

ULTIMATE LITTLE ATHLETICS SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CHEAT SHEET

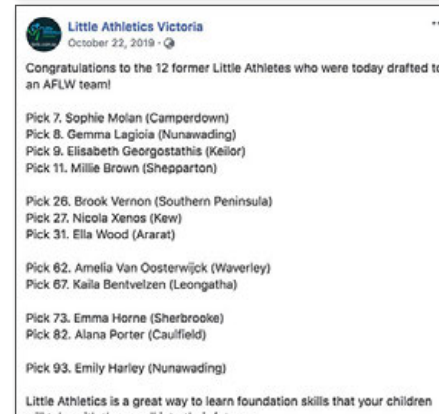
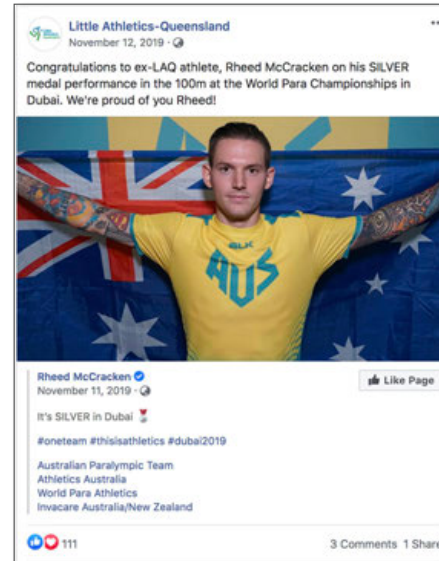
Analysis of 1,000's of social media posts has revealed **60** highly engaging storylines that every Little Athletics organisation should consider as part of its content strategy.



Example; A dual-purpose post that leads with the 'Throwback' theme (circa 2006) for Little Athletics Commonwealth and Olympic Games representative alumni Morgan Mitchell.

ALUMNI

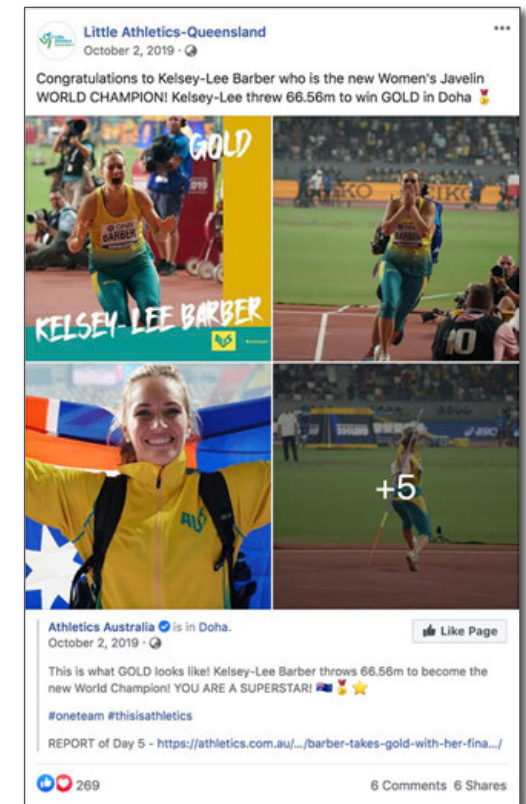
The importance of Little Athletics as a foundational sport is illustrated in these examples with participants going onto achieve great things in their chosen sporting careers. This theme can be used to good effect as both a participant acquisition and retention tool by administrators.



Examples; Interesting back-story Alumni posts linking the foundational elements of Little Athletics to the future career-path and success of athletes.

ASPIRATION

Sport runs on equal parts motivation and inspiration. As such, there is a wide range of compelling storylines that can inspire if you know where to look. Be it Little Athletics alumni that have gone onto great things, a legend of the sport achieving something no one thought was possible (hat-tip Eliud Kipchoge), a 'Special Olympian' making the team for the first time, a participant overcoming illness or adversity, the emergence of women's sport as a true equal to its male equivalent or an inspiring quote. The capacity of sport to continually generate these uplifting stories is one of its greatest strengths.



Example; Aspiration



Example; Aspirational sub 2-hour marathon run!

AWARD/RECOGNITION (CURRENT)

Awards storylines are typically either for current athletes or officials (generally recognition is for the previous 12-months or season) or for long-service and lifetime achievement. Content can include pre-event (nomination) or post-event (induction, appointment, selection, flag-bearer, recipient). Recognition can be in an official capacity (eg. At an Awards ceremony) or informally via a fan vote or survey.

AWARD/RECOGNITION (LONG SERVICE)

Long-service, Service to Sport, Lifetime Achievement awards are more commonly bestowed on officials or volunteers in recognition of often decades long contributions to sport. Hall of Fame type Awards are generally bestowed on athletes with extended careers. Posts for both types of Awards incorporate congratulations from the sport and often include a short, background 'bio' for added context.



Example; Award/Recognition (Current)



Example; Award/Recognition (Long-Service)

BIRTH (EXPECTING)

Non-sport specific good news from the Little Athletics community is always welcome with births or pregnancy announcements an engagement winner.



Example; Birth (Expecting)

BIRTHDAY

As with births, birthday posts are always well-received. Often worked into a 'Throwback' post it's milestone type content enable storylines to reflect on personal achievements and associated statistics. NB. Birthday posts don't always need to be for an individual – they can also be for a club, centre, facility or event. Got any major milestones coming-up?



