

Insight.X

Premier League Sponsorship Review
Social Media Insights & Risk Analysis

2022/2023 season

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Introduction

Introducing the report

The InsightX Premier League Sponsorship Review presents a unique perception and risk analysis of Premier League clubs' shirt sponsorships. Now in its second year, the analysis looks back at the 2022/2023 season.

The report contains:

- The key sponsorship news and changes from the season
- A comparison on how each club's sponsorship performed
- The impact each sponsor had in activating the club's brand and offering exposure to its online fanbase
- How each sponsorship was perceived across social media
- How much online conversation it generated over the season
- Whether the sponsor represented a reputational risk for the club
- A look ahead to the next season and what our editors are monitoring

Based on InsightX's expert social media and due diligence analysis, the report covers the period from June 01, 2022 to June 01, 2023 to capture conversation around the signing of sponsorship agreements ahead of the season, through to the end of the season.

The report includes an analysis of the risks that each sponsor represents to the club's reputation and a reputation risk rating of Low, Medium or High. The analysis and risk rating are produced by InsightX's specialist research and intelligence team which is commissioned by clients in the Premier League, Serie A, La Liga and the Bundesliga, as well as other sports rights holders, to report on risks associated with sponsors and other third parties.

About Us

InsightX is an independent due diligence, reaction and sentiment analysis agency, providing the world of elite sport with clear, actionable intelligence on their partnerships, athletes, investors and suppliers.

Our team has been advising clients since 2014. We work in more than 40 languages across every major jurisdiction, finding and highlighting information other due diligence providers are unable to source.

InsightX has produced intelligence and advised on some of the largest deals in sport, helping our clients fully understand who they are about to put pen to paper with.

We have helped our clients avoid significant damage in:

- Crypto/NFT deals
- Gambling sponsorships
- Third-party rights deals
- Merchandise and other licensing proposals

We also produce highly detailed player transfer, ambassador and influencer profiles and reports prior to a club or major brand signing a deal with an individual. This includes full social media analysis which looks at interactions, perception, tone and sentiment.

InsightX reports contain analysis outlining the main areas of risk a third party represents, including recommendations for mitigation, an at-a-glance grid of risks, a summary, a full narrative providing in-depth information and context for each finding and links to all source material.

Our research is exhaustive, making use of a global research team and a network of trusted investigative journalists and specialists. Where information is difficult to source digitally, InsightX will use vetted affiliates to obtain data through legal and ethical manual means.

We provide specialist detailed social media analysis, assessing output, interaction, sentiment and tone. We have also advised our clients on crisis management and communications as part of our overall traditional, online and social media analysis.

[Get in touch today](#) to find out how we can help protect your club or organisation.

Season Highlights in Sponsorship



Gambling Act Review

The UK Government released its long-awaited white paper reviewing the Gambling Act 2005 in April. As a result of the review, a levy on gambling companies was introduced despite pressure from the industry. Measures to protect so-called “problem gamblers” were also brought in, including a ban on VIP packages for those who incur heavy losses and affordability checks for those who are deemed at risk. Furthermore, the UK Gambling Commission will receive more resources and a gambling ombudsman will be created.

After the reforms were first reported, the Government estimated that the changes would lead to a £700 million fall in revenue for online gambling companies. However, initial plans for a compulsory front-of-shirt gambling sponsorship ban for football clubs were shelved, and Bournemouth and Fulham subsequently announced Dafabet and W88 as sponsors. Despite rumours that a review of white label licences would be announced, one was not forthcoming.

([InsightX](#))



Ban on front-of-shirt gambling sponsors

Two weeks before the release of the Government’s white paper, the Premier League announced that its members had agreed a voluntary ban on front-of-shirt gambling sponsorship ban, beginning at the start of the 2026/27 Premier League season. The agreement was made following extensive consultation between the League, its clubs and the Government.

The three-year “transitional period” was implemented to avoid potential lawsuits for breach of contract though there is nothing in the agreement to stop clubs agreeing short-term contracts with gambling companies.

Despite being endorsed by some club owners and gambling safety campaign groups, critics noted that the ban did not extend to shirt sleeve sponsorship deals, nor to pitch-side advertising hoardings. It was reported that the Premier League was also working with other sports on the development of a new code for responsible gambling sponsorship.

([The Guardian](#), [Sky Sports](#))

Season Highlights in Sponsorship

3



MPs urge clubs to drop sponsors supportive of Hong Kong security law

In 2022, UK politicians urged Tottenham and Liverpool to cut ties with front-of-shirt sponsors AIA and Standard Chartered over the organisations' support of the national security law in Hong Kong.

Standard Chartered publicly stated that the law can "help maintain the long term economic and social stability of Hong Kong". A bipartisan group of MPs wrote to Liverpool CEO Billy Hogan in July to accuse the bank, which has sponsored the club since 2010, of being "complicit" in the Chinese Government's crackdown in Hong Kong.

AIA Group, Asia's largest life insurer and Spurs' sponsor since 2014, issued a statement in support of the law days after it was legislated. The group of MPs wrote a similar letter to Tottenham Chairman Daniel Levy claiming that AIA was "lending legitimacy to China's illegal establishment of a brutal, totalitarian regime in Hong Kong".

[\(The Times\)](#), [\(The Telegraph\)](#), [\(City AM\)](#)

4



Fans petition to change gambling sponsors

The year also saw the growing discontent of fans over gambling sponsorship. In July 2022, families who had lost loved ones to gambling addiction walked from Manchester to Liverpool to raise awareness and call for reform.

Ahead of announcing W88 as its front-of-shirt sponsor, the Fulham Supporters' Trust accused the club of taking advantage of the last opportunity to partner with overseas gambling companies before the voluntary ban. The Trust had previously conducted a survey which found that almost half of respondents would be uncomfortable with one as the club's front-of-shirt sponsor.





















A petition was launched by Bournemouth fans after the club announced Dafabet as its own front-of-shirt-sponsor. Fans detailed their personal experiences with loved ones who have had their lives ruined by gambling.

[\(The Independent\)](#), [\(The Athletic\)](#), [\(38 Degrees\)](#)

Ranking & Insights

Ranking by Volumes of Social Media Conversation

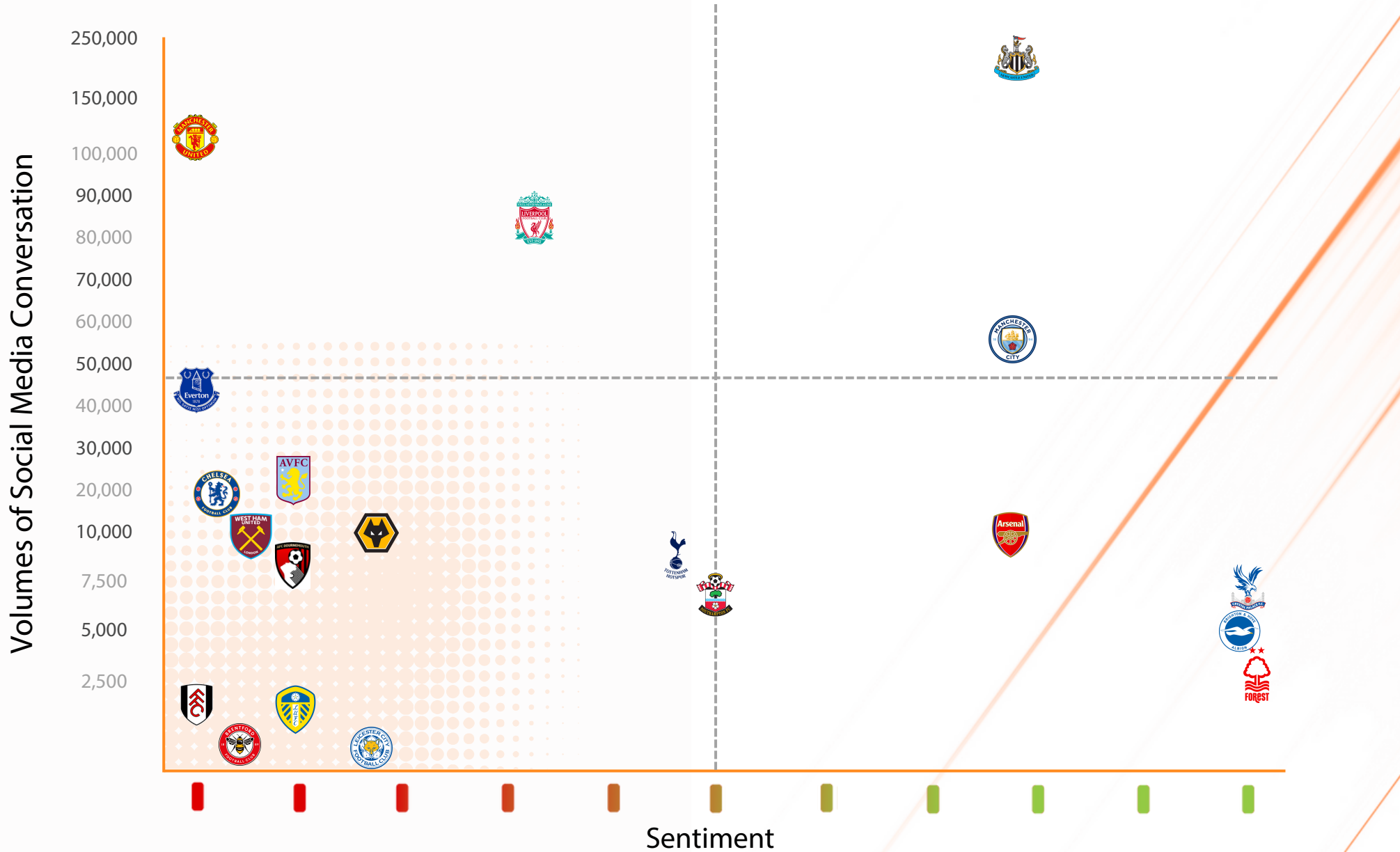
1	 	Newcastle United 242,800
2	 	Manchester United 118,900
3	 	Liverpool 82,600
	 	Manchester City 55,200
	 	Everton 49,800
	 	Aston Villa 21,600
	 	Chelsea 19,500
	 	Arsenal 17,900
	 	West Ham United 13,900
	 	Wolverhampton Wanderers 12,400

 	Bournemouth 8,600
 	Tottenham Hotspur 7,600
 	Southampton 6,900
 	Crystal Palace 6,800
 	Brighton & Hove Albion 5,200
 	Nottingham Forest 2,700
 	Fulham 1,800
 	Leeds United 1,200
 	Brentford 1,100
 	Leicester City 969



Ranking & Insights

Sentiment vs. Volumes of Social Media Conversation



Ranking & Insights

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal, Brighton & Hove Albion, Liverpool, Everton

High

Nottingham Forest, Crystal Palace, Chelsea, AFC Bournemouth, AVFC, Brentford, Ipswich, Leicester City, West Ham United, Southampton, Fulham, Manchester United

Medium

Wolverhampton Wanderers, Manchester United

Low



Full Report



Arsenal



£40 million

Value of Emirates sponsorship

In a continuation of its long-standing partnership, Emirates' sponsorship of Arsenal was worth £40 million during the 2022/2023 season. The deal will cover the club's sponsorship until 2024 and includes the shirt sponsorship, the naming rights for the Emirates Stadium and the sponsorship of The Emirates Cup. Talks about the likely renewal of the deal were reported throughout the season.

([Emirates](#), [BBC](#))



Social Media Activation

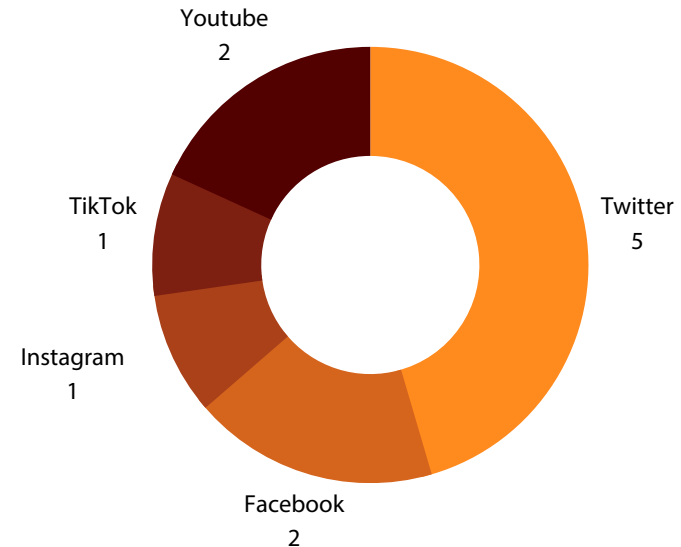
Potential brand exposure

21.3 million users



Brand activations over the season

11 posts



Emirates promoted its [sponsorship](#) of Arsenal with the "Lovers of Sport" and "[Connecting Gooners](#)" [campaigns](#). The Emirates Football Challenge in Dubai also saw Arsenal players compete against Real Madrid, AC Milan and Olympique Lyonnais players.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

17,900

social media mentions of Arsenal & Emirates



Sentiment

Associated Keywords



- Arsenal & Emirates Cup - 52,900 posts
- Arsenal & Emirates Stadium - 121,400 posts

Volumes of online conversation decreased in comparison to the previous season, while sentiment around the sponsorships was largely positive.

Social media mentions of Arsenal and Emirates centred around [competitions](#) and [events](#) organised over the season, including a football challenge in Dubai with the other clubs sponsored by the brand. The majority of users interacted by sharing and replying to Arsenal's and Emirates' posts.

Arsenal winning the Emirates-sponsored [Dubai Super Cup](#) generated a spike in volumes of conversation and saw positive sentiment towards the team and the sponsor.

A few [Twitter users](#) called on Arsenal and its fans to [boycott](#) Emirates' sponsorship because of the UAE's alleged involvement in providing arms to the Ethiopian government in the Tigray region as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign against Tigrayans.



