

Sports and Energy Drinks – China – September 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Beverage blurring can make sports and energy drinks more competitive against adjacent categories
- Include more minus-claims with familiar flavours to jump on health trend
- Use online channels to educate consumers on health effects of sports and energy drinks

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the China economy, the rate of growth for domestic sports and energy drinks was slowing.

Although China is experiencing a fitness boom, the habit of consuming sports and energy drinks to reach fitness goals remains uncommon. The market is also facing pressure from neighbouring categories which are providing similar functions to premiumise, such as featuring “energy-boosting” or “refreshing” claims.

Opportunities exist to increase habitual consumption by associating sports and energy drink with improved long term benefits when exercising. However, consumers currently find it difficult to make these judgements, so this is likely to require specialized recipes aimed at targeted sports or demographics, combined with a clear education program to help consumer's decision making.

Occasions other than physical exercise are already proving to be popular, especially for energy drinks which are associated with more diverse activities such as work, study, or gaming. Producers may take advantage of this and offer additional claims such as increasing concentration for the gaming occasion or mood lifting for the social occasion.



“The rate of value growth slowed for both sports and energy drinks in 2019, with COVID-19’s impact then resulting in sales declines. The market will recover slowly but brands need to provide more value added when faced with increasing pressure from adjacent categories.”

– Annie Jiang, Research Analyst, Food and Drink

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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

- What you need to know
- Covered in this report
- Excluded

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The market**
- **Sports drinks market heavily impacted by COVID-19 and will recover slowly**
Figure 1: Total China retail sales and forecast of sports drinks, 2015-25
Figure 2: Total China retail volumes and forecast of sports drinks, 2015-25
- **Energy drinks market experiences low negative growth in 2020 and due to rebound quickly**
Figure 3: Total China retail sales and forecast of energy drinks, 2015-25
Figure 4: Total China retail volumes and forecast of energy drinks, 2015-25
- **Growth of sports and energy drinks market reaches bottleneck as habitual consumption is low**
- **The impact of COVID-19 on sports and energy drinks**
Figure 5: Short, medium and long term impact of COVID-19 on sports and energy drinks, September 2020
- **Short term disruption due to increased time spent at home**
- **Growing health awareness can motivate consumers to learn more about functions of sports and energy drinks**
- **Companies and brands**
- **Reignwood Group and Danone both lose value share but continue to dominate the market**
Figure 6: Leading players' value share of the energy drinks market, China, 2018-2019
Figure 7: Leading players' value share of the sports drinks market, China, 2018-2019
- **Brands compete with sponsorships of novel shows**
- **Innovations around niche positioning or demographics**
- **The consumer**
- **Sports drinks are more reliant on physical exercise than energy drinks**
Figure 8: Consumption occasion, May 2020
- **Brand penetration is led by the leading player of each category**

What's included

Executive Summary

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Figure 9: Brand penetration, May 2020

- **Online channels become more prominent for sports and energy drinks**

Figure 10: Purchase channel, May 2020

- **Young consumers more aware of sugar and calories**

Figure 11: Product information to check for when purchasing, May 2020

- **Demand for immunity claims on the rise in the "next normal"**

Figure 12: Interest in additional claims, May 2020

- **Consumers require more education on long term benefits of consuming sports and energy drinks**

Figure 13: Attitudes towards sports and energy drinks, May 2020

- **What we think**

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

- **Beverage blurring can make sports and energy drinks more competitive against adjacent categories**

- **The facts**

- **The implications**

Figure 14: Examples of sports and energy drink beverage blurring

- **Include more minus-claims with familiar flavours to jump on health trend**

- **The facts**

- **The implications**

- **Use online channels to educate consumers on health effects of sports and energy drinks**

- **The facts**

- **The implications**

THE MARKET – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Growth of sports and energy drinks market slows due to weak consumption habit**
- **Both sports and energy drinks markets will rebound healthily after COVID-19**
- **Premiumisation with additional functions in adjacent categories squeeze sports and energy drink market**

MARKET SIZE, SEGMENTATION AND FORECAST

- **Growth of sports and energy drink market slows in 2019**

Figure 15: Value segmentation of the sports and energy drinks market, China, 2015–2020

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Figure 16: Volume segmentation of sports and energy drinks market, China, 2015-2020

- **Sports and energy drink market impacted by COVID-19 due to activity-associated consumption occasions**
- **Sports drinks to maintain slow growth**

Figure 17: Total China retail sales and forecast of sports drinks, 2015-25

Figure 18: Total China retail volumes and forecast of sports drinks, 2015-25

- **Market value of energy drinks will rebound quickly and continue previous growth trajectory**

Figure 19: Total China retail sales and forecast of energy drinks, 2015-25

Figure 20: Total China retail volumes and forecast of energy drinks, 2015-25

MARKET FACTORS

- **Growing awareness of health sprouts more casual athletes but habit of consuming sports and energy drinks remain weak**
- **Potential in female market with development of "she-economy"**
- **Pressure to premiumise from parallel categories**

Figure 21: Proportion of claim categories of new product launches in RTDs, carbonated soft drinks, juice drinks, flavoured water, and other beverages, select claim categories, 2017-2020

KEY PLAYERS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Leading players in both sports and energy drinks markets lose value share**
- **Sports and energy brands expand through novel sponsorships or claims**
- **Innovation to meet specialized demand**

MARKET SHARE

- **Reignwood Group continues to lose value share despite decreasing reliance on Red Bull**

Figure 22: Leading players' value share of the energy drinks market, China, 2018-2019

- **Eastroc announces strong performance leading to IPO**
- **Sports drink market becomes more fragmented**

Figure 23: Leading players' value share of the sports drinks market, China, 2018-2019

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COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

- **Using sponsorships and endorsements to reach target consumers**

Figure 24: Snapshot of Monster Energy's appearance in Death Stranding

- **Increase offerings with minus claims**

Figure 25: Proportion of new sports and energy drink launches featuring select claims, China, 2017-2019

- **Extend product line to include niche claims**

Figure 26: Zhongwo Ti Zhi Neng Liang, China, 2019

Figure 27: Examples of Powerade products

WHO'S INNOVATING?

