# Football clubs across Europe heavily reliant on gambling industry sponsorships



Football clubs across Europe are increasingly reliant on the gambling industry, according to an investigation by Investigate Europe. The report highlights that within the 31 premier competitions spanning the UK and EU, nearly two-thirds of teams—296 out of 442—have secured at least one betting partner for the 2024/25 season. Additionally, the investigation reveals that almost half of the leagues depend on gambling companies for their title sponsorship, emphasising the depth of the relationship between football and betting firms.

In England, however, there is a forthcoming shift in policy, as Premier League clubs have agreed to prohibit gambling logos from appearing on match-day shirt fronts starting from 2026. This move marks a significant change in the league’s approach to advertising and sponsorship.

Charles Livingstone, a member of the World Health Organization’s Expert Group on Gambling and Gambling Disorder, commented on the extensive advertising investment by betting firms. Speaking to The Christian Institute, he stated that "betting firms spend millions on advertisements, and that 80 per cent of their revenue is from problem gamblers." He further explained the industry’s perspective: “the best customers are those who go broke. So they constantly have to recruit new gamblers to replace the ones who have gone through all their money and all their assets and all their relationships.”

University of Liverpool lecturer and football finance expert Kieran Maguire also weighed in on the issue, remarking, “I don’t think there’s any desire by clubs to do due diligence, provided they get paid. And they’re prepared to not look too closely because they’re under pressure.” His observation points to the financial pressures faced by clubs which may overshadow ethical considerations regarding gambling partnerships.

The personal impact of gambling advertisements on football viewers was illustrated by Thomas Melchior, a former German bank employee. Melchior revealed that he began betting after watching a Champions League advertisement and eventually amassed gambling debts exceeding €800,000. He recounted to The Christian Institute, “Betting companies exploited my passion for football to hook me in and completely change my life.” Rather than restricting his gambling, the companies incentivised continued engagement by rewarding his behaviour with prizes such as a trip to London for a Premier League match between Chelsea and Liverpool, which included flights and VIP tickets. Melchior described this as a ‘prize’ for his gambling addiction, highlighting the complicated dynamics between consumer loyalty programmes and problematic gambling.

Tom Fleming, a representative from The Big Step campaign, voiced strong concerns about the influence of gambling in football. He stated that the sport has become “corrupted by gambling,” adding that “a lot of those in recovery we speak with say they are unable to watch football because the advertising is so much, games are just inundated with advertising.” His comments underscore the challenges faced by individuals recovering from gambling addiction in relation to the pervasive presence of betting adverts during football broadcasts.

The Christian Institute’s reporting sheds light on the extensive financial ties between football clubs and the gambling industry, the personal consequences for fans, and the emerging efforts to modify how betting is promoted within football, particularly in England’s Premier League.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/posts/revealed-how-gambling-betting-industry-sponsors-european-football> - This source confirms that two-thirds of teams (296 of 442) in the 31 premier competitions across the UK and EU have signed at least one betting partner for the 2024/25 season, showing the deep embedding of gambling sponsorships in European football.
* <https://readwrite.com/study-reveals-huge-impact-gambling-sponsorships-have-on-european-football/> - This article highlights that almost half of the leagues rely on gambling companies for title sponsorships and confirms the upcoming Premier League ban on front-of-shirt gambling logos starting in 2026.
* <https://www.versus.uk.com/articles/more-than-half-of-the-premier-league-is-sponsored-by-a-betting-company> - This source supports the claim that more than half of Premier League clubs will have gambling companies as front-of-shirt sponsors for the 2024/25 season and confirms the voluntary ban on front-of-shirt gambling sponsorships that will begin in 2026.
* <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/posts/revealed-how-gambling-betting-industry-sponsors-european-football> - The same Investigate Europe report includes testimonies from Thomas Melchior about personal gambling debts incurred after exposure to football betting adverts and highlights the tactics betting companies use to incentivize problem gamblers.
* <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/posts/revealed-how-gambling-betting-industry-sponsors-european-football> - The article cites Tom Fleming from The Big Step campaign expressing concerns that football has become corrupted by gambling advertising, which affects individuals recovering from gambling addiction.