

2025

BAROMETER REPORT

The second edition industry-wide barometer measuring online abuse in sport, with participation from leading NGOs and International Federations.



UNITED AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE
RESEARCH HUB



UNIVERSITY



FOUNDATION

The UAOA Barometer is authored by Professor David Hassan. He is a Professor of Sport Policy and Management who has published 15 books and over 175 academic papers/chapters on a range of subjects relating to the business of sport. With FIA University and in support of the United Against Online Abuse campaign, he has published findings from the UAOA Online Abuse Barometer survey in January 2024 and spoken at a range of international conferences, including the WiMENA 2024 Conference held in London, on the impact of online abuse in sport.



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INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD BY MOHAMMED BEN SULAYEM

As the President of the FIA and founder of the United Against Online Abuse campaign, I am proud to present the 2025 UAOA Barometer Report. Following a successful 2024 for the campaign, which culminated in UAOA winning Peace and Sport's Coalition of the Year award, this report marks a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to address the growing challenge of online abuse in the sporting ecosystem.

The 2025 Barometer builds on the first edition, which set a global standard for studying and measuring online abuse in sports. This report gives a clearer picture of how online abuse affects athletes and competitors and tracks how it has changed over the past year.

It not only highlights the current situation but also provides a guide for real action and lasting change.

Sports stand for unity, diversity, and respect. But online abuse and harassment go against these values, harming the spirit of sports and making it harder for athletes to feel safe, included, and able to compete at their best.

This year's results reveal a serious issue: half of the people surveyed said the online abuse they saw in sports was either misogynistic or racist. This important finding should guide our focus and priorities for the year ahead.

Half of the participants reported that volunteers, stewards, officials, and marshals in their sport faced regular online abuse in the past year. This highlights the urgent need to strengthen protections for everyone in sports by working with international federations to create and enforce better safeguards.

This report reflects the dedication and teamwork of our partners, researchers, and supporters. I sincerely thank everyone who helped make this research possible, especially those who shared their personal experiences. Their voices drive our mission to fight online abuse and build a sporting culture that supports talent, celebrates success, and creates a positive legacy for future generations.

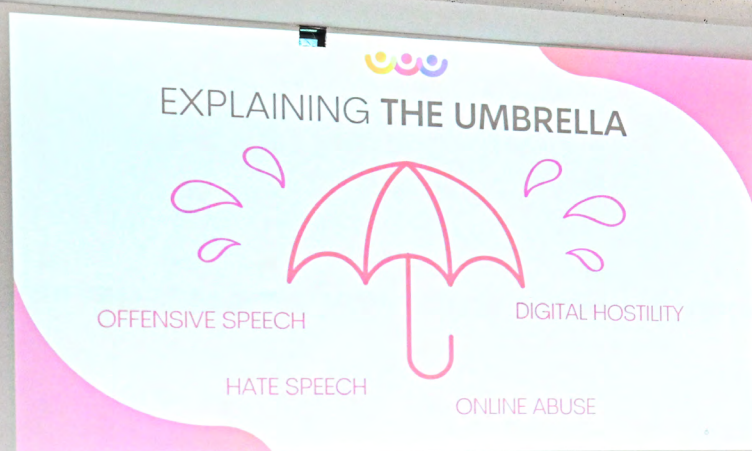
Let this Barometer be a call to action and a sign of our strong commitment. By working together through research, education, and teamwork, we can build a future where sports inspire and bring people together, free from online abuse.



UNITED AGAINST
ONLINE ABUSE
COALITION TO STOP HATE SPEECH IN SPORT

Mohammed Ben Sulayem
FIA President and Founder of United Against Online Abuse

INTRODUCTION





The second edition of the United Against Online Abuse (UAOA) Barometer is a major milestone in UAOA's mission to provide the authoritative research, analysis and solutions to address the escalating issue of online abuse in sport. Building on the inaugural 2024 report, this edition tracks evolving trends, identifies emerging challenges, and deepens insights into the impact of online abuse on athletes, officials, and others involved in the sporting ecosystem.

Since its inception, UAOA has rapidly become the leading global coalition in tackling online abuse in sport.

Over the past year, the campaign has:

- Received the 'Coalition for Peace' Award at the Peace and Sport Forum, presented by Prince Albert II of Monaco.
- Grown by 150%, expanding its research and influence.
- Secured €400,000 in Erasmus+ funding to develop a Pan-European Framework to Combat Online Abuse in Sport, supported by the European Commission.
- Launched the industry's first open-access educational module, aligned with UNESCO's 2030 Agenda, with over 150 students enrolled.
- Established the UAOA Scholarship Programme, funding four scholars at Dublin City University to research topics including online misogyny in motorsport.
- Hosted the first UAOA Conference in Paris, bringing together global leaders to discuss unified and collaborative action.
- Produced 10 academic publications, including the First Online Abuse Barometer, the Sports Journalist Barometer, and Safeguarding Guidelines.

The 2025 Barometer builds on these successes and significantly expands the research undertaken.

This year's survey captures data from 18 sporting federations across diverse disciplines and regions, including 10 federations from the inaugural edition. This continuity enables trend analysis over time, while the inclusion of 8 new federations broadens the perspectives represented in the findings.

In addition to tracking the prevalence and forms of abuse, the Barometer explores its disproportionate impact on women, young people, and minority groups—who remain the most targeted. By examining 20 key areas, this edition provides a thorough understanding of how online abuse affects participation, mental well-being, and inclusivity in sport.

As UAOA prepares for major initiatives in 2025, including a North American Conference, further scholarships, and the rollout of a groundbreaking pan-European anti-online abuse project funded by the European Union, this report continues to strengthen UAOA's role as a thought leader and research-driven coalition.

By equipping governments, regulators, federations, and technology platforms with the necessary data, the UAOA Barometer remains a critical evidence base for global advocacy and action, helping to create a safer and more inclusive digital space for all involved in sport.

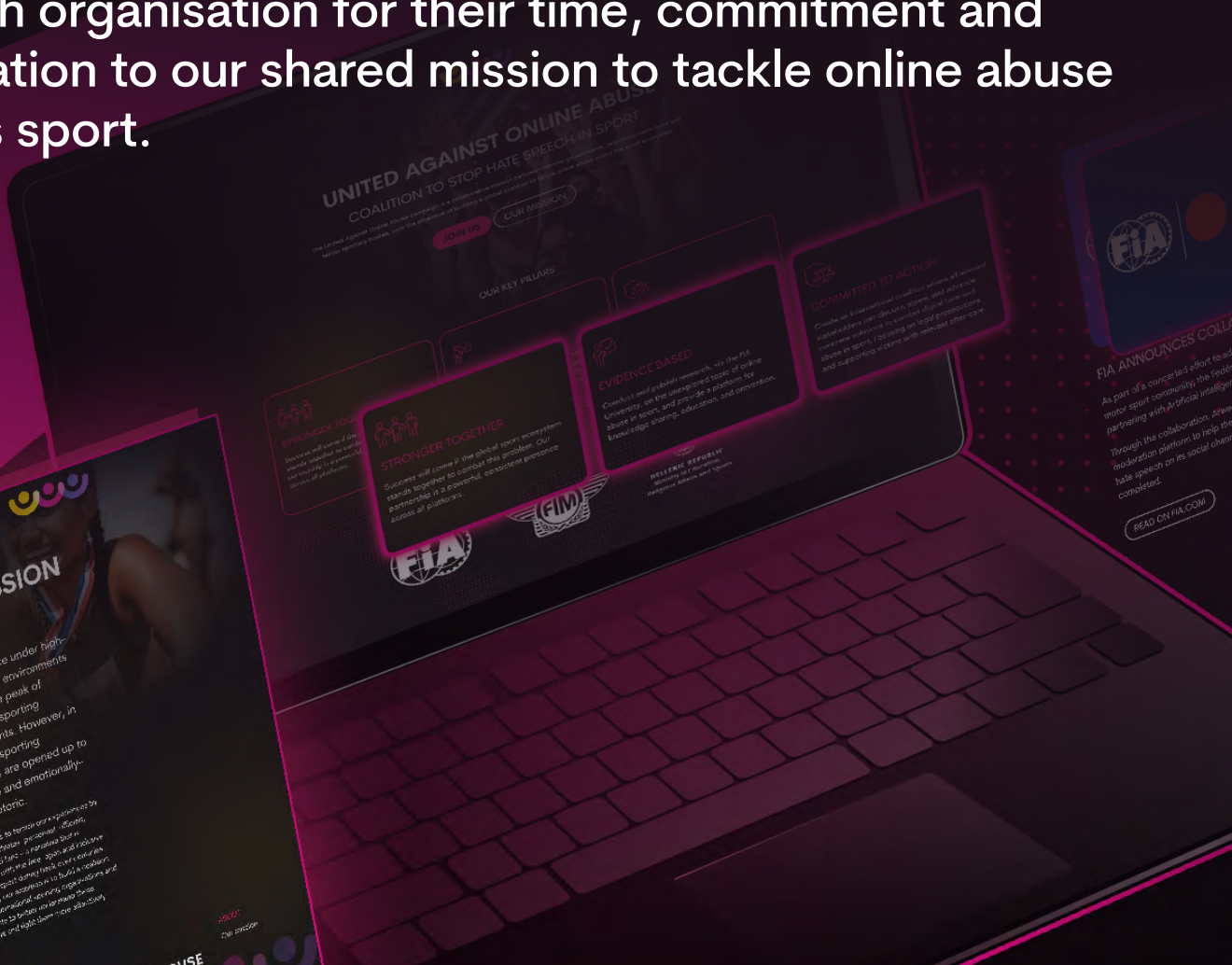


INTRODUCTION

PARTICIPANT LIST

This report stands as a testament to the UAOA coalition's collaborative effort.

The following organisations provided invaluable contributions and commitment to data gathering which has made this comprehensive survey possible. UAOA would like to express our thanks and appreciation to each organisation for their time, commitment and dedication to our shared mission to tackle online abuse across sport.







INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UAOA 2nd Annual Barometer Survey on Online Abuse in Sport was issued to a total of 73 international sporting federations in November 2024. At the time of completing this report, 18 full responses had been received that met the study's inclusion criteria. The data from these responses are presented in detail throughout the full report, which follows.

Following the success of the second edition of this Annual UAOA Barometer, and which included detailed submissions from a further 22 International Sporting Federations, we were particularly keen to see if attitudes on several core metrics had evolved, whilst we also included some new areas, including observations around online abuse in Esports, and these make for interesting findings, too.

Some of the most important outcomes of the 2025 survey and, where appropriate, how these compare to findings from the first edition of this Barometer issued one year ago, include:

- The UAOA campaign recognises the need to consider online abuse beyond that published in English and, indeed, has published reports covering this issue over the last 12 months. In the 2025 survey, **more than 8 out of 10 federations concluded there was likely to be a noted underreporting of the extent of online abuse because of a focus on commentary published only in English, suggesting levels of online abuse posted in other languages were concerning.**
- In a significant narrowing of the forms of abuse being posted online, **half of respondents to our 2025 survey said the online abuse they witnessed in their sports could be classified as either misogynistic or racist.** This sharp, reductionist trend is important to highlight, especially when 12 months ago, a significant minority (40%) of respondents to the first edition of this survey said they could not accurately categorise the type of abuse they were seeing online.
- More than 8 out of 10 federations concluded there was likely to be a noted **underreporting** of the extent of online abuse because of a focus on commentary published only in English, suggesting levels of online abuse posted in other



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

languages were concerning. The UAOA campaign recognises the need to consider online abuse beyond that published in English and, indeed, has published reports covering this issue over the last 12 months.

