

A HISTORY OF FOOTBALL THROUGH ADVERTISING:

Football sells....don't believe anything about stunning women, skimpy underwear and alluring destinations, the beautiful game has always been a magnet for advertisers. Every week, our resident Marketing Guru, Jim Thornton, takes a look back through the years as to how brand owners have exploited footballers to win our hearts, minds and most importantly, hard earned cash.

No. 1 Sir Stanley Matthews & Craven A Cigarettes

Football has been my lifelong passion and advertising, my adult-life-long business. So when the esteemed editors of this prestigious organ invited me to write a column, the lengthy, mutually beneficial and often inadvertently hilarious relationship between brands and footballers seemed the perfect subject.

In fact the first advertisement I ever wrote (that was actually produced) managed to achieve my only two career ambitions in one fell swoop: to have an ad featuring a Stoke player appear in a newspaper. It was for a Granada TV Rentals' discounted VHS cassette offer during the 1986 Mexico World Cup.

Surprisingly the internet has failed to archive this seminal moment in advertising history. However I can tell you it featured a picture of Gordon Banks's legendary save from Pele's header in the 1970 World Cup and a headline that said something like 'With saves like these you can record saves like these'. No, I know it doesn't really make sense but that wasn't my primary motivation as I recall, and the client didn't seem to notice. To be honest, the subsequent 26 years of my career have been something of an anti-climax.

But just like that ad, the first in this series brings together Stoke, advertising and my other adult-life-long love, smoking, in an ad for Craven A smokes endorsed by the legendary Sir Stanley Matthews in 1952 (and yes, Cynical Dave, I DO know he was actually playing for Blackpool in '52, but that was merely an ignominious interlude between his two glorious, triumphant periods starring for his home town club, the Mighty Stoke City).

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STANLEY MATTHEWS, Blackpool's quicksilver outside-right, has been capped for England no less than 33 times. Stan takes his training very seriously and soon discovered the cigarette which suited him best. "It wasn't till I changed to Craven 'A,'" he says, "that I learnt what smooth smoking meant."

"The cigarette for me"
SAYS FOOTBALL GENIUS STANLEY MATTHEWS

EVERY WEEK crowds warm to the brilliant technical play of master-schemer Stan Matthews—football's greatest name to fans and players alike. Like so many leading sportsmen Stan's a Craven 'A' smoker. "For a really satisfying cigarette that's kind to your throat," he says, "give me a Craven 'A' every time."

P.S. That cork tip really does make a difference, you know. There's a lot more pleasure in a cigarette with an end that's always clean, and dry, and firm between your lips

CRAVEN 'A' *smooth, clean smoking*

Sir Stan, along with Denis Compton, was one of the first ever sportsmen to exploit their talent, popularity and, given the period, surprisingly global fame by endorsing products in return for cash.

It's never actually been necessary for a star to like or even use the product they're endorsing in real life – I somehow can't see Joe Hart taking his Head & Shoulders into the modern metrosexual Man City dressing room – and in Sir Stan's case I find it very hard to believe he ever actually smoked. Here is a man who was a renowned fitness fanatic and as a result played top flight football until he was 50.

According to a recent biography, he came from a sporty family and was taught the importance of speed and stamina from an early age. Diet, too: while his teammates boozed and caroused, he ate salads, drank fruit juice, fasted every Monday and packed his cupboards with phials of vitamins.

So even though this ad is a product of a very different, more innocent age, one that seems even older than its 61 years, it's still hard to believe anyone actually believed Sir Stan was a regular smoker, let alone a Craven A smoker. But then again, I grew up believing martians really did eat Smash instant mashed potato so I guess anything's possible.

