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| *www.IowaABD.com* | *Lynn M. Walding, Administrator* |

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| *November 17, 2005* |

***SPECIAL EDITION***

Is Campus Drinking Out of Control?

*USA TODAY*

November 17, 2005



Around the country, colleges and universities are taking on the issue of students and alcohol. Although schools mostly encourage parents to “let go” of their kids when they send them off to campuses across the country, many are seeking help. Are you a concerned parent? Are you a student who feels the issue is being overblown?

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8. [Too Much Alcohol in Sports Stadiums?](#Eight)

**1. Colleges Are Reaching Their Limit on Alcohol**

By Steve Wieberg, *USA TODAY*

November 17, 2005

**To curb abuses, some universities rein in tailgating, sales at games, commercial ties to beermakers**

There'll be no oversized trucks, buses or RVs allowed outside the historic Yale Bowl on Saturday. No drinking games. Pack up your coolers, grills and buffet tables by halftime of the 122nd Harvard-Yale game, please, and head into the stadium ... or head home.

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| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
| Fresno State students drain their beers during a tailgate party outside the team's Nov. 10 game against Boise State. | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif | Fresno State students drain their beers during a tailgate party outside the team's Nov. 10 game against Boise State. | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
| By Robert Hanashiro, USA TODAY |

The rules for one of the most famous — and socially celebrated — rivalries in college football have changed, at least outside the stadium.

Yale's new tailgating restrictions are designed to discourage binge drinking and associated unruliness, issues reverberating not only through college stadiums and arenas but entire campuses nationwide. "I'm sure there'll be a different vibe. ... It certainly seems like it'll put a damper on some of the social aspects of the game," Yale senior history major Nick Baumann says.

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| Colleges and universities are turning up the heat in their fight against alcohol abuse. USA TODAY explores the fight on several fronts: |
| **Athletics:** [Slowing the flow at stadiums](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-colleges-alcohol_x.htm)**Marketing:** [Cutting commercial ties](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-alcohol-money-cover-usat_x.htm)**Parents:** [Tuning in to realities](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-campus-drinking-parents_x.htm) |
| [**Join our forum on whether campus drinking is out of control, 4 p.m. ET Thursday**](http://transcripts.usatoday.com/Chats/transcript.aspx?c=439) |

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Tradition has taken a number of tweaks. From such football and basketball powerhouses as Southern California and Kentucky to other Ivy League schools and lower-profile, lower-division institutions, college athletics is wrestling with its longstanding relationship with alcohol.

A USA TODAY survey of the 119 schools in the NCAA's major football-playing Division I-A found that nearly half (54) allow the sale of alcohol — through public concessions, in private suites or both — at one or more playing venues. Eighty-five of those schools have designated tailgating areas, and barely one in 10 keeps those zones alcohol-free.

But No. 1-ranked USC, drawing a record 90,000-plus spectators a game at home in the Los Angeles Coliseum, cut off alcohol sales there this season.

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| **http://www.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif** | **Studies highlight problem** | **http://www.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif** | http://www.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
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| Amid reams of research on alcohol use on college campuses are two studies focusing on sports: http://www.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifFans were more likely than non-fans to binge drink and have alcohol-related problems, from missing class or falling behind in schoolwork to vandalism and sexual violence, the Harvard School of Public Health found in 2002. It questioned nearly 12,000 students; about 30% said they were sports fans.More than half of the fans (53%) engaged in binge drinking, compared with 38% of the non-fans. The study also found that schools with larger proportions of fans were more likely to have high rates of binge drinking on their campuses.Among the study's conclusions: "The results ... suggest that the link between sports and alcohol is an important one for colleges to consider in their efforts to decrease binge drinking and the harm that it produces. ... Athletic administrators and officials should take the findings of the present study into account when considering the role of alcohol in athletic budgets."http://www.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifResearchers for Virginia Tech's College Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center, armed with handheld breathalyzers, fanned out before four Tech football games two years ago and found that 86% of 275 tested tailgaters had consumed alcohol. About 46% had blood-alcohol levels of 0.08 or higher, the state's legal standard for intoxication.Among the pregame tailgaters who intended to drive after the game, a third were legally intoxicated and another 13% were at risk of being cited for driving under the influence (with blood-alcohol levels between 0.05 and 0.08)."That's a very serious concern if you consider the number of football games on the weekend, pro and college," says Steven Clarke, the Center's director. "Locally, there's beginning to be some tailgating at high school games. It's really just a matter of time before that behavior also increases. Then we're going to be in a real crisis."http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/_photos/2005-11-16-alcohol-chart1.gif |

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Miami (Fla.) ended a sponsorship arrangement with Coors two years ago, and university president Donna Shalala says the school is phasing out another with locally headquartered Bacardi. Florida, Ohio State and Kentucky no longer allow alcohol advertising on any TV and radio broadcasts they control.

The moves reflect larger alarm. The National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimated in March that alcohol consumption accounted for more than 1,700 deaths among college-age students in 2001, the most recent year for which such figures are available.

"That's how many planes crashing?" says Henry Wechsler, a social psychologist and researcher at Harvard's School of Public Health who co-authored the study. "Indeed, if these were airplanes crashing, we'd hear a lot about it. We don't because they occur one at a time or two at a time."

