



Report on sport sponsorship by alcohol producers

Alcohol related sport sponsorship

Results of monitoring alcohol marketing in the Netherlands in 2010

AMMIE Project

Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe

Report on sport sponsorship in the Netherlands

July, 2011

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This report arises from the project Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme.



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Introduction

The most practiced field sports in the Netherlands are football, basketball, hockey, volleyball and korfbal. Especially football takes in a rather dominant place, both as a sport which is played on the highest levels as well as the high number of people participating in this sport. Furthermore, it is a sport that attracts many young people.

Therefore it is remarkable to observe that especially football clubs from the Premiership, which is followed by many young fans, maintain a close relationship with the big beer producers. The top clubs from the Dutch hockey league also receive plenty of interest from beer brands like Heineken and Amstel.

Sponsoring of sports clubs by alcohol producers is not without risks. The sponsoring of big sports clubs and sports events by alcohol producers leads to many minors getting exposed to alcohol marketing (Wildenberg 2009). Also recent studies provide evidence that alcohol industry sponsorship is associated with more hazardous drinking in sportspeople compared to non-alcohol sponsorship (O'Brien, Miller, Kolt, Martens, & Webber, 2011) (O'Brien en Kypril, 2008).

In a time when we struggle to reduce alcohol use among young people and excessive alcohol use among young adults, it is important to know exactly what the relationship is between sport and sponsorship by the alcohol industry. It is also good to know what shapes these sponsorships, which are visible on the popular websites of the top clubs can take.

Alcohol sponsorship of sports clubs is as yet barely regulated. Alcohol producers and sports organizations such as the KNVB have plenty of space to show their close relationship to the football-loving Dutch people. That is not naturally. The alcohol industry sponsorship of sports clubs and sporting events in France and Norway for example, are completely banned because of the health risks. The same applies to the tobacco industry: after it became clear how sponsoring in the form of tobacco advertising influenced the smoking behavior on young people, it was completely banned.

This report offers a first step to an overview of the relationship between the sports sector and the alcohol industry. As part of a European project, that aims to systematically monitor alcohol advertisements in five countries, an overview has been compiled of the five most practiced team sports in the Netherlands and their relationship with the alcohol industry. Therefore we conducted a short survey of the websites of the biggest sports clubs of the five most frequently performed team sports in the Netherlands. The goal was to discover if these clubs are sponsored by alcohol producers and how visible the alcohol brands are on their websites.

This report provides a good starting point but the analysis of sports sponsorship is far from complete. The main focus is on the ten most popular team sports, which leaves open for further research individual sports like tennis, certain leagues which are sponsored (for example the Dutch football Jupiler League, and the Champions League which is sponsored by Heineken) as well as certain

events (for example the Dutch cyclist race called the Amstel Gold Race and the motor race T.T. in Assen which is sponsored by Bavaria).

While this research is not scientific, this small systematic monitoring exercise underlines the importance of this subject.

The investments of Dutch alcohol producers in the sports sector are not publicly available. Unlike in the US, Dutch businesses are not required to reveal its spending in this sector. In the US roughly 60 percent of the alcohol industry's marketing expenditure is spent on sport related advertising and sponsorship (Centre on Alcohol Marketing & Youth 2004). This means that the American alcohol industry uses sports as its primary vehicle for promoting alcohol sales.

Methods

The list of Statistics of the Netherlands (CBS) shows that young people, between (6-19 years of age), mostly perform individual sports. However, top clubs that are known to the general public are mostly involved in team sports. For this reason, the five most frequently performed team sports by Dutch youngsters have been selected. These five sports are: football, basketball, field hockey, volleyball and korfbal. Of these sports the ten teams that play in the highest division are rated as top clubs. Of these 50 top clubs the club websites have been scanned thoroughly on the presence of alcohol-branded sponsors.

This report is written within the AMMIE (Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe) project. The goal of AMMIE is to systematically monitor various alcohol marketing practices in several European countries in order to improve and test the effectiveness of existing regulations. Special attention is paid to the protection of young people against the harmful effects of exposure to appealing alcohol advertising and to large quantities of alcohol marketing.' All AMMIE reports can be found on:

www.eucam.info/eucam/home/ammie.html.