Dubai Media Office
@DXBMediaOffice · Follow



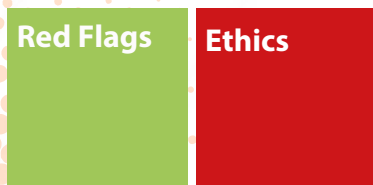
.@emirates invited @acmilan, @Arsenal, & @OL players to a unique street football challenge in #Dubai. They scored creative goals at iconic locations like the @BurjKhalifa & @BurjAlArab, & during a tour of the Dubai desert with Arabian Adventures.
gdmoe.ae/Dy9s



Take a look at this arrival this evening! @Arsenal has arrived aboard an @Emirates 777 ahead of this weekend's match with @Everton #SceneAtBWI



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Decided to continue Russia services after invasion of Ukraine ([Reuters](#))
- Refused to cut Heathrow flights though it later released an agreement to resolve the situation ([Sky News](#), [Heathrow, Media Centre](#))
- Knowingly used firm with criminal links to transport VIPs ([The Times](#))
- Fined for deceptive advertising to New Zealand customers ([Arabian Business](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- UAE is the world's sixth biggest aviation CO2 polluter ([S&P Global](#), [ICCT](#))

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Owned by Dubai govt sovereign wealth fund, which has been criticised for the Kafala system ([Meed](#), [The Guardian](#), [University of Tennessee](#))
- Control over flight attendants' weight ([Live and Let's Fly](#))
- Accused of having sexist and homophobic employment policies which required "female employees to obtain permission before getting married or pregnant and ban lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from employment" ([Business & Human Rights Research Centre](#))
- Emirates passengers targeted by protests who accuse the UAE Government of arming the Ethiopian government in its conflict with the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which has resulted in human rights abuses ([Travel Noire](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))
- Accused of discrimination by a number of people with disabilities and allergies ([Reduced Mobility](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Independent](#), [The Independent](#), [Live and Let's Fly](#))
- Subsidiary's contract flouted aviation rules ([News24](#))



Aston Villa



£ Undisclosed

Value of Cazoo sponsorship
(reported as £7 million per year)

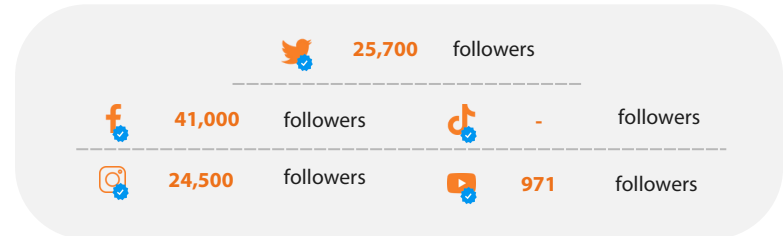
Following Cazoo's significant financial losses, it was announced that the brand would not be renewing its sponsorship deal at the end of the current season. The company announced its exit from the car market on mainland Europe following staggering losses and saw its share price tank to a record low. It was then suspended from trading on the NYSE and began delisting proceedings. ([Car Dealer](#), [Inside World Football](#))



Social Media Activation

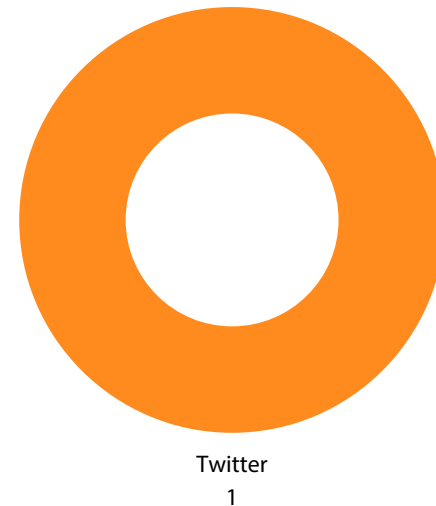
Potential brand exposure

92,171 users



Brand activations over the season

1 posts



Aston Villa received almost no promotion from [Cazoo](#) on social media over the season. An update on Twitter revealing the new kits at the beginning of the season was the only post supporting the team.

Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

21,600

social media mentions of Aston Villa FC & Cazoo



Sentiment

Hashtags

Aston Villa & #Cazoo - 141 posts



Aston Villa & #SearchDriveSmile - 98 posts

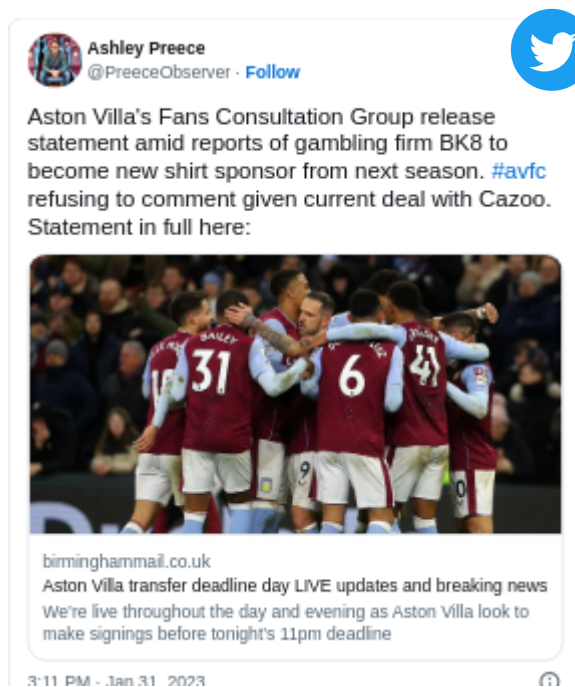
Conversation around Aston Villa and its front-of-shirt sponsor resulted in mainly negative sentiment throughout the season as [Cazoo](#) announced the end of its sponsorship and a new deal with online casino [BK8](#) was announced. However, the higher value of the new deal, [reported to be double](#) the previous one, received approval from fans.

Ahead of the season's start, news of the inclusion of Cazoo's [tagline](#) "Search.Drive.Smile" on the [shirts](#) in addition to its logo was, in the main, not popular with social media users. A Twitter user [stated](#): "There's just no way I can I'm [in] good conscience spend £65+ on something that has "Search. Drive. Smile." written on it."

The announcement of the three-year arrangement with BK8 resulted in a significant [backlash](#) from fans, with the [Aston Villa Fans Consultation Group](#) starting a campaign asking the club to step back from the deal. Reddit users expressed their disappointment at the club's decision, with one stating, "These random betting company shirt sponsors mean very little to us in the UK..."

The sentiment was reinforced following the Premier League clubs' collective [decision](#) to withdraw gambling sponsorship from the front of clubs' matchday shirts.

In a few posts, Cazoo was thanked for its [charity work](#) with the Aston Villa Foundation in collaboration with the club, with one [user](#) tweeting "Cazoo was so impressive with some fab insights into how they do things."





...the BK8 deal meant to be double that of Cazoo, so will be £14m a year rather than £7m. In comparison to other clubs we were way below the likes of Everton. It starts to make more sense when the board talk increasing commercial revenue. #AVFC



Thank you @AVFCOfficial and @CazooUK for giving one of our patients, Ian, an unforgettable experience. Ian and his family were treated to a VIP tour of Bodymoor Heath training ground and his daughter, Avah, was mascot at the Boxing Day match.

@MattyVsTheWorld - Follow
How can you "end" an expired deal? Cazoo have massively overspent commercially and are in trouble. In related news, we see this and then here about BK and assume it's the new sponsor. Not a chance it will be on the front of our shirts #avfc

Total Villa @Total_Villa
Cazoo is to end its multi-million pound sponsorship of Aston Villa when its current deal expires at the end of the season

- [@CarDealerMag] #avfc

12:03 PM - Jan 17, 2023

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Banker advising on IPO invested in early fundraising rounds ([Evening Standard](#))
- Daily Mail and General Trust paid special dividend of Cazoo stock before it plummeted ([Proactive Investors](#))
- Shareholder is Emirate sovereign wealth fund ([Cazoo](#))



Bournemouth



£ Undisclosed

Value of Dafabet sponsorship

(reported between £3.5 and £4 million per year)

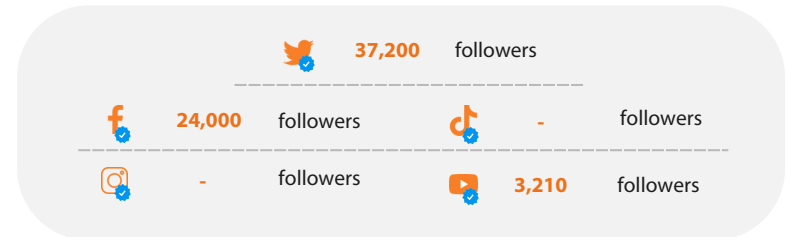
In June 2022, Bournemouth announced a new front-of-shirt sponsorship deal with Dafabet for the club's return to the Premier League. The two-year agreement is reported to have been the most "lucrative" of those on the table. Dafabet will also make a donation to the Community Sports Trust to support "projects that help get adults into work". ([Sportcal](#), [Bournemouth Daily Echo](#))



Social Media Activation

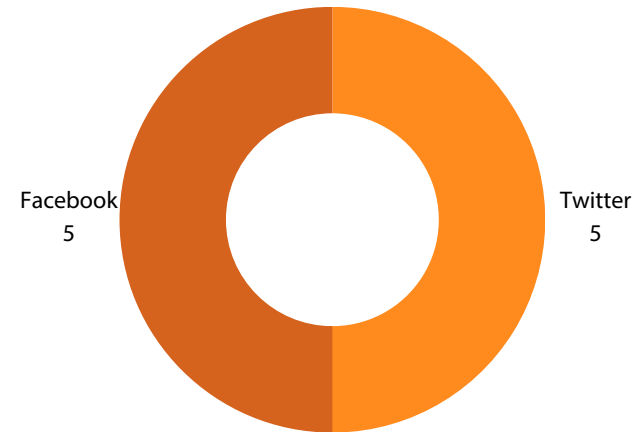
Potential brand exposure

64,410 users



Brand activations over the season

10 posts



Dafabet shared 10 [posts](#) on Bournemouth, split between its Twitter and [Facebook](#) pages. Its pictures of the release of the new kits saw limited engagement from followers.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

8,600

social media mentions of Bournemouth & Dafabet



Sentiment

Hashtags



- Bournemouth & #AFCB - 1,800 posts
- Bournemouth & #ElGladiador - 54 posts

The [announcement](#) of the Dafabet sponsorship in June 2022 resulted in high levels of negative sentiment being expressed by users who disapproved of the choice of a gambling company. A 38 Degrees [petition](#) – “AFC Bournemouth: Kick gambling ads out of football!” – was widely shared on [Twitter](#), with several [parents](#) commenting they wouldn’t be buying the new kits for their children because of Dafabet.

A few users on [Reddit](#) expressed their disapproval but added that they preferred a betting sponsor to a partnership with a crypto exchange, while others on Twitter [reiterated](#) that even if “far from ideal” the choice was necessary for the club to “survive this league”.

Dafabet social media [giveaways](#) for fans saw high [engagement](#), with several users [interacting](#) for the chance to win tickets to the games. Dafabet-sponsored [Celtic FC](#) also promoted promotional content featuring Bournemouth players.



The Big Step 
@the_bigstep



We are supporting this petition urging Bournemouth to drop their gambling sponsor, Dafabet.

Will you add your name and share too?
you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/afc-... via [@38_degrees](#)



“Bournemouth mark Premier League return with Dafabet main sponsorship deal. Seven gambling companies will be the primary shirt sponsor in the PL this season, down from nine last. (Nottingham Forest have yet to announce their sponsor.)”

So much for ridding football of opaque gambling operators - @afcbournemouth teams up with Dafabet, another company whose real owners the club have probably never met, operating through a front in the Isle of Man (Asian BGE), box-ticked by the UKGC.”





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



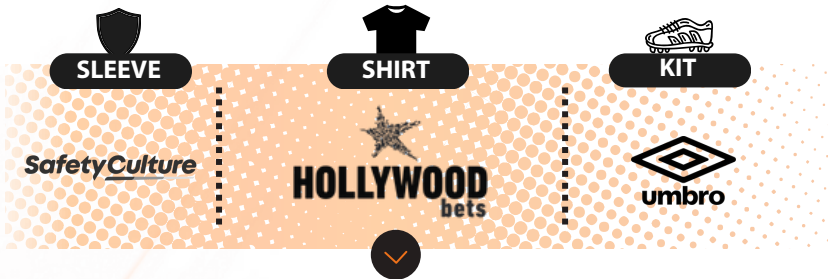
- Vivaro handed €733,000 fine for breaches of Maltese Prevention of Money Laundering and Funding of Terrorism Regulations ([FIAU Malta](#))
- Expansion into Kenya opposed by local politicians ([Sunday Post](#))
- Uses “dafanews” brand to circumvent local advertising restrictions in the Indian subcontinent ([MacroPakistani](#))

ETHICS

- White label through Vivaro Ltd which is listed on the ICIJ offshore leaks database and based in Malta, a tax haven ([Josimar Football](#))
- Vivaro’s sole shareholder listed in the ICIJ offshore leaks database and is based in the Isle of Man, a tax haven, and whose Armenian owners allegedly invested €2 million into the Maltese economy to obtain citizenship ([ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#), [Malta Independent](#))



Brentford



£ Undisclosed

Value of Hollywoodbets sponsorship (reported as £4 million per year)

This was Hollywoodbets' second year of its deal to sponsor Brentford. It was initially reported that Brentford would seek a replacement for the deal amid the upcoming ban on betting shirt sponsors and charges against striker Ivan Toney for breaches of betting rules, however, the club renewed the deal in July 2023.

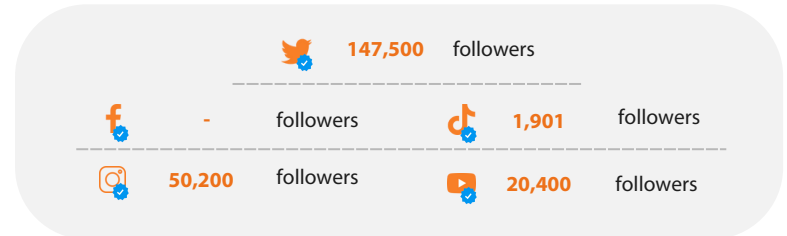
([Brentford FC](#), [SportsProMedia](#), [The Athletic](#))



Social Media Activation

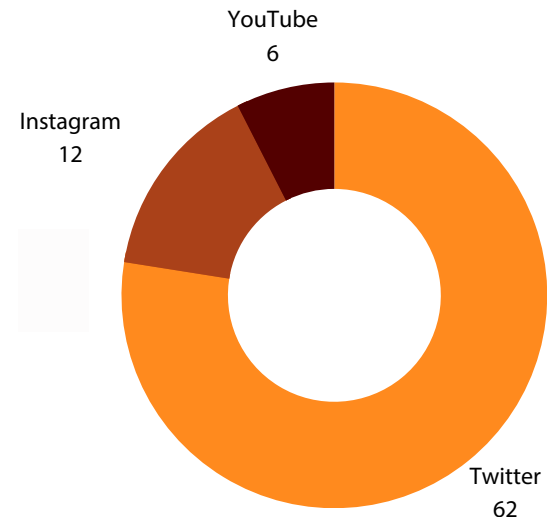
Potential brand exposure

220,001



Brand activations over the season

80 posts



Hollywoodbets actively posted [content](#) on Brentford across its [pages](#) over the season using the hashtag [#HollywoodbetsxBrentfordFC](#) to share news of the club. It also created the [#CanYouKickUp](#) challenge on Instagram and [YouTube Shorts](#) featuring Brentford footballers.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

1,100

social media mentions of Brentford & Hollywoodbets



Sentiment

Hashtags

Brentford & Ivan Toney - 230 posts

Brentford & #TheBees - 184 posts



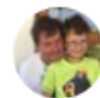
Conversation around Hollywoodbets and Brentford partnership remained low across social media, with a mostly negative perception following Ivan Toney's suspension. A few users thanked Hollywoodbets for [invitations](#) to game day [experiences](#), however prominent Brentford fan website [Griffin Park Grapevine](#) raised concerns on the requirements to register on Hollywoodbets and make bets to be allowed to enter giveaways.

In March, [news](#) that the club was looking for a [replacement](#) sponsor started to circulate, with many [users](#) connecting this choice to the investigation into Toney's breach of betting rules.

Several [users](#) pointed out the controversy of banning [Toney](#) for breaching betting rules while still allowing the club to be sponsored by a betting company, calling for a [ban](#) on gambling shirt sponsors and welcoming the search for a new partnership.



Ivan Toney has been banned from all footballing activities for 8 months. This is him wearing his club @BrentfordFC home shirt, sponsored by @Hollywoodbets who paid \$3M to have their name & logo on the shirts this season.