Colleges are trying to address drinking-to-excess rates that, despite increased national attention, haven't budged since the 1990s. Harvard's ongoing College Alcohol Study found that two in five college students admitted binge drinking, defined as consuming five or more drinks in one sitting for males, four or more for females, in 2001. That was nearly identical to rates reported in 1993, 1997 and 1999. That, the study found, has led to an increase in such problems as missing class, falling behind in schoolwork and having unprotected sex.

Students themselves register concern. In a Student Monitor LLC survey of 1,200 full-time, four-year undergraduates on 100 campuses in March, alcohol abuse was most commonly identified as one of the largest problems on campuses today — more so (by 44%) than the cost of tuition (40%).

Kentucky's athletics department adopted its no-alcohol ad policy in the wake of a November 1998 accident in which a truck driven by football player Jason Watts overturned, killing a 19-year-old teammate and a 21-year-old Eastern Kentucky student who was a friend of then-Kentucky quarterback Tim Couch. All three were intoxicated, authorities said.

His college career ended, Watts pleaded guilty to two counts of reckless homicide and served 3½ months of a 10-year jail sentence before being granted early release.

Yale needed no such tragedy to address the environment around its football stadium. By one account, tailgating traces its roots to the New Haven, Conn., school, to 1904 and the game-day arrival of legions of fans by train. Their walk from the station to the stadium left them hungry and thirsty, and somebody came up with the idea of toting picnic hampers of food and liquid refreshment.

In particular, The Game vs. Harvard has become as much about socializing — over beer, cocktails and fancy spreads of food — as it is about football. Yale's toughened new policy is simply an "attempt to promote an enjoyable, civil and safe tailgating experience," it says. Harvard similarly tightened restrictions when it hosted The Game last year, banning kegs and keg parties.

**Tie-ins are money-makers**

It was inevitable that the search for an effective response to campus drinking would spill into the athletics arena. Alcohol consumption has long been a companion to sports, be it in the stands, the parking lots outside or sports bars around town. For college football, especially, tailgating is part of the game.

But that's hardly alcohol's only entry point into intercollegiate athletics. Among the more than four dozen Division I-A schools allowing alcohol sales are 18 that permit public sales at facilities on campus, USA TODAY's survey found. Sixty-four I-A schools, or well more than half, allow alcohol advertising at athletic events, in stadium or arena signage or in game programs.

In an era of tight athletics budgets, a number of programs draw on high-dollar alcohol sponsorships. Missouri is getting $490,000 from Anheuser-Busch this year, not counting $75,000 it splits with Illinois from the brewer's sponsorship of their annual Busch Braggin' Rights basketball game in St. Louis. Wisconsin gets $450,000 from Miller and Busch. Colorado receives $392,000 from Coors.

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| http://images.usatoday.com/sports/college/_photos/2005-11-16-in-yale.jpg | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear1x5.gif |
| By Steven E. Frischling, Bloomberg News |
| A Yale police officer breaks up a keg-filled student tailgate party during the team's Nov. 5 game against Brown. |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear1x5.gif |

Those and a majority of other schools allow alcohol ads during radio broadcasts of their games. And conferences, which largely control regular-season television rights, allow them on those broadcasts.

The NCAA has long banned alcohol sales and on-site advertising at the 88 championships it runs in 23 different sports, and its Executive Committee recommended in August that individual schools follow its lead during the regular season. But the association gives beer, malt-beverage and wine advertisers access to postseason TV and radio broadcasts. The university presidents and chancellors who sit on the Executive Committee opted not to remove alcohol from that equation — most notably during the signature Division I men's basketball tournament.

Harvard's Wechsler was disappointed by the NCAA's action. "They ought to put their money where their mouth is, away from the beer industry," he says. "I see statements about increased sensitivity. I'm not sure about actions ... not where the pocketbook is concerned."

**Inconsistent message**

For most schools, and for the NCAA, pressure to toughen alcohol policies arises from escalating campus-wide concern about student drinking and efforts to moderate it. Sports can send a conspicuous signal.

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| A sampling of schools where alcohol-and-athletics issues have simmered in recent years: http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Hawaii** — Efforts to ban alcohol from Aloha Stadium have had mixed results. The stadium authority will hold a public hearing as early as next month on a compromise plan to bar alcohol from the parking lots next season. Beer, wine and mixed drinks still would be sold inside the stadium; a vending contract runs through 2011.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Ohio State** — It began prohibiting alcohol ads on local game broadcasts and TV coaches' shows two years ago. The school also bans alcohol advertising in stadium or arena signage and game programs.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**St. Cloud (Minn.) State** — The NCAA Division II school (in everything but hockey) banned alcohol from tailgating on Oct. 14. That conforms to a no-alcohol policy on the rest of the campus.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**North Dakota State** — Coinciding with a move into the NCAA's Division I-AA last year, it allowed alcohol for the first time in two designated tailgating areas outside the Fargodome. No alcohol is sold in the Fargodome.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Kansas** — As part of a plan to boost football attendance, it opted four years ago to allow alcohol consumption for three hours before each home game in the parking lots and grassy areas around Memorial Stadium.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Michigan State** — It relaxed its no-alcohol policy in expanded Spartan Stadium in October, allowing beer and wine sales for two hours until kickoff — but not during games — in new luxury suites.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Arkansas-Little Rock** — The school is pushing for alcohol sales at the Stephens Center, its new on-campus basketball arena, asking the state's Alcohol Beverage Control board for a liquor permit despite resistance from the agency's executive director. |

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"Community leaders are trying to deal with this issue as it relates to underage drinking and binge drinking and drinking responsibly," Florida athletics director Jeremy Foley says. "To make that a priority, an initiative, and then there's the athletic association — one of the more high-profile entities on the campus if not the highest-profile — advertising alcohol, that's an inconsistent message."

