Investment, Advertisement, and Sponsorship: Business in Dutch Football 1910–1920

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Contemporary professional football in the Netherlands has a close relationship with business and finance. This relationship is often one that is concerning to supporters of clubs who feel that they are being treated more as consumers than loyal followers of their team. This paper will represent the historic situation in Dutch football between 1910 and 1920. Particular focus will be placed on the role of advertising in the media and the illustration it gives of businesses interaction with the cultural field of football at this time. This paper will also give an overview of how businesses and individuals in the business field sometimes interacted with clubs and wider football projects. The paper suggests that the idea of football supporters as consumers is perhaps not as new as is often thought.

KEYWORDS association football, business, finance, sponsorship, media, Amsterdam, Rotterdam

Introduction

When the Netherlands travelled to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa they were financially assisted by nine Sponsors and six Official Partners. International sportswear companies, banks, energy suppliers, beer companies, car manufactures, and travel agents all combined with the Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbalbond (KNVB).¹ In return for their financial or material assistance they received the right to be associated with a popular and successful team at the world’s largest sporting event, followed by over eight million people. The KNVB promoted the cooperation by stating that the businesses are ‘powerful top-brands which stand for quality, just like the KNVB’.² On television and in the print media, numerous adverts all made a connection between their product and the national team’s efforts. In the Dutch top division, the Eredivisie, the leading clubs also have numerous sponsors, international, national, and more local. The role of business and money in modern Dutch
professional football is evident; the popularity of football as a promotional device for businesses is equally evident in the press. Oppenhuisen and van Zoonen indicate that, despite this apparent large business involvement, most Dutch clubs still struggle to balance the books and retain their professional status, and as a result have put a greater emphasis on branding. Such branding is often to the displeasure of the football fans who feel that they are becoming seen as consumers, rather than supporters, in an age of big business. This study aims to provide a representation of how the business field interacted with the field of football culture between 1910 and 1920. Though the scale of financial involvement, as well as football itself, was much smaller, the involvement of sponsorship from businesses and individuals in the business field was important to the clubs at this time. While financial involvement in the game — which for players was strictly amateur — was sometimes troublesome, this paper will demonstrate that during the period there was a large amount of business involvement, both in terms of advertising and also direct investment in football clubs or football-related projects. Such adverts not only indicate that there was investment in the field of football culture, but also indicate how the wider field, including equipment, food, businesses, and its social standing changed. Further to this, it indicates that the idea of football supporters as consumers is not as modern a concept, as is often suggested.

General sporting media and advertising

The formal arrival of football in the Netherlands is usually placed during the 1880s, although informal games took place before this time. In 1885, in the east of the Netherlands, Jan Bernard van Heek, who had returned from study in Lancashire, owned an ‘authentic’ leather ball and began to play attracting the youth of Twente. In the west the game was known and played in and around Haarlem, but it was with the establishment of a national association, the Nederlandschen Voetbal-en Athletischen Bond (NVAB), under the pioneering work of W. J. H. Mulier, in 1889, that firm roots were placed. By 1901, more than two hundred clubs had joined the organization and at the start of the 1910/11 season over six hundred clubs were participating in one of the leagues affiliated to the Nederlands Voetbalbond (NVB), which had formally dropped athletics from its mandate in 1895. The NVB organized club and league games and was one of the founding members of FIFA in 1904 but, unlike today, other associations were also formed. In Amsterdam a workers’ football association was formed independent of the NVB and over the course of the early twentieth century rival associations came and went — such as the Roman Catholic association and a Protestant variant.

