



OPERATING GUIDE · MEASUREMENT · AUGUST 2026

How to Measure a Club App.

Every benchmark you have been shown was built from apps ten times your size, with the failures removed. Here is what to measure instead.

**You are not too small to measure.
You are too small for their benchmarks.**

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What's inside.

A working guide for whoever has to answer the question "is the app working?" at a club with hundreds or a few thousand fans. Written for a volunteer with an hour a month, not an analyst.

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PART ONE

Why the usual numbers **don't fit.**

Before deciding whether your app is working, it is worth knowing where the numbers you are being measured against actually came from. The answer is uncomfortable.

You are not in the benchmark.

Somebody has probably shown you a table of app benchmarks. Retention should be this. Notification open rates should be that. Here is the part nobody mentions: your club was never in the sample.

WHO IS ACTUALLY IN THE BENCHMARK

THE PUBLISHED BENCHMARK POPULATION

Apps with at least 1,000 active users, sending at least 1,000 notifications a month. Low-performing and abandoned apps removed.



YOUR CLUB

Not in the population. None of those numbers describe you.

Airship 2025 push benchmark inclusion criteria; Google Play Console peer benchmark documentation. Both publishers' own stated wording.

The leading push notification benchmark states its inclusion criteria plainly. It covers "apps with at least 1,000 active users that had sent at least 1,000 cumulative push notifications in one month". A club app with four hundred active fans sending a handful of notifications a week is not a low performer in that dataset. It is not in that dataset.

Apple says something similar: retention data "may remain blank if privacy thresholds are not met, or for new apps and low-volume cohorts". Google is blunter about its peer comparisons, which "exclude low-performing and abandoned apps". A benchmark with the failures removed is, by construction, harder than average to hit.

1,000

THE ENTRY REQUIREMENT

Minimum active users for an app to appear in the leading push benchmark, alongside a minimum of 1,000 notifications sent in a month. Most community and semi-professional club apps sit below both thresholds.

None of this makes those benchmarks dishonest. They describe what they describe. The mistake is applying them to an organisation they exclude, then concluding the organisation is failing.

You are not too small to measure. You are too small for their benchmarks, which is a completely different problem with a much better solution.

The same word, four different numbers.

Even where a benchmark does apply, comparing two of them is usually invalid, because the publishers are not measuring the same thing.

RETENTION

Apple defines it as the percentage of devices that "opened the app a certain number of days later", which means opened on *exactly* that day. Apple also excludes anyone who installed and never opened from both halves of the calculation, and reports Day 1, Day 7 and Day 28. Other publishers measure from install rather than first open, and many report Day 30. Those are four different denominators and one shared word. A "30-day retention" figure from one publisher cannot be compared with another's, and Apple does not produce a Day 30 number at all, so a 30-day retention target is not even measurable in the tool most clubs would open.

PUSH OPEN RATE

One major publisher defines it as "the percentage of total sends within a month that triggered an app open". Another defines its click-through rate as "the ratio of push opens to push recipients". Sends versus recipients is a real difference: every undelivered notification sits in one denominator and not the other, so the second number is always the flattering one.

PRO-TIP · THE QUESTION THAT SAVES YOU

Whenever somebody quotes you an app benchmark, ask one thing: "out of what?" If they cannot tell you the denominator and the sample, the number is decoration. This applies to numbers in your favour as well.

ACTIVE USERS

One analytics platform defines a monthly active user as somebody who "performed a meaningful action", noting explicitly that "simply opening an app or logging in doesn't cut it". Most other tools count the app opening. Same term, materially different populations.

The practical consequence runs through the rest of this guide: **define your metric once, write the definition down, and never change it.** A consistent measure you invented is more useful than an industry-standard one you apply inconsistently.

Where the famous rules came from.

Some of the most-repeated benchmarks in app marketing have no research behind them at all. It is worth knowing which, because you may be being held to one.

