

GAMBLING MARKETING AND THE PREMIER LEAGUE: FOUR YEARS OF FAILED SELF-REGULATION

The 4th Annual Research Report into the Prevalence
of Gambling Marketing during the Opening Weekend of
the English Premier League.

October 2026



DATA POLICY

This work is published by the University of Bristol. As authors, we want to encourage the circulation of our work as widely as possible. But we also want to retain the copyright. We therefore have an open access policy that enables anyone to access our content online without charge. Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the following terms:

- University of Bristol or the author(s) are credited
- The work is not resold
- A copy of the work or link to its use online is sent to the authors.

You are welcome to ask for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. We gratefully acknowledge the work of Creative Commons in inspiring our approach to copyright. To find out more go to: www.creativecommons.org

FUNDING

This project was co-funded by the University of Bristol Business School, and the Bristol Hub for Gambling Harms Research. Information about the funders can be found here:

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/business-school/about/>

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/science/research/gambling-harms/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	04
2 INTRO AND BACKGROUND	06
3 AIMS	08
4 METHODS	09
4.1 TELEVISED MATCH BROADCASTS	09
4.2 SKY SPORTS NEWS	10
4.3 TALKSPORT RADIO	10
4.4 SOCIAL MEDIA	11
5 RESULTS	12
5.1 LIVE MATCHES	12
5.2 SKY SPORTS NEWS	16
5.3 TALKSPORT RADIO	18
5.4 SOCIAL MEDIA	19
6 DISCUSSION	24
7 FOUR YEARS ON: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM	32
8 REFERENCES	32

1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This is the fourth in a series of reports exploring the prevalence of gambling marketing across televised football matches, sports news programming, radio and social media during the opening weekend of this season's Premier League. Following the same research methods as the last three years, this report highlights findings from four main areas of focus:

- **Live matches:** Broadcasts of Premier League matches (21 to 24 August 2026)
- **Sky Sports News:** Coverage on 22 August 2026 (6 am to 9 pm)
- **TalkSport Radio:** Coverage on 22 August 2026 (6 am to 9 pm)
- **Social media:** Ads by the ten largest UK gambling brands (21 to 24 August 2026)

FAILURE OF SELF-REGULATION

The 2026 total fell from the exceptionally high levels recorded in 2024 and 2025, but remained 41.57% above the 2023 baseline, when further reforms were announced. Crucially, the reduction in live-broadcast messages mainly resulted from a sharp fall in sponsorship lead-ins, a format not targeted by any of the regulatory measures evaluated here. Although the front-of-shirt ban eliminated gambling logos from the front of matchday shirts, our analysis estimates that it was associated with a reduction of only 10.5% in live match messages. At the same time, we recorded 563 messages on shirt sleeves and training kits, a 363% increase from previous years. The Sponsorship Code of Conduct has neither meaningfully reduced exposure during matches nor resolved the visibility of unlicensed brands during live play, while 7,816 gambling messages still appeared during the whistle-to-whistle period. Social media regulation has also remained slow and ineffective. Taken together, the findings show that self-regulation has failed to deliver a meaningful reduction in gambling marketing. Instead, narrow voluntary measures have largely shifted where that marketing appears.

Failures of self-regulation



Policy	Intended aim	2026 findings
Sponsorship Code of Conduct	Limit gambling exposure to children and people at risk of harm	15,571 messages, 41.57% higher than before the Code was introduced.
	Restrict agreements involving brands without a Gambling Commission licence	8.46% of live match messages and 8.84% on Sky Sports News included ads by unlicensed brands.
Front of shirt restriction	Reduce exposure by removing gambling sponsorship from shirt fronts	Although the restriction removed logos from shirt fronts, it contributed only an estimated 10.5% reduction in live match messages.
Whistle to whistle restriction	Reduce gambling marketing during live play	7,816 messages, representing 69.75% of all live broadcast messages.
ASA and CAP oversight of social media	Ensure gambling advertising is clearly identifiable and appropriately regulated	93% not clearly identifiable as advertising, compared with 92% in 2023.
BGC under-25 targeting rule	Prevent paid social media ads from targeting people under 25	Meta Accounts aged 18-to-24 accounted for 16.6 million instances of estimated reach, exposing a major shortcoming in the industry's under-25 rule.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Four years of evidence show that self-regulation has failed to reduce gambling marketing around football. The House of Lords Liaison Committee (2026b) reached the same conclusion, describing the current model as insufficient and recommending a comprehensive advertising ban. We believe that reform must be delivered through legislation, backed by independent enforcement and meaningful sanctions.

Specifically, this includes:

- **A Comprehensive “Whistle-to-Whistle” Ban:** Enforce a ban covering all forms of gambling marketing during sporting events, including commercials, team sponsorship, pitchside hoardings, and associated media like social media and radio.
- **Mandated Responsible Gambling Messaging:** Require all gambling marketing to include clear messages about the harms of gambling, with legal standards for size, prominence, and duration.
- **Ban on Gambling Content Marketing:** Prohibit gambling content marketing, which often obscures its commercial purpose and is especially appealing to children, to protect young and vulnerable audiences.
- **Ban unlicensed brands in sponsorship agreements:** Limit all sponsorship and marketing to UK-licensed operators. The Sponsorship Code of Conduct has failed to prevent unlicensed brands, showing the need for government action.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

15,571

GAMBLING
MESSAGES IN ONE
WEEKEND

Recorded across televised matches, sports news, radio and social media during the 2026 Premier League opening weekend.



OF LIVE
BROADCAST
TIME

20%

At least one gambling message was visible for five hours and 16 minutes. The seven broadcasts averaged 6.95 messages per minute.



MESSAGES
DURING ONE
MATCH

2,702

Newcastle United v Liverpool contained the highest exposure, averaging 12.17 gambling messages per broadcast minute.



7,816

WHISTLE-
TO-WHISTLE
MESSAGES

69.75% of live-broadcast messages appeared during this period because sponsorship logos and embedded branding remain outside the restriction.

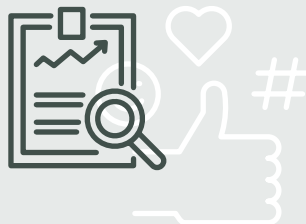


FINDINGS

8.5%

PROMOTED
UNLICENSED
BRANDS

Four unlicensed brands appeared during live matches; unlicensed operators also accounted for 8.8% of messages on Sky Sports News.



SOCIAL MEDIA
EXPOSURES

175M

During the weekend, paid ads recorded an estimated summed UK reach of 153.2 million Meta Accounts, while organic posts separately generated 21.8 million views.



UNDER 25s
REACHED

16.6M

Paid gambling ads reached 18-to-24-year-olds 16.6 million times, highlighting a major weakness in the industry's under-25 safeguard.



93%

NOT CLEARLY
IDENTIFIABLE AS
ADVERTISING

This applied to organic content marketing posts, which generated 16.7 million views and 97% of all organic-post likes.



2 | INTRO AND BACKGROUND

For the fourth consecutive year, this study examines the prevalence of gambling marketing during the Premier League's opening weekend. This report presents the results of the final study of a four-year programme of research (2023–2026), designed to build a longitudinal dataset that enables changes in the prevalence and nature of gambling marketing within Premier League football to be tracked over time. In addition to documenting the extent of gambling marketing, this longitudinal approach provides an opportunity to examine how changes in the regulatory and policy landscape are reflected in the gambling promotion visible to football audiences.

To maintain comparability across the four years, this study follows the core methodology established in the previous reports (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a), examining gambling marketing across four key platforms: live match broadcasts, Sky Sports News, TalkSport radio and social media. This captures multiple channels through which UK-based audiences mainly engage with Premier League football during the opening weekend. This year, newly available UK data from the Meta Ad Library also allow us to extend the analysis of paid social media advertising by examining the age and gender distribution of reported reach.

Gambling marketing is embedded within professional football in a variety of ways. Alongside conventional advertising, such as television and radio commercials, gambling operators use commercial partnerships and sponsorship arrangements to associate their brands with clubs, competitions and sporting events (Cornwell, 2025; Cornwell & Jahn, 2023). Sponsorship involves organisations providing financial or in-kind support in return for commercial benefits associated with the sponsored property (Meenaghan, 1991), and has become an important means through which brands can access and engage large sporting audiences (Hsiao et al., 2021).

Within the English Premier League, this means that audiences may encounter gambling brands across numerous settings and formats. These include commercial advertisements, shirt sponsorship, pitchside advertising, matchday programmes and other sponsorship-related branding within football environments (Rossi et al., 2024; Sharman et al., 2020). Gambling marketing also extends beyond match broadcasts and stadium environments through digital and social media, further increasing the opportunities for audiences to encounter gambling-related content. The accessibility of such marketing through social media has raised particular concerns about its potential reach among children and other vulnerable groups

(Singer et al., 2024). Throughout this report, we therefore use the term “gambling marketing messages” to capture individual instances of exposure to gambling brands across this broad range of marketing activities.

Understanding the scale of this exposure is important given growing evidence that gambling marketing can influence gambling attitudes, intentions and behaviours (McGrane et al., 2023), particularly within sports-related contexts (McGrane et al., 2025a). This has implications for gambling harm, which can extend beyond the individual to affect families, communities and wider society, encompassing financial, relational and health-related consequences (Langham et al., 2016; Wardle et al., 2018). The Gambling Survey for Great Britain found that 47% of adults had gambled in the previous four weeks in 2025. Among all participants, 7.8% scored 1 to 2 on the Problem Gambling Severity Index, 3.5% scored 3 to 7 and 2.4% scored 8 or more (Gambling Commission, 2026a). At the same time, substantial resources are invested in promoting gambling products. An analysis by WARC estimated UK gambling advertising expenditure at approximately £2 billion in 2024 (Davies and Sweney, 2025). The scale and visibility of this marketing are important not only because it may encourage gambling consumption, but because repeated exposure can contribute to the normalisation of gambling as an ordinary and seemingly harmless part of everyday life and sporting culture (McGee, 2020).

Gambling marketing in Great Britain continues to operate within a regulatory framework that relies substantially on self- and co-regulation, alongside statutory requirements under the Gambling Act 2005. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) administers rules governing the content and placement of gambling advertising through the CAP and BCAP Codes, while licensed operators are required by the Gambling Commission to comply with these advertising standards. Within football, this regulatory framework is supplemented by voluntary measures introduced by the gambling and football industries. However, research has repeatedly questioned whether this approach provides sufficient protection from the volume and visibility of gambling marketing encountered by consumers (Sharman et al., 2024; Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a). This approach differs from that adopted in several other European jurisdictions, including Italy, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, where governments have introduced more extensive restrictions on gambling marketing – notably in each case through legislation as opposed to self-regulation (Wilson et al., 2024).

In English football, three prominent voluntary measures have sought to address gambling marketing: the gambling industry's 'whistle-to-whistle' advertising restriction, football's Code of Conduct for Gambling Related Agreements, and, from the beginning of the 2026/27 season, the Premier League's withdrawal of gambling sponsorship from the front of matchday shirts.

Introduced in 2019, the '**whistle to whistle**' restriction prevents gambling advertisements from being shown on television before 9pm from five minutes before the start of a sporting event (other than horse racing) begins until five minutes after it finishes. Although this removes televised gambling commercials from periods such as half-time breaks, research has demonstrated important limitations. Gambling advertising may be displaced into periods immediately outside the restricted window, while the measure does not address the many other forms of gambling marketing embedded within sports coverage, including sponsorship and branding (McGrane et al., 2025b; Torrance et al., 2023; Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a).

A further voluntary measure was introduced at the beginning of the 2024/25 season through the Code of **Conduct for Gambling Related Agreements** in Football, developed by the Premier League, FA, EFL and Women's Super League. The Code establishes four principles covering protection, social responsibility, reinvestment and integrity, with the stated intention of reducing the reach of gambling sponsorship to children and people at risk of gambling-related harm (Premier League et al., 2024). While the Code represents an acknowledgement of the potential risks associated with gambling sponsorship, it does not prohibit gambling partnerships, and our previous research found that it had not substantially reduced the overall volume of gambling branding within football (Rossi et al., 2024, 2025a).