Despite the new position of football in Dutch culture in 1890, it still received some attention in the press. The short-lived Den Haag-based weekly sport newspaper, Het Sportblad, established in 1889, was host to a number of sports largely associated with the student populations around the Randstad. Reports on ice-skating and rowing were prevalent, however, football was also included. In 1893, De athleet of Leiden
took on the mantle of the general sport-paper and concentrated on football and athletics, but also saw reports on other more established sports of the time. Following the end of this newspaper in 1898, the Dutch athletics’ association and NVB launched the new *Het Sportblad* which would be one of the most successful and durable sport-weeklies of the early twentieth century; it naturally had an emphasis on athletics and football. In 1907 the *Nederlandsch Olympisch Comité* launched the illustrated *De Revue der Sporten* which covered all aspects of sport, from athletics and football to the newer sports of automobile racing and flying. Such general sporting newspapers were created and maintained by sporting federations as a way of promoting and publicizing sports. They also served the existing participants in the face of an absence of serious sport reporting in the national or local media; the first sport editor only appeared in a national newspaper in 1909.\(^7\) In 1910 there were at least two regular weekly, illustrated sport pages which focused on football as part of the established cultural sporting field.\(^8\)

The sports press had to be funded. In addition to the fee charged to buy a copy, one aspect of this funding came from regular advertisements placed promoting particular businesses and services. Of the two general sporting presses, *De Revue der Sporten* carried more adverts at both the beginning and end of the period. In addition to this, it also had more photographs and covered a wider range of sports; *Het Sportblad*, however, built its reputation on being the cheapest weekly sports-paper in the Netherlands.

There were a wide variety of services advertised in the general sport-weeklies in 1910. Few of these related to football and many were not directly related to sport. Far more numerous than football-specific adverts in *De Revue der Sporten* were the adverts relating to tyres for the newly mass-produced automobiles and racing bicycles. In addition to these adverts appear adverts for horse-riding apparel, as well as peripheral sporting articles like tea — often used after and during matches — quality soap, restaurants, and hotels — where numerous club gatherings were held — and cigarettes. All these products required a certain amount of disposable capital to purchase, perhaps giving an indication of the clientele of both the magazines and of sport in general. It was, after all, a necessity to have connections and free time if one wished to join many sporting clubs.

There were some adverts for football goods. In the 11 May 1910 edition of *De Revue der Sporten* an advert for J. P. C. Manen & Co. Sport Stores of Nijmegen proudly exclaims that it could supply ‘The Corinthian’ boot made by Manfield Football boots at the price of 7 guilders. Below this, an advert for G. J. Eilers & Co. of Amsterdam offers readers the chance to obtain a catalogue of football, hockey, and athletics equipment as an aid to buying boots and clothing.\(^9\) In September 1911 another company announced that it could provide readers with ‘The Cert’ football boot\(^10\) (Figure 1). Those sporting companies that did advertise often made specific note of the availability of English brands, and English companies certainly made an effort to distribute their products to the Dutch sporting public. The above-mentioned Manfield Company of Northampton advertised its products in the NVB. *Voetbal Jaarboekje* of 1910/11 (Figure 2).\(^11\) In *Het Sportblad*, which until 1913 was without
Figure 1: An advert for ‘the Cert’ football boot. De Revue der Sporten, 1913/14–17, 13 September 1913, p. 287.

Figure 2: A Manfield football boot company advert from the NVB Jaarboekje. Voetbal Jaarboekje 1910/11, p. 259.
wide-scale advertising, ‘Woodward Football Boots’ were advertised by Drukker & Polak on the Warmoearsstraat in Amsterdam. In Meppel, T. Temmink & Zn. could offer Achilles footballs in three different styles; one cow-hide as well as two types of chrome-leather, and ‘The Imperial Boot’ from Achilles for 6 ¼ guilders. Adverts for Dutch produced goods appear in the NVB. Jaarboekje in 1910, although still with distinct English links (Figure 3). In De Revue der Sporten the appearance of the ‘BOK’ boots and footballs manufactured by H. J. de Pont-Mannaerts of Tilburg, priced at 6 guilders and 5½ guilders respectively, signalled a more ‘Dutch’ approach from the ‘Netherlands’ top manufacturer. These boots were cheaper than many of the English imports of the previous years and carried some of the first examples of player branding; in this case the nickname of J. M. ‘Bok’ de Korver, the renowned central midfield player of Sparta Rotterdam and the Netherlands, and among the most famous players of his time. Though the link is not explicitly made to the football player, the intimation would not be lost upon the readership of the newspaper (Figure 4).

