

REPORT  
—Apples

# Europa League glory for KIKU

THESSALONIKI—Suppliers of the trademarked apple variety have continued their recent strategy of sponsoring sporting events to gain exposure for the brand, scoring an important victory in Greece.

by Mike Knowles

**K**IKU Hellas, the Greek arm of trademarked apple marketer KIKU, recently achieved its goal of reaching an international audience by securing a major perimeter advertising deal at the stadium of Super League Greece football club ΠΑΟΚ Saloniki.

The club apple, which is produced in several countries across Europe, South Africa, New Zealand, Chile and the US, has a proud history of sponsoring sporting clubs, events and activities. According to George Poultsidis, president of KIKU Hellas, teaming up with the two-times Greek football champions was very much a logical step. “The number of fans is 1.2m, the number of friends on Facebook more than 117,000,” he tells EUROFRUIT. “We are having a good capillary effect in the Greek market and we will continue our efforts this season with presentations at point of sale and other innovative ideas. Greek people love the KIKU apple, which is very attractive ruby red, crunchy and juicy. And they love the young, fresh brand.”

Jürgen Braun, chief executive of parent company KIKU, says he believes the commercial partnership with ΠΑΟΚ will help not only in terms of promoting the apple to Greek consumers but also in raising its international profile. Having won the Greek championship in 2009/10 and finishing third last season, ΠΑΟΚ are currently playing in the UEFA Europa League, where they are currently up against Russian side Rubin Kazan, English club Tottenham Hotspur and the Irish team Shamrock Rovers.

In ΠΑΟΚ’s opening game at home to Tottenham in mid-September, KIKU advertising hoardings were highly visible around the edge of the pitch – providing invaluable exposure for the brand to a live, international television audience. Furthermore, during a recent 3-0 victory at home to AEK Athens which saw them go top



BELOW—ΠΑΟΚ line up against Tottenham Hotspur, with KIKU signage behind

of the domestic league, the value of KIKU’s advertising deal was underlined when ΠΑΟΚ players celebrated their goals in front of the KIKU signage. “It was incredible,” says Poultsidis enthusiastically. “Players stopped to celebrate the goals exactly in front of the KIKU banners. We cannot be more lucky!”

But, Braun insists, securing such high-profile publicity was by no means purely down to good fortune. “KIKU Hellas is not lucky,” he argues. “It was the result of hard work, because George and his team have been able to create good notoriety for the KIKU brand in Greece by doing an excellent job at the point of sale, in wholesale markets and in selected supermarkets. Now, with the beginning of the new season, it is the right time to increase their efforts in terms of creating new brand awareness among consumers. Soccer is the top sport in Greece, so it was a natural choice to select soccer and bet on a great team like ΠΑΟΚ.”

KIKU remains committed to developing its commercial ties with

sporting and outdoor events in order to grow the brand, Braun adds. “The choice of ΠΑΟΚ was a continuation of the group’s strategy to focus on sports sponsorships. During the coming months we will promote sales of an estimated production of 17,000 tonnes of KIKU apples in Europe by supporting other interesting activities like slacklining and various winter sports, such as ice climbing and biathlon.”

## Video

[bit.ly/kikuhellaspaok](http://bit.ly/kikuhellaspaok)  
See ΠΑΟΚ’s players celebrate their goals against rivals AEK Athens directly in front of the KIKU banner.