Gary Lemke
@GaryLemke · Follow

SA gaming company @Hollywoodbets is front shirt sponsor for EPL club @BrentfordFC They wouldn't do so if they didn't get their ROI. R1bn isn't a lot for 3 years worth of advertising on Spurs' shirt. The harder part is 🇿🇦 getting its act together to be a desirable destination

1:10 PM · Feb 2, 2023

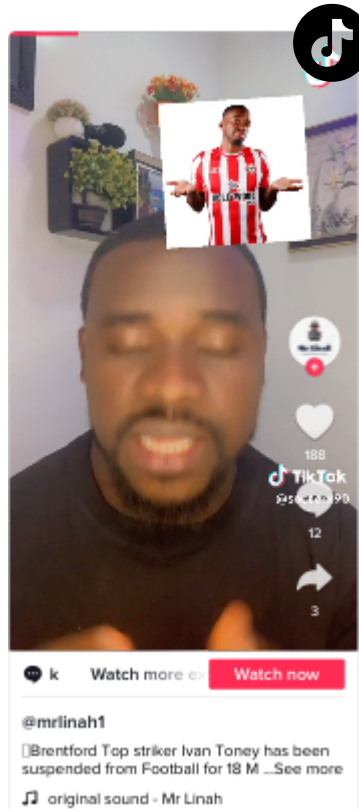




BIAS - Brentford FC f...
@BrentfordBIAS · Follow



Read this article and how it outlines why we want @Hollywoodbets sponsorship o @brentfordfc stopped. High street betting kills and emotionally injures thousands of people each year. @ladyhaja



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



► ETHICS

- Customers allege conflict of interest as company sponsors individual jockeys ([IOL](#))
- Licensed through a company, Hollywoodbets International Ltd, based in Isle of Man – a tax haven ([Gambling Commission](#))



Brighton & Hove Albion



£ 8.3 million

Value of American Express sponsorship

Continuing its sponsorship deal signed in 2013, American Express featured on the front of Brighton & Hove Albion FC's shirt for the season. The agreement also includes naming rights of the American Express Community Stadium and Performance Centre. Support of the club's charity, Albion in the Community, is an important part of the partnership with several initiatives taking place in Brighton throughout the year.

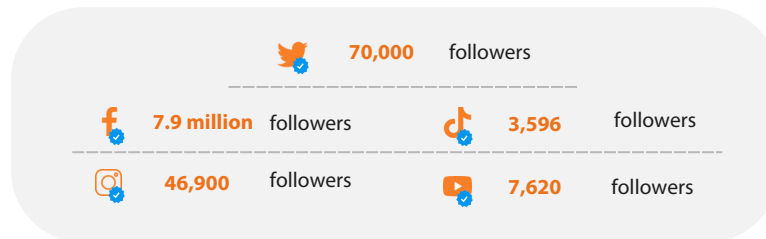
([SportBusiness Sponsorship](#))



Social Media Activation

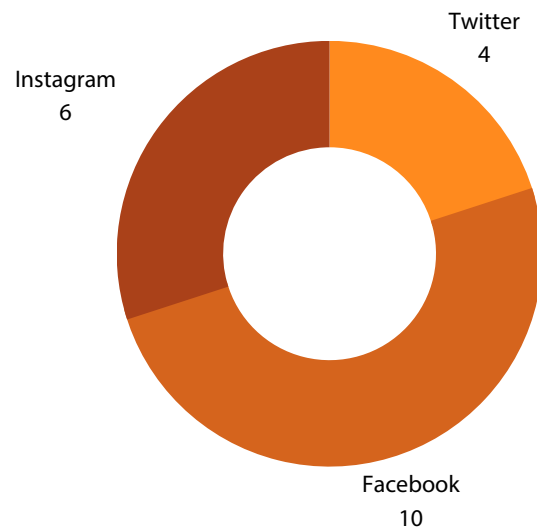
Potential brand exposure

8 million



Brand activations over the season

20 posts



American Express promoted the club 20 times on its social media accounts, sharing [initiatives](#) with Albion in the Community and celebrating Brighton securing a place for the 2023/24 [Europa League](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

5,200

social media mentions of Brighton & Hove Albion & American Express



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

American Express & #BHAFC - 218 posts

Amex Stadium & BHAFC - 12,900 posts



Social media conversation on the partnership decreased slightly this season, but perception improved as sentiment was positive overall. Mentions of the company focused on posts from sponsored [events](#) at the Stadium.

Over the months several users interacted in [voting](#) the AmexUK [Player of the Match](#) on American Express' accounts.

The creation of the [Amex TikTok correspondent role](#) offering the opportunity to follow the team on the Premier League Summer Series tour to the USA generated excitement among fans, with several pointing at Brighton creator and podcaster [Ryan Adsett](#) as ideal candidate.



More Radio

@moresussex · Follow

NEWS: American Express has launched a nationwide scouting mission to find an 'Amex TikTok Correspondent' to follow [#Brighton](#) & [#Hove](#) [#Albion](#) on The Premier League Summer Series tour to the USA. [#MoreRadioNews](#) [#Sussex](#)



Elevate Global

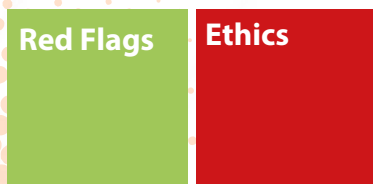
@ElevateStaffing · Follow

As key sponsors of Brighton, American Express wanted to celebrate the semi finals with the fans! Stationed in a high traffic area within Boxpark, we provided 2 brand ambassadors to distribute branded Brighton x American Express scarves. Make an enquiry ➔ bit.ly/44dDN76





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Suspended a director in foreign-exchange pricing probe ([Reuters](#))
- Chairman linked to smear campaign against rival banker ([LA Times](#))
- Shut down services to customers gained through welcome offers ([Forbes](#))
- CEO compensation US \$28.5 million ([PaymentsDive](#))

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Backlash after diversity training said capitalism was racist ([Yahoo News](#))

CRIMINAL LITIGATION

- Investigated by federal regulators who alleged company misled business owners ([Investopedia](#), [The Hill](#))
- Refunded customers US \$85 million after being found to violate consumer protection laws ([NY Times](#))
- Ruled to have violated antitrust laws ([US Department of Justice](#))
- Federal agency probing sales practices ([The Hill](#))



Chelsea



£ Undisclosed

Value of Three UK sponsorship (reported as £40 million per year)

The deal with Three was temporarily suspended after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Three’s branding was removed from Stamford Bridge and was supposed to be pulled from the club’s shirts, though this never happened. The sponsorship resumed after the acquisition of the club by Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital. In February 2023, the club announced that the deal would not be renewed.

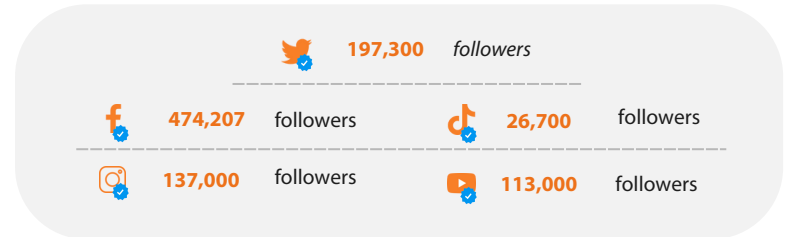
([The Guardian](#), [Footy Headlines](#), [Footy Headlines](#))



Social Media Activation

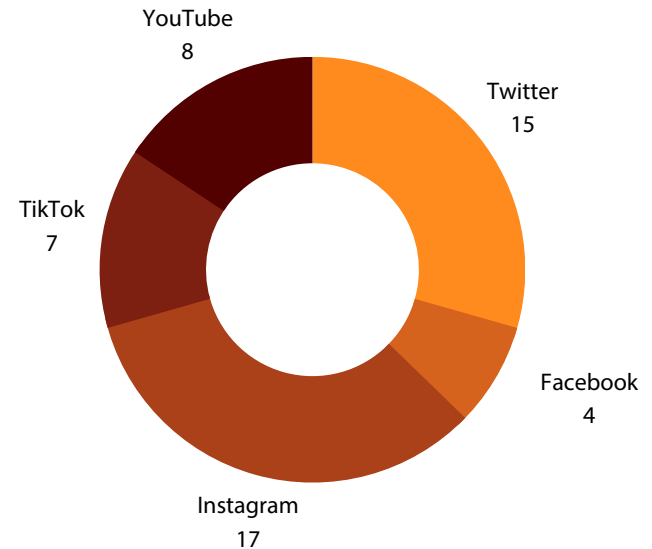
Potential brand exposure

947,907 users



Brand activations over the season

51 posts



Three created several formats across its channels to promote its partnership with Chelsea, including the popular [#ConnectWith](#) series, the [#TalkMoreThanFootball](#) initiative with UK charity [Samaritans](#) and videos with [highlights](#) from the season.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

19,500

social media mentions of Chelsea FC & Three UK



Sentiment

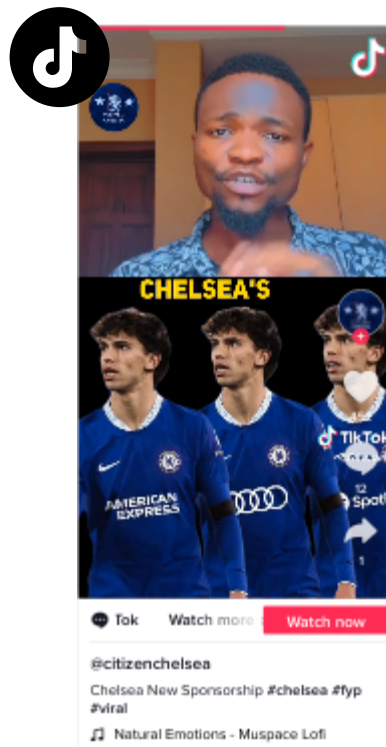
Hashtags

Chelsea FC & #ConnectWith - 4,600 posts

#Chelsea FC & #TalkMoreThanFootball - 1,500 posts

Online conversation reduced compared to the previous year, with the **focus** being on Chelsea's decision to **not renew** the sponsorship deal with Three, which was largely **well received** by users. The club's search for a new **sponsor** created speculation among fans on **Reddit**. Users on **TikTok** created **videos** to poll their followers on what their choice would be.

The release of the new kits at the beginning of the season saw numerous **users attacking** Three for having temporarily **suspended** the partnership in the previous months and stating the fans "**hadn't forgotten**". A few expressed their **preference** for the training kit with the Trivago logo.



SkepticSlakoth · 5 mo. ago

No betting or shady crypto sponsors please.

382 ↑ ↓ Reply Share ...

jolle2001 · 5 mo. ago

Considering the crypto market right and how whalefin bailed on us I dont think so, betting sponsors are also being cracked down on last time I checked

178 ↑ ↓ Reply Share ...



Łukasz Bączek

@Lu_Class_



- * Chelsea in shirt sponsor talks with Stake after crypto deal falls through, undisclosed suitor proposed £44m/year
- * Everton's current sponsor (Stake) offers ca.£40m/year
- * The German Allianz offered only £20m/year
- * Sponsorship agency Turnistle valued the CFC shirt at £43.4m/year



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ ETHICS

- Ultimate beneficial owner incorporated in a tax haven ([CK Hutchison Holdings Limited](#))
- Former holding company listed by the Burma Campaign UK on its 'dirty list' of companies that did business with the military junta via Hutchinson Port Holdings ([Burma Campaign](#))

▶ HUMAN RIGHTS

- Valentine's Day advert labelled as "misogynistic" ([Manchester Evening News](#))



Crystal Palace



£ Undisclosed

Value of Cinch sponsorship
(reported as £6.5 million per year)

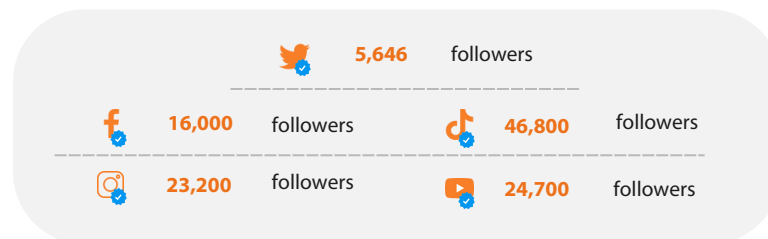
Cinch became Crystal Palace's front-of-shirt sponsor for the 2022/23 season signing a multi-year contract. As part of the agreement, the brand also features on training wear and receives brand exposure with the club's Academy teams, at Selhurst Park stadium, on digital channels and replica shirts. (Cinch, The Times, Swiss Ramble)



Social Media Activation

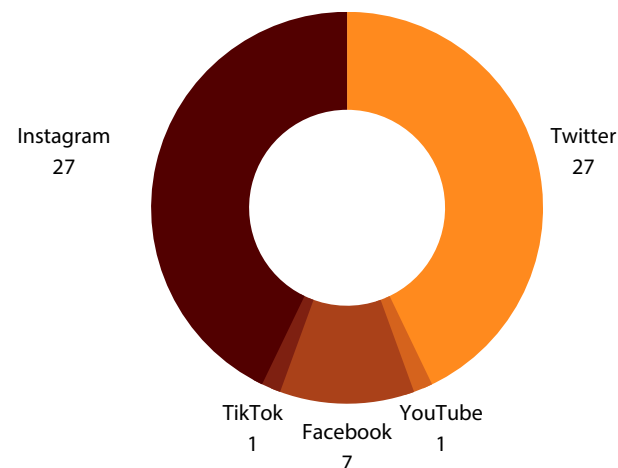
Potential brand exposure

116,346 users



Brand activations over the season

63 posts



Cinch's updates promoting Crystal Palace included pictures from several in-person marketing initiatives and offers of experiences. The brand used its slogan "cinched it" sharing videos of players' best moments. On its TikTok channel, it featured challenges with some of the players.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

6,800

social media mentions of Crystal Palace FC & Cinch



Sentiment



Hashtags

Crystal Palace & #CinchIt - 323 posts
 Crystal Palace & #Cinch - 363 posts

The Cinch sponsorship deal increased conversation around Crystal Palace significantly, with largely positive sentiment as fans welcomed the replacement of betting sponsor W88.

The signing of Crystal Palace’s technical partnership with Macron and the launch of the [new kits](#) ahead of the season saw many users voicing their [approval](#) of both Cinch and Macron as new sponsors. Several users also [praised](#) the company for featuring the [women’s teams](#) in the kit announcement.

Crystal Palace for Life Foundation and Cinch’s [initiative](#) to open Selhurst Park once a week as a “warm hub” for residents over 65 was [well received](#) online.

A few [posts](#) promoted Cinch’s ice cream vans near the stadium during match days and other marketing initiatives. The brand’s slogan “[cinched it](#)” was embraced by fans across social media.