STAP, Utrecht, July 2011.

1. Alcohol and sport sponsorship

1.1 The influence of alcohol related sponsoring on alcohol use, an analysis of recent literature

Recently, several systematic literature studies have been published researching the links between alcohol marketing and the drinking behavior of young people that are exposed to it.

Anderson and colleagues analyzed thirteen longitudinal studies and concluded that exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with the probability that adolescents start drinking alcohol. They also found that those who already drink, consume even more after exposure to alcohol marketing (Anderson, de Bruijn, et al. 2009). These findings are supported by two other systematic reviews. Meier and colleagues in 2008 and Smith and Foxcroft in 2009 both concluded that a relation exists between the use of alcohol by adolescents and exposure to alcohol marketing or promotional activities (Meier, et al. 2008) (Smith en Foxcroft 2009).

When it comes to exposure to alcohol industry marketing through televised sports events and its effects, the number of studies is markedly lower. The impact study by Collins et al. finds evidence that watching sports programs with many alcohol advertisements, raises the chances of the viewer drinking alcohol (Collins, et al. 2007). Another study found that the frequency of drinking amongst drinkers during the previous 12 months can be extrapolated by exposure to beer vendors at sports and music events (Ellickson, et al. 2005).

It's not only as spectators that young people get exposed to alcohol advertising but also as sportspeople themselves. It has been well established by many studies in Australia, New Zealand and the USA that sportspeople drink more alcohol in a more hazardous manner than non-sportspeople (Leichliter, et al. 1998) (Martens, et al. 2006) (Wechsler and Nelson, Binge drinking and the American college students: What's five drinks? 2001) (O'Brien, Blackie and Hunter 2005) (O'Brien, Ajmol, et al. 2007) (O'Brien and Kypri, Alcohol industry sponsorship of sport and drinking levels in New Zealand sportspeople 2008) (O'Brien, Kolt, et al. 2010). Furthermore it has been shown that levels of heavy episodic drinking have increased among young people, especially amongst student clubs and athletics in the USA and the UK (Wechsler, Dowdall and Davenport 1995). Recently O'Brien and colleagues added to this that sportspeople who are sponsored by the alcohol industry drink in more hazardous ways than those who have non-alcoholic sponsors (O'Brien, Miller, et al. 2011).

1.2 Resemblances with scientific conclusions about the influence of sports sponsorship by the tobacco industry on smoking behavior

In the case of the tobacco industry sports sponsorship was one of the last forms of tobacco marketing to be regulated. Partly because of this many tobacco producers started to use sports sponsorship as a central part of their marketing effort (Carlyle, et al. 2004). Some sports, like motor sports and formula 1 are of particular interest to tobacco producers because of their audience of predominantly young men (Carlyle, et al. 2004). As proof of the attractiveness of sports sponsoring by tobacco producers to youngsters, the World Health Organisation refers to an Indian survey held after the 1996 World Cup

Cricket, which was sponsored by the British American Tobacco Group. This survey showed that smoking among Indian teenagers increased five-fold (World Health Organisation 2002). A document from 2000 by ASH (Action on Smoking and Health), the charity organization of the Royal College of Physicians, sums up seven ways in which tobacco advertising can increase consumption.

However, restricting only a part of the advertising effort will not solve the problem. When a restriction offers limitations, the industry will surely find them and exploit them. In 2002 the tobacco industry still earned \$150 million from televised sports events which were sponsored by tobacco companies, despite a ban on tobacco advertising on television. Besides the sponsoring of events another inventive measure was the 1999 launch of tobacco producer British American Tobacco own formula one racing team, British American Racing (Collin, et al. 2004). While restrictions in Western societies were intensified, formula 1 racing, sponsorship of it by the tobacco industry and the tobacco industry's own team moved to upcoming markets like China (Carlyle, et al. 2004). And despite different kinds of bans and restrictions, tobacco companies are still sponsoring racing teams, the logo's may not show up on the cars and uniforms, but the company colors still are present. An example of this is the sponsoring of the Ferrari team by Marlboro, though no logo's are shown, the red and white color scheme of both cars and uniforms still manage to convey the image of one of the world's biggest tobacco brands. In January 2011 Marlboro and Ferrari renewed their contract till 2014 (ESPN 2011).