During a campaign by school President Bernie Machen to change the drinking culture on the Gainesville, Fla., campus, Foley banned alcohol advertising from radio and TV sports programming this year. The school's $64 million athletics budget dwarfs the $200,000 a year the move is estimated to cost, "but $200,000 is $200,000," he says.

"That's four endowed scholarships a year. That's not insignificant dollars whether you have a $15 million budget or a $60 million budget."

At Miami, Shalala says of the loss of the Coors and Bacardi sponsorships, "We lose some money, but we do the right thing."

She also has eliminated beer-hawking in the stands at home football games in Miami's city-owned Orange Bowl and says she's working with Mayor Manny Diaz to eliminate sales altogether when the Hurricanes are playing there.

**Decisions left to schools**

It was three years ago when Steve Angelucci, a vice president with Lexington, Ky.-based Host Communications, says he first sensed a growing sensitivity to alcohol tie-ins. Many schools fold their sponsorship and advertising rights, with TV and radio rights, into multimedia agreements with media and marketing firms such as Host, Missouri-based Learfield Communications and North Carolina-based ISP Sports. The firms, in turn, seek and secure the sponsors and advertisers.

"If you had 10 new schools going out for bid today," Angelucci says, "I think as many as half would say, 'We don't want any alcoholic advertising or sponsorship presence sold.' "

If there's movement, however, there's not yet *a* movement. Only two of seven schools affiliated with Host — Kentucky and Michigan — impose such a ban, Angelucci says. Greg Brown, a senior vice president at Learfield, says all but perhaps two of its 22 major-college clients accept alcohol ads.

Schools are left to decide for themselves. While setting policy for championships (except in football) and recommending guidelines for individual institutions, the NCAA has shied away from imposing across-the-board restrictions on advertising, sponsorships and sales at events.

"I would personally wonder how one justifies the sale of alcohol in an on-campus venue," says University of Hartford President Walter Harrison, who heads the Executive Committee. But he says, "We just felt that was something better left to institutions, that the NCAA is not really in a position to dictate." He points to antitrust concerns: "Perhaps it's not even legal."

Pressure for change comes from advocacy groups such as the Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest, which complains that college sports telecasts are increasingly delivering young viewers to beermakers. The center is enlisting schools to sign a pledge to prohibit alcohol advertising on local sports programming and work within their conferences and the NCAA to eliminate alcohol ads from all college sports on TV.

CSPI counts 246 institutions that have signed the pledge, although the message that it sends is mixed. They include just five of the 65 members of the six most powerful conferences in I-A (Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-10 and Southeastern). Those five schools: Baylor, Florida, Minnesota, Northwestern and Ohio State.

In Washington, former football coach and current Congressman Tom Osborne, R-Neb., has gotten nowhere with three House measures in the last three years that would have eliminated or discouraged alcohol ads during radio and TV broadcasts of college games.

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| http://images.usatoday.com/sports/college/_photos/2005-11-16-in-tail-beers.jpg | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear1x5.gif |
| By Robert Hanashiro, USA TODAY |
| Students line up mixed drinks next to open beer cans at a Fresno State tailgate party. |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear1x5.gif |

Beer industry representatives argue that those campaigns are mis-targeted. The NCAA says Nielsen statistics show 88% of the TV audience for Division I men's basketball games and 90% of the audience for women's games are over the age of 21. "We feel in trying to reach the adult consumer, 21-plus, that it's very appropriate," says Tony Ponturo, vice president for global media and sports marketing at Anheuser-Busch.

Even from officials working to curb college drinking, there are arguments that complete bans on stadium sales or advertising aren't necessary.

Drew Hunter works with the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Issues, a coalition of 21 organizations addressing college alcohol and drug issues. "Different campuses have different cultures," he says. "You have to have some flexibility to work within the culture that's there. ... It's important for a campus to have a consistent philosophy of how they want to address these issues. If they choose to do marketing, only do it in a way that does not add to drunkenness through promotions and things of that nature."

That's the thought behind the "drink responsibly" taglines to most alcohol ads.

**Wisconsin's solution**

Wisconsin's sponsorships by Miller and Anheuser-Busch — each brewer accounting for about half the $450,000 total — reflect the gray that shades the issue. Officials at the Madison school weighed national attitudes and whether to maintain the agreements before renewing them this summer.

The advertising they entail is concentrated in radio broadcasts and in football coach Barry Alvarez's Sunday TV show.