"TWENTY PER CENT DAILY-TO-MONTHLY USERS IS GOOD, FIFTY IS WORLD-CLASS"

This one is everywhere. It traces to a blog post written by a venture capitalist in July 2011, which describes the pattern as "one fairly common law of web/mobile physics" observed across the companies he had invested in. There is no dataset, no study and no citation. Fifteen years of benchmark articles rest on one person's rule of thumb about startups, none of which were sports clubs.

2011

THE YEAR OF THE RULE

The origin of the daily-to-monthly active user benchmark still quoted as an industry standard today. A blog post, explicitly framed as a personal observation, with no underlying data published then or since.

THE RETENTION CURVE EVERYBODY CITES

A widely reproduced curve puts day-one retention around 26% and day-30 around 7%. We went looking for its sample size, method and definition. The source states none of the three, and the figure is then reproduced across dozens of pages as established fact.

THE PUSH OPT-IN FIGURE THAT HAPPENS TO BE RIGHT

One large aggregator lists a 60% overall push opt-in rate with no source given at all. It sits close to a properly sourced figure of 61% from a benchmark covering 10,000 apps and 800 billion messages, which is probably why nobody has questioned it. Being accidentally near a real number does not make it evidence.

We are not repeating this to be clever about other people's work. We are repeating it because a club committee will sometimes hold a volunteer to a number that was invented, and knowing which numbers those are is genuinely useful.

Ask where a benchmark came from. A surprising number of them came from nowhere.

PART TWO

What to measure instead.

Three questions, asked every month, compared only against your own previous answer. That is the whole method, and it works at any size.

Three questions, in order.

Most app reporting fails because it opens a dashboard and reports whatever is on it. Start from the questions instead, and the metrics pick themselves.

THREE QUESTIONS, IN ORDER

1**Are they here?**

People who opened the app this month, and whether that beat last

2**Can you reach them?**

People who said yes to push, and how many acted on the last one

3**Did it do anything?**

Votes, check-ins, offers claimed. Things a fan did that you can count

Answer these three every month and you are measuring your app properly.

Everything else in this guide is detail underneath them. Downloads are not on the list, and that is deliberate.

WHY DOWNLOADS ARE NOT ONE OF THEM

A download is a decision somebody made once, possibly months ago, possibly at a stall on registration day because a volunteer asked them to. It tells you nothing about whether the app is doing its job today. It is worth counting once a season to know the size of the pool, and it belongs nowhere near a monthly report.

The three questions are deliberately ordered. There is no point improving what people do in the app if nobody is opening it, and no point sending more notifications if nobody said yes to them. Fix them in sequence.

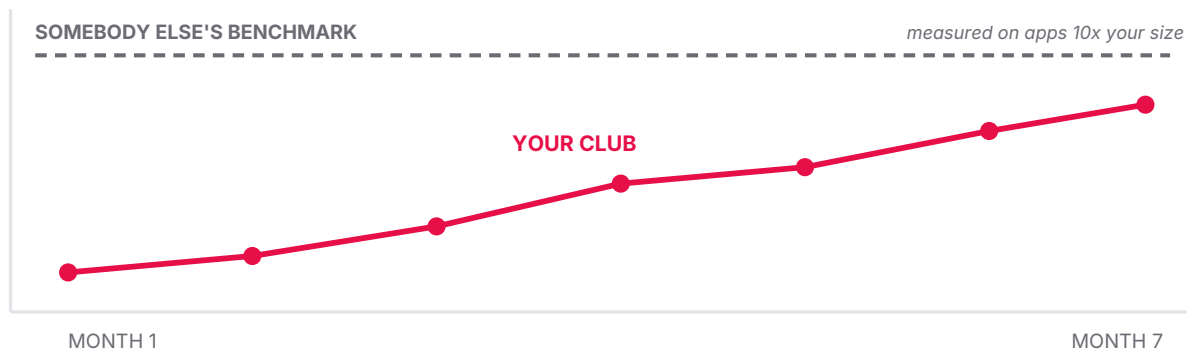
PRO-TIP · ONE MONTH, ONE QUESTION

If you only have an hour a month, spend it on question one until that number moves in the right direction three months running. Then move to question two. A club that improves one thing properly beats a club that reports twelve things and changes none of them.