Examples; Birthday



BOXES-TICKED

This is a unique form of content that is most effective when the source of the storyline has achieved multiple goals or results in a 'bundle'. Working from a defined list these posts often include 'box-tick' emoji in a bullet-point type format.

CHAMPIONS!

Or, the 'humble brag'. Short, sharp, to the point and often incorporating 'trophy' emoji it's often the first post published after an athlete or squad has achieved the ultimate accolade. 'Welcome home...', 'Congratulations...', 'Back-to-back' phrases might be used along with 'Enough said!'.

CHARITY

There is some amazing charity work undertaken by sport. Events in aid of charity, partnerships, crowd-funding, Go-Fund-Me all figure highly. Storylines are usually CTA 'get involved' 'donate here' type posts or recognition of fund-raising achievements.



COACHING

In many cases sports content centres on coaches appointed to senior roles within a sport at a state, national or international level. These appointments allow sports to undertake some subtle bragging about their ability to foster and develop in-demand talent. Coaches can also share their own interesting stories and anecdotes, delivering a rich vein of additional content for editorial purposes. Post-Covid this content might take the form of 'ISO Challenges' or similar.

Example; Come & Try Day

Example; Come & Try Day

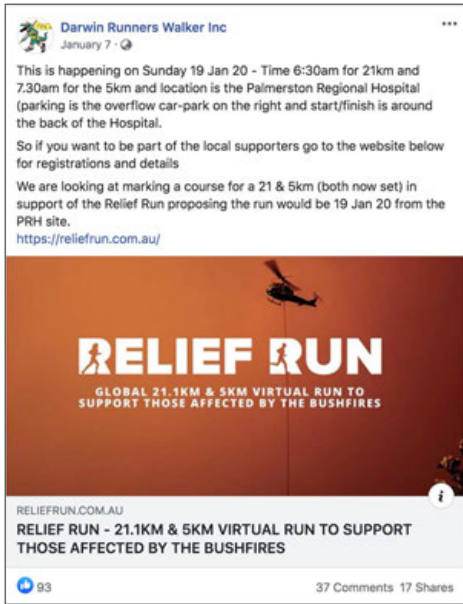
COME AND TRY

'Come and try', 'looking for something to do?', 'Looking to make new friends?', 'FREE program for migrant participants', '50% off bookings', 'open house' and 'meet a star' are just a few of the CTA's (Call-to-Action) that can be utilised by administrators to encourage Little Athletics participation acquisition. What's yours?

Example; Come & Try Day

EVENT CTA

For a host of reasons it's imperative for Little Athletics administrators to get as many participants as possible to attend events. With this in mind a diverse range of tactics can be employed from a content perspective to achieve this outcome. Social proof and FOMO are just a few psychological techniques to consider.



Examples; Event CTA



EVENT-JACKING

There are a number of dates during the year that Little Athletics administrators can choose to recognise through social media posts. This 'newsjacking' for events such as Easter, Christmas, New Years, Mother Day, Fathers Day even Valentine's Day has become increasingly common. What is your uplifting message for the next public holiday or commemorative day?



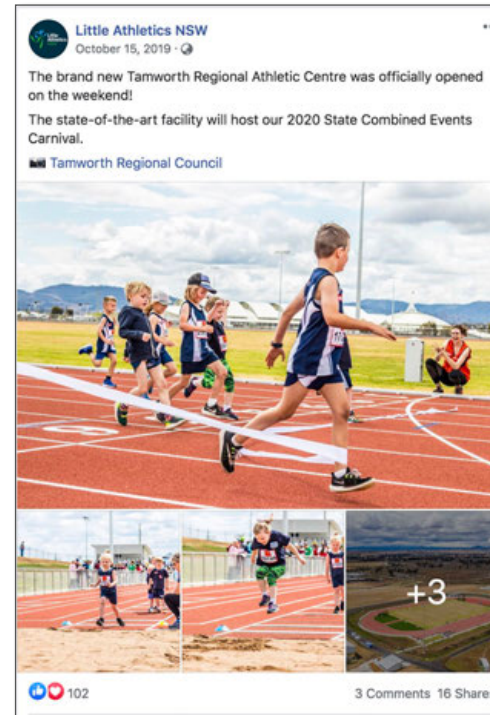
Example; Event-Jacking



Example; 2020 was destined to be a big sporting year with huge anticipation around the Tokyo Olympics. Then came droughts, floods, hailstorms, fires and Covid-19 all before the end of June! Having endured so much already here's hoping we finish the year on a more positive note.

EVENT RIGHTS

Earning the right to host a major event can be a protracted and expensive process requiring a considerable commitment of resources. It's perfectly reasonable then to shout this kind of success from the rooftops as proof positive of the Little Athletics administrators credentials within the sport and broader community.



Example; Facilities

FACILITIES

Sport can't exist without facilities (or equipment) that demand planning, funding, construction and maintenance – all of which provide interesting storylines to pursue on social media. In preparing facilities for an event there's an opportunity to thank volunteers and officials for their efforts. Drawing attention to well maintained grounds can also be used to encourage continued participation as part of any retention strategy.



Example; Facilities



Example; Facilities

FIXTURES

The publication and promotion of fixtures provides a great editorial hook to drive participation retention by 'hyping' the coming season. Content can be used to encourage speculation and expression of opinions as to the expected performance of an athlete, club or centre using fixtures as the talking point. Time for a little good-natured 'trash talk' between clubs?

