

# FACT SHEET

## Sport sponsorship in Germany 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 German 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).

### German regulations on sport sponsorship

In Germany the *non-statutory* "Code of Conduct on Commercial Communication for Alcoholic Beverages" of the German Advertising Council specifically refers to the sport sponsorship of alcoholic producers. It underlines that "commercial communication for alcoholic beverages shall neither be shown on jerseys worn by sports teams comprised by minors nor be conveyed in advertising or sponsoring campaigns that are directly related to minors". It also stresses that "alcohol advertisement shall not show athletes drinking or promoting drinking".

Violating these rules has no severe consequences for the advertising/ sponsoring companies. When a marketing activity is in breach with the Code, the advertising/ sponsoring company is prompted to change

the advertisement/ sponsoring strategy. If this demand is not met, an official rebuke follows which is used as a special marketing strategy of the respective product.

In German Law sport sponsoring by alcoholic producers is not explicitly determined. The "Protection of Young Persons Act" and the "Interstate Treaty on the protection of Minors in Broadcasting and in Telemedia" generally refer to alcohol advertising and thus also affects sport sponsoring of alcoholic beverages. The "Interstate Treaty on the protection of Minors in Broadcasting and in Telemedia" underlines that "advertising for alcoholic beverages must neither be directed toward children and adolescents nor show them drinking alcoholic beverages"

**Sponsoring of top clubs by alcohol brands**

In Germany sport sponsorship has become a dominating marketing tool during the last years. In 2009 around 2.6 Billion Euros were spent in the field of sport sponsorship. This represents an increase of 73,3% compared to 2000 (Sponsor Visions 2009, quoted after Zimmermann 2009). However, the proportion of sport sponsorship by alcohol producers is not available within German literature.

**Football**

All of the top ten premier league football clubs are at least sponsored by one German beer producer. Four clubs are moreover funded by sparkling wine or spirit brands.

The type of sponsorship varies from co-sponsorships, stadium sponsorships, premium partnerships, champions, classics, exclusives and service partnerships. It is striking that for most of the websites the sponsorship is just specified by a logo of the recent alcoholic producer or a link which leads directly to the website of the sponsors. Information about the content and the quantity of sponsorship by the alcohol industry is hardly available within the club's internet presence.



Part of the Brinkhoff's No.1 homepage, clearly identifying the brewer with sponsored football club Borussia Dortmund.

Many alcohol producers however, rely on more than just a logo on the site. For instance FC Bayern München's sponsor Paulaner established the 'Paulaner Hall of Fan' inside the football stadium. This hall provides an overview of more than 50 fan clubs of Bayern München. For every new fan club which is accepted, Paulaner endows amongst other things hundreds of vouchers for beer beverages. Another example is FC Schalke 04, which is sponsored by Veltins. This is made apparent by the name of their stadium (Veltins Arena) and the fact that they exclusively serve beer from Veltins.

**Handball**

The analysis of German premier league handball clubs revealed all top ten clubs to be sponsored by beer brewers. Seven clubs describe the type of sponsorship as a co-sponsorship, a premium partnership, a catering/ service or a business partnership. Three handball websites also indicate alcohol producers as a main sponsor or rather a jersey sponsor.

Within the majority of the itemized websites the sponsorship is specified by a logo or a link which leads to the sponsor's internet presence. Information about the content and the quantity of sponsorship is hardly available. Sometimes photos of the team or handball games reveal perimeter advertising and tricot sponsoring.

Whereas the sponsorship of football clubs is significantly stressed within the websites of the alcohol producers, the endorsement of handball teams is rarely mentioned.

**Volleyball**

The monitoring process reveals that six of the ten analysed top teams are funded by alcohol producers. Contrary to the sponsors of the top football and handball clubs these are nearly all funded by local companies

marketing and selling their products just within the greater region of the clubs.

The sponsorship is generally specified by a logo and a link to the sponsor's internet presence. Neither the websites of the respective clubs nor the internet presences of the sponsoring company reveal detailed information about the content and the quantity of the sponsorship. As with the examined websites of handball clubs photos of sportive events offer clues to the nature of the sponsorship.

### **Basketball**

Seven of the top ten premier league basketball clubs are funded by at least one German alcohol producer. The majority of the sponsors belongs to the beer brewing industry (the number one club is even sponsored by four different brewers); one club is supported by a sparkling wine brand. The websites of the clubs as well as the internet presence of the alcohol producers hardly reveal the quantity of the respective endorsement. Within some websites photos give clues about the nature of the sponsorship.

### **Hockey**

Three of the observed top ten premier league clubs are sponsored by the alcohol industry. On their websites the sponsorship is indicated by a logo or a link to the sponsor's internet presence. But neither the websites of the clubs nor the internet presences of the sponsoring company reveal detailed information about the content and the quantity of the sponsorship.

### **Conclusions**

This analysis confirms the statement that alcohol industry sports sponsorship is widespread within the German sport landscape. 36 in 50 premier league sport clubs were funded by alcohol producers. All the analyzed football and handball clubs are sponsored by at least one alcohol producer. All are sponsored by a brewery. Three breweries even function as main sponsors or shirt sponsors within teams of the German handball league. This commitment of the alcohol industry to German football and handball is apparently due to the fact that both sports are highly represented in German media reporting.

There are two important recommendations to be made: a) In German 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. In this context, i.e. a general ban on jersey advertisement would be appropriate.

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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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