Concluding we can state that it has been proven that exposure to alcohol advertising affects the drinking behavior. It lowers the initial age of drinking and can increase the amount of consumption. Sports programs on television with alcohol advertising around it raises probability of the viewer drinking alcohol and a clear relationship is established between visiting beer sellers at sports events and the frequency of drinking in the year before. It is especially concerning that research shows that sports people tend to drink more and more dangerously, especially when they are sponsored by the alcohol industry.

2. Sponsoring of top clubs by alcohol brands

2.1 Football

Earlier research by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP) shows that mainly medium and large sports clubs resist possible restrictions or even the prohibition of sponsorship by alcohol producers (Boere 2005). Looking at the sponsors of the ten soccer clubs of the Netherlands, we can understand why this is the case.

Of all the types of sports that were analyzed, alcohol sponsorship is most profound in soccer clubs. All analyzed soccer clubs are sponsored by large beer producers. On the right is a list of the top ten Premier league soccer clubs of the season 2009-2010 whose websites were searched and which alcohol producers they are sponsored by.

Soccer Club	Alcohol Sponsor
FC Twente	Grolsch
Ajax Amsterdam	Amstel (by Heineken)
PSV	Bavaria
Feyenoord	Amstel (by Heineken)
AZ	Amstel (by Heineken)
FC Utrecht	Amstel (by Heineken)
Roda JC	Brand Bier
Heracles Almelo	Grolsch
FC Groningen	Amstel (by Heineken)
NAC Breda	Bavaria

Above is an overview of the top ten Premier League football clubs of the 2009-2010 season, according to Wikipedia (wikipedia 2011) and the presence of alcohol sponsors on their websites.

It is striking that the phrasing of the sponsorship is chosen very carefully. Bavaria is not just a sponsor, according to the website of NAC Breda, the company calls itself a business partner. The same is true for FC Groningen in relation to Amstel as well as for Roda JC to Brand Bier. Amstel is considered a partner by FC Utrecht and Ajax, according to their websites, while the website of FC Twente states Grolsch as one of three select star partners.

Also remarkable is the wide variety of different marketing efforts that are undertaken jointly by the clubs and alcohol producers. Something we see on all websites is the clickable logo of the brewers company. The logo directly links to the website of the brewery. As the following example shows this outlet of alcohol marketing is even visible on web pages that are clearly directed at kids.



(Source: <http://fcutrecht.nl/tigers/>)

Another way of alcohol marketing is showing the product being consumed by high profile club members. This is something we found on the websites of Ajax, PSV and Roda JC. On the right you can see celebrities from Roda JC toasting together with some supporters on their new sponsor Brand Bier; below PSV veteran René van de Kerkhof enjoys a glass of Bavaria, and at the bottom the directors of Heineken and Ajax shaking hands while drinking a glass of Amstel (sources, respectively:

<http://www.rodajc.nl/nieuws/?newsID=1829>,

<http://www.psv.nl/Nieuws/Nieuwspagina/Bavaria-United-gaat-amateurclubs-actief-ondersteunen.htm>,

<http://www.ajax.nl/web/show/id=154417/contentid=43695>.)

Most websites also offer an explanation why the alcohol sponsor is the right partner for the club. An example of this can be found on the website of Ajax where a news item quotes the directors of Ajax and Heineken saying: "We share the same roots and both enjoy Amsterdam's international fame among football fans: at one time that had to lead to a cooperation" (Amstel partner van AFC Ajax 2005).