There's no alcohol advertising in Camp Randall Stadium, and Miller and Busch can't use the Wisconsin logo in posters or other point-of-purchase promotions.

But Wisconsin is ... well, a beer-drinking state. Shutting out Busch and especially Milwaukee-headquartered Miller, associate athletics director Vince Sweeney says, "could be read the wrong way at a time when universities are pointed at as not being in touch with the populace.

"It's such a complex issue. You have so many different people trying to attack it from so many different ways. I am in no way critical of the people who are saying 'ban this' or 'ban that' because I think their hearts are in the right place.

"They're trying to make things better."

*Scott Boeck and Ellen Horrow contributed to this report*

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| **Colleges respond about alcohol policies** |
| **The questions** |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your athletic department have a policy concerning alcohol at athletic events? |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your institution allow alcoholic beverages to be sold at athletic events? |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your institution allow alcoholic beverages to be advertised at athletic events? |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your institution designate an area for tailgating? |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your institution have a pass out policy prohibiting ticket holders who leave athletic venues from re-entering? |
| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gifDoes your institution provide training to athletic facility personnel for dealing with alcohol-related incidents? |

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| **Schools' responses** |
| Conference | Response | Policy? | Allow sales? | Ad signage? | Tailgate area? | Pass-out restrict? | Training? |
| **ACC** | Yes | 100% | 17% | 17% | 58% | 75% | 92% |
| No | 0% | 83% | 83% | 42% | 25% | 8% |
| **Big 12** | Yes | 100% | 42% | 25% | 58% | 50% | 92% |
| No | 0% | 58% | 75% | 42% | 50% | 8% |
| **Big East** | Yes | 100% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 88% |
| No | 0% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 13% |
| **Big Ten** | Yes | 100% | 36% | 0% | 55% | 64% | 91% |
| No | 0% | 64% | 100% | 45% | 36% | 9% |
| **C-USA** | Yes | 100% | 33% | 50% | 92% | 58% | 67% |
| No | 0% | 67% | 50% | 8% | 42% | 33% |
| **Independent** | Yes | 75% | 25% | 0% | 50% | 75% | 75% |
| No | 25% | 75% | 100% | 50% | 25% | 25% |
| **Mid-American** | Yes | 100% | 33% | 17% | 83% | 25% | 92% |
| No | 0% | 67% | 83% | 17% | 75% | 8% |
| **Mountain West** | Yes | 100% | 33% | 56% | 78% | 44% | 78% |
| No | 0% | 67% | 44% | 22% | 56% | 22% |
| **Pacific-10** | Yes | 90% | 10% | 20% | 70% | 50% | 90% |
| No | 10% | 90% | 80% | 30% | 50% | 10% |
| **Southeastern** | Yes | 100% | 0% | 0% | 42% | 92% | 83% |
| No | 0% | 100% | 100% | 58% | 8% | 17% |
| **Sun Belt** | Yes | 88% | 38% | 75% | 100% | 50% | 63% |
| No | 13% | 63% | 25% | 0% | 50% | 38% |
| **Western Athletic** | Yes | 78% | 44% | 78% | 100% | 67% | 89% |
| No | 22% | 56% | 22% | 0% | 33% | 11% |
| **All schools** | Yes | 96% | 31% | 33% | 71% | 60% | 84% |
| No | 4% | 69% | 67% | 29% | 40% | 16% |

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**2. Alcohol Makers on Tricky Path in Marketing to College Crowd**

By Bruce Horovitz, Theresa Howard and Laura Petrecca, *USA TODAY*

*November 17, 2005*

**Growing criticism could cut off access to prime market**

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| http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
|  UCLA fans celebrate a touchdown at the Rose Bowl behind a beer banner.  | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif | UCLA fans celebrate a touchdown at the Rose Bowl behind a beer banner.  | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
| By Robert Hanashiro, USA TODAY |

Every marketer has its sweet spot.

That's the age group where brand preferences begin forming for their product. For fast-food giants, it's the Happy Meal set. For soft-drink makers, it's preteens. For beer kingpins — and, increasingly, wine and liquor producers — it's the college crowd. (**Photo gallery:** [Alcohol marketing and college students](http://www.usatoday.com/money/gallery/2005/11-17-alcohol/flash.htm))

"If you're going to attract a new group to your brand that has a chance of sticking over a lifetime, the college years are crucial," says Barry Glassner, sociology professor at University of Southern California.

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| Colleges and universities are turning up the heat in their fight against alcohol abuse. USA TODAY explores the fight on several fronts: |
| **Athletics:** [Slowing the flow at stadiums](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-colleges-alcohol_x.htm)**Marketing:** [Cutting commercial ties](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-alcohol-money-cover-usat_x.htm)**Parents:** [Tuning in to realities](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-campus-drinking-parents_x.htm) |
| [**Join our forum on whether campus drinking is out of control, 4 p.m. ET Thursday**](http://transcripts.usatoday.com/Chats/transcript.aspx?c=439) |

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Also lucrative. Besides being ripe for learning brand names, these students have money to burn. The bulk of them hold down jobs, and they wield $231 billion in annual spending, according to a 2005 study from youth marketing firm Alloy.

