

The extent, nature, and frequency of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby union in Scotland

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Executive summary

Introduction

Sponsorship of professional* sports teams, organisations, and events provides a highly effective, high-profile, and high-reach platform for alcohol companies to promote their products and brands. To date, little is known about the extent and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland. In this report, we examine: (1) to what extent, if at all, professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland are sponsored by alcohol companies; (2) what marketing activities are used to promote partnerships between sports teams and alcohol companies; and (3) what is the frequency and nature of alcohol marketing references in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union in Scotland.

Methods

A three-stage mixed-method study was conducted. The first stage comprised an open source audit of the official sponsors or partners of football teams in the Scottish Premier League, Scottish Championship, and Scottish Women's Premier League; two professional rugby union teams; Scottish Rugby; and the Scottish Football Association (data were collected in 2018/2019). The second stage comprised in-depth qualitative case studies of how alcohol sponsorship relations were promoted by four teams (three football, one rugby union) at different levels of the sporting hierarchy (Scottish Premier League, Scottish Championship, Scottish League Two, and club-level rugby union) (data were collected in 2018/19). The third stage was a frequency analysis of alcohol marketing references in seven televised broadcasts of professional sport in Scotland from 2018/2019, including a live Scottish Premier League match, live Scottish Cup final, highlights of Scottish Premier League matches, highlights of international football, and a live international rugby union match.

Key findings

What is the extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby union in Scotland?

- In the audit, all three rugby union teams/organisations had multiple alcohol producers or distributors as official sponsors or partners. Almost a third of the football teams/organisations had at least one alcohol producer or distributor as a sponsor or partner in the 2018/2019 season.

* We note that a number of the teams in the lower leagues of the Scottish Professional Football League and the Scottish Women's Premier League are not professional. However, for the purposes of this report, the term professional is used throughout.

- In the audit, alcohol producers or distributors represented less than one-in-ten of the main sponsors or partners recorded. Sponsorship also came from a diverse and varied range of other companies, ranging from construction and building firms to IT and digital services. Due to a lack of publicly available information, however, it was not possible to know the total financial contribution of alcohol sponsors to each club, or how this compared to sponsorship from other sources.
- Among football teams, alcohol sponsorship appeared to be more prevalent among teams in the Scottish Premier League compared to Scottish Championship or Scottish Women's Premier League. For women's teams, there was a grey area for some football clubs where it was not clear whether the sponsors for the male teams – which contain alcohol companies – were independent of the women's teams.
- Both the audit and case studies reported sponsorship by companies from the hospitality sector, such as pubs, bars, and restaurants. Although distinct from alcohol producers or distributors, we acknowledge that these are on-trade premises which do also sell alcohol.

What activities are used to promote sponsorship relations between alcohol producers or distributors and professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland?

- When alcohol sponsorship was present, the four case studies demonstrated that these relationships are promoted in a variety of sophisticated ways. This included, but was not limited to: alcohol brand logos on match strips; advertising at various locations inside and outside the stadiums; exclusive 'pourage rights' within the stadiums and fan zones; limited edition products that featured the names of teams and/or their achievements; a presence on official social media channels (e.g. Facebook and Twitter); and players and/or managers featuring in adverts.
- One case study reported limited evidence of alcohol sponsorship activity, which was perhaps due to the smaller size of the club involved (Scottish League 2). This trend is also consistent with the audit of official sponsors or partners, where fewer alcohol sponsors were recorded among teams from the lower leagues. Where sponsorship did exist for this lower-league side, it was limited to advertisements within the stadium for local on-trade premises (e.g. pitch-side adverts for a pub or hotel), as opposed to large national or multi-national alcohol brands being promoted in a multitude of ways.

What is the frequency and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union in Scotland?

- Sponsorship by alcohol companies achieved a high level of exposure in the television broadcasts analysed for this study. For football, there was an alcohol marketing reference approximately once every 98 seconds in the live Scottish Premier League match (0.61 references per-minute), once every 71 seconds in the live Scottish Cup Final (0.84 references per-minute) and at least once every 57 seconds during highlights of Scottish Premier League football (1.05 references per-minute). There were no references in the international football matches analysed in this study.
- Compared to football, alcohol marketing references were more frequent in the television broadcasts of rugby union analysed for this study. Specifically, there was an alcohol reference approximately once every 15 seconds in the live Six Nations rugby match between Scotland and England (3.97 references per-minute). We also attempted to quantify alcohol marketing references during a Scottish club-level rugby union match (Edinburgh versus Glasgow Warriors in the Guinness Pro14), but the volume of references present meant that it was unfeasible to analyse using our existing codebook.
- Most alcohol marketing references appeared in prominent places (e.g. pitch-side advertising) and at points when most people would be likely to be watching (i.e. during the match action as opposed to pre-match build up or post-match discussion). Examples included static and electronic pitch-side advertising and sponsorship logos on the players' shirts, both of which were visible for large parts of the match action.
- Almost all alcohol marketing references provided explicit promotion of a brand, particularly through the use of brand logos and slogans.

1. Introduction

Sponsorship of professional sports teams, organisations, and events provides a highly effective, high-profile, and high-reach platform for alcohol companies to promote their products and brands. To date, little is known about the extent and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland. In this report, we examine: (1) to what extent, if at all, professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland are sponsored by alcohol companies; (2) what marketing activities are used to promote partnerships between sports teams and alcohol companies; and (3) what is the frequency and nature of alcohol marketing references in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union in Scotland.

1.1. Alcohol marketing and sport sponsorship

Alcohol marketing is fundamentally important to alcohol producers and distributors. It represents the primary means of communicating with consumers, it can help build market share over competitors, it can directly encourage sales, and it can help to increase the salience of products among new consumers (Critchlow et al., 2019; Maani Hesarri et al. 2019). Alcohol marketing is best understood as a sophisticated and multi-layered 'marketing mix' which appears at all stages of the consumer decision-making process (British Medical Association, 2009). This includes mass media and social media advertising to increase the visibility of products, salient branding to increase the attractiveness and perceived social appeal of products, point-of-sale promotion and price offers to stimulate purchases, and packaging or product designs that enhance the consumption experience. A full account of marketing opportunities, strategies, and influence is provided in a previous report by Alcohol Focus Scotland (2017).

In the United Kingdom (UK), over three quarters of 11-19 year olds recall seeing at least one alcohol marketing activity in the past month, the majority report seeing at least 32 instances of alcohol marketing in the past month (equating to approximately once per day), and almost a fifth own alcohol branded merchandise (Critchlow et al., 2019). In turn, awareness of alcohol marketing is associated with increased consumption and likelihood of higher-risk drinking in current drinkers, and owning alcohol merchandise (e.g. sports shirts with brand logos) is associated with increased susceptibility to drink among never-drinkers (Critchlow et al., 2019; Gordon et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2011). There is comparatively less research on how alcohol marketing reaches and influences adults (Meier, 2011). Nevertheless, the average number of units consumed by adults in Scotland was 12.5 units in 2018, with a quarter of adults consuming at hazardous or harmful levels (Scottish Government, 2018). Alcohol marketing

will have influenced all of these drinkers at some point in their decision to consume, and they therefore also remain an important population for marketing research.

Within the alcohol marketing mix, sport sponsorship warrants particular attention for three reasons. First, sport sponsorship enables alcohol brands to capitalise on the existing appeal and emotional connections that consumers have with sports teams and competitions, thereby increasing the brand's visibility and salience (Hastings et al., 2009; Purves, 2017a). Second, team sponsorship can help increase the efficacy and appeal of other marketing activities, for example limited edition packaging or products, featuring players from the sponsored teams in television adverts or social media marketing, and competitions offering exclusive team-themed prizes (Alcohol Action Ireland, 2015). Third, sponsorship provides alcohol brands with a high-profile opportunity to reach larger and more captive audiences than may be possible through other marketing activities (e.g. print adverts or social media). In Scotland, for example, television viewing figures for Glasgow derbies (between Celtic and Rangers) and international rugby union and football matches involving Scotland number in the millions (Bartlett, 2019; BBC Sport, 2015; Jackson, 2019). This is in addition to the tens of thousands who already attend the matches in person on a frequent basis (BBC Sport, 2019).

There is an established international evidence base which demonstrates that sports teams and organisations are attractive to, and used by, alcohol companies to market their products and brands. Belt and colleagues (2014), for example, found that the top 75 alcohol brands consumed by underage drinkers in the USA had 945 sponsorship relations, with sports the most prevalent category (compared to arts/entertainment and other groups). Similarly, Macniven and colleagues (2015) assessed sponsorship relations for 53 national and state sports organisations in Australia, and found 79 relations linked to alcohol companies, with the prevalence highest within rugby union and Australian Football. Similar results are reported elsewhere, including for youth sports teams (Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2011; Maher et al., 2006; Sartori et al., 2018). Research also supports that alcohol brands achieve a high frequency of exposure through sport sponsorship activities. Purves and colleagues (2017a; 2017b), for example, found more than 100 alcohol marketing references during broadcasts of the UEFA EURO 2016 football tournament – of which Carlsberg were an official sponsor – with most references appearing in highly visible locations (e.g. pitch borders during the match play). For the UK broadcasts, an alcohol marketing reference appeared, on average, once every 92 seconds. A high level of alcohol marketing references has also been reported for English club football (Graham & Adams et al., 2014) and broadcasts of international sports tournaments (Adams et al., 2014; Alcohol Concern, 2014; Noel et al., 2017a).

Research supports that alcohol sport sponsorship does reach and influence consumers, including young people. For example, a recent survey found that almost a third of 11-19 years old in the UK recalled seeing alcohol sponsorship for sports or events at least weekly, while one-in-twenty recalled seeing alcohol sponsorship daily or almost daily (Critchlow et al., 2019). Research also shows that young people are able to recall specific brands that they have seen sponsoring sporting events or teams (Houghton et al., 2014). A systematic review has also found an association between exposure to alcohol sport sponsorship and increased consumption, including among young people and adult sportspersons (Brown, 2016).