ACL Soccer

A screenshot of a Twitter post. The user is Luke Weaser-Seychell (@Luke_Seychell). The text of the tweet reads: 'Absolutely loving the Cinch x Macron link up. Goalkeeper, away and training kits all looking absolutely stunning 🙌🔥'. Below the text is a collage of four images showing football players in various kits, some with Cinch and Macron branding. The tweet is dated 2:16 PM · Jul 1, 2022 and has 6 likes. There are buttons for 'Reply' and 'Copy link', and a 'Read more on Twitter' button at the bottom.



r/ScottishFootball · 1 yr. ago
by drop_road_7SA

Crystal Palace F.C. cinches it



Coach Steve
@SteveAdex9 · Follow



The 2022/23 Crystal Palace away kit has been released, available to pre-order now and in-store from August. The away kit features the club's 1861 crest, new sponsors Cinch and Technical Partner Macron. [#crystalpalace](#)



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



► ETHICS

- SPL deal conflicted with Rangers sponsorship ([Sky Sports](#))
- Parent company owns entities via tax havens ([Financial Times](#))

► HUMAN RIGHTS

- As of 2021, its parent company, TDR Capital, had never had a female deal-making partner ([Financial Times](#))



Everton



£ Undisclosed

Value of Stake.com sponsorship

(reported as £15 million per year)

Ahead of the 2022/2023 season, Everton signed a multi-year partnership with the casino and sports betting platform, Stake.com, making it the highest value front-of-shirt sponsorship in the club's history. The partnership also includes promotion of the brand on screens, media backdrops and digital platforms.

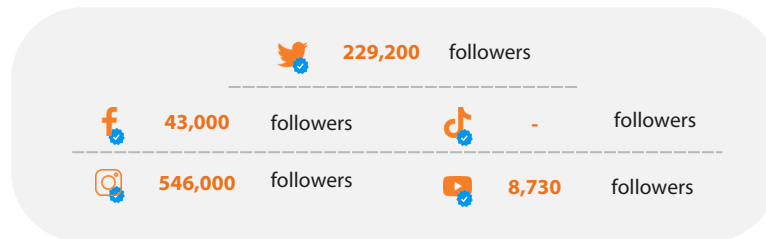
([Everton](#), [The Athletic](#), [Swiss Ramble](#))



Social Media Activation

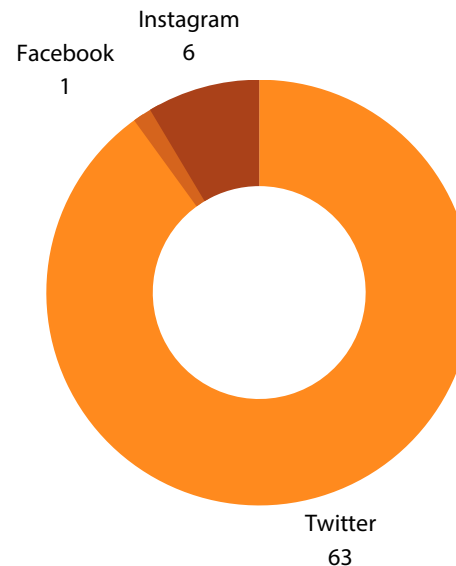
Potential brand exposure

335,530 users



Brand activations over the season

70 posts



Stake.com shared 70 [posts](#) promoting Everton during the season, primarily on Twitter. These included [pictures](#) from matches and [competitions](#) to win VIP packages and experiences.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

49,800

social media mentions of Everton FC & Stake.com



Sentiment



Hashtags

- #EvertonFC - 681 posts
- #EmiratesFACup - 560 posts

Social media sentiment worsened significantly over the season as conversation volumes spiked with the change in sponsorship from Cazoo to Stake.com. Users perceived Stake.com in a negative light over the season and a [petition](#) with over 20,000 signatures was widely shared online as [fans](#) asked the club to reconsider the deal.

As Stake.com shared Everton-themed [betting bonus codes](#) on Twitter, users voiced their [disapproval](#) at seeing the club's involvement in promoting online gambling. A user [noted](#) "what Stake does on live stream promotions is a disgrace. How Everton and Watford didn't look into it is beyond me."

[Coverage](#) of the company's \$400m lawsuit from a former business partner of its co-founders often mentioned its role as sponsor of Everton generating negative sentiment towards the club.

Numerous Stake.com-sponsored [YouTube videos](#) from Asia-based creators discussed betting on Stake.com and mentioned the brand's sponsorship of Everton. Also, several [bot accounts](#) posted under Everton's updates on Twitter promoting betting on Stake.com.



I've just signed the petition calling on @Everton to drop their new sponsorship with online betting site Stake. These companies fuel gambling addiction which can ruin lives, @Everton should not play a part in that. Will you join me?



James Grimes
@JamesGrimesGwL

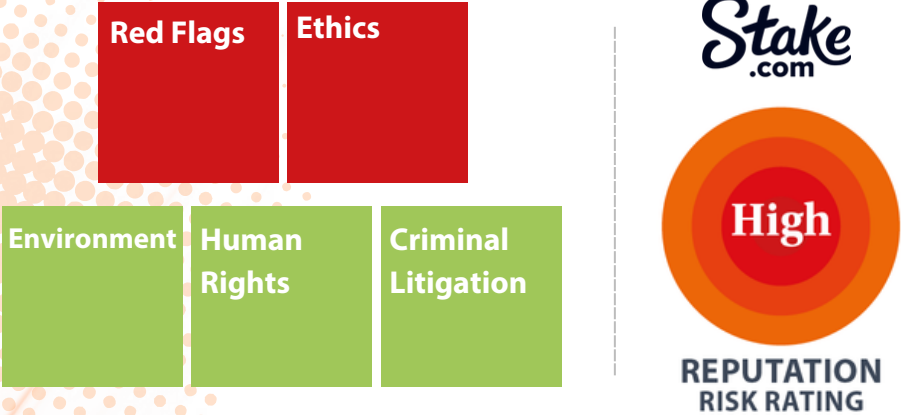


Many downplay the significance of gambling sponsorship in football. They say it's just about 'logos on shirts', but it's much more than that.

These deals normalise and legitimise abnormal and unsafe practices like this, and Everton/Stake are far from alone in their complicity.



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ RED FLAGS

- Owner of Stake Holdings, presumably the holding company, is founder's father, Jamie Craven, who was jailed for a year in the 1980s for fraud and contempt of court ([Australian Financial Review](#))

▶ ETHICS

- White Label via TGP Europe which is based in the Isle of Man, a tax haven ([Gambling Commission](#))

- TGP Europe's Hong Kong-based likely former UBO, LET Group Holdings, linked to organised crime and money laundering. LET Group's former CEO, Chau Cheek-Wa was convicted of illegal gambling, fraud and involvement in a criminal Organisation in January 2023 (InsightX)
- When accessed from outside the UK, its website says that it is owned and operated by mBet Solutions NV which is based in Curaçao, a tax haven ([Stake.com](#))
- Set up and launched in Melbourne by Ed Craven and Bijan Tehrani. Online casinos are banned in Australia, however, it is not illegal to operate an online casino from Australia as long as it does not serve Australians ([The Sydney Morning Herald](#)).
- Texan Twitch streamer broadcast himself using Stake.com whilst using VPN to circumvent website's lack of gaming licence in the US ([Wired](#))
- Structured in a way that it "legitimately avoids full Anti-Money Laundering/Counter-Terrorism Financing scrutiny globally" ([The Sydney Morning Herald](#)).



Fulham



£ Undisclosed

Value of W88 sponsorship

(reported as £3.5 million per year)

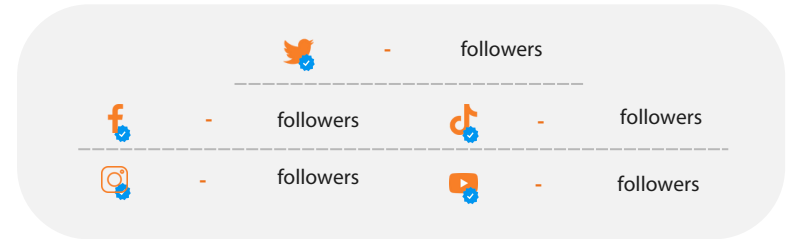
Ahead of the 2022/2023 season, Fulham announced a record partnership deal with W88 to run for one year. The agreement also offered W88 visibility across Craven Cottage on matchdays and via the Club's digital channels. ([Sportcal](#), [Fulham](#), [Swiss Ramble](#))



Social Media Activation

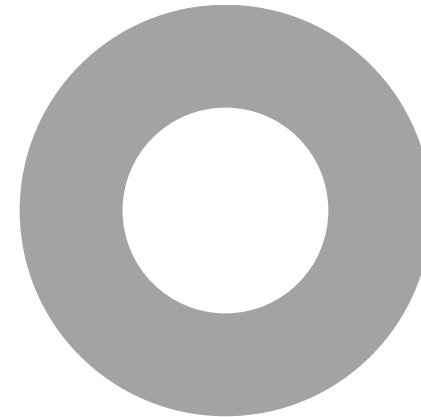
Potential brand exposure

0 users



Brand activations over the season

0 posts



With a social media presence composed of several unverified accounts across different Asian regions, W88 didn't offer any clear and cohesive platform for brand exposure to Fulham. Its local website, w88.co.uk, appears to be inaccessible from the United Kingdom. While the company created a dedicated Twitter account when sponsoring Aston Villa and Crystal Palace in previous seasons, no profile was opened to support Fulham.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

1,800

social media mentions of Fulham & W88



Sentiment



Hashtags

Fulham & #W88 - 180 posts

Fulham & #FulhamFCW88 - 30 posts

Social media mentions were low and [conversation](#) focussed on the [announcement](#) of the sponsorship, seeing a significant [backlash](#) from users over the choice of a gambling company, with some inviting fans to buy the [training kit](#) sponsored by World Mobile instead.

Former England goalkeeper [Peter Shilton](#) commented: "I always looked on them as a family club but not any more money has spoken over principal! Football needs to detach itself from gambling and soon!"

[Reddit](#) thread "Mystery surrounds our new sponsor W88" reports investigations into W88 from some sources and asks how fans could hold the club accountable.

Discussion around the upcoming gambling front-of-shirt sponsorship ban often mentions Fulham among the clubs which might be forced to [change](#) sponsors.



overhyped-unamazing · 1 yr. ago

Ah yes, another shady Channel Islands' based entity aimed at markets where gambling is illegal. Seems legit.

Then again, we were sponsored by a Ponzi scheme a few years ago so I can't really talk.

↑ 55 ↓ Reply Share ...



Sanogoals22 · 1 yr. ago

So despite the new rule coming into place, they've committed to a gambling sponsorship

↑ 64 ↓ Reply Share ...



Philippe Auclair

@PhilippeAu... · Follow



Come on, Fulham...W88 is another 'white label' Asian-facing online bookmaker. Those opaque operators are using PL clubs to promote gambling in a region where almost all gambling is banned/illegal. Has W88 assured you they were 'different', then?





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Certain sources suggest it is operated by Marquee Holdings which is registered in the British Virgin Islands, a tax haven ([Crunchbase](#), [ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#))
- The link between W88 and Marquee Holdings appears to be confirmed in a lawsuit filed by the latter in Hong Kong in which it attempted to dispute a number of domain names similar those it has owned since 2013, variations of w88.com ([Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Centre](#))
- No apparent UK presence ([W88](#))

- Marquee Holdings' agent, Mossack Fonseca, whose principals are currently awaiting trial in Brazil and have been charged with numerous crimes by US and German authorities and shut down after a raid by Panamanian authorities seeking information regarding links to engineering firm which had admitted bribery ([The Guardian](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Guardian](#), [Associated Press](#))
- Other sources suggest it is operated by Midnight Gaming, which shares an address with gambling payment platform Hexopay and AliQuantum Gaming Limited, which was struck off the companies register for failing to make any filings in four years of existence ([Gambling Commission](#), [Hexopay](#), [Gambling Commission](#), [Companies House](#))
- Indian website and social media accounts feature cricket content and advertise gambling on the sport and also feature offerings on kabaddi and football – the legality of gambling in India is complex ([w88cric.net](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#))



Leeds United



£ Undisclosed

Value of SBOTOP sponsorship
(reported as £6.5 million per year)

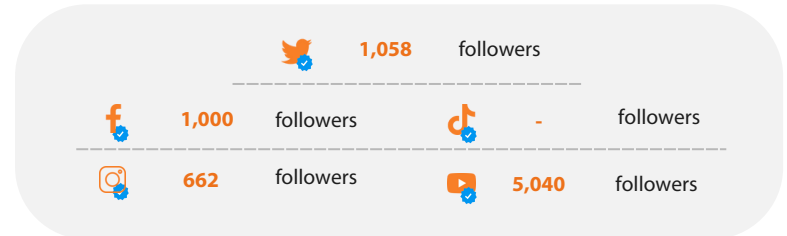
Leeds United’s deal with SBOTOP reported at £6 million represented the largest commercial deal in the club’s history and started during the 2020/2021 season. (SportsPro Media)



Social Media Activation

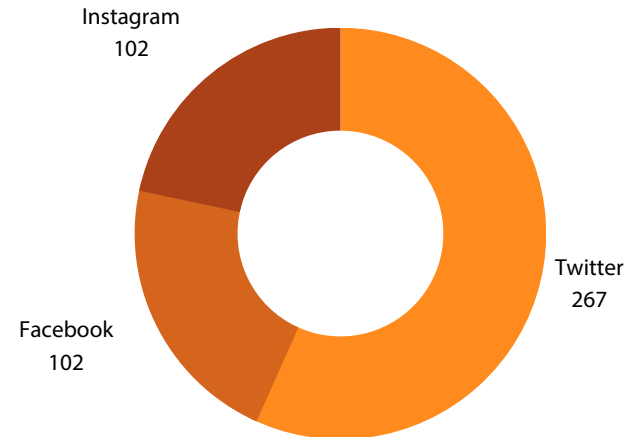
Potential brand exposure

7,760 users



Brand activations over the season

471 posts



SBOTOP made a large number of posts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook promoting Leeds United sharing wallpapers for fans to save, updates on matches and the team’s players.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

1,200

social media mentions
of Leeds United & SBOTOP



Sentiment



Hashtags

Leeds United & #SBOBET - 92 posts

Leeds United & #SBOTOP - 78 posts

Social media discussion remained low and sentiment unchanged as fans continued to view the partnership negatively. Users shared [investigations](#) into SBOTOP's possible connection to Chinese gambling-industry figure Alvin Chau.

Coverage of the upcoming ban on gambling sponsorships included [users](#) mentioning this would mean [the end](#) of the club's deal with SBOTOP.

A few users highlight their [annoyance](#) at the two O's in the sponsor name being [different](#).



yellowelephant888 · 3 mo. ago

I hope SB0top is gone completely honestly, they're a no-name gambling company and the "0" in their lettering sets my teeth on edge.

I'd love to see a proper Yorkshire company as our new main sponsor. Obviously it can't be Evening Post since print medium is dead, but perhaps someone like Yorkshire Tea. In all likelihood it'll be an insurance company though, which scores zero cool points.

63 ↑ ↓ Reply Share ...



NoAlternative17 · 3 mo. ago

Yorkshire tea would be class, just anything but gambling is a win really.

36 ↑ ↓ Reply Share ...



BrighterBeat
@EastStandL29 · Follow



Everything Leeds fans feared about our weird sponsor SBOTOP is seemingly true in this revealing piece. Worth a look [@TheSquareBall](#) and [@PhilHay_](#) ... [#lufc](#) are taking money from Chinese triad gangsters. Please get SBOTOP off our shirts now [@andrearadri](#)
👀 [@LeedsUnitedYEP](#) [@apopey](#)



Nick Harris @sportingintel

English football's complicated / controversial / opaque relationship with gambling firms has been an issue with lots of fans in recent years. Spent some time investigating a specific part of this industry. A Saturday night [\[redacted\]](#) (and story) on the subject.

