

Red Bull

what does Red Bull give you?

So many hockey players have adopted this drink and with the makers being a world-wide No1 seller of energy drinks there is a fair share of controversy surrounding it too- here's the story.

In 1999 an 18 year old Limerick University student collapsed after drinking 3 cans of Red Bull hours before playing in a basketball tournament. The coroner's jury, which recorded the death as a result of Sudden Adult Death Syndrome, called for immediate research into stimulant drinks and their possible side effects.

In hockey clubs and at tournaments played over the bank holidays players indulge in the trendy drink of 2001- Vodka and Red Bull. If you have an important game where you need to be alert then Red Bull will give you the smack around the chops to wake you up.

Nursing a hangover- Red Bull gives you wings.

Absolutely knackered, but have to go out because you have made a commitment to someone- Red Bull livens you up. Red Bull is the world market leader and favorite non-alcoholic drink among younger people. Sales of the drink in Britain, which was launched in 1993, have reached 500,000 cans a day. This represents 30% of the energy drink market. The makers of Red Bull say that there was no evidence in the case of the student that had anything to do with the drink and they remain convinced that the product and its ingredients are safe.

Behind the scenes, British and American health and police authorities are increasingly worried by the cocktail of chemicals that are used in the make up of drinks.

Red Bull was developed by Dietrich Mateschitz; an Austrian who worked for Unilever in the 1980's and traveled extensively in the Far East. He claims that Asian colleagues drank a syrupy kind of drink before meetings to boost their awareness and concentration levels. According to the publicity machine, he saw a marvelous business opportunity staring him in the face. The story is that he got a pharmaceutical firm to produce a drink for sale in Asia, and then formulated a less syrupy version for the European Market.

Much of the comment about Red Bull has focused on the alleged origin of its contents, in particular Taurine. The truth is that it is an amino acid naturally occurring in both human and animal bodies, but rumors

circulated for some time that it came from bulls' testicles.

Another naturally occurring ingredient, glucuronolactone, was the object of a wide-spread e-mail 'dirty tricks' operation last year. Although there was no truth in the message's content Red Bull spent several thousands of pounds reassuring anxious consumers and fending off criticism. The message claimed that glucuronolactone was a stimulant manufactured by the US government and given to soldiers in Vietnam and that it had been banned later following evidence that its use caused migraines and brain tumors. According to the e mail, an article in the British Medical journal revealed these and other side effects and several European governments were reviewing the stimulant's safety.

Other ingredients include less caffeine than you would find in a cup of coffee, 4 vitamins (inositol, pantothenic acid, B6 and B12), and niacin or nicotinic acid.

The practice of mixing Red Bull with a variety of alcoholic drinks has also heightened publicity surrounding the stimulant drink. A city favorite is to mix Red Bull and Champagne, creating 'Chambull', while generally the approach is to add it to vodka, tequila or rum.

There is concern amongst doctors about mixing a caffeine based drink with alcohol and they believe that this is a sure fire recipe for disaster. Red Bull fans say that it's not the drink but the alcohol you mix it with.

The caffeine element of the drink gives the consumer a positive 'buzz'. Allied with the vitamin B complex ingredients, which promote the growth of yeast and bacteria, consumption of the drink creates a feeling of excitement and durability. Many drinkers have described getting a 'hit' or 'jump start' from drinking Red Bull, while others have said that they had to stop drinking it because the product was making them 'jittery' and 'hyper'.

Company publicists counter any such claims by saying that the drink should only be used by those wanting energy or wanting to maintain their attention levels. American cans bear a marketing tag that it will be of benefit to 'world class athletes, busy professionals, active students and long distance drivers'.

There is gathering evidence that Red Bull could be addictive, the caffeine make up would explain this. In parts of America where distribution of the drink is not uniformly even cans of the drink exchange hands at prices well above the recommended price.

This drink has become a cult drink not just amongst the sports people but also to clubbers and trendy bar people. It's very sweet and not that great

tasting but the drink just keeps on selling. If it is addictive and it leads to hyperactivity and near psychosis, as growing numbers of consumers allege, then Red Bull is not a drink for the faint hearted.