1.2. Alcohol sport sponsorship and regulation in Scotland

To date, only one study has specifically examined the extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland. This 2012 study, a survey with alcohol industry representatives, reported 43 sponsorship relationships in Scotland (which exceeded £5,000 in value), almost half of which related to sporting events, clubs, or teams (Davidson et al., 2012). There is also anecdotal evidence of a long history between alcohol companies and Scottish sport. Tennent's have reportedly been involved in Scottish football for over 40 years, sponsoring the Scottish Football Association's Challenge Cup competition from 1989 to 2007 and partnering with the Scottish national team as the 'Official Beer Partner' from 2015 to 2018 (Donohue, 2006; Forsyth, 2015). The earliest examples of alcohol shirt sponsorship in club-level Scottish football can be traced back to 1987 when both Rangers and Dundee United announced sponsorship deals with McEwan's Lager and Belhaven, respectively. McEwan's Lager were Rangers' main shirt sponsor from 1987 to 1999 and this was followed by sponsorship deals with Carling (2003-2010), Tennent's (2010-2013) and Blackthorn (2013-2014). From 2003 to 2010, Rangers and Celtic were both sponsored by Carling, a deal described as the biggest shirt sponsorship deal in Scottish football history. The original three year sponsorship deal, which covered both clubs, was extended in 2005 for a further five years resulting in a deal which was reportedly worth over £18 million (Farey-Jones, 2005).

In Scotland, there are currently no legislative restrictions on alcohol sport sponsorship. Sponsorship activities are instead self-regulated by the advertising and alcohol industry, with the most recent guidance published by industry-body The Portman Group in 2014. The current code indicates that all sport sponsorship relations must, among other stipulations: (1) include a recognisable commitment to promoting responsible alcohol use or diversionary community activities; (2) not sponsor teams or individuals under 18 years old, or where three quarters of the participants or audience are under 18 years old; (3) not place logos or slogans on merchandise which has a particular appeal to, or is intended for, those under 18 years old; (4)

not use images of people who are, or look, under 25 years old; and (5) not imply it is acceptable to consume alcohol before, or during, a sporting activity or suggest that alcohol enhances sporting performance or success. These code items mirror previous guidelines set out by the Scottish Government and Alcohol Industry Partnership (SGAIP, 2009). Wider evaluation evidence, however, has queried the extent to which self-regulatory codes are adhered to and effective (Noel et al., 2017b; Noel et al. 2017c; Alcohol Concern, 2018).

The relationship between alcohol and sports remains an inconsistent and contested issue in Scotland. Some governing bodies of football in Scotland, such as Scottish Women's Football for example, have repeatedly stated their intentions not to accept sponsorship from alcohol or gambling companies (BBC Sport, 2018a; Campbell, 2016). Their rationale is that doing so would be incompatible with their goals of promoting a healthy lifestyle among girls and women and that being a 'clean' sport is beneficial to their long-term growth and sustainability (Scottish Women's Football, 2019). Instead, they do receive sponsorship from Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems, a partnership of the Medical Royal Colleges and the Faculty of Public Health in Scotland to campaign for effective alcohol policy (Christie, 2019). The Scottish Football Association, however, – who oversee the overall game in Scotland, including the male and female international sides – have a partnership with alcohol producer Diageo to promote responsible drinking and reduce alcohol misuse through education (Scottish FA, 2018). There is also disparity in the approach to alcohol in different sports, as alcohol consumption is permitted at rugby union matches – including in view of the pitch – whereas it is not permitted at football matches (with the exception of hospitality areas).

1.3. Research objectives

There are several unresolved gaps in understanding of alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland that must be filled to inform any debate on current regulations or future change. These gaps include understanding the current extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland, what activities alcohol sponsorship actually entails, and understanding how often spectators may be exposed to alcohol marketing during live sport. In response, this report had three research objectives:

RO1: To examine the extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby union in Scotland.

RO2: To scope the different activities used to promote sponsorship relations between alcohol companies and professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland.

RO3: To investigate the frequency and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union matches in Scotland.

1.4. Study design

This report contains three interlinked studies, with each responding to one of the respective objectives. They combine to provide in-depth insight about the extent and nature of alcohol sponsorship among football and rugby teams and organisations in Scotland. The first study, presented in section two, is an open source audit of official sponsorship arrangements for a sample of football and rugby union teams and organisations in Scotland. The second study, detailed in section three, presents in-depth case studies which explore the different activities that alcohol sponsorship takes among professional football and rugby union in Scotland. The third study, presented in section four, is a frequency analysis of alcohol marketing references in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union matches broadcast in Scotland. For ease of reading and interpretation, the methods for each study are described in their respective sections.

2. An audit of the main sponsors or partners of professional football and rugby union teams/organisations in Scotland

2.1. Research objective

To examine the extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby union in Scotland (RO1).

2.2. Methods

2.2.1. Design and sample

We conducted an open source audit to examine the main sponsors or partners of a sample of professional football and rugby union teams/organisations in Scotland. For football, the audit included all teams in the male Scottish Premier League ($n=12$) and Scottish Championship ($n=10$), and the Scottish Football Association (responsible for the male and female national sides and the Scottish Cup) (Table 1). In this study, our intention was to only focus on professional football teams (e.g. not semi-professional or amateur). At the time of data collection, however, the majority of women's teams in Scotland were not classed as 'professional'.² To ensure this important group were still represented, we purposively sampled all teams in the Scottish Women's Premier League ($n=8$). For rugby union, we audited two professional clubs (Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors) and Scottish Rugby (responsible for the male and female international sides). Data were collected in March and April 2019, and relate to the 2018/2019 football season.

2.2.2. Defining main sponsors or club partners

In this study, we only focused on companies or organisations suggested to be 'main sponsors' or 'official partners'. It is possible for organisations to sponsor teams in other ways, such as sponsoring individual players or junior teams, being a match day sponsor, sponsoring the match ball, becoming a member of 'business clubs', and purchasing advertising space (e.g. around the pitch). Many of these additional sponsorship opportunities, however, are transient (i.e. the matchday sponsor may vary with every fixture) or were challenging to verify through open source data collection (i.e. it is not possible to see all pitch-side or stadium advertising online). It was also not possible to code all individual player sponsorship or sponsorship of junior or reserve teams, given the volume of information this would produce. As such, these

² Broadly defined as teams in which the staff (e.g. manager) and players are employed full-time by the football club, compared to semi-professional (e.g. staff and players only employed part-time) or amateur (e.g. staff and players participate voluntarily).

alternative sponsorship opportunities are not included in this study. Some insight towards the range and extent of sponsorship activities is reported in the case studies in section three.

2.2.3. Identifying and recording 'main sponsors' or 'official partners'

All details on the main sponsors or partners were collected through open source data collection, an approach which mirrors previous research (Belt et al., 2014; Macniven et al., 2015; Maher et al., 2006; Sartori et al., 2018). In almost all cases, sponsorship information was identified from the official website of each team or organisation (e.g. www.celticfc.net and www.rangers.co.uk). To standardise the information collected, the researchers principally searched for pages or information on the official websites described as 'our partners' and 'club sponsors' (or equivalent terms) (Figure 2.1). When no such page or details could be identified, the researchers recorded the details of organisations/companies displayed prominently on the official web pages, for example those listed clearly across the header and footer (Figure 2.2). For two of the women's football teams (Glasgow City FC and Stirling University), there were no official details on sponsorship on the websites, although it was evident that each club did have a sponsor logo embossed on their match shirts. As such, these sponsors were identified and coded using recent images of the teams in action, obtained through the websites and official social media accounts (Figure 2.3).

2.2.4. Information recorded about each sponsor or partner

For each sponsor, we coded which team they were associated with, the sport played (football vs. rugby union), the gender of team (male vs. female), and which league they played in (e.g. Scottish Championship). For each sponsor, we also captured information on the sponsor name and associated website. We classified sponsors into categories that broadly reflected their primary focus (e.g. construction, trade, and building contractor and alcohol producer or distributor). At the end of initial coding, the list of categories was reviewed and condensed into the 14 main categories used in this study ([see 2.3.2](#)). A second codebook item also captured specific detail on the main focus of each sponsor; for example, whether an organisation classed as 'motoring, distribution, and logistics' was a taxi firm or a car dealership, or whether an 'alcohol producer or distributor' was associated with beer or whisky. We note that there is often little information reported in the public domain about the total value of sponsorship deals, either for alcohol companies or other groups. Although some clubs issue press releases or website stories about new or renewed sponsorship arrangements, this is not done consistently across clubs or sponsors and may not provide all the necessary details (e.g. total value). Consequently, it was not possible to capture information regarding the financial contribution of each official sponsor or partner in this study.

2.2.5. Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were used to examine the total number of main sponsors/partners recorded for each club and how many sponsors and partners came from each category (including the number and proportion that were alcohol producers or distributors). Cross-tabulations were used to examine differences by sport type (rugby unions vs. football) and, within football, differences by which league the team played in (Scottish Premier League, Scottish Championship, and Scottish Women's Premier League).

2.3. Results

2.3.1. Number of sponsors and partners identified

Across the 34 teams and organisations audited, we identified 404 main sponsor or partner relationships. Eighty-nine of these related to the rugby teams or organisations and 315 related to the football teams or organisations (Table 2.1). For three teams (Hibernian, Motherwell, and Rangers) the audit suggested that female and male teams had the same sponsors – or there was at least no clear evidence of different sponsorship arrangements for the respective sides – and these teams were only coded once in the audit (see further discussion in [2.3.3](#)).

2.3.2. Type of main sponsors and partners, by sport

Overall, most of the main sponsors or partners identified were for construction, trade or building contractors (14%), general retail organisations (14%, e.g. such as sportswear manufacturers or shops), motoring, distribution or logistic companies (10%), and media, marketing, publishing or communications companies (10%) (Table 2.2). These four categories were also the most frequent for football teams/organisations. For rugby union teams/organisations, most of the main sponsor or partner relations were for general retail organisations (16%), alcohol producers and distributors (15%), healthcare, fitness, and wellbeing organisations (15%), finance and legal companies (10%), or companies providing utilities or services (10%).