The emergence of sport and football specific advertising campaigns is also demonstrated in some of the advertisements for non-sporting goods. In 1912, chocolate manufacturer ‘Kwatta’ of Breda marketed its ‘Manoeuvre Chocolaad’ as the brand ‘for sportsmen’. Editions of De Revue der Sporten from May 1913 saw the Sickesz chocolate company of Amsterdam offer a free subscription to the newspaper for three months with every purchase of sixty ‘Abonnements’ bars; on the wrapper was a picture of a footballer. B. W. J. Hooft of Amsterdam advertised a range of divans from 11½ guilders to 35 guilders as offering relaxation after sport.

By far the most specific adverts relating to football from non-sporting companies were produced by cigarette companies and shops. In both De Revue der Sporten and Het Sportblad cigarette companies were regular advertisers, in particular, between 1913 and 1915. In June 1914 Union cigarettes, which had been regular advertisers in the years before, placed an advert showing a goalkeeper saving the shot of an opponent. On the jersey of the goalkeeper stood the company’s brand and underneath the phrase ‘Every shot unleashed by the opponent is saved by the goalkeeper’ (Figure 5). That the goalkeeper happened to look remarkably like the highly rated Vitesse and Dutch national goalkeeper Just Göbel was, perhaps, only a happy coincidence. The goalkeeper had previously been less subtly used in adverts by the DEOS company. Under a picture of Göbel’s head on top of a cigarette body ran the slogan, ‘What Göbel is to Dutch footballers, DEOS is to cigarettes’. This advert was stopped only after the non-cigarette-smoking doctor Göbel had threatened legal intervention. The British American Tobacco company also fell foul of the Sparta Rotterdam Board of Directors when they gained the photographs of footballers under false pretences. In 1914 they invited players, through an intermediary, to attend a photo session, only for the pictures to be later used as collectable cigarette cards.

In Het Sportblad Philips Brothers Limited ran a series of adverts with an explicitly football-related theme. Drawings of bandaged football players were used to reinforce the hygienic nature of the cigarettes’ production process, scrupulous referees
Figure 3 Products from H. J. de Pont Mannaerts of Tilburg. Voetbal Jaarboekje 1910/11, p. 263.

Figure 4 The 'Bok' boot from 'the Netherlands' top producer'. De Revue der Sporten, 1912/13–16, 6 May 1913, p. 810.
indicated the ‘exacting care’ taken in making the cigarettes, whilst a footballer and well-dressed lady emphasized that Philips’ cigarettes could be found in the best circles. The link to football even went as far as naming a brand after the Dutch Football Association; the NVB cigarette. As the war, which had started in 1914, continued in September 1918, Het Sportblad printed an advert of two competing footballers sharing a cigarette after a match, with the catchphrase ‘smoking the cigarette of Peace’ underneath; it further exclaimed, ‘How very much pleasanter the world would be if every battle should end like this’²⁰ (Figure 6). Previously, in the Christmas issue of 1913, ‘Cigarettes Turques’ had advertised their ‘Soccer’ brand²¹ (Figure 7). By the outbreak of the First World War football had become a marketable product, at least for cigarette companies, and this continued throughout the period. Between the end of the First World War and 1920 the number of advertisements in general sports newspapers remained consistent, slightly increasing towards the end of the period and including adverts for flying sports equipment. Yet, the number of football specific adverts — that is to say, advertising products directly relating to football or its related products — did not appear to increase; most advertisements still related to cars, horses, cigarettes, and other sporting paraphernalia.
The football specific press

While football appeared in general sporting publications, there were also a number of magazines and handbooks dedicated to the game. The NVB. published a yearly handbook between 1909 and 1914 with details on clubs, players, and the establishment of football as an ever increasingly popular game. These handbooks contained, like the general sports press, a wide range of adverts from transportation to typewriters, as well as the usual adverts for English sports manufacturers, quality hotels and restaurants. At the same time club newspaper became more numerous; Sparta Rotterdam produced De Spartaan from 1907 onwards and in 1917 the smaller Rotterdam based club R. V. V. Feijenoord created a similar official newspaper.

