**World Cup officials: Women were dressed to shill**

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JOHANNESBURG –  JOHANNESBURG (AP) — More than 30 women showed up at the Netherlands-Denmark match wearing orange mini-dresses emblazoned with the name of a Dutch brewery — earning them a red card from World Cup officials who acted to quash what they called an ambush marketing scam.

The stunt may have irked [FIFA](http://www.foxnews.com/topics/soccer/federations/international-federation-of-association-football.htm#r_src=ramp), soccer's governing body. But it got Dutch brewer Bavaria NV exactly what it wanted.

"That's the free publicity they were looking for," said John Sweeney, head of advertising at the University of North Carolina's school of journalism and mass communications. "But (for FIFA), there's paranoia about ambush marketing. Sponsors pay a lot of money, and are demanding exclusivity.

"It's two colliding things in a chess game."

Companies such as Budweiser pay millions to have their names attached to the World Cup, and FIFA has plenty of incentive to protect its sponsors — almost $300 million worth. According to FIFA's 2009 financial report, 97 percent of the federation's $1.06 billion in revenues came from TV and marketing rights, with sponsorship deals providing $277 million.

But the sponsorships don't pack the same punch if two or three companies can claim to be the "official (fill-in-the-blank) provider of the World Cup," which is why FIFA goes to great lengths to protect their exclusivity. Only official partners are allowed to use the World Cup for advertising and promotion campaigns.

In ambush marketing, non-sponsors try to sneak their logos or associate their brand names with a major sports event to reap free advertising. Imagine a pack of Bud Girls showing up at an event where Miller was the official beer sponsor.

So organizers of events like the Olympics or the World Cup employ staff to make sure that non-sponsors or their logos are kept out of sporting venues.

When Bavaria's orange mini-dress brigade showed up at Monday's game, FIFA was ready. Budweiser is the official World Cup beer, the only one sold at World Cup stadiums and official fan viewing sites. Anheuser-Busch Inbev is one of FIFA's eight "second-tier" World Cup sponsors, giving it exclusive sales rights.

Bavaria NV has been selling special eight-packs of beer including the skimpy orange "Dutchy Dress" since April. Bavaria's name is on a small blue tag at the bottom of the dress.

Barbara Castelein and a woman who would only give her name as Mirte said Bavaria NV gave them an all-expenses-paid trip to [South Africa](http://www.foxnews.com/topics/south-africa.htm#r_src=ramp). They and 34 women who live in South Africa went to the Netherlands-Denmark game dressed as Danish supporters.

But in the 25th minute of the match, the women stripped off their red-and-white gear to reveal their bright orange dresses, tossing the other clothes into the crowd.

"People were standing on their chairs and everyone wanted to make a picture with us," Mirte said.

FIFA officials escorted the women out of the stadium after the game and took them to the nearby offices of the South African Football Federation, where the women said they were questioned for several hours.

"There were no arrests. No one was detained," FIFA spokesman Nicolas Maingot said. "The only thing that we have done is actually asking some details (from) these women who have been involved. What seems to have happened is that there was a clear ambush marketing activity by a Dutch brewery company."

Bavaria NV did not return several phone calls seeking comment from The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Bavaria pulled a similar stunt in 2006, outfitting male fans in distinctive orange lederhosen with a black tail displaying the company's name.

"I'm a little bit surprised that FIFA didn't learn a lesson from that," said Jim Andrews, senior vice president at IEG, a Chicago-based sponsorship consulting firm. "Quite honestly, if they'd let the women into the stadium and let them have their orange dresses and do what they were going to do, they probably wouldn't have given Bavaria the publicity."

A huge photo of the women ran across the top of the front page of the Johannesburg daily The Star.

That's the danger in confronting ambush marketers, said T. Bettina Cornwell, a professor of marketing and sport management at the University of Michigan. Cornwell co-authored a study that found drawing attention to ambush marketing can actually backfire, cementing the renegade company in consumers' minds.

"The question is, what is the ultimate result?" Cornwell said. "And one of things our study shows is, over time, people lose the particulars. In a few days or weeks, they'll just remember Bavaria and the World Cup. And those orange dresses."

Indeed, Mirte and Castelein spent most of Tuesday posing for photos and doing interviews with news organizations from around the globe.

While Maingot said FIFA was looking into "all available legal remedies" against Bavaria NV, Sweeney said the damage is done.

"It's a cat-and-mouse game," he said, "and the mouse won."

AP Sports Columnist John Leicester and AP Sports Writer Graham Dunbar contributed to this report.

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