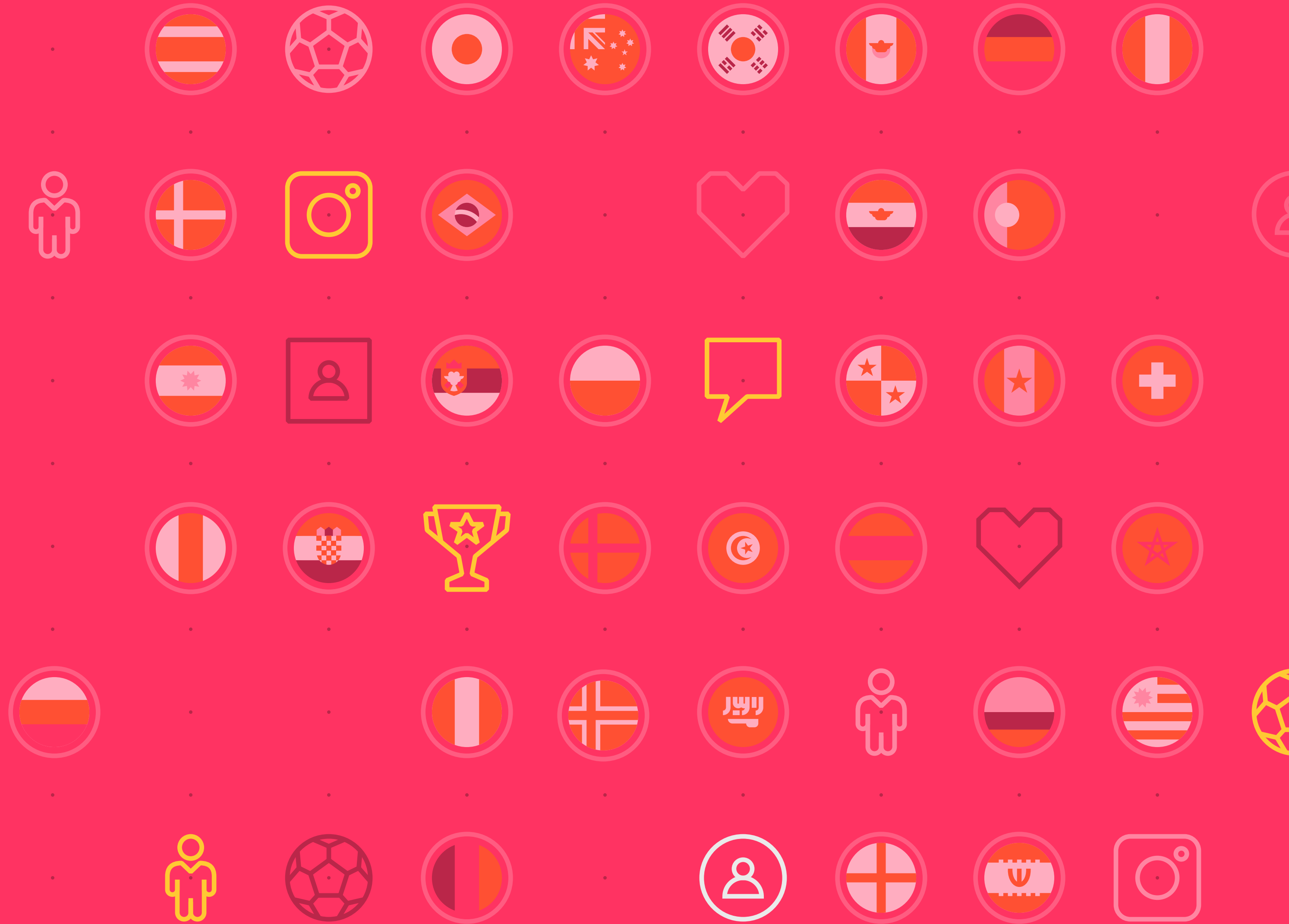
5.4M

2.7M





ASSOCIATIONS AND CONFED- ERATIONS INTERACTIONS





Associations and confederations

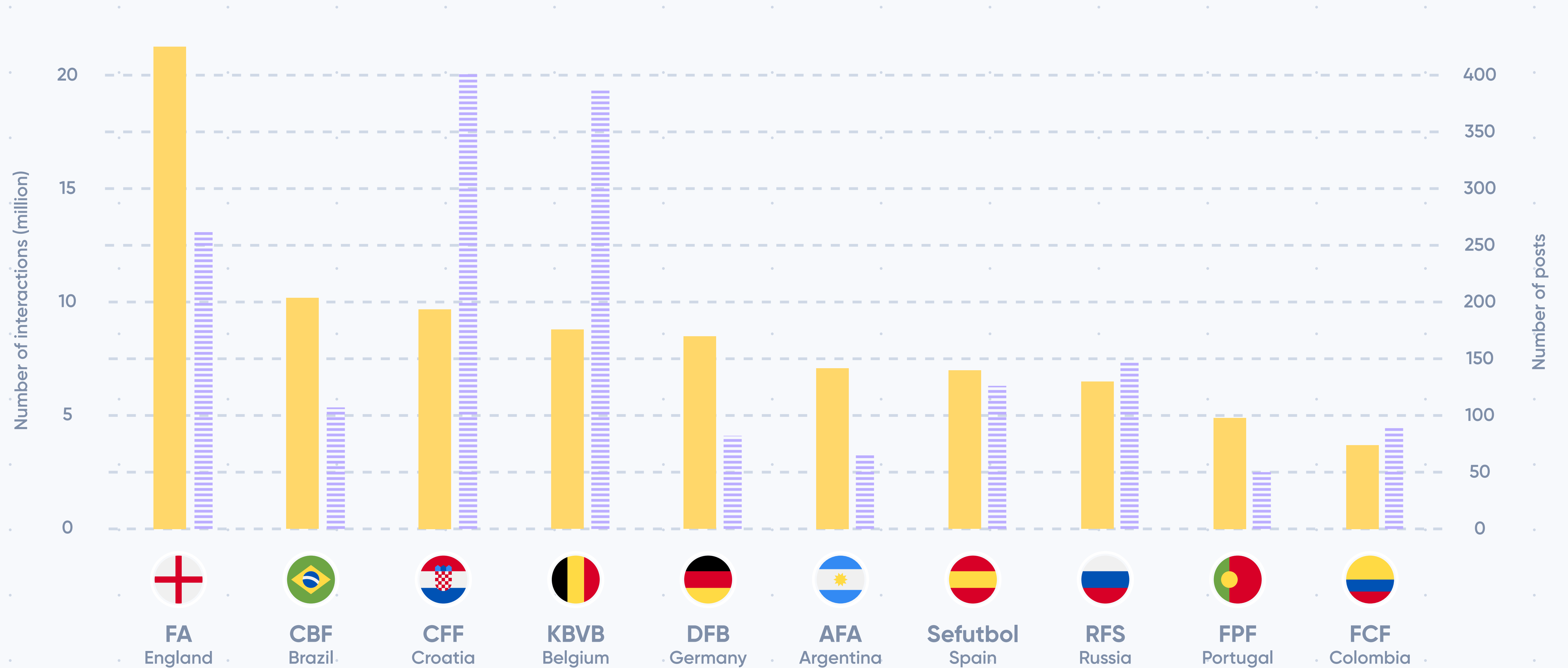
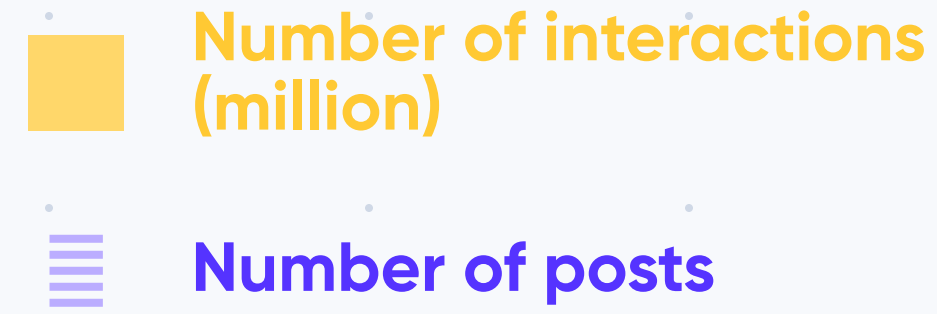
Only the English (FA) Association reached more than 20 million interactions out of the total 32 countries, proving the high level of commitment of their fans, even considering the fact that they were not the most active during the competition, with less than 300 posts. In fact, the FA got more than twice as many interactions than as the Brazilian CBF (21M vs 10M). On the other hand, the Croatian (CFF) and Belgian (KBVB) Associations were the most active. It's important to highlight that the Saudi Arabian (SAFF) and Egyptian (EFA) Associations were not subject to this analysis as they lacked an official Instagram account.

The official FIFA Instagram account steals the show, with more than 10M followers and an average of almost 10 posts per day.

With regards to Confederations, the big surprise was the AFC, from Asia. With 2.7 million interactions, the AFC got nearly six times as many as CONMEBOL (South American Confederation), with less than half the posts (120). This suggests a bigger effort and focus on the management of their Instagram account, as well as in the promotion of Asian football. Most of their posts feature players and managers that were at the World Cup, but whom play or have played for Asian clubs.

