

SHORTSTOP

BNP Paribas Tennis Classic: Japanese brewer Asahi, Malta Tourism and Evian all renewed their partnerships for the 2010 event in June at the Hurlingham Club in London. BNP Paribas Wealth Management renewed its title sponsorship for the fourth year running and film and photographic company eDv sponsored the event for the first time.

Fulham FC: The English Premier League club signed financial services company FxPro as its main sponsor, replacing electronics manufacturer LG. Fulham said the three-year deal was the biggest in the club's history.

International Olympic Committee: The 25th anniversary of the Olympic Movement's global sponsorship programme, known as TOP (The Olympic Partners), was celebrated with a reception in Lausanne for guests who helped create the original programme. Created in 1984 following the Los Angeles Olympic Games, the TOP programme is managed by the IOC's Marketing Commission, which was first chaired by IOC member Richard Pound.

West Brom FC: The English Premier League club signed home emergency company HomeServe as its shirt sponsor. The company's telephone number 0800 247 999 will feature on the team's kit as part of the deal.

Ryder Cup: German car manufacturer BMW extended its sponsorship of the biennial golf tournament between the United States and Europe until 2014. BMW is also the official car of the European Tour, title sponsor of the BMW Italian Open and supports the BMW Championship on the US PGA Tour, making it the only company engaged on all major golf tours.

Formula One: The FIA World Motor Sport Council announced Pirelli will replace Bridgestone as the sport's sole tyre supplier in 2011.

Aviva: The insurance company signed a four-year, £20m deal with Premiership Rugby to replace Guinness as title sponsor of England's top-flight rugby union division. The partnership, which will be officially launched close to the start of the 2010-11 season, also includes investment in strengthening the presence of Premiership clubs in their communities through a new Aviva grassroots programme.



PUMA'S WORLD CUP SAFARI

PUMA landed in Africa long before the World Cup and chief executive Jochen Zeitz tells **Bernardo Domingues** how the brand capitalised as the planet's eyes turned to the continent last month.

WHILE GIANT APPAREL BRANDS adidas and Nike compete for every possible sponsorship deal with national football associations - dressing 12 and 10 of the teams at this year's FIFA World Cup in South Africa - world number three PUMA secured a strong presence at the event through its now 13-year tactic of supporting African football.

Since signing the Cameroon team in 1997, the company, born out of the split between German brothers Rudolf and Adi Dassler (the latter went on to form adidas), has grown its portfolio to 12 African federations. The long-standing involvement with the continent guaranteed that four out of the six African teams playing in South Africa wore shirts with the PUMA logo - as well as Uruguay, Switzerland and 2006 world champions Italy.

"African football is very powerful, energetic,

passionate; the fans are fun and very colourful," CEO Jochen Zeitz told *SportBusiness International*. "Africa is all about diversity and different cultures. And that's very much what PUMA as a brand also stands for. The fun of the game and the enjoyment are things that are true to PUMA as well as true to African football."

Awareness in Africa

To get the most out of its partnerships in such a landmark year for Africa, PUMA undertook a series of awareness-raising initiatives.

One key initiative was a strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to support the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. The brand designed the Africa Unity Kit, as sported in the image above, which was approved by FIFA as the official third kit to be worn by the 12



Mensah, Eto'o and Eboué in the Africa Unity Kit - PUMA

African teams. The design is based around a brown pigment colour created by mixing actual soil samples from four different countries in the continent - Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Mozambique.

The kit, alongside playing a prominent marketing role for PUMA, has been sold to raise funds for biodiversity programmes in Africa.

Building on that initiative, African-American contemporary artist Kehinde Wiley was commissioned to create African-inspired PUMA football gear and lifestyle products, as well as four original works of art inspired by players Samuel Eto'o of Cameroon, John Mensah of Ghana and Emmanuel Eboué of Ivory Coast. The four pieces were the main components of the artist's Legends of Unity exhibition - promoted by PUMA - that travelled to six cities across Europe, North America and Asia (Berlin,

"The time for Africa to win and make an even bigger footprint on global football is about to come. It's going to happen; it's only a question of time."

Paris, London, New York, Beijing and Milan) before opening in Cape Town, South Africa, during the World Cup.

"Africa has a very diverse, cultural approach to lifestyle, which the PUMA brand also represents," adds Zeitz. "Now that we have had a World Cup in Africa, obviously the African lifestyle combined with football as the number one sport in the world is a great platform to promote our brand."

This brand positioning has driven most of PUMA's sponsorship strategies and explains the attraction for properties less traditionally sought by sponsors. The Jamaican athletics team, another PUMA property, achieved success at the Beijing 2008 Olympics thanks to Usain Bolt's record-breaking performances and provided another spectacular global showcase for the values of the brand.

But what does PUMA's sponsorship of African football have in common with, say, the Italian national football team? With PUMA's equally important brand-aspiration to be on the cutting edge of style with its leisurewear, it's no coincidence that Italy, a country known to be at the forefront of international fashion, sports the cougar logo on its shirts.

"Is more a question of who you are as a brand, what your personality is, and those are examples that very much represent the PUMA personality," adds Zeitz. "Obviously Jamaica and Africa are great examples. Whereas Italian football is more about fashionable style, Africa is more the colourfulness."

World Cup assessment

Zeitz claims that Ghana being the only African country to come out of the group stages at the World Cup (Italy also failed to reach the knockout rounds) did not have any negative impact on the results of PUMA's African campaign. Of all its sponsored national sides in South Africa, it was Uruguay that assured the brand had one team in the semi-finals - the same number as Nike.

"The results we generated pre and during the World Cup already look really good. This World Cup was more than just about getting to the next round. I think it is terrific that South Africa

was able to host a World Cup...that's more important than individual performances.

"I would say the time for Africa to win and make an even bigger footprint on global football is about to come. It's going to happen; it's only a question of time. If you look at between 1998 and today, we've had a 66-per-cent increase in African players in European leagues.

"African football on the world stage, whether it is with Eto'o or Drogba or others, already plays a very important role. It is just a question of the nations being able to turn that into bigger wins at an international level."

Tangible benefits

The objectives of PUMA's involvement with Africa are not confined to concepts of brand awareness and perception - things that can sometimes sound abstract and difficult to measure. Ultimately, these sponsorship deals are expected to deliver an increase in sales. And the brand's African business has experienced double-digit growth ever since it entered the continent. Double-digit growth in sales is also hoped for from the 2010-11 football season - when including the World Cup as the first competition of the period - and could take PUMA closer to fulfilling what is believed to be a long-term potential of reaching €4 billion in revenues.

The recession thwarted any possible growth last year, when sales froze at the same €2.5 billion level of 2008 - a situation also faced by rivals Nike (at €15 billion in 2009) and adidas (at €10 billion).

"A lot of the brands, when you are successful, are trying to look at what you're doing and trying to get a piece of the pie," adds Zeitz.

"Obviously, the biggest brands in the world are competitors to ours, and so are pure lifestyle brands as well as pure performance brands."

But there is one thing the PUMA chief says it is easier to determine - that this year's World Cup is a milestone and not the final stop for the company's support to Africa: "[The continent] is always going to be part of our approach. We started this partnership thirteen years ago and it will continue in the future."