Just as the soccer clubs have their stadiums, so the brewers have their breweries. And according to the website of PSV there is no better day out for people who enjoy both soccer and beer than a trip to the brewery of Bavaria (PSV-Bavaria Tour, 2011). PSV offers a tour which consists of a morning program in the PSV stadium, lunch and an afternoon program at the Bavaria Brewery. Below: a part of the PSV – Bavaria Tour website. (Source: <http://www.psvbavariatour.nl>)

Besides people and places, another way to market alcohol brands is through products, or more precisely promotional items such as the beer opener which is modeled as a team shirt of the football club NAC. The opener comes free with a crate of Bavaria. According to the website of the soccer club, the opener is a good reason to purchase a couple of extra crates of Bavaria beer (Gratis opener van Bavaria 2010). (Source picture: http://nac.nl/nieuws/33457/gratis-opener-van-bavaria.html?portal=selectie&jaar=2009&maand=&Speler_id=&offset=0)



Another product which frequently appeared over the last years and also features prominently on the club websites, is the club can. In 2002 Bavaria started selling 'PSV beer cans'; in 2009 they did the same with SC Heerenveen. That same year Amstel started selling AZ beer cans (AZ became national champion in 2009 and Amstel delivered 300.000 'AZ beer cans'), and Feyenoord beer cans (Mario Been, trainer of Feyenoord, received the first can). Bavaria has also released a 'NAC can'. On the next page: pictures of the AZ can by Amstel, the NAC can by Bavaria, and the Feyenoord can by Amstel. (Sources: <http://reclamewereld.blog.nl/files/2009/08/amstel-az-bier.jpg>, http://www.bndestem.nl/multimedia/archive/00729/finders_729689b.jpg, http://www.feyenoord.nl/pages/newsdetail/S2/20090813_amstel.aspx.)





Besides these forms of marketing we also found a special contests for fans of Roda JC, which were invited to come up with a name for the joint activities of the club and the Brand brewery (Verzin en Win 2010). The website states that “Brand Beer and Roda JC have much in common: Limburg’s pride, fun, fellowship ... basically all the ingredients to always make the match very enjoyable ‘on the side of the field’, even during the commentary!” (Verzin en Win 2010). While it is not allowed for people under the age of 16 to take part in this contest, youngsters between 16 and 18 are eligible to participate. The logo of this promotional action is showed left. (source: <http://www.rodajc.nl/nieuws/?newsID=2401>.)

Not only do alcohol producers invest in their own website and are present on the soccer clubs websites, they also offer applications for smart phones. One of these so called apps is Amstel’s Teamlink. Teamlink gives official rankings and scores and provides a planner for amateur senior soccer teams. According to the website the app will make sure beer runs and laundry turns are shared equally amongst team members (Amstel Teamlink 2010).



Finally we found a loyalty program for amateur clubs launched by Bavaria and PSV: Bavaria United. According to the website of Bavaria United this is an initiative that unites the power of professional soccer organizations and beer brewer Bavaria to support amateur soccer clubs (Bavaria United gaat amateurclubs actief ondersteunen 2008). Clubs who have Bavaria on tap will become a member of Bavaria United for free and can save for various interesting offers. Additionally Bavaria Unlimited will actively help the clubs with knowledge of training, purchase benefits, and ‘fun’, unique activities for the

clubs. Among these activities for example is a visit from the 'Bavaria Angels', a group of attractive young women, who will take over the bar shift and give tapping courses (Bavaria United gaat amateurclubs actief ondersteunen 2008).

2.2 Basketball

In other branches of sports in the Netherlands we found less sponsorship by alcohol companies. An example is the second most popular team sport for youngsters: Basketball.

According to our research of the websites of the top ten clubs only the Premier League's champion Eclipse Jet is sponsored by an alcohol producer (Jupiler by Anheuser-Busch InBev), the nine other clubs are all sponsored by local non alcohol companies. The website of Eclipse Jet only shows the Jupiler logo in their sponsors section. A link to the Jupiler website is also available in a list of the sponsors, no additional information about Jupiler is given on the website. Also the naming of the sponsorship deal is notable. The sponsors of Eclipse Jet are divided into six categories: Strategic Partners, Exclusive Partners, Outstanding Partners, Business Partners, Cooperations and FEP Partners. Jupiler falls into the category of Business Partners (Partners 2011).