As with the general sporting press the club newspapers also devoted space to advertising. In the first years of De Spartaan very few adverts appeared. But, as the results of the Sparta team improved, and as football itself became a more common sight in the Netherlands, advertising space grew. In terms of products many of the adverts were similar to those in the periodicals of wider appeal; cigarettes, clothes shops and sporting goods stores with access to English equipment. Such adverts were, however, localized and often had a connection to the club in question. The September
The 1911 edition of the publication featured adverts for cigarettes. One of these was the ‘De Spartaan’ cigarette, a quality brand available from H. J. C. Maasbommel of Rotterdam. The following page saw an advert for N. V. Scheffe & Co., suppliers of hearths, stoves, ovens of both coal and gas and bathing systems. They also happened to be, as they announced underneath, the installers and suppliers of the warm water system in Sparta’s changing rooms. By 1911, an attachment to a local football club was already seen as a valuable marketing tool, a sign of trustworthiness and a way to use the networks on offer at the club. Below this advert, one appeared for a method of displaying support for a football club. C. W. van den Ende would, for the sum of one guilder provide an enamel badge portraying the Sparta club crest. For those businesses who wanted to attract a wider audience the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Sportblad* could offer advertising space in their ‘much improved’ publication for one
guilder per quarter or four guilders per year. Later, in July 1914 the local baker would offer a ‘Sparta Bar’ for 6½ cents to those in the know.

New opportunities for business were opened up by the growth in the popularity of football. While bakers and cigarette manufacturers attempted to make products connected to football, the insurance industry spotted an opportunity to extend its range of operations. A commemorative book, issued in 1913 to celebrate Sparta being crowned national champions, included two insurance adverts. The second of these invited sport lovers to take advantage of the *Eerste Rotterdamsche Maatschappij’s* services. In 1916 the same company offered a package designed specifically for footballers concerned with the risk of injury during matches. 1916 also saw A. Tordoir Bzn. insurers advertise their role as insurers of the new Sparta stadium on the Spangen Polder. Two years later, in February 1918, the *Hollandsche Maatschappij voor Assurantie-, Agentuur-en Commissiezaken* announced that it could ‘insure footballers against accident’ and demonstrated they could offer a more sophisticated range of options. Three different policies were offered; the first, for a yearly premium of between 2.10 and 5.10 guilders, would cover all the medical bills for any injury sustained, from the chemists to the hospital. The second policy would cover all accidents that might occur from football or travel and provide a weekly stipend or, if needed, a lump sum of 10,000 guilders on death or incapacitation. The final, deluxe, package would do the same as the second but provide a lump sum of 20,000 guilders upon death.

At the end of the period, in 1919, the space devoted to advertising in *De Spartaan* appeared to be in somewhat of a paradoxical situation. Though more space had been reserved for advertising, there were also more gaps in need of filling. The last three editions of *De Spartaan* before 1920 saw the amount of empty advertising space comprise roughly a third of that available. Although regular advertisers, like Dekkers Sporthandel and A. van Hasselt’s clothing store, which had appeared in 1911, still advertised it seems that Sparta were struggling to attract new advertisers and sponsors. This in part may be down to the changed nature of football and economics in the Netherlands during and immediately after the first world war; league competition had been suspended for the war period as a result of mobilization and the Netherlands had economically struggled as a series of blockades and geographical positioning between the major warring parties disrupted daily life. However, another reason for Sparta’s struggle to fill space may be the emergence of R. V. V. Feijenoord as a successful club on the southern side of the Maas. After the war football appeared to be no longer just the game of the elite as it had largely been before the war but was attracting more players from all areas of society. Mobilization may have been was difficult for many established clubs as players were moved far from their home clubs, but the dispersal of players around the country led to many clubs being set up in new parts of the country. This is not to say that football had become a truly ‘popular’ sport, as it is today, indeed many traditionalists in the game were concerned at how popularization would affect the moral standing of the game. However, what is clear is that the number of people involved in football was growing...
at the end of the period. The emergence of a local rival to Sparta meant that businesses in the area had a greater choice of advertising partners. Although Sparta remained competitive in the league, an improving local team surely gave a better opportunity for publicity to businesses in the south of Rotterdam. By 1919, Feijenoord’s official club publication had increased the amount of space it devoted to advertising and, crucially, had managed to fill this space.