FLY-AWAYS

It's hard to comprehend that only last season fly-aways were a common occurrence and something everyone involved really looked forward to. In a post-Covid world who knows when or even if we'll see this type of highly engaging content again.



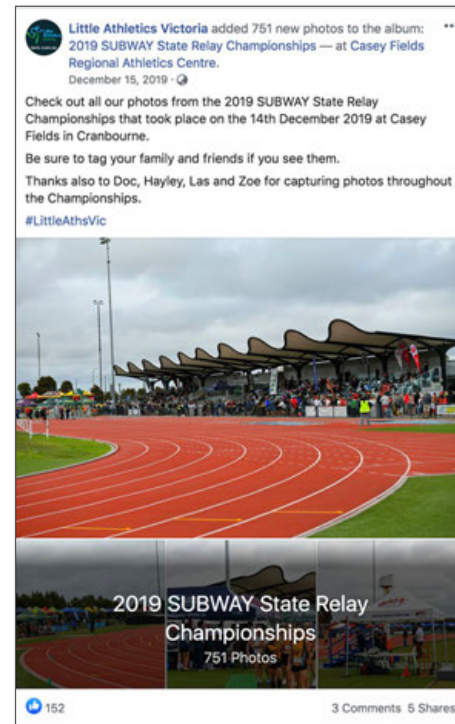
Examples; Fly-Aways



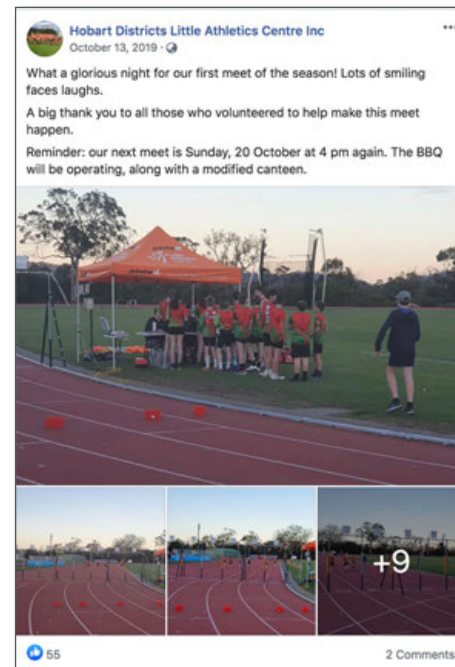
Example; Gallery

GALLERY

Facebook photo galleries are regularly used by Little Athletics organisations across the country. They're relatively simple to compile and provide a valuable digital record of an event. The bigger they are, the greater the audience size they are likely to appeal to, from an engagement perspective.



Examples; Gallery



GOOD DEED

There was some great examples of good deeds from Little Athletics participants around the country last season. From the kids who handed-in a large sum of cash found at an event to a young athlete who ran alongside a friend with a physical disability to Angelo Licastro (below) who helped a distressed competitor in their time of need. All of which demonstrate a strong sense of community within Little Athletics.



Example; Good Deed

GOOD LUCK!

A common refrain in social media posts is 'good luck' or 'best wishes'. Its typically reserved for club, state or national sports organisations who's athletes or squads are competing at a higher level. With a 'we'll keep you posted on results' follow-up, there's an opportunity to create additional content often accompanied by 'crossed-fingers', 'luggage' or 'airplane' emoji. With the subtext being that the hopes and dreams of the respective organisation rests on an athlete or teams shoulders. No pressure then!

GOVERNMENT VOUCHER

Sports participation subsidies in the form of vouchers are becoming increasingly common across the country and are likely to become essential for many, post-Covid. These initiatives play a key role from a membership acquisition and retention perspective. The most engaging of these posts is usually derived from the government department in question with an opportunity for Little Athletics administrators to share or 'piggy-back' on the good news.

GRANTS

There are a number of alternative government grants available to sports with an innovative twist that make for great potential storylines while funding grassroots clubs. Titles such as 'Local sporting champions', 'Worksafe Victoria club safety fund', 'Canteen hero' and 'Towards Zero club grants' are just a few.

GROUP SHOTS

The more the merrier! A common trend across all sports is for large group shots to achieve some of the highest engagement levels - which makes sense. This tactic has been employed to good effect in some interesting ways by Little Athletics clubs and centres around the country. Time to get creative with your next socially distanced group shot?

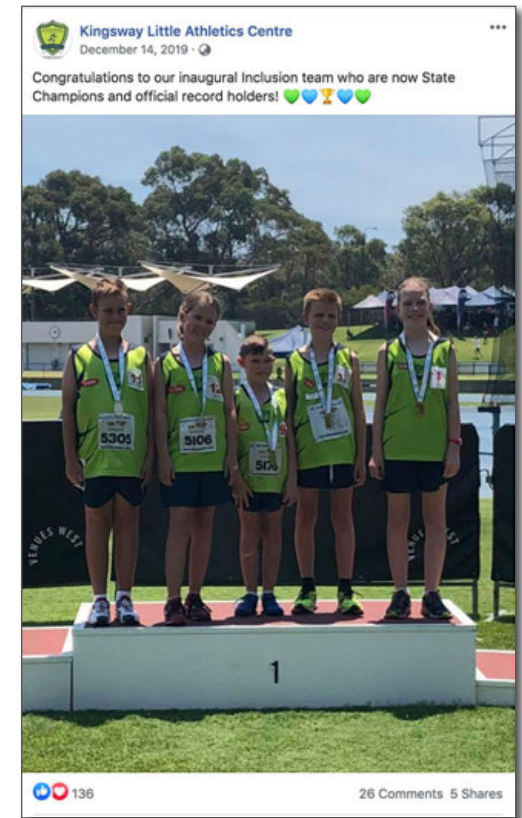


HIGHLIGHTS REEL

As the use of video and livestreaming becomes more commonplace at all levels of sport, so 'highlights reel' have emerged as a great way to re-purpose content. This can be managed from a seasonal, month, week or on-the-day timeframe depending on resources to generate engaging, 'snack-size' content.