Club Name	City	Alcohol sponsor
Eclipse Jet	Amsterdam	Yes (Jupiler)
WCAA Giants	Bergen op Zoom	No
GasTerra Flames	Groningen	No
EiffelTowers	's-Hertogenbosch	No
De Friesland Aris	Leeuwarden	No
Zorg en Zekerheid Leiden	Leiden	No
Matrixx Magixx	Nijmegen	No
Rotterdam Challengers	Rotterdam	No
Upstairs Weert	Weert	No
Landstede Basketbal	Zwolle	No

Above is an overview of the top ten Premier League basketball clubs of the 2009-2010 season, according to Wikipedia (wikipedia 2011) and the presence of alcohol sponsors on their websites.

2.3 Field Hockey

When it comes to field hockey beer brewer Heineken has half of the top ten Premier League (the 'Rabo Hoofdklasse') clubs covered with sponsorship. Besides Heineken both Bavaria and Grolsch sponsor one club,

this means that eight out of the top ten field hockey clubs are sponsored by alcohol producers. It's interesting to see that in this field of sports Heineken has sponsorship deals with half of the top ten clubs and that even more than half of the number of clubs are sponsored by alcohol companies. Heineken also sponsors the overarching Royal Dutch Hockey League (Welkom - Koninklijke Nederlandse Hockey Bond 2011). Heineken apparently likes to profile itself as a 'premium brand' and would like to be associated with 'elite sports' as hockey.

Most of the alcohol sponsors are visible, like all sponsors, on the homepage of the club websites. The logos are clickable, taking the user directly to the brewers website where they are welcomed with an age check. For three examples take a look at the picture below, containing screenshots of the homepages of the hockey clubs Amsterdam, Den Bosch and Bloemendaal. (Sources respectively: <http://www.ahbc.nl/site>, <http://www.hcdenbosch.nl/site>, <http://www.hcbloemendaal.nl/site>.)

Club Name	Alcohol sponsor
Amsterdam	Heineken
Bloemendaal	Heineken
Den Bosch	Heineken
Klein Zwitserland	No
HGC	No
Kampong	Heineken
Laren	Bavaria
Oranje Zwart	No
Pinoké	Grosch
Rotterdam	Heineken

Above is an overview of the men's top ten Premier League field hockey clubs, according to Wikipedia, and whether or not they are sponsored by alcohol companies (wikipedia



In this case we also see great differences between the naming of the sponsorship. For example Heineken is the 'head sponsor' of Hockey club Amsterdam, it's one of the 'partners' of Den Bosch, a 'supporter' of Kampong, yet merely one of the 'advertisers' of Bloemendaal. Another inventive way of phrasing is found on the website of Pinoké where Grolsh is called a 'silver sponsor', which is a category that is lower in the hierarchy than the head sponsors, but above the 'bronze sponsors'.

As we have seen earlier with the websites of soccer clubs the logo of sponsors is visible on virtually every part of the club websites, including those aimed at children. As the below picture shows, this is also happening on the website of hockey club Rotterdam. (Source: <http://www.hcr.nl/site>)



2.4 Volleyball

Of the top ten A league volleyball clubs only one is sponsored by an alcohol company, namely Taurus from Houten which is sponsored by Heineken. Interestingly the homepage of Taurus show a list of sponsors, but Heineken is not in this list. The user has to go to the full list of sponsors to discover that Heineken is one of their sponsors (Taurus - Overzicht van onze sponsors 2011). When the logo is clicked, the user is directed to a page of the Taurus website where information on the sponsor is given. In the case of Heineken, this information consists of address and contact information, visitor statistics of this page, as well as another picture of the logo (Informatie over een van onze sponsors 2011).

Club name	Alcohol sponsorship
Landstede Volleybal/VCZ	No
Prins/VCV	No
Webton Twente	No
AB Groningen/Lycurgus	No
BMC/SSS	No
Draisma Dynamo	No
Rivium Rotterdam Volleybal	No
Langhenkel Volley	No
Netwerk STV	No
Taurus	Heineken

Above is an overview of the top ten A League volleyball clubs of the 2009-2010 season, according to Wikipedia (wikipedia 2011) and the presence of alcohol sponsors on their websites.

2.5 Korfbal

The alcohol sponsorship found on the Dutch top ten Premier League (the Lotto Korfbal League) korfbal websites is done by the same company: Anheuser-Busch InBev. This constitutes half of the clubs out of this top ten; for an overview see the list on the right.