Table 2.1. Teams audited, main sponsors or partners, and links to alcohol producers or distributors

Club	Audited	Sponsors identified	Number of Alcohol producers or distributors
Scottish Premier League			
<i>Aberdeen</i>	✓	18	0
<i>Celtic</i>	✓	19	3
<i>Dundee</i>	✓	10	0
<i>Hamilton Academical</i>	✓	19	1
<i>Heart of Midlothian</i>	✓	6	0
<i>Hibernian</i>	✓	17	2
<i>Kilmarnock</i>	✓	7	0
<i>Livingston</i>	✓	9	0
<i>Motherwell</i>	✓	16	2
<i>Rangers</i>	✓	10	1
<i>St. Johnstone</i>	✓	24	1
<i>St. Mirren</i>	✓	16	0
Scottish Championship			
<i>Alloa Athletic</i>	✓	15	1
<i>Ayr United</i>	✓	9	0
<i>Dundee United</i>	✓	9	2
<i>Dunfermline Athletic</i>	✓	6	0
<i>Falkirk</i>	✓	10	0
<i>Greenock Morton</i>	✓	11	0
<i>Inverness Caledonian Thistle</i>	✓	3	0
<i>Partick Thistle</i>	✓	13	1
<i>Queen of the South</i>	✓	5	0
<i>Ross County</i>	✓	8	0
Scottish Women's Premier League			
<i>Celtic</i>	✓	1	0
<i>Forfar Farmington</i>	✓	33	0
<i>Glasgow City</i>	✓	4	0
<i>Hibernian</i>	x ¹	-	-
<i>Motherwell</i>	x ¹	-	-
<i>Rangers</i>	x ¹	-	-
<i>Spartans</i>	✓	2	0
<i>Stirling University</i>	✓	1	0
Rugby union			
<i>Edinburgh Rugby</i>	✓	25	5
<i>Glasgow Warriors</i>	✓	33	4
Governing bodies			
<i>Scottish Football Association</i>	✓	14	0
<i>Scottish Rugby</i>	✓	31	4
Total	-	404	27

Notes:

¹ Audit suggested that the sponsors for these teams were the same as their male counterparts (i.e. overall club sponsorship) and thus they are not duplicated.

Table 2.2. Type of main sponsors or partners, overall and by sport.

Sponsor category	Sponsors from each category (%)		
	Overall	Rugby union	Football
Construction, trade, or contractors	14	6	17
General retail	14	16	13
Motoring, distribution or logistics	10	8	10
Media, marketing, publishing and comms.	10	3	12
Finance and legal	9	10	8
Utilities and services	7	10	6
Alcohol producer or distributor	7	15	4
Charity, administrative or not for profit	6	2	8
Healthcare, fitness, and wellbeing	6	15	4
Food and non-alcoholic drinks	5	8	4
Hospitality (e.g. hotels, restaurants)	4	3	4
Gambling	4	0	5
IT and digital services	2	2	2
Misc.	2	2	2

2.3.3. Sponsorship by alcohol producers or distributors, by sport type

Overall, 7% ($n=27$) of the sponsor or partner relationships identified were for alcohol producers or distributors (Table 2.2). The proportion of alcohol sponsors was higher for rugby union teams/organisations (15% of all sponsorship relationships) compared to football (4% of all sponsorship relationships). The alcohol sponsors identified included producers and distributors of beer, whisky, gin, cider, ginger beer, and champagne.

Nineteen of the teams or organisations audited (61%) had no sponsorship relation with an alcohol producer or distributor and twelve (39%) did (Table 1). All three of the rugby union teams/organisations audited had at least one alcohol sponsor. For two of the rugby union teams/organisations, four alcohol sponsors were identified (e.g. Glasgow Warriors had sponsorship from Eden Mill, Tennent's, The Famous Grouse and Crabbie's). For the remaining team, five alcohol sponsors were identified (Edinburgh Rugby sponsored by Guinness [reported as part of their participation in the Pro14 tournament], Tennent's, Crabbie's, Eden Mill, and Glen Moray).

Around a third (32%; $n=9/28$)³ of the football teams/organisations audited had sponsorship by an alcohol producer or distributor. For five teams, one alcohol sponsor was identified (e.g. Rangers sponsored by Liverpool Gin). For three teams, two alcohol sponsors were identified

³ Although 31 football teams were considered, we discounted three as it was unclear if the sponsors were different for the male and female teams.

(e.g. Hibernian sponsored by Eden Mill and Carling). For one team, three alcohol sponsors were identified (Celtic sponsored by Magners, Eden Mill, and Pol Roger [a Champagne brand]). When analysed by league, half of the teams in the male Scottish Premier League (50%; $n=6$) and approximately a third of teams in the Scottish Championship had at least one alcohol sponsor (30%; $n=3$).

For most teams in the Scottish Women's Premier League, we did not record any evidence of alcohol sponsors or partners (Table 2.2). There were, however, three teams where it was unclear whether the women's team had different sponsors to their male counterparts; both teams appeared to have a single website which only listed one set of sponsors. In all three cases (Rangers, Motherwell and Hibernian) the male teams were found to have an alcohol sponsor. It not clear whether these alcohol producers and distributors should be considered sponsors of the male team only, or whether they also support the female teams.

Four percent of sponsorship relations were classed as relating to the 'hospitality' industry, with the proportion relatively even for rugby union and football teams (Table 2.2). This category included bars (e.g. Snug Bar in Dundee), restaurants (e.g. Tony Macaroni, Subway, or McDonald's), and hotels (e.g. Village Hotels). Although several of these were on-trade premises that sell alcohol, they were not coded as explicit alcohol sponsors in this study as their primary purpose (e.g. to provide hospitality services) was distinct from the primary sole focus of alcohol producers or distributors. Nevertheless, we note that of the 16 'hospitality' sponsors identified, 11 may also sell alcohol.⁴

⁴ For example, The Snug Bar is believed to sell alcohol whereas fast-food restaurants McDonald's and Subway are not.

3. Case studies of alcohol sport sponsorship activity in Scotland

3.1. Research objective

To scope the different activities used to promote sponsorship relations between alcohol producers or distributors and professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland (RO2).

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Design and Sample

We developed four in-depth case studies to illustrate how alcohol sponsorship relations for professional football and rugby union teams were promoted in Scotland. Case studies are an established approach to evaluate marketing activity and appeal (Brooks, 2010; Chester et al., 2010; Hastings et al., 2010). The case study teams were purposively chosen to reflect both rugby union and football. For football, the sample was purposively chosen to reflect different tiers of the football league (e.g. professional clubs in the Scottish Premier League and semi-professional clubs in the lower leagues). Where possible, and to respond to the research objectives, we purposively sampled teams known to have an alcohol producer or distributor as a sponsor. If there was more than one team to choose from, the researchers agreed which team was felt to have the highest profile and audience reach. The final sample included the top team in the Scottish Premier League (Celtic Football Club, Case Study A), a team from the Scottish Championship (Dundee United Football Club, Case Study B), and a team from Scottish League Two (Stirling Albion Football Club, Case Study C). For rugby union, a case study was developed for one of the professional teams (Edinburgh, Case Study D).

3.2.2. Data Collection

Data was gathered throughout the study period (May 2018 – June 2019) using a combination of open source data collection (i.e. publicly accessible records, social media pages and websites), grey literature (e.g. club annual reports or corporate documents) and site visits (e.g. to the stadium). For each team, examples of how they promote alcohol companies and brands was collected using screengrabs or photographs taken by the research team. Data gathered also included some information that was originally created before the study period began, but which was used or reproduced during study period. For example, some news stories on the team's websites or social media reproduced photos, images, and videos that had been captured or produced prior to May 2018. Nevertheless, as such information was pertinent to the study objectives, it is reported in the case studies.

3.2.3. Presenting case study data

For each case study team, the main sponsors and/or partners are summarised. Each sponsor or partnership with an alcohol producer or distributor is discussed for each team, and examples of their sponsorship activity are provided to illustrate how this relationship is promoted. Case Study C did not have an alcohol producer or distributor as an official sponsor or partner, so each of the team's main sponsors are discussed followed by examples of sponsorship or advertising which had an association with alcohol, including those which were classified in the audit as hospitality sponsors.

3.3. Case Study A – Celtic Football Club

Official Celtic FC Sponsors (According to CelticFC.net) in 2018/2019 season

- Dafabet - Main club sponsor (Online gambling)
- **Magners Irish Cider** - Back of shirt and official training kit sponsor (Cider brand)
- New Balance - Technical kit partner (Sportswear brand)
- Intelligent Car Leasing - Official car supplier (Car leasing company)
- Mr Green – Official Online Casino partner (Online gambling)
- Nirvana Europe – Official Travel Partner (Travel agency)
- Ladbrokes (Online gambling, gaming and bookmaker)
- **Eden Mill St Andrews** – Official gin partners (Distillery and Brewery)
- Coca-Cola and Powerade (Soft drinks/Sports drink)
- Primal Strength (Gym equipment)
- Science in Sport (Sports supplements and nutrition products)
- **Pol Roger** (Champagne producers)
- Sky Sports (Sports broadcaster)
- BT Sport (Sports broadcaster)
- VPZ (Vaping products)
- PES2019 (Football video game)
- Clyde 1 (Radio station)
- Indigo Communications (Business IT and communication company)
- Simple Group (Office equipment and services)

Magners sponsorship activity

Magners appeared on the back of the Celtic FC team shirt. This meant it was highly visible during football matches. In addition, the position of the Magners logo on the back of the shirt meant it was often visible in Celtic FC's publicity material when the club signed new players, when existing players extended their contracts, or when the shirt was used in photographs to promote events or partnerships. For example, when midfielder Ryan Christie signed a new three year contract, the player was photographed holding the strip with his name and '3 years' on the back. Both the Magners and Dafabet logos were visible in the picture. These images appeared in newspapers, on the club's official website and on their social media channels. Another example occurred in 2018 when Celtic FC joined the official partner roster of the football video game Pro Evolution Soccer (PES) (above left). This meant that digital versions of the Celtic FC players and Celtic Park stadium featured in the game. This partnership was announced on various social media channels and images featured the Celtic FC shirt with PES 19 as the player name and number. The Magners logo was still clearly visible as the back of shirt sponsor and the sponsor logos of Magners and Dafabet are clearly visible on the video game versions of the players.

