

# SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK for GRASSROOTS RUGBY CLUBS

Made possible by



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# THE GOOD THE BAD & THE RUGBY





# INTRODUCTION

If you're part of a sports team, growth is the key component that drives everyone within the organisation. Whether it's on-field growth – both individually and as a collective – or off-field growth.

If the on-field growth is positive, then the off-field growth is no doubt made easier, but social media is the real driving force behind most modern sports teams and brands and, unless utilised properly, you'll fail to maximise the potential growth of the team you're in.

Above all, social media is a tool to amplify. The proliferation of these platforms over the last decade has helped teams all across the

world turn people into fans no matter where they are in the world.

So it's of utmost importance that you have a structure in place to capitalise on your team's successes, and use all content that your club can generate to effectively reach a wider audience - here's how!

The tactics in this handbook will help you and your team put together winning content formats. But tactics work best when deployed in the service of a wider strategy. So make sure you're also being mindful of the wider purpose that you are looking to deliver when putting these tactics into practice.



# DOs & DON'Ts

## DO

- **POST CONSISTENTLY** – Keep your audience regularly engaged with what you do. Consistent high-quality posts always bear fruit in the long run.
- **HAVE A PLAN** – Always know what you're going to post, and have a structured plan centred around match days and key events; whether that be training galleries, marketing pushes around ticket sales or live game coverage.
- **KEEP IN TOUCH** – Keep up with other members of the team and find out who has skills – there might be photographers, videographers, writers and more all around you. See if members of any level can help you to build a hub of content to turn into social output on a weekly basis.
- **COLLABORATE** – Always look for opportunities to work with other brands and creators; they have ready-made audiences that you can gain exposure from.

## DON'T

- **POST FOR THE SAKE OF POSTING** – You can easily oversaturate an Instagram or Twitter feed and end up losing reach if you're just posting to fill a schedule. You should always post with purpose, and aim to engage or provide value to people.
- **FORMAT POSTS INCORRECTLY** – Take the time to learn what feel most authentic to each platform, whether it's video length, hashtagging, or something as simple as the length of a caption (Instagram and Twitter tend to favour the short and snappy, while Facebook can be more forgiving of longer pieces of text)





# ALGORITHMS

Fundamentally, a social algorithm is just a set of rules that determine the ranking of posts. These rules vary from platform to platform, but you can decode how they apply to your pages through observation and experience. Every page's audience has a unique set of wants, behaviours and expectations – this means the algorithm affects every profile in different ways. There is, however, a set of tactics you can use to give video posts a better chance at optimal performance.

## VIDEO FUNDAMENTALS

**TIP: If editing in Adobe Premiere, try using the built-in Auto Reframe tool to quickly make video look at its best across multiple resolutions.**

