

Marston's hopes for Rugby World Cup boost after wet July and August

The boss of Marston's said the pub group is set for a weekend sales boost from the Rugby World Cup, particularly in [Wales](#), as it revealed strengthening trade.

The company, which runs 1,415 pubs across the UK, revealed that sales jumped by around a tenth for the past year despite an impact from "wetter weather" in July and August.

Bosses at the company said sales rebounded in recent weeks amid improved weather and resilient consumer spending.

Andrew Andrea, chief executive of the group, told the PA news agency that its [Welsh](#) business, which includes Brains pubs it bought in 2020, has been strong as rugby matches have helped trade.

"We've seen a particular boost from the rugby at our 200 pubs in Wales," he said.

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“This weekend should be strong across the board too. We’ll expect to do well from the Wales match and hopefully will see people at those pubs stay to watch the Ireland-[All Blacks](#) game after.

“Hopefully we will see similar in England too on Sunday, and it is particularly good given there are no Premier League football matches on.”

Marston’s told shareholders on Wednesday that like-for-like sales have risen by 12% over the five weeks to date, with rises in both food and drink sales.

It comes after a 10.1% rise in like-for-like sales over the year to September 30.

The company said “customer demand remains encouraging” despite pressure on household budgets.

Julie Palmer, partner at Begbies Traynor, said: “Marston’s performance confirms the health of the larger pub companies, many of which have reported similar uplifts helped by the glut of televised sporting events.

“Despite the wet weather which weakened drinks sales over the summer, Marston’s focus on affordable pubs in suburban areas shows they remain appealing to consumers amid the cost-of-living crisis, as seen in a strong like-for-like revenue increase across the year.

“This strategy, combined with successfully reducing and fixing costs, and building out their franchise model, positions Marston’s well to emerge stronger from the headwinds currently facing the hospitality industry.”

However, shares declined by 1.6% on Wednesday morning.