Magners are Celtic FC's official training kit sponsor. This meant that their brand logo featured on the team's training kit, including shirts and training bibs. Images of the team in training were regularly used on the Club's website, in the Celtic FC magazine (Celtic View), in newspapers, and on television news reports. Social media accounts are updated daily and images of the team training are often used to build excitement and interest in the lead up to important fixtures or to update fans on how new signings are settling in before they make an appearance for the first team. Magners advertising also featured around Celtic FC's Lennoxtown training ground that was visible in images of the team training.

As an official club sponsor, Magners advertising featured in several locations throughout Celtic FC's stadium. This included: advertising around the pitch border; advertising around the players' entrance tunnel; advertising around the team and opposition dug-outs; on sponsor boards used in pre and post-match interviews; and billboard advertising on the exterior of the stadium (below).





Magners products were served in hospitality areas inside the stadium, where alcohol sales were permitted. During match days, Magners had a presence on branded glassware and signage throughout the hospitality areas (designated areas within the stadium where alcohol is permitted to be sold) at Celtic Park (left). Magners products were often available to fans who have purchased complimentary drink packages as part of match day hospitality packages or as part of specially organised fan events which took place on non-match days.

The Magners logo featured heavily in Celtic FC's social media communications on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, alongside other main sponsors New Balance and Dafabet. Examples of social media posts featuring sponsor logos included team line-ups on match days, announcements of new signings and goal alerts. Paid partnerships (a paid for branded advertisement) between Magners and Celtic FC on Facebook were often tied into specific matches, tournaments or events such as Halloween or Christmas.

Magners, alongside the other main club sponsors New Balance and Dafabet, featured on the cover of official matchday programmes which were available for sale at various locations inside and outside the stadium.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Celtic FC winning the European Cup, Magners released limited edition 'Lisbon Lions' packaging. This product proved to be highly popular and it was reported that Magners had to release more special edition packaging after the first run sold out. Celtic FC had a dedicated page on the Magners website which detailed their partnership.

Celtic FC's partnership with Magners has also meant that the football club was used to promote other events sponsored by Magners. For example, Magners were also the official sponsor of the Cheltenham Cup horseracing event. This event was promoted on Celtic FC's social media pages using images featuring the Celtic FC players and during a home match where the trophy was brought on to the pitch at half time. The Cheltenham Gold Cup event was also advertised on celticfc.net.

Celtic Park stadium also hosted the 2019 final of the Guinness Pro14 Rugby competition. Although Guinness are not one of Celtic FC's official sponsors, Celtic FC promoted this event

on their social media pages and outside the stadium on Celtic FC match days where fans were able pose for pictures beside the trophy and images of Guinness branding.

Eden Mill sponsorship activity

During the 2017/18 season, Eden Mill was the official back of shirt sponsor for the Celtic FC Women's team, who have Indigo Communications as their main shirt sponsor instead of Dafabet. Similar to the sponsorship activity of Magners above, this meant that the Eden Mill logo was visible during matches and featured in images when the team announced a new signing. This sponsor was seemingly removed for the 2018/19 season.

In 2017, to celebrate Celtic's unbeaten 2016/17 league season, Eden Mill released a limited edition 'Invincibles Gin'. The product came packaged in a limited edition bottle. To promote this product, Celtic FC players were invited to the Eden Mill distillery to create their own gin and a video featuring Celtic captain Scott Brown and defender Mikael Lustig featured on social media sites such as Vimeo and Facebook.

When Celtic won the 'Double Treble' in 2018, Eden Mill released a Limited Edition 'Double Treble Gin' and 'Double Treble Whisky' which was advertised across social media. These products were available to purchase via the Eden Mill website.

Free samples of Eden Mill gin were provided to fans at specially organised events held within the stadium. Eden Mill were the official sponsor of the Celtic FC Foundation's 2018 Golf Day. Golfers were given a complimentary gin and tonic during their round of golf and a pop up bar was located at one of the holes. Guests were also given the opportunity to take part in a tasting session with an Eden Mill Tasting Ambassador after the event.

Pol Roger Champagne sponsorship activity

Pol Roger is a champagne producer who provide Celtic FC with Champagne. Pol Roger has provided Celtic FC with champagne bottles to commemorate specific achievements such as winning seven titles in a row or for when a player wins the 'man of the match' award, an occasion when they are traditionally presented with a bottle of champagne. These images featured on Celtic FC's websites and social media pages.

3.4. Case Study B – Dundee United Football Club

Official Dundee United FC Sponsors (According to dundeetunitedfc.co.uk) in 2018/2019 season

- Utilita - Main club sponsor (Energy provider)
- Westend - Flooring specialists (Commercial and domestic flooring providers)
- **Carling** – Official beer partner (Beer and cider brand)
- **J.F. Kegs** – Wholesale drinks supplier (Keg and beverage supplier)
- Snug Bar (Local on-trade establishment)
- Mitre (Sports equipment manufacturer)
- Norman Jamieson (Lorry hire service)
- Sky Sports (Sports broadcaster)
- BT Sport (Sports broadcaster)

Carling sponsorship activity

Carling were the official beer partner of Dundee United FC. Carling's logo featured on Dundee United FC's official home and away kit shorts. This featured prominently during football matches and in images which featured the players in action. Carling's logo also featured on the home and away versions of the adult sized replica kit.

The partnership between Dundee United FC and Carling also granted the beer brand exclusive 'pourage rights' in hospitality areas of the stadium. This meant that Carling products were available to purchase on match-days and were provided as part of certain hospitality packages that provided complimentary alcoholic drinks.

Carling had pitch-side signage within Dundee United FC's Tannadice stadium where it was referred to as the 'Official beer partner of Dundee United FC'. The positioning of this signage meant that it was visible during televised highlights of matches played at Tannadice.

Carling also featured alongside other Dundee United FC sponsors on sponsor boards which were used for pre- and post-match interviews with the manager and players and which also featured frequently in Dundee United's social media activity. For example, Dundee United fans were able to purchase a personalised message from the Manager Robbie Neilson or striker Pavol Safranko which featured the sponsor boards in the background.

JF Kegs sponsorship activity

Similar to Celtic FC's relationship with Magners (detailed in Case Study A), JF Kegs appeared on the back of the Dundee United FC team shirt. This meant it was highly visible during football matches and in images of the Dundee United players in action (right). In addition, the position of the JF Kegs logo on the back of the shirt meant it was often visible in Dundee United FC's publicity materials when the club signed new players or announced a new manager. These images appeared in newspapers, on the club's official website and on their social media channels.

As part of Dundee United FC's partnership with JF Kegs, a local distillery produced a craft gin named 'Jaggi Gin' which was available to purchase from the Dundee United FC website. This product was also available to purchase from the stadium reception between the hours of 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. On match days, the product was also available to purchase within the hospitality suite, with fans able to collect their purchase at the end of the game. JF Kegs are described as Dundee United's 'wholesale drink supplier' which means they supply the bars and lounges within the stadium with alcoholic products.

As illustrated above, JF Kegs featured on sponsorship boards alongside Carling and the other official club sponsors. JF Kegs also featured on pitch-side advertising boards which were visible to fans who were in attendance at matches and to those watching televised games (right).



Other alcohol sponsorship activity

Although not listed as an official club sponsor on dundeefc.co.uk, Dundee Dry Gin, produced by James Keiller Estates, featured on advertising boards within Dundee United FC's Tannadice stadium.

In partnership with Dundee United FC, The Dundee Gin Co. produced a 'Tangerine' gin liqueur which is orange marmalade flavoured. This product was available to purchase on the Dundee United FC website. This product was also promoted via the club's official social media accounts. As with 'Jaggi Gin', described above, this product was also available to purchase at the stadium reception or within hospitality areas.

3.5. Case Study C – Stirling Albion Football Club

Official Stirling Albion Sponsors (According to stirlingalbionfc.co.uk) in 2018/2019 season

- Prudential – Main sponsors (Insurance firm)
- Dron & Dickson (Supply and maintenance of hazardous area electrical equipment)
- Hunter’s Executive Coaches (Local coach and bus company)
- Braehead Taxis Stirling (Local taxi firm)
- Allan Storrar Cars (Local car dealership)
- Stirling: Alive with Scotland (Local tourism initiative).

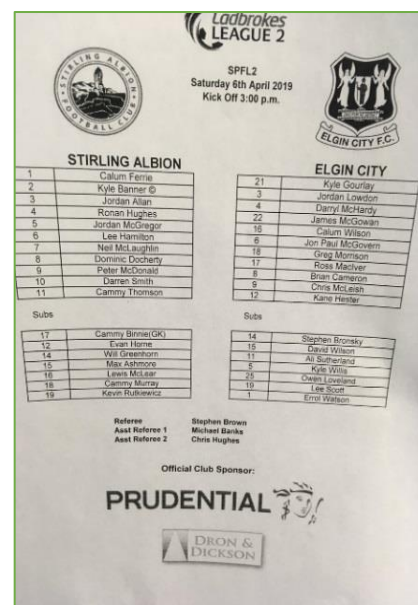
Types of sponsorship activity

Compared to the other three case studies, the professional football and rugby union clubs with a national or international profile and who are extensive users of digital and social media, sponsorship activities for Stirling Albion appeared to focus more on match-going activities.

Stirling Albion carried the name of their main sponsors, Prudential, on their match shirts (right). This insurance firm, who have a large office in the local area, have been long-term main sponsors of the club. Some of the club’s junior teams carried alternative shirt sponsors, such as Halliday Homes, a local estate agency.