- **Support for a collaborative approach (across sporting federations and other agencies) to addressing online abuse remains high at 72.2%.** Interestingly, some 11.1% of respondents also stated a preference for a campaign like this to be led by well-known sports stars, using their profile to communicate the importance of 'keeping sport social'.
- In a major finding for the 2025 survey, 50% of Federations stated they either 'Strongly Agree' (11.1%) or 'Rather Agree' (38.9%) that individuals not directly involved in their sports (such as volunteer officials) were also routinely subject to online abuse. With over a quarter of Federations also stating that they preferred not to respond to this question in detail, this may suggest it is an area they are reluctant to highlight further due to a concern about an escalation in activity across this realm.
- Findings from the 2025 Survey Barometer also confirm, regrettably, the conclusion of **three in every four sporting federations that threats to harm sportspeople or their dependents remain a reality for such individuals due to their use of social media platforms.**
- **Half of all survey respondents also confirmed that they either 'Strongly Agree' (11.1%) or 'Rather Agree' (38.9%) that people not directly participating in their sports (such as volunteer officials or marshals) had been routinely subject to online abuse in the past 12 months.** This confirms an ongoing concern for many sporting federations that the volunteer base upon which so many bodies rely, may be gradually eroded due to concerns some may have about being openly identified and criticized online.
- Many sports leaders have, both publicly and in private, confirmed to the UAOA campaign that they feel a duty of care to their athletes, and volunteers to do something impactful to address the issue of online abuse in their sport. This view was confirmed in the 2025 Barometer results when **just under 9 out of 10 respondents to this survey (89%) either 'Strongly agree' (11.1%) or 'Rather agree' (77.8%) with the conclusion that sport's governing bodies are under increasing pressure to ensure their athletes are not exposed to online social media abuse.**



- Indeed, in response to this very question, our survey confirmed that **there has been an increase (over the past 12 months) in the number of governing bodies that are now actively developing a Federation-wide plan (to respond to online abuse in their sport) – which is up 10.2% over the last 12 months.**
- The other notable increase from our 2024 UAOA Survey results concerning the wishes of sporting federations is to see more immediate and responsible action being shown by social media companies when online abuse is identified. **Whereas 57.1% of respondents to our 2024 survey said they 'strongly agree' with a call for companies such as X and Meta to remove harmful content promptly, this figure has increased significantly to 66.7% following this second edition of the Barometer.**
- Another important outcome from the first edition of this UAOA Survey Barometer (published in January 2024) was a clear need for sporting federations to consider the support measures it had in place to assist its members should they be subject to instances of online abuse. It's significant, therefore, to see that **55.6% of respondents confirmed their Federation did have appropriate support measures in place (for those colleagues and members impacted by online abuse).**
- **Just under one-third of Federations, when asked about their experiences of online abuse in Esports, confirmed they either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that it is an issue of considerable concern** and action should be taken against perpetrators who can be proven to have engaged in this activity.
- Despite recent public commentary from the leaders of some of the most widely used social media platforms that appear to imply a reduction in the protections offered to its users, including against online abuse, there is still an expectation amongst sporting federations that they can do more and indeed are critical to the long-term strategic response to the challenge of online harm. In our 2025 survey.

Over 94% of respondents confirmed that the support of social media companies was **crucial** to the long-term outcome of any campaign for change in this realm. At a time when public commentary from the leaders of some of the most widely used social media platforms appears to imply a reduction in the protections offered to its users, including against online abuse, there is still an expectation amongst sporting federations that they can do more and indeed are critical to the long-term strategic response to the challenge of online harm.



KEY FINDINGS

OF FEDERATIONS FEAR
ONLINE ABUSE WILL DRIVE
TALENTED ATHLETES OUT
OF SPORT

90%

OF ONLINE ABUSE IDENTIFIED
AS MISOGYNISTIC OR RACIST

50%

SUPPORT
COLLABORATIVE
EFFORTS AMONG
FEDERATIONS
AND AGENCIES

72.2%

11.1%

PREFER
CAMPAIGNS LED
BY HIGH-PROFILE
SPORTS STARS

BELIEVE SOCIAL
MEDIA SUPPORT
IS CRUCIAL TO
LONG-TERM
CHANGE

94%

AGREE THAT VOLUNTEERS, LIKE
OFFICIALS AND MARSHALS, FACE
ROUTINE ONLINE ABUSE

50%



METHODOLOGY

The second edition of the UAOA Barometer builds upon the inaugural survey conducted for the first edition but with expanded scope to track trends, explore emerging issues, and deepen understanding of online abuse and its effects in sport. This edition was designed to provide both a snapshot of the current landscape and a comparative analysis with data from the inaugural report to track behavioural, regulatory and technological changes over the past 12 months.

SCOPE AND PARTICIPANTS

The second edition was issued to international sporting federations and UAOA received responses from 18 federations, reflecting a diverse representation across disciplines and regions.

10
REPEAT
PARTICIPANTS

Federations that contributed to the inaugural survey, enabling robust longitudinal comparisons.

8
NEW
PARTICIPANTS

Federations participating for the first time, enriching the dataset with fresh perspectives.

The inclusion of federations spanning various sports and geographic regions ensures a balanced analysis which incorporates insights from a range of cultural, political, and socio-economic backgrounds and experiences.



DATA COLLECTION

The Barometer utilised a structured survey format disseminated electronically to participating federations. The survey was divided into 20 thematic areas, each aimed at uncovering specific dimensions of online abuse in sport. To maintain consistency with the inaugural survey and enable reliable comparisons, questions in the second edition were structured similarly, using scaled responses, ranking exercises, and open-ended prompts. This design ensures that trends, shifts, and continuities in key metrics can be accurately tracked over time.

The survey questions were crafted to assess both quantitative and qualitative aspects of online abuse in sport, with the following key focus areas:

1 PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY

The extent to which respondents perceive online abuse as a widespread issue within their sport.

Changes in the volume and toxicity of abuse over the past 12 months.

2 PLATFORM-SPECIFIC ABUSE

Ranking of five major social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) based on the volume of observed abuse.

3 TARGETED PARTICIPANTS

Ranking of participant categories (e.g., athletes, referees, volunteers) by the volume and toxicity of abuse they experience.

4 METHODS OF ABUSE

Identification and ranking of the most prevalent forms of online abuse (e.g., flaming, harassment, cyberstalking).

5 IMPACT AND RESPONSE

The effect of online abuse on athlete attitudes and participation.

Evaluation of federations' formal plans, use of AI tools, and support systems for those impacted.

6 BROADER CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

The role of online service providers in mitigating abuse.

The intersection of online abuse with equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.

The survey was launched in October 2024 and was open until January 2025. Responses were then assessed and analysed by FIA University to produce a detailed overview of the current online abuse landscape and a critical comparison with the responses received for the first edition Barometer published in 2024.





MONITORING AND REPORTING

BREAKDOWN OF FINDINGS

This survey is the second edition of the UAOA Barometer issued to international sporting federations, and, referring to the 2024 publication, governing bodies are increasingly concerned about the extent of online abuse in their sport and the harm it causes to their athletes and officials.

Indeed, what this second edition of the survey underscores is that abuse is no longer targeted solely at athletes but also at officials and volunteers, whilst the measures recently introduced by sporting federations, including engagement with specialist AI-led detection companies as well as implementing policies designed to support members impacted by online abuse, reflect the seriousness with which they are now framing the existential challenge online abuse presents to their members and competitors.

Indeed, many of the federations who engaged with this survey now see online abuse as constituting a clear and present danger to their safeguarding and athlete welfare policies.

SET OUT BELOW ARE SELECTED FINDINGS FROM THE UAOA BAROMETER SURVEY (SECOND EDITION):



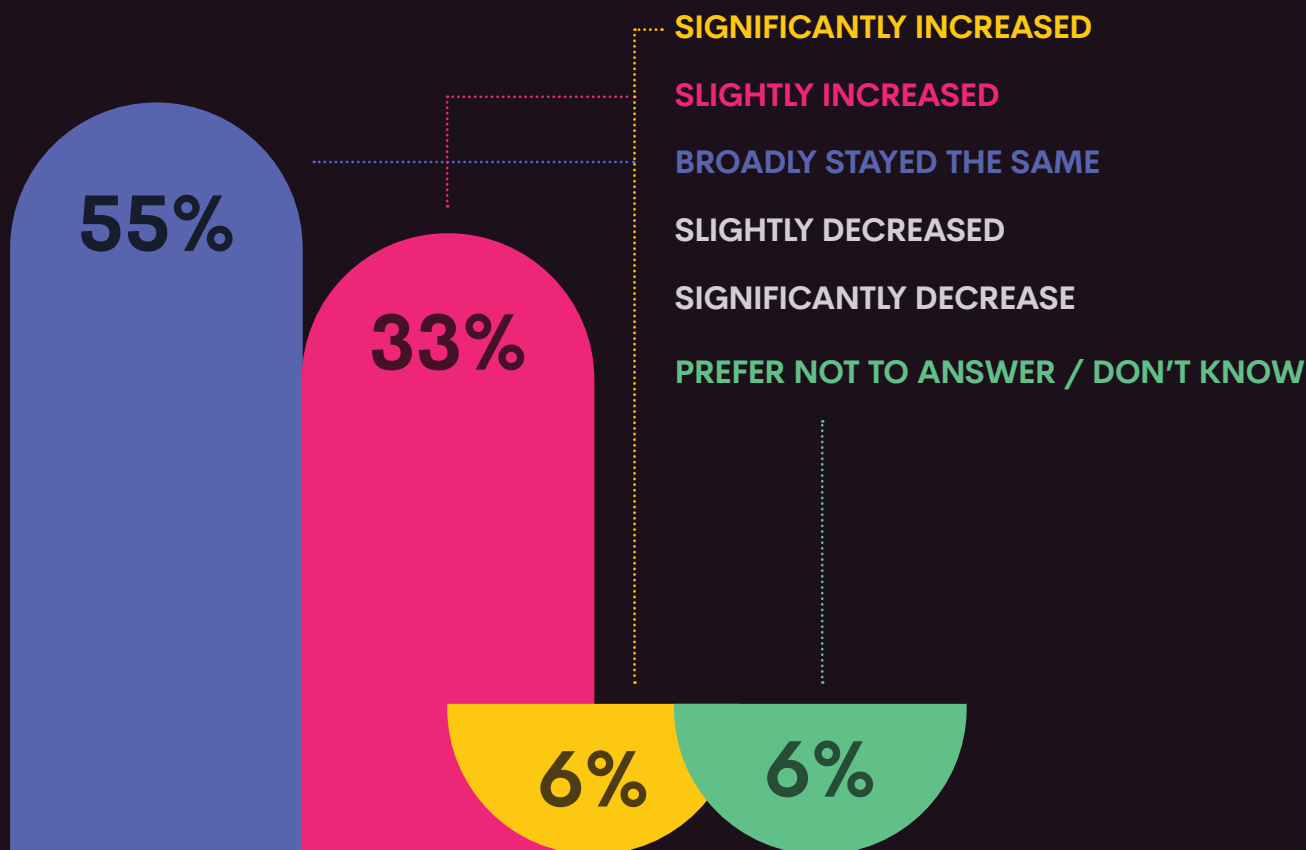
MONITORING AND REPORTING

As indicated in the introduction to this section, it is widely understood that the challenge of online abuse is one largely endured by sports participants. Whilst our survey again confirms this, it also points to a rise in online abuse against officials and volunteers involved in various sports, which is a worrying trend.

