

# ALCOHOL CHOICES FOR ATHLETES



# Ultimate Guide: Alcohol Choices For Athletes

**From Olympian - Jonathan Edwards**  
**Head Coach at AthleteSpecific.com**

Dear friend,

I'm one of the only people in the field of mental performance for athletes who will talk about this topic.

Most athletes, parents, and coaches will just sweep this topic under the rug. I mean, think about it, we know alcohol isn't great for us, but...

But we advertise sports as part of alcohol consumption. We tailgate before and after games. I can't imagine the Super Bowl without a Budweiser ad. Work hard, play hard. It's time to *relax*...have a drink

Whether you play or just watch, there will be beverages to be had! The social "pull" of drinking alcohol is huge.

As an Olympian, I'd be lying to you if I said all I ever did was drink distilled water and ate sprouts on whole wheat all the time.

No...

As a matter of fact, many athletes that I have known, and many I have worked with have developed drinking issues as part of the culture that surrounded their team or their sport in general.

When you couple the emotional “high” that comes with competing with the additional “high” that alcohol can help create afterward, you are creating a biological cocktail that is very hard to replicate later on in your life. It’s best to know about that now.

If you don’t drink, that’s fantastic. Your body will thank you. Your sleep will improve. Your recovery will be faster and more efficient.

But, most likely, you’re going to “relax” with some alcohol after a big game or you’ll be pressured into drinking by friends and teammates into doing so.

What I want to do here is not just assume you’re going to say “no” to every alcoholic beverage that comes your way. (If you can do that, great, but it’s rare.)

What I want to do is help you understand that:

- 1) alcoholic drinks in ANY form are not good for you athletically and...
- 2) that if you do decide to drink, you’ll want to drink THIS and not THAT.

## We All Know That Guy/Girl Who Drinks a Lot

I do want to touch on an interesting topic here first...

We all know a teammate or competitor who drinks. They may even drink a lot.

The problem with that is that if you don’t really drink, or don’t like to drink, you may feel it’s ok to drink or may actually want to start drinking because, “Hey, he’s really good! Maybe I should drink like that.”

Um...no. Please don’t fall for that.

While some athletes out there have incredible talent, their bad habits are not the cause of their talent.

Let me say that again, **“While some athletes out there have incredible talent, their bad habits are not the cause of their talent.”**

For every athlete out there who has a bad drinking habit there are numerous coaches and teammates who think, “Man, just how good could she have been if she didn’t drink like that.”

# If You Are Going To Drink...Drink This and Not That

So while I'm going to encourage you NOT to drink alcohol, I know that many of the athletes who read this will or maybe already do.

I also know that many of the parents and coaches who read this will have a new understanding of what they should drink and what they should avoid after reading this quick guide.

Let's start with this understanding: Beer is horrible. Vodka is best.

When I was young, if you drank socially and had a beer in your hand, that was cool. If you had vodka in your hand you were an alcoholic. This is unfortunate, because in the grand scheme of what is best for an athlete in terms of recovery, what you choose to drink is really important.

Part of drinking has less to do with what you are actually drinking and what you are SEEN drinking. That's the weird thing about being in social situations. But I don't want you to fall for that. The idea here is to still maintain your focus on how the alcohol in your hand affects your body.

**And to be clear, I'm not condoning drinking, especially if you are under age.**

And if you are underage in your home country but you will be "of age" when you go to a foreign country, I suggest following the laws of your home country, for the following reasons:

- **You haven't "trained" to drink yet.** Let's say you're a competitive athlete and you are headed from the US to Europe to train and compete. As per US law, you're underage so you haven't had a lot to drink in the US. (Maybe you've had a few beers here and there but we'll just keep that quiet for now.) Now you go to Europe and alcohol is more accessible. Just like you wouldn't lift a heavier weight than you're used to or run a distance that is longer than you've normally run, why would you start to drink now? Because it's "cool"?

Just like any sort of "training", drinking alcohol takes some getting used to. Not only while you're drinking but how to manage how you feel AFTER you drink.

So while this approach may seem a bit off-putting, the truth is for a young athlete trying to take advantage of local drinking laws, you're actually setting yourself up for failure not 1x but 2x. Don't bother.

## The Alcohol List: From Worst to First

Here is a list of alcoholic drinks starting with the worst and ending with the best:

- **Beer - Most toxic to the body.**
- **Red wine**
- **Sweet alcoholic drinks**
- **Liqueurs**
- **Dry white wine**
- **Dry champagne**
- **Dry ciders**
- **Distilled spirits**
- **Whiskey**
- **Tequila**
- **Gin**
- **Vodka - Least toxic to the body.**

I spent a fair amount of time in Europe as an aspiring Olympian and our Russian competitors (and their COACHES!) would be drinking a lot of vodka after race day. (They sometimes started AT the race!) That evening the go-to drink was always very high-octane vodka, but the next morning...they looked like they could have run a marathon.

Coming from the United States where beer is king and micro-brews are popular, drinking high-octane vodka pretty much scared us. It was the opposite of what we thought we should be drinking. A beer, or two, or six, seemed like a way better choice in comparison to even one shot of vodka. We were so wrong.

Our German competitors who drank a beer (and lots of it) tended to have really bad hangovers.

What the Russians knew, that none of us really knew, was that the lack of sugar and gluten was what is toxic to the body. By staying away from drinks that contain wheat, and gluten and lots of sugar, the toxic effect on the body was not as high.

# The Alcohol For Athletes Guide Recap

So for those of you who jump right to the end...here's the recap.

While I don't condone drinking for athletes (especially those who are underage) I know that athletes are going to fall for social pressures here and there and they need to be prepared for those moments.

We need to always take the approach that, if we are going to do...anything...we really need to think about how can we do it in the best way possible for our training and recovery.

With that in mind...beer is bad...vodka, gin, tequila are good. Why? Because of sugar, gluten, and other toxic contents that are bad for our body.

If you can, avoid alcohol altogether. But if you must, steer yourself to the clear alcohols and make sure you don't overdo it and stay within the laws of your home country.

## About Jonathan Edwards and AthleteSpecific.com

After years of dealing with athletes who had been let down by their coaches and programs, Jonathan Edwards set out to create the most impactful mental performance coaching programs for aspiring athletes and their families. This isn't a watered-down sport psychology theory. This is in-the-trenches, backed by science, real-world, programming by athletes for athletes. If you've got an athlete with big dreams, book a Breakthrough Call to see what programs we have that will fit your aspirations. The call is free. The insight is priceless.  
**[www.AthleteSpecific.com/call](http://www.AthleteSpecific.com/call)**



For more information about  
our AthleteSpecific.com programs:

**[www.AthleteSpecific.com](http://www.AthleteSpecific.com)**  
**[hello@athletespecific.com](mailto:hello@athletespecific.com)**

TM and Copyright 2020. AthleteSpecific.com All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without the written permission from AthleteSpecific.com and Jonathan Edwards. This guide is made in Canada and the United States.  
September 2020