



# 2025 MARKETING REPORT

# 2025 GOALS

2025 was a year of fresh energy and forward momentum for Chicago Grit. With SRAM stepping in as our presenting sponsor, we injected new life into the series and signaled to the cycling world that Chicago Grit is the race to watch.

The appetite for Chicago Grit is bigger than ever. On Instagram, we crossed 2.4 million views, reached over 724,000 people, and saw 88,000 interactions with our content. We added more than 2,100 new followers, and one reel alone exploded past 962,000 views—proof that the Chicago Grit experience is spreading well beyond race day.

This is what fuels the future: not just who showed up this year, but who can't wait to show up next. With SRAM at our side and digital momentum on our side, we're shaping Chicago Grit into something riders crave—a race that belongs on every calendar, every summer.



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS - OUR RIDERS

**38  
States**

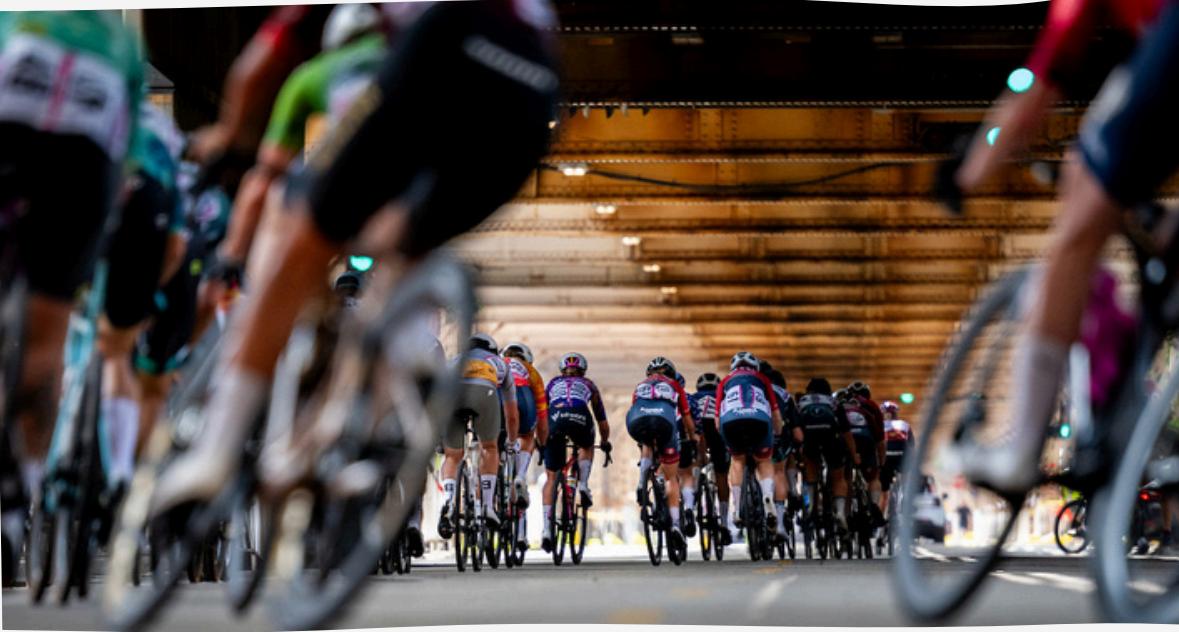
**77.6% Men  
22.4% Women**

**25.9% <25  
52.1% 25-40  
22% >40**

**5  
Nations**

**Scan below to watch  
our highlight reel**





# SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

Our social media strategy in 2025 remained centered on Instagram, where our audience is strongest and engagement consistently outperforms Facebook. With SRAM joining as presenting sponsor, we leaned into content that told both the story of the racing action and the culture of Chicago Grit.



