

Insight.X

Premier League Sponsorship Review
Social Media Insights & Risk Analysis

2023/2024 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. With 2023/2024 marking its third season, it has become a highly anticipated analysis by major stakeholders in the Premier League.

The report contains:

- The key sponsorship news and changes from the season
- A comparison on how each club's sponsorship performed
- How impactful each sponsor was 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 spans a period from June 01, 2023 to June 01, 2024 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



Short-term front-of-shirt sponsorships agreed ahead of voluntary ban on gambling sponsors

Aston Villa, Fulham and Nottingham Forest all signed short-term partnerships with gambling companies ahead of the [Premier League's voluntary ban on front-of-shirt gambling sponsorships](#) beginning in the 2026/2027 season. Eight Premier League teams had front-of-shirt gambling sponsors for the 2023/24 season as a result.

At the time that the three aforementioned clubs announced their deals, many fans were confused as they believed the voluntary ban would take effect immediately. After it became apparent that this was not the case, fans expressed their dissatisfaction. Others commented how these sponsorships look like a "desperate opportunity" to earn money from gambling companies while they can and pointed to "shady" and "controversial" marketing initiatives by these brands.

For the clubs, appointing such sponsors is purely a matter of retaining a competitive edge. This itself has been seen as a race to the bottom, which disregards the experiences of football fans, who have struggled with addiction.



Positive fan response to the long-term extensions of sponsorships with high-risk companies

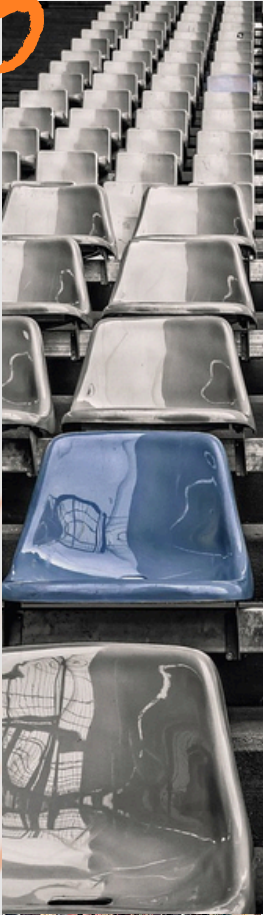
In the summer of 2023, Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester City extended their sponsorship deals with Emirates, Standard Chartered and Etihad Airways respectively.

Despite each of these sponsors receiving a 'High' Reputation Risk Rating by InsightX, fan engagement with the sponsors was found to be largely positive. This is due to the fact that the deals typically run for far longer than for the clubs outside the traditional 'Big Six', as content creation and initiatives within local communities strengthen the ties between the sponsors and the fans of the clubs.

Tottenham's sponsorship with AIA also received a 'High' Risk Rating, but is also similarly well received and engaged with by the club's fans. AIA marked 10 years as a Tottenham Hotspur sponsor by holding an event during the club's Asia Pacific Tour in Singapore where fans had the opportunity to meet club legend Ledley King.

Season Highlights in Sponsorship

3



Promoted clubs Luton Town and Sheffield United refused gambling sponsorship

Luton Town CEO Gary Sweet said in 2018 that [the club was not comfortable being sponsored by gambling companies](#), adding: "I don't think I'm going to be fired because I'm turning down that kind of income from our board, because together we all think and believe the same things as part of our principles."

In September 2023, he said that the club's decision not to use a gambling sponsor for their first season following promotion back to the Premier League could cost it between £2-3 million, though reiterated the club's stance that it would not use gambling sponsors. He also called the voluntary ban on front-of-shirt sponsorship an ["investment in culture"](#). Sheffield United were also reported to have turned down at least three multi-million pound offers from gambling firms as it [sought a more "family friendly" sponsor](#). This would allow children's replica shirts to match those worn by the players.

4



Outrage at Ivan Toney's eight-month ban

Ivan Toney served an eight-month ban after being [found guilty of 232 breaches of the FA's rules betting rules](#). Gambling awareness charities ridiculed the ban, with [The Big Step](#) posting images of Toney wearing matchday shirts with front-of-shirt gambling sponsors and being awarded Player of the Month awards sponsored by Sky Bet, with the caption: "If you force young people to endorse addictive products, don't be surprised if they use them." [The Guardian](#) suggested the "hypocritical" ban showed the extent to which football was in "gambling's grip", pointing to the fact that Toney's Brentford are owned by Matthew Benham, who owns a gambling stats firm and betting exchange. The ongoing investigation into [alleged spot fixing by West Ham's Lucas Paqueta](#) has not had the same reception, due to the nature of the offence he is accused of, though the FA seeks a lifetime ban. Social media users pointed to the absurdity of these players wearing shirts with a front-of-shirt gambling sponsor on it, Hollywoodbets and Betway respectively, considering accusations against them.

Ranking & Insights

Ranking by Volumes of Social Media Conversation

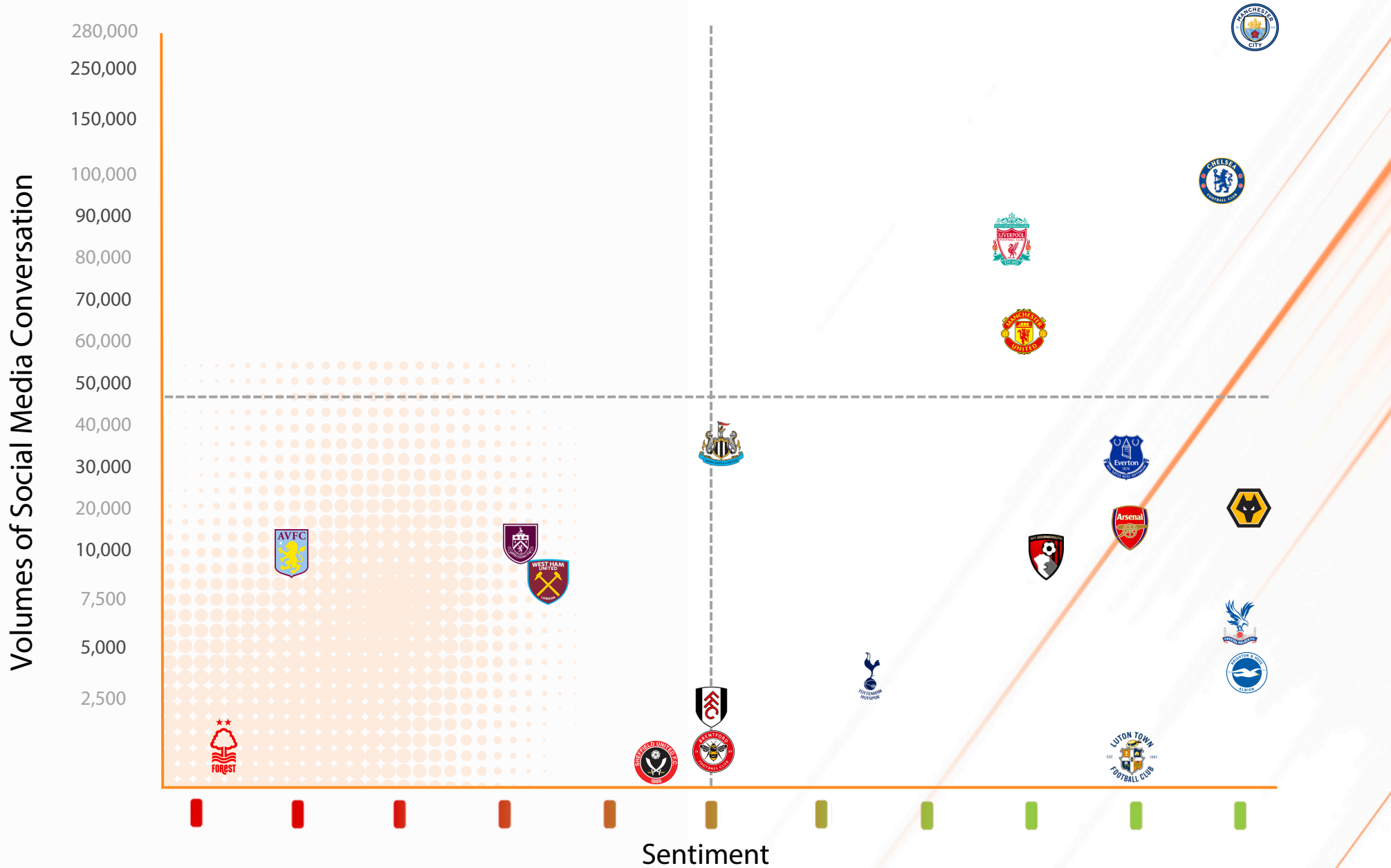
1	 	Manchester City 271,400
2	 	Chelsea 100,300
3	 	Liverpool 80,500
	 	Manchester United 62,900
	 	Newcastle United 38,300
	 	Everton 36,700
	 	Wolverhampton Wanderers 25,600
	 	Arsenal 21,600
	 	Burnley 12,100
	 	Aston Villa 10,800

 	Bournemouth 10,600
 	West Ham 9,600
 	Crystal Palace 7,300
 	Brighton & Hove Albion 4,700
 	Tottenham Hotspur 3,500
 	Nottingham Forest 1,000
 	Fulham 1,400
 	Brentford 981
 	Sheffield United 632
 	Luton Town 556



Ranking & Insights

Sentiment vs. Volumes of Social Media Conversation



Ranking & Insights

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

A collection of football club logos including Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal, Newcastle United, Brighton & Hove Albion, Liverpool, Everton, and Nottingham Forest. Below the logos is a dark blue bar with a red-to-orange gradient circle containing the word "High".

High

A collection of football club logos including Nottingham Forest, Crystal Palace, Chelsea, AFC Bournemouth, AVFC, Brentford, Burnley, Luton Town, West Ham United, Sheffield United, and Fulham. Below the logos is a dark blue bar with a yellow-to-orange gradient circle containing the word "Medium".

Medium

A collection of football club logos including Manchester United. Below the logos is a dark blue bar with a green-to-blue gradient circle containing the word "Low".

Low



Full Report



Arsenal



£50 million

Value of Emirates sponsorship

Ahead of the start of the season, Arsenal announced the renewal of its front-of-shirt sponsorship deal with Emirates, now extended to run at least until 2028, when it will reach 22 years since the initial signing. The new five-year agreement is reported to be worth £50m per season, an increase from the previous £40m per season. The deal continues to include the naming rights for the Emirates Stadium and the sponsorship of The Emirates Cup.

(Sports Pro Media)



Social Media Activation

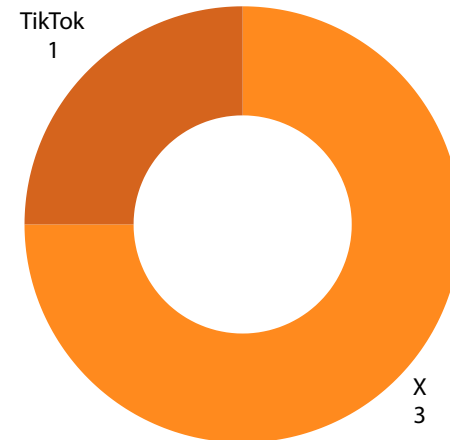
Potential brand exposure

22.4 million users



Brand activations over the season

4 posts



Emirates barely promoted the airline’s sponsorship with Arsenal, only replying to a few of the club’s [posts](#) on the renewal of the deal and using the motto “Woven Together”. On [TikTok](#), Emirates shared a challenge featuring Arsenal footballers in Dubai. However, Arsenal’s accounts featured several posts sponsored by Emirates [promoting the airline](#) to followers.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

21,600

social media mentions of Arsenal & Emirates



Sentiment

Associated Keywords



Arsenal & Emirates Cup - 66,500 posts

Arsenal & Emirates Stadium - 374,500 posts

Volumes of online conversation slightly increased when compared to the previous season, as Arsenal renewed its sponsorship with Emirates. Sentiment remained largely positive, with high engagement on the club’s social media initiatives with the airline’s accounts.

The [extension](#) of the Emirates deal dominated social media [conversation](#) in August 2023, with over 2,000 [posts](#) reporting the news with a largely positive reaction from users. Some commentators looked ahead to the next renewal in 2028, discussing the possible change in naming rights for the stadium and with one [noting](#): “I expect a higher sponsorship bidder in 2028 or a good package from the Emirates to extend..future looks absolutely great & bright..”

Images of the Emirates flight on the day the team [welcomed](#) midfielder, Declan Rice, ahead of the season, gathered fans’ attention as users shared images after spotting the player on the plane.

Arsenal’s accounts shared several posts over the year in [partnership](#) with Emirates inviting followers to enter dedicated competitions, seeing significant engagement from users on X. The [Goal of the Month](#) award was presented by Emirates throughout the year, seeing social media coverage.

A few [users](#) attacked Arsenal fans for criticising other clubs’ ties with Saudi Arabia, while not realising the Emirates’ sponsorship implies their club is also connected to a Middle Eastern government.



Łukasz Bączek
@Lu_Class_



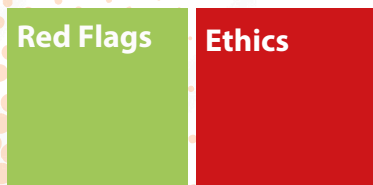
Record half-year profit of \$2.7 billion, up 138% from the same period last year, driven by strong demand for international travel across regions. Revenue up 20% to \$18.3 billion.

No wonder Emirates is extending and improving one of its most lucrative contracts with Arsenal.



Exciting news! @Arsenal and @emirates extend partnership with a groundbreaking 5-year deal worth £50M per season. A move that reflects modern sports business ambitions.