There were other examples of promotion on match days. For example, main club sponsors Prudential and Dron & Dickson were included on team sheets at the club’s home games (right). Main sponsors Prudential were also included on the interview boards that the manager and players speak in front of before and after matches, in conjunction with the Stirling Albion club and Scottish Football League logos.

On match days, sponsorship was also visible through the advertising boards around the perimeter of the pitch and on other parts of the stadium structure (e.g. dugouts). In addition to the club’s main sponsors, examples of companies who had purchased advertising space included: Ogilvie (construction company), the Samaritans (charity), AG Barr (soft drinks producer), the Stirling Observer and Sunday Mail (newspapers), Morrisons Stirling (supermarket adjacent to the ground), Show Racism the Red Card (charity), Corrieri’s (an Italian café and pizzeria in Stirling), Ladbrokes (national bookmaker who sponsor the league),



Morrisons Jaguar (a local car dealership), Strathallan Pharmacy, Allanwater Café (local fish and chip shop), and Hill and Robb (a solicitors firm) (see below).



Stirling Albion also provided the opportunity to sponsor individual members of staff, for example first team footballers (below). According to latest details on the club website, sponsors included individual members of the public, supporter's organisations, and a range of local businesses (e.g. heating engineers, newsagents, gyms, cleaning services, and a joinery company).

Sponsors linked to alcohol

At Stirling Albion, there were no 'official' sponsorship relations with alcohol producers or distributors. There were, however, three hospitality sponsors that were associated with alcohol, all of which were local on-trade premises. The first was a local pub and brewery, the



Allanwater Brewhouse, who had purchased an advertising board at the stadium (right). The advertising hoarding was positioned adjacent to one of the penalty boxes and featured on the side of the pitch opposite the main stand and thus had reasonable visibility during the match.



The second hospitality sponsor, which could be considered to have an association with alcohol, was a local hotel which also contains a bar and restaurant, The Golden Lion Hotel. This sponsor also had a pitch-side advert (left), which featured behind the goal. It was also identified that this hotel hosted the club's annual awards dinner, and thus also received promotion around this event for example on social media. It is noted, that this is only a

tangential link to alcohol (e.g. not a producer, distributor or specific retailer).

The final hospitality sponsor, which could be considered to have an association with alcohol, was a local pub and restaurant based in nearby Dunblane, the Village Inn. The on-trade premises was the recorded as the current sponsor of Stirling Albion TV a YouTube channel that posted match highlights and interviews with players and staff.

3.6. Case Study D – Edinburgh Rugby

Official Edinburgh Rugby Sponsors (According to edinburghrugby.com) in 2018/2019

- Principal and Prosper – Principal partners (Financial advisory)
- Macron – Principal partners (Technical sportswear manufacturers)
- **Guinness** – Pro14 League Sponsors (Beer producer)
- **Tennent's** (Beer manufacturer)
- Mitsubishi motors (Car manufacturer)
- Thomas Cook Sport (Specialist sport travel operator)
- **Crabbie's** (Alcoholic ginger beer producer)
- JBC (Nutrition company)
- Dentons (Law firm)
- Kylee (Restaurant)
- Wood (Energy supplier)
- **Eden Mill** (Gin, beer, and whisky producer)
- Galbraith (Estate agents and mortgage brokers)
- 20/20 Productions (Video and event production company)
- Booking.com (Online travel operator)
- Spire (Private healthcare)
- SmilePlus (Private dental care)
- **Glen Moray** (Whisky producer)
- AG Barr (Soft drink manufacturer)
- Village Hotels (Hotel company)
- Gilbert (Sports equipment manufacturer)
- iPro Sport (Energy and sports drink)
- Healthspan Elite (Vitamins, supplements etc.).
- G4S (Security and events safety company)
- Shirt by Hand (Tailoring and clothes sales)

Guinness sponsorship activity

As participants in the Guinness Pro14, Edinburgh Rugby prominently promoted the tournament sponsors in several ways. In tournament matches, the logo appeared on the sleeve of the match shirts of Edinburgh Rugby, their opponents, and the match officials. Consequently, it could be seen throughout the match (particularly on television footage) and reproduced media from the event, for example match highlights, photos on social media or the club website. The match ball also featured the Guinness Pro14 logo, and thus this branding appeared in photos both from the match and training before games. Such photos were often also used again for other marketing purposes, for example to depict players winning man-of-the-match awards or to promote future games.

As the Pro14 tournament is a key part of the rugby union calendar (alongside the Heineken Cup), promotion of Guinness featured prominently in much of Edinburgh Rugby's digital marketing activity. For example, the Guinness Pro14 logo feature in multiple places on the landing page of their website. Guinness also featured prominently in social media posts discussing or promoting the tournament (below) and particularly fixtures that Edinburgh were playing in (e.g. score updates, match build up, man-of-the-match awards).

As official sponsors, the Guinness brand also had a very prominent presence in the build up to, and during, match days from the Pro14 tournament. In addition to the match shirts and match balls this included, but was not restricted to: branding on each of the goalposts at the end of the pitch, the flags which denote the edge of the playing area, the Guinness Pro14 Trophy, the match day programme, the interview boards, sponsorship of the man-of-the-match award, and on both static and electronic advertising hoardings in the stadium. Consequently, there were many instances in which the audience, both within the stadium and watching on television, could see the Guinness logo in multiple locations at the same time (below).



Editorial credit: JLP Photography

Other examples of Guinness sponsorship activity included promotion of a fan zone selling Guinness before a high-profile match against Glasgow Warriors (the 1872 Cup) and promotion of a competition to win tickets to two high-profile rugby union events sponsored by Guinness (Scotland vs. Ireland in the Guinness Six Nations and the Guinness Pro14 final).

Glen Moray sponsorship activity

The logo for Glen Moray appeared on the rear of the shorts worn by Edinburgh Rugby players during matches, alongside several of their other main sponsors (below). Due to this positioning, the Glen Moray logo could therefore be seen when the players were engaged in a scrum position, which meant that it was commonly visible during matches and reproduced in media (e.g. television highlights or social media posts).



Editorial credit: D. Ribeiro / Shutterstock.com

Glen Moray also sponsored Edinburgh Rugby's 'Try of the Month' tournament. Promoted on social media, users were shown videos of the best tries in each month and asked to comment on which they thought should win. This activity was multi-stage and included both the initial call to vote, followed by a reminder to participate, and finally a post showing the winner. Within each post, the Glen Moray brand name was depicted at the start. This was actively repeated each month.

Glen Moray also produced an Edinburgh Rugby-branded whisky, a limited edition of only 312 bottles. As part of the venture, players from the Edinburgh Rugby first team attended the Glen Moray distillery to select which cask the limited edition whisky would be bottled from, an event that was covered through the club's social media. Several social media posts 'teased' the product launch (below right), after which it was promoted periodically. The limited edition was

also included as a prize in their 'Ultimate Christmas Rugby Hamper' and a virtual advert was produced for the large display screens during a match vs. Glasgow Warriors.

Edinburgh Rugby also teamed up Glen Moray with another of their sponsors, Thomas Cook Sport, to offer fans the opportunity to win an 'Ultimate Edinburgh Rugby Experience'. The prize was the opportunity watch the team play a home match (inclusive of hospitality and accommodation) and then visit the Glen Moray distillery for a tour the following day. To enter the competition, fans had to comment on the social media post with which current Edinburgh player and club legend they would take with them.

Eden Mill sponsorship activity

Eden Mill have an extensive relationship with rugby union in Scotland. In addition to Edinburgh Rugby, they were also official partners of Glasgow Warriors and Scottish Rugby. As part of their sponsorship agreement with Edinburgh Rugby, Eden Mill was advertised on both static and animated electronic advertising at their home stadium.

In the build-up to a contested match between Edinburgh Rugby and Glasgow Warriors (known as 'The 1872 Cup'), Eden Mill invited players from both clubs to produce their own gin blends and associated branding at their distillery, with the process documented across Eden Mill's Official Social Media channels. The product produced by the Edinburgh team, named Castle Rock after the famous Edinburgh landmark, was available to purchase from Eden Mill and was promoted through Edinburgh Rugby's social media and offered as a prize in competitions.

Alongside the club's other alcohol sponsors, Eden Mill was available at the onsite bars at Edinburgh's home match days.

Crabbie's sponsorship activity

Crabbie's was an official sponsor of both Glasgow Warriors and Scottish Rugby, as well as Edinburgh Rugby. As part of their sponsorship agreement, Crabbie's was available at Edinburgh Rugby's Murrayfield stadium, and this included occasions where it was sold in the fan zones through a branded double-decker bus.

As part of the sponsorship, Crabbie's also had a visual presence within the Edinburgh Rugby stadium (through pitch-side and tier advertising boards) and also sponsored a competition in which fans could win the opportunity to take part in the 'Crabbie's half-time kicking challenge'.

Tennent's sponsorship activity

Similar to Eden Mill and Crabbie's, Tennent's had a comprehensive association with alcohol rugby union in Scotland (below). In addition to Edinburgh Rugby, they were also sponsors of Glasgow Warriors and Scottish Rugby and were sponsors of all national league competitions in Scotland (e.g. Tennent's Premiership and Tennent's Women Premier League).

Tennent's had a visual presence on match days in several ways. There was static advertising in the stadium, visible to both those in attendance and through televised broadcasts or reproduced media. This advertising was also similarly visible in Scotland Rugby matches, which take place at the same venue.



Tennent's was also available at the stadium. This included at the stadium's onsite sports bar, in which Tennent's were also the title sponsors (The Tennent's 'Up and Under Bar' [a term synonymous with rugby]). The bar also appeared to be available during selected away matches to enable fans to watch the game on television (left).

4. A frequency analysis of alcohol marketing references in professional televised sport in Scotland.

4.1. Research objective

To investigate the frequency and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union matches in Scotland (RO3).