Our 2025 social media efforts leaned even harder into storytelling—not just about the pros, but about the everyday heroes who make Chicago Grit what it is. These are the men and women who punch out of their 9-5s, swap button-downs for bib shorts, and spend their weekends chasing KOMs. They show up at Grit not just to race, but to prove—to themselves, to their friends, maybe even to their office Slack channels—that they’re more than their desk jobs.

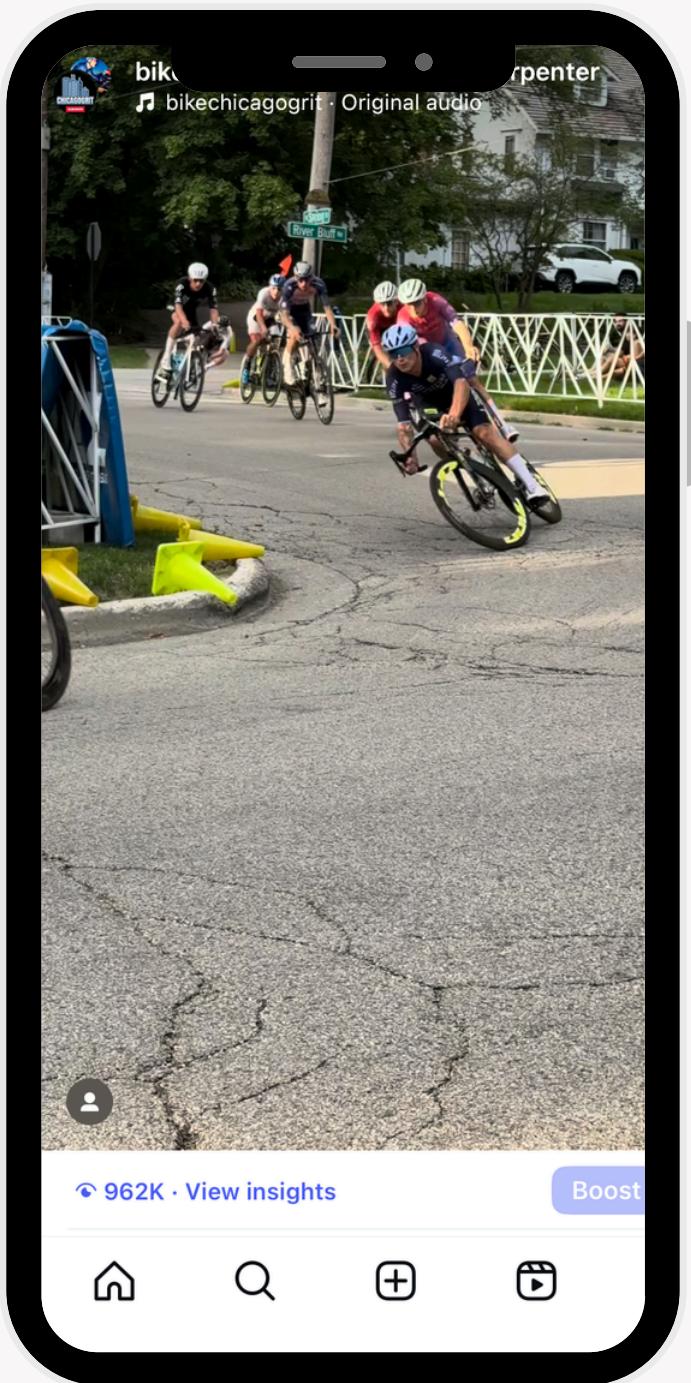
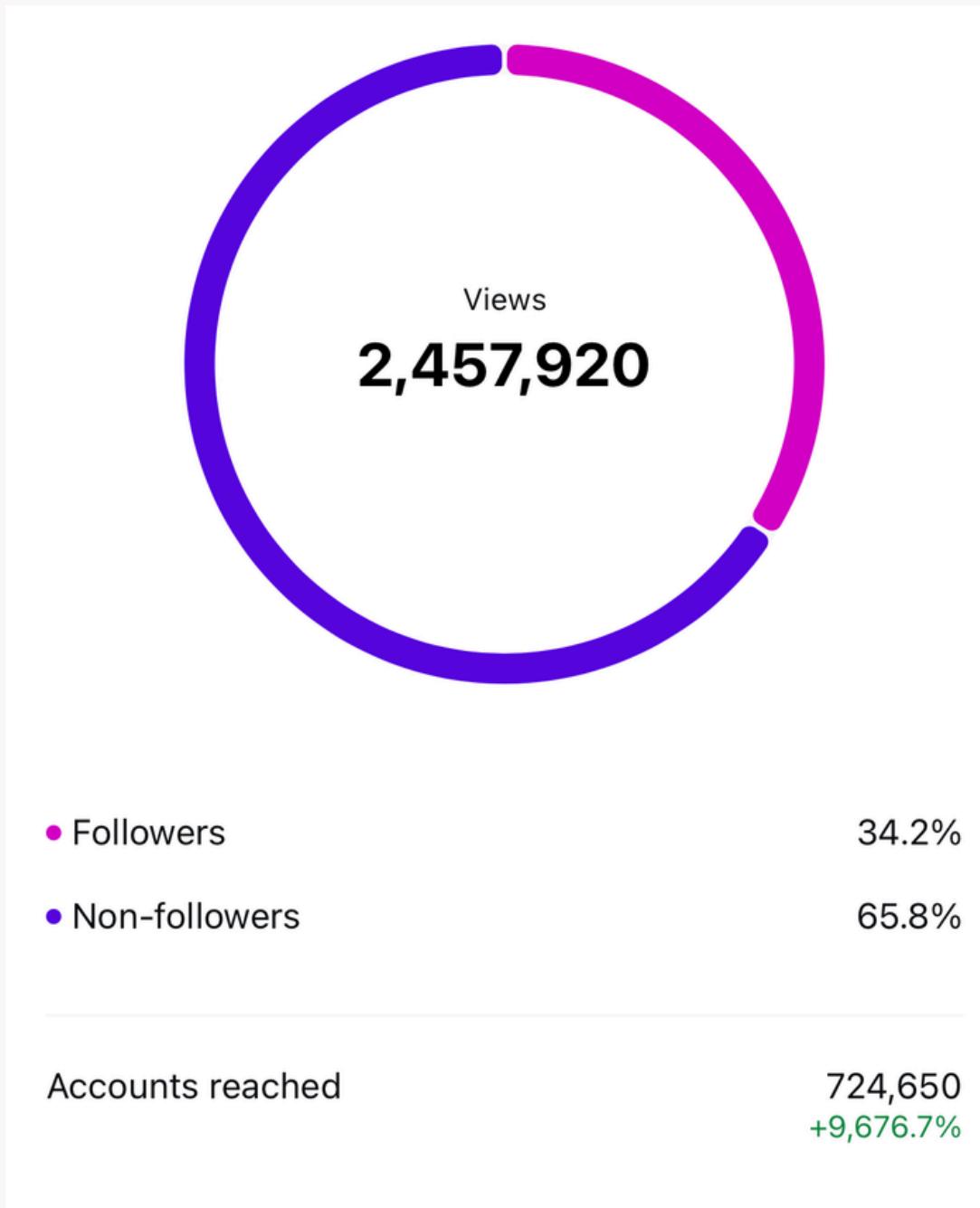