- **Novel natural ingredients provide alternative to caffeine**

Figure 28: Proportion of new energy drink launches featuring "caffeine free" claim, select markets, Jun 2018-Jul 2020

Figure 29: Synapse Natural Cognitive Boost

Figure 30: Mindscopic, Clear Focus Caffeine Free

- **Different formats may benefit in out-of-home occasions**

Figure 31: Package type of new sports and energy drink launches, China, Jul 2018-Jun 2019

- **Capsules increase portability of sports drinks**

Figure 32: Examples of adidas Sport Drinks products

- **Specialized formats and formulations for different physical activities**

Figure 33: Examples of TORQ's products

- **Products to meet demands of female consumers**

Figure 34: Osmo Active Hydration for Women

Figure 35: Infographic on Eros Energy

- **Brands innovate in sports and energy drinks sphere with niche positioning**

Figure 36: Yuan Qi Sen Lin Alienergy products

Figure 37: RESPAWN energy drinks

THE CONSUMER – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Sports drinks rely more heavily on fitness occasions**
- **Young consumers more watchful of energy intake**
- **Difficult for consumers to discern health effects of sports and energy drinks**

CONSUMPTION OCCASION

- **Sports drinks more heavily associated with physical activity than energy drinks**

Figure 38: Consumption occasion, May 2020

What's included

Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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- **Consumption occasion of sports drinks varies by gender**
Figure 39: Consumption occasion – “Sports drinks”, by gender, May 2020
- **Consumption of energy drinks more prominent in males across all occasions**
Figure 40: Consumption occasion – “Energy drinks”, by gender, May 2020
- **Opportunities for energy drinks to target gamers, especially young males**
Figure 41: Consumption occasion – “When playing video games”, by subcategory, by gender, May 2020

BRAND PENETRATION

- **Brand usage is dominated by leading players of each subcategory**
Figure 42: Brand penetration, May 2020
- **Hi-Tiger and Monster Energy appeal to young males**
Figure 43: Brand penetration – Select brands, by gender and age, May 2020
Figure 44: Monster Energy official brand ambassador announcement
- **Take more niche positioning for young males**
Figure 45: Repertoire analysis of brand penetration, May 2020
Figure 46: Brand penetration by brand repertoire groups, May 2020

PURCHASE CHANNEL

- **Online channels become more notable for sports and energy drinks**
Figure 47: Purchase channel, May 2020
Figure 48: Impact of COVID-19 on grocery shopping channels – Select channels, Feb-Aug 2020
- **Gym and sports facility provides short route to young males**
Figure 49: Purchase channels – “Gym/sports facility”, by gender and age, May 2020
Figure 50: SeaSport Pro Watermelon Flavoured Isotonic Mix, Portugal, 2019

PURCHASE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Vitamin and mineral content is considered by most consumers**
Figure 51: Product information to check for when purchasing, May 2020

What's included

Executive Summary

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Infographic Overview

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- **Purchase considerations determined by existing perceptions**

Figure 52: Product information to check for when purchasing – select factors chosen, by attitude towards “Drinking sports or energy drinks frequently is unhealthy (eg lead to obesity)”, May 2020

- **Potential in carbonated sports and energy drinks**

Figure 53: % of new launches of liquid sports and energy drinks with carbonated texture, China, Jul 2018-Jun 2020

- **Young consumers are more mindful about energy intake**

Figure 54: Product information to check for when purchasing – Select factors, by age, May 2020

INTEREST IN ADDITIONAL CLAIMS

- **Immunity claims rising in demand in the “next normal”**

Figure 55: Interest in additional claims, May 2020

- **Include different marketing language to appeal to males and females**

Figure 56: Interest in additional claims – Select claims, by gender, May 2020

- **Increase offerings for focus in gaming occasion**

Figure 57: Interest in additional claims – “Helping increase concentration”, by select consumption occasions, May 2020
Figure 58: C4 Peach Mango Nectar Smart Energy Superbrain Performance Fuel, USA, 2020

- **Energy drinks targeting the work and study occasion should be dual function**

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPORTS AND ENERGY DRINKS

- **Sports and energy drinks have distanced themselves from negative associations but can increase variety**

Figure 59: Attitudes towards sports and energy drinks, May 2020

- **Difficult for consumers to perceive health effects**

- **Increase flavour offerings for young consumers**

Figure 60: Attitudes towards sports and energy drinks – Agree with “There are limited flavours available for sports or energy drinks”, by age and gender, May 2020

Figure 61: Top 10 flavour components of new sports and energy drink launches, China, Jul 2018-Jun 2020

MEET THE MINTROPOLITANS

- **MinTs general hold more positive attitudes and expect more functions from sports and energy drinks**

What's included

Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

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Figure 62: Interest in additional claims – Select claims, by consumer classification, May 2020

- **MinTs value different factors**

Figure 63: Purchase considerations – Select factors chosen, by consumer classification, May 2020

APPENDIX – MARKET SIZE, SEGMENTATION AND FORECAST

Figure 64: Total market value of sports drinks, China, 2015–25

Figure 65: Total market value of energy drinks, China, 2015–25

Figure 66: Total market volume of sports drinks, China, 2015–25

Figure 67: Total market volume of energy drinks, China, 2015–25

APPENDIX – METHODOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- **Methodology**
- **Abbreviations**

What's included

Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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