

## Carlsberg involved in football for 30 years

*Like a good marriage, Carlsberg's bond with football grows stronger year after year*

Carlsberg has been engaged with the international football community for almost three decades as a dedicated supporter on all levels and in plenty of countries. It almost seems like a lifelong love affair.

Today, football is an important and integral part of Carlsberg's general marketing strategy – and part of the brewery's DNA!

Just like the bonds of a good marriage, Carlsberg's involvement with football just grows stronger and stronger. And like many a good marriage, Carlsberg's involvement in football began almost by coincidence.

### Bringing professional football to Denmark

Until the late 1970s, Danish football was purely amateur-league: the players also had full-time jobs to tend to, and all they were allowed to receive in payment was their playing equipment. That was why the best players in the Danish football league turned professional with European clubs and why Danish clubs were always the underdogs in international tournaments.



*Today, football is part of Carlsberg's DNA as a company.*

In the summer of 1977, however, a group of businessmen forced the introduction of professional football in Danish stadiums. The following year, Carlsberg helped bring professional football to the country by becoming Denmark's first main sponsor for the national team. At the time, it almost became a national duty for Carlsberg to help take Danish football to the next level.

Over the next decade, Carlsberg focused its sponsorship on its home market, Denmark. Late in the 1980s, the brewery took on a defining role as a professional sponsor, becoming Part of the Game at the 1988 UEFA European Football Championships in Germany and at the 1990 FIFA World Cup in Italy.

By becoming involved with UEFA and FIFA, Carlsberg became a full-fledged football sponsor.

### Six in a row

Carlsberg has since renewed its contract with UEFA several times, and the UEFA EURO 2008 agreement will be the sixth straight time Carlsberg spreads joy among football fans at a final round.



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Previous sponsorship agreements with UEFA have included 1993, 1994 UEFA Champions League and European Cup Winners Cup.

## English football

In 1992, Carlsberg became involved for the first time in England, the 'homeland' of football, when Liverpool FC, one of the strongest and best-known Premier League clubs, began playing with Carlsberg's recognisable logo on their jerseys.

Just three years later, Carlsberg also became a sponsor of England's Football Association, the FA.

Having been renewed a number of times, both of these sponsorship agreements have since evolved into business partnerships in which both parties have an in-depth knowledge of each other's needs and requirements.

Its bond with English football was strengthened further when in 2006 Carlsberg became a founding partner of the new Wembley Stadium, which was inaugurated on 17 March 2007.

Wembley CEO Michael Cunnah commented: "We are looking forward to offering Carlsberg's market-leading brands to our customers. Carlsberg has played an important role in English football for many years, and we are thrilled that they now have a major role to play in the operation of the new national stadium."

The four-year deal includes the pouring rights, which will see approximately three million pints of Carlsberg served over the course of a year.

In the nineties and in the new millennium, Carlsberg has entered into partnerships with top teams in Canada, Germany, Serbia and Denmark.

## What's in it for a sponsor?

***Carlsberg works hard to make good use of its sponsorships, and today, football is something valued by the brewery's employees.***

Back in the 1980s, the sponsors of major international sports events were still unsure about the actual impact of their sponsorships. How did the sponsor benefit from a sponsorship that typically cost a fortune?

In Carlsberg's home country, Denmark, a young man by the name of Keld Strudahl contacted Carlsberg. At the advertising agency he worked for, they had developed a model to measure the effects of a sponsorship more precisely, and they had a firm belief that this model would allow Carlsberg to document the value of its football sponsorships.



Keld Strudahl, International Marketing Director and Carlsberg's head of sponsoring.

“That was what I tried to convince Carlsberg’s management, and that is probably the reason why, in 1991, they asked me if I would be interested in taking up a new position as their sponsorship director.”

He accepted and has been in charge of developing Carlsberg’s global sponsorship operations ever since.

### **Interdisciplinary challenge**

Over the years, Carlsberg has developed a methodology of measuring the effects of its marketing efforts, including its sponsorships.

“At first, I was afraid that I would become known as the guy with the tickets to events sponsored by Carlsberg, but my goal was for us to *use* our sponsorships and integrate our sponsorship activities with all the other ways in which we worked to sell Carlsberg beer. My goal was to develop a strong interconnected marketing and sales discipline.”

This was a new way of thinking of and of using sponsorships. Obviously, the main presumption was and is that Carlsberg’s sponsorships benefit the Carlsberg brand, and that they support operations in the countries in which Carlsberg has a presence or licensee.