We produced about 100 pieces of content throughout the series, with stories covering the blow-by-blow action and reels focusing on rider profiles. Those reels were our strongest connection point: highlighting riders who drove all night to get here, riders climbing categories with pure grit, and riders chasing dreams bigger than a paycheck. It’s the side of Grit that resonates far beyond the podium.

We kept the local flavor alive by tagging host towns, amplifying their stories alongside ours. And as always, we partnered with our videographer to produce daily recaps—giving fans pro-quality highlights while still celebrating the gritty, sweaty, underdog stories that keep people coming back.

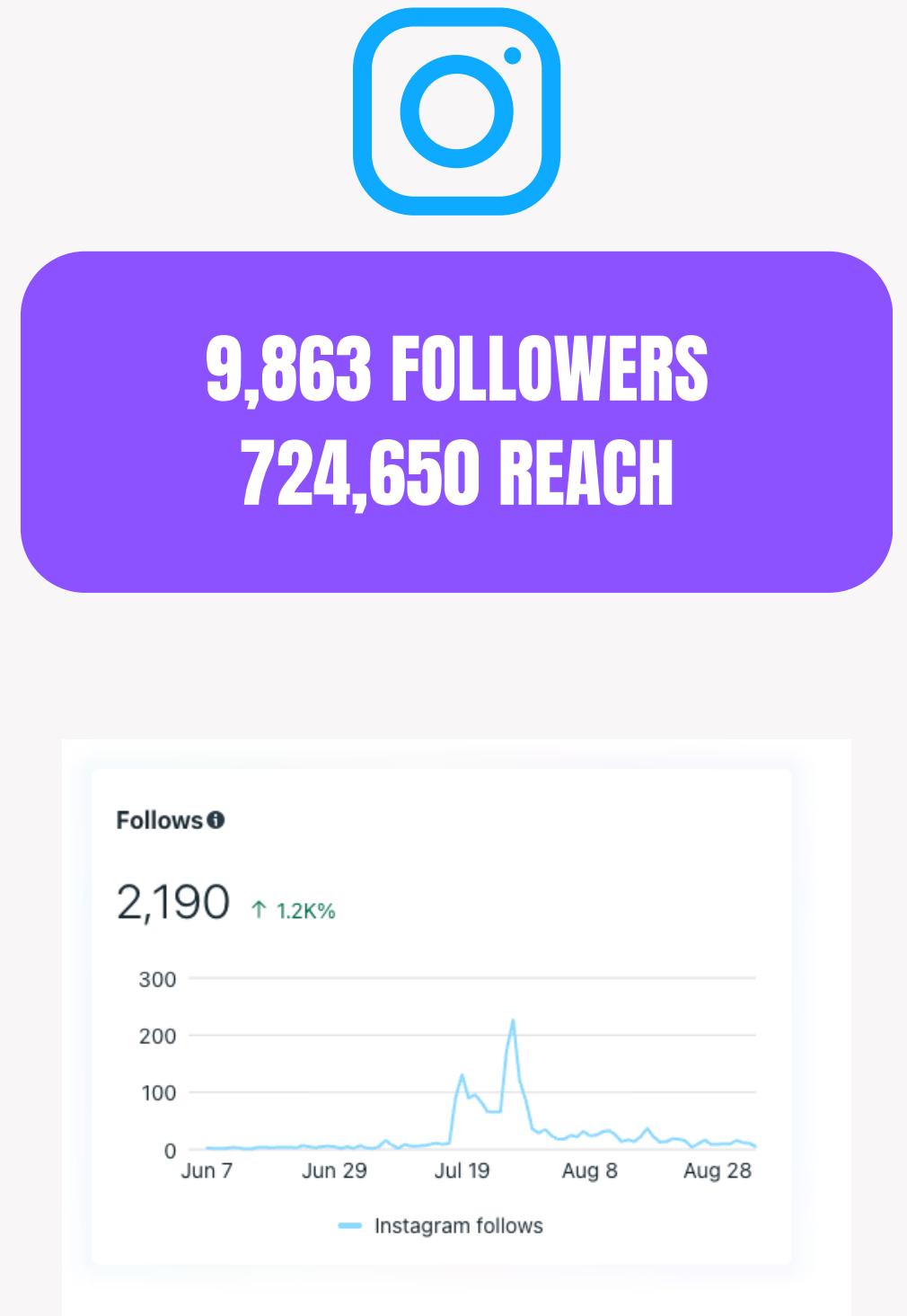
In short: 2025 proved again that Chicago Grit isn’t just about who wins—it’s about the people who show up hungry, determined, and ready to turn a desk-job life into a highlight reel.