### TWITTER

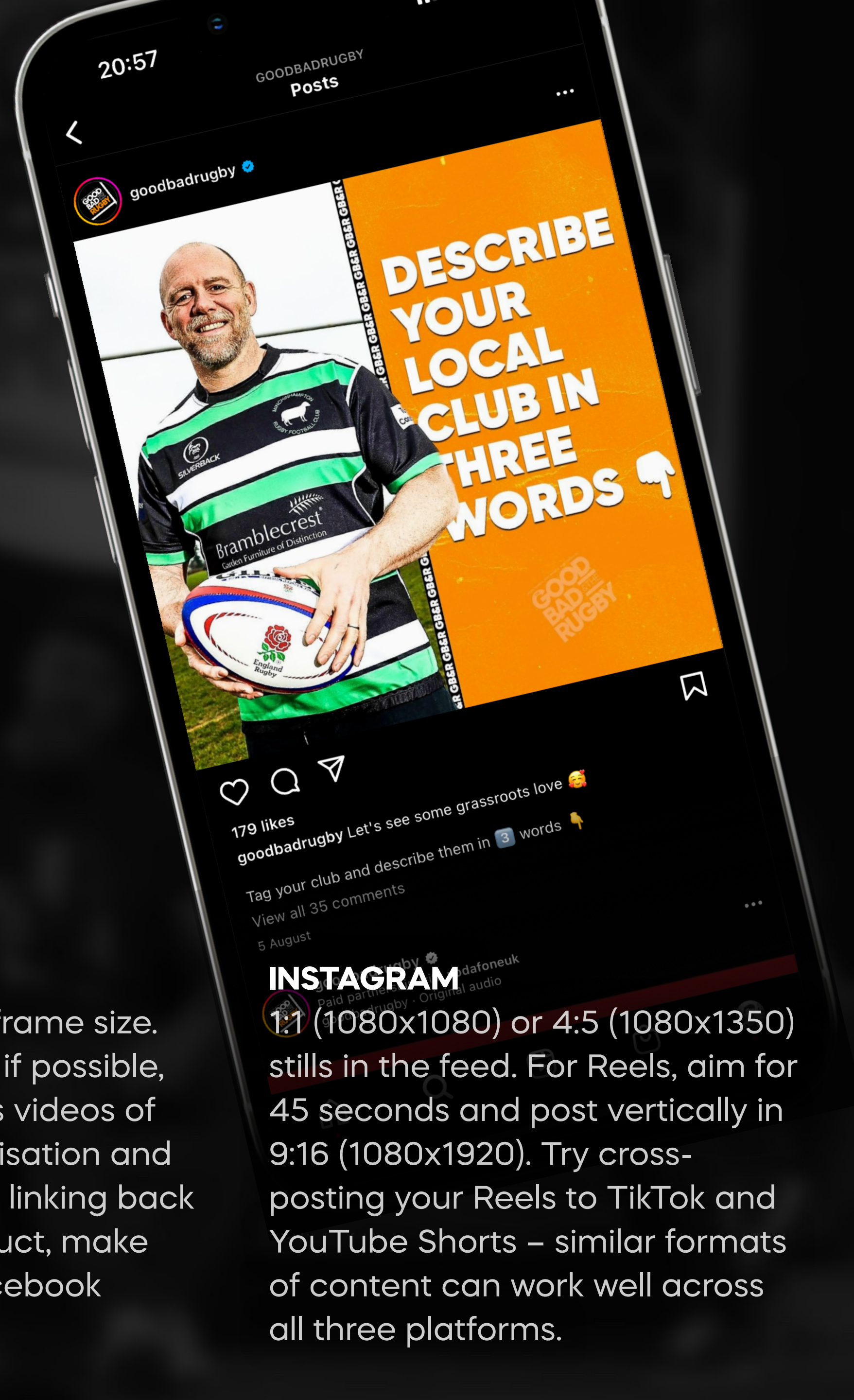
Use a 1:1 (1080x1080) frame size. Aim to post videos around 60s. Try using tweet cards if linking from content to a website – this way, you can pair your video with a webpage that loads underneath. These are called Video Website Cards and can be posted for free without setting up an ad campaign from [ads.twitter.com](https://ads.twitter.com)

### FACEBOOK

1:1 (1080x1080) or 4:5 (1080x1350) frame size. Aim to post three minutes or more if possible, as the Facebook algorithm favours videos of that length both in terms of monetisation and distribution. Always shorten URLs if linking back to a website, and if tagging a product, make sure you're selling them on the Facebook marketplace for ease of use.

### INSTAGRAM

1:1 (1080x1080) or 4:5 (1080x1350) stills in the feed. For Reels, aim for 45 seconds and post vertically in 9:16 (1080x1920). Try cross-posting your Reels to TikTok and YouTube Shorts – similar formats of content can work well across all three platforms.





# DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL CONTENT & FORMATS

Content comes in many different formats. As a sports team, you're likely to use a lot of still imagery to share information – things like starting lineups, manager's quotes and more. Ensure that the still imagery you're using is eye-catching without being over the top; a clean look with the team down one side and an image of a single player down the other is chosen often by graphic designer in social.

Consider developing templates and themes for formats you post regularly. This will save you design time each week, as you can amend an existing design rather than starting from scratch each time. It will also provide your channel with a recognisable and consistent look-and-feel.

When posting video, check the frame size (or aspect ratio) and durations of your post match the norm for the platform. Ensure fundamentals such as audio and picture quality are in check.

Video content and templated images content can present an opportunity to collaborate with local businesses. Getting your content sponsored can bring revenue and exposure to both your team and your sponsor.

When captioning both video and image-based content, another useful tool to install is Grammarly – this is a cloud-based typing assistant that'll help ensure you don't make any grammatical or punctual errors, as well as refine the quality of your caption.





# CONVERSATIONAL VIDEO

Whether shooting interviews, press conferences, podcasts or debates, we strongly recommend front-loading your more conversational social content with a 5- to 15-second teaser to act as a hook and get people interested and invested in your video.