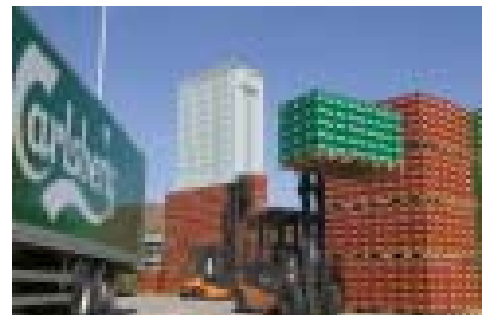
"My first ambition was to channel the value of our sponsorships to our licensed breweries as something that could prove useful to them. The idea was to gradually incorporate the sponsorships – and not least the opportunities they would produce – into the mindsets of their employees.

In countries where Carlsberg does not have a subsidiary, the company has licensed breweries to produce and market Carlsberg beer.

### **Topic of discussion for all**

It has been to Carlsberg’s benefit that football culture all over the world has become professionalised over the past 10–15 years. Today, professional football is not just sporting events; it is part of the global entertainment industry.

“Football has become something that everyone, high or low, can discuss. To fans and casual spectators alike, football has become a sport without social barriers. But it wasn’t always that way. Many felt that football was a working man’s sport. Golf and tennis were considered classier sports that attracted more affluent people. This isn’t true anymore. I believe that football earned its breakthrough in the 1996 European championships. That was when I sensed that international football was gaining more and more recognition from people in all walks of life,” explains Strudahl.



As a professional brewery Carlsberg also has a very professional approach to sponsoring.

## Documentation

Strudahl was proved to be correct in his earlier prediction that the effect of sponsorships could be measured just as the effects of television advertisements or other campaigns can. All parts of the chain have become professionalised, so today, Carlsberg can document that its sponsorship efforts have produced results in terms of the ultimate criterion of success: a rise in beer sales.

“This professionalisation trend is also true of the people who sell sponsorships to Carlsberg and other corporate sponsors. In the old days, football clubs – and the national associations to some degree – saw sponsors as people who would hand over a huge cheque, receive a bunch of tickets in return and then stay in the background until the next contract negotiations. Things are different now. In fact, I’m very impressed by the way UEFA consults its sponsors to hear their opinion on various issues. That’s how a true partnership should work; so incredibly much has changed in just a few years,” Strudahl opines.

“For Carlsberg, a sponsorship is an investment and a means of access that we use to implement a number of marketing and promotional activities as well as build press relations and sales. We have to work hard to get the most out of our sponsorships. If we didn’t, being a sponsor would make no sense.”

## In-house support

Today, Strudahl gets a lot of support from within Carlsberg for both its UEFA EURO 2008 and other football sponsorships.

“I can really tell that Carlsberg employees from everywhere in the group are proud of our sponsorships. Football has become a rallying point for us all; it’s part of our DNA and an independent corporate value,” Strudahl claims.

A few years ago, Carlsberg launched a project to build a winning corporate culture that could reach across national borders. The group’s football involvement is very often used in this connection, in many cases by holding in-house competitions that allow employees to win football tickets or by using tickets as a reward to mark the conclusion of team building or business projects.

Football is also used directly to build Carlsberg’s corporate culture. For example, Carlsberg organises a cross-border football tournament for its employees in the Balkans as well as table football tournaments in other countries.



*During UEFA EURO 2008 the Carlsberg brand will be highly visible and connected with football in 60 countries across the world.*

“In many of our locations, we also invite our employees to watch important matches on big screens in festive surroundings. There is a lot of excitement in-house when we link our sponsorship of a major event to an in-house event,” says Carlsberg Communications Director Tomas Jørgensen.

## **From top matches at Anfield to watching girls' football from the sideline**

Over the past 16 years, Carlsberg Sponsorship Director Keld Strudahl has become accustomed to being a part of the international football environment, whether he is negotiating at UEFA's impressive headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, hosting a hospitality event at the Champions League final in Athens, or attending a Liverpool home match at Anfield with a client.

However, behind the facade of a dedicated businessman whose mission is to maximise the benefits to Carlsberg of its investment in international football sponsorships, lies a heart that truly beats for football.

This is especially true when he is on the sideline of a wind-swept football pitch close to his home in eastern Denmark, with no spectators. Strudahl is an assistant coach and does a lot of odd jobs for the local football club's under-12 girls' team.

"My daughter plays in the local football club, so I've talked to the coaches and offered to help them now and then, if I can," explains the 44-year-old dad.

"These are humble surroundings compared to Anfield, but these girls have at least as much heart in their game as the players at Anfield. This is where I meet the grassroots of the global football culture and the true soul of football: a team of young players working to achieve something together and to have fun on and off the pitch," explains Strudahl.

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