However, it remains the case that **participants – athletes and competitors – continue to be the primary targets for online abuse, according to the Federations who responded to our survey**, and this is, of course, concerning because, for young athletes or those

representing minority populations, this reality be extremely challenging, particularly in the absence of adequate support measures being in place, which, it should be acknowledged, a growing number of sports governing bodies are now developing.

Over the past 12 months, do you believe the volume of online abuse in your sport has:





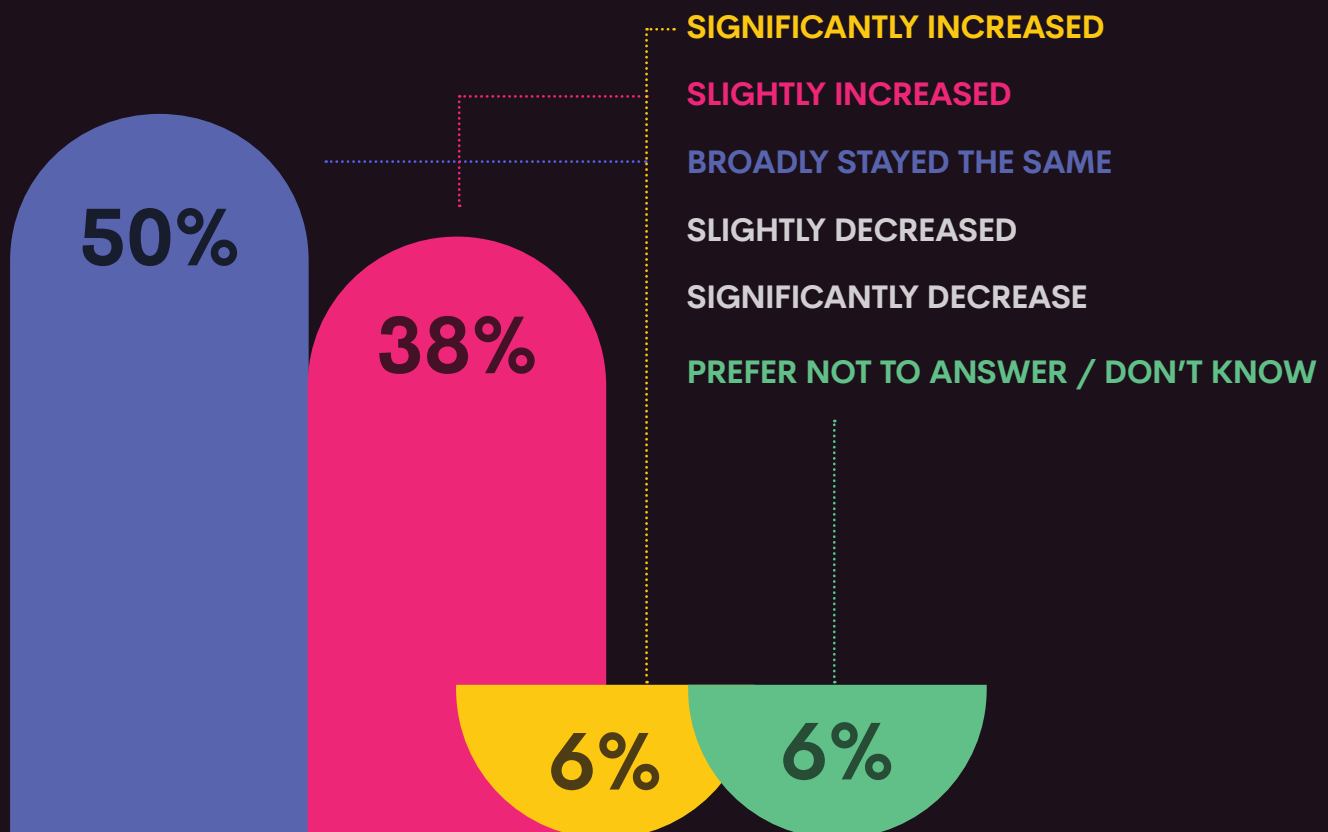
MONITORING AND REPORTING

The UAOA research conducted across 2023 and 2024 has crystallised a view that there are four main categories of abuse that people endure in the online environment.

Of this typology, misogyny is by now well understood as being the most dominant form, eclipsing racism and sectarianism. This finding was particularly stark in the UAOA research into the experiences of sports journalists, first published in 2024. Whilst this remains true from the findings of this survey barometer, what is particularly noteworthy is that **50% of those who responded to this question indicated that the type of abuse they were**

witnessing could be categorized as either being misogyny or racist, which is important as it suggests a contraction of the type of online abuse now being posted. Whereas in the first edition of this Barometer, there were examples of many different forms of abuse being witnessed in the online setting, this narrowing in the use of the online environment to post either misogynistic or racist abuse is both significant and disturbing.

Over the past 12 months, do you believe the degree of toxicity (i.e., its severity) of online abuse has:





MONITORING AND REPORTING

As we have seen in several UAOA publications to date, whilst the purpose of online postings designed to abuse or harm recipients has been firmly established, so too has the methodology employed by those engaged in this activity.

Once again, **'flaming', in which individuals send threatening, abusive, or rude messages, was recorded as being the most commonly occurring form (of abuse) according to the results of this second Barometer survey.**

This is relevant because whilst online abuse can often be dismissed by those not directly impacted by it as comparatively harmless, the sending of threatening or abusive messages has an insidious effect for those targeted by it, especially if the threat extends to dependents of the intended recipient.

Five of the most widely used online platforms are listed below.

Please rank these from 1 to 5, where 1 is the platform where you have witnessed the most online abuse directed towards athletes/ competitors and others involved in sport, and 5 is the platform, comparatively speaking, with the least amount of online abuse postings.

MOST
ONLINE ABUSE



LEAST
ONLINE ABUSE





MONITORING AND REPORTING

The survey barometer then asked respondents to consider the ultimate effect of online abuse in sport, if the rise in the prevalence and toxicity of the harmful practice remain unchecked.

Over 90% of those who completed the survey either 'strongly agreed' or 'rather agreed' that such is the detrimental effect of online abuse in their sport, that if it is not addressed it may result in some athletes/competitors withdrawing from participating altogether.

This finding should serve as an important reminder to sporting federations of the need to address the harmful effects of online abuse. This view confirms that online abuse has serious and, in some cases, potentially career-ending consequences for some sportspeople. This is the second consecutive year when this stark conclusion has been drawn by sports federations, so the stakes could hardly be higher when considering the impact of online abuse on sports.

By now, there are few sports governing bodies unaware of the potential negative impact of online abuse and many, to their credit, have now followed the lead demonstrated by co-signatories to the UAOA campaign and begun to address the challenge in more meaningful ways.

Whilst a minority continue to see the merit of adopting a unilateral response to the issue, some **72.2% of respondents to the survey expressed support for a coalition of interested parties to take this fight forward, stating that the issue is best addressed when international and national governing bodies of sport act together to present a unified opposition to online abuse.** Interestingly, by contrast, 11.1% of respondents believed this outcome was best achieved by individual athletes speaking out against it, which is perhaps a useful reminder of the impact role models or athlete 'leaders' can play in relaying the importance of addressing this issue.

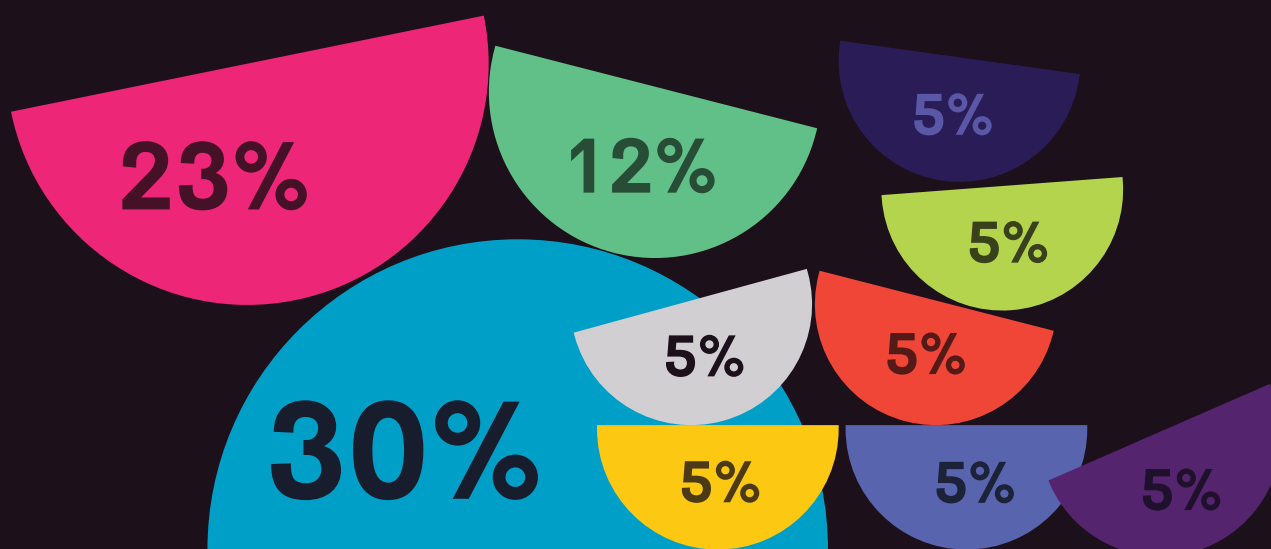


MONITORING AND REPORTING

In your experience, what form of abuse, directed towards athletes, volunteers, officials (and others) engaged in your sport, do you regard as being the most commonly occurring:

MISOGYNY
RACISM
**PERCEIVED
SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

- DECISIONS
- CRITICISM OVER PERFORMANCE/
THE WAY YOU LOOK
- SEXIST OR OF SEXUAL NATURE AS WELL
AS GENERAL ABUSE
- INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL SUGGESTIONS
- BETTING / MATCH-FIXING RELATED
- GENERAL ABUSE
- BULLYING





MONITORING AND REPORTING

As the previously published UAOA research has demonstrated, including the UAOA Barometer (First Edition) and its White Paper on Online Abuse in Sport underscored, despite the insidious nature of online abuse in modern sports, comparatively little is known about the subject.

Indeed, academic research, which is often at the forefront of investigations of this kind, has only been undertaken in this field for the last four years. However, collaborations are now growing quite considerably, across several **sports and academic institutions, and the field is now populated by motivated and skilled researchers.**

Thus, when asked, it is little surprise that sporting federations confirmed that they felt that only by developing a research base in this field could they, in turn, speak with authority on the issue, with greater than 4 in every 5 respondents supporting this perspective. In the words of one Federation representative:

“Currently, we don’t have a formal and systematic way to measure the extent of online abuse in (our sport). (Our) answers are based on various experiences and the overall situation within the sports sector. There is currently a need for more tools and research to measure the extent and impact of online abuse in most sports”.



MONITORING AND REPORTING

Below is a list of the most common methods of online abuse in sport.

