

# FACT SHEET

## Sport sponsorship in Denmark Results from the AMMIE Project

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### **Introduction**

Sport-related alcohol advertising and promotion expenditures for European countries are not publicly available. However, we do know that European sport sponsorship by the alcohol industry in 1999 was approximated to be 168 million US dollars. This made it the industry with the second largest amount of European sports sponsorship expenses, second only to both manufacturers of cars and sports clothing (1). We also know that in the US roughly 60 percent of the alcohol industry's marketing expenditure is spent on sport related advertising and sponsorship (2). These figures are concerning when considering that recent studies provide evidence that alcohol industry sponsorship is associated with more hazardous drinking in sportspeople compared to non-alcohol sponsorship (3, 4). Additionally, the sponsoring of big sports events by alcohol producers leads to many minors getting exposed to alcohol marketing (5). Owing to a lack of research into the effects of sports sponsorship it is unclear how the alcohol industry's sponsorship of both professional and amateur sports clubs impacts drinking behaviours. To give an accurate idea of sport sponsorship in top Danish sport clubs we have chosen the 5 most practiced team sports. Consequently we have gathered a list of 50 clubs (10 for each sport). The criterion for the sport clubs to be included is a top 10 position in their respective leagues. The goal was to discover if these clubs are sponsored by alcohol producers and how visible the alcohol brands are on their websites. While this research is not scientific, this small systematic monitoring exercise underlines the importance of this subject by showing that in most countries sports sponsorship is highly prevalent in various branches of premier league sports.

### **Recent literature on alcohol marketing and alcohol brands sports sponsorship**

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 (6). These findings are supported by two other systematic reviews (7) (8).

When it comes to exposure to alcohol industry marketing through televised sports events and its effects on drinking behaviour, there is less literature available. The impact study by Collins et al finds evidence that watching sports programs with many alcohol advertisements, raises the likelihood of the viewer drinking alcohol (9). Another study found that the frequency of drinking amongst drinkers during the previous 12 months can be extrapolated by exposure to beer concession stands at sports and music events (10).

Furthermore, 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 (4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). Additionally, it has been shown that levels of heavy episodic drinking have increased among young people, especially amongst sororities, fraternities and athletes in the USA and the UK (17). 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 (3).

### **Danish regulations on sport sponsorship**

In Denmark alcohol marketing is regulated in self-regulation codes and two statutory regulations which all restrict the content. In Danish law sport sponsoring by alcohol producers is not explicitly determined. In the non-statutory code it is written: sponsoring a sport-event is allowed if it is executed according to the Code. The code was revised in 2010. The revision was sold in all media as a tightening, but in reality it wasn't. For instance a crucial article as the prohibition of linking alcohol with sport is now much weaker.

### **Sponsoring of top clubs by alcohol brands**

In Denmark sports sponsorship has developed greatly over the last decade. The Danish market for sports sponsorship peaked in 2008 with DKK 1.248 mio. ~ to € 166 mio.

Since 1995 there has been an increase of 271%, which means the figure almost quadrupled in 2008.

### Football

Seven of the top ten premier league football clubs are sponsored by breweries. Carlsberg was sponsor of three football clubs in the Danish 'SAS League', in august 2010. Royal Unibrew sponsored an additional three clubs, while two clubs were also sponsored by Wine retailers. The type of sponsorship varies from main sponsorships, co-sponsorships, gold-sponsorship etc. The sponsors logo's are clearly visible on the clubs homepage and on virtually every subpage. For instance all 75 subpages of the FC Copenhagen webpage feature the slogan 'Carlsberg – Part of the Game'. Ten of these pages are more or less directed towards children.



Part of the Familietribune site on the FC Copenhagen website.

Furthermore, most of the websites feature a clickable logo of the alcohol sponsor, which leads to the producers website.

Additionally, an inventory of 20 randomly selected amateur clubs showed Carlsberg as sponsor of three amateur clubs.

### Handball

The analysis of Danish premier league handball clubs revealed one club (Bjerringbro-Silkeborg) to be sponsored by an alcohol producer (Carlsberg).

An analysis of the website of 20 randomly selected amateur clubs found one club sponsored by a brewery (Royal Unibrew) and one by a wine producer.

### Basketball

One of the top ten premier league basketball clubs (Bakken Bears) was sponsored by Hagelquist Wines. Additionally, one club was sponsored by Carlsberg Sports, a non-alcoholic soda which even had a club tournament named after it.

An analysis of the website of 20 randomly selected amateur clubs found one club (Falcon Basketball) which was funded by the Tuborg-Fund.

### Volleyball

One of the top ten premier league volleyball clubs (Holte IF Volleyball) was sponsored by Holte Wine Depot.

None of the 20 randomly selected amateur clubs is sponsored by an alcohol brand.

### Cycling

None of the top ten premier league cycling clubs are sponsored by an alcohol brand. Additionally no alcohol sponsors were found on the websites of 20 randomly selected amateur clubs.

### Conclusions

In Denmark sport sponsorship by the alcohol industry is mainly focused on football clubs. Carlsberg is the top sponsor, Royal Unibrew second. Alcohol industry sport sponsorship is not very widespread in other popular sports, even though the industry does sponsor sport events in clubs without being the head sponsor.

The result from random findings in amateur clubs shows a minor appearance of the alcohol industry.

There are two important recommendations to be made: a) In Danish Law sport sponsoring by the alcohol industry is not explicitly determined. For this reason a statutory regulation is recommended, keeping sport and alcohol marketing separated; b) such a regulation should include clear rules that protect children and youngsters against the harmful influences of sport sponsoring.

AMMIE (Alcohol Marketing Monitoring in Europe) is a project of NGOs from five EU countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands). The project (2009-2011) was co-funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy (STAP). The five NGO's monitored systematically alcohol advertising practices in 2010. Also young people were involved in this project.

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