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Decided to continue providing services to Russia 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 customers in New Zealand ([Arabian Business](#))

- UK government opened investigation into treatment of foreign business executives accused of breaking the law by the UAE government. This was after an individual claimed to have been “arbitrarily detained, tortured and sentenced to life imprisonment in the UAE under the charge of espionage on behalf of the United Kingdom” ([Forbes](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- UAE is the world's sixth biggest aviation CO2 polluter ([S&P Global](#), [ICCT](#))
- UAE planned to use COP28 to leverage oil and gas deals ([Independent](#))
- Head of UAE state oil company, Sultan Al Jaber, appointed COP president; the country then passed a law which stipulated that “damag[ing] the reputation or prestige of the [COP] President” was punishable by 15 years in prison ([Amnesty International](#))
- Protest “with the aim of [...] infringing on public order” at COP28 punishable with life imprisonment by the UAE government ([Amnesty International](#))

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Owned by Dubai government 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. The conflict has resulted in human rights abuses including ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity ([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](#))
- Workers at COP28 conference site forced to work in 42°C heat ([Geneva Solutions](#))

- UAE continued to detain prisoners of conscience after completion of prison sentences following the passing of a law which authorised indefinite "counter-extremism counselling"; one prisoner held in solitary confinement without access to personal hygiene items and with limited visits from family members in contravention with international law on torture ([Amnesty International](#))
- Human rights advocates and prisoners of conscience tried during COP28 for charges of "terrorism" ([Amnesty International](#))
- Senior officials of UAE government planned with COP organisers to "counter" and "minimise" criticism of the country's human rights abuses ([Centre for Climate Reporting](#))
- Refugees International called for an investigation into the UAE government, accusing it of "systematically sending arms" to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia in Darfur, Sudan "which is currently engaged in ongoing ethnic cleansing operations in that region" ([Refugees International](#))



Aston Villa



£ Undisclosed

Value of Cazoo sponsorship
(reported as £7-8 million per year)

Aston Villa signed a three-year partnership deal with online betting company BK8 to run until the end of the 2025-2026 season. As part of the contract, the brand agreed to make a contribution to charity for every adult third kit sold. The deal was cut short at the end of the season and the club announced Greek betting company Betano as its new front-of-shirt sponsor for the 2024/2025 season.

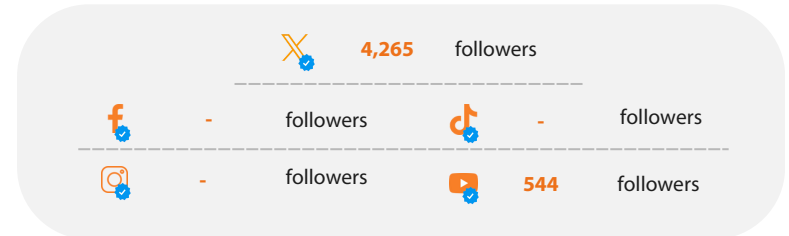
([Aston Villa](#), [The Telegraph](#))



Social Media Activation

Potential brand exposure

4,809 users



Brand activations over the season

107 posts



X
107

Aston Villa received significant promotion on BK8's official X profile, with 107 [updates](#). The BK8 website links to Instagram and Facebook pages that no longer exist, while the YouTube channel featured no content related to the club. BK8 collaborated with rapper KingChi to release a song dedicated to the club called '[It's Showtime](#)'.

Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

10,800

social media mentions
of Aston Villa FC & BK8



Sentiment

Hashtags

Aston Villa & #OfficialPartner - 113 posts

Aston Villa & #BK8 - 267 posts



Social media conversation volume surrounding Aston Villa and its principal sponsor decreased compared to the previous analysis. Sentiment remained overwhelmingly [negative](#) following the deal with BK8 and then with Betano at the end of the season.

Criticism of the agreement with BK8 began immediately following its [announcement](#) in June 2023 and continued throughout the months, with numerous users disapproving of the club's choice and referencing the brand's controversial [marketing](#) that led to a [cancelled deal](#) with Norwich City.

A few comments highlighted that the “only positive” aspect of the agreement was the increase in value compared to other offers and the previous sponsorship, which meant [“ethics have to be left behind”](#).

Outraged fans launched a petition on [Change.org](#) and [circulated](#) it on social media, while news that Aston Villa Supporters' Trust released a [statement](#) expressing fans' disapproval of the deal and accusing the club of ignoring their concerns about gambling sponsorship also gathered momentum. A Reddit user [commented](#): “It's pissed off most fans, to the point where people are offering to remove the sponsor from the new shirts for a tenner...”

Later in the season, a [Josimar Football](#) investigation found evidence that suggested that BK8 “operates from one of the most notorious cyber slavery compounds in Cambodia.” The findings [circulated](#) on X among fans expressing further [disappointment](#) with the club.

In March 2024, several [users](#) circulated the news that the club had cut the deal with BK8 short and signed a new agreement with Greek online betting company Betano for the following season. As details started to emerge and it was revealed to be the “biggest deal in the club's history”, some fans commented [positively](#) on the decision, with one [stating](#) “Impressive deal. More or less double what BK8 pay.” However, numerous users criticised the [choice](#) of “another obscure betting” organisation that also appeared to be a [“dodgy company”](#).



legentofreddit · 1y ago

Funny how the statement doesn't mention what they actually do. Trying to hide something Villa?

75 ↓ Award Share ...

Moug-10 OP · 1y ago · Edited 1y ago

Like many clubs around the world, we don't want to know what is happening backstage.

28 ↓ Award Share ...

ISqueezeBlackheads · 1y ago

Absolutely laughable. It goes to show how shady this is. A brand that sponsors a club with millions, but somehow saying what they do isn't important. Embarrassing to see my club as a part of this.

21 ↓ Award Share ...



Aston Villa

“X
#AVFC A significant boost the club's commercial revenue profile!

AVFC have ended their main shirt sponsorship deal early and have struck a new £40m deal with betting platform Betano (£20m p/a over 2 years).

Thomas Brewster
@blametom · Follow

"Congrats to Aston Villa, who, in a country in which hundreds of people addicted to gambling kill themselves each year, have betting company BK8 as their new front-of-shirt sponsor. Well played, guys!"

@AVFCOfficial - do the shirt sans sponsor.



theguardian.com
Luminous keepers and a nod to Andy Gray: the 2023-24 Premie...
From Arsenal's commemorative fail to Spurs' handsome home strip that would not look amiss at Wimbledon, here's the latest o...

John W.
@johnwSEAP · Follow

Concerning findings highlighting connections btw @premierleague clubs & #HumanTrafficking, #CyberFraud & #MoneyLaundering operators controlled by Asian #OrganizedCrime in the #Mekong. Really just tip of the iceberg - intl. exposure to the industry massive & skyrocketing fast

Josimar
Features · 15 May 2024

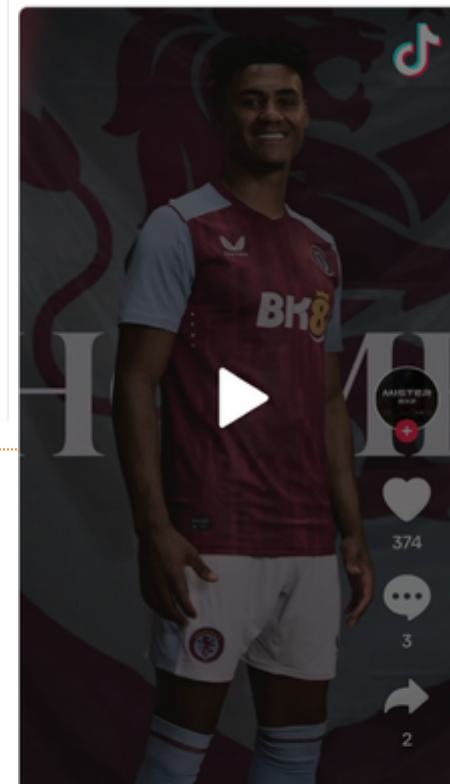
Another day in paradise

Evidence suggests that Aston Villa and Burnley FC's official Asian betting partner operates from one of the most notorious cyber slavery compounds in Cambodia.

By Philippe Auclair

Philippe Auclair @PhilippeAuclair
New investigation into Aston Villa and Burnley FC Asian betting sponsor BK8 reveals links to notorious Cambodian cyber crime and human trafficking compound Victory Paradise.

josimarfootball.com/2024/05/15/ano...



k Watch more e Watch now

@mister_bx2
ASTON VILLA new kit home 23/24 🍷
#astonvilla #villapark #bk8
🎵 เสียงต้นฉบับ - mister_bx2 - mister_bx2

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](#))
- Norwich cancelled 2021 deal due to overtly sexual marketing ([Sport Resolutions](#))

- Offers betting, including on cock-fighting, and in jurisdictions where gambling is illegal ([Josimar Football](#))
- Falsely claimed to be licensed in Malta ([Josimar Football](#))

▶ HUMAN RIGHTS

- Investigation found links to company which operates out of “cyber slavery compound” in Cambodia ([Josimar Football](#))



Bournemouth



£ Undisclosed

Value of Dafabet sponsorship

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

Now in its second year of the agreement, Dafabet’s sponsorship of Bournemouth continued for the 2023/2024 season.

No announcement of a possible deal renewal or new sponsorship agreement has emerged so far.

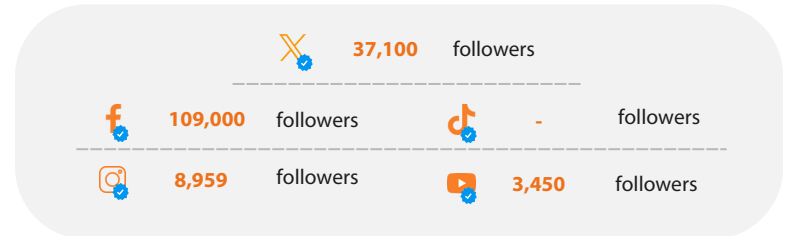
([Sportcal](#), [Bournemouth Daily Echo](#))



Social Media Activation

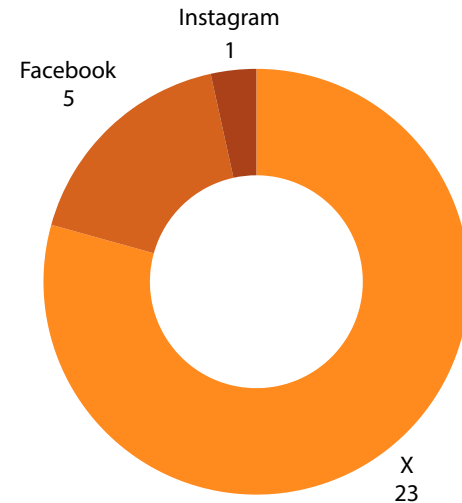
Potential brand exposure

158,509 users



Brand activations over the season

29 posts



Dafabet shared 29 posts associated with Bournemouth, mostly on the brand’s X account. The majority of the updates centred on Bournemouth’s upcoming games, inviting followers to bet on the result. They also ran a few competitions for the club’s fans and interviewed some of the players to create exclusive content.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

10,600

social media mentions of Bournemouth & Dafabet



Sentiment

Hashtags

Dafabet & #AFCB - 138 posts

Bournemouth & #Dafabet - 41 posts



Social media conversation around the club and Dafabet remained steady while criticism of the sponsor choice died down over the past season.

Sentiment is largely positive with mentions mostly focusing on engagement around Bournemouth's [content](#) created in partnership with Dafabet, including ticket [giveaways](#) and [Man of the Match](#) awards. Thousands of users commented on these posts.

A few [users](#) call out Dafabet for scams they have experienced and call the site a [fraud](#).





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



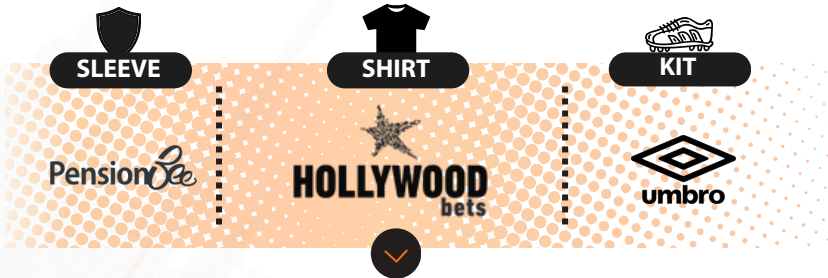
▶ ETHICS

- White labelled 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. Its Armenian owners allegedly invested €2 million into the Maltese economy to obtain citizenship ([ICIJ Offshore Leaks, Malta Independent](#))

- Dafabet accused of colluding with an individual arrested for making fraudulent transactions ([The Hindu](#))
- 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](#))



Brentford



£ Undisclosed

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

After the deal with Hollywoodbets was renewed in July 2023, the club confirmed the brand would feature as front-of-shirt sponsor for two more years. The announcement received criticism by UK anti-gambling charity The Big Step following Brentford striker Ivan Toney's gambling addiction diagnosis and his temporary ban from football after he broke FA gambling rules.

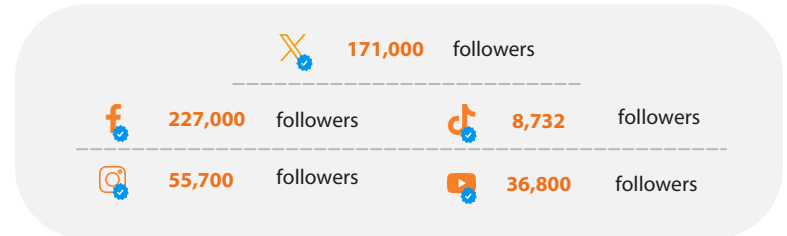
([Brentford FC](#), [The Athletic](#))



Social Media Activation

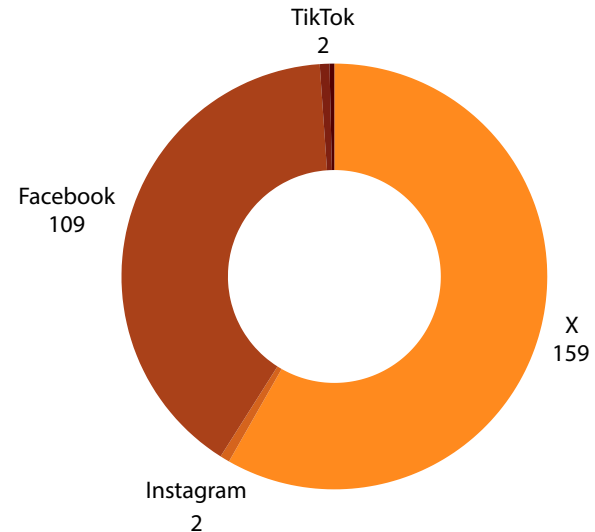
Potential brand exposure

499,232 users



Brand activations over the season

273 posts



Hollywoodbets actively promoted Brentford across all its accounts, particularly on X and Facebook, using the hashtag [#HollywoodbetsxBrentford](#). Weekly [updates](#) on the team's line-ups and scores were [shared](#), as well as posts inviting fans to bet. The brand also shared pictures and [videos](#) from its [Brentford watch party](#).