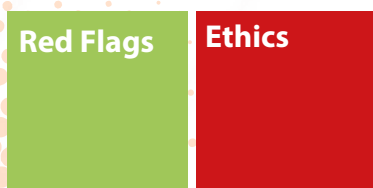
1/n

11:22 PM · Jan 21, 2023





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- White labelled via TGP Europe which is based in Isle of Man, a tax haven ([Gambling Commission](#))
- TGP Europe's alleged former UBO is a Macau-based operation with links to the Chinese criminal underworld ([Josimar Football](#))
- Operates in the Asian market allowing individuals in jurisdictions where gambling is illegal to gamble unlawfully, risking criminal charges ([Josimar Football](#))

- Linked to Celton Manx Limited whose shareholder Celton, International Limited is wholly owned by Cardenhill Limited, an entity based in Tortuga, the BVI ([Josimar Football](#))



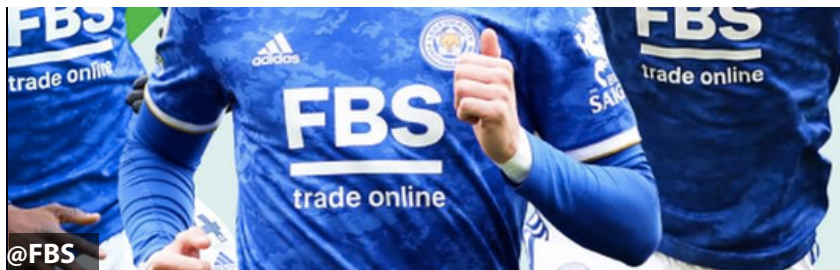
Leicester City



£ Undisclosed
 Value of FBS sponsorship
 (reported as £15 million)

Now in its second year, FBS' three-year sponsorship deal with Leicester City started in the 2021/2022 season and was reported as a "record deal" for the club and reportedly significantly more than the £12 million one with its previous sponsor, King Power.

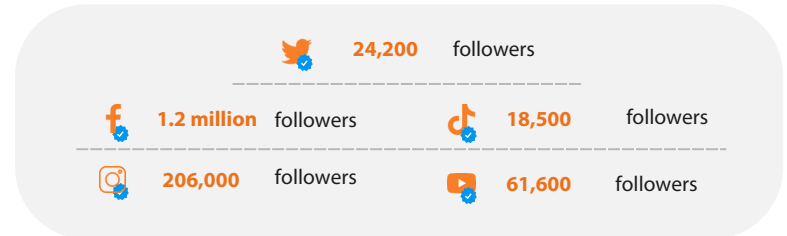
(SportPro Media)



Social Media Activation

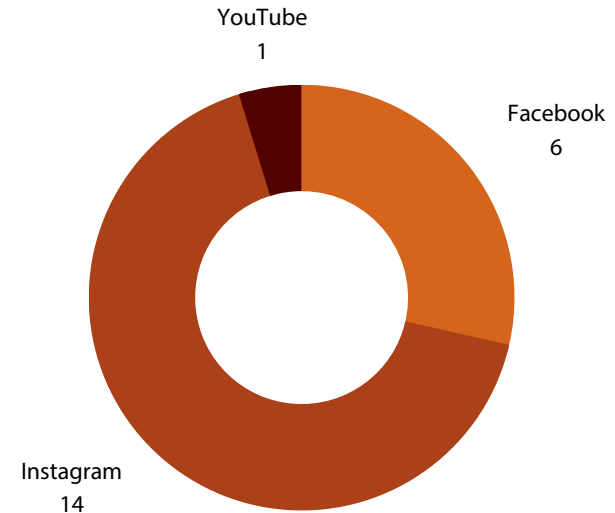
Potential brand exposure

1.5 million users



Brand activations over the season

21 posts



FBS created original content in partnership with Leicester City featuring the club's players promoting trading education, including the campaign, "Make Your Own Way".



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

969

social media mentions of Leicester City & FBS



Hashtags

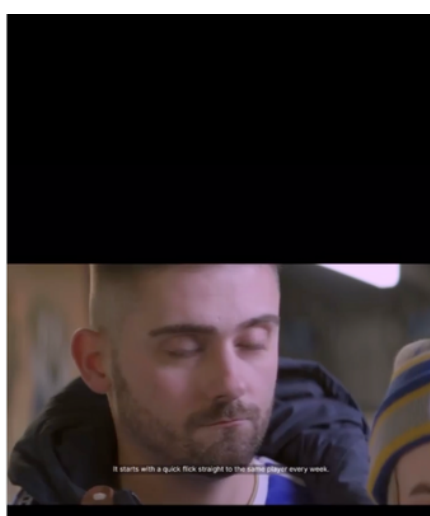
- Leicester City & #Forex - 15 posts
- Leicester City & #Broker - 15 posts



Social media mentions of Leicester City and FBS were minimal over this season and featured broadly negative sentiment about the brand. Several fans expressed their desire to have Walkers back as sponsor instead of FBS.

Towards the end of the season, some users discussed who the next sponsor might be and what value might the club look for in a sponsorship following the club's relegation to the Championship.

The Make Your Own Way project in partnership with the team received some pickup on social media.



graham.ww · Follow
Original audio

graham.ww Commercial for @lfc @fbs_forex
67 w

graham.ww #leicester #lfc #leicestercity #leicestercityfootballclub #football #fbs #amazing #advert #commercaill #lfcfamily #leicestercityfc #foxes #kingpowerstadium
67 w Reply





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ ETHICS

- Holding company, FBS Markets Inc, incorporated in Belize, a tax haven ([FBS](#))
- EU business is owned and operated by Tradestone Limited, licensed and registered in Cyprus, a tax haven ([FBS](#))
- Registered business address on EU website features on the ICIJ offshore leaks database ([ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#))
- Russian review website details numerous complaints around withdrawals, with a number referring to the company as a scam ([Forex Broker Rating](#))

- Offers leveraged crypto trading ([FBS](#))
- Japanese Ministry of Finance warned against using FBS as it was operating in the country without a licence ([Finance Magnates](#))
- Operates in Myanmar, Zimbabwe and Russia, all of which are subject to US sanctions ([Forex Agent Reviews](#), [Finance Magnates](#))
- Linked to individuals accused of embezzling US \$1.5 million ([Forex Scam](#))



Liverpool



£40 million

Value of Standard Chartered sponsorship

Signed in 2010, the Standard Chartered sponsorship deal with Liverpool has been a strong partnership over the years with the brand creating numerous campaigns to promote the club and fans. Despite rumours that Liverpool was looking for a replacement, the agreement was renewed during the 2022/2023 season for another 4 years, increasing the annual value to £50 million.

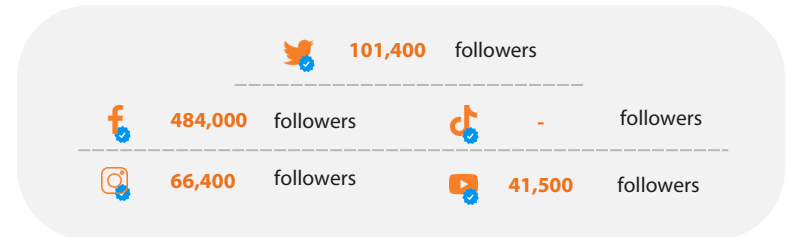
([The Athletic](#), [The Guardian](#), [Liverpool Echo](#))



Social Media Activation

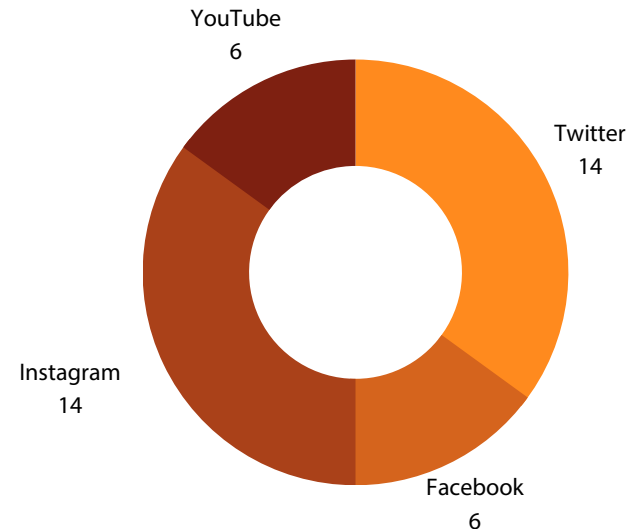
Potential brand exposure

693,300 users



Brand activations over the season

40 posts



Standard Chartered used the bespoke hashtags [#SCHallofFans](#) and [#StandRed](#) to promote posts related to Liverpool. The updates included videos of [activities](#) organised with footballers such as the “[One hour, 1,000 prizes](#)” to meet fans, and [messages](#) from players to their [followers](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

82,600

social media mentions of Liverpool & Standard Chartered



Sentiment

Hashtags

- Liverpool & #StandRed - 2,600 posts
- Liverpool & #SCstays - 3,400 posts



Conversations about the partnership stayed at high levels this season and continued to feature mostly negative sentiment. Over 8,000 [mentions](#) about the extension of the deal were shared and there was high [engagement](#) among fans. Users [commented](#) they were relieved that the club had not chosen a crypto sponsor.

[Investigations](#) into Standard Chartered's [financing](#) of £6.18bn to a company "which owns a mine that is causing irreparable damage to Luis Diaz's village" referenced its role as Liverpool's sponsor and the fact that the threatened Wayuu village is where forward [Luis Diaz](#) is from.

Negative sentiment [surrounded](#) news that Liverpool had been urged by politicians to drop the company as a sponsor as the bank faced a backlash for endorsing China's "brutal human rights abuses" in Hong Kong. [A professor of sport](#) shared the news and tweeted: "Geopolitical economy of sport - another sport laundry analogy... As with sport washing, operating environment becoming increasingly sensitive, complex, difficult to navigate."

The "[Bank More Score More](#)" campaign gathered 7,000 mentions over the season. Users also interacted with the company sharing [updates](#) on the Player Of The Month and [Player Of The Year](#).

[Kick Fossil Fuels Out of Football](#) campaign group continued to share posts against Standard Chartered's sponsorship of the club.

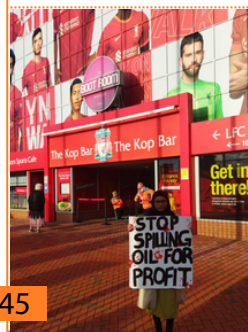


Karachi United @karachiunitedfc



For the past few days, we were at @LFC attending a Community Coaches' workshop to further reinforce our knowledge of 'The Liverpool Way' with sessions & meetings thanks to our amazing partners @StanChart 🇬🇧

#KarachiUnited #TrainTheTrainer #StandardCharteredPakistan #LFC #KUYouth



It's been a busy morning... hosted this virtual meet and greet with two very special managers talking leadership and diversity with @StanChart and @LFC



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

Red Flags

Ethics

Environment

Human Rights

Criminal Litigation



RED FLAGS

- Fined £220 million by US regulators after being found to have laundered hundred of billions of pounds for Iran ([The Guardian](#))
- Fined US \$327 million for violating sanctions involving payments from Iran, Burma, Libya and Sudan ([CNN Money](#))
- Fined £102.2 million by Financial Conduct Authority for poor AML controls, operated under deferred prosecution as these fines were handed down and in 2019, it was reported that SC was expected to pay over USD 1 billion to resolve all of the probes ([FCA](#), [Reuters](#))

- FinCEN leaks revealed that SC processed payments in Jordan linked to terrorist financing ([BBC](#), [BBC](#))

ETHICS

- Named in ICIJ FinCEN Files, Pakistan subsidiary also named ([BuzzFeed](#), [Pakistan Today Profit](#))
- Bankers received biggest bonuses since the financial crisis in 2023, sharing a pot of US \$1.6 billion, after rising global interest rates pushed its profits up 28% ([The Guardian](#))
- Forced to appoint self-regulation officials who report to US authorities after Iranian money laundering episode ([New York Times](#))
- Claimed it stopped breaking sanctions in 2014 ([Forbes](#))
- Signed letter in 2004 committing to comply with AML procedures ([The Federal Reserve Board](#))
- Named in lawsuit accusing it of handing high-interest loans to the apartheid-era government of South Africa which was subject to sanctions ([The Guardian](#))



▶ ETHICS

- UK authorities rejected an application for a government-backed £500 million loan to scandal-hit Greensill in 2020 after being approached by Standard Chartered ([Global Trade Review](#))
- Named numerous times in ICIJ offshore leaks database ([ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#))
- Subsidiary operated tax evasion scheme which led to US \$200 million fine for Kenyan company ([ICIJ](#))

▶ ENVIRONMENT

- Financing of Indonesia project led to hundreds of people being displaced through flooding caused by deforestation, and the development of a coal mine will lead to thousands of premature pollution-related deaths ([Brandalism](#))
- Loaned money to companies with palm oil subsidiaries ([Greenpeace Unearthed](#))
- Investigation revealed €2.52 billion funding of companies involved in deforestation ([EuroNews](#))
- Funding North Sea oil field development ([Client Earth](#))

- Shareholders called on bank to act on net zero promises ([Market Forces](#))

- *SC is the biggest UK financier for new coal plant developers in Asia*
- *SC is financing coal companies undermining climate action such as India's Adani Group, which is constructing the controversial 60 megatonne-per-annum Carmichael mine in Australia*
- *SC recently financed Adaro Energy, an Indonesian coal company which SC's own analysis shows has a business plan aligned with a catastrophic 5-6°C of global warming*
- *SC continues to fund oil and gas companies expanding the fossil fuel industry, including Saudi Aramco, the world's single biggest polluting company*
- *SC provided US \$24.02 billion to the coal, oil and gas sectors since the 2015 Paris Agreement was signed*

▶ HUMAN RIGHTS

- Club urged by cross-party group of UK politicians to drop partnership due to it being "complicit" in China's crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, previously criticised by major shareholder over same issue ([The Telegraph](#))



▶ CRIMINAL LITIGATION

- Fined £46.55 million by UK authorities for failing to comply with transparency rules and regulatory reporting governance ([Bank of England](#), [Bank of England](#))
- Fined £20.4 million in 2020 for loans to a Turkish bank, Denizbank, which was majority owned by Russian bank Sberbank, subject to EU and US sanctions ([Kirkland](#))
- Fined US \$300 million by New York regulators after failure to comply with AML protocols originating in Hong Kong and the UAE ([Gulf News](#))
- Fined US \$13 million in 2020 for forex takeover rule violations committed in 2007 when it bought a stake in Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd ([Bloomberg](#))
- US \$250,000 fine imposed by Indian regulators in 2021 after delays in fraud reporting ([Business Standard](#))



Manchester City



£ **67.5 million**

Value of Etihad sponsorship

Signed in 2009, Etihad's sponsorship of Manchester City became a 10-year deal in 2011 also including naming rights for the stadium. In February 2020, investigations by UEFA's Club Financial Control Body (CFCB) fined the club following allegations that the sponsorship was in fact financed by the Abu Dhabi government. The CFCB suspended the team for two years, but the ban was later overturned.