In the case of the korfbal clubs we found less examples of logo's of alcohol producers on the club websites. The website of Fortuna/MHIR has a banner of Inbev on the 'business club' page; this page also states that the included companies are the 'financial pillars' of the club (Fortuna/Tempus Business Club 2011). The other club website that has a logo of an alcohol brand is NIC/Alpha College. This is the only page of a korfbal club with the name of the sponsors on the homepage.

The other alcohol sponsors are found in sponsor lists. A remarkable finding of this study is that AKC Blauw Wit has a direct link to the Inbev website, which is entered without an age check. The same applies to the Fortuna/MHIR website, but in this case when clicking on Inbev in the sponsors list, you directly go to an info page about Inbev where there is also a clearly identifiable link to the Inbev website. The reason for linking to an alcohol producers website without age checking could be that Inbev profiles itself as a supplier of drinks, instead of a producer of drinks. This can be clearly seen on the club

website of DeetosSnel/Volhuis, where the sponsor Inbev is described as 'supplier of catering drinks' (Sponsoring > Partners 2011). However, on the same page Inbev is not mentioned as one of the 'supplier sponsors', but as a 'board sponsor'.

Club name	Alcohol sponsorship
Koog Zandijk	No
Dalto	No
Fortuna/MHIR	Inbev
PKC/Lukassenboer	No
DOS'46	No
TOP/Wereldtickets.nl	Dommelsch (by Anheuser-Busch InBev)
Nic./Alfa-college	Dommelsch (by Anheuser-Busch InBev)
Blauw-Wit/HavenFD	Jupiler (by Anheuser-Busch InBev)
OVVO/De Kroon	No
DeetosSnel/Volhuis	Inbev

Above is an overview of the top ten A League korfbal clubs of the 2009-2010 season, according to Wikipedia (wikipedia 2011), and the presence of alcohol sponsors on their websites.

3. Conclusions

Of the fifty sports club websites that were visited for this report 24 (48%) stated that the clubs are sponsored by alcohol producers. The way that these sponsorship deals are executed varies wildly between the selected sports branches and in some cases even between clubs of the same sports.

The fact that a large brewery like Heineken uses different sports to profile their different brands is remarkable. For example the Heineken brand itself, which is branded as a premium brand, is strongly connected to elite sports like field Hockey (by sponsoring half of the top ten Premier League clubs) and sailing (the Heineken Regatta). Heinekens Amstel brand however is tied just as strongly to folk sports like soccer (by sponsoring half of the top ten Premier League clubs).

Another interesting finding is the differences in the naming of the sponsorship deals. Whether the alcohol producers are called 'partner', 'star sponsor', 'silver sponsor', 'business sponsor', or 'head sponsor', in virtually all cases they are considered as partners, which implies mutual benefits. However, as the website of korfbal club DeetosSnel/Volhuis shows it can be unclear to outsiders what role the alcohol producers actually play within the club.

Lastly it was very interesting to see the many different ways sports sponsorship is used to promote alcohol brands, especially on the websites of the soccer clubs. Yet, this study has only focused on the websites of the clubs, while in practice the ways in which marketing can be carried out is nearly limitless (billboards next to the field or in stadiums, promotional items, naming of stadiums etc.) And it is possible that not every form of alcohol marketing through sponsorship is reported on the club websites. Inside the club canteens and on the sidelines of the sports fields there may be more alcohol marketing going on, however this lays beyond the scope of this research and thus remains to be a speculation.

Longitudinal studies have shown that particularly a high exposure to alcohol advertising contributes to a higher level of alcohol consumption and an earlier starting age of drinking (Anderson, Bruijn and Angus, 2009) (the Science Group, 2009).

Literature shows that alcohol sponsoring of sports clubs is related to excessive drinking of sports people (O'Brien, Miller, et al., 2011) (O'Brien en Kypri, Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking among sportspeople, 2008). This means that the strong relation of many important and influential sports clubs on the one hand and the alcohol industry on the other does more harm than good.