Reflecting upon your experience of online abuse in sport, rank the following from 1 to 5 (with 1 being the most prevalent method that you have observed, through to 5, which is the least prevalent):

LEAST
ONLINE ABUSE



MOST
ONLINE ABUSE

FLAMING
(THE SENDING OF THREATENING,
ABUSIVE OR RUDE MESSAGES)



HARASSMENT
(THE SENDING OF OFFENSIVE
MESSAGES REPEATEDLY)



DENIGRATION
(THE POSTING OF INNUENDO OR
OTHER FORMS OF MISINFORMATION)



CYBERSTALKING
(INCLUDING THREATS TO HARM A
NAMED PERSON OR GROUP)



OUTING
(REVEALING INFORMATION,
WHETHER FACTUAL OR ALLEGED,
ABOUT A PERSON THAT THEY MAY
WISH TO REMAIN PRIVATE)





MONITORING AND REPORTING

One concern regularly expressed by researchers and sporting federations alike is, to date, most of the commentary, and research, on online abuse in sport has been conducted and published through the English language.

When asked whether this narrow focus may result in a global underreporting of the extent and impact of online abuse in sports, more than 8 out of 10 respondents agreed that this may well be the case.

The UAOA campaign is now aware that the impact of online abuse in other languages,

including Portuguese and Spanish, is underreported and, in other respects, can be subject to underassessment in terms of its potency due to unique phrases and meanings used in local dialects and linguistic derivatives. It's clear further research on online abuse communicated through languages other than English should be a priority.

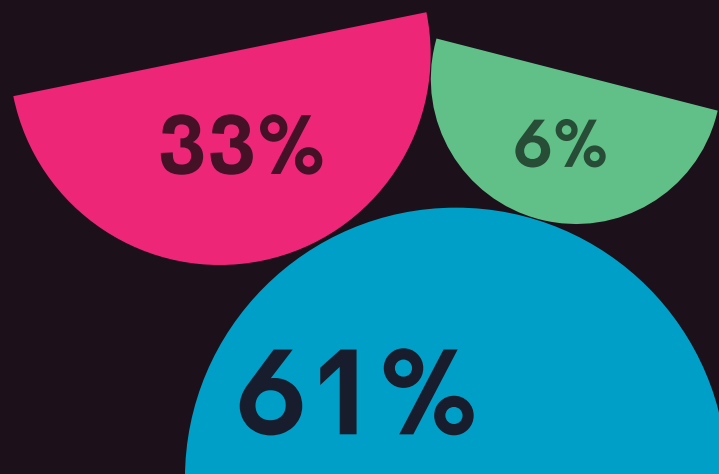
To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

Online abuse against athletes/competitors has a detrimental effect on their attitude towards their sport and, if not addressed, may lead to some athletes/competitors withdrawing from participating altogether.

**STRONGLY
AGREE**

RATHER AGREE

**PREFER NOT
TO ANSWER /
DON'T KNOW**





MONITORING AND REPORTING

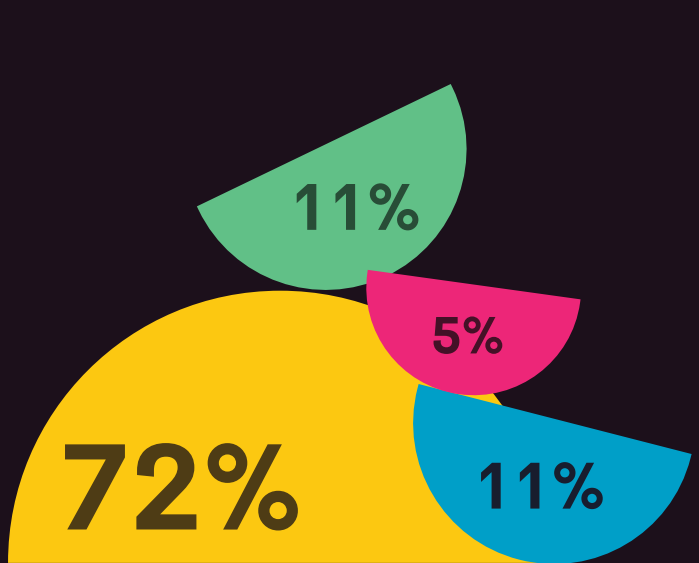
Amongst the many challenges that those concerned with the negative impact of social media, which remains a largely unregulated space despite the introduction of the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) (2023), face when highlighting its effect upon modern life, is countering the accusation that they, in turn, are seeking to restrict freedom of speech or expression.

Indeed, the rise in support for what is euphemistically referred to as 'free speech' but can very often prove harmful for public figures, including those involved in sport, alongside recent announcements by social media companies Meta and 'X' (early 2025) suggest a further eradication of measures designed to protect such individuals from the potentially harmful impact of online abuse. However, the response to our survey indicates that sporting federations have given careful thought to this emerging contradiction, and **some 2/3rds (of**

sporting federations) conclude that the right to online privacy and the ability to detect online abuse in sports are, in fact, broadly of equal importance.

This majority view suggests that whilst sporting federations are content to engage in free and open debate on a range of issues and encourage unrestricted commentary, equally this cannot constitute an unconditional right. As such, where people knowingly or repeatedly overstep what is deemed acceptable, they should be subject to the full rigours of the law.

Which one, if any, the following statements comes closest to your view?



OPPOSITION TO ONLINE ABUSE IN SPORT IS BEST ACHIEVED BY INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES SPEAKING OUT AGAINST IT.

ONLINE ABUSE IN SPORTS IS BEST ADDRESSED WHEN GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT, ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, DECIDE TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST IT.

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT ACTING TOGETHER TO PRESENT A UNIFIED OPPOSITION TO ONLINE ABUSE IN SPORT REPRESENTS THE MOST IMPACTFUL APPROACH.

PREFER NOT TO ANSWER / DON'T KNOW



MONITORING AND REPORTING

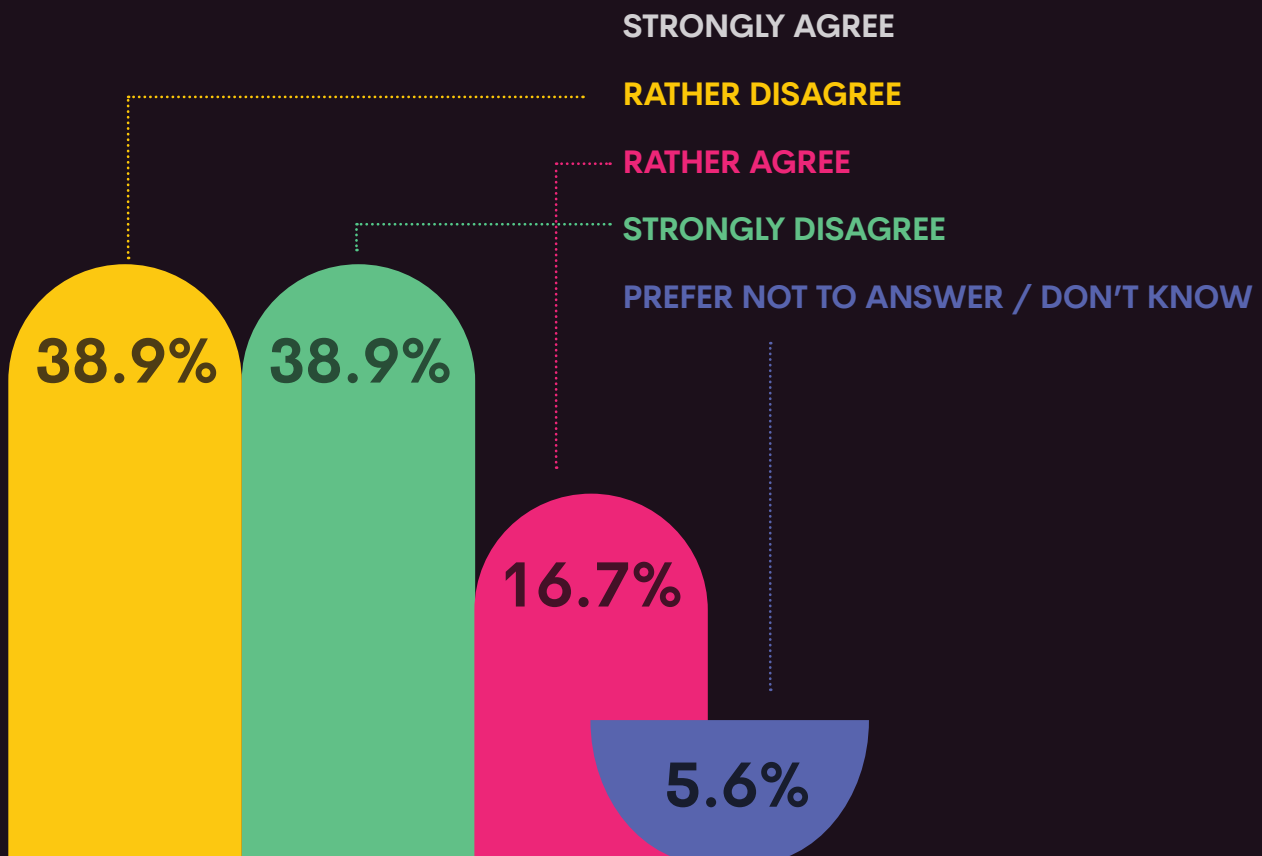
When asked to comment on whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

'As things stand, athletes can use online social media platforms without concern that they may be exposed to online abuse' just less than 8 out of 10 respondents to the survey either 'strongly disagreed' (38.9%) or 'rather disagreed' (38.9%) with it.

This finding has several implications, not least to highlight a chilling effect on athletes' use of social media, their interaction with fans and the media and serves also as a measure of how the fear alone of online abuse can create a profound impact on competitors' use of social media platforms.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

As things stand, athletes can use online social media platforms without concern that they may be exposed to online abuse:





MONITORING AND REPORTING

It is a truism that for some commentators, sports people, including high-profile officials, represent legitimate targets robust criticism and, on occasions, even abuse.