HP (HIGH-PERFORMANCE)

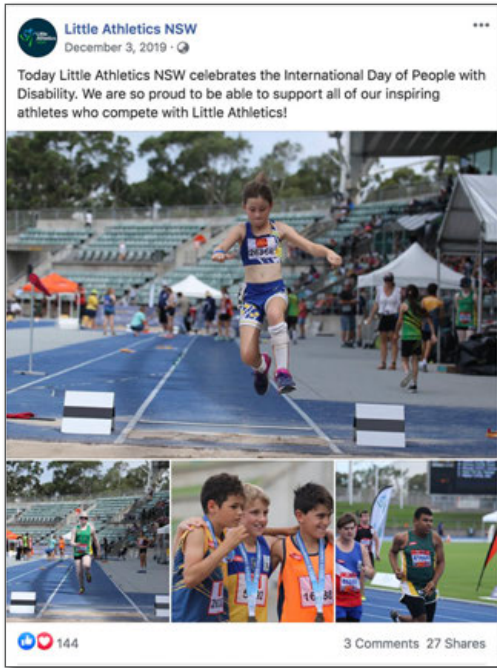
HP related content captures a broad scope of storytelling encompassing junior development, programs, camps, pathways, news and athlete updates. Pre-event CTA's often call for expressions of interest, while on-event posts highlight interviews or athlete profiles. Post-event content includes athletes who have been successful in gaining selection. There is an element of participation retention coming into play here with posts advertising the many benefits of inclusion for foundational skills development.



Examples; Inclusion

INCLUSION

The reasons why everyone can't be involved in sport in some way are now few and far between. This drive for inclusiveness has opened-up sports like Little Athletics for anyone who wants to have a go. These very special athletes back-stories make for compelling content as does their participation journey. What inclusive stories have you got to share?



Example; Inclusion

INDIGENOUS (CaLD)

There is now some fantastically diverse content and storylines generated by sports around indigenous participation and programs. These include limited edition uniforms to celebrate events such as NAIDOC week, acknowledgment of local spiritual custodians, smoking ceremonies, indigenous specific carnivals and rounds. One particular sports markets that really excels in this space is the Northern Territory.

INFLUENCERS

Sporting heroes are often called upon to inspire and motivate the next generation of little athletes. These draw-cards have been used by administrators in a variety of ways to help get kids involved in the sport and make for highly engaging, aspirational content.



Examples; Influencers



24 Comments 49 Shares



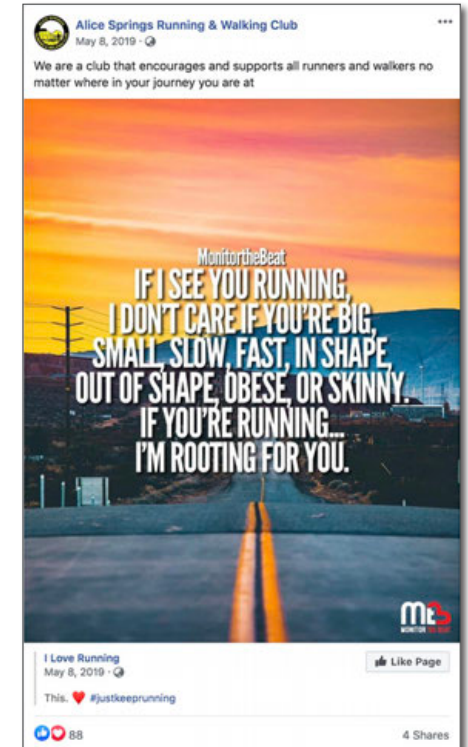
Example; Influencers

LIVESTREAM

Livestreaming of Little Athletics events is now common, providing a great opportunity for viewers to watch family and friends compete when unable to attend in person. Are you livestreaming your events? If so, how are you promoting the streams and making the production itself more entertaining for viewers?

MEMES

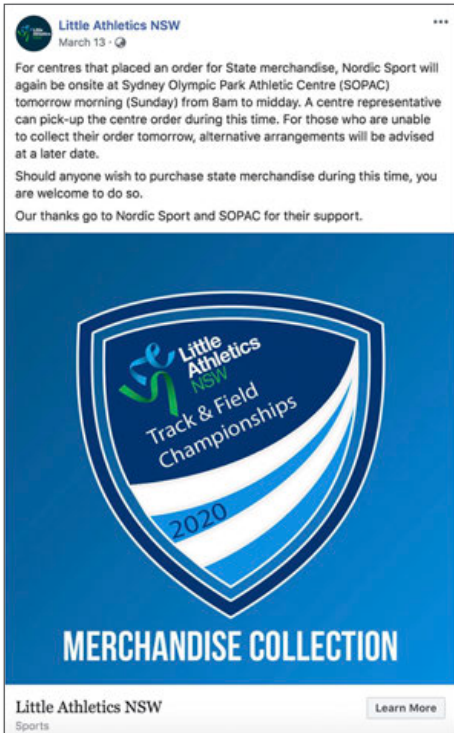
Unlike several sports, memes haven't found their way into mainstream Little Athletics social media (Facebook) use in any great numbers with the one example here (not your typical meme style or format) coming from the Alice Springs Running & Walking club. Memes work best when they tap into the culture, language and ethos of a sport. How would that manifest itself for your organisation?