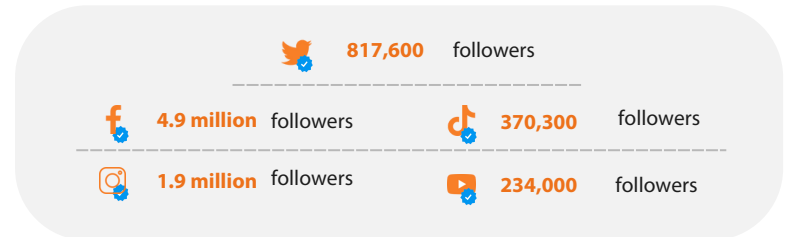
([Statista](#), [The Guardian](#), [Football Insider 24/7](#))



Social Media Activation

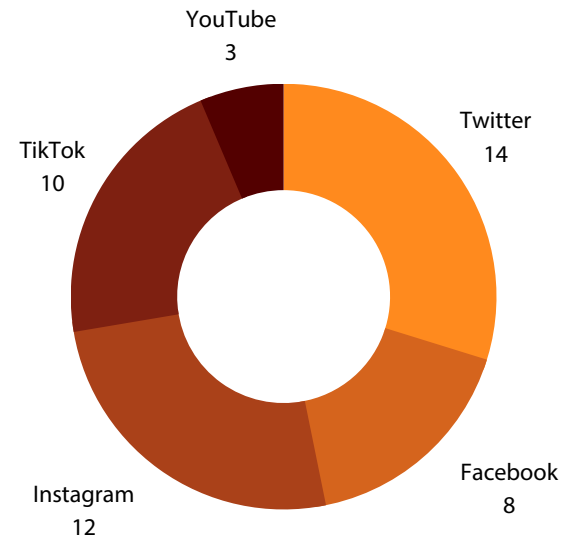
Potential brand exposure

8.2 million users



Brand activations over the season

47 posts



Etihad [created](#) different [formats](#) across its channels to promote Manchester City, such as 'Travel Tales' on [YouTube](#) and 'Guess The Country' challenge on [Facebook](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

55,200

social media mentions of Manchester City & Etihad



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

Manchester City & #CityzensGiving - 147 posts



Manchester City & #ManCity - 6,300 posts

Social media mentions of Etihad and Manchester City increased and sentiment became largely positive compared with the previous season.

Users focussed on matches and [events](#) at the stadium in [partnership](#) with the company.

Thousands of posts [celebrated](#) the club's victory in the Premier League and [Champions League](#) and included numerous pictures of the Etihad [plane](#) carrying the team.

Fans engaged with the brand's posts over the months, with over 3,000 posts shared for the choice of the [Player Of The Season](#).



Lukasz Baczek @Lu_Class_



[#ManCity](#) is currently the hegemon in terms of commercial revenue, not only in the Premier League, but globally. The club's combined revenue from the signed contract with Etihad Airways is £80m a year. In comparison, [#Spurs](#) earn 'just' £88m a year from four major partners [#TOTMCI](#)



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETIHAD AIRWAYS



ETHICS

- Questions whether Manchester City sponsorship helps club evade FFP ([Bleacher Report](#))
- Accused of inflating income figures to comply with FFP ([Marca](#))
- Chairman of Etihad Aviation Group is a member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council along with the Manchester City chairman; Abu Dhabi Executive Council expressed the aim is assisting the ruler of Abu Dhabi “to carry out his duties and powers” and “achieve the general well-being of the country.” It is answerable to its chair, Mohamed bin Zayed Al ([The Athletic](#))

- Nahyan, the brother of City’s owner Sheikh Mansour, is also the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi ([The Athletic](#))
- Organised bail-breach in the US for one of its pilots who allegedly committed racially-motivated attack ([Court House News](#))
- US carriers allege government support contravenes fair competition rules ([Transportation Research Board](#))
- Cut jobs due to huge pandemic losses of US \$1.7 billion, previously cut jobs as growth slowed ([Reuters](#), [Al Arabiya](#), [Bloomberg](#))
- Accused of favouring UAE nationals ([Law360](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- UAE is the world's sixth biggest aviation CO2 polluter, ([S&P Global](#), [ICCT](#))
- “Sustainable aviation” adverts banned in the UK for misleading consumers of the environmental impact of flying ([The Guardian](#))



HUMAN RIGHTS

- Economic success of Abu Dhabi intrinsically linked to kafala system ([Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain](#))
- Etihad staff made criminal complaint regarding army veteran's comments leading to his detention ([Paddle Your Own Kanoo](#))
- Accused of having sexist and homophobic employment policies, though this was denied ([Business & Human Rights Research Centre](#), [Huffington Post](#))
- Denied that it forced flight attendants to live in "confinement in secure compounds" ([Aviation Business ME](#))



Manchester United



£47 million

Value of TeamViewer sponsorship

TeamViewer and Manchester United's five-year shirt sponsorship agreement started with the 2021/2022 season, becoming the biggest shirt-only deal in the Premier League. However, it was announced during this season that the parties had agreed to end the sponsorship ahead of its expiration date, with the option for the club to buy back the rights to the shirt front sponsorship.

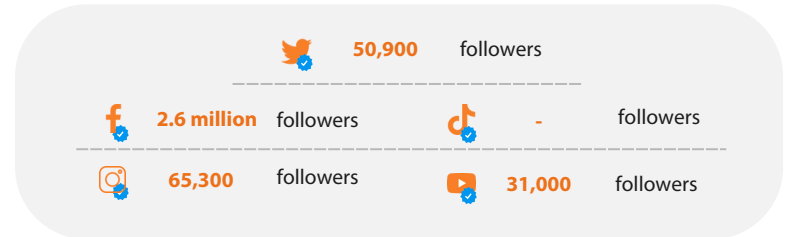
([Sky Sports](#), [Manchester United](#), [Sky Sports](#))



Social Media Activation

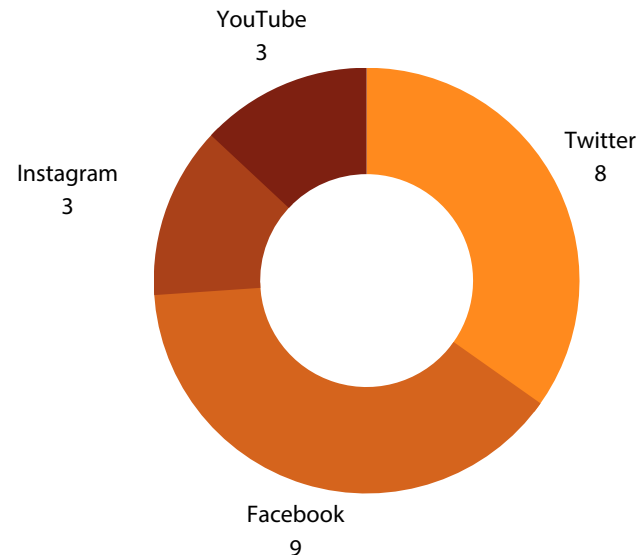
Potential brand exposure

2.7 million users



Brand activations over the season

23 posts



TeamViewer shared 23 [updates](#) on Manchester United over the season including videos for the release of the [new kits](#) and celebrating the [best moments](#) from matches and training.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

118,900

social media mentions

of Manchester United & TeamViewer



Sentiment

Hashtags

#BringYouCloser - 44,600 posts

#GlazersOut - 16,000 posts



Manchester United and TeamViewer’s partnership was the second most discussed over the season as volumes doubled compared to the previous one. Sentiment remained highly negative.

In early August 2022, [news](#) that TeamViewer did not intend to renew the deal started to circulate on social media, with many reporting that the company attributed the [loss in value](#) and stock price drop to the [sponsorship](#).

In the following two weeks, volumes increased with over 10,800 mentions including the hashtags [#EmptyOldTrafford](#) and [#GlazersOut](#) attributing the fault of the end of the deal to the club’s ownership and calling all sponsors to [dissociate](#) from Manchester United’s owners.

Others invited followers to [boycott](#) the sponsors too for their association with the club.

In December, several [sources](#) reported that the two parties had [agreed](#) to an early end of the deal, with many [users](#) calling the club “a sinking ship”. Volumes of online conversation started to spike, with Twitter users [discussing](#) who might become the new sponsor.

[#BringingYouCloser](#) posts introducing new players saw positive engagement from fans.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis





Newcastle United



£ Undisclosed

Value of Fun88 sponsorship
(reported as £8 million per year)

The sponsorship agreement between Newcastle United and Fun88 was initially signed in 2017 and extended in 2020. At the end of the past season, the club announced the deal would not continue after this one and it was later confirmed that Fun88 will remain as the club's Asian betting partner only.

([SportsPro Media](#), [SportsPro Media](#))

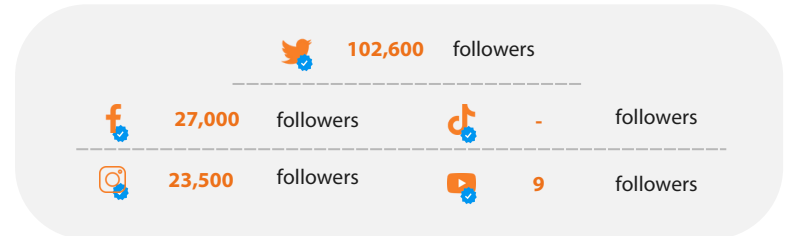


Footy Hedlines

Social Media Activation

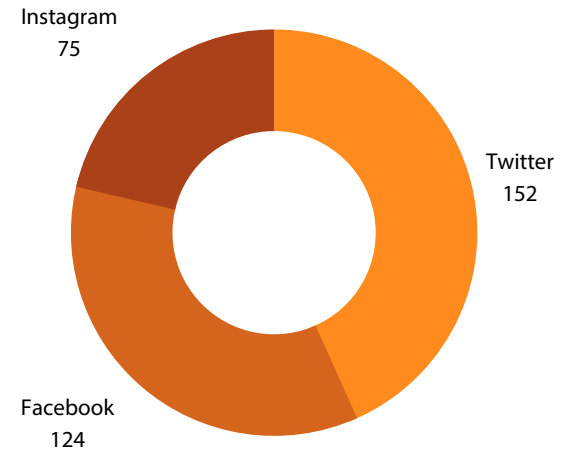
Potential brand exposure

153,109 users



Brand activations over the season

351 posts



Fun88 actively promoted Newcastle over the season with regular [pictures](#) and graphics providing updates on the team's results. [Posts](#) on the release of the new [kits](#) at the beginning of the season resulted in high engagement, particularly after the release of the special [fourth kit](#) to be used against Brighton.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

242,800

social media mentions of Newcastle United & Fun88



Sentiment

Hashtags

Newcastle United & #CarabaoCup - 28,000 posts

Newcastle United & #Fun88 - 7,500 posts

Mentions of Newcastle and the Fun88 partnership increased exponentially becoming the most discussed over the season, with news of the end of the agreement and the search for a [new sponsor](#) dominating conversation. While sentiment was strongly negative during the past season, the brand saw a shift to a positive perception among fans.

Numerous [users](#) shared updates about the end of the deal, expressing their sadness at the news and expressing happiness that the [brand](#) would stay on as official Asian betting partner recognising its many years of [commitment](#) to the club.

Fun88 competitions, giveaways and [Player of the Month](#) awards generated high volumes of engagement, on Twitter in particular, with numerous posts praising the brand's [fan engagement](#). A charity [challenge](#) sponsored by Fun88 between co-owners Mehrdad Ghodoussi and Jamie Reuben saw significant pickup among [fans](#).

Pictures of [issues](#) with some of the shirts and kits ordered by fans circulated during the year, with some noticing their shirt arrived without the Fun88 logo. While some online posts also accused kit supplier [Castore](#) of having sent out poor-quality products, it was later revealed these were fake shirts manufactured by a Chinese supplier.

Some [users](#) reported the existence of fake Fun88 [accounts](#) and [scams](#) targeting Newcastle fans.



Toon Polls @ToonPolls



Really pleased to see @Fun88eng continue their association with #NUFC after supporting the club for 6 years.

Their fan engagement is brilliant and would have been a huge miss.

Most importantly, they follow polling etiquette. The mark of a truly classy organisation ❤️💙



Newcastle United FC @NUFC · Jun 5

Thank you FUN88 for your incredible support over the last 6 seasons.

We look forward to continuing working with you as our Official Asian Betting Partner 🍀

1:46 PM · Jun 5, 2023 · 105.2K Views

4 Retweets 4 Quotes 245 Likes



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- White labelled via TGP Europe which is based in the Isle of Man, a tax haven ([Gambling Commission](#))
- TGP Europe’s Hong Kong-based likely former UBO, LET Group Holdings, linked to organised crime and money laundering. LET Group’s former CEO, Chau Cheok-Wa was convicted of illegal gambling, fraud and involvement in a criminal Organisation in January 2023 (InsightX)
- Overseas website says it is operated by a Montonegran firm in cooperation with OG GLOBAL ACCESS LIMITED which is based in the British Virgin Islands, a tax haven ([Fun88](#))

- The website’s own terms reference Welton Play Ltd which is also based in the Isle of Man. The registered address for Welton Play Ltd features on ICIJ offshore leaks database. Welton Holding Limited is also based at the same address ([Fun88](#), [Open Corporates](#), [ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#), [Open Corporates](#))
- Overseas website says it is the “Best Sports Betting Website In India & Asia”; it offers Kabaddi betting and it is partnered with the CPL – the legality of gambling in India is complex ([Fun88](#), [TGP Europe](#))



Nottingham Forest



£ Donation

Value of UNHCR sponsorship
(donated in December 2022)

Nottingham Forest started the season without a front-of-shirt sponsor. In December 2022, it announced the donation of the space for the rest of the season to UNHCR UK, the UN Refugee Agency, "as a sign of solidarity with those forced to flee their homes and communities."

([Sport Business](#))



Nottingham Forest

Social Media Activation

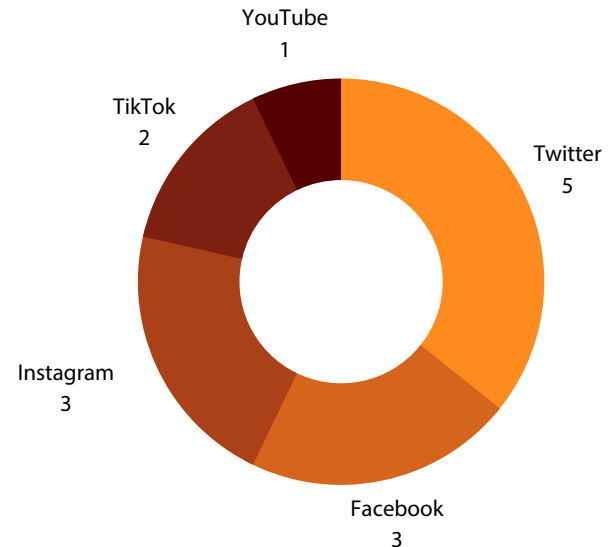
Potential brand exposure

10.4 million users



Brand activations over the season

13 posts



UNHCR shared a few [updates](#) on Nottingham over the [season](#) both on its global and UK accounts, including videos spotlighting [refugee footballers](#) and raising awareness of what it means for refugees to flee [conflict](#).

Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

2,700

social media mentions
of Nottingham Forest & UNHCR



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

Nottingham Forest & #WithRefugees - 593 posts

- Nottingham Forest & #UNHCR - 213 posts



Conversation was low over the season and [concentrated](#) in December around the [announcement](#) of the partnership, seeing highly positive sentiment. Numerous fans expressed their [pride](#) at the club's decision to donate the space to UNHCR and sport media sources [reported](#) the news. [Reddit users](#) also supported the decision, with one stating: "Glad we're putting the shirt space to positive use and not another betting company." [ForestFanTV](#) creator set up a [Just Giving page](#) inviting followers and fans to also donate to support UNHCR.

Following Match of the Day presenter Gary Lineker's suspension from the BBC for criticising the language used by UK ministers when discussing the asylum policy, several [users](#) questioned whether the [BBC](#) would stop showing Nottingham matches because of their support of UNHCR or [blur](#) the logo on the shirts.



Forest Ant
@FFTV_Forest_Ant

People can call me a soft lad, I don't care. I was moved to tears watching NFFC announce that from 1st Jan. 2023 until the end of the season our shirts will display UNHCR I'm so proud my club will now be associated with such a wonderful, worthwhile charity ❤️

1:11 PM · Dec 22, 2022 · 2,385 Views

2 Retweets 42 Likes

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ ETHICS

- 2021 UN audit found agency had mismanaged up to \$214 million in Ugandan “ghost refugee” scandal ([The New Humanitarian](#))
- Accused of failing to act on whistleblower reports ([NBC News](#))

▶ HUMAN RIGHTS

- Facilitated unsafe return of Rohingyas to Myanmar beginning in 1994 ([Stimson](#))

- Alleged to have improperly collected biometric data of Rohingya’s and later sharing it with the Myanmar government without the Rohingya’s consent ([ODI](#))
- Failed to prosecute claims against 67 workers who engaged in sexually exploitative relationships with refugee children ([Huffington Post](#))
- Workforce alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse ([reliefweb](#))
- Sudan staff member solicited bribes from refugees for resettlement in Western countries ([Journalists for Transparency](#))
- Refugee Status Determination mechanism criticised for failing to implement basic standards of procedural fairness ([Semantic Scholar](#))



Southampton



£ Undisclosed

Value of Sportsbet.io sponsorship
(reported as £8 million per year)

After an initial one-year agreement, in 2021 Southampton announced a record-breaking three-year extension for its shirt sponsorship with Sportsbet.io. The deal includes the option for the club to be paid performance-related bonuses in Bitcoin.

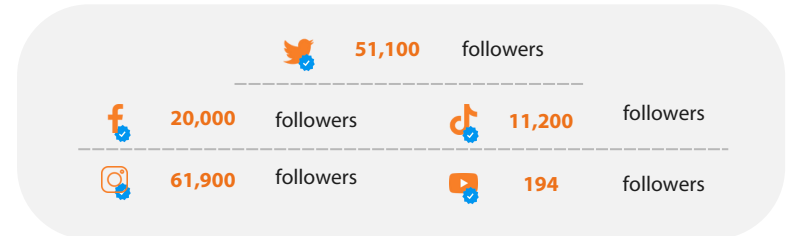
[\(The Athletic, Southampton FC\)](#)



Social Media Activation

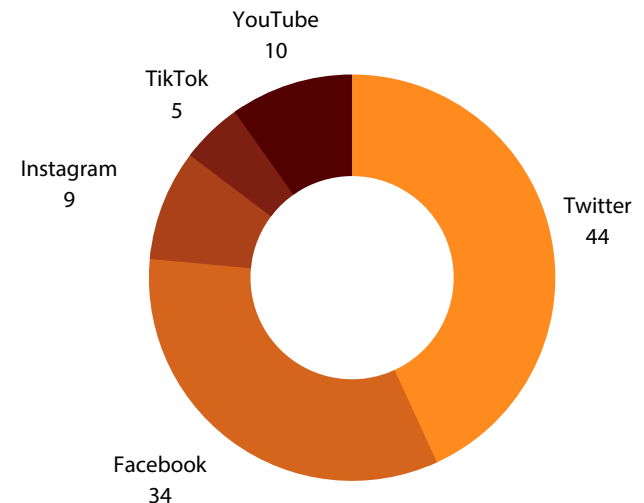
Potential brand exposure

144,394 users



Brand activations over the season

102 posts



Sportsbet.io posted different [formats](#) across its platforms promoting Southampton using the hashtag #SaintsFC. Updates included the promotion of an [NFT](#) collection and [challenges](#) on Instagram and [YouTube](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

6,900

social media mentions of Southampton & Sportsbet.io



Sentiment

Hashtags

#PremierLeagueWithCrypto - 243 posts

#SaintsFC - 218 posts



Online conversation around the partnership decreased compared with the previous season with largely neutral sentiment.

As its official betting partner, Sportsbet.io promoted Arsenal in a higher number of updates than Southampton but some of Arsenal's posts promoted joint collaborations for fan engagement.

Several users on Twitter invited followers to bet on Southampton matches using Sportbet.io with the hashtag #PremierLeagueWithCrypto. Users posted predictions on the team on Bitcoin forums mentioning bets on Sportsbet.io

Discussion on the upcoming ban on gambling sponsors mentioned that the agreement between Sportsbet.io and Southampton is coming to an end after the 2023/2024 season.

A few posts thanked Sportsbet.io for funding the revamp of the Northam Social Club to launch the Saints Social Club.



Joey D'Urso
@josephmdurso



SOUTHAMPTON

In November last year, Sportsbet and Southampton announced a "first-of-its-kind Crypto Fan Fund" donating two Bitcoin to good causes. More on Sportsbet: theathletic.com/2517118/2021/0...



Just Saints
@JustSaints_ · Follow



#SaintsFC to wear @SFC_Foundation kit for this weeks PL clash against Fulham.

Club sponsor, Sportsbet have donated their shirt sponsorship alongside pledging to match funds raised by supporters of up to £10,000 🍷

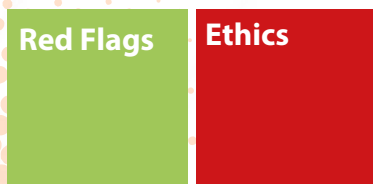


8:24 AM · May 10, 2023





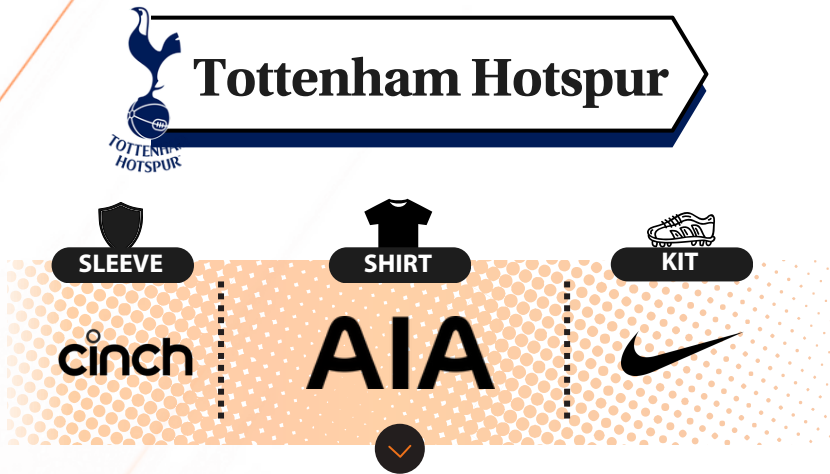
Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



► ETHICS

- White labelled via TGP Europe which is based in Isle of Man, a tax haven ([Gambling Commission](#))
- TGP Europe's Hong Kong-based likely former UBO, LET Group Holdings, linked to organised crime and money laundering. LET Group's former CEO, Chau Cheok-Wa was convicted of illegal gambling, fraud and involvement in a criminal Organisation in January 2023 (InsightX)
- Subsidiary of the Coingaming Group, whose investors Yolo Group/Yolo Investments were reportedly incorporated in Malta, a tax haven ([Crunchbase](#), [Yolo](#), [e-krediidiinfo](#), [Yolo](#), [Pitchbook](#))

- When accessed from outside the UK, its website promotes gambling with cryptocurrency. It also says that it is owned and operated by mBet Solutions NV which is based in Curaçao – Curaçao is a tax haven ([Sportsbet.io](#))
- Non UK-website also says that payments are operated by Medium Rare Limited which is based in Cyprus, another tax haven ([Sportsbet.io](#))
- Blacklisted by Swiss regulators ([iGaming Business](#))



£ **40 million**

Value of AIA sponsorship

AIA's sponsorship deal with Tottenham Hotspur started in 2014/2015 and has been extended to run until the 2026/2027 season. The brand also signed forward Son Heung-min and midfielder Cho So-hyun as official ambassadors.

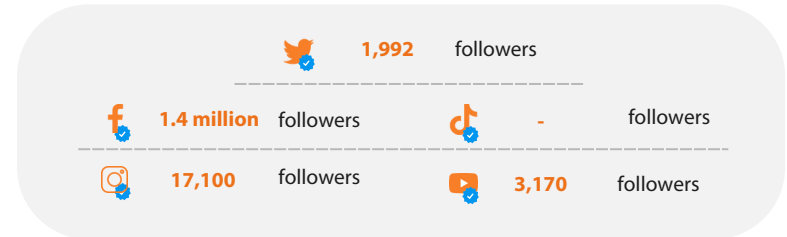
([Independent](#), [SportsPro Media](#), [Korea Times](#))



Social Media Activation

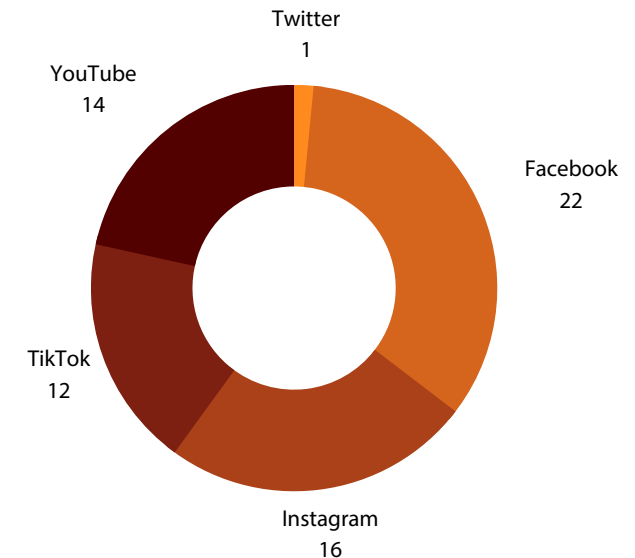
Potential brand exposure

1.4 million users



Brand activations over the season

65 posts



AIA posts promoting the club mainly featured [Harry Kane](#) and [Son Heung-min](#) as Kane was announced as a new [AIA Ambassador](#) and Son continued in the same role. The company created several high-quality videos on its channels featuring players including [AIA Voices](#), [The Check-In](#), [Mental Health Discussion](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

7,600

social media mentions of Tottenham Hotspur & AIA



Sentiment

Hashtags

#SandaraPark - 1,100 posts

#산다라박 - 1,100 posts



Social media conversation around the partnership increased during this season, with sentiment being mixed.

In October 2022, British politicians called on Tottenham to sever ties with AIA and accused the [club](#) of “collaborating with supporters of human rights abuses in Hong Kong” as the [company](#) has “supported Hong Kong’s national security law”. The news generated discussions among [users](#) who pointed out how other [sponsors](#) in the Premier League are connected to controversial governments.

In October 2022, British politicians called on Tottenham to sever ties with AIA and accused the [club](#) of “collaborating with supporters of human rights abuses in Hong Kong” as the [company](#) has “supported Hong Kong’s national security law”. The news generated discussions among [users](#) who pointed out how other [sponsors](#) in the Premier League are connected to controversial governments.



violetrcliner · 8 mo. ago

Spurs have so many players yet curiously enough in an article about a company from Hong Kong, The Times chose to show Son, a Korean player, front and center. Alright.

Anyway, I don't want the club associated with these kind of people either, but (and sorry for my whataboutism, I dislike it too) what are their thoughts on Newcastle and Manchester City? And isn't this the same government that planned to ship refugees to Rwanda?

77 Reply Share



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Admitted overcharging or wrongly ending cover for customers ([Stuff](#))
- Sued by elderly couple over employee's fraudulent insurance plan ([Marketing Interactive](#))
- Breached regulatory requirements in Malaysia by failing to review supervisors ([Today Online](#))
- Admitted making false and misleading representations to customers ([Financial Markets Authority New Zealand](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- Criticised by Tottenham fans over US \$3 billion coal investment holding, agreed to pull out of all coal investments by 2028 ([The Guardian](#))
- Shareholder BlackRock faces questions about environmental record ([BlackRock's Big Problem](#))

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Group of UK politicians urged Tottenham to drop sponsorship due to AIA's public support of Hong Kong's national security law, which made it harder for citizens to protest and resulted in the closure of unions, independent media and civil society groups ([Evening Standard](#))
- UK MP lobbied for care insurance whilst holding AIA stake ([Open Democracy](#))

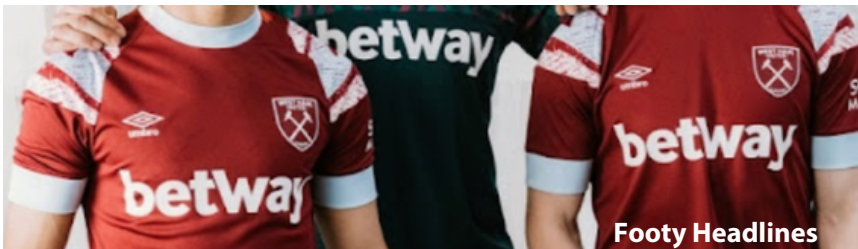


West Ham United



£ Undisclosed
Value of Betway sponsorship
 (reported as £10 million)

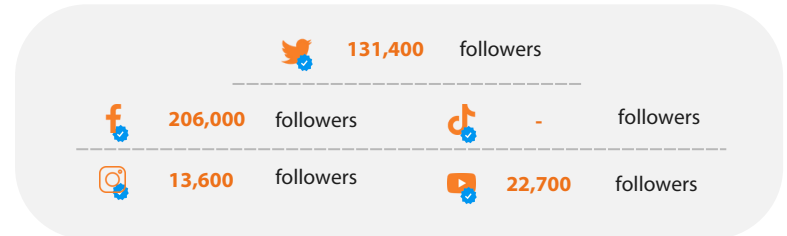
Betway became West Ham's shirt sponsor in 2015, with a deal which has since been extended multiple times, currently until 2025, raising its yearly value over time. The company has also created fan engagement initiatives for the club such as the Betway Academy and Betway Fan Taxi. ([SportsPro Media](#))



Social Media Activation

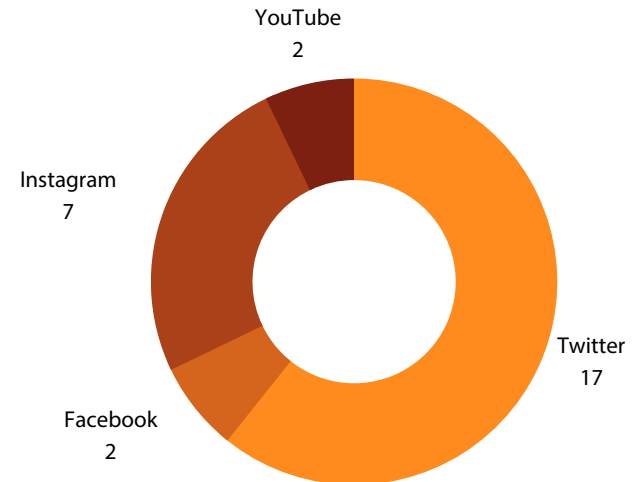
Potential brand exposure

373,300 users



Brand activations over the season

28 posts



Betway ran several [giveaways](#) for West Ham fans over the season, offering shirts and [match tickets](#) and creating bespoke content such as [The Karaoke Cup](#) video with fans.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

13,900

social media mentions of West Ham United & Betway



Sentiment

Hashtags

West Ham United & Betway Cup - 129 posts



West Ham United & #Betway - 76 posts

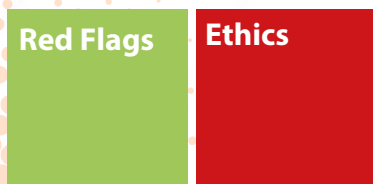
Online [conversation](#) around West Ham and Betway decreased during the season and focussed on Betway's £400,000 [fine](#) by the Gambling Commission for marketing on the kids' section of the club's website, which attracted negative sentiment.