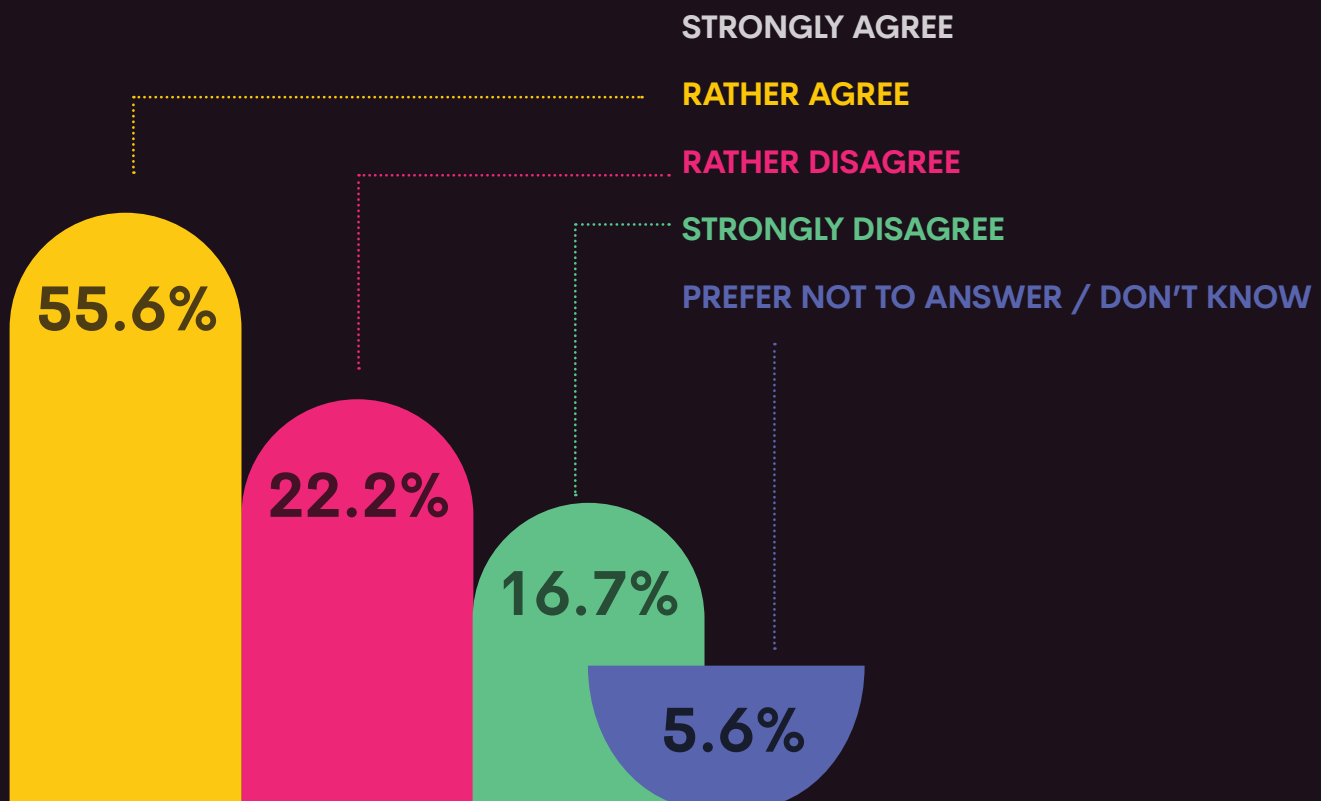
Thus, there remains a concern **that online abuse may be dismissed, in some quarters, as simply part of the reality of being a high-profile sporting 'actor', particularly within those sports that attract a global following.**

Yet when just less than 3 out of every 4 respondents to our survey barometer

conclude that threats to harm sportspeople, or their dependents, remain a reality for sportspeople using social media platforms (after this finding was first reported during the published First Edition of this survey), the stark conclusion is drawn that this issue constitutes an ongoing threat to a free, open, and social sporting discourse.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

At present, athletes can use online social media platforms without, specifically, being subject to threats to harm them or their dependents:





MONITORING AND REPORTING

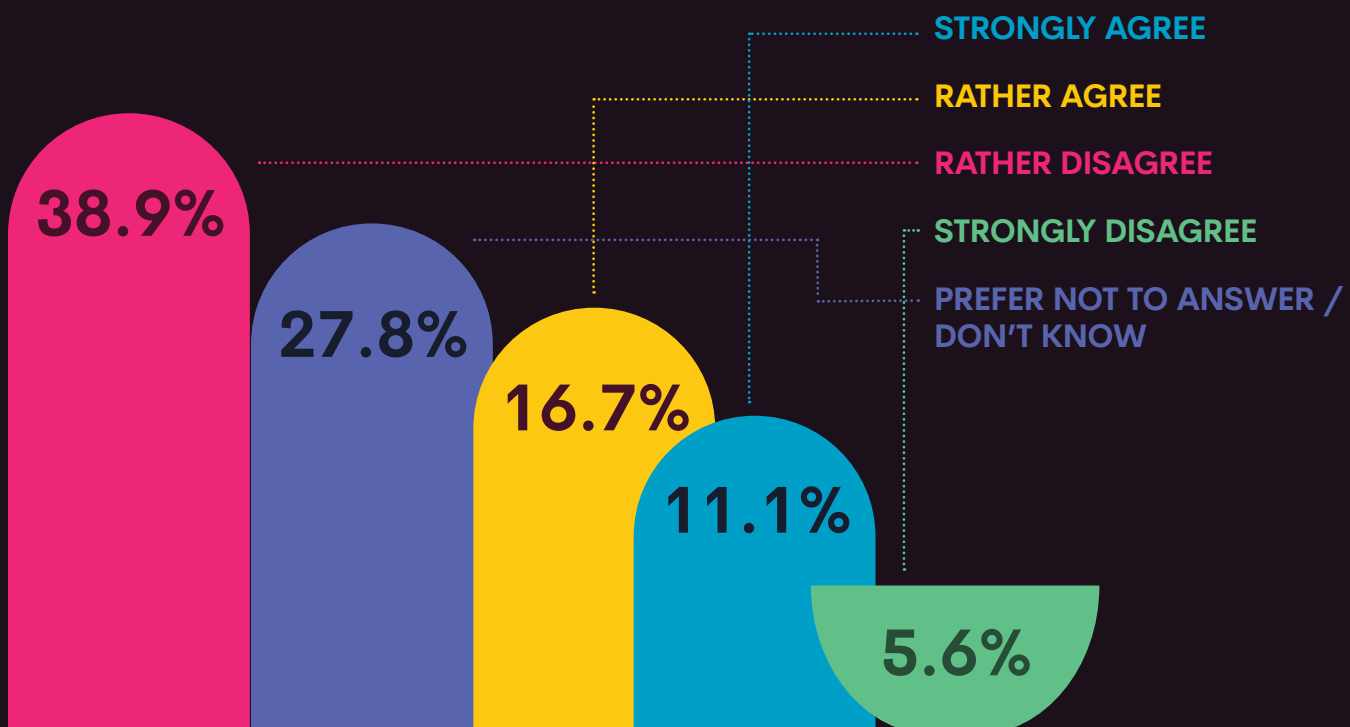
An enhancement introduced to the second iteration of this survey was a question concerning the extent of online abuse targeted at sports officials, volunteers and/or administrators, as our (UAOA) focus extends beyond simply the experiences of athletes/ competitors in the sporting sphere.

It was very interesting, therefore, to find that 50% of Federations stated they either 'Strongly Agree' (11.1%) or 'Rather Agree' (38.9%) that individuals not directly involved in their sports (such as volunteer officials) were also routinely subject to online abuse.

Over a quarter of Federations also said they preferred not to respond to this question in detail, which may suggest it is an area they are reluctant to highlight further due to a concern about an escalation in activity across this realm.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Aside from competitors, other key figures involved in your sport, such as volunteers and/ or administrators, are increasingly subject to online abuse:





MONITORING AND REPORTING

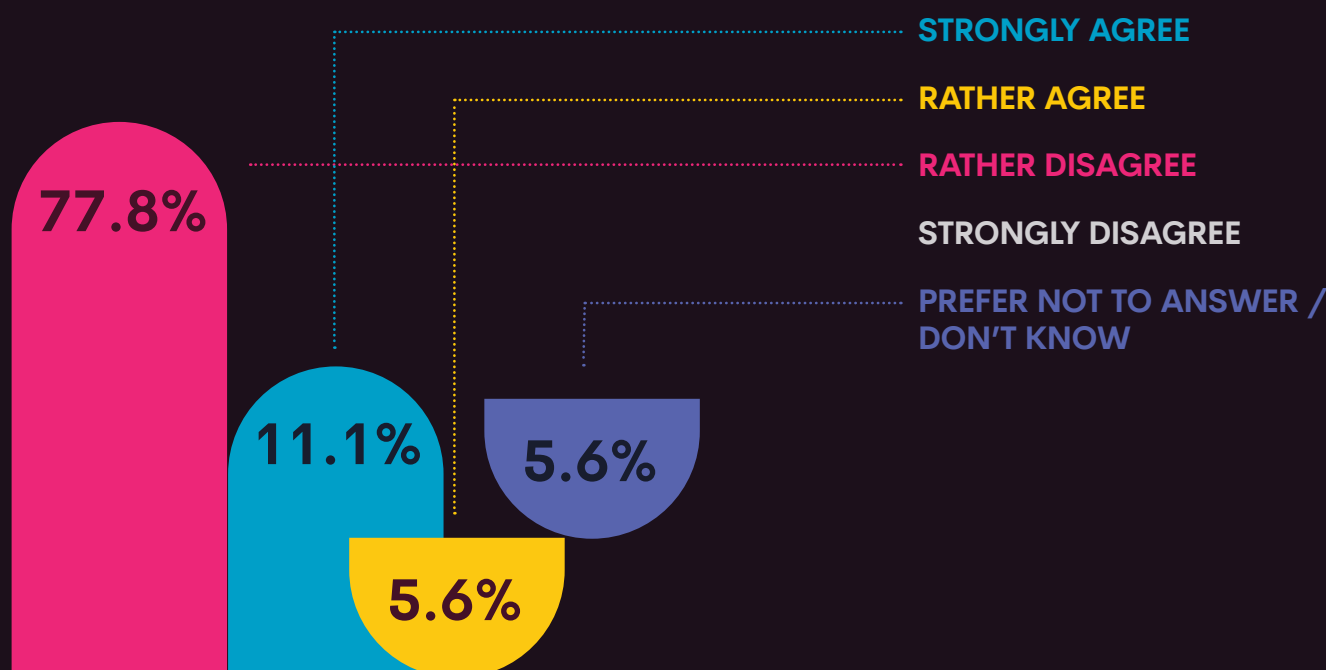
Reflective of the added burden placed upon sport's governing bodies because of the impact of online abuse, **just under 9 out of 10 respondents to this survey (89%) either 'Strongly agree' (11.1%) or 'Rather agree' (77.8%) with the conclusion that sport's governing bodies are under increasing pressure to ensure their athletes are not exposed to online social media abuse.**

This confirms a view, expressed both in private and public by high-profile sports administrators, that they carry a burden or responsibility to address this issue,

yet many state they also feel powerless to effectively change practices they feel are outside their immediate sphere of influence.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Sports governing bodies are under increasing pressure to ensure that their athletes are not exposed to online social media abuse:





MONITORING AND REPORTING

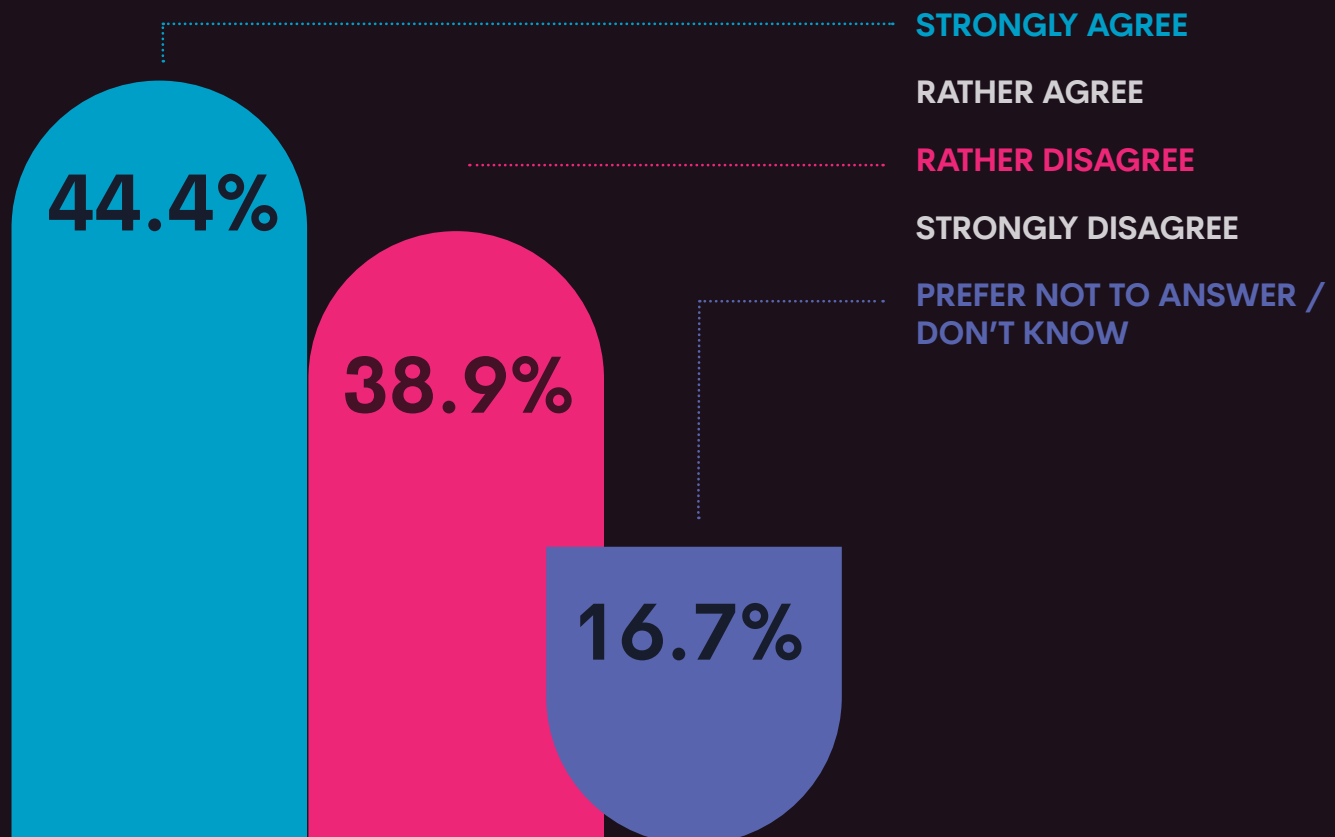
It is of little surprise therefore that sporting federations appreciate they require some level of collaboration with social media platforms to ensure a meaningful response to the challenges they now endure.

Despite this, just under **85% of respondents to this survey stated that they, by now, have concluded that online service providers are not sufficiently active in supporting the fight against online abuse in sports,**

which merely confirms the extent of the challenge that yet lies ahead and an understanding that more must be done to disarm a degree of scepticism around social media companies' commitment to enacting meaningful change in this area.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Currently, online service providers are not sufficiently active in supporting the fight against online abuse in sport:





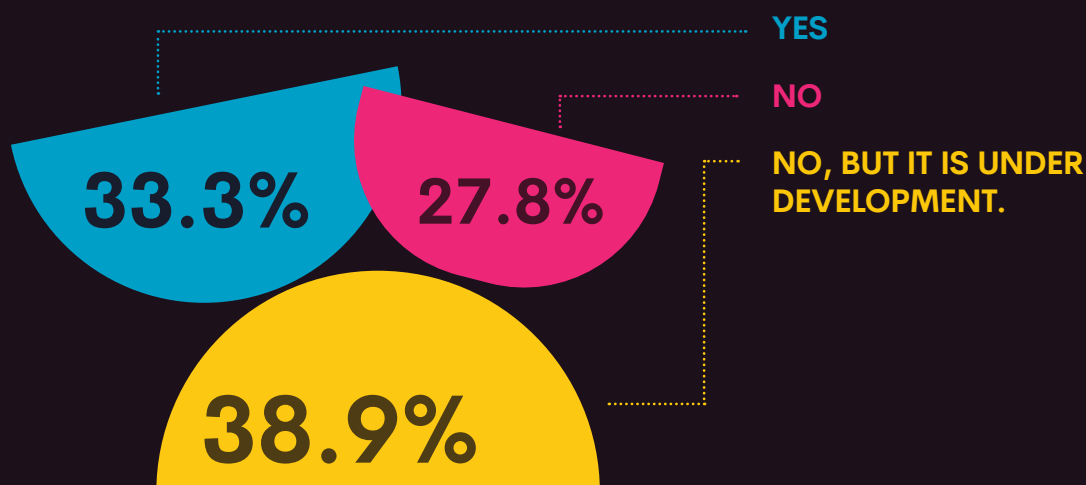
MONITORING AND REPORTING

In recognising the extent of the challenge presented by online abuse against their participants and officials, it is heartening to note that **33.3% of federations that responded to this survey confirmed that they have a formal plan in place to address online abuse in their sport.**

In most cases that has meant collaborating with a company specialising in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and who are engaged in monitoring and, through machine learning, shielding/ removing examples of harmful content, particularly on their official social media channels (e.g. X or Facebook). Whilst this approach has the effect of removing the most harmful content, arguably it does not address the extent, far less the genesis, of the challenge posed by this issue. A further 38.9% of respondents indicated that their federation was currently working on a plan (to address online abuse as it relates

to their sport), or it was in some stage of development, whilst only just over a quarter of those who replied stated that did not have a plan in place. It is probable that the latter category of respondents does not regard online abuse as being a particular concern for them, at least currently, and therefore are focused on other immediate challenges for their sport. Indeed, it is true that some minor sports, in terms of television coverage, sponsorship and overall viewership, do not experience any significant issues with online abuse, even if few remain untouched by it, either directly or indirectly.

Does your Federation have a formal plan in place to address online abuse as it relates to your sport?





MONITORING AND REPORTING

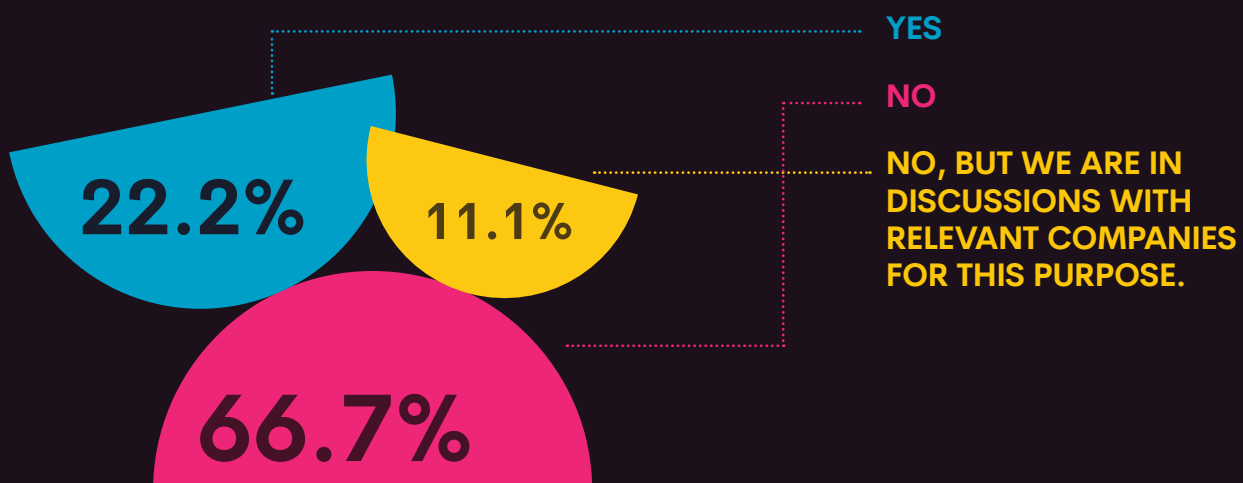
As indicated, the role of companies offering AI detection and concealment to sports federations challenged by the impact of online abuse has expanded rapidly in recent years.

To this end, Federations were asked in our survey whether they are currently engaged with such technology companies.

Their responses confirm that only a minority currently are – 22.2% – and indeed around 2 in every 3 Federations (66.7%) currently are not. Of course, there is a considerable financial cost associated with retaining the services of such companies and some Federations may feel their scarce resources could be put to better effect elsewhere. Specifically highlighting the growing correlation between the ill effects of disgruntled gamblers with online abuse in sports, one Federation representative spoke candidly, stating:

“A lot of the online abuse we see in (named sport) relates to disgruntled betting punters (gambler) who direct abuse at the players due to the punter losing a bet. We are currently engaging an AI online abuse service provider to conduct a pilot project to establish what other types of online abuse are being experienced by players. This will then allow the (Federation) to better shape and develop its Safeguarding Plan”

Does your Federation engage companies that deploy Artificial Intelligence to detect and remove instances of online abuse against competitors, officials, volunteers etc. in your sport?





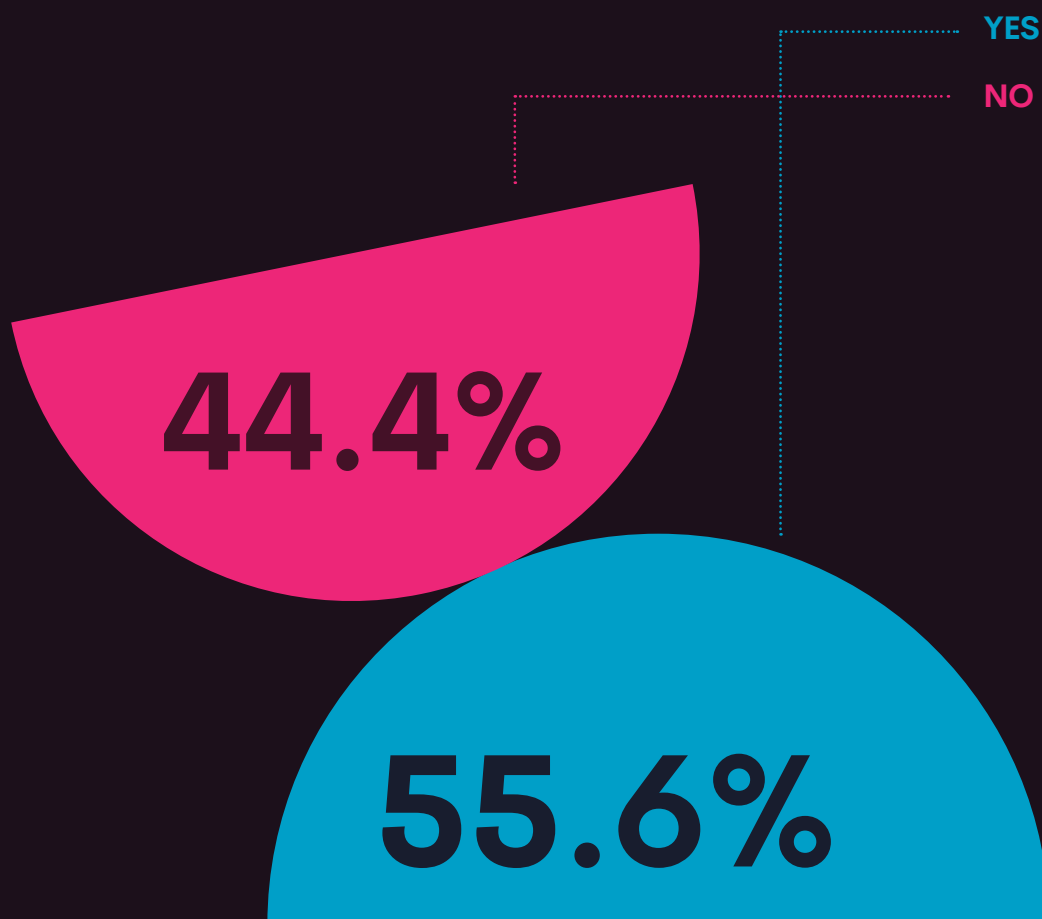
MONITORING AND REPORTING

As the need for a coherent response to the threat of online abuse to the integrity of sporting bodies grows, the importance of having in place appropriate support measures for those impacted by such abuse is understood.

