

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



Best Use of Sponsorship

PR Budget was €50K or Under



Campaign

Guinness Rainbow Gates

Description of Campaign

GUINNESS leveraged its sponsorship of the UNION Cup to spark a conversation on diversity and inclusion. Without traditional sponsorship assets, we transformed the iconic GUINNESS gates into a canvas, painting them in the colours of the rainbow raising awareness of the UNION Cup and showing our commitment to inclusion.



Public Relations Consultant

Wilson Hartnell



Client

Diageo Ireland

The Background

GUINNESS has a long-time association with rugby and enjoys a portfolio of rugby sponsorships, which includes, the GUINNESS SIX NATIONS, GUINNESS PRO-14 as well as Ireland, Munster, and Leinster Rugby.

The Union Cup, despite being Europe's largest LGBTQ+ rugby competition with 45 teams from 15 countries coming to play over 2 days, is not well known. The 2019 staging also included a dedicated women's competition for the first time ever.

Ireland's Emerald Warriors Rugby Club, established in 2003 to provide an open, inclusive, and safe environment to watch, play and enjoy rugby, were tournament hosts. Significant sponsorship would be required to raise awareness of the tournament, assist in driving attendance and ensure the staging of the tournament would be successful with a legacy to grow the profile of Emerald Warriors and the availability of inclusive rugby in Ireland.

Objectives

Our objectives were to support the overall objectives for GUINNESS's rugby sponsorships:

- Be the brand most associated with rugby and most loved by rugby fans.
- Be the beer and brand most talked about with rugby.
- Through the Union Cup sponsorship, celebrate the power of camaraderie.
- Share our love of the game with rugby fans.

In the absence of above the line advertising and significant paid support, generating significant earned coverage and influence would be key to success. Our task was to maximise the return on available investment by leveraging the importance of inclusion in culture to achieve significant volumes of earned.

Planning

Determined to generate wide reaching conversation around GUINNESS's sponsorship of Union Cup, we faced several challenges. The available time and resources were limited. The Union Cup is Europe's largest LGBTQ+ rugby Championship, but in terms of profile, it remains a minnow.

We decided to focus on what we had as opposed to what we were missing. Our attention turned to the hugely valuable asset that is St. James's gate attracting, as it does, significant footfall.

Creative

As a symbol of GUINNESS's support for the Union Cup specifically, and inclusion more generally, we had the idea to paint the gates in the colours of the LGBTQ+ rainbow flag - literally flying the flag for the Union Cup and our support for it. It would be the first time ever that the gates would be painted in anything other than the GUINNESS brand colours - from black to rainbow.

Building Intrigue

Painting the gates took nine days and took place behind a specially erected hoarding, which concealed the work in progress.

The big reveal

We filmed the entire painting process allowing us to create a time lapse video that we then seeded on social media creating a further shareable asset and fuelling conversation.

In an effort to raise awareness of the Union Cup and its hosts, the Emerald Warriors RFC, we unveiled the newly painted GUINNESS gates with members of the team. They were very much part of this special moment. We issued a press release along with photography of the transformed GUINNESS gates. We leveraged all our existing rugby stakeholders with our image and messages seeded and shared by members of the wider GUINNESS rugby family.

Gareth Thomas, whom GUINNESS had previously worked with when he told the story of his coming out in a Guinness advertisement in the run up to the 2015 World Cup, is an ambassador for Union Cup. Knowing that he was in Dublin in that capacity in the lead up to the tournament, we invited him to the Gates and to a reception in the GUINNESS Open Gate Brewery with the Emerald Warriors. Taking a picture of Gareth in front of the gates created a second round of conversation and shareable imagery.

To further leverage this traction, GUINNESS built a replica of the gates and installed them at the GUINNESS Village at the Union Cup tournament providing an opportunity for the more than 11,000 who attended the tournament and the players themselves to maintain the conversation.

Results

The campaign exceeded all expectations and outperformed the stretching KPIs that were set for it.

KANTAR

PARAGON



RUEPOINT MEDIA