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

981

social media mentions of Brentford & Hollywoodbets



Sentiment

Hashtags

#HollywoodbetsXBrentfordFC - 32 posts

Brentford & #TheBees - 94 posts



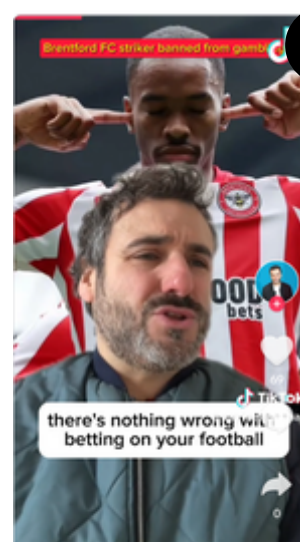
As with the previous season, online conversation was limited and mostly consisted of fan engagement with Hollywoodbets' competitions. Social media sentiment was mixed with these brand initiatives gaining a positive response, while some negative reaction to the choice of sponsor still persisted.

While discussion and petitions against the club's decision to have a betting company as its sponsor quieted down, several users still pointed to the absurdity of the sponsorship choice given Ivan Toney's ban for breaching FA gambling rules.

Photos of the footballer wearing the shirt, adorned with the Hollywoodbets logo, accompany these comments.

Anti-gambling campaign group [The Big Step](#) commented: "Brentford will continue to promote gambling on their shirts next season which means when Ivan Toney returns he'll be a billboard for the addiction he is recovering from. Careless."

A few [users](#) accused Hollywoodbets of scamming them on their website.



@patrickjmonahan
What's the probability of scoring on your first touch? Whats the odds on ...See more
original sound - patrickjmonahan



Southernerupnorth
@Jamie53159065



Oh dear, imagine having a player banned for betting, saying you'll support him while continuing to accept money from the cause of it all 🤔
brentford really have had a mare here in ethics #ivantoney #brentford #gambling #Hollywoodbets



robertmarawa  [@robertmarawa](#) · Follow

Sihamba nazo!!!


A truly amazing game where [@BrentfordFC](#) could have taken their chances in the 1st half but it wasn't to be...Mo Salah off the bench for [@LFC](#) to score & assist for a convincing 1-4 win!!
 Thanx for being great hosts [@BrentfordFC](#) 

[#MarawaOnTour](#)
[@Hollywoodbets](#)



6:37 PM · Feb 17, 2024



Jay Harris  [@jaydmharris](#)

Brentford had an important decision to make this summer over their sponsorship with Hollywoodbets

By sticking with the gambling firm, despite Ivan Toney's ban for breaching the FA's betting rules, the club have made the wrong call

[@TheAthleticFC](#)

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis




HOLLYWOOD
 bets



Medium
 REPUTATION
 RISK RATING

► 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'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.

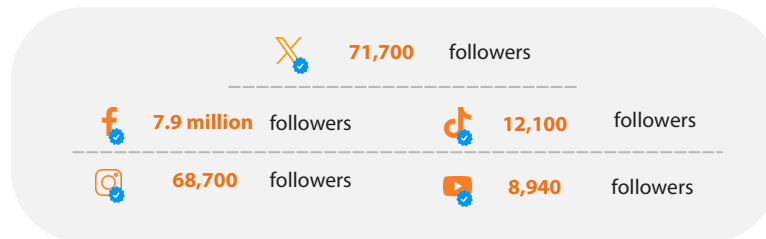
([SportBusiness Sponsorship](#))



Social Media Activation

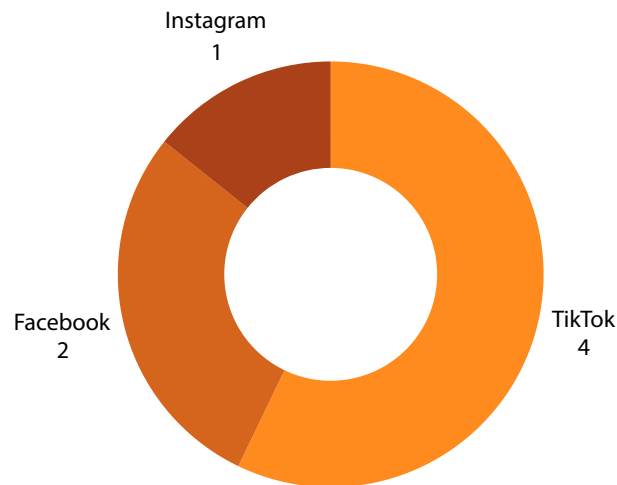
Potential brand exposure

8.06 million users



Brand activations over the season

7 posts



American Express' promotion of Brighton focused on the team's [pre-season Tour](#) in the [United States](#) in July 2023. On TikTok, a clip shows an [interview](#) with Brighton's CEO about teamwork.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

4,700

social media mentions of Brighton & Hove Albion & American Express



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

American Express & #BHAFC - 1,200 posts

Amex Stadium & BHAFC - 2,200 posts



Mentions of Brighton and American Express remained similar in volume to the previous season and consisted mostly of positive [fan engagement](#) in response to Brighton's posts in collaboration with the brand, such as [giveaways](#) and [fan events](#).

The [Men's Player of the Season award](#), sponsored by American Express, saw positive social media coverage.

Several users tagged and mentioned American Express while discussing the [transfer window](#) and the financials of the [player acquisition](#).





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

Red Flags

Ethics

Environment

Human Rights

Criminal Litigation

AMERICAN EXPRESS



REPUTATION RISK RATING

▶ 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](#))

▶ 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](#))



Burnley



£ Undisclosed

Value of W88 sponsorship

(reported as £15 million per year)

Fulham’s decision to break its sponsorship deal with W88 led the online betting company to approach Burnley for the club’s return to the Premier League in the 2023/2024 season. As part of the deal, the brand received visibility in the home stadium on match days and on the club’s digital channels.

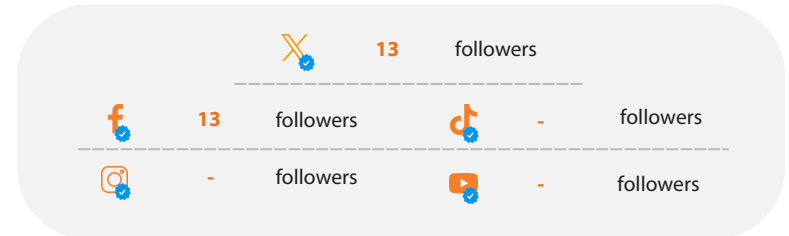
([SportBusiness Sponsorship](#), [Burnley FC](#))



Social Media Activation

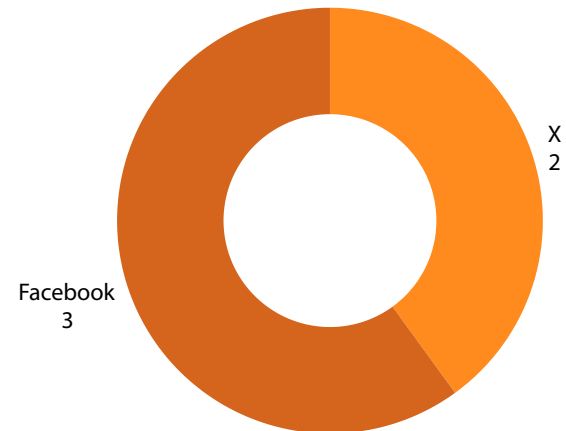
Potential brand exposure

26 users



Brand activations over the season

5 posts



W88 social media presence consists solely of India-focused Facebook and X accounts. The two pages shared 5 [posts](#) about Burnley at the beginning of the [season](#), all pointing to a [blog post](#) announcing the deal.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

12,100

social media mentions of Burnley & W88



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

Burnley & #W88 - 378 posts

Burnley & #W88Malaysia - 41 posts



Although 12,100 social media mentions of Burnley and W88 were identified, over 10,000 of these consisted of [Vietnamese](#) and [Thai](#) language posts from accounts that appeared to be bots reporting the news of the deal and sharing the same short video clip announcing the sponsorship.

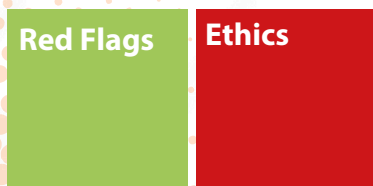
Additionally, numerous X [accounts](#) disguising themselves as W88 local accounts in different [countries](#), used the brand's association with Burnley to attract users to gambling sites. Frequent messages [included](#): "Did you know W88 are the proud sponsors of Burnley football club? now you know. Bet with us today".

In July 2023, several [sources](#) reported on the deal with [negative](#) reaction from users criticising the choice of a gambling company as sponsor. As controversial revelations about another of Burnley's sponsors, BK8, came to light, [users](#) expressed "[major concerns](#)" about W88 too.





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 to those it has owned since 2013 which are variations of w88.com ([Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Centre](#))

- Marquee Holdings' agent is Mossack Fonseca. Its principals are currently awaiting trial in Brazil and have been charged with numerous crimes by US and German authorities and were shut down after a raid by Panamanian authorities seeking information regarding links to an 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 and 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](#))
- No apparent UK presence ([W88](#))
- 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](#))
- Banned in Kenya for operating without a licence ([Business Daily](#))



Chelsea



£40 million

Value of Infinite Athlete sponsorship

After starting the season without a front-of-shirt sponsor, in September 2023, Chelsea announced a one-year deal with sports technology company Infinite Athlete. The agreement sees the logo featured on the front of the Chelsea male and female teams' playing kits and their training kit sleeve.

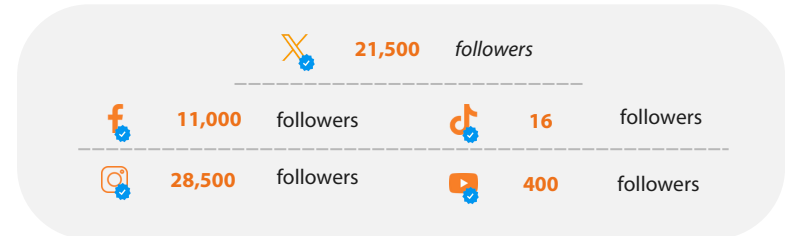
(ESPN)



Social Media Activation

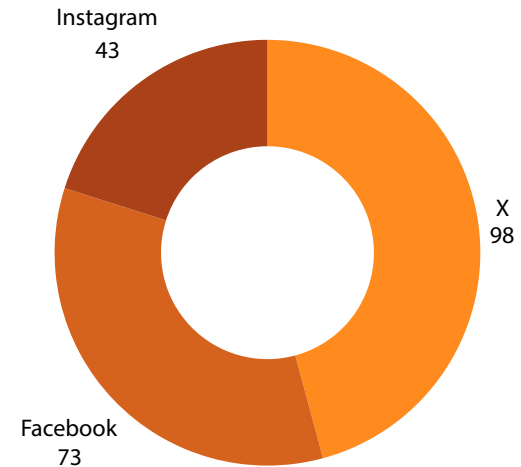
Potential brand exposure

61,416 users



Brand activations over the season

214 posts



Infinite Athlete actively promoted Chelsea, particularly on X, where the company's account retweeted [posts](#) from Chelsea and [congratulated](#) the club on its victories. Several [posts](#) also aimed to promote the bespoke match replay system on the Chelsea app. A series of [posts](#) in collaboration with Chelsea shared statistics from footballers' performances.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

100,300

social media mentions of Chelsea FC & Infinite Athlete



Sentiment

Hashtags



- Chelsea FC & #SportsData - 5,500 posts
- Chelsea FC & #SportsTech - 5,100 posts

Infinite Athlete’s sponsorship of Chelsea generated levels of social media conversation five times higher than during the previous season. The majority of the discussion occurred between the beginning of August and the end of September 2023 following the announcement of the deal.

News of the sponsorship broke in early August, and sentiment towards the reported deal was positive, particularly as Chelsea had begun the season without a front-of-shirt sponsor. Several X [users](#) conveyed their relief that an agreement had been reached and congratulated their new owners on the lucrative sponsorship.

Confirmation of the sponsorship was delayed amid an [investigation](#) by the Premier League, which saw [some](#) negative sentiment arise in early September. The negativity was due to reports that Chelsea had also discussed a deal with Riyadh Air, owned by the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund, and that Infinite Athlete had investment ties to Silver Lake, the investment fund which is the second largest shareholder in Manchester City.

The deal was officially confirmed on September 30 and engagement peaked during this week with over 34,000 mentions. Sentiment was largely positive, although some [fans](#) suggested they preferred the kit without a visible sponsorship.