4.2. Methods

4.2.1. Design

We conducted a frequency analysis of all verbal and visual references to alcohol marketing observed in seven televised broadcasts of professional football and rugby union matches in Scotland. The design mirrored previous analyses of alcohol marketing at the UEFA EURO 2016 football tournament (Purves et al., 2017a; Purves et al., 2017b), gambling marketing references in televised sport in the UK (Ipsos Mori, 2017), and alcohol marketing references in UK club football (Adams et al., 2014; Graham & Adams, 2014).

4.2.2. Sample of broadcasts

A purposive sample of programmes ($n=7$) were recorded as broadcast in Scotland in 2018 and 2019 on either a public service (e.g. BBC) or commercial broadcast channel (e.g. Sky Sports) (Table 4.1). The sample was designed to reflect a combination of sporting events (e.g. football vs. rugby union), sport competitions, and broadcast formats. For football, the sample included a live match from the Scottish Premier League, a live Scottish Cup final, two highlights programmes showing match action from the Scottish Premier League, and two highlights programmes of international football matches played in Scotland (qualifiers for the UEFA EURO 2020 competition). We also captured an international rugby union match played in Scotland as part of the 2018 Six Nations Tournament. Although we also captured a club-level rugby match played in Scotland (Edinburgh Rugby vs. Glasgow Warriors in the Guinness Pro14), the volume of alcohol marketing references present during the match meant that it was unfeasible to analyse ([see section 4.2.6](#) for details).

All selected broadcasts were recorded in their entirety using either recordable DVD players or through an online media recording service available through academic institutions (Box of Broadcasts). Where relevant, the recording included all normal playing time, added time, half-time analysis, commercial breaks, interviews with players and staff, and all pre-and-post match studio punditry. As per previous research, we excluded any pre-or-post match discussion, interviews, or highlights that were not part of the scheduled broadcast (e.g. content through

on-demand television, content on sports news websites, or additional content available through interactive television).

Table 4.1. The sample of broadcasts analysed

Sport	Competition	Fixture	Date	Broadcast channel	Approx. Length
Football	Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership	Rangers vs. Celtic (Live broadcast)	11 th March 2018	Sky Sports Main Event	149 mins
Football	Scottish Cup Final	Celtic vs. Motherwell (Live broadcast)	19 th May 2018	BBC One Scotland	195 mins
Football	Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership	SportsScene (Highlights programme)	1 st April 2018	BBC One Scotland	60 mins
Football	Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership	SportsScene (Highlights programme)	31 st March 2019	BBC One Scotland	75 mins
Football	UEFA EURO 2020 Qualifying	Scotland vs. Albania (Highlights programme)	10 th Sept 2018	BBC One Scotland	45 mins
Football	UEFA EURO 2020 Qualifying	Scotland vs. Israel (Highlights programme)	20 th Nov 2018	BBC One Scotland	44 mins
Rugby union	RBS Six Nations	Scotland vs. England (Live Broadcast)	24 th February 2018	BBC One	180 mins

4.2.3. Defining alcohol marketing references

Consistent with previous research, a reference was defined as any visual and/or verbal reference to alcohol or an alcohol brand that lasted for one second or more during the broadcasted programme or commercial break (Purves et al., 2017b). References were counted each time they appeared, irrespective of how long it lasted or whether they had been seen previously (e.g. a shirt sponsor first shown during live match action and later again in a replay of that action). A new reference was counted each time the camera angle changed shot, even if the reference source remained the same (e.g. if a pitch-side advertising board was first visible in a close up and then again when the camera moved back to the wide angle lens). A new reference was also counted if a reference went out of shot for at least a second (e.g. if the camera panned away from an advertising board and back again). If multiple references were visible at the same time (e.g. shirt sponsorship and a static advertising board), each was recorded as a separate reference. If multiple identical references were visible at the same time (e.g. if logos could be seen on multiple players shirts simultaneously) these were coded as 'identical references visible at the same time'.

4.2.4. Coding alcohol marketing references

All references to alcohol marketing were captured using an existing codebook that was developed to analyse alcohol marketing at the UEFA EURO 2016 Football Tournament (Purves et al., 2017b). The codebook has been shown to have excellent inter-rater reliability among the current research team (Purves et al., 2017b). Although developed for football, the codebook was also piloted on part of the international rugby union match and no significant changes were required. Each reference was coded on the following criteria (a full copy of the codebook is available on request from the research team, or as reported in existing publications – Purves et al. 2017b):

- Whether the reference appeared in play (i.e. during the live match action) or out-of-play (e.g. during pre-match studio punditry). This variable was not coded for the highlights programmes as none of the match coverage was 'live'. It was, therefore, not possible for a reference to be 'out-of-play' (e.g. pre-match or post-match) and would have created confusion when comparing to live matches where these sections did feature.
- Type of reference (e.g. whether it was visual, verbal, or both).
- Location of reference (e.g. whether it appeared around the pitch border, on the field of play, or during a commercial break).
- Format of reference (e.g. static pitch-side advertising, branded merchandise, or electronic advertising).
- Duration of the references (measured in seconds, using the media player timer), thus providing insight into how long it was displayed to the audience.
- Number of identical references visible at the same time (e.g. if logos can be seen on a variety of shirts), thus providing a proxy measure of marketing saturation.
- The alcohol brand featured (e.g. Magners or Eden Mill).
- Content of reference (e.g. did it feature a brand logo, was there a brand slogan, was it just a generic reference with no brand present?)

4.2.5. Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 23. All broadcasts were analysed separately to provide detailed understanding of the frequency and nature of alcohol marketing references in the different sports (e.g. football versus rugby union), competitions (e.g. Scottish Premier League versus Scottish Cup) and broadcast formats (e.g. highlights versus a live match). Frequencies and percentages were computed for the total number of alcohol marketing references, whether the reference appeared in-play versus out-of-play (live matches only), type of reference (e.g. verbal versus visual), location of reference (e.g. field of play), format of reference (e.g. branded merchandise), alcohol brands featured, and the content of the advert (e.g. logo featured). Range and medians were computed for the duration of references and number of identical references visible at the same time. For each broadcast, we calculated the average number of alcohol marketing references per minute and the estimated frequency in seconds, for comparison between broadcast types, lengths, and formats.

4.3. Results

4.2.1. Live Scottish Premier League football

We recorded a live Sky Sports broadcast of a Scottish Premier League football match between Rangers and Celtic, a high-profile fixture that attracts a large attendance and television audience. The match took place at Rangers' home stadium, Ibrox. The broadcast provided approximately 149 minutes of footage. Within this period, 91 alcohol marketing references were observed, an average of 0.61 per broadcast minute (Table 4.2). This equated to an alcohol marketing reference appearing, on average, once every 98 seconds. Most references appeared in-play (68%), appeared on the field of play (67%), and contained brand logos (98%), thus providing brand exposure in highly visible places when the audience would be most paying attention. The most popular format was branded merchandise (93%) and most references were for cider brand Magners (82%), who sponsored Celtic football club (Figure 4.1). At least half of the references were on screen for two seconds or longer.

Table 4.2. Summary of alcohol references in the televised football and rugby union matches.

Variable	Football						Rugby union
	Rangers vs. Celtic (SPL)	Celtic vs. Motherwell (Scottish Cup)	SportScene (SPL highlights) ^{2,4}	SportScene (SPL highlights) ^{3,4}	SportScene (Scotland vs Albania) ^{2,4}	SportScene (Scotland vs. Israel) ^{3,4}	Scotland vs. England (Six Nations)
Total references in broadcast	91	164	119	79	0	0	716
Average references per minute	0.61	0.84	1.98	1.05	-	-	3.97
Approximate average frequency of references	Every 98 seconds	Every 71 seconds	Every 30 seconds	Every 57 seconds	-	-	Every 15 seconds
Proportion of references in play	68%	48%	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	-	-	61%
Proportion of references out-of-play	32%	52%	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	-	-	39%
Most popular location of references	Field of play (67%)	Field of play (70%)	Pitch border (60%)	Pitch border (80%)	-	-	Stadium interior (69%)
Most popular format of references	Branded merch. (93%)	Branded merch. (84%)	Static adverts (77%)	Static adverts (77%)	-	-	Static adverts (80%)
Most featured brand	Magners (82%)	Magners (85%)	Eden Mill (42%)	Magners (63%)	-	-	Tennent's (43%)
Median duration references	2 seconds	3 seconds	4 seconds	4 seconds	-	-	3 seconds
Median number of identical references	1	1	1	1	-	-	1
Logo present	98%	95%	99%	100%	-	-	87%
Slogan present	0%	<1%	51%	3%	-	-	54%
Generic reference (i.e. no brand)	1%	4%	0%	0%	-	-	12%

Notes:

¹ Broadcast was a highlights programme of multiple football matches, plus studio punditry. No live action.

² Coded by NC

³ Coded by RP

⁴ Highlights programme broadcast by BBC, no commercial adverts

4.2.2. Live Scottish Cup Football

We recorded a live BBC One Scotland broadcast of the 2018 Scottish Cup Final, contested between Celtic and Motherwell. The broadcast provided approximately 195 minutes of footage. Within this period, 164 alcohol marketing references were recorded, an average of 0.84 per broadcast minute (Table 4.2). This equated, on average, to an alcohol marketing reference approximately once every 71 seconds. There was almost an even proportion of references in-play (48%, i.e. during the match action) versus out-of-play (52%, i.e. during pre- or post-match discussions); with the latter plausibly related to the post-match celebrations by Celtic players and staff. Most references appeared on the field of play (70%), were for branded merchandise (84%) and depicted brand logos (95%), thus providing brand exposure in highly visible places when most of the audience would be paying attention. Most references were for cider brand Magners (85%). Similar to the Scottish Premier League game, this was because Magners sponsored Celtic's match shirts and coaching staff attire (Figure 4.2). At least half of the references lasted for three seconds or longer.