In 2011 we saw an example of a grass roots resistance to alcohol sponsorship of sports clubs. Utrecht sports club Kampong appeared in the news because parents of two of their child members successfully sued Heineken for their brand advertisements on the side of the field (Vader: Haal bierreclame weg, 2010). According to the parents the advertisements violated the alcohol industry's own code of conduct. Article 21 of the 'Advertising code for alcoholic beverages' states that alcohol marketing may not target an audience which consists for more than 25% of minors. The membership

of Kampong consists of 1500 youth members, which comprises a third of the total club membership (Vader: Haal bierreclame weg, 2010). For the soccer and field hockey sections of the club, the youth members comprise even half of the membership. Therefore Heineken was ordered to remove the billboards.

Heineken has accepted the verdict which may have ramifications for many other sports clubs (Heineken moet bierreclame bij Kampong verwijderen, 2010).

In reaction to the negative attention that has recently centered on sports sponsorship by alcohol producers, the industry has started a charm offensive where sports sponsorship is portrayed as a helpless victim of the 'never ending crusade' of pressure groups (Currie 2010). Alcohol itself is called a 'vulnerable product group', threatened by 'lobbying groups' as well as the 'EU and its ability to enforce legislation across several territories' (Currie, 2010).

4. Recommendations

Alcohol consumption is a causal factor in more than 60 different diseases (Room, Babor and Rehm, 2005). The more one drinks, the greater the risk of health damage. Yet these health risks can present themselves even from consuming low dosages (Anderson en Baumberg, Alcohol in Europe, 2006). This makes the intensive sponsorship relations of the main Dutch alcohol producers and sports that are attractive for millions of youngsters even more questionable.

In the best case alcohol sports sponsoring should be restricted such as is the case in France, Norway and recently Turkey.

The French example shows that such a ban will not threaten the further existence of sports, sports clubs and sports events. With their alcohol sponsorship and advertisement ban in place, France still succeeded in hosting the 1998 FIFA World Cup and currently hosts the international Heineken Rugby competition, renamed the H-Cup.

And in case governments fear the survival of sports and sporting clubs they can use a part of the excise duty from alcohol sales to replace the funding of the alcohol industry sponsors (O'Brien, Miller, et al., 2011).

5. Summary

While evidence is mounting that sports sponsorship by alcohol producers affects the drinking behavior of sportspeople (O'Brien, Miller, et al. 2011) regulations concerning sports sponsorship are rare and largely ineffective (Hastings, O., et al. 2010) (Hastings and Sheron 2011). This is a problematic development because alcohol is getting connected to the healthy image of sports and sport clubs and mayor sports events reach a large group of minors.

This report offers an overview of alcohol industry sports sponsorship on the websites of the top ten premier league sports clubs of the five most popular Dutch team sports. Since results of the analysis highly differ between the five selected sports, findings are presented by sport:

Soccer:

The top 10 clubs are all sponsored by alcohol producers. It seems that all the larger beer companies in the Netherlands have found a club to sponsor. Not only are the alcohol companies heavily promoted on the clubs' websites, the alcohol producers use the soccer clubs as a marketing tool to advertise their product in various ways. They organize events together with fans and with the club, they create promotional items in which the beer brand and the club are connected, and they even create special 'club' beer cans that are available in the stores (within limited editions).

Basketball:

Only the Champion of the Basketball League (Eclipse Jet) is sponsored by an alcohol producer (Jupiler by Inbev). Other teams are mostly sponsored by local companies.

Field Hockey:

Top hockey Clubs are often sponsored by alcohol producers. Besides sponsoring the national Hockey team, five out of ten top clubs (in the Rabo Hoofdklasse) are sponsored by Heineken. Additionally, one is sponsored by Bavaria and one by Grolsch. Heineken likes to profile itself as a 'premium brand'; they apparently would like to be associated with 'an elite sport' as hockey.

Volleyball:

Volleyball clubs are mostly sponsored by local companies: only one out of the top ten is sponsored by an alcohol producer (Taurus by Heineken).

Korfbal:

All Korfbal Clubs that are sponsored by an alcohol producer (five out of ten clubs in the A-League) are sponsored by InBev (Dommelsch, Jupiler, InBev).

This report gives an overview of the most important sponsors of the most popular sports clubs in the Netherlands. It also gives some insight into the ways the sponsors shape their contribution to these sports.

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