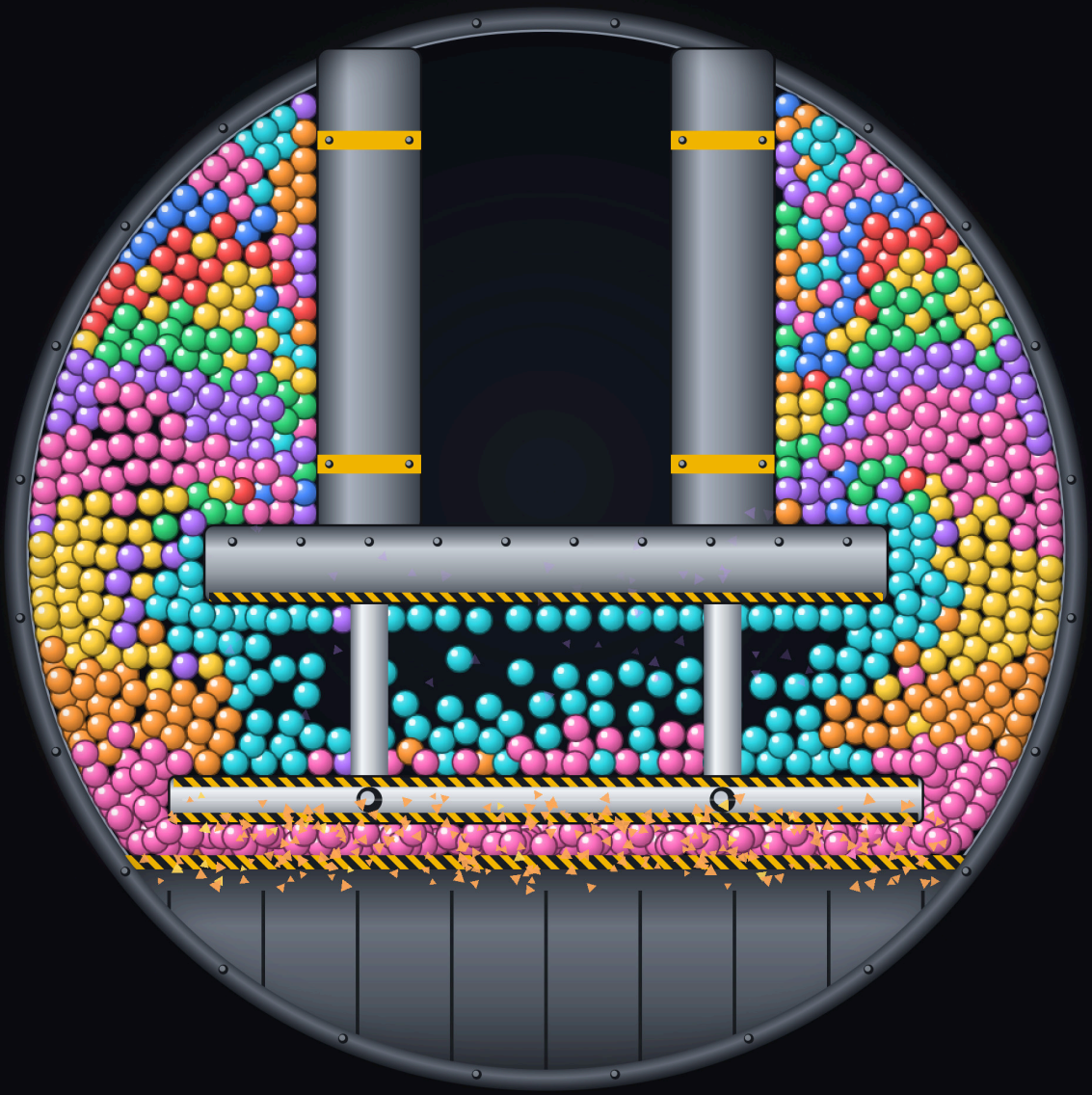
1 Ball vs a Machine

The format, the rules and the first-week numbers of a channel that drew 1.28 million views in six days. With what failed on the way.



