

OpenSponsorship Data: December Beats Father's Day for Male Athlete-Parent Campaigns by 24%

OpenSponsorship analyzed 700,000+ athlete posts and found female athletes get a 41% engagement lift on family content while male athletes get a 23% penalty.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [OpenSponsorship](#), the

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Ishveen Jolly, Founder and CEO, OpenSponsorship

world's largest athlete marketing platform backed by Serena Williams and David Blitzer, today published new proprietary [research](#) showing that brands activating male athlete-parent campaigns around Father's Day are targeting the wrong moment. Analysis of more than 700,000 Instagram posts from 1,000 of the most-followed athletes on the platform reveals that male athletes post about their kids 2.97% of the time in December compared to 2.40% in June, making the holiday season 24% more effective than Father's Day for male athlete-parent content.

The research covers January 2018 through May 2026 and classifies posts from 500 female and 500 male athletes. The findings challenge several widely held assumptions in sports marketing and have direct implications for brand planning across the second half of 2026.

The Engagement Asymmetry

Female athletes receive a 41% engagement lift on posts featuring their children compared to their own non-family content. Male athletes posting the same type of content receive a 23% penalty. The asymmetry holds across 5,943 female kid-content posts and 3,626 male kid-content posts classified individually across the eight-year corpus.

Female athletes posting about their kids are not being personal at the cost of being professional. They are producing the highest-engagement content on their feeds.

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rewrites the brand-buying playbook for the next decade." -- [Ishveen Jolly](#), Founder and CEO, OpenSponsorship

The Seasonal Calendar Brands Are Missing

For female athletes, October is the highest month for kid-content posting at 4.82%, outperforming Mother's Day in May at 4.64%. Halloween family content drives the October peak and no major national brand has built a sustained athlete-parent activation around it.

For male athletes, December is the strongest month at 2.97%, driven by holiday family content. Father's Day in June produces only a 2.40% rate. Brands planning Father's Day male athlete-parent campaigns this weekend are activating at the wrong point on the curve.

The Sports Nobody Expected

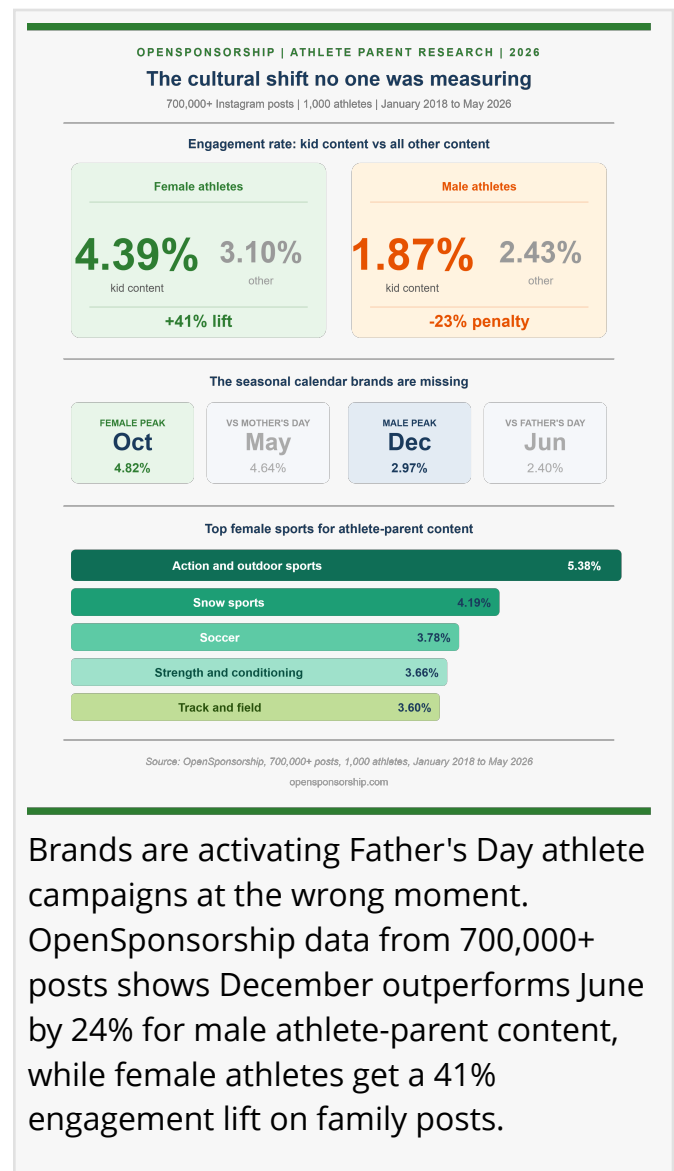
The sports producing the most athlete-parent content are not the ones most brand plans target. Action sports athletes including surfers, BMX riders, CrossFit athletes, and bodybuilders post more family content than WNBA and USWNT athletes by significant margins. Bethany Hamilton posts about her kids in 17.9% of her Instagram posts. Kari Pearce posts at 21.8%. Paige Hathaway hits 31.5%, nearly one in three posts.

On the male side, MLB players post about their kids 6.13% of the time, more than any other men's sport and 3.6 times the NBA rate of 1.70%.

"If your media plan treats athlete-parent content as a WNBA mom story or an NBA dad story, you are missing where the volume and the engagement actually live." -- Ishveen Jolly, Founder and CEO, OpenSponsorship

The Brand Category Winning the Vertical

Health and wellness brands have spent more on athlete-parent partnerships than every other category combined. Ka'Chava alone has run 87 deals with athlete-parents on the platform totaling nearly \$1 million. Eleven of the top fifteen brand buyers are nutrition, supplements, or functional-wellness companies. CPG, QSR, automotive, and kids-apparel brands are largely



Brands are activating Father's Day athlete campaigns at the wrong moment. OpenSponsorship data from 700,000+ posts shows December outperforms June by 24% for male athlete-parent content, while female athletes get a 41% engagement lift on family posts.

absent from the category.

"When 11 of the top 15 buyers in a vertical come from one category, that is not a trend. It is an arbitrage that is about to close." -- Ishveen Jolly, Founder and CEO, OpenSponsorship

Planning Implications for the Second Half of 2026

Three windows brands should be planning now: Halloween athlete-parent partnerships should be booked by August 1st. Back to school campaigns should be committed by mid-June. December holiday partnerships should be locked by October 15th.

About OpenSponsorship

OpenSponsorship is the world's largest athlete marketing platform, connecting 25,000+ athletes and creators with brands across 160 sports and 120 countries. Launched in 2015, the company has facilitated over 9,000 accepted deals. OpenSponsorship became profitable in 2024 and delivered 200% revenue growth in 2025. Ishveen Jolly is the Founder and CEO, winner of SBJ Game Changer 2025 and Forbes 30 Under 30. Full research and methodology available at opensponsorship.com.

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