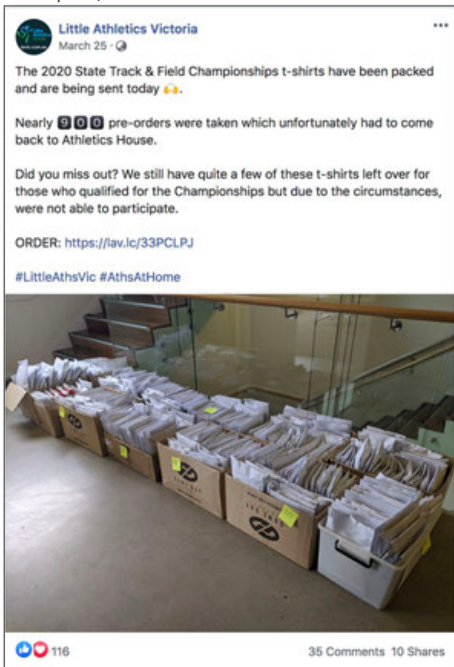
Example; Meme



Example; Merch



Examples; Merch'



MERCH-ANDISE

New uniforms, signal a new season and can be used to build a sense of anticipation. They can also be utilised to make a subtle connection with a sponsor or supplier as illustrated (left). Have you used merch' to build some hype around your club or centre?

MILESTONES

Often piggy-backed onto birthdays and anniversaries milestone posts provide an opportunity to publish compelling content while recognising the contribution of athletes and officials. These posts can be labour intensive so must be resourced accordingly.



Example; Milestone

NEWS-JACKING

An interesting content play is piggy-backing on the success of your sport's (former) athletes at an international level. These results often transcend sport and enter the mainstream, allowing a sport to bask in the reflected glory of one of their own.



Example; Fun, Family Friendly..... Off-Track



Example; Keepin' it real..... Off-Track



Example; Off-Track image merged with a CTA



Example; Fun, family, friendly.....Off-Track

OFF-TRACK

Shunt post analysis suggests that images that represent the true essence of Little Athletics 'Fun, family, friendly' vision can often be found off the track. These candid moments between events provide a fantastic window into the emotional reasons why participants love the sport of Little Athletics.

PASSING

In a sports context, the death of an athlete or official provides an opportunity to reflect on the individual's life and contributions made. Posts often read like an obituary and serve to provide a degree of comfort and meaning to those experiencing loss.



Example; Passing

P.B. (RECORD)

Little Athletics is somewhat unusual in that its defined by athletes constantly striving for their own, very personal best. For some, these P.B.s actually become records in their own right making for great content. Audiences engage not only from a congratulatory point of view but also from an aspirational perspective. **If s/he can do it, then so can !!**



Examples; P.B. & Records



Example; P.B. & Records

PERSONNEL (ARRIVAL)

A good news story for any sport is the announcement of a new appointment. It implies a sport has momentum, is progressive and forward-looking. Language such as 'welcome on-board', 'you may have noticed a familiar face?', 'excited to announce', 'pleased to introduce' are commonplace.

PERSONNEL (DEPARTURE)

Less common than incoming personnel or appointments are storylines around staff who are departing. These tend to be reserved for longstanding employees who have made a considerable contribution to the role. Occasionally written in the first-person they thank everyone involved in the sport for their support as they move onto new challenges and opportunities.



Example; Personnel (Departure)



Example; Profile



Example; Profile

PROFILE

The most common type of profile is that of a young athlete. However, you may also find bio's on parents, volunteers, officials, clubs, centres and even facilities. Who did you last do a bio' feature on?

PROMOTION

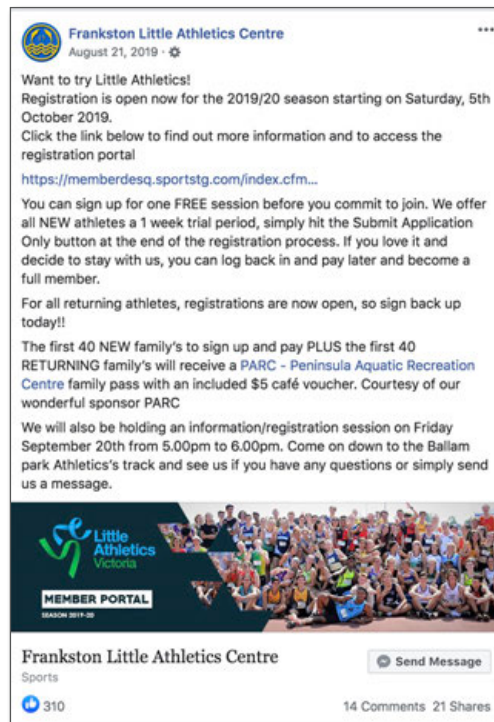
The nature and type of prizes that are available within sport are almost limitless. This provides huge scope for the development of interesting and engaging content to promote a competition or giveaway. There is also the timing angle as well with storylines developed to encourage participation that explore the personal stories and background of lucky winners.