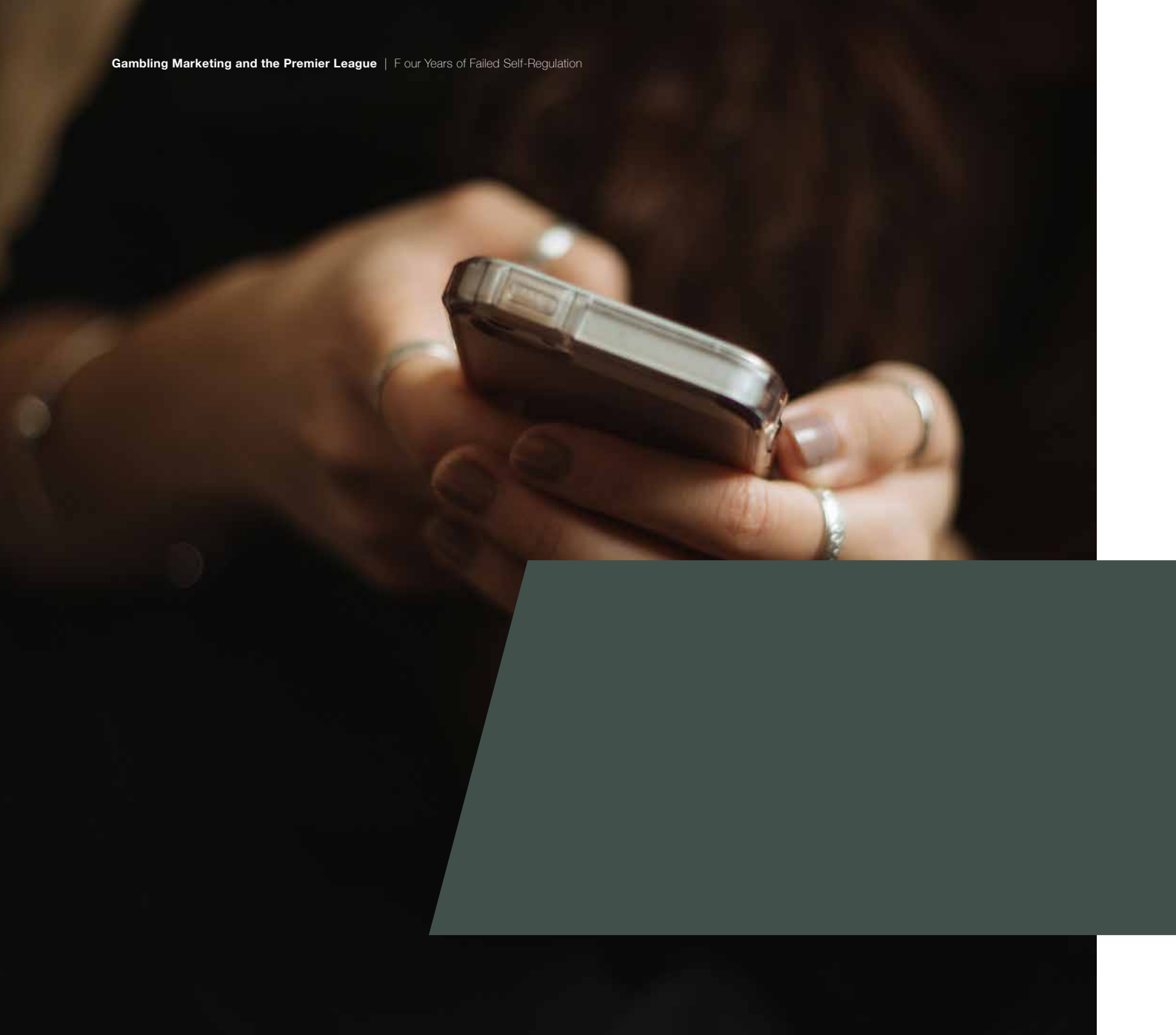
The 2026/27 season marks a more visible change to the Premier League's sponsorship landscape. Premier League clubs collectively agreed in 2023 to voluntarily withdraw gambling companies as **front-of-shirt sponsors** from the start of the 2026/27 season, meaning that the restriction was in effect for the opening weekend examined in this report (Premier League, 2023). Importantly, the measure applies specifically to the front of matchday shirts rather than constituting a ban on gambling sponsorship in the Premier League. Clubs can continue to enter into sponsorship agreements with gambling brands, with sponsorships activated through other assets and marketing channels. Previous findings from

this project demonstrate why the scope of the shirt sponsorship restriction matters. Gambling logos on the front of players' shirts accounted for 8.3% of messages recorded during live match broadcasts in 2024 and 9.66% in 2025 (Rossi et al., 2024, 2025a). Most recorded messages therefore appeared through formats that remain outside the restriction, including pitchside advertising and broadcast sponsorship. Removing sponsorship from shirt fronts may reduce a prominent form of gambling branding, but its contribution to any change in overall exposure needs to be considered alongside changes in these other formats.

Across the four media channels, the number of gambling marketing messages recorded increased from 10,999 in 2023 to 29,145 in 2024, before falling slightly to 27,440 in 2025 (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a). These findings indicate that the substantial increase observed in 2024 was largely sustained in 2025, despite the introduction of the Sponsorship Code. They raise questions about whether restrictions targeting individual formats can substantially reduce exposure when gambling marketing operates across broadcast, sponsorship, digital and social media channels.

The 2026 opening weekend provides the first opportunity to examine gambling marketing following the removal of sponsorship from the front of matchday shirts. By comparing the volume, duration and formats of marketing across the four years, this report examines whether the restriction's introduction coincides with reduced exposure and whether the distribution of gambling branding across other locations has changed.

The continued visibility of gambling brands without a Gambling Commission licence presents a further regulatory concern. Our 2025 study identified 13 such brands, which together accounted for 8.8% of gambling messages across live match broadcasts and Sky Sports News. Following TGP Europe's withdrawal from the British market in May 2025, several brands previously operating through its licence continued to appear as sponsors (Gambling Commission, 2025). Such arrangements are not automatically unlawful, provided the operators' gambling services are inaccessible to consumers in Great Britain. In July 2026, the Government launched a consultation proposing restrictions on sponsorship and advertising by unlicensed operators, including within sport (DCMS, 2026). This study therefore also examines the continued presence of these brands within Premier League coverage.



3 | AIMS

Building on our research across the previous three Premier League seasons (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a), this study examines the prevalence of gambling marketing during the opening weekend of the 2026/27 season and assesses the effectiveness of current regulatory and self-regulatory measures in limiting exposure. As the final year of our programme, the study also examines how gambling marketing has changed across four years, alongside developments in the regulatory landscape. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following aims:

1

To measure the prevalence of gambling marketing across sports-related media during the opening weekend of the 2026/27 Premier League season.

2

To track changes in the volume, duration and formats of gambling marketing associated with the Premier League across all four years of the study (2023 to 2026).

3

To assess the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework in the context of the self-regulatory approach currently adopted in the UK.

4 | METHODS

4.1 TELEVISED MATCH BROADCASTS

To support comparisons over time, we followed the methodology established in the previous three annual studies (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a). To measure the extent of gambling marketing visible during televised Premier League football, we analysed all matches broadcast live in the UK across the opening weekend of the 2026/27 season, from 21 to 24 August 2026.

Gambling marketing was recorded using a structured codebook originally developed with reference to Purves et al. (2020) and subsequently adapted to capture the range of marketing practices identified within Premier League broadcasts. For every incidence, coders recorded the timestamp, marketing format, duration in seconds, maximum number of identical messages visible, gambling brand, type of gambling referenced, whether the message represented a generic or indirect reference to gambling, and the presence of age restriction or harm reduction messaging. Full definitions of each variable are provided in the Technical Appendix.

The marketing format was categorised according to where or how the message appeared within the broadcast. Categories included static advertising hoardings, full and partial electronic advertising hoardings, merchandise worn by supporters, player shirt sleeves, integrated graphics, sponsorship lead-ins, commercial advertising breaks, interviews or press conferences, stadium structures, and an 'other' category for messages not captured elsewhere. From the 2026/27 season, gambling sponsorship was no longer permitted on the front of Premier League clubs' matchday shirts (Premier League, 2023). However, this category was retained within the codebook to maintain consistency with previous years and identify any remaining exposure, including logos appearing in archive footage. Early reports also showed that

some clubs had introduced gambling sponsorship on training kits (Johnson, 2026). We therefore introduced a separate 'training kit' category to capture this form of marketing within broadcasts.

Consistent with Purves et al. (2020) and our previous studies, where multiple identical gambling messages were simultaneously visible within a single camera shot, coders recorded the maximum number visible within each format. A gambling marketing message was defined as an individual gambling brand logo or other reference appearing to viewers as a consequence of gambling-related marketing activity. A single incidence could therefore contain several gambling marketing messages.

Our analysis covered the complete broadcast surrounding each live match. Analyses therefore included pre-match coverage, the match itself, half-time analysis, post-match coverage and commercial advertising breaks. Seven matches were broadcast live during the 2026/27 opening weekend and were included in the analysis (Table 1), producing a total of 26 hours, 51 minutes and 53 seconds of footage. Broadcast duration differed between fixtures according to scheduling and the amount of pre- and post-match coverage provided.

A team of research assistants coded the broadcasts independently using separate copies of the codebook. Prior to the main analysis, coders undertook training to ensure that variables and coding decisions were interpreted consistently. This involved collectively coding a sample of footage and discussing the application of the codebook before independently coding the same 20-minute segment, which included gameplay and pre-match and post-match discussion.

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Krippendorff's Alpha, which is suitable for evaluating agreement between multiple coders (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007).

Table 1: Live match broadcasts analysed during the opening weekend of the 2026/27 Premier League season

Match	Date	Broadcaster	Length of footage
Arsenal v Coventry City	Friday 21 August, 20.00	Sky Sports	272 minutes, 31 seconds
Hull City v Manchester United	Saturday 22 August, 12.30	TNT Sports	237 minutes, 38 seconds
Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur	Saturday 22 August, 17.30	Sky Sports	225 minutes, 41 seconds
Brighton & Hove Albion v Aston Villa	Sunday 23 August, 14.00	Sky Sports	183 minutes, 31 seconds
Manchester City v AFC Bournemouth	Sunday 23 August, 14.00	Sky Sports	189 minutes, 28 seconds
Newcastle United v Liverpool	Sunday 23 August, 16.30	Sky Sports	221 minutes, 58 seconds
Fulham v Chelsea	Monday 24 August, 20.00	Sky Sports	281 minutes, 6 seconds
		Total	1,611 minutes, 53 seconds (or 26.8h)

A value of 0.66 or above was used as the threshold for acceptable agreement. Reliability scores across the coded variables ranged from 0.91 (number of identical references) to 1.00 (harm reduction message), demonstrating high levels of agreement. Following this exercise, coders independently analysed their allocated broadcasts, with any uncertainties or coding queries discussed with the wider research team.

4.2 SKY SPORTS NEWS

Alongside live match broadcasts, we examined gambling marketing appearing on Sky Sports News (SSN) during the opening weekend. Following the approach adopted during the previous years of the study (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a), coverage was analysed on Saturday 22 August 2026 from 6 am to 9 pm. SSN was included to capture gambling marketing associated with Premier League football during the matches that kick off at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon, where matches cannot ordinarily be televised live domestically (UEFA, 2022). Of particular relevance is ‘Soccer Saturday’, which provides live reporting and updates from fixtures taking place during the traditional Saturday afternoon football schedule (Sky Group, 2023). Analysing SSN therefore enabled the study to capture gambling marketing surrounding Premier League fixtures that were not themselves included within the live televised match sample but nevertheless received extensive live media coverage.

Coding followed the framework used in previous waves, with the principal variables consistent with those applied to televised match broadcasts. These included the timing and duration of gambling messages, marketing format, maximum number of identical messages, gambling brand and type of gambling referenced, alongside the presence of age-restriction and harm-reduction messaging. An additional ‘spoken reference’ was included within the format categories to record verbal references to gambling during studio discussions or reports. Full variable definitions are provided in the Technical Appendix. Given the close alignment between the SSN and televised match codebooks, coders completed the same training process before the SSN footage was divided between them for independent analysis.

4.3 TALKSPORT RADIO

Radio coverage was also included to capture gambling marketing encountered through another major form of Premier League media consumption. As in previous years (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a), the study analysed TalkSport, a national commercial sports radio station providing extensive coverage of Premier League football. For the 2026 study, broadcasts from Saturday 22 August between 6am and 9pm were recorded and analysed.

The TalkSport codebook was designed specifically for audio content while remaining consistent with the measures used in previous waves. Gambling marketing was classified according to four formats: sponsorship lead-ins, commercial advertising breaks, spoken references and ‘other’. For each occurrence, coders also recorded its duration, the number of gambling messages, the gambling brand referenced, the type of gambling promoted (including sports betting, gaming or slots, lotteries, bingo and casinos), and whether age restriction or harm reduction messaging was present. TalkSport coverage was analysed by two coders using the codebook described above. Complete definitions are provided in the Technical Appendix.