# 2025: THE YEAR WE WENT VIRAL ON INSTAGRAM



## Top Performing Post:

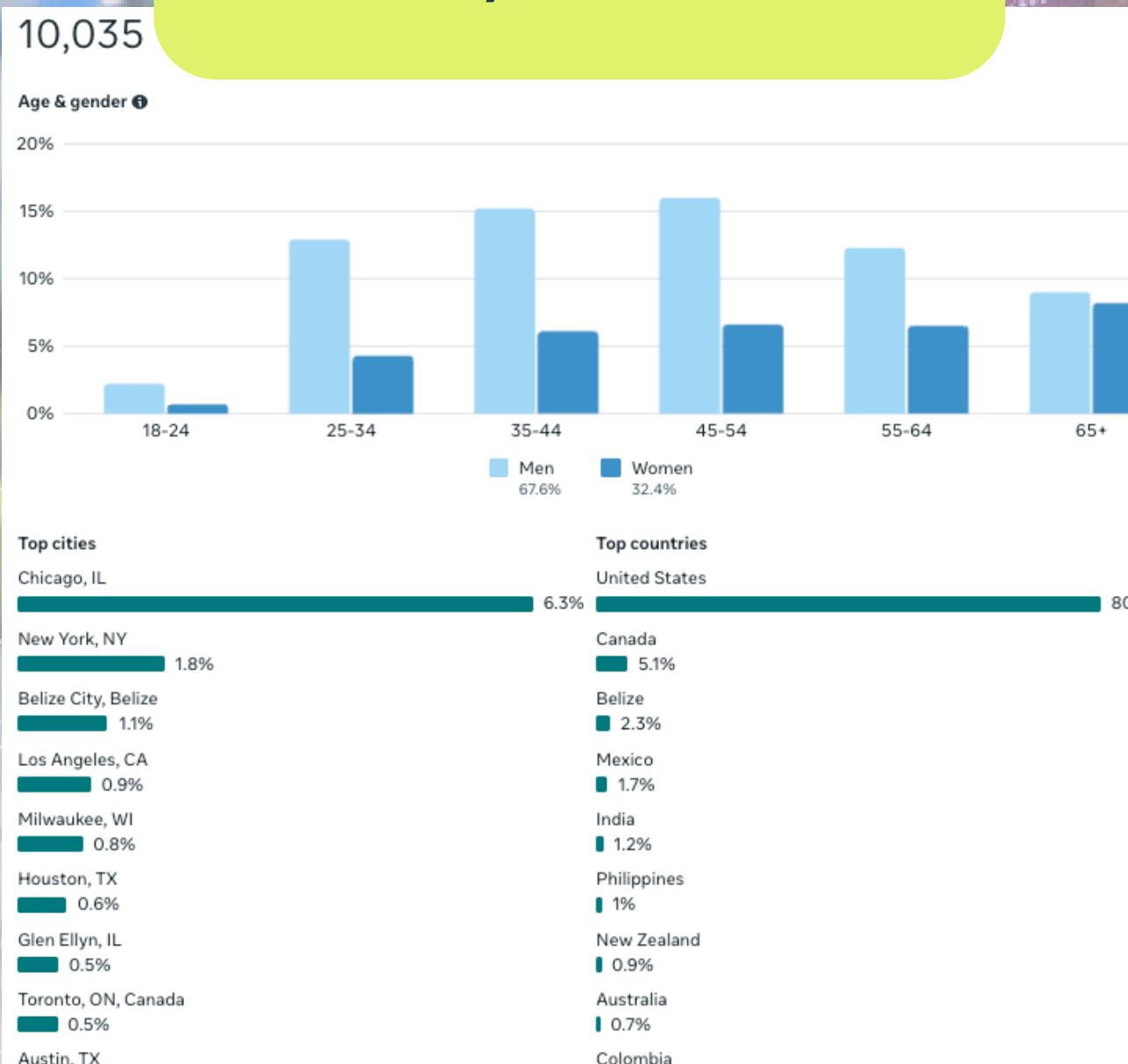
- 962,121 Views
- 50,745 Interactions
- 9,900 Shares