Those facts are why beer and spirits makers have quietly worshiped at the dorm-room altar.

But something's changing in the cultural ozone that is giving chills to alcohol marketers — and a lot of other big-time food and beverage advertisers. They are under the microscope of industry watchdogs, savvy lawyers, vote-seeking lawmakers and health-and-safety-conscious boomer parents. Their goal, the companies fear, is nothing less than a ban on advertising, or even, for alcohol marketers, prohibition.

That's why McDonald's now sells apple slices and Coke pitches bottled water. But perhaps no industry has been hit harder than the big alcohol makers, particularly when it comes to marketing in and around campuses. This comes even as some marketers have put the brakes on over-the-top college promotions, such as giant inflatable beer bottles and raucous spring break beach booths.

Momentum is building to ban alcohol ads from college sports broadcasts, arenas and even whole campuses. Already, conferences have set various TV ad limits for their events. For tournaments and championships, the National Collegiate Athletic Association limits beer and wine ads to 60 seconds per broadcast hour and says they must include a "drink responsibly" tagline in the ad.

Even so, $68 million was spent to advertise alcohol on college sports TV in 2004, up from $54 million the year before, reports TNS Media Intelligence.

"How can young people make the right choices in an environment that's polluted?" asks Mark Pertschuk, executive director of the Marin Institute, an alcoholic-beverage-industry watchdog group.

The scrutiny of college marketing is intensifying even though a majority of college undergraduates are of legal drinking age. The average age of an undergraduate student is 26, reports the American Council on Education. But the average age of an undergraduate living on campus is 20, the group says.

So, what's a beer or liquor maker to do? The companies' futures depend on recruiting and keeping new customers. And this is a very big group: There were 14 million undergraduates as of October 2004, reports the U.S. Census Bureau.

The alcohol giants are not about to abandon what's arguably their most precious market.

**Hot spirits give beermakers chills**

Beermakers are particularly worried about twentysomethings' developing tastes, since in recent years they've been losing many drinkers to hard liquor.

In the intense competition for alcohol market share — where a tenth of a percentage point is big money worth fighting over — beer was the biggest loser from 1999 to 2004, at 2.2 points, while distilled spirits gained the most, 1.3 points.

"Beer isn't as cool and sexy as it once was," says Joseph Anthony, CEO of Vital Marketing. "We're turning into a cocktail-and-martini generation."

But reaching college students is a delicate dance for Big Alcohol. One way, as flashy TV ads draw fire, is to find even smaller, less-visible promotional openings — often inside the off-campus bars or off-campus liquor stores — that are less likely to generate backlash.

Sometimes it works. Sometimes it implodes. Here are some examples:

**•Latch on to college crazes — carefully.**

With Budweiser sales growth softening, Anheuser-Busch sponsored "beer-pong" events through distributors in 47 cities. Beer pong — very hot with collegians — is a pingpong table game in which players score by bouncing the ball across the table into a cup of beer. Losing involves downing beer.

Trying to avoid backlash, A-B renamed it Bud Pong and told distributors to sub water for beer.

Many players ignored that rule and, under withering criticism, A-B pulled the promotion on Oct. 18.

Did A-B really think students would play for water? "It was a bad idea," says Francine Katz, A-B's vice president of consumer affairs. "It was just too capable of being misused, and it was naïve to think that it wouldn't be misused."

**•Pass the buck.**

While flashy national TV ads get the most scrutiny, most promotions aimed at college students are set up by local distributors, using a mix of their money with support from brewers or distillers and from bar owners, who often offer specials on the promoted brands.

"So the onus is on the bar owner" to keep out underage students, says Kathleen Joyce, editorial director of *PROMO Magazine*, a promotions trade publication.

Last week, at the Kollege Klub bar in Madison, Wis., a team of women wearing Captain Morgan shirts and a man dressed in pirate attire took photos and provided samples of spiced Captain Morgan rum. Captain Morgan drinks were discounted by $1, to $3. Bruce Meier, whose family has owned the bar for 53 years, says spirits such as rum are "in" now with his patrons.

At Murphy's bar near Marquette University in Milwaukee, a recent Wednesday night special offered a 32-ounce Miller beer for $3.50, and Miller brought in a team of male and female "referees" — like those in current Miller ads — to make penalty calls for "unbeermanlike" conduct. The "refs" also gave free rounds of Miller and posed for pictures with patrons.

At The Tally Ho, a student favorite at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., recent giveaways included dorm-size refrigerators and microwaves embellished with the Miller logos, and kayaks and snowboards decorated with Coors Light logos.

"Beer companies and liquor companies have money, and they have no trouble flaunting it," says Ed Hrichak, manager. "It's all brand recognition, and they'll put their name on anything to do it."

**•Fly under the radar.**

Before a Penn State football game on Nov. 5, an airplane towing a Bacardi banner flew around — but not across — the campus, clearly visible to the near-110,000 in the stands.

The company adhered to the alcohol industry's self-imposed guideline of not flying over campuses or sports events, says spokeswoman Pat Neal. She says it also met the media placement guideline that 70% of the viewership must be 21 or older.