Social media engagement throughout the rest of the season was fairly low, although some statistics detailing player performance that were shared on the official Chelsea X account in collaboration with Infinite Athlete in April and May did lead to responses from supporters. Some [fans](#) questioned why more of this data is not shared publicly.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



- CEO faced multiple lawsuits after collapse of his minor American football league in 2019 ([The Athletic](#))

► ETHICS

- Tempus Ex Machina, who merged with Biocore in 2023, were sued by US collegiate athletic conference Pac-12 over alleged breach of contract ([San Francisco Business Times](#))
- Premier League investigated Infinite Athlete's sponsorship of Chelsea due to investment links to the club's co-owners, but approved the deal ([The Telegraph](#))
- Silver Lake, the investment fund which owns more than 18% of the City Football Group (the umbrella organisation which owns Manchester City), is also an investor in Infinite Athlete ([The Athletic](#))



Crystal Palace



SLEEVE



开云体育



SHIRT

cinch



KIT

macron



£ Undisclosed

Value of Cinch sponsorship

(reported as £6.5 million per year)

Cinch continued as Crystal Palace's front-of-shirt sponsor for the season. However, reports on the company's financial struggles posed a question on the future of its sport sponsorships, with the club finally announcing the end of the agreement at the end of the season and revealing NET88 as sponsor for the following one.

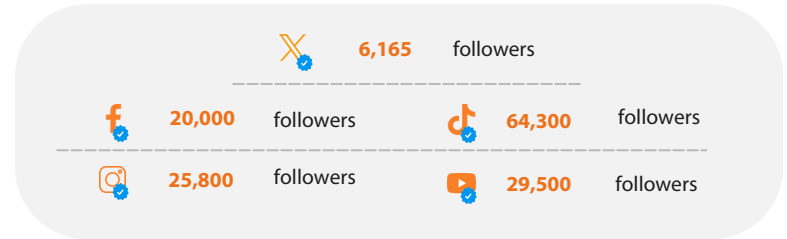
([Cinch](#), [The Times](#), [Sport Business Journal](#))



Social Media Activation

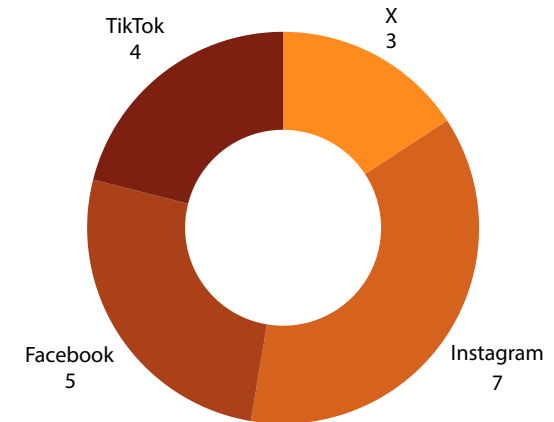
Potential brand exposure

145,765 users



Brand activations over the season

19 posts



Cinch continued to variously share [posts](#) in collaboration with Crystal Palace across its [accounts](#), creating content with players including episodes of its '[Conversation in Cars](#)' video series. The brand also promoted the season's new [shirts](#), ran [giveaways](#), sponsored the Player of the Month [award](#) and reposted several of the club's posts.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

7,300

social media mentions of Crystal Palace FC & Cinch



Sentiment



Hashtags

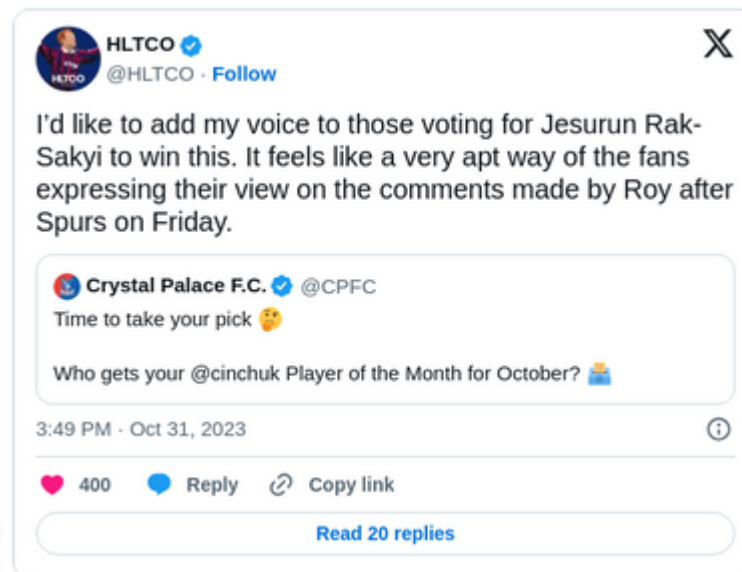
- Crystal Palace & #CinchIt - 117 posts
- Crystal Palace & #Cinch - 65 posts

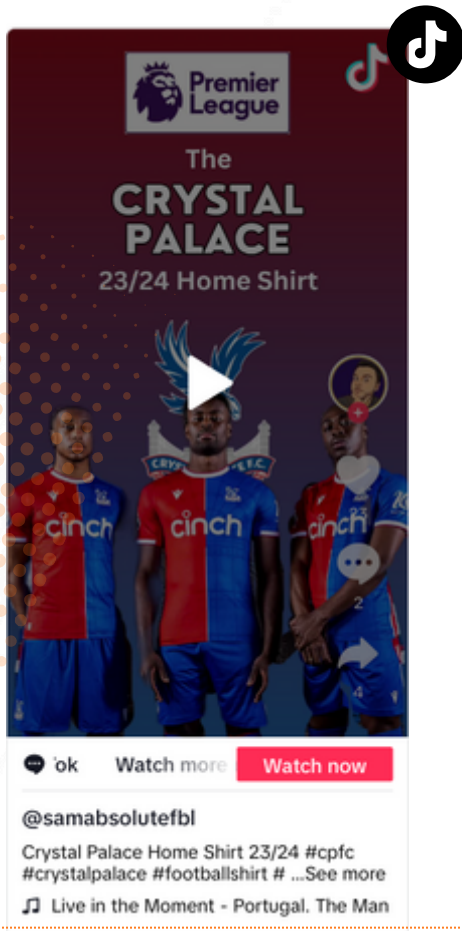
Social media conversation around Crystal Palace and Cinch remained steady and continued to receive positive feedback from fans.

The release of the [kit](#) in July 2023, gathered fans' attention and generated discussion on how they would change the [colours](#) of Cinch's logo.

The Cinch-sponsored [Player of the Month](#) award generated the majority of the conversation during the year with significant [engagement](#) from users voting their favourite players and reposting the brand and club's content detailing the award.

Towards the end of the season, several [sources](#) started to discuss the upcoming end of the deal and speculating about the club's future choice of front-of-shirt sponsor, with several commenting that they were fans of Cinch.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



► ETHICS

- SPL deal conflicted with Rangers sponsorship ([Sky Sports](#))
- Parent company owns entities via tax havens ([Financial Times](#))
- Backed down in dispute with customer who bought car which had been involved in unreported accident ([Car Dealer Magazine](#))

► HUMAN RIGHTS

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





Everton

SLEEVE

SHIRT

KIT

KICK

Stake.com

hummel

£ Undisclosed

Value of Stake.com sponsorship

(reported as £15 million per year)

Everton’s multi-year sponsorship deal with Stake.com continued for the 2023/2024 season. The partnership included promotion of the brand on screens, media backdrops and digital platforms.

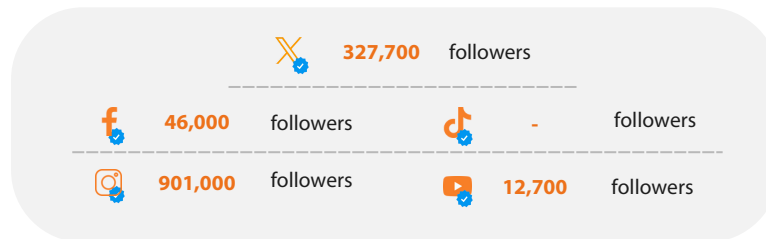
([Everton](#), [The Athletic](#), [Swiss Ramble](#))



Social Media Activation

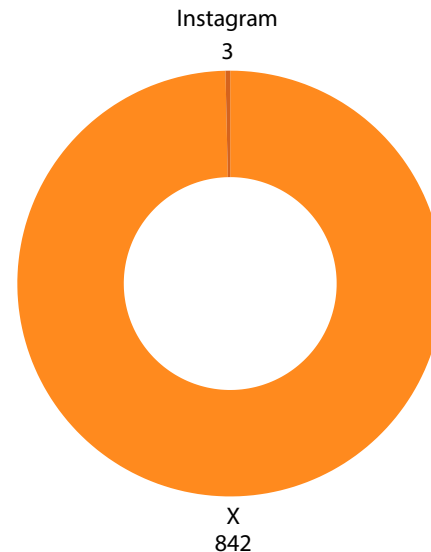
Potential brand exposure

1.2 million users



Brand activations over the season

845 posts



Stake.com’s X account mentioned Everton 842 times over the season. The majority of the posts consisted of interactions with followers, often using [GIFs](#) of the players. Several [posts](#) encouraged betting on the team’s results. A few [pictures](#) on Instagram also featured, updating on the club’s results.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

36,700

social media mentions of Everton FC & Stake.com



Sentiment

Hashtags

Stake & #EvertonFC - 44 posts

Everton & #Stake - 41 posts



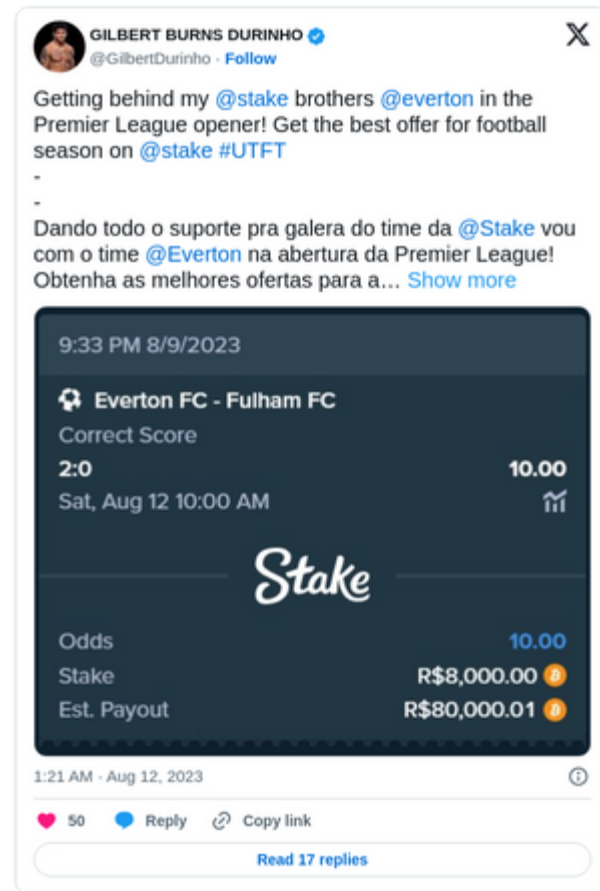
Thanks to Stake.com, frequent and active [promotion](#) of Everton in social media [conversation](#) surrounding the partnership was high during the season. Numerous users engaged positively with the brand's related content and tagged it on their comments about the team.

Everton [fan experiences](#) organised in partnership with Stake.com received positive feedback and high engagement with numerous pictures and messages of praise being shared from the events.

UFC fighter, Gilbert Burns' visit to Everton in [partnership](#) with Stake.com gathered thousands of views and [reposts](#) in September 2023.

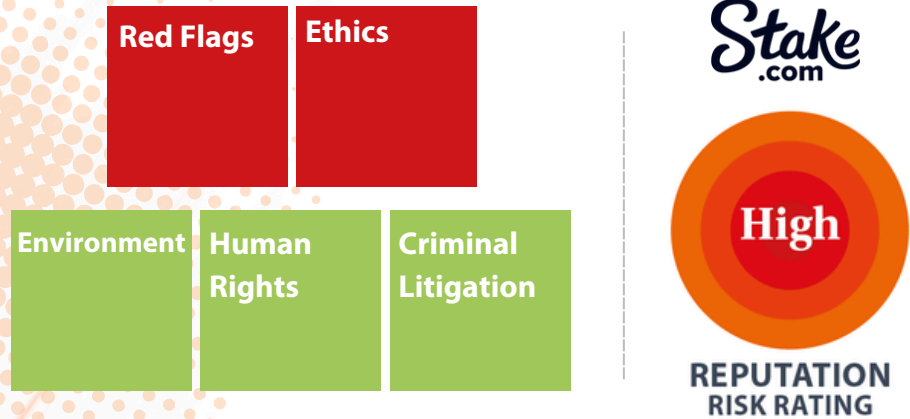
Media profiles of Stake.com's owner, Edward Craven, often [mention](#) Everton alongside his other sport sponsorships.

Some [users](#) express concern about Stake.com's use of customers' [personal data](#) and [call](#) the site a scam.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ RED FLAGS

- Owner of Stake Holdings, assumed to be 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 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, is 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](#)).
- A Texan Twitch streamer broadcast himself using Stake.com whilst using a VPN to circumvent the 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



WebBeds

SBOTOP



£ Undisclosed

Value of SBOTOP sponsorship

(reported as £10 million per year)

Fulham announced a sponsorship deal for the 2023/24 season with betting brand SBOTOP, which previously sponsored Leicester City. The SBOTOP logo featured on the men’s first team kit and training kit sleeve. The deal was announced as a “record” for the club, with media sources reporting its value at £10 million.