It's heartening therefore to see that **55.6% of respondents confirmed their Federation did have appropriate support measures in place (for those**

impacted by online abuse), even if the remaining governing bodies have not implemented a similar response yet.

Does your Federation have support measures in place for those impacted by online abuse i.e., a unit/ department or named personnel that can offer psychological and other support services etc?





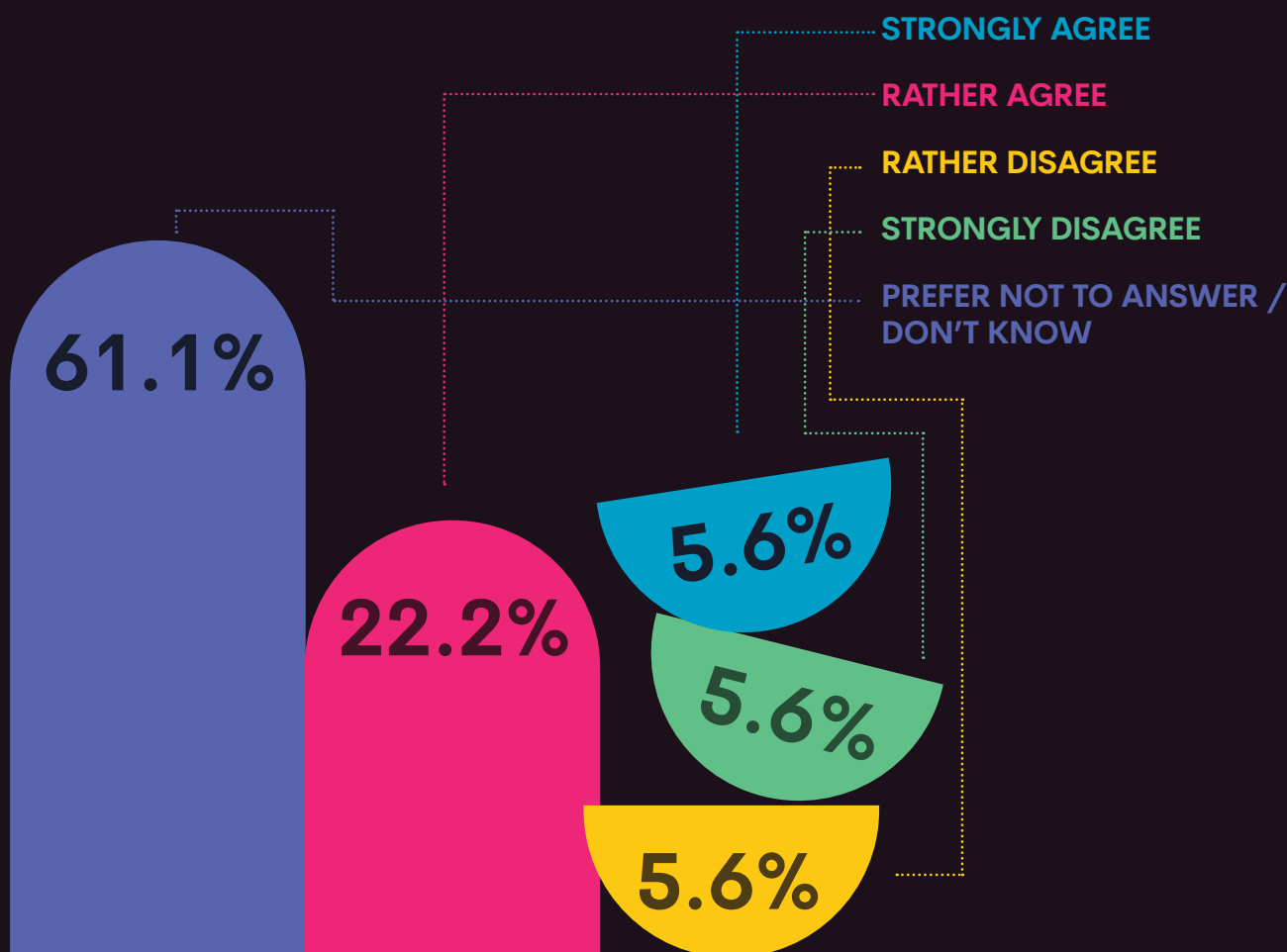
MONITORING AND REPORTING

Another innovation for this second edition of the UAOA Barometer survey was a question concerning online abuse in Esports.

A minority of Federations – just under one-third – either ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’ that online abuse in Esports was problematic, even if a majority stated

they didn’t know the extent of the challenge this issue presented to their Federation or preferred not to comment on the matter.

What is clear from published evidence is that instances of online abuse in Esports is now the cause of considerable concern. From your experience to what extent would you agree that online abuse in Esports is a problem as it relates to your Federation?





MONITORING AND REPORTING

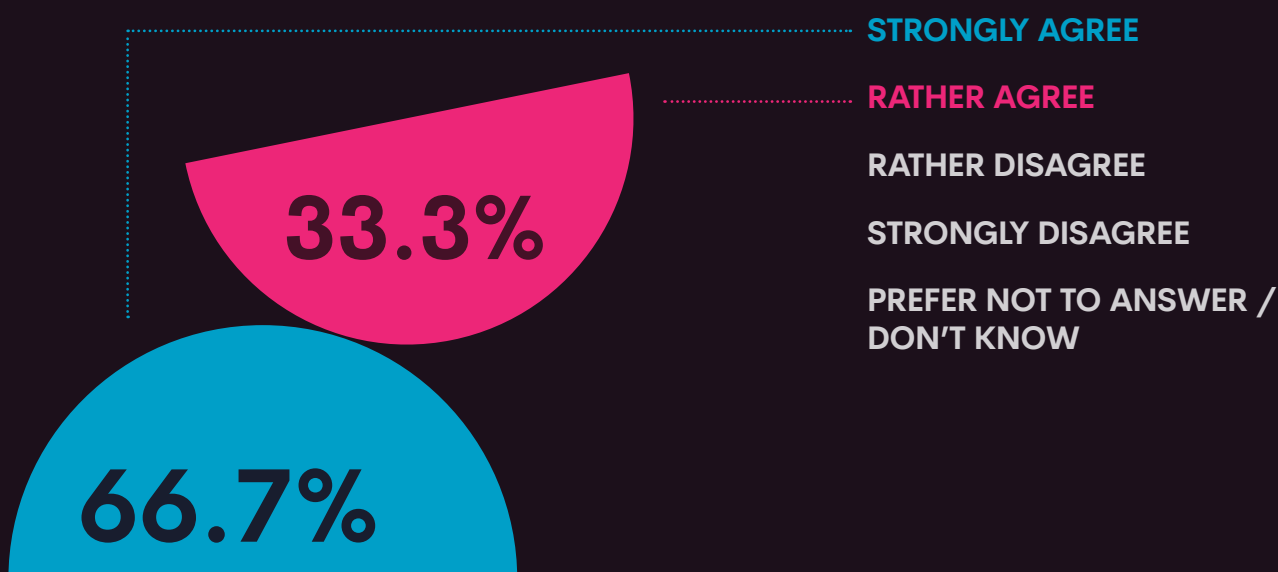
When the survey turned to enquire about attitudes around the detection and, where appropriate, prosecution of offenders, sporting federations expressed their clear support for the full rigors of the law to be imposed on those perpetrating online abuse against their members and, as a first principle, agreed online service providers should remove harmful content and, in by so doing, avoid further distress to its intended recipients.

Indeed **some 66.7% of respondents said they 'strongly agreed' with this comprehensive approach (outlined above).**

Perpetrators of online abuse, in general, avoid detection by virtue of the anonymity they benefit from on social media platforms?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this following statements?

The posting of online abuse should be detected and investigated with the aim of bringing perpetrators to justice, and the material should be removed to prevent it causing any further distress, including to the intended target(s).





MONITORING AND REPORTING

It's clear national and transnational legislatures are becoming increasingly focused on the issue of online abuse, albeit not exclusively in the sporting realm, and are either considering introducing legislation or, in fact, are in the process of doing so.

Sporting federations have a clear position on the role any new laws should play in this realm indicating in overwhelming terms (61.1%) that

online service providers should, under certain circumstances, be obliged by law to detect, remove, and report online abuse in sport.

Online service providers (e.g., social media platforms) can currently use several measures, including a combination of automated technology tools and human oversight, to detect and report online abuse, helping to identify this activity and sanction perpetrators e.g., removing access to their account.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

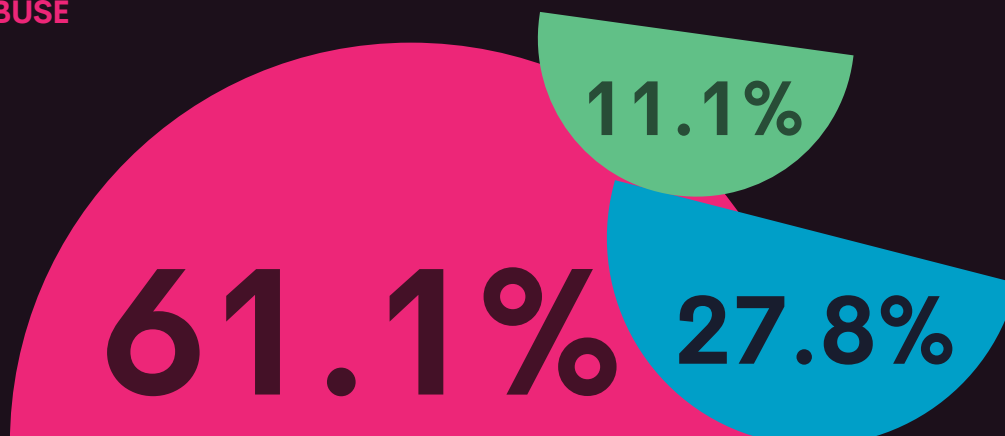
Online service providers (e.g., social media platforms) ...

... SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE VOLUNTARY ACTIONS TO DETECT, REMOVE AND REPORT ONLINE ABUSE

... SHOULD NOT DETECT, REMOVE AND REPORT ONLINE ABUSE

... SHOULD, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, BE OBLIGED BY LAW TO DETECT, REMOVE AND REPORT ONLINE ABUSE

PREFER NOT TO ANSWER / DON'T KNOW





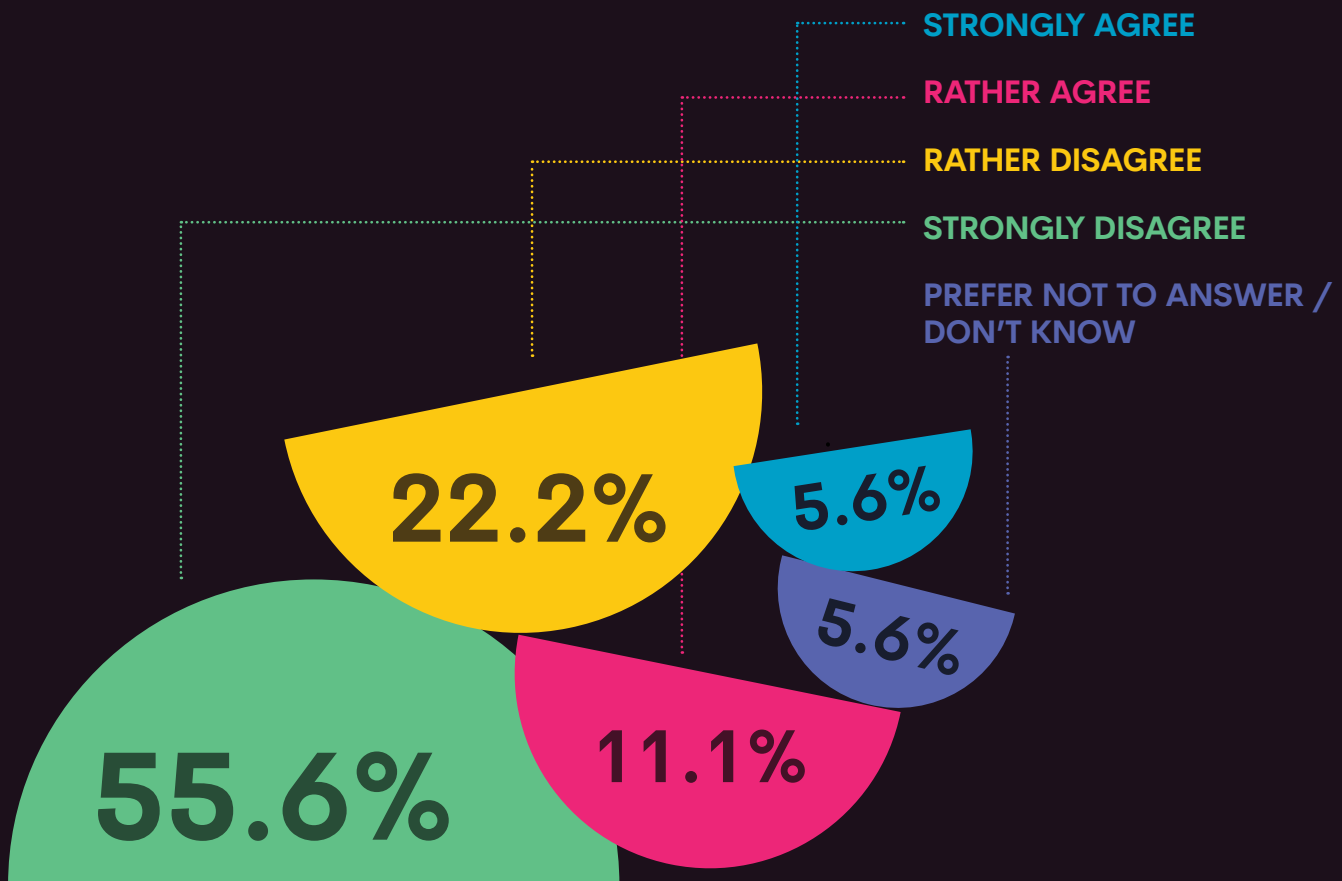
MONITORING AND REPORTING

Finally, whilst there is a sense amongst sporting bodies that they and others may need the support of legislation to see meaningful change, for now they were clear that any campaign against online abuse in sport must have the support of online service providers.

Indeed **over 94% of respondents confirmed that the support of social media companies was crucial to the long-term outcome of any campaign for change in this realm.**

Perpetrators of online abuse, in general, avoid detection by virtue of the anonymity they benefit from on social media platforms?

To what extent do you believe that anonymity should be left undetected?





MONITORING AND REPORTING

FINDINGS FROM THE 2025 UAOA SURVEY BAROMETER (SECOND EDITION) COMPARED TO THE 2024 UAOA SURVEY BAROMETER (FIRST EDITION).

One of the main aims of issuing the UAOA Online Abuse in Sport Survey in the form of a Barometer was that it allowed the Campaign to assess changes over time in the key metrics that contribute to the identification, classification and management of online abuse for international sporting federations.

Acknowledging that assessment of attitudinal change over 12 months should be cautionary, equally, it is worth drawing attention to some notable trends emerging from the UAOA 2025 Survey, compared to the outcomes of the 2024 version, that we intend to monitor closely over time. These include:



MONITORING AND REPORTING

- **There has been a narrowing in the typology of online abuse being identified and recorded by international sports federations over the last 12 months.** Whereas in 2024, 40% of Federations that responded to the UAOA survey stated they could not readily classify the type of online abuse they were witnessing, by contrast, one year later, 50% of respondents clearly stated it to be either misogynistic or racist. As a result, we can state that half of all online abuse identified by respondents to this 2025 survey falls, definitively, into one of these two categories, which is a significant finding compared to the position in 2024.
- Confirmation of findings from the 2024 Survey Barometer, through the recording of similar outcomes from the 2025 version, provides us with greater confidence as to the attitude of sporting federations on several key issues. To this end, **for the second consecutive year, more than 90% of respondents stated they feared the ill effects of online abuse, if left unchallenged, had the potential to result in some competitors (in their sport) withdrawing from participating altogether.** The consolidation of this finding underlines the importance of meaningfully responding to the impact of online abuse in a range of sports.
- Whilst there has been a **slight recorded fall in support for a multi-agency coalition of interested parties to address the scourge of online abuse in sport (2024 - 85% versus 72.2 % in 2025), this is best explained by those 2025 survey respondents (11.1%) who see it as perhaps a supplementary measure, to deploy leading sports stars as ambassadors for the campaign's aims.** Indeed, to this end, the UAOA campaign will, in 2025, identify several ambassadors to further promote and embed its key message.



MONITORING AND REPORTING

- Once again, comparing the findings from 2025 to 2024, **attitudes (of sporting federations) towards balancing freedom of speech for commentators using social media with their right to privacy, as well as the extent to which athletes can use social media without fear of being abused online, reveal remarkably similar outcomes. It suggests a consolidated position across time by sports governing bodies on these matters.**
- Whereas the number of sporting federations that are currently implementing a plan to address online abuse has remained consistent with our 2024 findings, **it is noteworthy that there has been an increase (over the past 12 months) in the number of governing bodies that are now actively developing a plan (to respond to online abuse in their sport) – up 10.2% over the last 12 months.** It is reasonable to conclude that this increase in the planning process spawns from an acceptance that online abuse is now an unfortunate reality for most sporting bodies.
- The other notable increase from our 2024 UAOA Survey results concerning the wishes of sporting federations is to see more immediate and responsible action being shown by social media companies when online abuse is identified. **Whereas 57.1% of respondents to our 2024 survey said they 'strongly agree' with a call for companies such as X and Meta to remove harmful content promptly, this figure has increased significantly to 66.7% following this second edition of the Barometer.** It suggests that sporting federations want to see social media companies proving more interventionist and supportive when addressing these matters.
- Indeed, this latter point is underscored by the fact that **the percentage of sporting bodies that wish to see social media companies be more supportive of the UAOA campaign to 'keep sport social' has risen exponentially over the last 12 months, from 75% in 2024 to 94% in 2025.**



UAOA PLAN OF ACTION

United Against Online Abuse is committed to using the findings of the Barometer to continue leading the global fight against online abuse in sport. The UAOA coalition will drive collective and sustained efforts to design and implement the lasting solutions we need to protect the integrity of sport and everyone involved from competitors and athletes to officials, journalists and fans.

UAOA will focus its third year efforts on harnessing the collective power, influence and authority of our growing coalition to convene, inspire and lead the global efforts to tackle online abuse in sport. As the UAOA coalition continues to grow, we renew our commitment to working with all partners to address the key findings in this report.

UAOA will:

- Host landmark global events to convene the coalition, share best practice and use the UAOA knowledge and research base to inform the frameworks, legislation and regulation required to effectively tackle online abuse in sport. This will include the landmark annual UAOA Conference which is set to significantly expand the global reach and influence of the campaign.
- Develop and launch a pan-European framework for tackling online abuse in sport, including a dedicated "Countering Online Abuse in Sport Day", aiming to raise awareness and mobilise stakeholders across Europe. This will be achieved as part of UAOA's successful Erasmus+ bid which has secured significant funding from the European Union who have entrusted UAOA to lead European efforts to tackle online abuse in sport.



UAOA PLAN OF ACTION

- Host and promote regular online events, including topical webinars, working groups, and educational modules focused on behavioural change and global awareness across sports.
- Collaborate with world leading research centres to offer an informed, evidence-based, and solution-led approach to the issue, cementing UAOA as a 'thought leader' and authoritative body in the research and study of online abuse in sport. This includes continuing to support six UAOA research scholars, funded by the FIA Foundation and hosted by Dublin City University, to produce world-leading research on various aspects of the study of online abuse in sport.
- Launch a UAOA ambassador programme, providing invaluable first-hand accounts of the impact and effects of online abuse in sport as well as the urgent need for collective action.
- Create resource packs that can be used by UAOA Coalition members to raise awareness amongst their organisation, stakeholders, and fans.
- Following UAOA's membership increase of 154% in 2024, the Coalition will aspire to sustain this growth rate by expanding its international outreach, host global events and conferences and produce research in under-explored aspects of online abuse across the world. The campaign will also prioritise showcasing the individual developments and achievements of UAOA partners in combating online abuse in sport to share best practices and begin to develop the collaborative solutions needed.

UAOA recognises that lasting change and reform can only be achieved through behavioural and regulatory change and reform. UAOA will continue to engage with governments and international organisations to lead global efforts. UAOA also celebrates that, as a united coalition, we are far stronger than the sum of our parts and must utilise our collective voice and power to stand strongly against the toxicity some inject into the sporting world.

UAOA welcomes new coalition partners to join its mission and is keen to engage with international federations, governments and others who wish to join the campaign.



PARTNERS

OUR PARTNERS



Mohammed Ben Sulayem
FIA President and UAOA Founder

Richard Nyirishema
Minister for Sport, Rwanda



PARTNERS

The United Against Online Abuse coalition would like to thank our partners who share a common vision and commitment to creating positive and lasting change, throughout the sporting ecosystem.

Sporting Federations and Organisations	Other Partners
FIA	FIA Foundation
FIM	Clark Hill LLP
Peace & Sport Monaco	DCU University
IESF	UNESCO
ARISF	Council of Europe
SAMBO	ARCOM - France
FIH	Interpath Advisory
ASETEK Sim Racing	Sport Radar
	ESBS Business School
	ESSEC Business School
	Arwen.AI



PARTNERS

GOVERNMENTS

The United Against Online Abuse campaign is supported by the endorsement of the following governments:



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Education,
Religious Affairs and Sports



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË
MINISTRIA E ARSIMIT,
SPORTIT DHE RINISË



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE



**Republic
of Rwanda**



Australian Government



Together, in partnership with the UAOA Coalition, these governments will strive towards fostering a safer digital environment for all individuals, uniting to explore innovative strategies and policies in the field of digital responsibility.

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UNITED AGAINST ONLINE ABUSE

COALITION TO STOP HATE SPEECH IN SPORT



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