Read this first

One channel, one week, and a grade on every rule that says how far to trust it.

This is the working notebook of one channel, written up. Between 8 and 13 November 2026 a new channel built on one kind of video (one ball, one machine, and every ball the machine crushes splits in two) drew 1.28 million views on the five platforms whose counts we could read. That count also holds a few tests, and a second series that this edition leaves out, in which a spinning blade cuts the balls.

In those six days we built eleven pilot videos and rejected nine, went through three formats, and measured other people's hits frame by frame to find out why ours were worse. What you have bought is that record: what was measured, what was decided on it, and what failed.

It is not a promise. Six days is a small sample. A format that drew views in November can be stale by February, and chapter 2 shows one that went stale on two accounts within three months. Nothing here says what you will earn: after 1.28 million views no platform had paid us anything, and chapter 13 explains why.

How far to trust each rule

Every rule in this guide carries one of five grades, or two where its evidence is of two kinds. Read the grade before the rule.

THE FRAME

Every pixel measurement in this guide is on a frame 1080 wide and 1920 tall, at 60 frames a second. Times are seconds from the first frame. Clock times are UTC.

●●● MEASURED	Our own data, or our own measurement of a video frame by frame. The sample size is stated.
●●○ COUNTED	Public counts of other people's videos: views, lengths, captions. We counted them; we did not run their channels.
●○○ ONE READING	One post, one test or one day. A reason to run your own test, and no more than that.
○○○ JUDGEMENT	Decided by eye or by ear, ours or the creator's.
■ RULEBOOK	A platform's own published rule, or a report of one, read on the date given. These change. Check the platform's page before you rely on one.

What is in here, and what is not

- **Other creators are measured, never named.** They did the original work. Their videos appear as numbers (“Hit A”, “a crusher account”), and nothing of theirs is reproduced.
- **This month's tests are named, not judged.** None had a result we could print when this edition closed. This edition describes the format as it stood on 12 November 2026 and the decisions up to 14 November.
- **No income figures, ours or anyone's.** Every dollar-per-view number in circulation is a third party's estimate, so we print none.
- **Any simulator will do.** The rules are about the video, so they hold for an engine you write or one you rent. Ours is sold separately as the Machine Kit, and a margin note marked *Kit* says how the kit does what the page describes.

Four ways through

- **With an hour.** Chapters 1, 4 and 15, then the list of rules in appendix A.
- **About to start a channel.** Chapter 16 first. It sends you to the others in the order you will need them.
- **With the Machine Kit.** Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 14, and every note marked *Kit*.
- **Already posting.** Chapters 5, 11, 12 and 13: retention, rate, tests and money.

Chapter 15 lists what we still do not know. If you read one chapter twice, read that one.

THE CREATOR

One person runs the channel, judged every pilot and has the last word. Their verdicts are quoted from the working chat. Spelling and punctuation are tidied, three dots mark a cut, a word in square brackets is ours, and nothing else is changed.

KIT

Notes like this one are for readers who have the Machine Kit. Everyone else can skip them and lose nothing.

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How our numbers and other people's videos were measured, the pages behind every Rulebook grade, and how this guide was made.

The week in numbers

1.28 million views between 8 and 13 November. Three quarters came from one platform, and one video could draw half the views of a day's Instagram posts.

1.28 M	75 %	22,669	51 ×
views on the five platforms we could read, 8 to 13 November 2026	of them on Instagram: 955,000	median views per Instagram post, over 24 posts	Instagram's median post against TikTok's

We sent our videos to six platforms. The median post drew 22,669 views on one of them and 2 on another.

That spread is the first thing the week taught us, so it comes before everything else in this guide.