Figure 4.2. Example of Magners shirt sponsorship in Scottish Cup Final



4.2.3. Highlights of Scottish Premier League Football

We recorded two BBC One Scotland programmes that showed highlights from a round of fixtures in the Scottish Premier League. These programmes provide a broader insight into alcohol sports sponsorship exposure in televised broadcasts as they provide a snapshot of a

variety of teams and football stadiums across Scotland. We purposively chose two programmes in which the stadiums that featured varied as much as possible, thus increasing the geographical coverage of the study. The first broadcast lasted approximately 60 minutes. The second broadcast was approximately 75 minutes, as it provided extended highlights of a high-profile match between Celtic and Rangers (albeit not the same fixture coded for the live broadcast).

Across the two broadcasts, there were a combined 198 alcohol marketing references (Table 4.2). There was, on average, 1.98 alcohol marketing references per-minute in the first broadcast (approximately once every 30 seconds) and 1.05 references per minute in the second broadcast (approximately only every 57 seconds). In both broadcasts, most references appeared around the pitch borders (60% and 80%, respectively) and were static advertising (77% in both). In the first broadcast, the majority of references were for Eden Mill (42%), who were shirt and stadium sponsors of Hibernian football club, who featured prominently in the highlights (Figure 4.3). In the second broadcast, the majority of references were for Magners (63%), because Celtic football club featured prominently in the highlights. In both broadcasts, almost all references depicted brand logos (99% and 100%, respectively) and at least half lasted for four seconds or more.

Figure 4.3. Example of Eden Mill sponsorship of Hibernian Football Club in Highlights



4.2.4. Highlights of International Football matches in Scotland

We recorded two BBC One Scotland programmes showing highlights of Scotland's national football team in qualifying matches for the men's UEFA EURO 2020 tournament. Both programmes were purposively selected to depict matches in Scotland (at the national stadium, Hampden Park), as fixtures played in other countries may be subject to different regulations on alcohol sport sponsorship. The first highlights programme (Scotland vs. Albania) was 45 minutes in length and the second (Scotland vs. Israel) was 44 minutes. Throughout both broadcasts, no alcohol marketing references were observed at any stage (Table 4.2).

4.2.5. International Rugby union matches in Scotland

We recorded a live BBC One broadcast of the 2018 Six Nations Rugby union match between Scotland and England. The match took place at the national stadium in Scotland, Murrayfield. The broadcast provided approximately 180 minutes of footage. Within this period, there were 716 references to alcohol marketing, an average of 3.97 references per broadcast minute (Table 4.2). This equated, on average, to an alcohol marketing reference approximately once every 15 seconds. Most references appeared in-play (61% i.e. during the match), thus appearing when the audience would likely be paying most attention. The majority of references appeared around the stadium interior (69%), depicted brand logos (84%) and were static advertising (80%). For example, static advertising for Tennent's and Eden Mill on the front of an upper tier were visible during large sections of the match (Figure 4.4), while Guinness advertising was occasionally shown on the electronic pitch-side borders (Figure 4.5). Over one-in-ten references (12%) were classed as 'generic' alcohol depictions, all of which constituted alcohol being consumed by supporters in the crowd (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.4. Tennent's and Eden Mill static advertising on front of upper tiers



Figure 4.5. Guinness advertising on the electronic pitch-side borders



Figure 4.6. Example of alcohol products visible in close shots of the crowd



4.2.6. Club level rugby union in Scotland

We recorded a live Sky Sports broadcast of a Guinness Pro14 match between Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Rugby in March 2018 (also known as 'The 1872 Cup'). The match took place at the home of Edinburgh Rugby, Murrayfield. Attempts were made to code this match, however, we established many instances in which multiple varied alcohol marketing references were simultaneously visible, thus rendering it too time consuming and complex to assess with the validated codebook. For example, Guinness logos were visible on the match shirts of all players and match officials; Edinburgh Rugby had a Glen Moray logo on their shorts; the posts that signified the edge of the pitch had protective covers and flags with the Guinness logo; the posts at each end of the pitch had large protective covers with the Guinness logo; there was a Guinness logo on the rugby ball; supporters in the crowd were consuming alcohol; and there was advertising for Glen Moray, Guinness, Tennent's, Eden Mill, and Crabbie's around the stadium (including pitch-side and behind the posts) (Figure 4.7). Because many of these references were simultaneously present in a single camera shot, because each would require individual coding, and because each had separate durations and movement, the broadcast was deemed unfeasible to accurately code. Nevertheless, we have included the fact that we attempted to code this match, and reported specific examples of the alcohol marketing identified, as these findings are relevant to the study aims.

5. Discussion

5.1. Key findings

What is the extent of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby union in Scotland?

- In the audit, all three rugby union teams/organisations had multiple alcohol producers or distributors as official sponsors or partners. Almost a third of the football teams/organisations had at least one alcohol producer or distributor as a sponsor or partner in the 2018/2019 season.
- In the audit, alcohol producers or distributors represented less than one-in-ten of the main sponsors or partners recorded. Sponsorship also came from a diverse and varied range of other companies, ranging from construction and building firms to IT and digital services. Due to a lack of publicly available information, however, it was not possible to know the total financial contribution of alcohol sponsors to each club, or how this compared to sponsorship from other sources.
- Among football teams, alcohol sponsorship appeared to be more prevalent among teams in the Scottish Premier League compared to Scottish Championship or Scottish Women's Premier League. For women's teams, there was a grey area for some football clubs where it was not clear whether the sponsors for the male teams – which contain alcohol companies – were independent of the women's teams.
- Both the audit and case studies reported sponsorship by companies from the hospitality sector, such as pubs, bars, and restaurants. Although distinct from alcohol producers or distributors, we acknowledge that these are on-trade premises which do also sell alcohol.

What activities are used to promote sponsorship relations between alcohol producers or distributors and professional football and rugby union teams in Scotland?

- When alcohol sponsorship was present, the four case studies demonstrated that these relationships are promoted in a variety of sophisticated ways. This included, but was not limited to: alcohol brand logos on match strips; advertising at various locations inside and outside the stadiums; exclusive 'pourage rights' within the stadiums and fan zones; limited edition products that featured the names of teams and/or their achievements; a presence on official social media channels (e.g. Facebook and Twitter); and players and/or managers featuring in adverts.

- One case study reported limited evidence of alcohol sponsorship activity, which was perhaps due to the smaller size of the club involved (Scottish League 2). This trend was also consistent with the audit of official sponsors or partners, where fewer alcohol sponsors were recorded among teams from the lower leagues. Where sponsorship did exist for this lower-league side, it was limited to advertisements within the stadium for local on-trade premises (e.g. pitch-side adverts for a pub or hotel), as opposed to large national or multi-national alcohol brands being promoted in a multitude of ways.

What is the frequency and nature of alcohol sport sponsorship in professional football and rugby in Scotland?

- Sponsorship by alcohol companies achieved a high level of exposure in the television broadcasts analysed for this study. For football, there was an alcohol marketing reference approximately once every 98 seconds in the live Scottish Premier League match (0.61 per-minute), once every 71 seconds in the live Scottish Cup Final (0.84 per-minute) and at least once every 57 seconds during highlights of Scottish Premier League football (1.05 per-minute). There were no references in the international football matches analysed in this study.
- Compared to football, alcohol marketing references were more frequent in the television broadcasts of rugby union analysed for this study. Specifically, there was an alcohol reference approximately once every 15 seconds in the live Six Nations rugby match between Scotland and England (3.97 per-minute). We also attempted to quantify alcohol marketing references during a Scottish club-level rugby union match (Edinburgh versus Glasgow Warriors in the Guinness Pro14), but the volume of references present meant that it was unfeasible to analyse using our existing codebook.
- Most alcohol marketing references appeared in prominent places (e.g. pitch-side advertising) and at the point when most people would be likely to be watching (i.e. during the match action as opposed to pre-match build up or post-match discussion). Examples included static and electronic pitch-side advertising and sponsorship logos on the players' shirts, both of which were visible for large parts of the match action.
- Almost all alcohol marketing references provided explicit promotion of a brand, particularly through the use of brand logos and slogans.

5.2. Interpretation and relation to wider literature

The popularity of sport as a platform for alcohol marketing

There is an established international evidence base which demonstrates that sports teams and organisations are attractive to, and used by, alcohol producers and distributors to market their products and brands (Belt et al., 2014; Kelly et al., 2011; Maher et al., 2006; Macniven et al., 2015; Sartori et al., 2018). Previous research and anecdotal evidence has shown that this is also true for Scotland (Davidson et al., 2012), and our findings confirm that this remains the case for several professional sports teams/organisations. That alcohol sponsorship was more prevalent for rugby union teams than football teams may reflect the fact that alcoholic products can also be sold and consumed at rugby union stadiums (including while spectators are watching the match), thus increasing the potential marketing opportunities described in the case studies (e.g. product sales, packaging, placement of logos at stadium bars, and presence in fan zones). In contrast, alcohol cannot be consumed at football matches in Scotland, either within the stadium (with the exception of hospitality areas) or in sight of the pitch. That higher-profile teams (e.g. professional teams in the Scottish Premier League) appeared to have more alcohol sponsorship than those in the lower tiers (e.g. Scottish Championship or League 2) may reflect that the larger spectator attendances and wider audience reach (e.g. through live television broadcasts and social media marketing) better justify financial and resource commitments to alcohol producers and distributors, as is discussed later in the discussion.

The sophisticated nature of alcohol sport sponsorship

The case studies demonstrate that alcohol sport sponsorship is multifaceted and draws upon a variety of activities to explicitly promote products or subtly blend them among existing attractive and stimulating content. By associating their products and brands with sports teams, players, and achievements, alcohol producers and distributors are able to capitalise on the emotional connections that consumers already have with these individuals or teams, thereby increasing their own visibility, appeal and influence among their target market (Farrelly et al., 2006; Hastings et al., 2010; Purves et al., 2018). For example, by featuring players in social media adverts for alcohol brands, it appears that these players are endorsing the products. Purchasing or consuming the product then may become aspirational for the consumer in order to emulate, or be similar to, their sporting heroes. Likewise, releasing limited edition products that feature a specific event or achievement as part of the name or packaging means that fans will be enticed to purchase these items in order to feel as though they are part of the event or sharing in their team's achievements.