(RE) BRAND

Sports administrators don't often re-brand but when they do it's a great opportunity to reset the editorial voice and tone. There have been a number of teams, leagues and sports recently that have gone through a subtle upgrade or a complete branding overhaul. If you are thinking about a change make sure you plan ahead to extract as much content value from this process as possible.

REGISTRATION

Probably the most important acquisition and retention 'window' for any club or centre is registration. Regular CTA's (Call-to-Action) around this period are crucial if you're going to cut-through and get participants to sign-up. There's some good examples here of how this could be achieved. What's your approach?



Example; Registration



Example; Registration

RESULTS

Sports content is built on results. Audience demand for these types of posts is insatiable and in developing this cheat sheet, posts that fall into this category are by far the most common and most engaging. In this analysis, the focus was on storylines where athletes or squads excelled at a state or national level. Considerations here are the timing (pre, on or post event) with language such as; 'Awesome', 'Congratulations', 'Huge', 'Crowned', 'Champs', 'Well done', 'Incredible', common. How do you describe your athletes results?

RESEARCH

Data analysis and research is becoming more prevalent in every corner of the sports landscape. As the industry moves towards a more evidence-based approach associated insights and intelligence can make for compelling storylines, particularly when applied as infographics and data visualization. When did you last go data-mining?

RETENTION

Promoting fixtures, trumpeting new facilities, showcasing highlights reels and junior development pathway success can all be used directly and indirectly to drive retention. A simple thankyou every now and then is often all you need to retain the services of the most vital cog in the delivery of any sport – volunteers and officials.

RETIREMENT

Neatly aligning itself to 'awards', 'box-ticking' and 'throwback' type posts is the retirement story. Typically coinciding with the end of the season it's an opportunity to use content to reflect on the many achievements of an athlete or official and thank them for their often immense contribution to the sport.



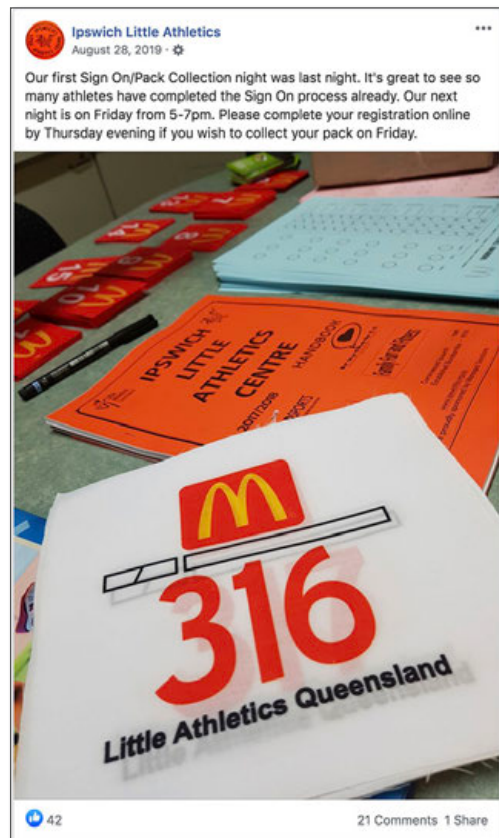
Example; Retirement

SELECTION (ATHLETE)

Few types of content are more engaging than Little Athlete selection posts. With so much attention on this type of content it's worth noting the many and varied ways in which the news could be conveyed via social media. Consider 'selected', 'confirmation', or 'news just-in' to spice things up a bit....

SELECTION (SQUAD)

At a state and national sporting organisation level the naming of squads (or state representatives) are common. Some sports even use the byline 'Team List Tuesday/ Thursday' in their posts with the 'Two Teams, One State, United in Maroon' (QRL) a particularly catchy turn of phrase. What's your clubs byline for the next big 'drop'?



Example; Sign-On posts build anticipation

SIGN-ON

This type of content is not commonly used across Little Athletics but could it be? A great way to signal a new season and build a sense of excitement.

SPONSOR

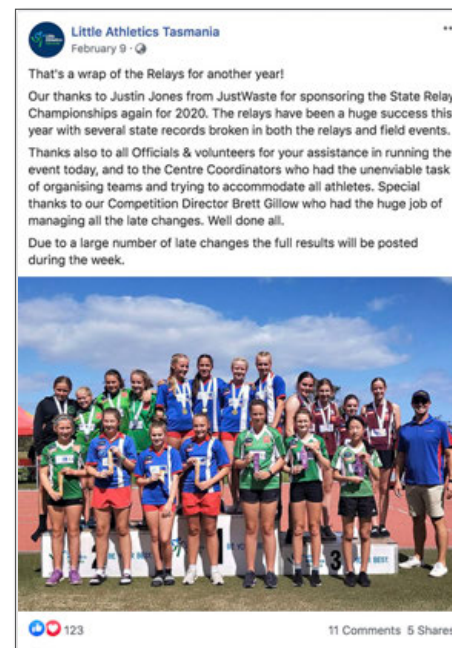
Sponsor posts are one of the toughest types of content to get right with respect to engagement. The trick here is to work it into a post so it's part of the story but not THE story as this is likely to turn audiences off. Sponsor logos and recognition when promoting a team uniform, Your 'sponsor-x' athlete of the meet, 'did you know that our partner does this?' are a few examples of subtly inserting a sponsor into a storyline.