The types of things that work best as hooks are things like emotive lines in the conversation, high-energy moments, or jokes that get a big reaction. This intro sequence should ideally be taken from a section of the video that is beyond the 50-second mark so that the audience isn't seeing the same lines repeated in quick succession.

For conversational video in particular, subtitling is a must if you want your content to cut through. The majority of social video is initially watched on mute, so if you want to grab people's attention, they will need to be able to know what your video is saying before they can hear it.





# CAPTIONS

Ideally, the line you choose for the caption should be different to the one you frontload in the intro sequence. This way you will get two chances to hook your audience.

If you're posting highlights, match footage or content that is otherwise more active than conversational, shorter captions often work best.

If something truly remarkable happens in the clip, describing it literally can be very effective; 'Incredible 60-yard pass and drop goal from @name!'. You can justify using all capitals to convey high energy for explosive moments.

For more humorous moments, feel free to bait the climax of the video to not ruin it (Think along the lines of '...wait for it' or '...then this happened')



For conversational video, captions are often served across two short paragraphs. This formula often works well:

***"An interesting one-sentence quote from the subject of the video, followed by..."***

***Further context briefly summarising content and @tagging the source and/or those mentioned.***

***Here's an example***





# PRODUCING PLAYERS & STAFF TO BECOME ON-SCREEN TALENT

It can be tricky to create content with people who aren't used to appearing on-camera, as not every player you'll come across will be comfortable with it. So it's important to ensure you make them relaxed before the shoot, and that the content you're making caters to their strengths; some people are more at home with quick-fire questions, while others may need the time and space to articulate longer answers.

In our experience working with elite athletes, we always find that players respond better to being approached in an informal manner. You can subconsciously influence a person's manner if you come across relaxed, rather than as if you're about to do a piece of work with them.

Where possible, try to look at previous pieces of content a player has done in order to best learn how they answer certain types of questions. Again, this can prepare you for the content and allow you to preemptively make any necessary tweaks in your approach before filming.

If you happen to be presenting yourself, just always remember your audience. Transmit an enthusiasm in your work which makes the viewer want to stay and watch more, or learn more about the team. If presenting live from a venue, try not to script your work too heavily – you will come across far more authentically if you're living in the moment.





# OPTIMISING ACROSS PLATFORMS



## TWITTER

Twitter has a more concentrated audience than any other social media; here, you can tap into different communities in the network by making the right observation or reference. If you've got a good sense of humour, or a broad pop culture lexicon, then Twitter is the place to use it. Stay on top of trends, and if something happens that you can reference authentically in a humorous way, it's a great way to attract new followers.



## FACEBOOK

Facebook's distribution is very algorithm-heavy compared to Twitter, which is more follower-driven. With that in mind, giving the algorithm what it wants is ultimately important when it comes to being seen. Posting videos over three minutes long is the best way to go in that regard. Then it's just down to making sure the content you're putting out is of highest quality and worth your fans watching.



## INSTAGRAM

Photography dominated Instagram for the best part of a decade, it's become more video-centric over the last few years. Reels can multiply the reach and engagement of a grid post just through people viewing in the Explore tab, so check that you're posting these alongside match imagery, training galleries, etc. Reels can vary from funny moments to match highlights – it's really up to you – but keep them around the 45-second mark as best practice.



## TIKTOK

TikTok is a place to have a bit of fun, the perfect platform to post fun bits of short-form content you've filmed with players, or the perfect platform to post any compilations. TikTok doesn't need to be posted on as heavily - once a day should suffice - but it's certainly the current platform where growth is the easiest. Simply through consistently posting and using hashtags effectively, you can grow a page relatively easily at this moment in time.





# BRAND & SOCIAL GROWTH: OUR APPROACH

The **GBR** social media strategy followed many of the outlined tactics, concentrating on two main pillars to grow an audience of engaged rugby-mad followers.

**1) TALENT** – Recognisable faces fronted our social media content, as they did our show, and by doing so, helped distribute any pieces produced to their own followings, quickly growing our channels across all platforms. It also offered a reason for audiences to engage with us, seeing rugby heroes across anything we shared.

**2) HIGH-QUALITY TOPICAL CONTENT** – From the highlights of our weekly podcast to fun behind-the-scenes video snippets with our hosts, and topical up-to-date rugby content (player quotes, interesting stats, team news and more.) We ensured that following our channels provided tangible value to rugby fans. We also created a recognisable style, establishing a brand feel to the offering, including our brand logos and colourways across anything shared, ensuring instant recognisability of our content on the timeline.