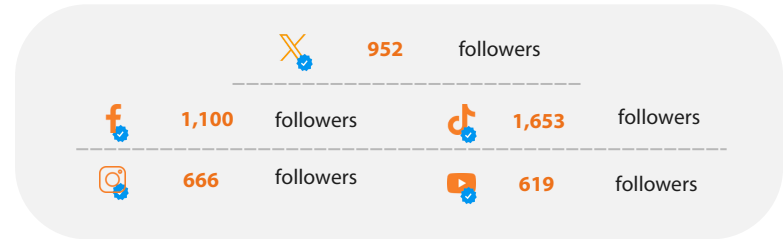
(Fulham FC, Sports Pro Media)



Social Media Activation

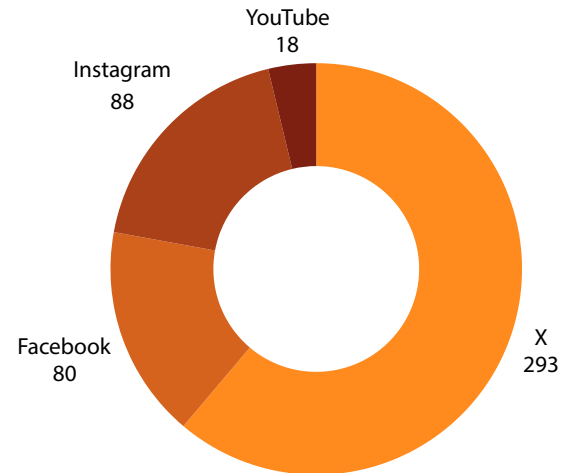
Potential brand exposure

4,990 users



Brand activations over the season

479 posts



SBOTOP rebranded its sponsorship social media channels, changing from Leeds United to Fulham’s branding following the agreement. Over the season, the brand shared numerous updates on the club, often using the hashtag #FulhamFriday. Additionally, the SBOTOP blog mentioned Fulham’s sponsorship and resulted in numerous posts over the season.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

1,400

social media mentions of Fulham & SBOTOP



Sentiment



Hashtags

Fulham & #Sbobet - 90 posts

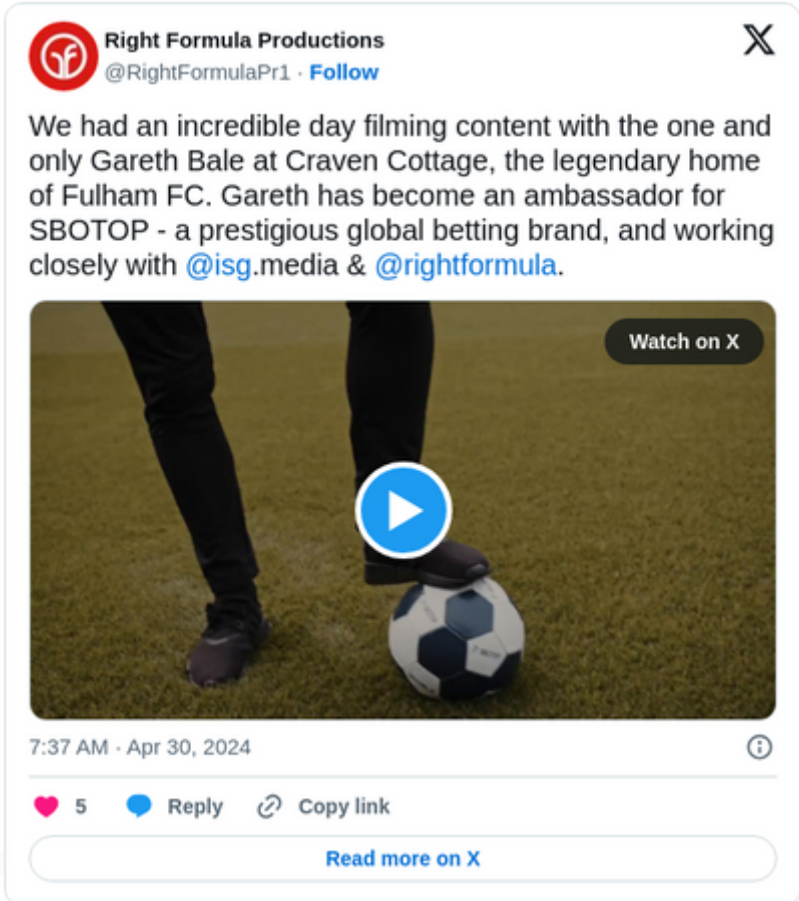
Fulham & #Sbotop - 23 posts

Social media conversation around Fulham’s sponsorship has been in line with the previous season and mostly focused on mentions of SBOTOP in [lists](#) of betting companies sponsoring Premier League clubs. Several Asian [betting blogs](#) also mentioned SBOTOP and Fulham alongside match results.

Several [videos](#) of Malaysian influencer, Ms. Puiyi promoting Fulham’s shirts in partnership with SBOTOP [circulate](#) across different platforms.

SBOTOP’s [advertising campaign](#) with Welsh former professional footballer Gareth Bale was filmed at Fulham’s stadium, Craven Cottage, and gathered some [coverage](#).

Handful of [users](#) discuss the value of SBOTOP’s sponsorship deal.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



SBOTOP



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 cooperation with links to the Chinese criminal underworld ([Josimar Football](#))
- Operates in the Asian market allowing individuals in jurisdictions in which gambling is illegal to gamble illegally, risking criminal charges ([Josimar Football](#))

- Shareholder of Celton Manx is Celton International Limited which is wholly owned by Cardenhill Limited which is based in Tortuga in the BVI ([Josimar Football](#))



Liverpool



£50 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. The current agreement signed during the 2022/2023 season will last 4 years and has a value of £50 million per year.

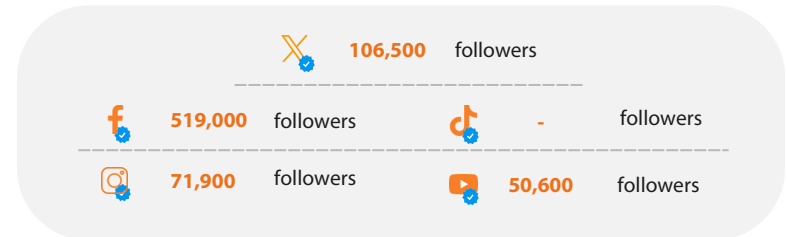
([The Athletic](#), [The Guardian](#), [Liverpool Echo](#))



Social Media Activation

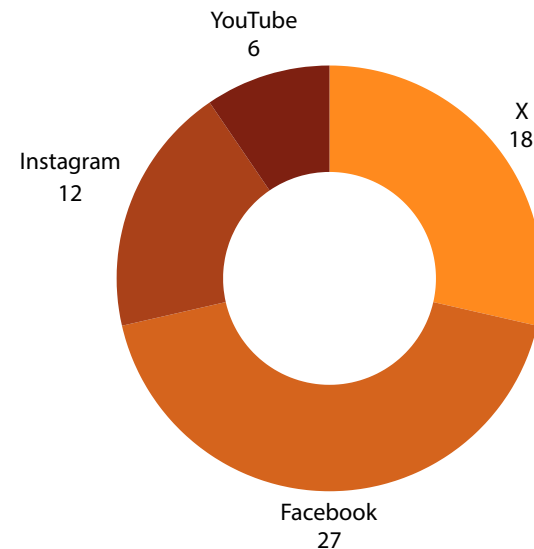
Potential brand exposure

748,000 users



Brand activations over the season

63 posts



Standard Chartered created original [content](#) across all its accounts to promote Liverpool, including [interviews](#) with [players](#), the team's coach and CEO, and launching the [Futuremakers X Liverpool](#) collection.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

80,500

social media mentions of Liverpool & Standard Chartered



Sentiment

Hashtags



- Liverpool & #StandRed - 1,600 posts
- Liverpool & #SCfuturemaking - 801 posts

Levels of online conversation around the sponsorship remained similar to the previous season, while sentiment turned positive.

The Standard Chartered-sponsored [Player of the Month](#) awards dominated social media conversations as fans engaged with the contest celebrating the players. The September edition won by [Dominik Szoboszlai](#) and the December one won by [Wataru Endo](#) proved particularly popular, as they generated 10,000 and 20,600 social media mentions respectively.

The charity auction of the [Futuremakers](#) shirts gathered momentum as users shared pictures and [celebrated](#) the initiative.

A few Liverpool [fans](#) on X and reddit [reported](#) on Standard Chartered fines for breaking US sanctions.



khassidi · Follow

khassidi · 23 w
Liverpool FC Standard Chartered Men's Player of the Month for January... Conor Bradley 🏆

No comments yet.
Start the conversation.

4 likes
14 February

Goater's Motors
@goatersmotors · Follow

Replying to @JosimarFotball

Interesting, I searched your tweets and there's nothing on the sanctions that Liverpool's main sponsor Standard Chartered received for money laundering for terrorist groups.

12:56 PM · Feb 18, 2024

16 Reply Copy link



Due Diligence & Risk Analysis

Red Flags

Ethics

Environment

Human Rights

Criminal Litigation



▶ RED FLAGS

- Numerous fines, ranging between US \$281 million and US \$1.1 billion, handed down by UK and US authorities in relation to breaking sanctions and money laundering ([Reuters](#), [The Guardian](#), [CNN Money](#))
- Fresh allegations of terrorist financing; whistleblower claimed that US authorities concealed evidence that Standard Chartered had conducted many money transactions with sanctioned Iranian entities and terror groups in addition to those it admitted in 2012 ([ICIJ](#))

- 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 USD 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, but admitted doing so again in 2019 ([Forbes](#), [Reuters](#))
- Signed letter in 2004 committing to comply with AML procedures ([The Federal Reserve Board](#))



- Rebuked by BaFin for failing to hold enough capital to mitigate the risk presented by “serious organisational flaws” which did not meet legal requirements ([Financial Times](#))
- Named in lawsuit accusing it of handing high-interest loans to the apartheid-era government of South Africa when it was subject to sanctions ([The Guardian](#))
- Admitted liability in a case brought by South African competition watchdog accusing 28 banks of attempting to manipulate the rand-US dollar exchange rate between 2007 and 2013 ([BFSI](#))
- 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

- 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’s 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 Standard Chartered’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*
 - 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](#))

▶ 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](#))



Luton Town



£ Undisclosed

Value of Utilita sponsorship

(reported as £2.7 million per year)

For its debut in the Premier League, Luton Town named Utilita Energy as front-of-shirt sponsor in a deal that marks the biggest sponsorship agreement in the club's history. The company has partnered with the club since 2015 and Luton Town's Chief Executive, Gary Sweet, has publicly rejected the idea of accepting a gambling company as sponsor.

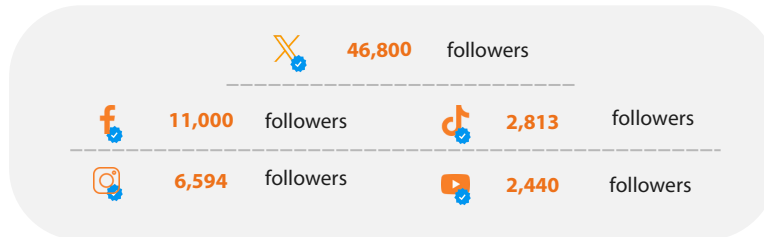
([Sports Pro Media](#), [Luton Today](#))



Social Media Activation

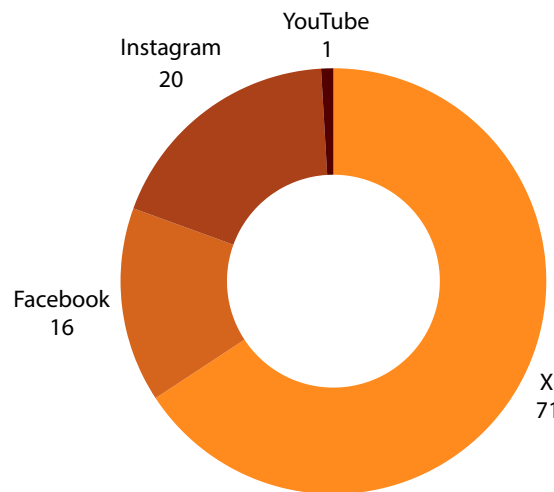
Potential brand exposure

69,647 users



Brand activations over the season

108 posts



Utilita promoted its [sponsorship](#) of Luton Town on a set of [dedicated accounts](#) called Utilita Football. The posts focused on charity [initiatives](#) and interviews with players for the [#FootballRebooted](#) series. The X account ran several [giveaways](#). The company also announced itself as Luton's sponsor at the [beginning](#) of the season on its main X account.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

556

social media mentions of Luton Town & Utilita



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords



Luton Town & #FootballRebooted - 14 posts

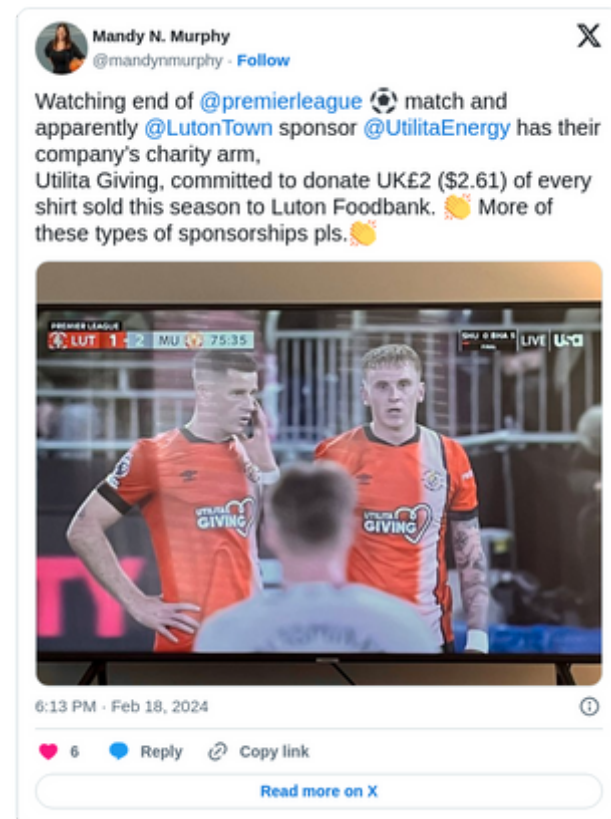
Luton Town & #UtilitaGiving - 10 posts

Utilita Energy’s sponsorship of Luton Town generated low levels of social media conversion this past year. Mentions mostly focused on engagement with Utilita and Luton’s content about the partnership.