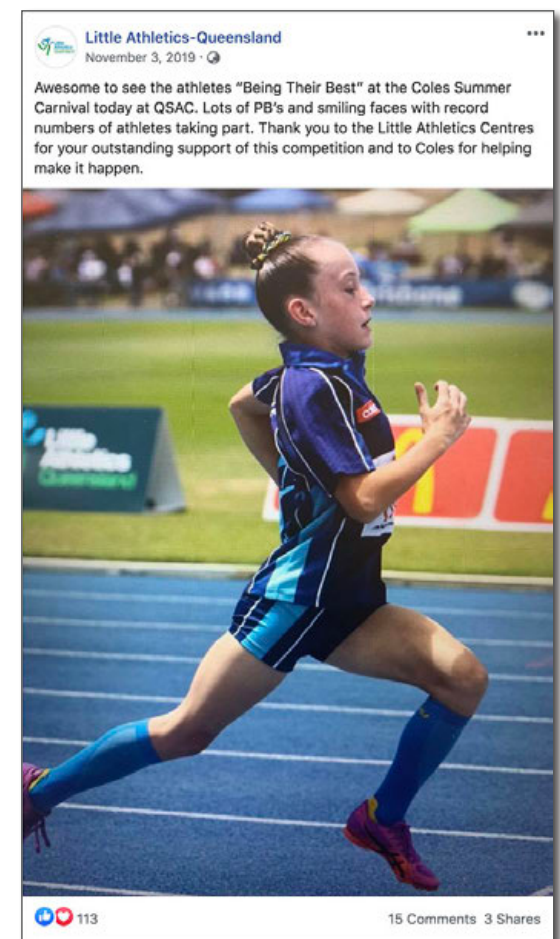
Example; This footage from Balmain LAC defies description but works well on a number of levels.

SPORT FOR ALL

Some posts defy classification and are often the one's that go 'viral'. Case in point is this great post from Balmain LAC where a bunch of young athletes start in a staggered formation ahead of 800m champion Angus Beer. The big question being can he catch them and still win the race? What out of the ordinary stories have the potential to become your next 'X' factor?



Examples; Thankyou



Example; Thankyou

THANKYOU

Often the most-effective content from an engagement perspective is a simple thankyou. Regularly used after a major event these posts highlight and thank the many volunteers and officials without whom the event would not have been possible. When was the last time you thanked your volunteers on social media?



Examples; Theft / Vandalism



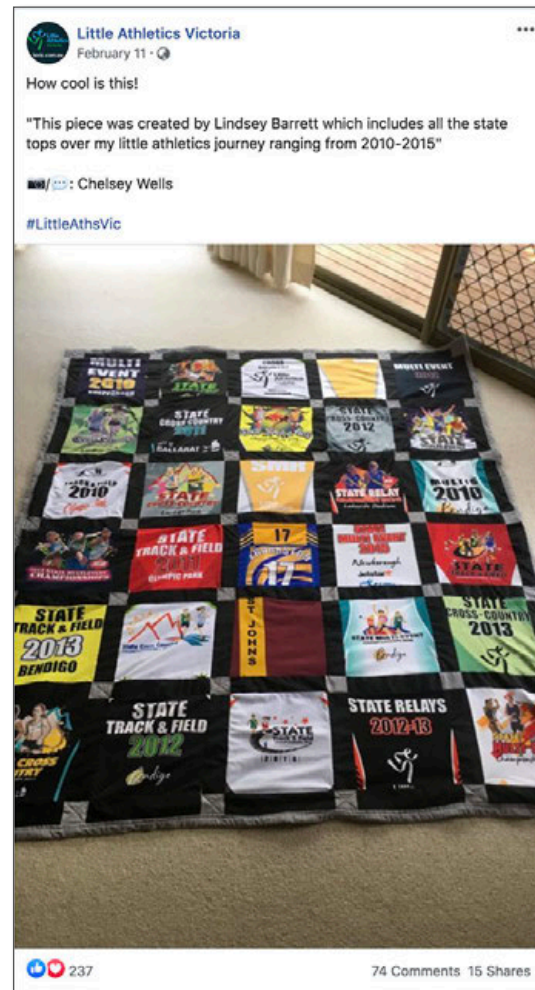
THEFT/VANDALISM

Every now and then bad news can sour the narrative. Case in point is anti-social behaviour, vandalism or theft. While rare, they do serve as a timely reminder to remain vigilant and impresses the need for contingency plans due to associated disruptions.



THROWBACK

As social media content marketing matures within the sport's industry, improved resourcing and archiving capabilities create a new type of story-telling that has gained in popularity - the 'throwback' post (usually posted on a Thursday, funny that!). These are ideal for framing the history of a sport, club or centre and provide additional context as to how it has evolved. Used correctly, these nostalgic posts can be hugely engaging as audiences reflect on the 'good old days' or 'I remember when....'.