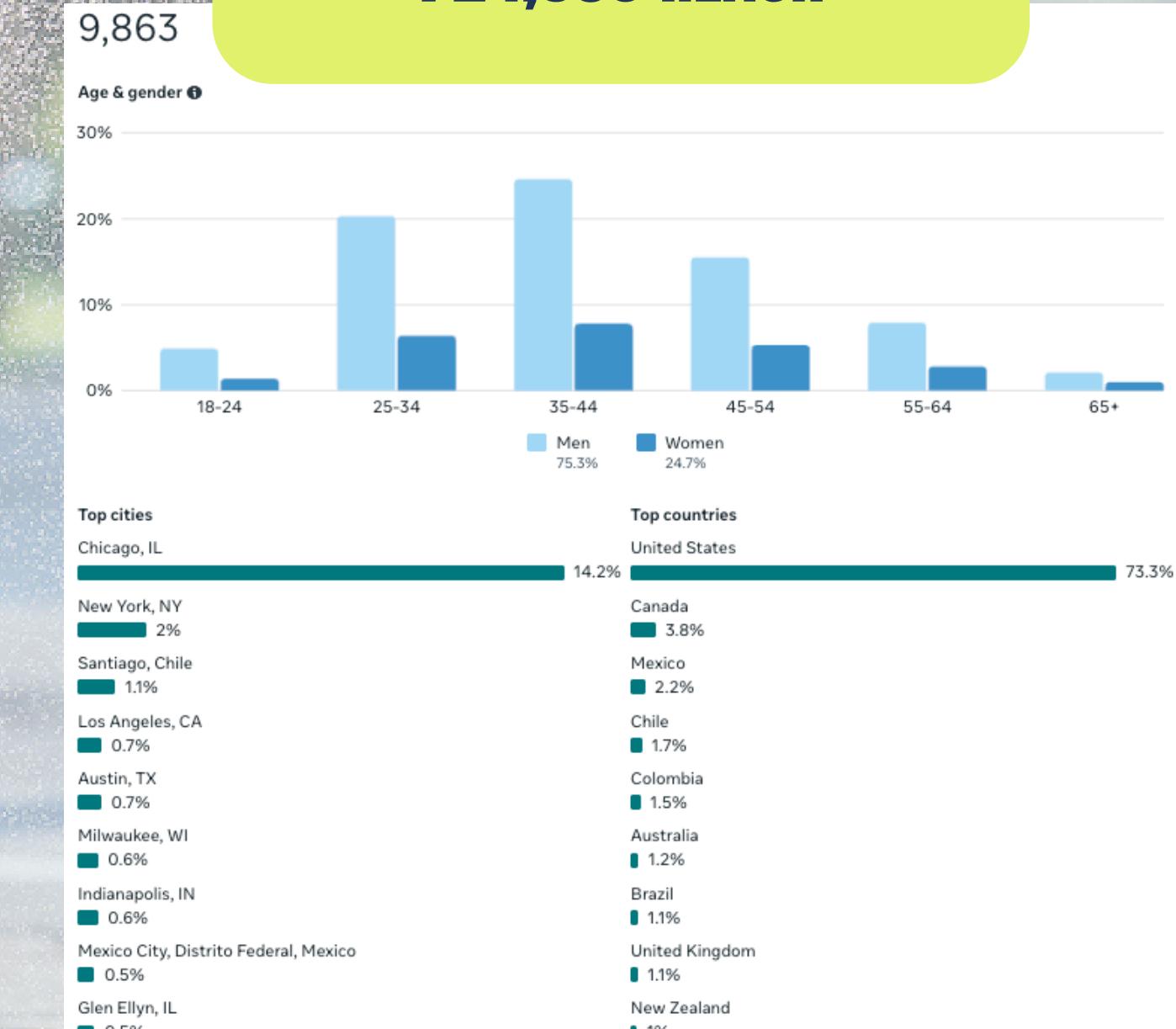
# SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISON



**10,035 FOLLOWERS**  
**663,610 REACH**



**9,863 FOLLOWERS**  
**724,650 REACH**



While Instagram has a slightly smaller audience, engagement on the platform, visibility, and our ability to communicate with a younger demographic all drive our strategic focus on Instagram.

# SRAM GRITTY AWARD

The SRAM Gritty Award continued to be a defining part of the Chicago Grit identity in 2025. Honoring riders who embodied perseverance, toughness, and relentless drive, the award became both a highlight on course and a spark for online engagement.

With SRAM as presenting sponsor, the Gritty Award carried even greater prestige — fueling competition among athletes and amplifying our brand values of resilience and determination. Riders eagerly shared their “Gritty moments” across social platforms, creating a wave of organic content that expanded our reach and deepened community connection.

The SRAM Gritty Award has become more than a prize. It's a symbol of what Chicago Grit stands for: racing defined not just by victory, but by GRIT.



Scan the code to see  
**Roxsolt Liv SRAM rider**  
**Peta Mullens receive the**  
**Gritty Award**



# EARNED MEDIA

0 0 0 0

**We're all about creating community events... with a bike race.**

This year we did a series of local and national pushes, which resulted in an increase in local coverage. National coverage was predominantly cycling-specific publications and Endurance Sportswire.

We've created a Media Coverage Report, which you may view by [clicking here](#) or scanning the QR code below.



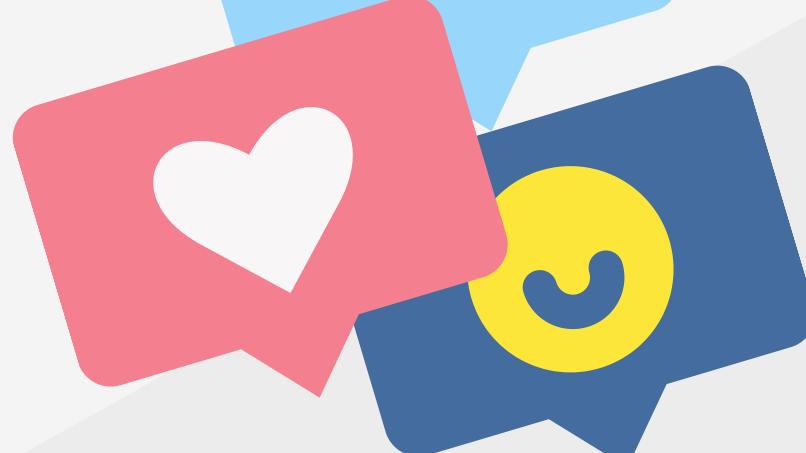
# EMAIL MARKETING

Our riders receive emails both through our Mailchimp Account and our BikeReg account. BikeReg is used for Communiques, and are not included in this report. Our MailChimp Account is where we send riders our sponsor info, tease the event leading in the race, and engage them post-event.