4.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

The final part of the study examined gambling marketing from the ten gambling brands licensed in Great Britain with the largest social media followings at the time of data collection. These were Bet365, Betfair, Betfred, Betway, Coral, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, Sky Bet, Unibet and William Hill, with a combined following of more than 11.5 million. Table 2 provides details of each brand and its number of followers.

Consistent with previous years (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025a), the analysis captured both paid and organic marketing. Paid-for ads from the selected brands active on Facebook or Instagram were identified through the Meta Ad Library and captured between 21 and 24 August. Organic advertising was examined separately on X (previously known as Twitter), where we collected all posts published by the selected brands from 21 to 24 August 2026. Publicly displayed numbers of likes, reposts and views were recorded.

Paid and organic adverts were analysed using the codebook developed through previous years and informed by earlier research (Houghton et al., 2019; Singer et al., 2023; Rossi et al., 2021, 2024). Adverts were first classified as content marketing or conventional advertising and then coded for marketing techniques, references to gambling, age restriction and harm reduction messaging, and key advertising regulations. The framework was retained wherever possible to support comparison across the four years, with minor amendments reflecting changes in platform features and marketing practices. Full variable definitions and coding criteria are provided in the [Technical Appendix](#).

For the first time this year, expanded UK-related transparency data from the Meta Ad Library enabled a more in-depth analysis of paid advertising reach by age group and gender. Meta’s estimated UK reach figures were retrieved on 24 August and aggregated across the sampled advertisements. These reach estimates reflect the delivery of advertisements configured by

gambling brands. Summed reach can count the same account across several advertisements and therefore does not represent unique individuals across the sample. These platform estimates may combine delivery across multiple Meta services, including Facebook and Instagram. The figures reflect reported reach accumulated by the sampled adverts up to retrieval and should not be interpreted as reach generated solely during the opening weekend.

Table 2: Gambling brands included in the social media analysis and their follower counts

Brand	Twitter/X Followers	Instagram Followers	Facebook Followers	Total Followers
Paddy Power	756,400	289,000	1,600,000	2,645,400
Bet365	489,100	46,500	1,900,000	2,435,600
Sky Bet	420,800	98,800	1,100,000	1,619,600
Unibet	126,800	28,800	938,000	1,093,600
William Hill	239,000	34,900	684,000	957,900
Betfair	160,500	18,300	611,000	789,800
Coral	286,800	17,900	311,000	615,700
Ladbrokes	191,900	45,200	343,000	580,100
Betway	140,900	19,600	278,000	438,500
Betfred	110,700	11,000	206,000	327,700
Total	2,922,900	610,000	7,971,000	11,503,900

5 | RESULTS

LIVE MATCHES

Our analysis identified 11,205 gambling messages across 2,249 incidences during seven televised match broadcasts. The key results are shown in Table 3 below. The highest numbers of gambling messages were recorded during Newcastle United v Liverpool (2,702), Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur (1,950) and Fulham v Chelsea (1,907). The overall total represents a 48.64% decrease from the 21,815 messages recorded in 2025, but remains 60.85% higher than the 6,966 recorded in 2023.

Despite the reduction in message numbers, recorded gambling marketing incidences lasted longer on average, increasing from 7.29 seconds in 2025 to 10.55 seconds in 2026, a rise of 44.7%. The longest average durations were recorded during Arsenal v Coventry City (14.74 seconds), Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur (12.45 seconds) and Fulham v Chelsea (11.92 seconds). Overall, at least one gambling message was present during 19.62% of the total broadcast time across the seven matches, amounting to 5 hours and 16 minutes. Newcastle United v Liverpool (40.71%), Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur (28.68%) and Brighton & Hove Albion v Aston Villa (21.35%) had the highest proportions of broadcast time containing at least one message.

The findings reveal a slight increase in the proportion of messages occurring during the whistle-to-whistle period, up to 69.75% from 60.79% in 2025. However, this still represents a decrease in the actual numbers of messages occurring during the whistle-to-whistle period itself, from 13,262 in 2025 to 7,816 this year. Matches with lower proportions of messages occurring during the whistle-to-whistle period were those played in the evening (i.e. Arsenal v Coventry City and Fulham v Chelsea), when the second half took place after the 9pm watershed.

Taken together, this shows that fewer gambling messages did not translate into an equivalent reduction in time containing gambling marketing. Compared with 2025, the number of message numbers fell by 48.64%, while the average duration increased by 44.7%. Indeed, at least one message remained present during approximately one fifth of the analysed coverage.

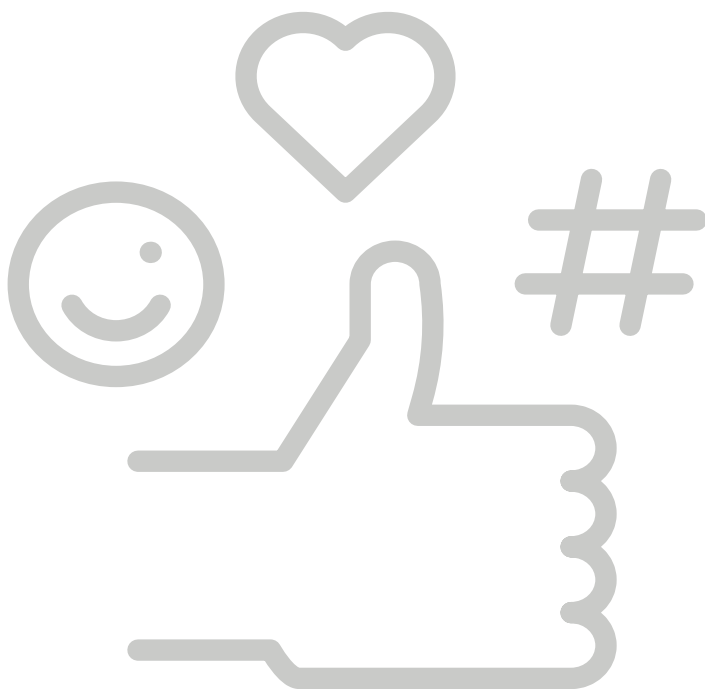


Table 3: Key results from the analysis of the televised Premier League matches

Variable	Arsenal v Coventry City	Hull City v Man Utd	Brentford v Tottenham	Brighton v Aston Villa	Man City v AFC Bour- nemouth	Newcastle v Liverpool	Fulham v Chelsea	Total
Total number of incidences*	158	118	400	304	209	866	194	2,249
Total number of gambling messages**	1,214	848	1,950	1,704	880	2,702	1,907	11,205
Average number of gambling messages per broadcast minute	4.45	3.57	8.64	9.29	4.64	12.17	6.78	6.95
Average duration of gambling messages (seconds)	14.74	11.36	12.45	7.78	7.91	10.10	11.92	10.55
Total duration of broadcast featuring at least one gambling message (minutes)	34.77	22.23	64.72	39.18	26.93	90.37	38.10	316.30
Percentage (%) of broadcast (minutes) featuring at least one gambling message.	12.76%	9.36%	28.68%	21.35%	14.22%	40.71%	13.55%	19.62%
Percentage (%) of messages occurring during the whistle-to- whistle period	19.03%	88.09%	84.31%	85.09%	73.30%	90.08%	34.87%	69.75%
Most common formats (% of messages)	Electronic pitchside full (42.17%) Stadium structure (28.09%) Sponsorship ead-in (20.18%)	Electronic pitchside full (86.32%)	Electronic pitchside full (47.13%) Stadium structure (27.33%) Sponsorship lead-in (7.79%)	Electronic pitchside full (79.99%) Sponsorship lead-in (6.98%)	Electronic pitchside full (48.18%) Players' shirt sleeve (22.61%) Sponsorship lead-in (11.14%)	Sponsorship lead-Static pitchside (56.85%) Electronic pitchside full (37.71%)	Electronic pitchside full (79.81%) Commercial adverts (8.76%)	Electronic pitchside full (57.93%) Static pitchside (14.13%) Stadium structure (8.27%)
Most common brands (% of messages)	Betway (71.91%) Bet365 (23.15%)	Betano (55.78%) Bet365 (16.04%) Unibet (13.68%)	Hollywood- Bets (53.49%) Bet365 (24.10%) BetMGM (13.38%)	Betway (38.03%) Betano (24.41%) Bet365 (24.12%)	Betway (47.05%) Mr Q.com (22.27%) Bet365 (17.84%)	Betano (32.75%) BetMGM (30.79%) Bet365 (28.98%)	SBOTOP (38.23%) Betway (23.86%) Betano (23.86%)	Betway (22.23%) Bet365 (21.83%) Betano (21.12%)
Most common formats of gambling referenced (% of messages)	Logo only (73.81%) Sports betting (25.95%)	Logo only (81.13%)	Logo only (90.31%)	Logo only (91.14%)	Logo only (59.66%) Casino or card (22.27%)	Logo only (75.57%) Sports betting (24.43%)	Logo only (80.39%)	Logo only (80.30%)
Harm reduction (% of individual incidences)	Yes (44.30%)	Yes (71.19%)	Yes (19.75%)	Yes (20.07%)	Yes (12.44%)	Yes (7.62%)	Yes (45.36%)	Yes (21.08%)
Age restriction message (% of individual incidences)	Yes (20.89%)	Yes (61.02%)	Yes (4.25%)	Yes (5.59%)	Yes (5.74%)	Yes (6.12%)	Yes (30.41%)	Yes (11.69%)
*An individual gambling incidence refers to each instance of gambling marketing logged in the codebook. **Total messages refer to the maximum number of identical logos or references visible per incidence.								

Pitchside advertising remained the most prominent form of advertising, with 57.93% of messages appearing on full electronic advertising hoardings, as shown in Figure 1. This compares with 38.84% in 2025 and approximately 56% in 2023. Our findings also uncovered an increase in the proportion of messages appearing in static pitchside advertising formats, which accounted for 14.13% of messages, compared with 4.55% in 2025. In Newcastle United v Liverpool, static pitchside advertising accounted for 56.85% of messages (Figure 2), with its persistent presence on screen also helping to explain the increased proportion of broadcast time featuring at least one gambling message.



Figure 1: Examples of electronic pitchside advertising hoardings (Arsenal v Coventry City and Hull City v Manchester United).

The substantial overall decrease in gambling messages may also be explained by the change to sponsorship lead-ins. Whereas messages shown during Bet365 sponsorship lead-ins contributed substantially to the total in the previous two years, a change to the lead-in segment and the reduced frequency of its appearance meant that the proportion of messages related to sponsorship lead-ins reduced from 25.45% in 2025 to 6.43% this year.



Figure 2: Examples of static pitchside advertising hoardings (Newcastle United v Liverpool).

As expected, there were virtually no gambling messages shown on the front of players' match shirts this year, in line with the Premier League's decision to remove front of shirt sponsorship from the start of the season. The 0.08% of messages recorded were found solely in archive footage or highlights from the previous season. The proportion of messages found on players' shirt sleeves increased from 0.80% in 2025 to 2.72% this year, while 2.30% appeared on training kits. These findings demonstrate the continued visibility of gambling sponsorship through kit placements outside the scope of the restriction.

Three brands dominated the recorded messages: Betway (22.23%), Bet365 (21.83%) and Betano (21.12%), together accounting for 65.18% of the total. The exposure of each brand reflected its prominence on pitchside advertising

hoardings. Other notable brands reflected the principal sponsorship agreements of clubs appearing in the televised matches. For example, Hollywoodbets accounted for 53.49% of messages analysed during Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur, while SBOTOP accounted for 38.23% during Fulham v Chelsea.

Twenty-seven brands appeared during the seven live matches, four of which were not licensed by the UK Gambling Commission. Fifteen of the brands were members of the Betting and Gaming Council, accounting for 57.98% of all messages analysed during the live seven broadcasts. SBOTOP, Stake, and 8XBet were previously licensed through agreements with TGP Europe, a white label partner whose licence was surrendered in May 2025. Mansion's licence was listed as "surrendered" on the Gambling Commission register at the time of writing (Gambling Commission, 2026b). Messages from unlicensed brands formed a total of 8.46% of all messages. This proportion was similar to the 8.6% recorded in 2025.

As in 2025, most messages consisted solely of a brand logo (80.30%), rather than promoting a particular form of gambling. This was an increase from 70.02% in 2025 and reflected the greater share of messages appearing as pitchside advertising. Sports betting accounted for 14.55% of messages, while 3.36% referred to more than one form of gambling. A small proportion (1.78%) advertised casino or card-based gambling products.