Professionalizing clubs, amateur players?

This indicates that football was becoming influenced more by business and was itself becoming an industry of sorts; it was able to support an increasing number of media publications, shops and new opportunities. However, within the field of football culture there were discrepancies between how clubs and players could interact with business and finance. Players were strictly to remain amateur. A directive from the NVB in August 1917 set out how football players could be compensated for legitimate expenses. They could reclaim train travel from the club for whom they had played up to the cost of a second class return ticket, food and accommodation only if it was attached to a specific game. Football players were also not allowed to play in games where any of the participants received financial reward. Sanctions for this would be expulsion from NVB competitions for an amount of time to be determined dependent on the offence. Football amateurism in the Netherlands would remain until 1954 and throughout the period 1910–1920 the amateur nature of football players was fiercely guarded by the NVB.

While football players were amateurs, some clubs appeared to adopt many of the trappings of the professional game a long time before 1954. As we have seen, the clubs attracted advertising for club newspapers and deals for club members could be made with local businesses. In addition to this, the Sparta Rotterdam archives indicate a certain amount of direct interaction with businesses for hospitality packages and also concessions to sell products within the ground. As early as 1907 Sparta had contact with the chocolate manufacturer A. Driessen of Rotterdam regarding the sale of their products on the old Prinsenlaan ground. In 1916, when Sparta moved ground, they also negotiated a new contract for the following three years. The eight-point agreement was comprised of the following conditions:

\[\text{[...]}\] The firm A. Driessen receives the exclusive right from the club to sell her [products] in the club building and at the pitch-side of the club for the period of three years from 1st September 1916 to 31st August 1919 inclusive.

As a yearly rental sum the A. Driessen Company will pay a sum of five hundred guilders to be deposited as follows: the first half 1st October, the second half 1st April.

The A. Driessen Company will receive the right to place two kiosks on the ground of the club, namely one in a good position next to the main stand and another in a good position next to the youth stand.

The A. Driessen Company will receive the right too choose two portions of the wall on the inner side of the youth stand in connection with the advertising of their products.
After the expiration of the contract the A. Driessen Company will have the choice to have a further partnership with the club upon agreement of a further contract.

The club promises not do display another advert for cocoa or chocolate either on its ground or in its buildings other than those of the A. Driessen Company.

The club will not be held responsible for any damage to the property or personnel of the A. Driessen Company, either as the result of fire or other causes as well as in the case of theft.

The A. Driessen Company will receive a storage space under the covered stand to store their wares.33

The contract with the chocolate company demonstrates that both clubs and businesses were aware of marketing opportunities within the game of football. For the club there was the guaranteed revenue of 1500 guilders over three years with no initial capital outlay on their part, but only the need to provide storage space for the company goods. The company itself would receive the exclusive right to sell chocolate inside a ground with a regular captive audience. The exclusivity deal is similar to those agreed today in professional football. At the 2010 World Cup, particular note was made when the ‘Bavaria Babes’ — a group of young women all wearing the promotional dresses of the Dutch beer manufacture Bavaria — were ejected, and later arrested, from the game between Netherlands and Denmark; FIFA considered this to impinge on its commercial agreement with other beer manufacturers who had paid for their own exclusivity agreement.34 The contract of 1916 suggests that the present board of FIFA is, perhaps, not entirely to blame for this particular interaction of business and sport. Sparta also received money from Held’s Sporthandel to attend the annual start of season tournament, ‘Het Zilveren Voetbal’, on the Sparta ground between 1913 and 1919.35 This indicates that while those involved in playing the game of football were held to the strictest of amateur standards, the institution of the club itself was heavily involved in more ‘professional’ relations with finance.