Volumes spiked in July 2023 as Utilita announced that it would continue its relationship with Luton as their front-of-shirt sponsor, signing the biggest sponsorship deal in the club’s history for their first-ever Premier League season. As the new kits were released ahead of the season, several users offered their opinion of Utilita’s logo on the shirts.

Luton’s opening of a Warm Hub in its stadium, generated a largely positive reaction online, however some fans expressed concern about the country’s need for these initiatives. Utilita Giving charity’s announcement that it would donate £2 from every Luton shirt to local charities also received fan reaction with positive sentiment.

Utilita Giving’s charity auctions of Luton shirts and David James’ unveiling of the Utilita Energy Hub saw high social media engagement.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



ETHICS

- Ofgem, the government regulator for electricity and gas markets in the UK, urged Utilita and five other suppliers in July 2022 to take “immediate” action regarding the way they charged customers by direct debit ([BBC](#))
- On 9 September 2022, Ofgem then issued Utilita with a Provisional Order, which forced them to meet its obligations to protect vulnerable customers. As part of the agreement it had to pay out £830,000, including GBP 508,260 in compensation to 25,000 customers and £321,740 to the Energy Redress Fund ([Ofgem](#), [Standard](#), [Independent](#))

- Named as worst energy firm for customer service according to a report from Citizens Advice in April 2022 ([inews](#))
- Forced to pay £500,000 in compensation for overcharging 40,000 prepayment customers by over £125,000 in October 2020 ([TheSun](#))
- Chief Executive criticised by campaigners over prepayment metres (PPMs) after investigation found only 72 of 500,000 court warrants allowing company to forcibly install metres had been refused since July 2021 ([Express](#))
- Ofgem later announced that the firm had fulfilled necessary conditions to resume involuntary installations of PPMs on customers who are struggling to pay bills ([EnergyLiveNews](#))
- Involved in two Employment Tribunals for “unfair dismissal” in which both parties agreed financial terms, and disability discrimination in which the claim was withdrawn ([GOV](#), [GOV](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- Paid £175,000 to Energy Redress Fund after failing to meet carbon emission reduction obligations in July 2019 ([Ofgem](#))



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 including naming rights for the stadium in addition to sport sponsorship. Even though the club didn’t disclose details of the renewal at the end of the 10 years, Etihad continues to be the club’s front-of-shirt sponsor to this day.

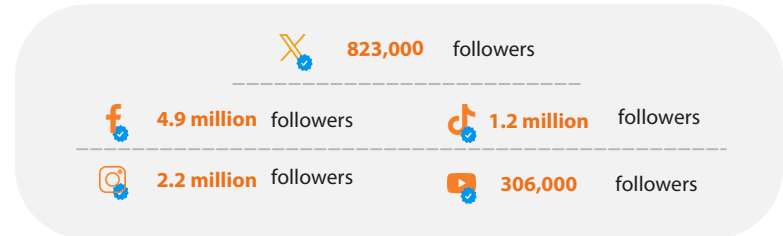
([Statista](#), [The Guardian](#), [Football Insider 24/7](#))



Social Media Activation

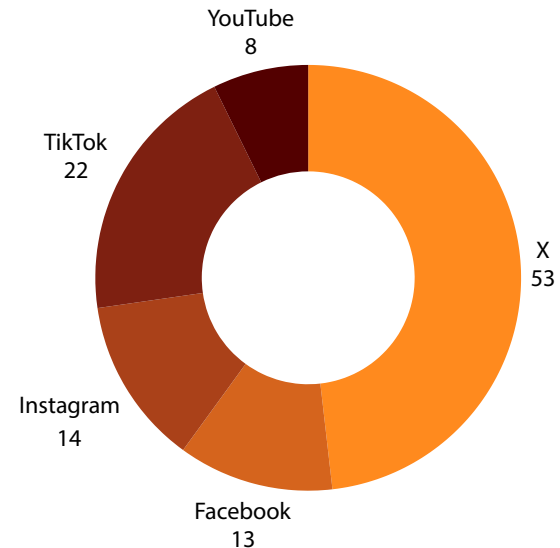
Potential brand exposure

9.4 million users



Brand activations over the season

110 posts



Etihad shared numerous [posts](#) about Manchester City across its [channels](#), celebrating the club’s success and filming various [games](#) and interviews with players both at the stadium and at [Zayed International Airport](#). Etihad YouTube channel features a [‘Manchester City Football Club’](#) playlist with 8 videos posted over the past year.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

271,400

social media mentions of Manchester City & Etihad



Sentiment

Hashtags & Associated Keywords

Manchester City & #CityzensGiving - 13 posts

Etihad & #ManCity - 24,000 posts

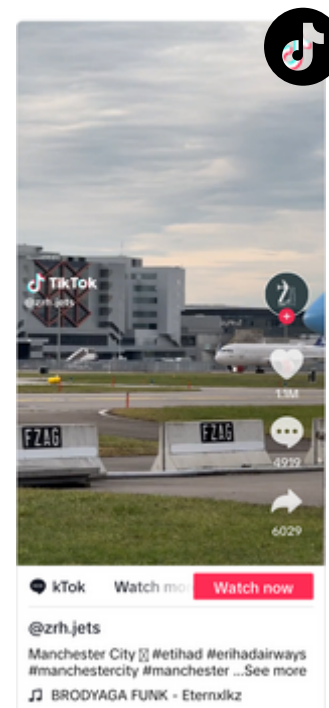


Social media volumes around Manchester City and Etihad have increased significantly from the previous year with the sponsorship becoming the most discussed over the season.

Numerous posts mentioned and tagged Etihad in the team's results and match commentary. The end of the season, in particular, saw a spike to over 16,000 mentions as the team won the Premier League title.

Fans and players engaged with the Etihad Player of the Month award over the season, generating significant positive engagement.

Pictures and videos of the Manchester City branded Etihad airplane circulated on X and YouTube.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



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 in assisting the ruler of Abu Dhabi is to “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 agreement started in the 2021/2022 season and became the biggest shirt-only deal in the Premier League. However, during the 2022/2023 season it was announced that both parties had agreed to end the deal as soon as the club could secure a new sponsor. The club confirmed a new agreement with Snapdragon for the 2024/2025 season.

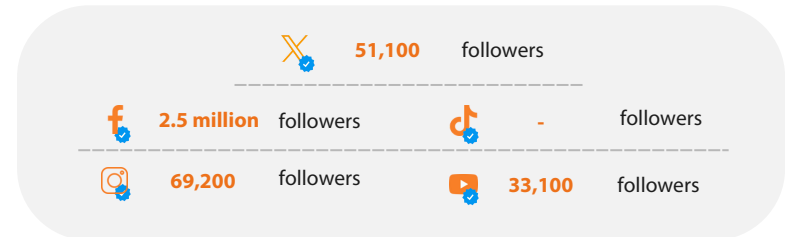
([Sky Sports](#), [Manchester United](#), [Sky Sports](#), [KSL](#))



Social Media Activation

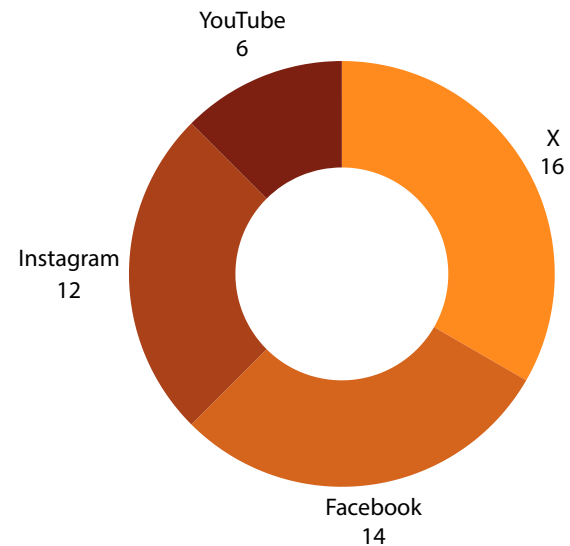
Potential brand exposure

2.6 million users



Brand activations over the season

48 posts



TeamViewer continued to **promote** Manchester United across all its channels, **highlighting** how the team uses TeamViewer, shooting the **Frontline Challenge** with players and creating the **TeamViewer Experience Day** with the club.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

62,900

social media mentions
of Manchester United & TeamViewer



Sentiment

Hashtags



- Man Utd & #FindYourBetter - 22,100 posts
- Man Utd & #BringingYouCloser - 13,400 posts

Social media conversation decreased compared to the previous season but sentiment turned highly positive as users focused on the club's search for a new front-of-shirt sponsor.

In September 2023, [news](#) of the advanced discussions with [Qualcomm](#) and the subsequent [confirmation](#) of the new deal with Qualcomm brand, Snapdragon dominated online mentions.

Users [praised](#) the deal, expressed relief that Qualcomm is a "proper company" and not a "crypto, ForEx trading, or an airline" and noted how the agreement will be the most [valuable](#) in the Premier League alongside Arsenal's.

The [release](#) of the 2024/2025 season kit in May 2024 with the Snapdragon logo proved a success on social media, with users celebrating the look of the new [logo](#) on the shirts.

A few [users](#) mentioned TeamViewer while discussing a possible return of [Mason Greenwood](#) to the team following the charges dropped against him. Discussion centred on whether the sponsor would be consulted and if they would accept the player's return.

Some [conversation](#) against the Glazer family and calls for TeamViewer to stop sponsoring the club lingered from the previous season.

r/reddevils · 1 yr. ago
calupict

Adam Crafton - **NEW** @TheAthleticFC Manchester United in advanced talks with U.S. firm Qualcomm (subsidiary brand Snapdragon) to become front-of-shirt sponsor 💰 Expected to take over from Team Viewer at start of next season & Man Utd targeting £60m per year



Łukasz Bączek
@Lu_Class_

As part of a deal worth £60m a year, Snapdragon will appear on the front of the shirt from next season. The size of the sponsorship rivals #ManchesterUnited's historic deal with General Motors (Chevrolet brand). TeamViewer will remain with the club at a global level.





Shaun Irvine [@_shaunirvine](#) · [Follow](#)

Manchester United's potential new front of shirt sponsorship deal with American technology company Qualcomm doesn't hold any baring on a potential sale or not. No final decision has been made by the Glazer family but some form of update from them is expected by the end of... [Show more](#)

Shaun Irvine [@_shaunirvine](#)
 Manchester United in advanced talks over new front-of-shirt sponsorship with the U.S. technology company Qualcomm. Will replace Team Viewer from 2024/25 season, [@TheAthleticFC](#) confirms! #MUFC 🗨️

theathletic.com/4852286/2023/0...

10:33 AM · Sep 12, 2023

Channels Television [@channelstv](#) · [Follow](#)

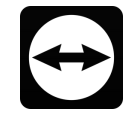
Manchester United have announced a bumper sponsorship deal with US-based Qualcomm Technologies, whose Snapdragon brand will replace the TeamViewer logo on their shirts from next season.

channelstv.com/2023/09/13/man...



7:18 PM · Sep 13, 2023

Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



REPUTATION RISK RATING



Newcastle United



£ **£25 million**
Value of Sela sponsorship

Newcastle signed Saudi Arabian state-owned events firm Sela as new front-of-shirt sponsor for the 2023/2024 season. The value of the deal represents a significant increase on their prior sponsorship from gambling firm Fun88.

([SportsPro](#), [The Guardian](#), [Sela](#), [World Economic Forum](#), [Review of International Political Economy](#))

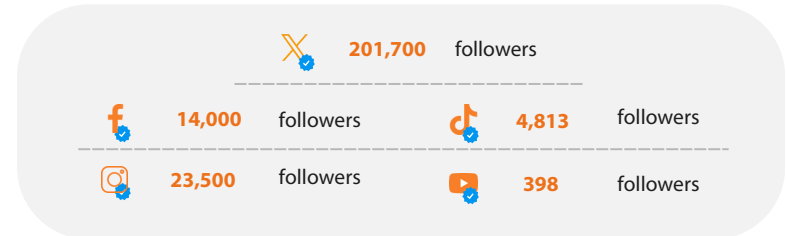


TrueFaith

Social Media Activation

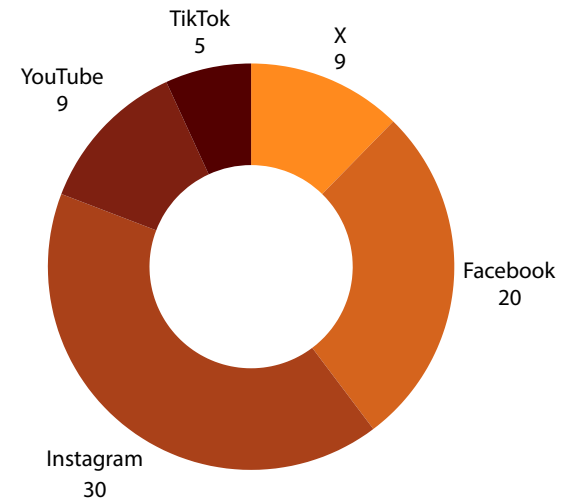
Potential brand exposure

254,211 users



Brand activations over the season

73 posts



Sela actively promoted Newcastle in numerous posts using the bespoke [#SpectacularEveryday](#) hashtag. The two collaborated on a number of events, such as the [#UnsilenceTheCrowd campaign](#) and their [drone show](#). Newcastle played host to the inaugural [Sela Cup](#). On Instagram, the brand revealed the club's [Player of the Month award](#) winners throughout the season.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

38,300

social media mentions of Newcastle United & Sela



Sentiment

Hashtags



Newcastle & #SpectacularEveryday - 1,800 posts

Newcastle & #UnsilenceTheCrowd - 1,132 posts

The volume of social media discussion surrounding Newcastle’s sponsorship deal fell significantly from the prior year, following the switch from gambling firm Fun88 to Sela. Users reacted mostly positively to the change, however, some critics of the deal expressed their concern in forums highlighting the human rights implications of being owned by the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia as well as the potentially inflated value of the deal.