Our findings showed increases in harm reduction and age restriction messages compared with last year. The proportion of incidences containing a reference to the legal gambling age increased marginally, from 10.00% in 2025 to 11.69% in 2026. Harm reduction messaging increased more substantially, from 12.13% of incidences in 2025 to 21.08% in 2026. Such harm reduction messages were often recorded during electronic pitchside messages and during televised commercial advertisements, as demonstrated in Figure 3. Importantly, while harm reduction messages may have accompanied most incidences of gambling messages on electronic pitchside hoardings, they may not have been visible during each camera shot.

Figure 3: Examples of harm reduction messages (Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur).



SKY SPORTS NEWS

Pitchside advertising was the most common source of gambling messages, accounting for 59.41% of all messages, compared with 39.59% in 2025. Electronic hoardings (full and partial coverage) accounted for 33.44%, while static pitchside advertising represented 25.97%. In contrast, the proportion appearing during interviews or press conferences fell from 32.64% in 2025 to 15.36%. Commercial adverts accounted for just 4.39% of messages, highlighting that most gambling marketing appeared within sports news coverage rather than conventional advertising breaks.

Sky Bet remained the most prominent brand, accounting for 35.27% of messages.

BoyleSports (11.30%) and Betway (10.08%) were the next most frequently recorded brands. In total, 37 distinct gambling brands appeared, compared with 49 in 2025. Similar to last year, the vast majority of messages consisted solely of a brand logo (88.89%), with the remaining 11.11% referring to sports betting.

A total of 233 gambling messages (8.84%) recorded on Sky Sports News promoted brands not licensed to operate in Great Britain, compared with 12.08% in 2025. These included Stake, 8XBet and SBOTOP, all previously associated with the British market through TGP Europe. Although their share of messages declined, the continued visibility of these brands highlights that the reduction in gambling marketing has not eliminated exposure to brands outside the Gambling Commission's licensing framework.

The presence of harm reduction and age restriction messaging remained low and declined compared with 2025. Only 5.38% of individual incidences contained harm reduction messaging, down from 7.37%, while age restriction messaging appeared in 4.04% of incidences, compared with 5.90%. Consequently, more than 94% of incidences contained no harm reduction message, and almost 96% contained no age restriction message.

When analysing the timings of gambling messages, our analysis found that a minority of messages (2.67%) were exposed between 3pm and 5pm, when Premier League (and EFL) matches were being played and reported upon. The

Table 4: Results from the Sky Sports News Analysis

Sky Sports News	
Variable	TOTAL
Total number of individual incidences*	743
Total number of gambling messages**	2,637
Average duration of gambling messages (In seconds)	10.72 seconds
Most common formats (% of messages)	Electronic pitchside full (32.87%) Static pitchside (25.97%) Interview/press conference (15.36%)
Most common brands (% of messages)	Sky Bet (35.27%) Boyle Sports (11.30%) Betway (10.08%)
Most common format of gambling referenced (% of messages)	Logo only (88.89%)
Harm reduction message (% of individual incidences)	Yes (5.38%)
Age restriction message (% of individual incidences)	Yes (4.04%)
Gambling messages split into times of the day	
6.00am – 9.00am	404
9.00am – 12.00pm	301
12.00pm – 3.00pm	573
3.00pm – 5.00pm	69
5.00pm – 7.00pm	470
7.00pm – 9.00pm	820
*Individual gambling incidences refers to each instance of gambling marketing logged in the codebook.	
**Total messages refer to the maximum number of identical logos visible per incidence.	

greatest share of gambling messages (31.10%) was shown between 7pm and 9pm, when highlights from the day's matches were shown. Messages shown prior to 3pm mainly consisted of those shown during match highlights from the previous season, on training kits, or during interviews and press conferences.

TALKSPORT RADIO

The analysis of TalkSport coverage identified 207 gambling messages heard across 76 separate incidences. This represents a 45.77% increase from the 142 messages recorded in 2025, and a 76.92% increase compared with the 117 messages recorded in 2023. The average duration of individual incidences was 24.87 seconds, compared with 28.52 seconds in 2025. The key results are presented in Table 5.

Commercial adverts (i.e. adverts heard during commercial breaks) remained the dominant format, accounting for 87.92% of messages. Sponsorship segments contributed a further 7.25%, while spoken references accounted for 4.83%. Sky Bet was the most frequently referenced brand (20.29%), followed by Coral (19.32%) and TalkSport Bet (18.84%). Together, these three brands accounted for 58.45% of all messages. This contrasts with 2025, when Betfair alone accounted for 52.11% of messages.

Sports betting remained the predominant form of gambling promoted, accounting for 88.89% of messages. Harm reduction and age restriction messaging were also more prevalent than last year. Each appeared in 97.37% of individual incidences, compared with 73.97% and 89.04%, respectively, in 2025. Such messaging therefore accompanied almost all recorded incidences on radio, in contrast to its limited presence during televised matches and Sky Sports News.

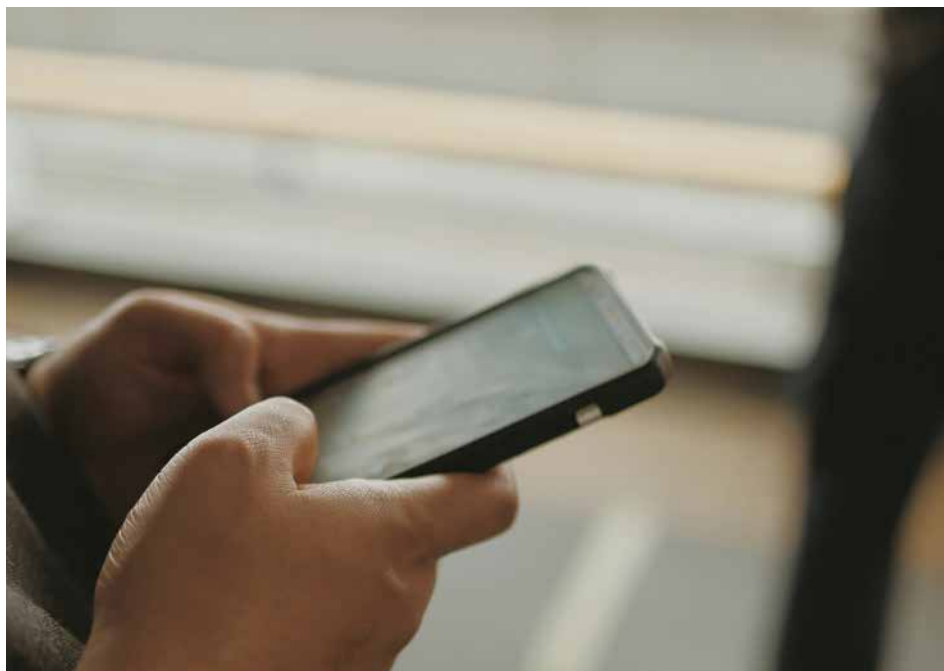


Table 5: Key results from the analysis of TalkSport Radio

TalkSport Radio	
Variable	TOTAL
Total number of individual incidences	76
Total number of gambling messages	207
Average duration of gambling messages (In seconds)	24.87 seconds
Most common formats (% of messages)	Commercial advert (87.92%)
Most common brands (% of messages)	Sky Bet (20.29%) Coral (19.32%) TalkSport Bet (18.84%)
Most common format of gambling referenced (% of messages)	Sports betting (88.89%)
Harm reduction message (% of individual incidences)	Yes (97.37%)
Age restriction message (% of individual incidences)	Yes (97.37%)
*An individual gambling incidence refers to each instance of gambling marketing logged in the codebook. **Total messages refer to the maximum number of references heard per incidence.	

5.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

Across the ten selected betting brands licensed in Great Britain, we identified 1,522 gambling ads during the 2026 Premier League opening weekend. This represents an increase of 56.42% from the 973 ads identified in 2025, and 67.44% from the 909 ads recorded in 2024. However, the total remained 19.98% below the 1,902 ads recorded in 2023. Comparisons across years should be interpreted with caution, as changes to the Meta Ad Library affected the collection of paid advertising. Figure 4 compares the total number of ads identified across the four annual studies.

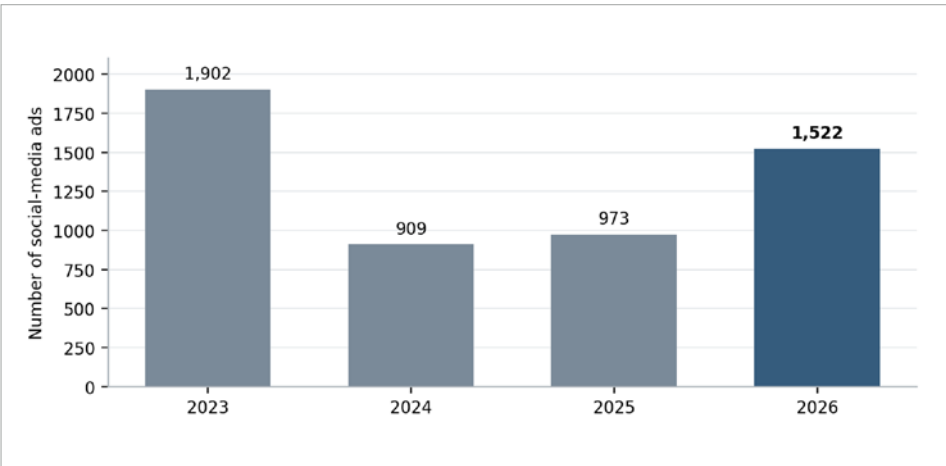
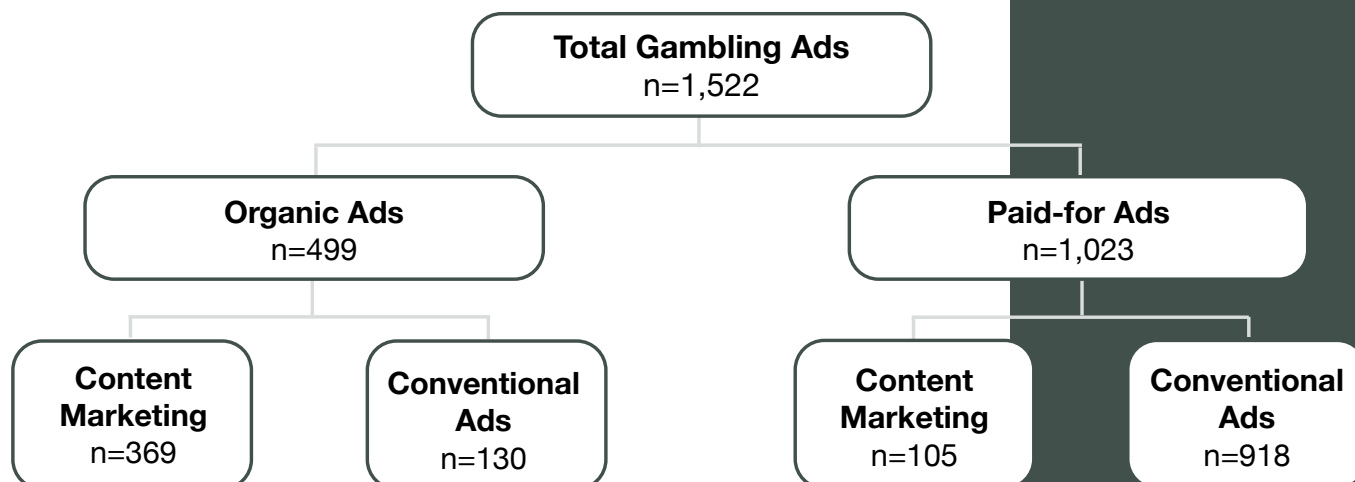


Figure 4: Total social-media ads across the four annual opening-weekend studies.

Note: A change to the Meta Ad Library required a new approach to collecting paid ads, meaning that the 2023 figure is not directly comparable with those for 2024 to 2026.

Of the 1,522 ads, 499 were organic posts published on X, while 1,023 were paid ads shown on Facebook or Instagram and identified through the Meta Ad Library. Figure 5 presents the breakdown between organic and paid advertising, alongside their classification as content marketing or conventional advertising. The following sections present the findings for organic posts first, followed by paid advertising.

Figure 5: Breakdown of posts included in social media analysis.



Organic Advertising

Content marketing accounted for 74% of organic ads (369 of 499), compared with 58% in 2025. The remaining 130 posts (26%) were classified as conventional advertising. This was the highest proportion of content marketing recorded across the four annual studies, compared with approximately 50.6% in 2023, 48% in 2024 and 58% in 2025. Figure 6 illustrates these changes, while Table 6 presents the full results.

