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BeerBoard: A-B's Michelob Ultra Eclipses Bud Light as Top-Selling Draft Beer during Super Bowl LVIII

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Anheuser-Busch InBev's (A-B) Bud Light was dethroned by Michelob Ultra as the country's best-selling draft beer on Super Bowl Sunday as drinkers watched the Kansas City Chiefs defeat the San Francisco 49ers in overtime, according to on-premise data firm BeerBoard

Draft volume of No. 2 Bud Light – also the official beer of the National Football League (NFL) – declined -31.8% year-over-year (YoY), as the company nears the anniversary of the conservative-led boycotts that have left its No. 1 brand bleeding out at retail.

Bud Light's draft volume declined -10% during the Super Bowl last year, when it was the country's top-selling draft beer.

However, Bud Light's replacement was still in the A-B family of brands. Michelob Ultra claimed the top draft brand spot nationwide with “a modest” +0.7% increase YoY. The brand was No. 2 in draft sales last year and grew volume +5% compared to 2022.

Driven by Bud Light's losses, light lager's volume was down (-3.1%) for the second year in a row (-2.3% in 2023), BeerBoard reported. Full-strength lagers in part filled the vacuum, with a +5.1% volume share gain as the country's No. 2 draft style. IPAs were No. 3, but declined -1.9 YoY.

Overall, draft beer sales were flat nationwide, with volume +0.34% year-over-year (YoY), according to BeerBoard.

Constellation Brands' Modelo Especial “saw the most growth among top brands.” The brand's draft volume increased +15% during Super Bowl LVIII, an acceleration from last year, when it recorded +11.6% growth.

In Las Vegas, which hosted the Super Bowl for the first time, draft volume increased +22% YoY. Draft volume of top-selling Michelob Ultra increased +59% and the brand gained +1.5% in share.

Draft sales in the hometowns of the competing teams diverged. Draft sales were roughly flat in Kansas City, Missouri, but increased +6.7% in the Bay Area, according to BeerBoard.

“Fatigue may be setting in for fans in Kansas City,” BeerBoard wrote. “Celebrating its third title in the past five seasons, and fourth appearance in the Big Game in that span, Kansas City’s draft volume was down a nominal 0.3% when compared to 2023 (after seeing a lift of +5.7% last year).”

Bud Light was the top brand in Kansas City, but was down -12.3% compared to last year, a decline “most likely mitigated” by “regional affinity for the brand,” BeerBoard wrote.

In California, Modelo Especial was the top draft brand, with an increase of +14%.

Constellation’s Corona Extra was the top-selling packaged product in the on-premise channel nationwide, BeerBoard reported. Imports gained +5.8% in share on game day, and Modelo Especial (+2.6%) gained the most share.

Mark Anthony Brands’ White Claw Black Cherry was the top-selling beyond beer packaged product (+1.17% YoY), followed by E. & J. Gallo’s High Noon Sun Sips Pineapple (+0.67% YoY), which gained +2.7 share points.

In the spirits category, Tito’s Vodka was the No. 1 spirit brand (7.4% in share), though vodka was the No. 2 spirit.

Bourbon was No. 1, led by Jameson, which was the No. 4 spirit brand (4.4% in share). Tequila/mezcal was No. 3, led by Patron Silver, the second-most popular spirits brand (6.33% in share), followed by rum at No. 4, led by Malibu Original Coconut Rum, the No. 3 spirits brand overall (5.75% in share).