WHERE THESE COME FROM

The channel's own dashboard, read on 13 November 2026 at 17:32 UTC. Each post is counted at its latest reading and not at a fixed age, so newer posts count low.

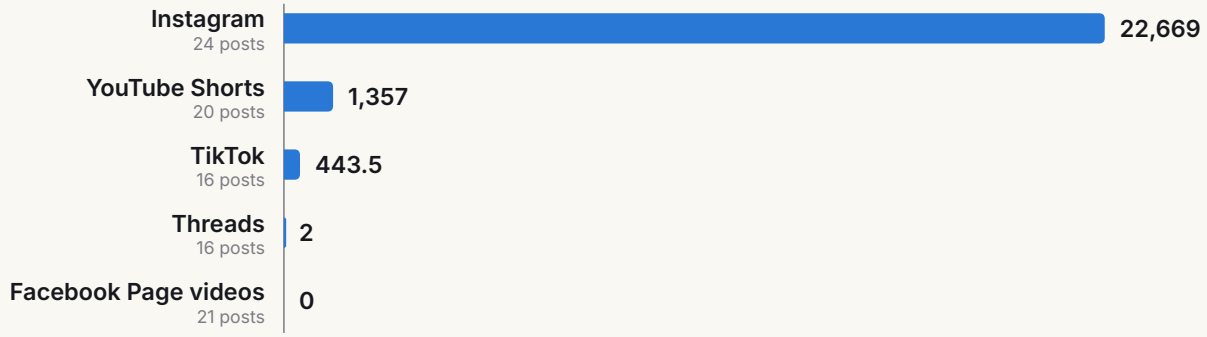


FIGURE 1 Median views per post on each platform. The Facebook row is 21 videos posted to a Page by our posting app. Three reels posted to the same Page by hand drew 107,000 to 110,000 views between them, by two readings. X is not shown: we could not read its numbers.

One video can be most of a day

The Instagram posts of 12 November had drawn 369,000 views between them when we read the dashboard a day later. One video, a pair of scissors, took 198,000 of those: 54%. A day's total says more about whether a video like that was in it than about the day.

The accounts we studied show the same shape at every size. On one ball account 14% of its 72 ball videos passed a million views, and a single video holds 41% of the views of those 72. On a crusher account the top 5 of 25 videos hold 59%. On an Instagram account with 629 reels the top tenth hold 74%.

Rule **01**

Judge a format on its median over a full week, never on its best video.

●○○ ONE READING One video was 54% of the views of one day's Instagram posts (198,000 of 369,000). ●●○ COUNTED Top video 41% of the views of an account's 72 ball videos; top tenth 74% (629 reels).

The same ten videos on two platforms

On 12 November we read the public counts of ten of our videos on TikTok and on YouTube, 6 hours to 2 days after each was posted. If the platforms agreed about which videos were good, the two rankings would match. Their rank correlation is 0.07, where 1 is the same order and 0 is no relation at all.