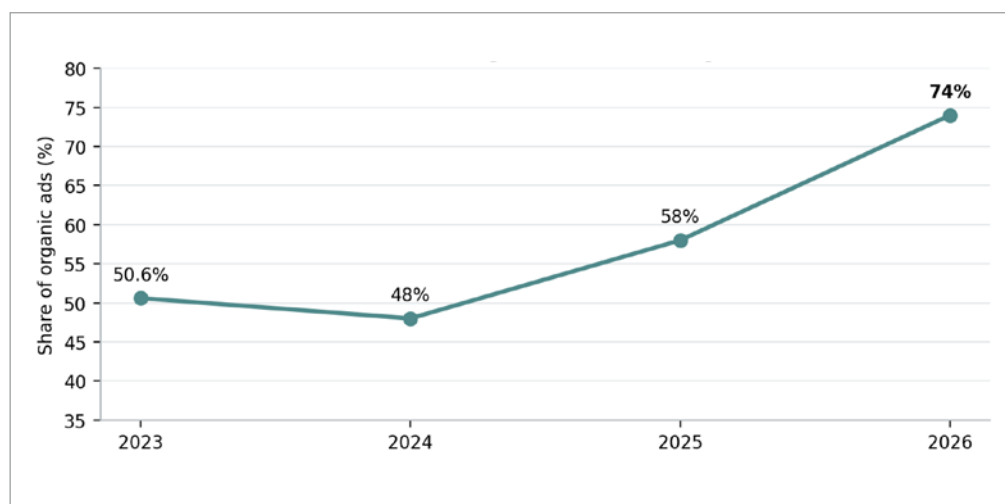


Figure 6: Content marketing as a share of organic social-media ads, 2023-2026.

Table 6: Results of the organic ads (content marketing and conventional advertising)

Code	Definition	Content Marketing	Conventional Ads	Total
<i>Volume and Engagement</i>				
Likes	How many likes do the ads have?	128,034 (avg. 347)	4,218 (avg. 32)	132,252 (avg. 265)
Shares	How many shares do the ads have?	11,981 (avg. 32)	478 (avg. 4)	12,459 (avg. 25)
Views	How many views did the posts record?	16,722,761 (avg. 45,319)	5,107,259 (avg. 39,287)	21,830,020 (avg. 43,748)
<i>Content</i>				
Use of emojis	Ads that use emojis.	187 (51%)	74 (57%)	261 (52%)
Use of humour	Ads that use humorous content.	76 (21%)	15 (12%)	91 (18%)
Reference to the weekend's football	Ads that refer to the weekend's Premier League football.	320 (87%)	75 (58%)	395 (79%)
Signpost to method of gambling	Ads that make reference to how the audience could participate in gambling (e.g. having a link to the website).	0	75 (58%)	75 (15%)
Odds	Ads that present odds for a specific bet.	0	64 (49%)	64 (13%)
Bonus or inducement	Ads that include a bonus or inducement (e.g. sign-up offers, deposit match, etc.).	0	52 (40%)	52 (10%)
<i>Social Responsibility & Adherence to Advertising Regulations</i>				
Age restriction	Ads that reference the age-restricted nature of gambling.	81 (22%)	107 (82%)	188 (38%)
Harm reduction messaging	Ads that include a harm reduction message.	82 (22%)	107 (82%)	189 (38%)
T&Cs stated	Ads that include information on the T&Cs.	18 (5%)	49 (38%)	67 (13%)
Appeal to children	Ads that are of strong appeal to children, based on CAP guidance.	0	0	0 (0%)
Not clearly identifiable as advertising	Ads that are not clearly identifiable as advertising.	343 (93%)	37 (28%)	380 (76%)

Volume and Engagement

The organic posts recorded over 21.8 million views. Engagement remained substantial, with 12,459 shares and 132,252 likes. Content marketing accounted for approximately 77% of views, 96% of shares and 97% of likes. Of the 50 most viewed organic ads, 41 were content marketing. As demonstrated in Figure 7, a Sky Bet post with 2.0 million views was the most viewed conventional ad, while two Sky Bet posts with 1.0 million views each were the most viewed content marketing posts. Paddy Power posts attracted particularly high interaction, including one with 9,155 likes and another with 7,531 likes and 854 shares.



Figure 7: Examples of organic gambling posts attracting high numbers of views, likes and shares.

Content

Organic ads frequently used emojis (52%), humour (18%) and references to the Premier League opening weekend (79%). Content marketing was more likely than conventional advertising to use humour (21% compared with 12%) and refer to the weekend's football (87% compared with 58%). The latter was the highest proportion recorded for content marketing across the four studies. Across all organic ads, humour increased from 12% in 2025 to 18% in 2026.

The absence of direct gambling references does not make these posts non-commercial. By combining gambling branding with football discussion and humour, content marketing maintained operators' visibility without explicitly promoting betting products. Such posts formed part of the wider marketing activity surrounding the opening weekend, even when they resembled ordinary football content.

Among conventional ads, 40% included bonuses or inducements, down from 47% in 2025. Conversely, signposting to a method of gambling increased from 44% to 58%, while the presentation of betting odds increased from 38% to 49%. Both reached their highest proportions across the four annual studies.

Social Responsibility and Adherence to Advertising Regulations

Age restriction messages appeared in 38% of organic ads, while harm reduction messages also appeared in 38%, down from approximately 52% for both measures in 2025. Among content marketing posts, only 22% included each type of message, compared with 82% of conventional ads.

Our findings suggest that conventional advertising is increasingly taking on the less overt commercial character associated with content marketing. In 2026, 28% of conventional ads were coded as not clearly identifiable as advertising, compared with just 4% in 2025. This suggests a shift towards a more subtle form of promotion, where even posts directly promoting gambling can be difficult to recognise as advertising. Among content marketing posts, this proportion rose from 70% to 93%.

Figure 8 shows an example of a post that appears to be content marketing but ends with a low-key reference to a fan who profited substantially from an 'acca' (an accumulator bet).



Figure 8: An example of a conventional gambling advertisement designed to resemble content marketing. Its only direct reference to betting is a subtle mention of a fan's winnings from an "acca" (accumulator bet) in the final line.

Paid-for Advertising

A total of 1,023 paid ads shown on Facebook or Instagram during the opening weekend were identified through the Meta Ad Library. Of these, 918 (89.7%) were classified as conventional advertising and 105 (10.3%) as content marketing. Content marketing therefore remained an established component of paid advertising, following its emergence in the 2025 sample, when it accounted for approximately 9% of ads. Table 7 presents the detailed findings.

Emojis appeared in 89.6% of paid ads, compared with 86.8% in 2025. Humour increased from 1.2% to 11.5%, while references to the Premier League opening weekend rose from 32.7% to 49.1%. Both humour and references to the weekend's

Table 7: Results from the analysis of paid-for ads

Code	Definition	Total
<i>Marketing Design</i>		
Use of emojis	Ads that use emojis	917 (89.6%)
Use of humour	Ads that use humorous content.	118 (11.5%)
Reference to the weekend's football	Ads that refer to the weekend's Premier League football.	502 (49.1%)
<i>Gambling Related Content</i>		
Signpost to method of gambling	Ads that make reference to how the audience could participate in gambling (e.g. having a link to the website).	912 (89.1%)
Bonus or inducement	Ads that include a bonus or inducement (e.g. sign-up offers, deposit match, etc.).	835 (81.6%)
Odds	Ads that present odds for a specific bet.	198 (19.4%)
<i>Social Responsibility and Adherence to Advertising Regulations</i>		
Age restriction	Ads that reference the age-restricted nature of gambling	971 (94.9%)
Harm reduction messaging	Ads that include a harm reduction message.	968 (94.6%)
T&Cs stated	Ads that include information on the T&Cs.	909 (88.9%)
Clearly identifiable as advertising.	Ads that are clearly identifiable as advertising.	1,000 (97.8%)
Active Sportsperson Shown (appeal code)	Ads that feature or make reference to an active sports person.	36 (3.5%)

football reached their highest proportions across the four annual studies. Figure 9 illustrates the use of humour in paid content marketing.

Direct routes to gambling and financial incentives remained prominent. Overall, 89.1% of paid ads signposted a method of gambling, compared with 77.8% in 2025, although this remained slightly below the 89.5% recorded in 2023. Bonuses or inducements appeared in 81.6% of ads, up from 69.8% in 2025. Betting odds appeared in 19.4%, more than double the 8.8% recorded in 2025 and the highest proportion across the four studies.

The inclusion of social responsibility messages increased compared with 2025. Age restriction messages appeared in 94.9% of paid ads, compared with 78.0% previously, while harm reduction messages increased from 76.5% to 94.6%. Terms and conditions were included in 88.9%, compared with 75.1% in 2025. Almost all paid ads (97.8%) were clearly identifiable as advertising, up from 92.6%. However, these measures capture the presence of messages, not their effectiveness in reducing gambling harm. Finally, 36 ads (3.5%) featured or referenced an active sportsperson, a similar proportion to the 3.3% recorded in 2025.

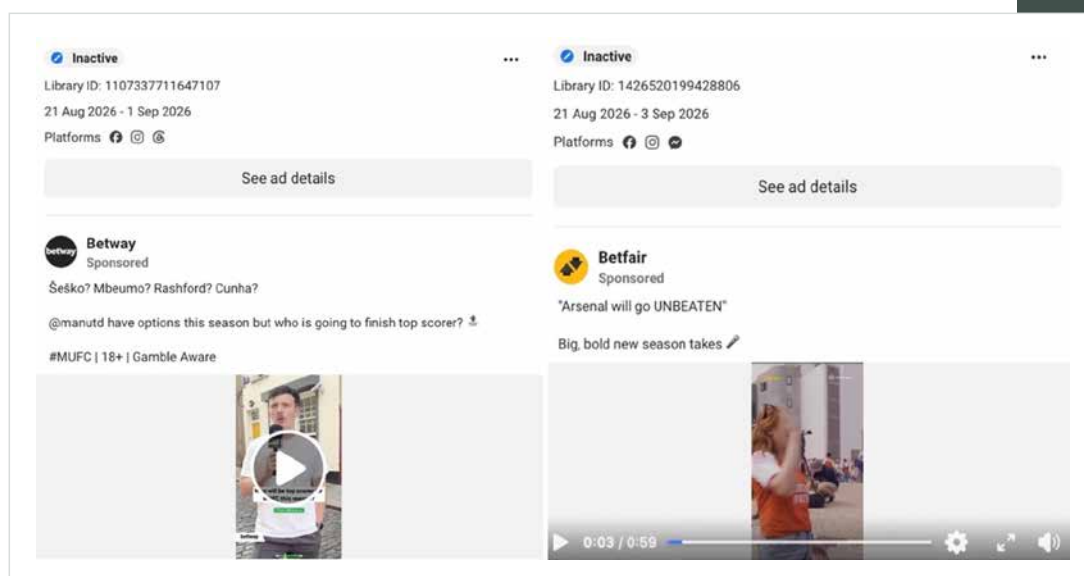


Figure 9: Examples of paid-for gambling advertising coded as Content Marketing with humour.

Audience Reach

Changes to the Meta Ad Library expanded researchers' access to UK advertising data. For the first time in this annual series, we could therefore analyse the age and gender breakdown of audiences reached by paid gambling ads. The sampled ads had a combined reported UK reach of approximately 153.2 million (Table 8). This figure sums reach across individual ads, meaning that the same account may be counted repeatedly across different ads.

Male users accounted for 66.9% of reported reach, compared with 32.2% for female users; gender was unspecified for the remaining 0.9%. Adults aged 18 to 24 accounted for 16.6 million instances of reported reach, or 10.9% of the total; 75.6% of reach within this group was attributed to male users. Delivery to 18 to 24-year-olds confirms that the sampled adverts were configured to allow this age group to receive them. This adds to concerns raised by Xiao et al. (2026), who analysed 20,119 UK gambling adverts shown over ten months and found that 6,301 (31.3%) used an advertiser-set minimum age below 25, which they classified as suspected non-compliance with the BGC rule.

Table 8. Age and gender breakdown of summed UK audience reach across sampled paid gambling ads.