Most of the conversation surrounding Sela and Newcastle was generated in July and August 2023, when Newcastle hosted and subsequently won the inaugural Sela Cup.

Whilst many fans enjoyed watching the team play, some comments **criticised** the perceived lack of fairness in refereeing decisions in the competition and accused Sela of rigging it in Newcastle’s favour.

A spike in discussion in September 2023 focused on the **drone show** organised to celebrate Newcastle’s return to the Champions League. Reactions to the stunt were overwhelmingly positive, with many praising Sela’s actions compared to the efforts of past Newcastle sponsors and owners.

The **#UnsilenceTheCrowd** campaign also generated significant positive **engagement** and coverage, with numerous users praising Sela for giving up its front-of-shirt sponsorship space and allowing the Royal National Institute for Deaf People to use it instead during a game against Tottenham. The company provided innovative ‘haptic’ **shirts** to allow deaf fans to experience the atmosphere.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



RED FLAGS

- MBS initiated Saudi intervention in Yemen, where they violated the laws of war by targeting civilians ([The New York Times](#), [BBC](#), [Inter Press Service](#))
- Saudi Arabian forces used illegal white phosphorous and cluster bombs in Yemen ([Washington Post](#), [CNN](#))
- Saudi Arabia declared entire city of Sa'ada a military target in contravention of international law ([Human Rights Watch](#), [Reuters](#))

- Potential conflicts of interest over PIF payments to senior US officials, including Donald Trump ([Just Security](#), [The Guardian](#))

ETHICS

- Questioned about fairness of sponsorship deal's value due to common ownership by PIF ([The Guardian](#), [The Independent](#))
- PIF ownership of Newcastle art of 'sportswashing' campaign to improve international reputation of Saudi Arabia ([The Mirror](#), [CNBC](#))
- Saudi forces were authorised to use lethal force in evictions for eco-city project ([BBC](#), [Politico](#))

ENVIRONMENT

- PIF also invests in Saudi Aramco, which emits the most carbon dioxide of any company in the world ([The Guardian](#), [Reuters](#))
- MBS is allegedly overseeing the Oil Demand Sustainability Project to keep developing countries reliant on fossil fuels ([Centre for Climate Reporting](#), [Channel 4](#))



HUMAN RIGHTS

- Controlled by government of Saudi Arabia, regarded as one of the most authoritarian in the world ([The Economist](#), [Alqst](#))
- Saudi Arabia executed 172 people in 2023 as part of a rising trend in the use of the death penalty, including against women ([Reprivee](#), [Amnesty International](#))
- Discriminatory Personal Status Law gives which gives men guardianship over women enshrined in 2022 ([Human Rights Watch](#), [The Guardian](#))
- Widespread use of torture in Saudi Arabian prisons, including sexual violence towards feminist activists ([Peoples Dispatch](#), [The Guardian](#))
- Mass allegations of migrant workers being mistreated under 'kafala' system ([DAWN](#), [Council of Foreign Relations](#))
- General Authority of Media Regulation greatly limits freedom of speech and press in Saudi Arabia ([SMEX](#), [Access Now](#))
- MBS ordered assassination of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 ([Amnesty International](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

- Homosexuality is criminalised in Saudi Arabia and punishable by death ([France 24](#), [BBC](#))



Nottingham Forest



£ Undisclosed

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

In August 2023, Nottingham Forest announced a two-year partnership deal with digital sports platform and betting company Kaiyun Sports, which represents the first front-of-shirt sponsorship deal for the club since its promotion to the Premier League.

([Nottingham Forest](#), [The Athletic](#), [Football Insider](#))

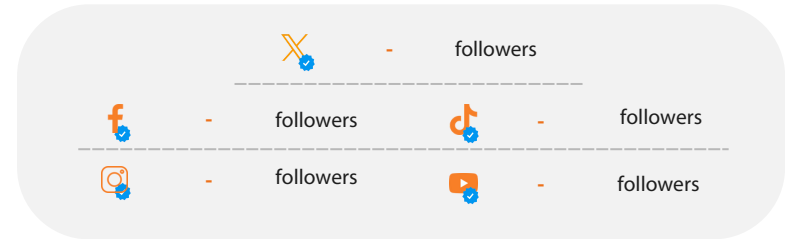


Nottingham Post

Social Media Activation

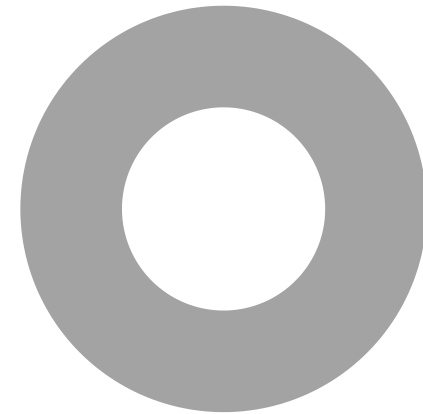
Potential brand exposure

0 users



Brand activations over the season

0 posts



0

Even though numerous Kaiyun branded social media pages exist, no official or verified accounts were confirmed. The fake accounts all link to different betting platforms or feature unrelated content. Nottingham Forest's official pages also don't tag any accounts for the sponsor when mentioning them in their posts.

Social Media Reaction & Sentiment



Hashtags & Associated Keywords

Kaiyun & #NFFC - 30 posts



News of Nottingham Forest’s deal with Kaiyun Sports spread online in August 2023, but mentions were low and mostly [negative](#) for the rest of the season, compared to the highly-praised charity agreement with UNHCR the previous year.

Users [voiced](#) their disappointment at the choice of a gambling sponsor, with some [mentioning](#) they “expected better” from the club and noting how the brand doesn’t have an available [website](#). [Concerns](#) about the reportedly non-existent spokesperson mentioned in the announcement also circulated.

Several journalists and media sources reported how the announcement was [misleading](#) as it didn’t clarify that Kaiyun is a betting company and [presented](#) it instead as a “prominent Asian digital sports platform”, the lack of information on the company, and shared [investigations](#) on how its owner is linked to criminality in Asia.

A handful of users pointed out that the brand already [sponsored](#) Real Madrid and AC Milan and most clubs in the Premier League are sponsored by [betting](#) brands so fans should not be concerned.

Anti-gambling campaign group, [The Big Step](#) sarcastically shared Harry Toffolo’s interview with BBC Sport about supporting people with a gambling addiction after his own struggles and commented: ““Kaiyun” on the front of this shirt is an online gambling company”.



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 Cheek-Wa was convicted of illegal gambling, fraud and involvement in a criminal Organisation in January 2023 ([InsightX](#))
- Kaiyun websites explicitly state that the company offers sports betting in mainland China, while geoblocked websites deny service to individuals based in the Philippines, where its operating company is incorporated ([InsightX](#))

- Operating company owns trademarks formerly held by Yabo Sports, from which Chinese authorities confiscated more than US \$200 million as part of the arrest of more than 4,000 individuals as part of its investigation into Yabo’s illegal “cross-border gambling” operation ([Josimar Football](#), [Josimar Football](#))
- Falsely claims to be licensed by the Malta Gaming Authority and the British Virgin Islands Financial Services Commission, among others ([InsightX](#))
- Yabo Sports has its own reported links to Chau Cheek-Wa ([Josimar Football](#))
- No online footprint for listed shareholders ([InsightX](#))
- Offers betting under the guise of broadcasting ([Kaiyun](#))
- Pays agents in cryptocurrency ([Kaiyun](#))



Sheffield United



£ Undisclosed

Value of CFI sponsorship

(reported as £6.9 million per year)

Sheffield United announced a one-year deal with Dubai-based global multi-asset broker, Credit Financier Invest (CFI) for the 2023-24 season, with a possible renewal option for next season.

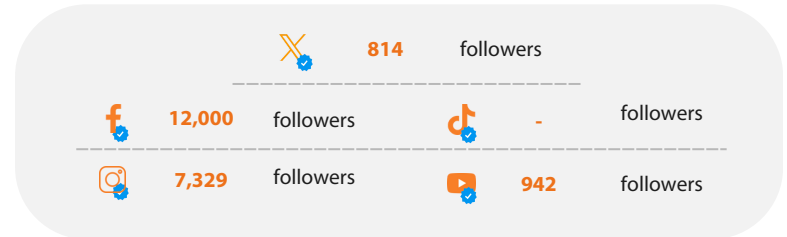
([YorkshireLive](#))



Social Media Activation

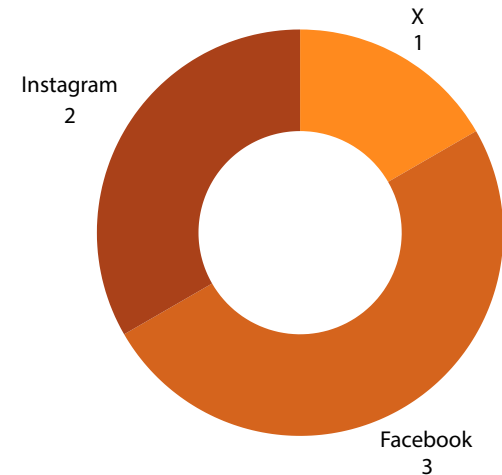
Potential brand exposure

21,085 users



Brand activations over the season

6 posts



CFI shared 6 posts about Sheffield over the season, mostly announcing the new sponsorship agreement. It also shared a Facebook video featuring Sheffield promoting CFI tools by comparing trading to football.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

632

social media mentions of Sheffield & CFI



Sentiment

Hashtags

Sheffield & #TheBlades - 32,400 posts

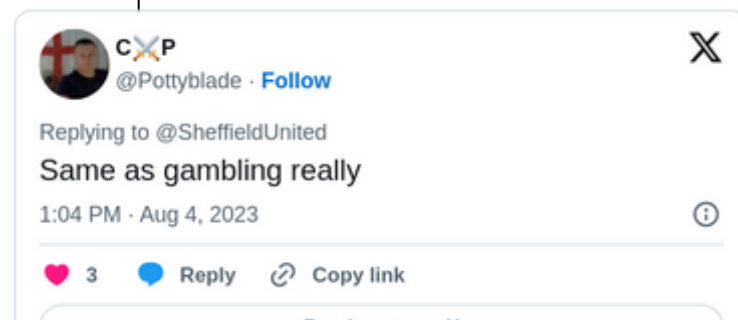
CFI & #Twitterblades - 3 posts



Social media discussion of Sheffield and CFI's sponsorship deal was low with around 600 mentions over the year.

As news of the agreement spread in August 2023, users circulated images of the new shirts while some noted the club had turned down more lucrative deals from betting companies in favour of CFI. Reaction was mostly neutral with a few negative comments.

Trade sources updating on CFI's business news mentioned the company's role as Sheffield sponsor.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



▶ ETHICS

- Incorporated in Mauritius, a tax haven; holding company incorporated in Cyprus, also a tax haven ([InsightX](#))
- Questions about whether some EMEA branches are regulated ([InsightX](#))

▶ HUMAN RIGHTS

- Links to Dubai highlighted upon announcement, with reference to the country's human rights issues ([The Star](#))



£ **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.

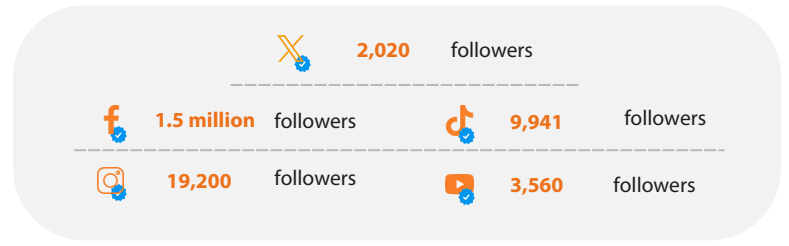
([Independent](#), [SportsPro Media](#), [Korea Times](#))



Social Media Activation

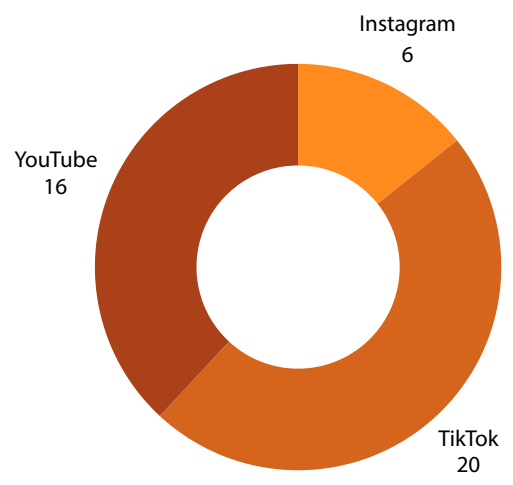
Potential brand exposure

1.5 million users



Brand activations over the season

42 posts



AIA celebrated the **10 years** of its Tottenham's sponsorship deal with several posts across its **channels**. Singapore AIA YouTube channel features a playlist titled '[AIA x Tottenham Hotspur](#)', which includes 13 videos from the season, including the Kitchen Kick-off series. AIA's TikTok channel focused on videos featuring player and brand ambassador Son Heung-min, including the '[Sonny's Sacred Secrets](#)' series.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

3,500

social media mentions of Tottenham Hotspur & AIA



Sentiment

Hashtags

Tottenham & #StopTicketPriceRises - 131 posts

Tottenham & #AIA - 51 posts



Online discussion around Tottenham and AIA decreased compared to the previous season.

At the beginning of the season, numerous fans tagged AIA alongside other sponsors on fans' online and in-person campaigns against ticket price increases asking the company to put pressure on the club.

AIA's cooking show with Tottenham players saw pickup on X, as users shared clips from the videos, especially from moments featuring Son Heung-min.

As in previous years, fans discussed their preferences for the colour of AIA's logo on the team's shirts.