Compare yourself to yourself.

This is the central idea of the guide, and it is the one that makes the rest of it work at club scale.

THE ONLY COMPARISON THAT WORKS AT YOUR SCALE



A club improving every month is winning, whatever the dotted line says.

Report the direction and the change. The absolute number only means something next to your own last one.

At a few hundred users, a single number in a single month is close to meaningless. Twenty people going on holiday moves your monthly active figure by a chunk that would look like a crisis on a chart. A bye week does the same. A cold snap does the same. The number is real, but the variation swamps the signal.

What survives that noise is direction over time. Six months of your own numbers, measured the same way, tell you something no benchmark can: whether what you are doing is working, at your club, with your fans, in your season.

THE THREE COMPARISONS THAT ARE ACTUALLY VALID

- **This month against last month.** Short-term, noisy, but it catches a problem early.
- **This month against the same month last season.** The best one you have. It controls for the season's shape: round three is comparable with round three, and finals with finals.
- **This season's average against last season's.** The one to put in front of a committee, because it is the least noisy and the hardest to argue with.

One comparison to use carefully: your own app store peer benchmark. Apple and Google both group your app against others of similar category and size and show you how you compare, free, inside the tools you already have. It is the fairest external comparison available to a club. Just remember what Google removed from the group before drawing it.

The only fair comparison for your club is your club, last season.

Are they here?

The first question, and the one to fix before any of the others. It has one primary measure and two supporting ones.

THE MEASURE · MONTHLY ACTIVE SHARE

What it is: the number of people who opened the app at least once this month, divided by the number of people who have it.

Write your definition down: "opened the app at least once between the 1st and the last day of the month, divided by total app users at month end." Then never change it.

What to report: the percentage, the raw number, and the change on the same month last season.

Report the raw number alongside the percentage, always. "38%" invites an argument about whether 38 is good. "412 people opened the app in June, up from 340 last June" is a fact nobody can dispute, and it is the sentence that works in a committee meeting.

THE TWO SUPPORTING MEASURES

- **Returning versus first-time.** Of the people active this month, how many were also active last month? A club whose actives are mostly returning has a habit. A club whose actives are mostly new every month has a leak.
- **Activity on match days versus other days.** The multiple tells you what the app is for at your club. A high multiple means it is a matchday tool, which is fine but means you have six other days doing nothing. Nobody has published a credible benchmark for this in club sport, so yours is the only number that means anything.

PRO-TIP · SET THE BASELINE BEFORE YOU JUDGE IT

Measure for three months before you decide whether the number is good. You cannot tell a bad number from a normal month without a normal month to compare it to, and the first month you measure is almost never typical.

Can you reach them?

The second question is about permission, and it is the one where the widely circulated numbers do the most damage.

THE MEASURE · PUSH OPT-IN RATE

What it is: the percentage of your app users who have granted permission to receive notifications.

The comparison that is fair: a benchmark across 10,000 apps and 800 billion messages puts the average at 61%, split 67% on Android and 56% on iOS. This one you can reasonably compare yourself against, because opt-in is a simple ratio that does not depend on how many notifications you send.

What to do if it is low: the ask is usually the problem. An app that requests permission on first open, before showing any value, gets refused more than one that asks after a fan has done something they enjoyed.

OPEN RATES, AND THE NUMBER TO BE CAREFUL WITH

You may have been told to expect notification open rates of twenty to forty per cent. Treat that with real caution. The best-evidenced benchmark available reports a median direct open rate, meaning notifications sent that resulted in the app being opened, in the low single digits across most industries, with sport ranking at or near the bottom of thirteen verticals on both opt-in and open rate. The most favourable credible figure we found anywhere was 14.4%, and that was for contextual notifications triggered by something a user did, against 4.2% for generic broadcast sends.