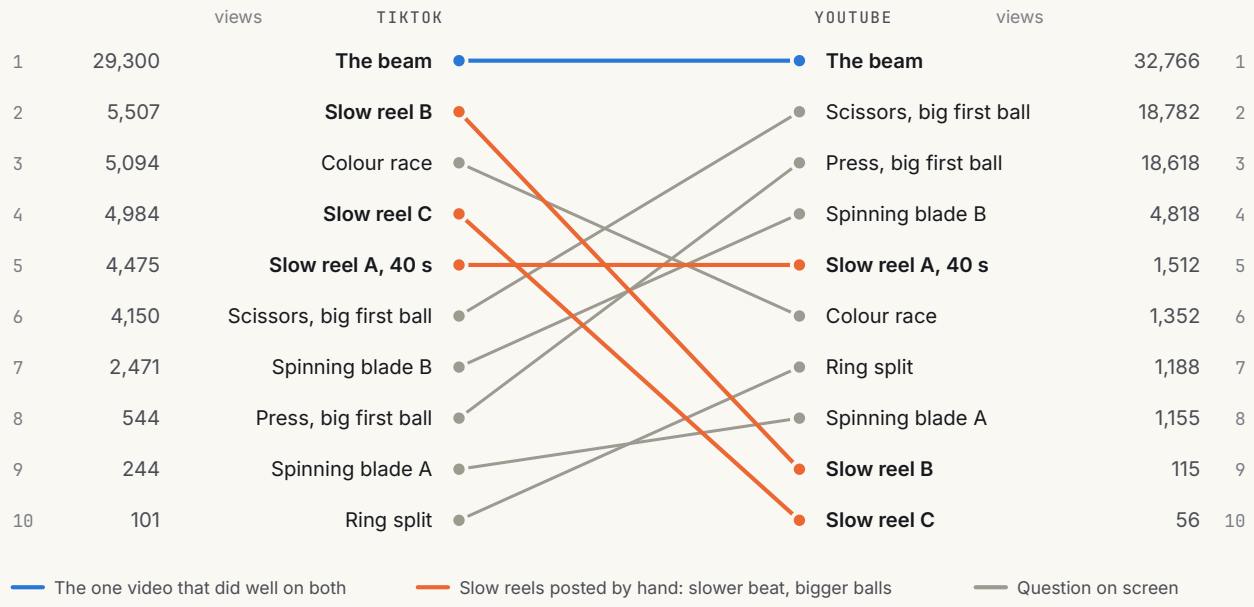


FIGURE 2 Ten videos ranked by views on TikTok (left) and on YouTube (right). Only one, in blue, was a hit on both. The three in orange were slow reels posted by hand, with bigger balls and a slower beat. Our records do not agree that all three ran without words, so the figure shows which platform liked that kind of video, and cannot show what missing words did.

A press with a big first ball drew 544 views on TikTok and 18,618 on YouTube. One of the slow reels drew 5,507 on TikTok and 115 on YouTube. We found the same in another creator's catalogue, where the two platforms had the same titles: one video with 8,320 views on TikTok and 1.9 million on YouTube, another with 387,000 and 528. Over 39 matched videos of theirs the rank correlation is 0.36.

Rule
02

Never keep a video off a platform because of its kind, and judge it against that platform's own median.

We could not predict where a video would land. A video kept off a platform loses its chance there, and in Figure 2 only one video of the ten did well on both.

●●● MEASURED Rank correlation 0.07 over 10 of our videos.
●●○ COUNTED 0.36 over 39 of another creator's.

A VIEW IS NOT A VIEW

Since 31 March 2025 YouTube has counted every start and every replay of a Short as a view. A looping 23-second video collects them fast. Compare a video with the median of its own platform and never with its count on another.

What the first days looked like

READINGS FROM THE FIRST WEEK

What	Reading
Our first three TikToks	Stalled at 10 or 11 views each while the account was new
Instagram reach	Up to 319,000 accounts in a day, almost all of them not followers
Instagram, first day at 10 posts	The first 7 posts drew 210,000 views. The posts at 01:00 and 04:00 UTC led with 80,000 and 64,000
YouTube Shorts, by the day they were posted	64,800 views (10 Nov), 31,800 (11 Nov), then 4,200 on the first day at 5 posts (12 Nov, read a day younger)
Threads	16 posts, 47 views in total
Audience age	23.5% aged 13 to 17, in one breakdown of 14 November

What the week does not show

Followers. The dashboard said about 2,300 across five accounts, but on the same day the Instagram figure was read as 146 in one place and 1,200 in another, and a growth figure of about 190 a week does not square with 2,300 or 1,200 after under a week of posting. We cannot tell you how many followers these videos won, so we will not guess.

Money. No platform paid for any of these views. Chapter 13 has the thresholds.

Staying power. A week cannot show whether a format lasts. Chapter 2 has one format that faded on two accounts within three months.