Example; Throwback



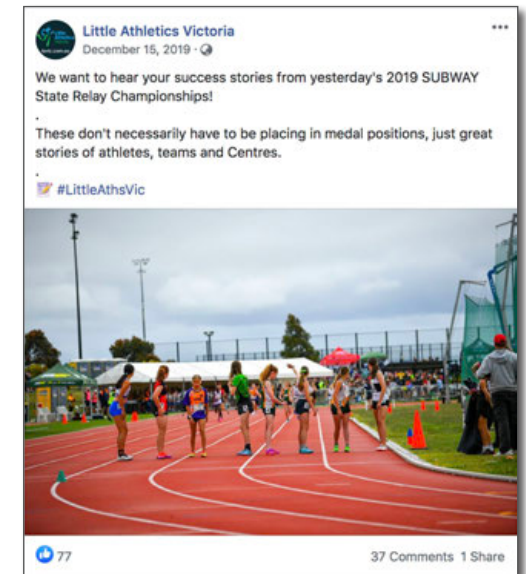
Example; UGC CTA (note number of comments)

UGC CTA

UGC CTA (User Generated Content - Call to Action) is a great way to get your audience to do some of the content heavy-lifting for your organisation. Ideal if you're resource poor, this type of content has become essential during the Covid lockdown. With audiences now used to making these types of contributions why not make it a regular feature of your messaging?



Examples; UGC CTA

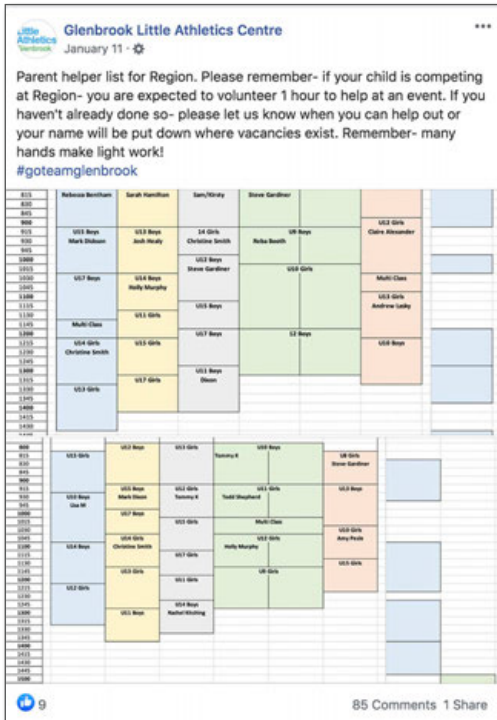


VOLUNTEERS

Grassroots participation sport simply wouldn't exist without volunteers. Little Athletics has evolved in a unique way to tap into this amazing resource in the delivery of its events. Regularly thanking them for their support, highlighting their back-stories, contributions made, along with CTA's seeking further assistance are just a few themes that could be considered.



Examples; The post above says a lot about the contribution volunteers make to Little Athletics and the novel ways in which they are recognised and thanked. The post below highlights the constant need for volunteers to keep the sport on-track.



VOTE!

Improved functionality within social media platforms has made the use of polling a simple process and when done right these types of posts can be extremely powerful. With clickbait type headlines such as 'Vote for your favourite', 'Have your say', 'Who did it better?' and 'Who's your G.O.A.T?' these polls can generate a rolling conversation and debate on a wide-range of topics.



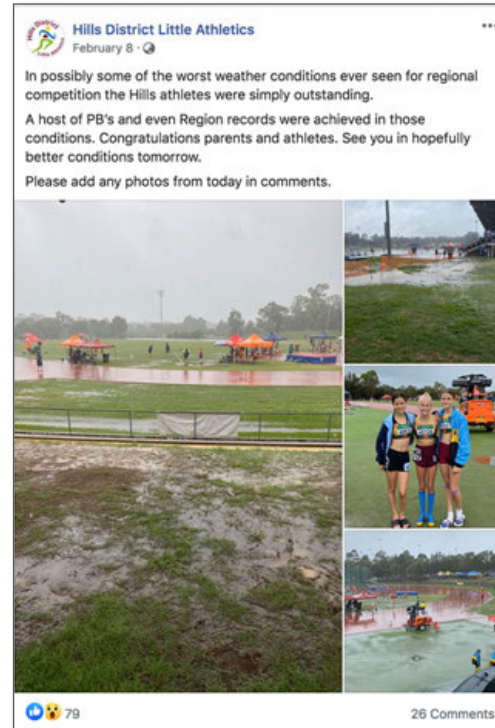
Example; Weather

WEATHER

Weather in Australia can be extreme and sport is often the perfect vehicle to demonstrate just how weird and wonderful it can be. From extreme heat, to rain, to snow and ice, sport is played in all manner of conditions with plenty of opportunities to generate some compelling content.



Example; Extreme hail and rain



Example; Sponsors deftly incorporated into a PSA (Public Service Announcement) - nice work!

WOMEN IN SPORT

Few issues in sport are hotter at present than the rise in profile and status of women's sport. In short, if this isn't a focus for your social media content strategy going forward then it should be. What's great to see is the increasingly diverse nature of the content resonating with audiences. From highlighting international women's day to investment in sporting facilities that cater for women, to success of Australian women on the international sports stage to pioneering women breaking down barriers. Go girls!



**This Little Athletics social media
Cheat-Sheet was made possible
through the collaboration and
cooperation of the following
organisations;**

- Athletics Northern Territory
- Little Athletics ACT
- Little Athletics Australia
- Little Athletics NSW
- Little Athletics Queensland
- Little Athletics South Australia
- Little Athletics Tasmania
- Little Athletics Victoria
- Little Athletics WA

August 2020 EDITION

Notes;

- *Facebook post analysis*
- *Posts and themes sourced from Little Athletics Australia, state and territory organisations, clubs and centres*
- *Additional themes sourced from across the Australian sports industry*
- *High engagement post examples from August 1, 2019 to March 15, 2020 (NT posts from Jan-Dec 2019)*