14.4% v 4.2%

CONTEXTUAL VERSUS GENERIC

Open rates for contextual notifications triggered by a user's own behaviour, against generic broadcasts, across 10,000 apps and 800 billion messages. The gap is the actionable part: what you send matters more than how often.

So if somebody sets your club a 20% open-rate target, they have set a target above the ceiling of the published evidence for your category. A club hitting 6% is not failing. It is doing roughly what the data would predict, and the way to improve it is to send fewer, better-timed, more specific notifications rather than more of them.

A target nobody can hit is not ambition. It is a reason to give up in March.

Reading a notification properly.

One number per notification tells you almost nothing. Three tell you what to do next time.

What to record	What it tells you
Sent	The size of the audience you chose. A small, well-chosen send is not a worse send
Opened	Whether the message earned attention. Compare against your own average, not an industry one
Acted	Whether it caused anything. Votes cast, offers claimed, page reached. This is the real measure
When you sent it	Time and day, so you can find your club's pattern rather than borrowing somebody else's
What it said	The actual copy. In six months this becomes the most useful column in the table

Keep that as five columns in a spreadsheet, one row per notification, for a season. It costs two minutes per send and by finals you will know more about what works on your fans than any benchmark could tell you. This is the single highest-return habit in this guide.

PRO-TIP · THE UNSUBSCRIBE YOU CANNOT SEE

Watch opt-in rate over the season, not just at signup. If it falls, fans are turning notifications off, and that is the most expensive thing that can happen to an owned channel. It usually means volume, not content. Nobody turns off a channel that only messages them when it matters.

Did it do anything?

The third question is the one your committee and your sponsors actually care about, and it is the one generic app metrics are worst at answering.

Session duration will not tell you whether the app did anything. Neither will screen views. What matters is the count of things a fan chose to do: a vote cast, a poll answered, a prediction entered, a check-in at the ground, an offer claimed, a piece of content shared. Each one is a deliberate act, each one is countable, and each one attaches to a person you can reach again.

THE MEASURE · ACTIONS PER ACTIVE USER

What it is: total fan actions in the month, divided by the number of people who were active.

Why the ratio and not the total: the total rises when your audience grows, which tells you about recruitment rather than engagement. The ratio tells you whether the app is getting more useful to the people already there.

What good looks like: more than last month, and rising across a season. There is no external benchmark for this, because it depends entirely on what you put in the app.

THE SPONSOR VERSION OF THIS NUMBER

For a partner, the useful report is not app-wide. It is theirs: how many people saw their activation, how many acted on it, when, and what share were people the club had not previously identified. "Four hundred and twelve fans claimed your half-time offer, thirty-eight per cent of them aged 18 to 34" is a renewal conversation. "The app had good engagement" is not.

Count the things fans chose to do. Those are the only numbers that survive contact with a committee.

What the numbers are worth at your size.

A short section on statistics, because at club scale the honest answer to "is this number meaningful?" is often no, and knowing which numbers those are will save you from acting on noise.

SMALL NUMBERS MOVE A LOT

With 200 people in a cohort, one person is half a percentage point. A dozen fans away at a school holiday moves a retention figure by six points, which on a chart looks like a collapse and in reality is a school holiday. The smaller the number, the more of its month-to-month movement is randomness rather than meaning.

This is reasoning rather than a citable finding, because nobody has published guidance on measuring apps at this scale. That absence is itself the point of Part One.

THREE RULES THAT FOLLOW

- **Never act on one month.** Two consecutive moves in the same direction, or a change against the same month last season, before you change anything.
- **Prefer counts to percentages when the base is small.** "412 people, up from 340" is solid. "38%, down from 41%" invites a conversation about three percentage points that may be four people.
- **Do not report a metric you cannot explain.** If you cannot say what moved it, it is not ready for a committee paper.

