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# The Foamy Haircut /

*Brahma*

**Beer brand creates novelty hairstyle inspired by its brew to circumvent Brazilian football sponsorship regulations**

► <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdjK6pk4Zo4>

Beer and Brazilian football have a rocky past. For years, the sale of alcohol at stadiums has been banned in an effort to reduce violence. And this year, a new law banned beer brands from sponsoring players' jerseys. **AB InBev** brand **Brahma** is one of Brazilian football's biggest sponsors, and needed to find a new way to insert itself into gameplay while communicating two key product attributes: smoothness and foam.

There's a football tradition of famous players, such as David Beckham with his mohawk and cornrows and Ronaldinho and his headband, sporting unusual hairstyles that inspire copycat haircuts among other players and fans. Tapping into this aspect of football culture, Brahma worked with São Paulo-based agency **Africa** to launch its own hairstyle: the **Foamy Haircut**.

Created with Ariel Franco, a Brazilian barber known for his iconic cuts, the Foamy Haircut resembles a glass full of Brahma: golden liquid below, white foam on top. The campaign launched on 10 July 2021, when São Paulo FC left-back Reinaldo Manoel da Silva (known as Reinaldo) played in a game between Sao Paulo FC and Bahia, assisting Liziero to score the winning goal. Reinaldo appeared with the Foamy Haircut, and the following day, Brahma released a spot showing Franco and Reinaldo creating the look.



The haircut was then copied by numerous other Brazilian footballers (including Chelsea FC's Thiago Silva and Jorginho during their UEFA Super Cup win), pundits, and fans. 'Brahma's smoothness is such that it goes beyond beer and goes into the players' heads,' said Marina Raats, Brahma's marketing manager, in a press release. 'Among so many things, the hair of male and female players is something iconic within soccer. Many athletes become idols and are recognised, not only for what they present on the field, but also for their looks. So, in an unusual way, we decided to create the cut that is dictating fashion this decade, all this to bring Brahmoothness to people in a different way.'

**Results /** According to the agency, within two weeks of launching, the Foamy Haircut hit the brand's annual mentions and engagement goal, with **264,288** mentions, **91%** of which were generated organically.

The campaign also generated **37.6 million** earned impressions and trended on Twitter for three days in a row.

## Contagious Insight /

**Bend (the rules) like Beckham /** As attitudes towards health have changed and sports sponsorship regulations have tightened, many brands have faced challenges like Brahma's. When tobacco sponsorship of Formula One, for instance, was restricted in the 1990s, tobacco brands found their way around the rules by designing 'global dark market logos' –

branding that used the product's distinctive assets (such as the red and white of Marlborough) but didn't include the brand name. Similarly in Brahma's case, the brand name was off the table, and sponsorship of the jerseys wasn't an option. Instead, the brand leveraged its association with Brazilian football, as the largest sponsor of the sport in the country, and found a lighthearted, creative way to insert itself into the conversation. Whether the Foamy Haircut conveys the smoothness of a pint of Brahma is another thing – although the case study film does capture a Brazilian footballer referring to something the brand has translated into English as 'Brahmoothness'.

**Shots on target** / Football is so much more than the 90 minutes played on the pitch; the fan culture, punditry and cultural importance of football make it more than a sport. That's particularly true in Brazil, the self-proclaimed home of football, where it's part of the national identity. More than 16,000 Brazilians play football professionally around the world and there are over 776 professional football clubs in Brazil. At first glance, a beer-inspired haircut is a fun brand stunt with limited learnings for other brands. But Brahma did show how in tune it is with football culture by paying homage to the tradition of unique footballer haircuts and tapping into the cultural buzz that surrounds them. By having a player wear its brand assets on his head, rather than his jersey, Brahma captured the attention of its audience in a way that a standard shirt sponsorship couldn't have done. With this campaign, Brahma displayed a cultural fluency and an understanding of its audience and the fan culture that surrounds the sport. Without shelling out for a jersey sponsorship, Brahma generated organic brand awareness and reinforced its associations with Brazilian football.

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