That didn't make it sit any better with Felicity DeBacco, 31, a season ticket holder who wasn't pleased: "The kids that are going to games do not need anymore encouragement to be drinking alcohol."

**• Tie in with hip brands.**

Bud Light is sponsoring *Maxim* Exposure, a promotion of 40 parties in 40 cities. A majority are college towns, including Austin, Tallahassee and Athens, Ga. Co-sponsor *Maxim* magazine is hot with college-age men.

Even though the parties are invitation-only, says A-B's Katz, "You card people. Nobody is allowed to enter who isn't 21."

**• Be seen around town.**

Canadian beer Moosehead is pushing for a resurgence after falling out of favor with U.S. college students since its 1980s peak. Its average buyer today is 42.

It is showing off its logo on wild postings placed near campuses at building sites, on mailboxes and even inside pizza boxes. And in college-friendly bars in Boston, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Champaign, Ill., it is sponsoring giveaways of home keg systems.

The company says it's not targeting students under 21. "We're trying to seed this brand in the mind of young adults, particularly 21- to 25-year-old males," says Shamus Hanlon, marketing director.

**• Hire bigwigs.**

Big-name brewers and distillers have tapped some former state attorneys general for advice on underage drinking.

A-B works with former New York attorney general Robert Abrams and former Mississippi attorney general Mike Moore. Former Nevada attorney general Frankie Sue Del Papa has worked with Diageo and is currently on retainer with Brown-Forman.

While he was in office, Moore was approached by A-B about an effort to cut underage drinking in Mississippi. Moore says he was "skeptical" but came to see the effort as sincere. After he left office, he became an A-B consultant on the issue.

The companies also may be looking for advice from the former attorneys general on the industry's voluntary ad limit to shows with 70% of viewers 21 and older. The National Association of Attorneys General has a committee looking at a push for 85%.

**• Promote responsible drinking.**

A-B has given $4 million in grants to colleges to promote drinking in moderation and deter underage use. Jim Beam Brands has given 28 colleges and universities more than $400,000 in the past three years toward support of a spirits industry program — dubbed Alcohol 101 — that includes on-campus speakers, pamphlets and CDs promoting responsible drinking.

Despite the message, industry critics charge that even responsible drinking ads are irresponsible.

"They're creating a perception that justifies drinking," says J. Edward Hill, president of the American Medical Association.

Worse, says George Hacker, director of alcohol policies at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, the ads use brand names.

**•Don't advertise in the campus paper.**

These days, only an occasional responsible-drinking ad shows up in student newspapers.

Not that some student newspapers wouldn't welcome more alcohol ad spending. "We don't typically turn down whole big classes of advertising," says Kathy Lawrence, media adviser for *The Daily Texan* at the University of Texas.

**Drinking and downloading are 'in'**

With all the concern by critics about alcohol marketing and worries by makers about market share, students seem unaffected.

Student Monitor, a college student research specialist, last spring asked 1,200 undergrads: "What's 'in' on campus?" The top answer from nearly three of four: drinking beer.

"Nothing else comes close," says Eric Weil, managing partner.

The three-way tie for No. 2: drinking other alcohol, going to bars and downloading music.

In fact, only once in the past decade has "drinking beer" had a rival for the top slot in the student poll. That was in 1999, when the Internet tied beer.

"I heard from Coors, Anheuser-Bush and other beer companies," says Weil. "They thought it was the end of the world."

*Contributing: Kelly Barry*

**3. University Officials, Ames Police Analyze Policies for Alcohol (Iowa)**

By Adam Graaf, Staff Writer – *Daily Iowan*
November 14, 2005



AMES, IA -- Ames Police officers and university officials discussed Friday the potential risks and benefits of alcohol policies with representatives from college campuses around the country.

Lynn Walding, State of Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division administrator, co-hosted a session during the last day of the National Summit on Preventing Civil Disturbances in the Cardinal Room of the Memorial Union.

Walding advised officers and university officials to create clear channels of communication to ensure effective education programs are matched by effective law enforcement programs.

He also advised city officials of the environmental changes within university communities, citing Iowa City's role of host to marketers targeting students and bar promotions that contribute to excessive drinking.

Officers addressed specific, municipal policies that have assisted their own agencies.

Champaign, Ill., Police Lt. Holly Nearing said allowing 19- and 20-year-olds into bars has been a positive experience for police, a policy that generates more than $250,000 in revenue for the city from underage drinking fines.

"A lot of that money goes back into compliance checks and street sweeps, to pay overtime to officers who work the bars," she said.

The money typically doesn't go toward prevention or education programs, but since it mainly comes from students, it does get back to students in the form of safety patrols, she said.

Lowering the entry age also created a controlled environment for officers to monitor and shift drinkers away from house parties, Nearing said.

"House parties are not a problem in Champaign-Urbana," she said. "We have a vibrant downtown bar area to compete with the campus town, so we're large enough to accommodate both."

Linda Langford, one of Thursday's keynote speakers and associate director for the Center for College Health and Safety in Newton, Mass., warned about the risks of lowering the entry age.

"Greater accessibility increases underage drinkers, so allowing them into the bars would increase the potential," she said. "Nineteen-and-over bars could facilitate the problem."

