

Does binge drinking affect rugby performance?

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A Massey University study has found a big night on the booze has little effect on the anaerobic performance of rugby players the following day.

The research, led by School of Sport and Exercise master's graduate Chris Prentice, investigated the effects of alcohol consumption on the [physical performance](#) of male club [rugby players](#). The study has been

published in *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*.

Performance was measured two days before and two days after a heavy alcohol drinking session involving up to 20 standard drinks per player. It found that alcohol consumption and the associated reduction in sleep had little effect on the anaerobic performance the morning after. However, the research found that players had weaker lower body output, but that only affected jumping, not sprinting ability or strength.

The research, co-authored by primary supervisor Lecturer in Exercise Prescription and Training Dr Matt Barnes and the head of Massey's School of Sport and Exercise Professor Steve Stannard, advises that these findings be treated with caution. "It is unclear how such behaviour affects adaptation to exercise in the long-term. Although the short term effects of such [alcohol consumption](#) may not impact performance the harmful physical and psychological effects of such alcohol abuse are well known."

The findings revealed a hazardous culture of binge drinking exists amongst senior club rugby players that may, in part, be due to after-game alcohol abuse.

More information: "Effects of heavy episodic drinking on physical performance in club level rugby union players." Christopher Prentice, Stephen R. Stannard, Matthew J. Barnes . *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* - 12 May 2014. [DOI: 10.1016/j.jsams.2014.04.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2014.04.009).

Provided by Massey University

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