PRO-TIP · SAY THE CAVEAT OUT LOUD

"This is 200 people, so it bounces around and I would not read much into one month" makes you more credible, not less. Anyone who has run numbers for a small organisation will recognise honesty when they hear it, and it protects you the month the figure dips.

PART THREE

Running it.

One page a month, a way to present it that survives a committee meeting, and what to do when a number goes the wrong way.

The one-page monthly report.

Copy this. It takes about twenty minutes once you have done it twice, and it is the whole reporting habit.

TEMPLATE · CLUB APP, [MONTH] [YEAR]

Are they here?

[X] people opened the app this month, from [Y] who have it. Same month last season: [Z].

Can you reach them?

[X] of [Y] have notifications on ([Z]%). We sent [N] notifications; the best was "[copy]" at [X]% opened, the weakest "[copy]" at [Y]%.

Did it do anything?

[X] fan actions this month, [Y] per active user. Top three: [action, count] · [action, count] · [action, count].

Sponsors: [partner] activation reached [X] fans, [Y] claimed.

What I am changing next month: [one thing].

What I need from the committee: [nothing, or one specific thing].

Two rules about that template. Keep it to one page even when you have more to say, because a two-page report gets skimmed and a one-page report gets read. And always fill in the last two lines, even if the answer is "nothing this month". A report that never asks for anything trains people to stop reading it.

PRO-TIP · WRITE IT ON THE SAME DAY EVERY MONTH

First Monday, or the day after the last home game of the month. The habit matters more than the date, and a report that appears at the same time each month becomes something people expect rather than something you have to chase.

Taking it to the committee.

The reporting problem at most clubs is not measurement. It is that the person who understands the numbers has four minutes at the end of a long agenda.

LEAD WITH THE CHANGE, NOT THE NUMBER

"412 fans used the app in June, up from 340 in the same month last year" lands. "Monthly active users were 38%" invites a debate about whether 38 is a good number, which nobody in the room can settle, and which is not the point.

BRING ONE NUMBER, ONE STORY AND ONE ASK

The number is the headline change. The story is one specific thing that happened: the half-time poll that pulled 300 votes, the notification that emptied the canteen queue, the sponsor who asked for the report. The ask is what you want them to decide. Anything beyond those three things is a written attachment, not an agenda item.

TEMPLATE · THE FOUR-MINUTE VERSION

"App use is up [X]% on this time last season, [N] people last month."

"The thing that worked: [one specific activation and its number]."

"The thing that did not: [one honest miss, and what you are changing]."

"What I need: [the decision, or nothing]."

HANDLE THE DOWNLOAD QUESTION BEFORE IT ARRIVES

Somebody will ask how many downloads there are. Have the number, give it, and move on with one sentence: "It is [N], and it is worth knowing once a season, but it counts a decision someone made once. What matters is how many of them came back this month, which is [X]." Said calmly and without defensiveness, that reframes the conversation permanently. Said as a correction, it starts an argument.

One number, one story, one ask. Everything else is an attachment.

When a number looks bad.

It will. Here is a short diagnostic, in the order worth checking, because the cause is usually further up the chain than the symptom.

The symptom	Check first	Usually
Active users fell	The fixture list and the calendar	A bye, a break or school holidays. Compare with the same month last season before doing anything
Opt-in rate falling	How many notifications you sent	Volume. Fans turn off channels that message them about nothing
Open rates low	What the notifications said	Generic broadcasts. Specific and timely beats frequent, by a factor of about three in the published data
Actions per user flat	What you put in the app this month	Nothing new to do. Engagement follows content, not the other way round
Lots of installs, no actives	The first-run experience	People installed at registration, opened it once, found nothing for that week, and never returned
Everything is flat	Whether you changed anything	Flat is what happens by default. It is a prompt to act, not a failure to report

THE ONE THAT IS NOT A PROBLEM

A number below an industry benchmark is not, on its own, a bad number. Given Part One, it may simply mean you are the size you are. Before treating it as a failure, check whether the benchmark's population included clubs like yours, and whether the definition matches the one you used. Most of the time one or both will be false.