Ames Police Sgt. Rory Echer was skeptical that a lower entry age into bars would solve the city's problem of house parties because most of the large house parties police respond to grow after the bars close.

Echer said enforcing new policies could be a problem.

"We don't have the staffing to be in the bars right now and I don't think bars have the staffing to intercede," he said.

Discussion also focused on preventative policies similar to Story County's proposed keg ordinance.

Donell Young, coordinator for the office of judicial services at the University of Missouri, said students found ways around the tagged kegs and Linda Major, director of student involvement at the University of Nebraska, said wholesalers reported a shift in profits from keg beer to case beer after similar law was implemented.

"You should not look at a keg regulation without looking at a quantity regulation too," she said.

Nearing said the student party patrol at the University of Illinois act as the first-responders, working as officers' eyes and ears at large parties.

Ames Police were commended by students and ISU officials alike for their party response team tactics which, Echer said, gives the option for hosts to call officers if their party is getting out of control.

"We'll help them break it up without citing the attendant," he said.

**4. Parents Tune in to Realities**

By Mary Beth Marklein, *USA TODAY*

November 16, 2005

MADISON, Wis. — Wren Singer, director of freshman orientation at the University of Wisconsin, calls them the "wink-wink, nudge-nudge parents," the ones who typically make themselves known during parent sessions at orientation.

When the topic turns to how parents might talk with their child about drinking, "One parent in the back will say, 'Oh, but kids will be kids,' and everyone will laugh. You see it in their faces — relief: 'Oh yeah, kids will be kids.' "

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| Colleges and universities are turning up the heat in their fight against alcohol abuse. USA TODAY explores the fight on several fronts: |
| **Athletics:** [Slowing the flow at stadiums](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-colleges-alcohol_x.htm)**Marketing:** [Cutting commercial ties](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-alcohol-money-cover-usat_x.htm)**Parents:** [Tuning in to realities](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-campus-drinking-parents_x.htm) |
| [**Join our forum on whether campus drinking is out of control, 4 p.m. ET Thursday**](http://transcripts.usatoday.com/Chats/transcript.aspx?c=439) |

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That attitude undermines campus efforts to curb high-risk drinking, arguably the most insidious problem facing colleges today, Singer says. Despite more than 10 years of national attention to the dangers associated with high-risk drinking, the problem not only persists on many campuses, it thrives.

Walk along State Street here, and you'll see signs in bar windows for $1 taps on Thursday night and caps for sale that read "Tappa Kega Beer." Even a sidewalk poster for Chipotle, a burrito and taco restaurant, makes a reference: "Think beer bong. But with food."

Meanwhile, even as national studies show that more students abstain, more students also are engaging in frequent high-risk drinking. And over the past 12 years, morestudents have reported missing a class, getting behind in schoolwork, having unprotected sex and getting hurt because of binge drinking, usually defined as having five drinks in one sitting for males, four for females. (**Related story:** [A tragic lesson](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-16-campus-drinking-parents-side_x.htm))

"We obviously aren't finding the right answer. That's what's most concerning," says Lori Berquam, interim dean of students. "It's a moving target. So our approach has been: Let's talk, let's engage."

That's one reason parental involvement is critical. Colleges once urged parents to let go when sending kids off to school. Now they're increasingly turning to them for help when it comes to alcohol.

College drinking hardly is new to this beer-lover's state. Think the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team, which plays at Miller Park. Wisconsin also was named this year's top party school for the first time in *The Princeton Review*.

And while the school's binge-drinking rate is well above average (66% vs. 44% nationally), problems here are hardly unique.

"Wisconsin is one extreme example of the same issue that's going on at colleges around the country," says Toben Nelson, a researcher with the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, which has been researching student drinking at some 120 colleges in 40 states since 1993.

**Delivering the alcohol talk**

Some schools have been more aggressive than others in getting parents involved on alcohol issues, especially since 1998, when an amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act clarified that colleges could inform parents if their child violated campus policies.

The alcohol talk has long been part of Wisconsin's orientation. Two years ago, chancellor John Wiley began sending letters to parents of freshmen, urging them to talk with their child about alcohol and referring to a new website that gives tips on how to do so (http://pace.uhs.wisc.edu/parents.php). Wiley says the school held off for years on notifying parents of campus violations out of a desire "to treat students as adults."

He changed his mind this fall after seeing mounting evidence suggesting that parents have made a difference on other campuses.

Today's students are "very connected to their parents," says Susan Crowley, director of the college's PACE Project (Policy, Alternatives, Community and Education), a 9-year-old initiative funded by the non-profit Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that aims to reduce high-risk drinking. It has, for example, published a guide to throwing a safe house party. No specific incident triggered the outreach to parents. Rather, Crowley says, "Parents are just one more resource."

But lawsuits, including one against MIT by the family of Scott Krueger, a freshman who in 1997 drank himself to death at a fraternity initiation, have pushed universities into action. The university agreed to a $6 million settlement with Krueger's family.

Courts increasingly say colleges have a legal duty to take reasonable care to protect students, says Stetson University law professor Peter Lake, co-author of *The Rights and Responsibilities of the Modern University*. "The best way to avoid legal liability is to do good prevention."