Age range	Male	Female	Unspecified	Total
18-24	12,567,095 75.6%	3,858,536 23.2%	197,142 1.2%	16,622,773 10.9%
25-34	25,857,406 72.6%	9,571,371 26.9%	206,997 0.6%	35,635,774 23.3%
35-44	24,304,636 66.2%	12,164,095 33.1%	257,425 0.7%	36,726,156 24.0%
45-54	16,703,491 63.8%	9,165,348 35.0%	308,641 1.2%	26,177,480 17.1%
55-64	13,710,559 62.4%	8,017,974 36.5%	250,222 1.1%	21,978,755 14.3%
65+	9,313,546 58.0%	6,556,326 40.8%	190,597 1.2%	16,060,469 10.5%
Total	102,456,733 66.9%	49,333,650 32.2%	1,411,024 0.9%	153,201,407 100%

6 | DISCUSSION

For the fourth consecutive year, this study examined gambling marketing across televised matches, sports news, radio and social media during the Premier League’s opening weekend. Together, these reports provide the first sustained, longitudinal picture of how gambling marketing around the Premier League has changed over time (Rossi et al., 2023; 2024; 2025a). In 2026, we recorded 15,571 gambling marketing messages, including 11,205 during televised matches, 2,637 on Sky Sports News, 207 on TalkSport and 1,522 on social media. Although the overall total was lower than in the previous two years, it shows that gambling marketing remained highly prominent across the football media environment.

Gambling marketing remains deeply integrated into the football content itself. At least one gambling message was present during 19.62% of the analysed live match broadcasts, while full electronic and static pitchside advertising accounted for 72.06% of all messages. Pitchside advertising also accounted for 59.41% of messages on Sky Sports News. Most exposure came through logos embedded within football coverage, rather than conventional advertising breaks (e.g. Purves et al., 2020; Torrance et al., 2023).

Table 9. Gambling marketing messages by media channel, 2023 to 2026

Media Channel	2023	2024	2025	2026	Change Rate (2023-2026)
Televised Matches	6,966	23,690	21,815	11,205	+60.85%
Sky Sports News	2,014	4,332	4,510	2,637	+30.93%
TalkSport Radio	117	214	142	207	+76.92%
Social Media	1,902	909	973	1,522	-19.98%
Total	10,999	29,145	27,440	15,571	+41.57%

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT REGULATIONS

Drawing on four years of data, in this section we evaluate four prominent measures intended to regulate gambling marketing associated with football: the voluntary withdrawal of front-of-shirt gambling sponsorship, the Code of Conduct for Gambling Related Agreements in Football, the whistle-to-whistle ban, and the regulations governing social media advertising.

To judge whether these measures have worked, a clear benchmark is needed. In April 2023, Premier League clubs announced that gambling sponsorship would be removed from the front of matchday shirts, explicitly stating that the measure was intended to reduce gambling advertising. The same announcement confirmed that football authorities were developing a new code for responsible gambling sponsorship (Premier League, 2023). Our 2023 study therefore captured gambling marketing at the point when these reforms were being promised, but before they had taken effect. The Sponsorship Code was introduced at the beginning of the 2024/25 season, while the front-of-shirt restriction took effect at the start of the 2026/27 season (Premier League et al., 2024).

The 2023 findings also showed why further action

was being demanded. We recorded 10,999 gambling marketing messages across the opening weekend, including 6,966 during six televised matches. In December 2023, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee cited the finding from televised matches and called for the forthcoming Sponsorship Code to reduce gambling advertising in stadiums. Dame Caroline Dinenage MP, then Chair of the Committee, described “what often seems like a bombardment of advertising branding at football and other sporting events” and called for action to reduce the volume of betting advertising (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2023).

The 2023 total should therefore not be viewed as a low or acceptable baseline. It represents a level of gambling marketing that had already attracted serious concern and contributed to calls for tighter controls. For the measures introduced after 2023, the key test is whether exposure has fallen below this already high level, rather than simply whether it has decreased from the exceptional peaks recorded in 2024 and 2025.

1 Front of Shirt Sponsorship Restriction

The front of shirt restriction had a measurable effect within its specified scope. Gambling sponsorship on the front of matchday shirts accounted for 9.66% of

Table 10. Average annual gambling messages during live match broadcasts before and after the front of shirt restriction

Advertising format	Pre-restriction annual average, 2023 to 2025	2026	Change
All gambling messages	17,490	11,205	–35.9%
Sponsorship lead-ins	5,776	721	–87.5%
All messages excluding sponsorship lead-ins	11,715	10,484	–10.5%
Front of shirt	1,539	9	–99.4%
Shirt sleeves and training kits in 2026	122	563	+362.7%
Full electronic pitchside	6,101	6,491	+6.4%
Static pitchside	1,618	1,583	–2.1%
Static stadium structure	939	927	–1.3%

messages during live broadcasts in 2025 but only 0.08% in 2026. The remaining messages appeared solely in archive footage from the previous season. The measure has therefore been effective in eliminating this specific form of sponsorship-based advertising.

However, our analysis of 26 televised matches across four years indicates that, beyond removing logos from the front of shirts, the restriction has done little to reduce gambling marketing overall. Indeed, despite the removal of front of shirt sponsorship, this year’s 11,205 messages recorded during live broadcasts remained 60.85% above the 2023 total. The rate also increased from approximately 4.81 messages per broadcast minute in 2023 to 6.95 in 2026, an increase of approximately 44.5%.

The decline from 2025 also cannot be attributed substantially to the shirt restriction. Front of shirt logos accounted for less than 10% of messages in 2025, while much of the overall decrease this year was associated with changes to sponsorship lead-ins, which fell drastically this year. At the same time, static pitchside advertising increased from 4.55% to 14.13%, shirt sleeve branding increased from 0.80% to 2.72%, and training kit sponsorship accounted for a further 2.30%. This pattern suggests that some of the marketing budget previously allocated to front-of-shirt sponsorship may now be flowing into other permitted formats.

This kind of shift is not unusual and was to be expected. International evidence shows that when gambling marketing is restricted in one location or channel, operators often move their activity into other, less-regulated formats (Wilson et al. 2024; Torrance et al., 2026). Our 2025 report had already warned that this could happen in the Premier League, after gambling branding on shirt sleeves and other stadia structures

began to increase (Rossi et al., 2025a). To assess this over a longer period, Table 10 compares the 2026 findings with the average annual totals recorded during the three years before the restriction took effect.

The longer-term comparison reinforces the same conclusion: the front of shirt restriction was not the main cause of the overall reduction and appears to have had only a minor effect on overall exposure. The annual total fell by 35.9% compared with the 2023 to 2025 average, largely because sponsorship lead-ins declined by 87.5%. Once these lead-ins are removed from the calculation, gambling messages decreased by only 10.5%. Full electronic pitchside advertising actually increased by 6.4%, while static pitchside advertising and stadium structures remained close to their previous levels.

What is more, the elimination of front of shirt branding was accompanied by a substantial increase in branding elsewhere on club kit. Messages appearing on shirt sleeves and training kits increased from a pre-restriction annual average of 121.7 to 563 in 2026, an increase of 362.7%. This suggests that some of the branding removed from the front of shirts shifted to locations outside the restriction.

The restriction therefore succeeded in removing gambling logos from the front of matchday shirts, but it did not substantially reduce the wider volume of gambling marketing surrounding the live broadcasts. Most of the headline reduction came from fewer sponsorship lead-ins, which were not targeted by the restriction. At the same time, gambling branding remained prominent in other permitted locations, particularly shirt sleeves and training kits, while pitchside and stadium advertising remained widely used. **In summary, it seems that the measure has changed where gambling branding appears far**

more than it has changed the overall marketing environment.

2 Code of Conduct for Gambling Related Agreements in Football

The Sponsorship Code came into effect at the beginning of the 2024/25 season. It contains four broad principles covering protection, social responsibility, reinvestment and integrity. Three parts are particularly relevant to this study: first, reducing exposure to gambling sponsorship, particularly among children and people at risk of gambling harm; second, restricting agreements with operators that are not licensed to provide gambling in Great Britain; and third, increasing the use of responsible gambling messages within sponsorship inventory (Premier League et al., 2024).

a Failure to reduce overall exposure

First, the Code states that gambling sponsorship should be designed to limit its reach and promotion to children and people at risk of gambling harm. Although it does not set a limit on the total number of messages, reducing the amount of gambling sponsorship visible throughout football would be one clear way of working towards this aim. On this measure, there is little evidence of progress. Across all four media channels, the 15,571 messages recorded in 2026 remained 41.57% above the 2023 total – the final year in which the Code was not in place. Messages during live match broadcasts were 60.85% higher than in 2023, while the rate per broadcast minute increased by approximately 44.5%. Sky Sports News also carried 30.93% more messages than in 2023, a direct increase that reflects the greater saturation of in-play coverage. Our study did not measure the age of every person exposed, so these figures cannot establish formal non-compliance. However, they show that the visible

gambling sponsorship environment has not become less saturated since Parliament called for the Code to reduce gambling advertising in stadiums (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2023).

Table 11 places these findings in an international context using studies conducted with the same coding framework and counting approach. Premier League broadcasts contained an average of 2,449 gambling messages per game and 11 per broadcast minute. This compares with 1,677 messages per game and 10 per minute in Germany, and approximately 500 messages per game and between two and three per minute in Canada and the United States. The UK also recorded a higher proportion of harm reduction messages.

Taken together, these findings show that the UK remains an international outlier. No other sample combined such a high number of messages per game with the same level of sustained minute-by-minute exposure. More importantly, the Code does not appear to have changed this position substantially. The highest UK totals were recorded in 2024 and 2025, after the Code had been introduced, while exposure in 2026 remained 61% above the already concerning 2023 level. Now in its third season of operation, the Code has not delivered a meaningful reduction in gambling sponsorship. Without numerical limits, measurable targets or effective enforcement, its commitment to limiting exposure remains largely aspirational.

b Continued visibility of unlicensed gambling brands

Second, the Code states that clubs should only enter into sponsorship agreements with companies providing gambling facilities to UK consumers where the company is licensed by the Gambling Commission or covered by a white label partnership. This voluntary restriction goes further than the current law, which

Table 11. Gambling marketing during televised sports broadcasts across four countries using a consistent methodology

League	Premier League UK (2023-2026)	NBA / NHL Canada (2024)	NBA / NHL United States (2025)	Football Bundesliga Germany (2025)
Games analysed	26	7	13	9
Total gambling messages	63,676	3,537	6,282	15,089
Average messages per game	2,449	505	483	1,677
Average messages per minute	11	3	2	10
Most prolific game, messages per minute	30	4	5	26
Harm reduction messages (% of messages)	16.7%	0.9%	3.9%	3.3%
Data for previous years taken from: Rossi et al (2023, 2024, 2025a, 2025b); Wheaton et al. (2025); Universität Hohenheim (2026).				

does not prohibit clubs from entering into sponsorship agreements with unlicensed operators. The continued exposure of unlicensed brands may therefore indicate breaches of the Code.

This is not a new issue. In 2025, brands without a Gambling Commission licence accounted for 8.6% of messages during live matches and 12.08% on Sky Sports News (Rossi et al., 2025a). In 2026, the corresponding figures were 8.46% and 8.84%. Although the proportion declined on Sky Sports News, it remained largely unchanged during live broadcasts. Examples included Stake, 8XBet and SBOTOP, which had previously operated in Great Britain through TGP Europe before it surrendered its licence in May 2025. The Government's subsequent proposal for a statutory ban underlines the limits of this voluntary approach: the Code has not prevented sustained exposure to unlicensed brands and has proved difficult to oversee and enforce, prompting the Government to propose legislative intervention (Gambling Commission, 2025; DCMS, 2026).

c More harm reduction messaging, but no evidence of its effectiveness

Third, the Code requires a “reasonable and proportionate” share of sponsorship inventory to carry meaningful responsible gambling messages. This is the area in which the findings show the clearest progress. Harm reduction messages appeared in 21.1% of incidences during live broadcasts, up substantially from 12.1% in 2025. Age restriction messages also increased, although more modestly, from 10.0% to 11.7%. These improvements are consistent with the Code having encouraged greater use of responsibility messages within prominent sponsorship formats.

However, the increase in harm reduction messaging should also be treated cautiously. The Code requires only a “reasonable and proportionate” share of sponsorship inventory to carry such messages, without setting minimum standards for their content, size, prominence or duration. As our 2025 report showed, this requirement can be met through small references to “GambleAware” or “Take Time to Think”, including logos placed on advertising hoardings. None of these provided meaningful information about the risks associated with gambling. In 2026, harm reduction messages appeared more frequently, but most were devised by gambling operators themselves and messages on electronic hoardings were not necessarily visible in every camera shot. This risks becoming a box-ticking exercise in which a message is technically present, but may be barely noticed and has no demonstrated effect. This concern is supported by research finding that “Take Time to Think” produced no credible beneficial effect across four measures of gambling behaviour (Newall et al., 2025). The Code should therefore require clear, independently tested warnings about gambling harms, such as “Gambling

is addictive” or “Chances are you lose” (Newall et al., 2024), rather than simply counting the presence of industry-designed messages.