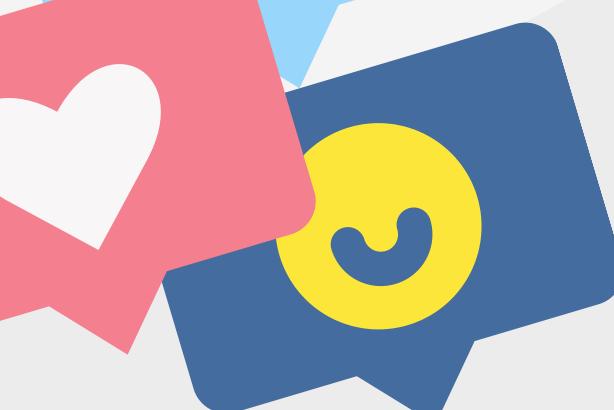
Our current list is just under 9,000 contacts, including our VIP List. This year our race wrap up reports were sent not only to our VIP list but to our full distribution list. [Click here](#) or scan the code to the right to view one of our race wrap ups.



**64,651  
SENDS**



**45.8%  
OPEN RATE**



**1,028  
CLICKS**



# LIVE AUDIO

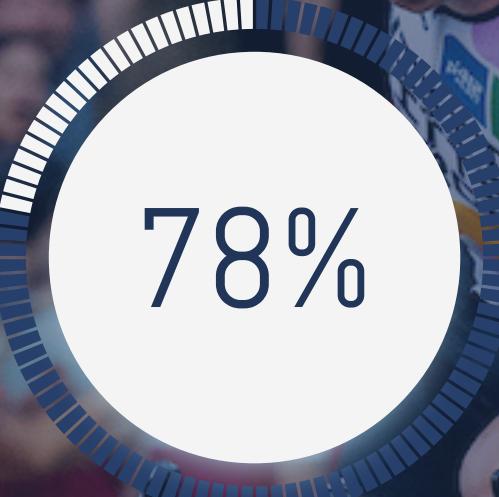
Capturing the electrifying energy of our announcers is no easy task. Todd Busteed's soothing tones, Brad Sohner's perfectly balanced humor and hype, and Frankie Andreu's infectious crowd engagement create a truly mesmerizing experience.

We invested in this experience in order to bring the hype of racing to families, fans, and spectators on the course (who were too far from the stage).

**5401**  
**LISTENERS**  
**WORLDWIDE**

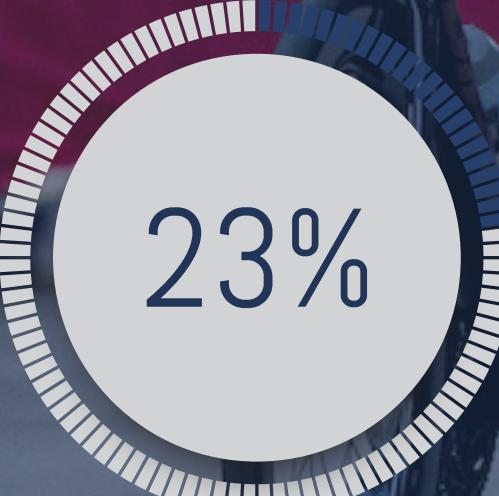


# WHAT OUR RIDERS SAY ABOUT US



78%

Riders who say they will return in 2026



23%

Listed Fulton Market as their favorite course

**"Grit was phenomenal this year, I thought even better than last!"**

**"I really appreciate the marketing director and social media team highlighting not only winners but also their clubs from around the country. It was also great to see coverage of the women's races, which usually get a lot less attention."**

**"Brings talented and competitive racing to my doorstep. But really enjoy the atmosphere at each event and always very impressed with how professional and dedicated the organisers are to creating a awesome series of races day after day"**

**"Every year, I contemplate whether it is worth the money and risk of racing, but every year I race, I get pumped again for the sport of cycling!"**

# VISION FOR 2026

Our vision is to grow Chicago Grit into the most rider-driven cycling series in the nation — a place where elite athletes, first-time racers, and weekend warriors find their stage.

In 2026 we will sharpen our reputation as the premier criterium festival in the U.S., bringing deeper fields, bigger crowds, and stronger community impact.





# 2026 DATES

**July 17-26, 2026**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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