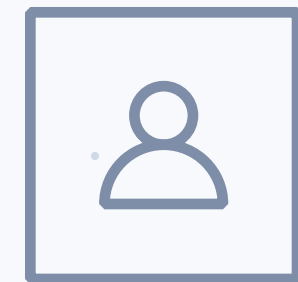
Only the English (FA) Association reached more than 20 million interactions (out of the total 32 million)

TOP 10 ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS WITH MOST INTERACTIONS



FIFA AND CONFEDERATIONS

FIFA ACCOUNT – OVERVIEW



288
posts

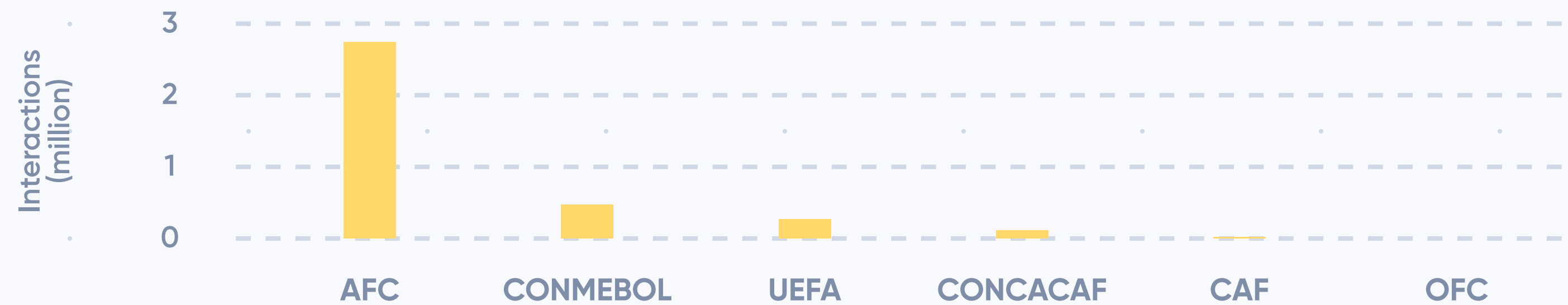


10.6 M
followers



90.5 M
interactions

CONFEDERATIONS – NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS





Conclusion

The 2018 Russia World Cup was the most far-reaching football tournament ever, featuring an unparalleled proximity between players and fans. According to the results measured by Primetag, one in seven people either liked or commented an image or video shared by a player, on Instagram alone. This reveals a gigantic and unprecedented reach and signals a new societal organisation, flatter and more connected than ever.

Thanks to technology, players can speak directly to their fans and fans can interact directly with their idols as well. The impact on the game is tremendous, both for teams and players. Nonetheless, the repercussions of these evolutionary changes aren't circumscribed to the foot-

ball industry. The advertising business for one has a great deal to prosper. Budweiser, Nike and Adidas are examples of brands on the forefront of this new establishment. Will today's juggernauts reinforce their position, or will newcomers seize the opportunity?

The impact on the game is tremendous, both for teams and players

On the cutting edge of this massive popularity wave comes Cristiano Ronaldo, the uncontested king of social media. On top of an already mas-

sive lead, his unrivaled growth extends that lead on a daily basis. Neymar is a similar phenomena, but at a fraction of the scale. Then comes everyone else. Far, far behind.

It's no surprise that Brazil, a country with long tradition in football and two hundred million inhabitants was named the country with the most popular athletes.

Honorable mention to Rúrik Gíslason, crowned the social media rising star by the fans with his meteoric ascension to global celebrity.

See you all in 4 years!
The Primetag team.



About Primetag

Together with the democratisation of content creation and social platforms, many entities and individuals have gained notoriety and created their own audiences throughout the internet. Consumed and shared by a multitude of loyal followers, their specific knowledge, experience, reputation or their creative and artistic ability have turned into a source of income and an excellent opportunity for brands.

As Influence specialists, Primetag monitored the globe's biggest sporting event: The 2018 World Cup. A tournament followed by billions of people, from the stadium to social networks. Our purpose is to revolutionise how players, teams, brands and media can access key information and help them harness the power of social media and maximise

their influence on the global stage. These analysis provide valuable insights into social behaviour on the Internet but are also focused on helping brands make better decisions when it comes to implementing new commercial strategies.

Primetag is a global company based in Portugal that develops technology in the field of influence marketing.



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Know more

Looking for detailed information
about a specific player, manager,
football association or sponsor?

Get in touch.

 research@primetag.com

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