Taken together, the Code has made some progress in increasing responsible gambling messaging during live matches, but this is a limited achievement. Now in its third season of operation, it has still not produced an overall reduction in exposure nor resolved the continued visibility of unlicensed brands. These are not minor implementation issues: they concern two of the Code's central aims and remain firmly unresolved. The findings therefore raise serious questions about whether a voluntary Code without clear limits, measurable targets or effective enforcement can meaningfully reduce gambling sponsorship across football.

3 Whistle-to-whistle ban

The whistle-to-whistle restriction was introduced by the gambling industry in 2019. It prevents most television betting commercials from appearing from five minutes before a live sporting event begins until five minutes after it ends, where the event starts before the 9pm watershed. It does not cover gambling logos on pitchside hoardings, shirts, stadium structures, broadcast sponsorship or other branding embedded within the event itself (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling, 2023).

In 2026, 7,816 gambling messages appeared during the whistle-to-whistle periods analysed, accounting for 69.75% of all messages during live match broadcasts. The number was lower than in 2025, but the proportion appearing during the restricted period increased from 60.8% to 69.8%. This does not mean that the rule was formally breached, because most of these messages appeared through formats that the restriction does not cover. It does, however, show how little the measure affects the overall marketing audiences encounter while watching football.

Previous research provides a similarly mixed assessment. McGrane et al. (2025b) found that the introduction of the restriction was associated with 2.3 fewer gambling commercials per live football programme, with most of the reduction occurring during half-time. However, advertising increased during the unrestricted pre-match period, and an average of three commercials per programme remained after the restriction was introduced. The measure therefore appears to have reduced conventional television commercials within its narrow scope, but not eliminated them or addressed the wider marketing surrounding live sport.

The term “whistle-to-whistle ban” suggests a much broader restriction than is actually in place. For audiences, gambling marketing remained a routine part of watching the match, particularly through pitchside advertising that was visible during live play. The measure can therefore be considered effective

at reducing one type of commercial shown during a defined period, but ineffective as a wider restriction on gambling marketing during football broadcasts.

4 Social media advertising regulation

Across the four years of this study, social media has become an increasingly important part of gambling marketing around Premier League football. In 2026, 79% of organic posts and 49.1% of paid ads referred directly to the opening weekend, rising to 87% among organic content marketing posts. The organic posts generated 21.8 million views over a single weekend, while paid advertising recorded a combined reported UK reach of 153.2 million. Neither figure represents a unique audience measure, as the same account may have encountered several adverts. Their scale shows why social media must now be treated as a central part of the gambling marketing environment (Rossi et al., 2021; Rossi and Nairn, 2022). Social media gambling advertising is governed by separate self-regulatory systems, including the CAP Code administered by the ASA and the IGRG Code.

a ASA's failure to regulate content marketing

The ASA's regulatory record on content marketing has been remarkably poor. Content marketing increased from approximately half of organic posts in 2023 to 58% in 2025 and 74% in 2026. In the latest sample, 93% of these posts were coded as not clearly identifiable as advertising, almost identical to the 92% recorded in 2023. This raises a direct concern under Rule 2.1 of the CAP Code, which requires marketing communications to be obviously identifiable as advertising (Committee of Advertising Practice, 2014). Their lack of recognisability may indicate widespread non-compliance with this basic rule. This is particularly concerning because experimental research has found content marketing to be four times more appealing to children than conventional gambling advertising and much harder for them to recognise as advertising (Rossi and Nairn, 2024, 2025; Rossi et al., 2026).

This is not a new problem. The first large-scale evidence was based on data collected in 2018, and concerns were raised directly with the ASA from 2019 onwards. As we told the House of Lords in June 2026, the issue had been raised with the regulator on more than 15 occasions. We also provided the ASA with more than 150 examples from 2021 onwards (Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform, 2026; House of Lords Liaison Committee, 2026a). Despite this, it took until 2025 for the regulator to issue its first substantive ruling on gambling content marketing.

For years, the ASA relied on a narrow test of whether a post was 'directly connected' with the supply of gambling. This created an obvious regulatory gap: posts designed to build brand awareness through

content marketing function as advertising yet, if they did not directly promote gambling products or services, would fall outside the Code altogether and therefore escape Rule 2.1. This is particularly important because content marketing accounted for around 74% of the organic gambling ads identified this year. This approach misses the central purpose of content marketing, which is to build positive associations with a gambling brand through football, humour and entertainment without directly promoting a bet.

Only after mounting pressure did the ASA begin large-scale monitoring of gambling content marketing in 2026. Its own review found that around 5% of the 388 Meta posts assessed were clearly problematic, while a further 10% required investigation. The regulator therefore identified potential breaches in up to 15% of the content it examined, even under its own narrow interpretation of what counts as advertising (Advertising Standards Authority, 2026). This finding supports concerns that we have raised repeatedly for years and confirms that potentially non-compliant content was circulating during the period in which the ASA had failed to act. This is not evidence of a system beginning to work. It is evidence of an entirely avoidable regulatory failure. Indeed, a broad and growing evidence base had highlighted the problem repeatedly through academic research, direct complaints to the ASA, parliamentary scrutiny and media investigations for almost ten years. The failure was not caused by a lack of evidence, but by the regulator's persistent failure to act on it.

b The overseas registration loophole: years outside regulatory oversight

A second major failure by the ASA in regulating social media gambling advertising was the overseas registration loophole. Due to an oversight in the ASA regulations, until September 2025, organic social media marketing by GB-licensed operators registered overseas fell outside the ASA's remit. In our 2025 sample, this applied to eight of the ten brands studied and left 371 of 486 organic posts, or 76.4%, outside ASA oversight. More than three quarters of the organic posts in the sample therefore escaped scrutiny. Both our research team and Lord Foster of Bath repeatedly raised this loophole directly with the ASA from 2023 onwards, particularly in relation to Paddy Power content, which the ASA argued was not subject to its codes because the company's marketing team operated from Ireland. We also raised this concern with the ASA's Chief Executive during a meeting at its London office. The regulator was therefore clearly aware of the problem and had been given specific examples of its consequences. The loophole was eventually closed in September 2025 (Committee of Advertising Practice, 2025), but only after years during which organic social media marketing from major gambling brands was left outside the advertising rules

(Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform, 2026).

The Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform described this as a major regulatory failure, concluding that the loophole had allowed “the bulk of gambling advertising on social media” to escape ASA scrutiny and left children and young people exposed to effectively unregulated marketing for years. The report stated that the ASA owed stakeholders clear answers about why repeated warnings from parliamentarians, researchers and charities had not been acted upon (Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform, 2026).

c Failure to comply with under-25 targeting industry rules

Finally, serious questions remain about compliance with and transparency around the industry’s own rules for paid advertising. The IGRG Code requires sponsored or paid digital advertising to target users aged 25 and over where that facility is available, permitting targeting from age 18 only where a platform has verifiably demonstrated that its age gating prevents people under 18 from seeing gambling advertising (Industry Group for Responsible Gambling, 2023). Yet the formal Code names no exempt platforms. The last archived version of the separate, undated BGC webpage before the House of Lords hearing, captured on 27 May 2026, listed Facebook, Snap and YouTube, but not Instagram (House of Lords Liaison Committee, 2026a; Xiao et al. 2026).

By 12th September, the first time we checked as part of this report, the webpage had been changed to add Instagram and Spotify to the platforms permitted to use targeting from age 18. Although the absence of a publication date or change log means the exact date cannot be established, Xiao et al. (2026) report that Instagram was added only after the House of Lords Hearing, presumably in response. Neither the Code nor the webpage publishes the assessment criteria, supporting evidence or explanation for why these platforms qualify, or identifies age assurance measures that distinguish them from platforms still subject to the 25 and over requirement (Betting and Gaming Council, 2026).

The inclusion of Facebook and Instagram is particularly interesting because Meta’s advertising library now provides unusually detailed evidence about advertisers’ selected age ranges and the ages of users reached. The sequence raises a serious transparency concern: after evidence of widespread suspected non-compliance became visible, the industry body appears to have quietly changed the scope of its own rule, without announcing, dating or publicly justifying the change.

Our 2026 sample recorded 16.6 million instances of paid advertising reach among people aged 18 to 24, equivalent to 10.9% of total reported reach. Male users accounted for 75.6% of this younger reach. This delivery was possible because advertisers selected settings that allowed their adverts to reach this age group. Similarly, Xiao et al. (2026) analysed 20,119 UK gambling adverts shown over

ten months and found that 6,301 (31.3%) used an advertiser-set minimum age below 25, which the authors classified as suspected non-compliance with the BGC rule.

Taken together, the evidence from four years shows a regulatory system that has consistently reacted too slowly to changes in social media marketing. One major loophole has finally been closed and monitoring has begun, but only after years of evidence, repeated warnings and extensive exposure. Content marketing remains poorly regulated, whilst paid advertising shows widespread compliance issues with the industry’s age targeting standard (e.g. Xiao et al., 2026) The current framework is therefore failing both where the ASA draws the boundary of advertising and where gambling operators are expected to regulate themselves.

7 | FOUR YEARS ON: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

Across four Premier League opening weekends, this research programme recorded 83,155 gambling marketing messages, including 63,676 during 26 televised matches. Although the total fell in 2026 compared with the exceptionally high levels recorded in 2024 and 2025, it remained 41.57% above the already concerning level recorded in 2023, when further regulation was being promised. In 2026, gambling marketing remains deeply embedded throughout football broadcasts, stadiums, sports news, radio and social media.

Each of the regulatory measures examined produced some change within a narrowly defined area, but none substantially reduced the wider exposure surrounding football. The front-of-shirt restriction removed almost all branding from that particular location, but marketing continued to appear on other formats such as pitchside advertising, stadia structures, shirt sleeves and training kits. The Sponsorship Code increased the presence of harm reduction messages, but did not substantially reduce the exposure or resolve the visibility of unlicensed brands. The whistle-to-whistle restriction covers conventional television commercials while excluding the thousands of logos embedded within match coverage. On social media, regulation has repeatedly fallen behind changes in industry practice.

These shortcomings reflect a wider failure of the voluntary and self-regulatory approach. The existing measures contain few numerical limits, measurable targets or meaningful consequences for failing to meet their stated aims. Their narrow scope also allows gambling brands to move marketing into formats that remain permitted. Progress has generally followed public pressure and parliamentary scrutiny rather than timely engagement with research, effective monitoring and early regulatory action. Four years of evidence therefore lead to a clear conclusion: self-regulation in this area is not working.

The House of Lords Liaison Committee has now reached the same broad conclusion. In September 2026, it described a comprehensive ban on gambling advertising as the most effective long-term policy option. It also called for gambling advertising to be removed from all parts of sports kits, including training kits, and from in or near sports grounds and venues. To prevent advertising simply shifting elsewhere, it recommended that the Government also consider an accompanying restriction on gambling advertising within televised sports coverage (House of Lords Liaison Committee, 2026b).



83,155

GAMBLING MARKETING
MESSAGES

41.57%

REMAINED ABOVE 2023 LEVELS

63,676

DURING 26 TELEVISED MATCHES





Policy Recommendations

Evidence collected across four years of this research shows that self-regulation is ineffective. Neither the whistle-to-whistle restriction, the front of shirt sponsorship restriction nor the Sponsorship Code of Conduct has substantially reduced the wider volume of gambling marketing associated with football. Further voluntary commitments or revisions to existing codes are therefore unlikely to produce meaningful change.

Effective reform can only be delivered through comprehensive legislation, independently enforced and supported by meaningful sanctions. This conclusion is consistent with the House of Lords Liaison Committee, which identified a comprehensive ban on gambling advertising as the most effective long-term option (House of Lords Liaison Committee, 2026b). We therefore reiterate the recommendations made in our previous reports, but stress that they must now be implemented through legislation rather than self-regulation.

A A Comprehensive Whistle-to-Whistle Ban

To be effective, the whistle-to-whistle restriction must cover all forms of gambling marketing visible during sporting events, not only conventional television adverts. This includes kit sponsorship, pitchside advertising, stadium structures and broadcast sponsorship, as well as marketing accompanying live events through social media and radio. A phased approach could give clubs time to secure alternative sponsorship arrangements.

C Ban Content Marketing

Gambling content marketing on social media should be prohibited. This material often uses football, humour and entertainment to build positive associations with gambling brands while making its commercial purpose difficult to recognise. All gambling promotions should be clearly identifiable as advertising, and restrictions preventing paid advertising from reaching people under 25 should be legally enforceable.