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](#))



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

9,600

social media mentions of West Ham United & Betway



Sentiment

Hashtags

West Ham United & Betway Cup - 10,660 posts

West Ham #BetwaySquad - 79 posts



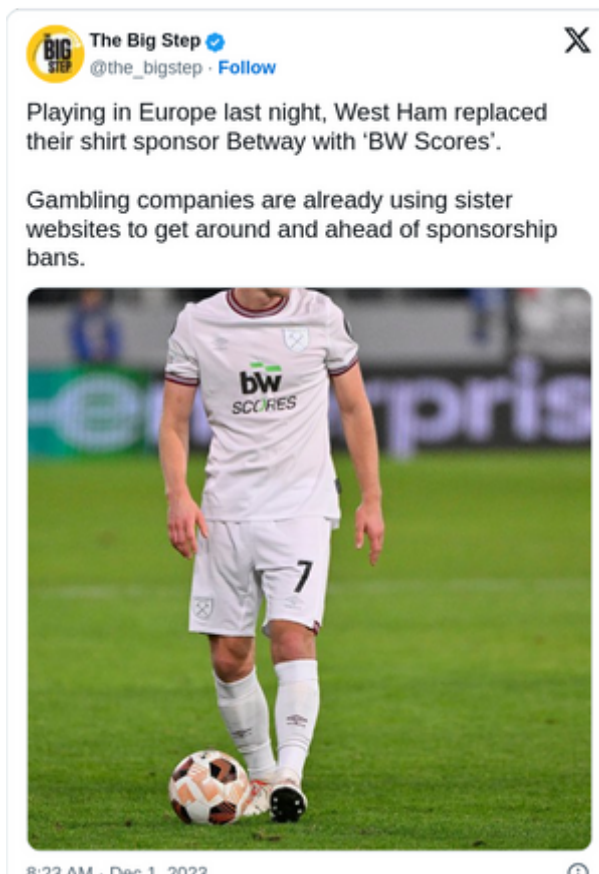
Social media discussion centred around [investigations](#) into West Ham midfielder Lucas Paquetá, as [Betway](#) reported "suspicious activity" on its betting platform to the FA, leading to a [corruption probe](#) against the footballer.

Mentions were mostly [neutral](#) as the news broke in September 2023, although some [users](#) expressed anger against Betway for the potential impact of the investigation on Paquetá's [career](#).

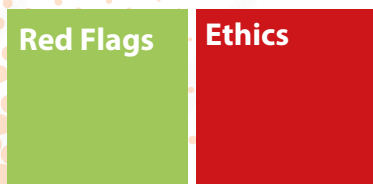
In May 2024, [news](#) of the confirmed charges against Paquetá spread widely online with numerous Brazil-based [users](#) commenting on the events.

The [reveal](#) of the new shirts ahead of the season in August 2023, generated over 600 [comments](#) with an overall negative perception as fans complained about the e size of Betway [logo](#) which was deemed to be too large.

Several [users](#) noted how Betway's brand BW Scores featured on West Ham's shirts during a European match in a [move](#) that seems to be used to "get around and ahead of sponsorship bans."



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)

AstroPay continued to feature 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.

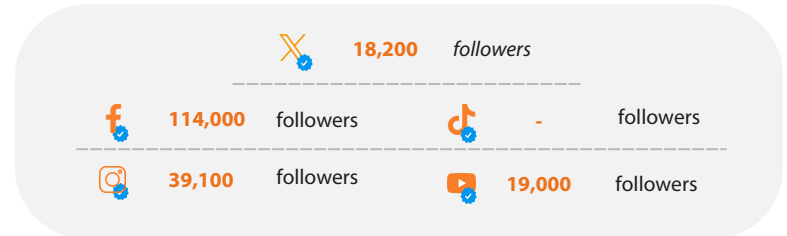
([Wolverhampton Wanderers](#), [SportCal](#))



Social Media Activation

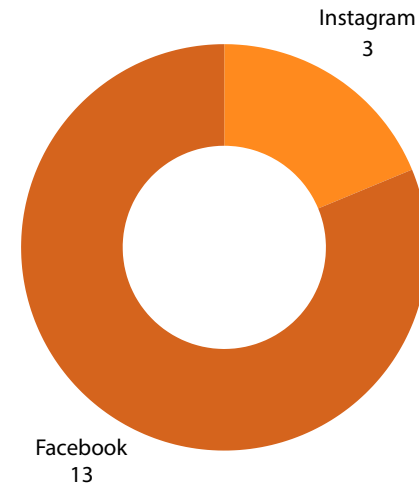
Potential brand exposure

190,300 users



Brand activations over the season

16 posts



Astropay mentions of Wolves focused on its [Facebook](#) page where the company promoted its Wolves card in the majority of its posts. Three of the four posts existing on Astropay's [Instagram](#) page also publicise the card.



Social Media Reaction & Sentiment

25,600



social media mentions
of Wolverhampton Wanderers &
AstroPay

Sentiment

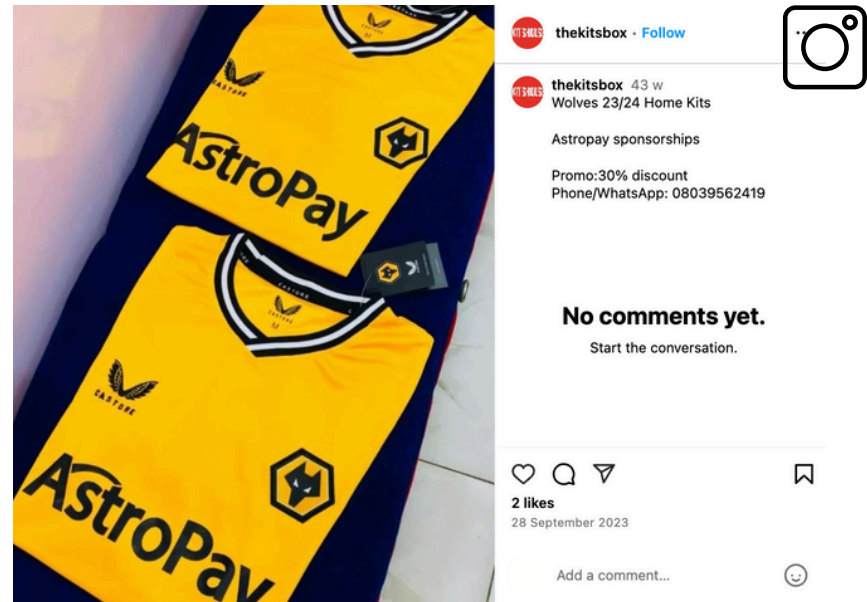
Hashtags



AstroPay & #Wolves - 17 posts
Wolves & #AstroPay - 11 posts

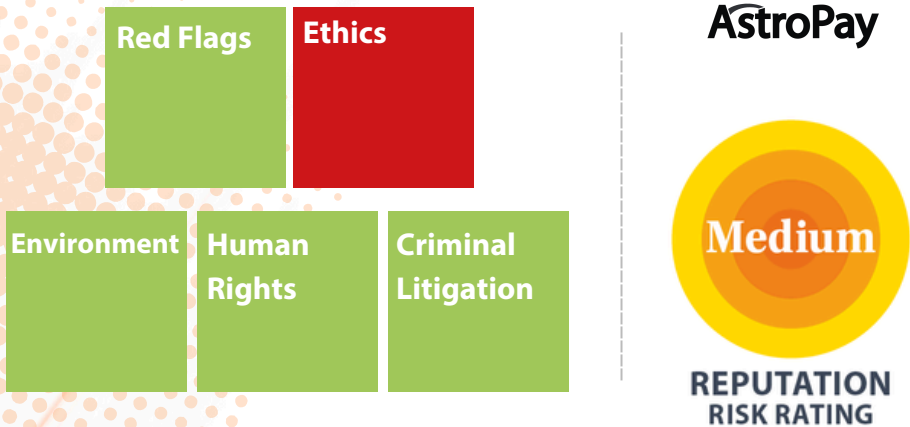
Conversation increased since the previous season and focused on fans' engagement with Wolves' social media content in partnership with Astropay.

The club's posts saw high social media engagement, as users praised the accounts' graphics and interacted with posts, commenting on the players' performances and updating on matches' line-ups.





Due Diligence & Risk Analysis



► ETHICS

- Agreed with UK regulator to voluntarily refrain from 'accepting any new customer funds, providing payment services or issuing or redeeming e-money' ([Financial Conduct Authority](#))
- Owes more than US \$22 million to creditors ([Fintech Futures](#))
- Poor reviews and numerous accusations of being a scam ([Reddit](#), [Reddit](#), [Trustpilot](#))

Conclusions

Social media discussion around the Premier League's 2023/2024 sponsorship agreements quieted down slightly compared to the previous season, while still seeing high engagement around clubs and sponsors' content initiatives such as giveaways and Player of the Month awards. Manchester City became the most discussed team of the season, with volumes of online conversations five times higher than the previous one. Similarly, Chelsea saw a spike in online discussion following its new agreement with Infinite Athlete, gathering five times more mentions than the previous year.

InsightX's due diligence risk analysis found that Manchester United's sponsor was the only one representing a 'Low' risk for the club's reputation, with the downgrade of Wolverhampton Wanderers' partner Astropay to 'Medium' risk after adverse events in 2024. Seven clubs' partners were classified as 'High' risk, compared to six in the previous season.

Increase in clubs' content creation to promote partners

Social media activation on the sponsors' official accounts was once again limited, with the exception of Stake and

However, in what appears to be a new form of highlighting the partnership, the clubs' accounts created several brand concepts for their partners on their social media accounts tagging them as sponsored content or sharing them in using the collaboration feature on Instagram.

Sentiment: winners and losers

Sentiment of social media discussion turned overall more positive, with fans generating enthusiastic engagement with clubs and sponsors' online initiatives. Even though opposition to gambling sponsorship was not as vocal as during the past season, several clubs were still the target of online campaigns and negative conversation on their choice of sponsors.

- Stake.com, Etihad, Standard Chartered and Cinch's frequent promotion of their sponsored clubs and engagement initiatives proved highly effective in generating positive return, particularly the Player of the Month awards.
- Infinite Athlete's deal with Chelsea received numerous congratulations and turned the club's sentiment around compared to the previous season.

- Manchester United's new deal for the next season with Qualcomm brand Snapdragon gathered a positive reaction from online users, who celebrated the choice of sponsor and look of the logo on the shirts.
- Aston Villa, Burnley, Fulham and Nottingham's new deals with controversial gambling companies found opposition from online users. Nottingham's fans in particular voiced their disappointment after last season's charity deal with UNHRC.
- AIA was mentioned in numerous fans' online and in-person campaigns against Tottenham's ticket price increases asking the company to support them by putting pressure on the club.

Increased disregard for sponsorship risks

While the previous season saw a minor trend away from controversial partnerships, the various new short-term agreements with several Asian, often obscure, betting companies prevented clubs from moving to InsightX 'Low' risk sponsorships.

Newcastle's new sponsorship deal with Sela, downgraded the club to InsightX 'High' risk category as several ethics and human rights' concerns related to the company were identified.

Additionally, Wolverhampton Wanderers' partner Astropay, one of the two sponsors in the 'Low' risk category last year, was downgraded to 'Medium' risk following newly-identified ethical concerns.

Looking ahead

Until the front-of-shirt sponsorship ban comes into effect in the summer of 2026, clubs outside of the traditional 'Big Six' will continue to be drawn to the prospect of gambling sponsorship due to the significantly larger deals available. [The Big Step accused the league's clubs of desperation](#) after Bournemouth's sponsorship deal with bj88 took the total number of Premier League clubs with a gambling company as a front-of-shirt sponsor to 11.

The Big Step told The Guardian: "Premier League clubs must know that gambling harms are a serious public health issue that destroys many lives in their communities and around the world, yet continue to blindly sign these desperate deals for a few extra quid."

Manchester United's deal with Snapdragon represents the only change in sponsorship for the traditional 'Big Six' and the only new sponsor for a non-promoted side which is not a gambling company. The club were able to agree a [reported £65 million per year deal](#) with the US-based tech company Qualcomm Technologies Inc, which will see its brand adorn Manchester United's shirt for at least the whole of the 2024/25 season; the exact length of the deal has not yet been publicly disclosed.

Ipswich Town will celebrate its return to the Premier League by [continuing its partnership deal with lifelong fan Ed Sheeran](#). The Suffolk-born singer has been the team's front-of-shirt sponsor for the previous three seasons, in which time it achieved back-to-back promotions to secure Premier League football for the first time in 22 seasons.

Aston Villa and Bournemouth announced partnerships with Betano and bj88 respectively; both deals are the most lucrative deals in each clubs' history, with Aston Villa's Betano deal thought to be worth around [£20 million per year](#), a healthy reward for qualifying for the Champions League. The two brands could not be more different in recognisability, with Betano recently surveyed as [the most recognisable betting brand in Brazil](#) and bj88 previously only serving as [the Asian partner of Serie A's Bologna](#) and various X accounts affiliated with the brand [only having a handful of followers between them](#).

Net88 and DeBet have been named as Crystal Palace and Wolverhampton Wanderers front-of-shirt sponsors respectively, though the two sponsors are operated by the same company KNW Technology Inc.

The announcement of the deals was scrutinised by Josimar Football, which claimed that [Net88 offered gambling on cock fighting and or streaming live pornography on its website](#).

Reports suggest that Leicester City's partnership with BC.Game will net the recently-promoted side [US \\$20 million per year](#), a significant amount more than any recent partnership with [a TGP Europe affiliate](#). As part of the deal, BC.Game will launch its own cryptocurrency, \$BC, though it is unclear when.

Finally, RollBit, operated by Curaçao-based Bull Gaming NV, has been announced as Southampton's sponsor. The crypto casino [entered the UK market at the same time](#), having entered into a white label agreement with Grace Media Ltd. The length and value of the Southampton deal have [not been disclosed](#).

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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