The presence of alcohol marketing in televised broadcasts

Our findings are consistent with suggestions that televised broadcasts of professional sport provide a high-profile platform for exposure to alcohol marketing (Adams et al., 2014; Graham & Adams, 2014; Noel et al., 2017a; Purves et al., 2017b). Our findings also suggest that alcohol marketing in sport is potentially more frequent and explicit in Scotland compared to countries with statutory regulations. For example, an evaluation of alcohol marketing during broadcasts of UEFA EURO 2016 – held in France, where sport sponsorship is ostensibly prohibited by law – estimated that there was an alcohol marketing reference once every 92 seconds for matches broadcast in the UK, every 87 seconds for matches broadcast in France, and every 101 seconds for matches broadcast in the Republic of Ireland (Purves et al., 2017a). The vast majority of references, however, were classed as ‘alibi marketing’ – that is they did not directly reference an alcohol brand, but instead indirectly promoted them using only brand slogans (*‘Probably...the best in the world’*) presented in the iconic brand font. The main sponsor, Carlsberg, argued that such alibi marketing did not link the partnership to alcohol (Christie, 2017). For most of the broadcasts analysed in this study, alcohol marketing references were observed more frequently than reported in France; appearing approximately once every 57 seconds in Scottish Premier League highlights, once every 71 seconds in live Scottish Cup football, and once every 15 seconds in live international rugby union. Moreover, in this study the majority of references featured explicit promotion of an alcohol brand (e.g. logos, names and slogans), and were therefore more recognisable than the alibi marketing in France. This suggests that although France’s restriction on sport sponsorship does not explicitly restrict *all* alcohol marketing, it has potentially been more successful in reducing the explicitness of marketing versus the self-regulatory approach employed in Scotland.

Compliance with self-regulatory codes

There are no statutory restrictions on alcohol sport sponsorship in Scotland, with all marketing activity instead subject to self-regulatory codes (see [section 1.2](#) for further details). While this study did not set out to test the efficacy of these self-regulatory codes, two aspects of compliance warrant discussion. First, the codes state that sponsorship must include a recognisable commitment to promoting responsible alcohol use and/or diversionary community activities. In both the case studies and frequency analysis, however, we observed a multitude of instances in which alcohol was marketed without the inclusion of any harm-reduction message and we did not record evidence of diversionary activity. Where harm reduction messages did exist, they often exhibited certain limitations such as not appearing regularly on electronic pitch-side boards, not appearing in high-profile locations that are easily seen or being secondary to the marketing message. For example, there was no harm-reduction message on Celtic’s match shirts (which had the highest exposure in the live Scottish Premier League match and Scottish Cup final match, see Figures 4.1 and 4.2), and

this was also true for Dundee United and Edinburgh Rugby. We also did not observe harm-reduction messages in highly visible static advertising in the live rugby union match (see Figure 4.4). In the case studies, we also did not knowingly record evidence of any divisionary activities.

Second, the self-regulatory codes state that sponsorship should not use images of people who are, or look, under the 25 years old. In this project, however, we found multiple instances in which this had occurred. In the case study, for example, Celtic football club posted pictures of Ryan Christie on social media holding a Magners branded football shirt, and in the televised broadcasts Kiernan Tierney was observed playing football in a Magners branded shirt. At the time of the study, both players were under 25 years old. While these two examples from Celtic are provided, instances of people under the age of 25 years wearing alcohol branded merchandise were also observed across the case studies and broadcasts featuring other teams. These findings are therefore consistent with research that has questioned the effectiveness of, and compliance with, self-regulatory codes (Alcohol Concern, 2018; Noel et al., 2017b; Noel et al., 2017c).

The value of sports sponsorship

There is little information reported in the public domain about the total financial value of sponsorship deals, either for alcohol producers or distributors, or for other sponsorship groups. However, from this research, we are able to draw some conclusions regarding the potential 'value' inherent in sponsorship of sporting teams, for both the sporting organisations and the sponsors.

Alcohol sponsorship of sporting teams and events can be viewed as a strategic alliance between two established brands who each bring their own values, personality and appeal to the partnership (Purves 2017c). In exchange for financial resources, the sponsor gains intangible social and cultural benefits from their partnership with the sporting organisation which enhances their brand image and improves goodwill towards the brand (Yang and Goldfarb, 2015). The brand can also capitalise on the existing appeal and emotional connections that sports fans have with their teams. This merging of two brands strengthens both, in a sense creating one 'super-brand' which carries with it, as the Rangers chief executive stated when referring to the club's partnership with Carling, "*the scale and unrivalled passion and commitment of our supporters*" (Farey-Jones, 2005).

Where alcohol sponsorship was found to be present in our study, it tended to be associated with larger, more successful clubs and appeared in high-profile locations (e.g. shirt

sponsorship and pitch-side advertising). Doing so achieved high levels of visibility during televised broadcasts, which may reflect the larger spectator attendances and wider audience reach that these clubs can achieve (both nationally and internationally). Where marketing exposure was likely to be lower, such as among teams from the lower leagues of the football pyramid, alcohol sponsorship by large alcohol brands was less prevalent. Literature on strategic alliances suggests that distance is a key variable to sponsorship packages (Yang and Goldfarb, 2015). Smaller or less-successful sports clubs are more likely to be sponsored by local companies, whereas larger or more successful clubs are more likely to be sponsored by national or international brands. Our results support this by demonstrating that the larger or more successful teams were sponsored by large international alcohol brands, whereas alcohol-related sponsorship of the smaller club from the lower league was limited to advertisements within the stadium for local on-trade hospitality premises (e.g. pitch-side adverts). This suggests that any restrictions on limiting sponsorship by alcohol brands may have less impact on smaller or less successful clubs, as they currently appear to be less dependent on alcohol producers or distributors for sponsorship revenue; albeit we note that our current findings do not provide insight into the relative financial contribution made by each sponsor. In addition, larger or more successful clubs are plausibly more likely to attract replacement sponsors given their popularity and visibility.

The high visibility of alcohol sponsorship in the televised broadcasts of rugby union may be due, in part, to the fact that alcohol is available to be purchased and consumed at rugby games in Scotland, increasing the value of the sponsorship arrangement to the producer. Alcohol sales at Scottish football grounds are restricted to hospitality areas, limiting the opportunity for alcohol sponsors to sell their products in and around the stadium and for fans to act on the marketing messages they are exposed to at the stadium. The high volume of references present in Scottish club-level rugby union made it unfeasible to analyse using our existing codebook and is indicative of the inordinate level of exposure alcohol brands can achieve when they partner with rugby teams or organisations.

5.3. Strengths and limitations

There are several strengths. The report approaches the topic of sport sponsorship using a variety of methods, which combine to provide unique insight into the extent, nature and frequency of alcohol sponsorship among popular spectator sports in Scotland. By including both football and rugby union, we also provide a comparison across two sports which have different approaches to alcohol availability (i.e. consumption is permitted at rugby union matches but not at football). The open source audit focused on all main sponsors and partners

– not just alcohol or other unhealthy products (e.g. high fat, salt and sugar foods) – thus providing insight into the varied revenue streams that contribute to professional sport in Scotland, using information self-reported by the teams and organisations. In both the audit of sponsorship relations and case studies, we also explored alcohol sponsorship at different levels of the sporting hierarchy, including professional high-profile teams (e.g. Celtic Football Club and Edinburgh Rugby) and other levels of competition in Scotland (e.g. lower-league football). In the audit we also considered both the male and female Premier Leagues. In the frequency analyses, we considered several different types of professional sport and broadcasting formats shown in Scotland, for example both live matches and highlights programmes, and coded the alcohol marketing references using a coding framework with high inter-rater reliability (Purves et al., 2017b).

There are limitations to the study. All data were collected in 2018/2019, and may not reflect any changes in sponsorship since. The audit data was based on information recorded in certain ways on official websites, and the veracity of that information rests with the teams/organisations responsible for the website content. The audit also only captured information on the main sponsors or partners, yet throughout the study we also observed a multitude of alternative opportunities through which a company could support a sports team/organisation (e.g. naming of stadiums, pitch-side advertising, in-kind support, and business clubs). As such, the findings are only partially representative of all sponsorship relations. In the audit, main sponsors or partners were classified into categories, however, these were based on subjective judgment using website descriptions, and some companies had dual purposes which straddled multiple categories (albeit we only recorded the primary focus). As such, the categories are illustrative and not definitive. In the audit, we also only show *whether* a company sponsored a team, but we cannot infer from this how much financial support was provided, and what proportion of income received is from alcohol companies. The case studies, however, demonstrate the high value marketing opportunities obtainable by sponsoring a successful sporting team. Due to the time consuming nature of data collection, only four teams were purposively sampled for the case studies and we only focused on how alcohol sponsors were promoted – particularly using open source data collection (e.g. social media and websites). Consequently, the sponsorship activities may not be representative of all other teams in Scotland or at different points of the year, and we cannot draw inferences about how this activity compares to, or differs from, non-alcohol sponsors. Finally, in the frequency analysis, the volume and frequency of references in the club level rugby broadcast exceeded the capabilities of the codebook and time available to code, and was omitted from the analysis. Only one other rugby broadcast was captured, which was an international match, and thus the findings may not be representative of club level rugby.

5.4. Conclusions

The findings show that alcohol producers and distributors do sponsor some professional football and rugby union teams/organisations in Scotland. For both football and rugby union, however, sponsorship also comes from a variety of other sources, ranging from construction and building contractors to IT and digital services. Nevertheless, when alcohol sponsorship was present, it uses a variety of marketing activities to ensure that it is highly visible and appears salient to consumers. Examples include logos on kits, advertising around stadiums, limited edition products, featuring players in wider marketing content, and limited edition prizes. When present, alcohol sponsorship also appears frequently in televised broadcasts of these sporting events, and usually in places that are likely to coincide with peak audience attention (e.g. pitch-side advertising and shirt sponsors). Compared to football, the frequency in broadcasts was much higher in rugby union, with three to four alcohol marketing references, on average, per minute of broadcast.

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