B Centralised Mandate for Responsible Gambling Messages

Legislation should require all permitted gambling marketing to include clear warnings about gambling harms, such as “Gambling is addictive” or “Chances are you lose”. It should also establish minimum requirements for their size, prominence and duration. Small logos and industry-designed slogans with no demonstrated effect should not qualify as meaningful harm reduction messages.

D Ban unlicensed brands in sponsorship agreements

All gambling sponsorship and marketing visible to British audiences should be limited to operators licensed by the Gambling Commission. The continued visibility of unlicensed brands shows that the Sponsorship Code of Conduct has not resolved this issue. Clubs, leagues and broadcasters should be legally responsible for verifying the licensing status of gambling sponsors.

8 | REFERENCES

- Advertising Standards Authority (2026). 'Snapshot Report: Gambling Content Marketing'. 12 June. Available at: <https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/snapshot-report-gambling-content-marketing.html> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Betting and Gaming Council. 'Industry Group for Responsible Gambling'. Available at: <https://bettingandgamingcouncil.com/members/igr> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Committee of Advertising Practice (n.d.). 'Recognition of Marketing Communications: CAP Code, Section 2'. Available at: https://www.asa.org.uk/type/non_broadcast/code_section/02.html (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Committee of Advertising Practice (2025). 'CAP Code extended to ensure consistency in regulation of online ads'. 1 September. Available at: <https://www.asa.org.uk/news/cap-code-extended-to-ensure-consistency-in-regulation-of-online-ads.html> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Cornwell, T.B. (2025). *Sponsorship in Marketing: Effective Partnerships in Sports, Arts, and Events*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- Cornwell, T.B. and Jahn, S. (2023). *Concise Introduction to Sport Marketing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2023). 'MPs call for cut to football gambling adverts to shield children from exposure'. UK Parliament, 21 December. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/378/culture-media-and-sport-committee/news/199092/mps-call-for-cut-to-football-gambling-adverts-to-shield-children-from-exposure/> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Davies, R. and Sweney, M. (2025). 'UK gambling firms spent "astronomic" £2bn on advertising last year'. *The Guardian*, 23 November. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/nov/23/uk-gambling-firms-advertising-rachel-reeves-budget> (Accessed: 6 October 2026).
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2026). 'Consultation on banning unlicensed gambling sponsorship'. 15 July. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-banning-unlicensed-gambling-sponsorship/consultation-on-banning-unlicensed-gambling-sponsorship> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Gambling Commission (2025). 'TGP Europe leaves GB market following Commission investigation'. 16 May. Available at: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news/article/tgp-europe-leaves-gb-market-following-commission-investigation> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Gambling Commission (2026a). *Gambling Survey for Great Britain: Annual Report 2025*. 16 July. Available at: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/report/gambling-survey-for-great-britain-annual-report-2025-official-statistics/gsgb-annual-report-2025-introduction> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Gambling Commission (2026a). *Mansion Europe Holdings Limited*. Available at: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-register/business/detail/39448> (Accessed: 16 September 2026).
- Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform (2026). *Gambling Advertising, Marketing and Sponsorship: Recommendations for Reform*. London: Gambling Reform APPG and Peers for Gambling Reform. Available at: <https://gamblingreformappg.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/gambling-advertising-marketing-and-sponsorship-recommendations-for-reform.pdf> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- House of Lords Liaison Committee (2026a). *Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry: Follow-up*. Corrected Oral Evidence, 17 June. London: UK Parliament. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/27576/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- House of Lords Liaison Committee (2026b). *Gambling Harm: Time for Action*. Follow-up Report. 2nd Report of Session 2026 to 2027, HL Paper 52. London: House of Lords. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5902/ldselect/ldliaison/52/5202.htm> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Houghton, S., McNeil, A., Hogg, M. and Moss, M. (2019). 'Comparing the Twitter posting of British gambling operators and gambling affiliates: A summative content analysis'. *International Gambling Studies*, 19, pp. 312–326.
- Hsiao, C.H., Tang, K.Y. and Su, Y.S. (2021). 'An empirical exploration of sports sponsorship: Activation of experiential marketing, sponsorship satisfaction, brand equity, and purchase intention'. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 677137.
- Hayes, A.F. and Krippendorff, K. (2007). 'Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data'. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 1(1), pp. 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312450709336664>.
- Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (2023). *Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising*. 7th ed. London: Betting and Gaming Council. Available at: <https://bettingandgamingcouncil.com/uploads/22703-BGC-IGRG-Code-7th-Edition-111023.pdf> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).
- Johnson, D. (2026). *How Premier League shirts will change with gambling sponsor ban*. BBC Sport. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/articles/c4g3vrr1vdro> (Accessed: 13 August 2026).
- Langham, E., Thorne, H., Browne, M., Donaldson, P., Rose, J. and Rockloff, M. (2016). 'Understanding gambling related harm: A proposed definition, conceptual framework, and taxonomy of harms'. *BMC Public Health*, 16, 80.
- McGee, D. (2020). 'On the normalisation of online sports gambling among young adult men in the UK: A public health perspective'. *Public Health*, 184, pp. 89–94.
- McGrane, E., Pryce, R., Field, M., Gu, S., Moore, E.C. and Goyder, E. (2025a). 'What is the impact of sports-related gambling advertising on gambling behaviour? A systematic review'. *Addiction*, 120(4), pp. 589–607. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16761>. McGrane, E., Pryce, R.,
- Wilson, L., Field, M. and Goyder, E. (2025b). 'How did the "whistle to whistle" ban affect gambling advertising on TV? A live football matching study'. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 33(2), pp. 134–142.
- McGrane, E., Wardle, H., Clowes, M., Blank, L., Pryce, R., Field, M., Sharpe, C. and Goyder, E. (2023). 'What is the evidence that advertising policies could have an impact on gambling-related harms? A systematic umbrella review of the literature'. *Public Health*, 215, pp. 124–130.
- Meenaghan, T. (1991). 'Sponsorship: Legitimising the medium'. *European Journal of Marketing*, 25(11), pp. 5–10.
- Newall, P.W.S., Torrance, J., Russell, A.M.T., Rockloff, M.J., Hing, N. and Browne, M. (2024). '"Chances are you're about to lose": New independent Australian safer gambling messages tested in UK and USA bettor samples'. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 32(6), pp. 400–408.

Newall, P.W.S., Hayes, T., Singmann, H., Weiss-Cohen, L., Ludvig, E.A. and Walasek, L. (2025). 'Evaluation of the "Take Time to Think" safer gambling message: A randomised, online experimental study'. *Behavioural Public Policy*, 9(4), pp. 762–779.

Premier League (2023). 'Premier League statement on gambling sponsorship'. 13 April. Available at: <https://www.premierleague.com/en/news/3147426> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).

Premier League, English Football League, The Football Association and Women's Super League (2024). 'Statement from the Premier League, EFL, The FA and Women's Super League'. 24 July. Available at: <https://www.premierleague.com/en/news/4065603> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).

Purves, R.I., Critchlow, N., Morgan, A., Stead, M. and Dobbie, F. (2020). 'Examining the frequency and nature of gambling marketing in televised broadcasts of professional sporting events in the United Kingdom'. *Public Health*, 184, pp. 71–78.

Rossi, R., Nairn, A., Smith, J. and Inskip, C. (2021). "'Get a £10 Free Bet Every Week!": Gambling advertising on Twitter: Volume, content, followers, engagement, and regulatory compliance'. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 40(4), pp. 487–504.

Rossi, R. and Nairn, A. (2022). 'New developments in gambling marketing: The rise of social media ads and its effect on youth'. *Current Addiction Reports*, 9, pp. 385–391.

Rossi, R., Wheaton, J.J., Moxey, M. and Tozzi, E. (2023). *New Season, More Self-Regulation, More Marketing: The Prevalence of Gambling Adverts during the Opening Weekend of the English Premier League 2023/2024*. Bristol: University of Bristol.

Rossi, R. and Nairn, A. (2024). 'Priming young minds: The appeal of gambling advertising to children and young people'. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 9(2), pp. 187–199.

Rossi, R., Wheaton, J.J., Moxey, M., Moradipour, S., Tozzi, E. and Singer, J. (2024). *Gambling Marketing and the Premier League: The Continued Failure of Industry Self-Regulation*. Bristol: University of Bristol.

Rossi, R. and Nairn, A. (2025). 'Clearly (not) identifiable: The recognisability of gambling content marketing'. *International Journal of Market Research*, 67(1), pp. 33–52.

Rossi, R., Moradipour, S., Wheaton, J.J., Lin, R. and Moxey, M. (2025a). *Gambling Marketing and the Premier League: Continued Saturation and Failed Self-Regulation*. Bristol: University of Bristol.

Rossi, R., Wheaton, J.J., Moradipour, S., Lin, R. and Moxey, M. (2025b). *Betting on the Finals: Prevalence of Gambling Marketing in the NBA and NHL Finals 2025*. Bristol: University of Bristol.

Rossi, R., Tozzi, E. and Nairn, A. (2026). 'Cognitive overload and emotional arousal: Why gambling content marketing appeals to children and resists established educational interventions'. *Psychology & Marketing*, 43(6), pp. 1472–1487.

Sharman, S., Ferreira, C.A. and Newall, P.W.S. (2020). 'Exposure to gambling and alcohol marketing in soccer matchday programmes'. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 36(3), pp. 979–988.

Sharman, S., Piper, T., McGrane, E. and Newall, P.W.S. (2024). 'Gambling adverts in live TV coverage of the Qatar 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup'. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 32(4), pp. 237–244.

Singer, J., Kufenko, V., Wöhr, A., Wuketich, M. and Otterbach, S. (2023). 'How do gambling providers use the social network Twitter in Germany? An explorative mixed-methods topic modelling approach'. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 39, pp. 1371–1398.

Singer, J., Wöhr, A. and Otterbach, S. (2024). 'Gambling operators' use of advertising strategies on social media and their effects: A systematic review'. *Current Addiction Reports*, 11, pp. 437–446.

Sky Group (2023). 'Simon Thomas announced as new Gillette Soccer Saturday presenter'. Available at: <https://www.skygroup.sky/article/simon-thomas-announced-as-new-gillette-soccer-saturday-presenter> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).

Smith, A. (2012). *Introduction to Sport Marketing*. London: Routledge.

Torrance, J., Heath, C., Andrade, M. and Newall, P.W.S. (2023). 'Gambling, cryptocurrency, and financial trading app marketing in English Premier League football: A frequency analysis of in-game logos'. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 12(4), pp. 972–982.

Torrance, J., Smith, J., Russell, A.M.T., Wright, S., Xiao, L.Y., Wyn-Davies, E., Heath, C. and Newall, P.W.S. (2026). 'Regulatory whack-a-mole: A rapid scoping review of gambling marketing restrictions and their (in)effectiveness'. *Current Addiction Reports*, 13, article 85. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-026-00793-5>.

UEFA (2022). 'Blocked broadcasting hours defined'. Available at: <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/025f-0fca25bed000-61c2e92414f0-1000--blocked-broadcasting-hours-defined/> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).

Universität Hohenheim (2026). 'Werbung für Sportwetten: Dauerpräsenz im Fußball gefährdet vulnerable Gruppen'. Informationsdienst Wissenschaft, 2 June. Available at: <https://nachrichten.idw-online.de/2026/06/02/werbung-fuer-sportwetten-dauerpraesenz-im-fussball-gefaehrdet-vulnerable-gruppen> (Accessed: 7 October 2026).

Wardle, H., Reith, G., Best, D., McDaid, D. and Platt, S. (2018). *Measuring Gambling-Related Harms: A Framework for Action*. Birmingham: Gambling Commission.

Wheaton, J.J., Rossi, R., Moxey, M., Tozzi, E. and Moradipour, S. (2025). 'Gambling advertisements in Ontario: Exploring the prevalence and regulatory compliance of televised and social media marketing during sports matches'. *International Gambling Studies*, 25(1), pp. 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14459795.2024.2400356>.

Wilson, J., Rossi, R., Bransden, N., Amos, M. and Sakis, P. (2024). *Drivers of Gambling Marketing Restrictions: An International Comparison*. Bristol and London: University of Bristol and Ipsos Strategy & Advisory.

Xiao, L.Y., Deery, C., Lo, C.Y., Ren, X., Huang, Y. and Tattan-Birch, H. (2026). 'Missing the target: Gambling adverts on social media were 28 times as likely to breach restrictions on targeting young adults under UK industry self-regulation than under Dutch law'. *OSF Preprints*. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/sbdfk_v2.