Ask what changed before you ask what is wrong. Most bad months are a bye week.

Sources cited.

Every figure and definition in this guide traces to a document we opened. Where a widely repeated number turned out to have no source, we have said so rather than repeating it.

PLATFORM DOCUMENTATION

Apple, App Store Connect Analytics help, app retention: "retention tells you the percentage of active devices that installed the app on the selected day and opened the app a certain number of days later"; users who install but never open "do not qualify, and are not counted in the numerator or the denominator"; retention data "may remain blank if privacy thresholds are not met, or for new apps and low-volume cohorts". Apple reports Day 1, Day 7 and Day 28 in its peer group benchmarks, and groups peers by App Store category, business model and download volume. · Apple, metric definitions: a session is counted when "the app has been used for at least two seconds". · Google Play Console help, peer benchmark groups: curated groups use at least 100 apps, custom groups between eight and twelve, and groups "exclude low-performing and abandoned apps".

PUSH NOTIFICATION BENCHMARKS

Airship, Mobile App Push Notification Benchmarks for 2025: 9 billion app users, thousands of apps, 13 vertical industries, January to December 2024, restricted to "apps with at least 1,000 active users that had sent at least 1,000 cumulative push notifications in one month". Direct open rate defined as "the percentage of total sends within a month that triggered an app open". Sports and Recreation ranks at or near the bottom of all thirteen verticals on both opt-in and direct open rate, on both platforms. · Batch, push notification benchmark 2025: 800 billion messages across 10,000 apps and sites, 1.2 billion monthly unique users, July 2024 to July 2025, Europe-weighted; 61% average opt-in (Android 67%, iOS 56%); contextual campaigns open at 14.4% against 4.19% for generic. · Pushwoosh, push notification benchmarks 2025: over 600 apps, Q4 2024 to Q2 2025; click-through defined as "the ratio of push opens to push recipients"; industry CTRs roughly 0.5% to 3.8%.

ACTIVE USERS AND DEFINITIONS

Mixpanel, State of Digital Analytics 2026: 3.7 trillion events, more than 12,000 companies, 22 billion devices; monthly active users defined as "the number of unique users who performed a meaningful action in your product within a 30-day window", with the explicit note that "simply opening an app or logging in doesn't cut it". Sport is not a covered industry.

CLAIMS WE FOUND TO BE UNSOURCED

The daily-to-monthly active user rule ("20% is good, 50% is world-class") traces to a venture capitalist's blog post of July 2011, presented there as "one fairly common law of web/mobile physics" observed across portfolio companies, with no dataset or citation published then or since. · The widely reproduced retention curve of roughly 26% at day one and 7% at day 30 is published without sample size, method or definition. · A frequently cited 60% overall push opt-in rate appears on a major aggregator with no source given. · Several push "reaction rate" figures circulate attributed to a vendor with no year, using a metric that vendor no longer reports.

Deliberately absent: any retention, stickiness, session or store-conversion benchmark for sports or club apps. We searched for all of them and none exists in published form with a disclosed method. Any figure you are shown for those is either from a different category or from nowhere. Tiparra platform benchmarks for club-scale apps are in preparation and will be published with their sample size disclosed.



14 · ABOUT TIPARRA

Measure what you actually **control**.

Tiparra is a white-label fan engagement platform, used by clubs and organisations from Super Rugby to community football across Australia and New Zealand. We help them stop renting attention and start owning the audience relationship.

The only fair comparison for your club is your club, last season.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Set your baseline this month using the one-page report in Section 10. Do not judge it. Just write it down, then do the same thing next month and compare the two. Three months of your own numbers will tell you more than any benchmark ever will. When you want help reading them, get in touch.

START THE CONVERSATION

tiparra.com

Your app. Your channel. Your rules.