**Individuals and football finance**

The involvement of business in football was not limited to companies as a whole, but in many situations was connected to a network of individual businessmen. Between 1910 and 1920 the physical landscape of football in the city began to change. Whereas early football was often played on large open grounds within the city, in this period some of the larger clubs began to build stadia capable of holding significant crowds. One such stadium was the stadium built in the Spangen polder of Rotterdam for Sparta. The stadium formed the focal point of a new development scheme to the west of the centre which was to contain houses, schools, and recreational facilities. However, when the stadium opened in 1916 it was the only completed building in the surroundings.36 While the other developments suffered from a lack of available capital, in part caused by a downturn in the building trade during the European conflict, the Sparta stadium had been completed on budget and on time.
Instrumental in the financial support had been the money given to the club from prominent Rotterdam businessmen. In 1915 the club issued a request for financial capital in order to finance the building of the stadium. These bonds were quickly taken up by individuals of differing financial capabilities. When the Board of Directors was presented with the list of investors, it contained Rotterdam’s most influential businessmen. The top ten names on the list, who donated a total of 102,000 guilders in amounts between 2000 and 25,000 guilders, was comprised of the following individuals: W. S. Burger, J. van Hoboken, M. J. Overeijnder, S. v. d. Bergh Jr, Herm de Jongh, A. van Driel, Mr J. van Hoboken, B. E. Ruijs, G. L. M. van Es and J. van ’t Hoff. These men were traders, distillers, margarine manufactures, ship brokers, ship owners, and politicians; they occupied positions in the greatest of Rotterdam’s industries and businesses. The full twenty-seven-man list secured finance to the value of 130,000 guilders and contained investment pledges from G. H. Hintzen, A. G. Kroller and D. G. Beuningen; individuals who contributed large sums to the business and cultural fields of Rotterdam. What is striking is the number of personal connections the individuals had to each other. Many individuals knew each other through business, lived next to each other, or were related. One of the architects charged with the development of the stadium, W. H. Overeijnder, was the brother of the Sparta president and major donor, M. J. Overeijnder. The football club was, as with other cultural and business organizations, part of a network of individuals which encompassed the wealthiest and most influential members of the local community. The participation in the loan was not a direct business venture but was part of wider activities directed towards cultural events which were also headed by influential individuals.

Investment in football was not confined to Rotterdam. In Amsterdam, over 300 individuals contributed the 300,000 guilders of private investment needed to build ‘Het Nederlansch Sportpark’, the first multi-purpose sport and football stadium in the Netherlands situated in the new area of Amsterdam Zuid. Though there were no clear financial rewards for taking part in the scheme, the individuals would receive certain access rights to matches played within the stadium, which were to include the Netherlands’ football internationals and the finals of domestic cup competitions. Fourteen individuals had taken advantage of the opportunity presented by donating 5000 guilders. They were as follows: J. [T.] Cremer, Abr. Muller, C. J. K. van Aalst, S. P. van Eeghen, H. C. Rehbock, G. Bn. Rosenthal, W. H. van Loon, M. P. Voute, E. A. Lehmann, W. G. Dedel, J. B. & A. Roelvink, H. C. v. d. Honert, P. J. van Haren Noman, and G. C. B. Dunlop. Within Amsterdam these were among the wealthiest and most influential people holding positions, *inter alia*, at the head of banks, trade organizations, oil companies, and within the political field. Again, most of the individuals attended similar social events or were members of similar business organizations. Some were also investors in other cultural events. For many of the leading business figures of the time football was considered as another form of cultural participation. It was a way to further the cultural reputation of the city, but also to participate in an extensive and influential network of individuals. Without the
investment from these individuals the development of stadia in the Netherlands would not have occurred as quickly and the game would not have been as accessible to as many people.

Conclusion

What the above has indicated is that business and football in the Netherlands, after its formalization, were, from a very early stage, involved with each other. This is, perhaps, not surprising as many of those who began football clubs were from so-called ‘better levels’ of society. Although the financial input from companies was not on a par with that of present-day business, between 1910 and 1920 some businesses saw in football an opportunity to publicize and adapt themselves. At an early stage businesses that responded to the specific needs of football began to emerge; at first these were importers of English equipment but were followed by Dutch manufactures, insurance companies, cigarette firms, confectioners, and print media. With the greater interest in football came a greater degree of interest in the players. During this period early examples of player-related merchandise such as the ‘Bok’ boot or the ‘Göbel’ cigarette also emerged. Businesses wanted to capitalize on the fame and popularity of the best players and link with their success; in this respect the greatest difference between this period and that of today — with the exception of the scale of the enterprise — is that the players themselves could not benefit from their skills in the financial arena. Though players were strictly amateurs, the clubs themselves sought new ways to bring in finance by arranging exclusive product placement deals and corporate hospitality packages. For business such as A. Driessen’s chocolate company the opportunity to exclusively sell chocolate in a stadium with a captive audience was an opportunity not to be missed, for Sparta it represented a steady, guaranteed, source of income in a turbulent economic market.