A fans [petition](#) on 38 Degrees – “West Ham United FC: Kick gambling ads out of football!” – collected almost 3,000 signatures and [circulated](#) on social media with some asking the players to sign it too.

Conversation around the upcoming gambling sponsorship ban in the Premier League included Twitter users [noting](#) this would mean the end of the partnership with Betway and postulating [alternative](#) solutions.



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



betway



ETHICS

- Registered in Malta, a tax haven, named in ICIJ offshore leaks database – directors and affiliate companies have numerous mentions on database ([Betway](#), [ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#))
- Holding company is based in Guernsey which is considered a tax haven ([Super Group](#))
- Shareholders listed in the BVI, and Malta, both have interests in the same companies ([ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#), [ICIJ Offshore Leaks](#))
- Faced sanctions in Belgium due to opaque ownership structure and source of funds ([ICE365](#))

- Received record fine for failure to comply with AML and customer protection checks ([BBC](#), [Gambling Commission](#))
- Assigned addicts 'VIP managers' and offered promotions to keep them betting ([Daily Mail](#))
- Forced punter to spend £10,000 on auditing his own finances in order to access £108,000 in winnings ([The Guardian](#))
- Fined £400,000 by Gambling Commission for advertising on children's section of West Ham's website ([The Guardian](#))
- Partnered with company stripped of UK gambling licence ([Gambling Insider](#))
- Advert featuring Declan Rice banned after it contravened rules on using under-25s ([Evening Standard](#))
- Fined for breaching Swedish local gambling regulations and banned from operating in Lithuania ([iGaming Next](#), [Gaming Control Authority Lithuania](#))
- Kenyan licence reinstated after BW agreed with Kenyan government to tax winnings at 20 per cent ([SBC News](#))
- CVC Capital Partners, which hold an interest in Betway, owns Gujarat Titans in the IPL; gambling illegal in the Indian province of Gujarat ([Mykhel](#))



Wolverhampton Wanderers



£ Undisclosed
Value of AstroPay sponsorship
(reported as £8 million per year)

Becoming principal sponsor for West Ham in the 2022/2023 season, AstroPay secured its place on the front of Wolves' shirts for the men's and women's first-teams, under-23s, and a range of replica kits across all ages. The deal also included the brand featuring on the shirts of the club's European esports teams.

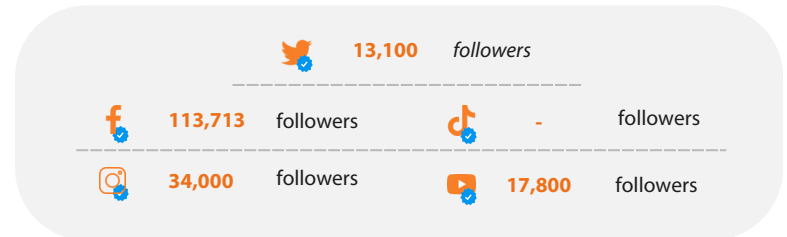
([Wolverhampton Wanderers](#), [SportCal](#))



Social Media Activation

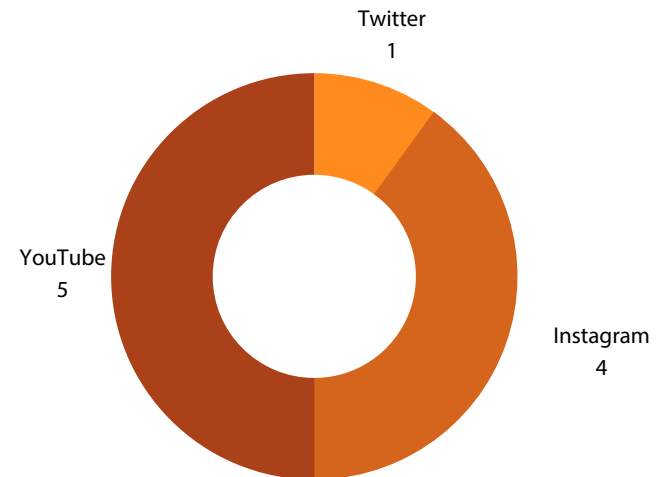
Potential brand exposure

178,613 users



Brand activations over the season

10 posts



Promoting its partnership with the club, Astropay launched the Wolves [debit card](#) on social media offering cashback to fans. Its YouTube channel included a behind-the-scenes [video](#) of the kit launch.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

12,400

social media mentions
of Wolverhampton Wanderers &
AstroPay



Sentiment



Hashtags

Wolves & #AstroWolves - 600 posts

Wolves & #AstroPay - 136 posts

The Wolves partnership with AstroPay generated a significant increase in online conversation, however this mainly included fans criticising AstroPay's app and customer service, with many discussing whether the company is reliable or not.

Numerous users having technical issues with AstroPay app tagged the Wolves accounts in their complaints and referenced scams on their accounts.

Wolves' Twitter posts in partnership with the brand gathered significant interaction from fans, as did the launch of the Wolves debit card.



Priti Kumari
@prit422 · [Follow](#)

Replying to @Wolves

You have all the money to sponsor football clubs but can't provide live chat support to your users. Response over email is also too slow. I became a victim of fraud due to your pathetic customer support. [@AstroPay_OK](#)

2:32 PM · Jan 11, 2023



Mike Manfield
@MichaelManfield · [Follow](#)

[@Ripple](#) partner AstroPay, the online payment solution of choice for millions of users worldwide, is delighted to announce the launch of its new co-branded product – the AstroPay Wolves debit card

Finextra @Finextra

Company announcement: AstroPay issues new Visa debit card co-branded with W... [finextra.com/pressarticle/9...](#) #fintech

10:52 AM · Mar 8, 2023



37



Reply



Copy link



r/WWFC · 1 yr. ago
by RA_786

Join ...



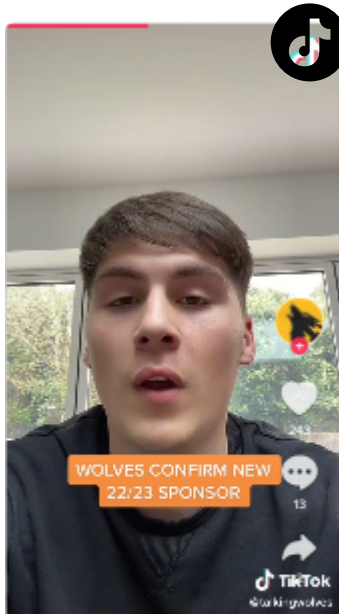
Hi Wolves fans, I'm currently doing a research project regarding gambling shirt sponsors, can you help answer the two questions below? Thanks in advance :)



That_Charming_Otter · 1 yr. ago

Not now; AstroPay are an online payments service. But we've had the infamous ManBetX, W88 and SportingBet within the past decade.

3 Reply Share ...



Watch more ... Watch now

@talkingwolves

Wolves confirm their new sponsor. What do you think about this leaked kit? # ...See more

All The Way Up (feat. Infrared) - Fat Joe & Remy Ma & French Montana

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



AstroPay



ETHICS

- Poor reviews and numerous accusations of being a scam ([Reddit](#), [Reddit](#), [Trustpilot](#))

Conclusions

As revealed from this social media perception and risk analysis, the 2022/2023 Premier League season saw a slight decrease in risk and negative perception around the clubs' shirts. Volumes of social media conversation increased overall, with many fans taking to social media to participate in discussions around their clubs, launch petitions and campaigns against certain partnerships, and interact with sponsors' competitions.

InsightX's due diligence risk analysis highlighted how almost all sponsors, with the exception of Manchester United's and Wolverhampton Wanderers', represented a medium to high reputational risk for the clubs. However, just six clubs' partners were classified as high risk, compared to seven in the previous season.

Increase in misleading content from Asian betting sites

With several Asia-based betting companies as principal partners of Premier League clubs, misleading websites and fake accounts took advantage of their presence in the UK and generated hundreds of thousands of spam links and social media posts mentioning the clubs and their sponsors over the season, redirecting fans to online casinos. So Do Casino, in particular, generated thousands of fake links since January 2023.

While these controversial links and accounts were not directly created by the sponsors, numerous users struggled to identify the companies' real accounts, often getting scammed and attributing the fault to the brands.

Sentiment: winners and losers

Sentiment among social media users remained mixed towards the shirt sponsors, but almost no user discussed some of the sponsors' connection to the Russia-Ukraine war as in the previous year.

- Nottingham Forest's charity sponsorship with UNHCR and Crystal Palace's deal with Cinch gathered the most positive discussion.
- Emirates and Etihad saw their perception turn positive thanks to the clubs' performance in the season and the high engagement generated by their sponsored events and competitions. Fun88's fan engagement initiatives for Newcastle also received high praise online.
- Gambling sponsors attracted the most negative sentiment and continued to remain controversial due to their opacity as some fans compelled their clubs to replace them by launching online petitions.

Conclusions

- Standard Chartered and AIA gathered a more negative sentiment as British politicians asked the clubs to sever ties with the companies due to their connection to the Chinese government's actions in Hong Kong.

Minor trend away from controversy

Nottingham Forest playing the first half of the season without a front-of-shirt sponsor, before signing UNHCR for the second half, was a sight very few could have pictured given the importance of the money that comes with front-of-shirt sponsorship. That being said, the agency has had a number of adverse issues in its past and so the move came with a degree of risk. Fellow promoted sides Fulham and Bournemouth both signed gambling companies with considerable adverse ethical findings against them.

Sponsorship changes at Wolves and Crystal Palace saw each of the clubs' risk ratings drop. However, Everton's move from Cazoo to Stake.com saw its own risk rating elevated to high.

Generally, a move away from controversial sponsors can be observed but a sea change is unlikely given that more controversial sponsors generally have the resources to meet the needs of clubs.

Looking ahead

The sponsorship landscape will change in the 2023/24 Premier League season; Newcastle's ascendancy is reflected in the news that it will drop the TGP Europe-affiliated Fun88 to replace it with [the Saudi events company, Sela](#).

It had previously been reported that the club had negotiated a £25 million per year deal with another Middle Eastern company which was not from Saudi Arabia. However, as recently as May 24, Sela appears to be frontrunner for the deal.

The club's third-placed finish in the Premier League represents extraordinary success for the first full season of ownership by the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF). However, the PIF's ownership has drawn protests from other Premier League clubs, and further questions have been raised about Sela's partnership with the club; new Premier League rules allow for commercial deals with associated companies to be scrutinised so clubs do not gain significant financial advantage over their rivals.

With Chelsea's deal with Three UK set to expire, the club was reported to be seeking a deal which [exceeds the current deal Manchester City have with Etihad Airways](#). It had a deal in place with Paramount Plus which was [rejected by the Premier League in June](#) due to it not being permitted under rules around broadcasting and commercial deals. A deal with Stake.com was pulled after [opposition from the Chelsea Supporters Trust](#) and [Allianz's offer of GBP 20 million per year was rejected](#). The club [announced Oman Air as its Official Airline Partner in July](#) but the search for a front-of-shirt sponsor goes on.

Aston Villa controversially signed a partnership with [Asia-based betting sponsor BK8](#), which will run until the voluntary front-of-shirt gambling sponsor ban comes into effect. The Aston Villa Supporters' Trust accused the club of ignoring fans' concerns about such sponsorships and called the deal a "cynical attempt" at financial gain.

It is likely that the three promoted sides – Burnley, Sheffield United and Luton Town – will also have new sponsors. Burnley, who come up as Champions, were sponsored by ClassicFootballShirts during their victorious Championship campaign, a company local to the town.

Looking ahead

The club announced in June that it would be sponsored in the upcoming season by 2022/23 Fulham sponsor W88. The deal is thought to be [worth no more than £8 million](#). Fulham's deal with W88 has been replaced by SBOTOP, this season's sponsor of relegated Leeds.

Championship second-place finishers Sheffield United are currently sponsored by Radox Laboratories, the healthcare company which was [awarded government contracts worth £500 million](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic and ultimately saw the suspension and [resignation of Conservative MP Owen Paterson](#). It was reported in June that Radox was highly unlikely to activate its option to continue as the club's main partner. It was also reported that the club had [turned down at least three multi-million pound sponsorship offers from gambling companies](#) as the club were looking for a partner which parents would feel comfortable allowing their children to wear.

Finally, Luton Town, who were promoted via the playoffs, are sponsored by Utilita Energy. The club recently announced plans to [develop a £100 million stadium](#) to open in 2026/27.

Their current stadium Kenilworth Road is in need of £10 million in upgrades to meet Premier League standards, [for which work has already begun](#). Already at a considerable disadvantage, the club will look to improve on the reported £365,000 deal they currently hold with Utilita.

Methodology & Disclaimer

Methodology

Premier League Sponsorship Review

The report has been created combining InsightX expert due diligence research and social media perception analysis, with third-party social media data.

Social Media Activation

This report analysed the potential brand exposure each club could have gained from its sponsors' social media presence in the value of their total fanbase, against how many times the sponsor actually activated visibility towards the club through their platforms.

The analysis takes into consideration the main social media pages of the sponsors and not regional accounts.

Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

This report assessed the volumes of conversations across social media platforms and the sentiment and perception around each sponsorship to offer an overview of how the clubs' main sponsors were perceived and which news and campaigns gathered the most attention.

All posts can be accessed by clicking on the posts' images or the platform icons.

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

Due diligence investigation of each sponsor analysed the key areas of ethics, human rights, environment, and criminal litigation to assess potential risks coming from the association with the company and possible impact on the clubs' reputation. The checks were not exhaustive and were lesser in scope than those carried out in a commissioned report.

InsightX searched records held in the public domain to derive the contents of this report. Examples of such records include public databases, corporate records filings, articles published in the media and online and court records.

Disclaimer

This report represents a summary of content held in the public domain. InsightX makes every effort to ensure that the summaries of the information found during research are accurate. However, it is not possible for InsightX to guarantee the veracity of the original source material. Furthermore, it is not possible to ensure that the source material is up to date. No liability is accepted by InsightX as a result of the original source material being inaccurate or out of date.

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