This suggests that the difference between ‘supporters’ and ‘consumers’ is perhaps not as great, or as recent, as many modern supporters would believe. From an early stage in football’s development it was seen as a way of making people connect with a brand and new products were developed with the specific intention of capitalizing on this consumer culture — the ‘NVB.’ cigarette of Philips Limited is an example of this. As far as the Driessen Company was concerned, once the supporter entered the stadium he or she was also a consumer; if Sparta desired to keep their income from this company they surely had to view them, at least partly, in the same manner. The role of financial capital and wealthy individuals was instrumental in the development of football in the Netherlands. Without the financial support of wealthy industrialists football would not have spread to as wide an audience as quickly as it did; money was needed to build the stadia that could accommodate increasing numbers of supporters. Football was another cultural scene that influential individuals could interact with, form networks within, and, perhaps, even relax in.

The aim of this paper is not to indicate that the present financial input in Dutch, or world, football has a positive or negative impact. However, it indicates that, in the
Dutch case, as soon as football began to be more popular and consist of more than a collection of friends playing every week, it was linked with business and finance. The discrepancy between supporter and consumer, or between sport and business, is not as great, or as modern, as is believed by many supporters. The search for a ‘golden age’ where business, investors, advertisement, sponsorship, and money played no part in football is perhaps a search in vain. For those supporters of today’s game in the Netherlands, and elsewhere, who desire an apparent return to the idea of such an age, the question is not how can business be extricated from the ‘beautiful game’ today, but whether business, large or small, can ever be separated from football as a popular game while it is still such a prevalent force in other cultural and social arenas?

Notes

1 The Royal Dutch Football Association. Before 1929, when royal ascent was given, the association was known as the ‘Nederlands Voetbalbond’ (NVB), the Dutch Football Association. Until 1895 the union of the football and athletics associations was known as the NVAB, the Dutch Football and Athletics Association.


5 Miersman, p. 90.

6 Miersman, pp. 125–41.

7 The first full-time sport editor in the Netherlands was A. H. M. Meerum Terwogt who created the position of sport editor at the Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant in 1909. Meerum Terwogt wrote in De Revue der Sporten under the pseudonym ‘Tartuffe’. He was also a football referee.

8 During the period other national and local general sports presses were established and disbanded.


10 Anon., De Revue der Sporten, 1913/14–17, 13 September 1913, p. 287.


13 Anon., Voetbal Jaarboekje 1910/11, p. 263.

14 Anon., De Revue der Sporten, 1912/13–16, 6 May 1913, p. 810.

15 Anon., De Revue der Sporten, 1911/12–15, 12 March 12, p. 703.


19 Anon., De Spartaan, April 1914, Advertising Section. Union cigarettes issued the first collectable stickers of football players in 1907, perhaps also bringing the concept of the individual ‘star’ player to Dutch football at the same time.


21 Anon., Het Sportblad, 24 December 1913, p. 3.

22 Anon., De Spartaan, July 1911, Advertising Section.


25 Anon., De Spartaan, November 1916, Advertising Section.

26 Anon., De Spartaan, February 1918, Advertising Section.

27 For a personal account of how the war impacted on the business and economy of the Netherlands, see the personal diaries of C. J. K. van Aalst on the Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis website <http://www.inghist.nl/retroboeken/vanaalst/> [accessed 20 July 2010].

28 Miersman, p. 121.

29 Miersman, p. 141.

30 By 1921 there were 1186 registered clubs with the NVB.

31 Rotterdam Gemeentearchief, archive no. 256, fol. 36, “De Feyenoorder”, officieel tijdschrift van de sportclub ‘Feyenoord’.
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