Even so, Wisconsin alerts parents only if their child is under the legal drinking age of 21 and involved in a serious incident, such as being transported to a detox center or violating a campus policy that could lead to a suspension or expulsion. Example: attacking another student.

**Dealing with denial**

Business was brisk on a recent football Saturday in the bunker-like police center beneath Camp Randall Stadium. The first person was sent to detox at 11:01 a.m., a minute after kickoff. Campus police say he was 18, disoriented and couldn't stand or walk without help.

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| **http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif** | **HOW PARENTS CAN TALK ABOUT DRINKING** | **http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif** | http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/clear.gif |
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| Research by Pennsylvania State University professor Rob Turrisi suggests that parents who talk with their child about alcohol can influence his or her drinking habits in college. And it can make a difference even if parents don't start until the months before the start of the freshman year. But there's an art to doing it effectively. Here, experts offer a few tips on how to broach the topic:http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Be specific about expectations**. "Language such as 'drink responsibly' is not specific enough when talking with 18-year-olds," says Frances Taylor, wellness programming director at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. For example, identify specific limits, such as no more than three drinks in one night, using a designated driver and avoiding sexual activity while under the influence.http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Don't glorify your college drinking exploits**. That just "sets up an expectation that that's what you do in college," says Helen Stubbs, spokeswoman for the non-profit Center for College Health and Safety Education Development Center in Newton, Mass. http://images.usatoday.com/_common/_images/bullet.gif**Be positive**. If "you're turning things into a debate, you're not listening, you're lecturing," Turrisi says. "Kids (whose) parents have their best interest at heart are willing to listen."  |

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So far this semester, a record 45 studentshave gone to detox, up from 25 last year and up eight from the previous high in 2003.

Most parents have appreciated being contacted, although a few have seemed defensive. "I think there's some denial there," says Suzanne Jones, an assistant dean of students. But mostly, "I don't think they quite understand the whole culture of campus. Things happen with friends sometimes, in a group. People tend to egg each other on. Even though students are good kids, they make poor decisions."

With more than 28,000 UW undergraduates, student opinions on campus drinking vary.

"For freshmen and sophomores, there's definitely more of the idea 'Drink as much as you can in the shortest amount of time,' " says senior Alex Roland, 21, as he sits, drinkless, with a friend on a Friday night in Memorial Union. But he says the party image is exaggerated. Among friends, "I don't know anybody who really overdoes it."

Others suggest that those who get sick or hurt aren't savvy. "I had my first drink at 16. I was around my parents," senior Adam Kadlec, 21, says as friends play beer pong and glug from a beer bong hanging off his balcony before the football game. "I totally understand the risks I'm taking. I know how to control myself."

(For the uninitiated, beer pong is a drinking game in which the object is to bounce a ping pong ball across a table and into a cup holding the opponent's beer. A beer bong, a contraption that involves pouring beer into a funnel and down a hose, enables partiers to chug large amounts quickly.)

Singer, the orientation director, often hears students say they're in control. To parents, she says, "the message we give is that this is an age group that seems invincible."

Yet finding solutions isn't simple. Parents may differ in philosophy. And even experts aren't unanimous on the best approach.

National polls, for example, suggest the public largely opposes underage drinking. Yet an American Medical Association poll released in August found that 25% of parents with children ages 12 to 20 had allowed their teens to drink alcohol under their supervision in the past six months.

UW has all but given up trying to stop underage drinking, focusing instead on changing dangerous behavior. That's not to say there's no punishment. But the goal, Berquam says, is to help students change behaviors and "figure out how to answer the issue of high-risk, dangerous drinking."

Campus police also recently released data on students sent to detox, including an 18-year-old male found lying on the ground on a Sunday at 4:49 a.m., unaware of the location, date or time. "Urinated on self," the report said.

Some of them "came very close to not making what it is that I want them to do, which is to live to graduate," UW police chief Susan Riseling told a local paper.

Researcher Michael Haines criticizes such a strategy, arguing that calling attention to negative behavior suggests it is the norm. A more effective approach is to emphasize that many students don't drink to excess, and most don't end up in detox. Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, where Haines is based, has used the strategy called "social norms marketing," and its student high-risk drinking rate dropped by 44% between 1990 and 1999.

**The best course**

So what's a concerned parent to make of all of this?

Interviews here with a small group of parents and students suggest parents worry, among other things and to varying degrees, about who their kids hang out with, the possibility of date rape, and how drinking affects their child's studying and grades. Several assume it's inevitable their child will at least try drinking.

"You end up saying, 'I know you're probably going to start drinking. Just do it responsibly,' " says Ann Dolan of Fitchburg, Wis., mother of two UW students, freshman Andrew, 18, and senior Brian, 21. "You hope for the best."

The students appear to share their parents' desires to keep communication open.

The best advice for parents, says senior Christopher Spoehr, 23, is to "teach your kid to find friends who think like they do and drink how you'd like them to drink."

The worst thing a parent could say? "Don't drink." "They're still going to drink," says freshman Samantha Lepage, 18. "They're just not going to tell you about it."



**5. Tragic Lesson: ‘Your Life Can be Altered in a Split Second’**

By Mary Beth Markelin - *USA TODAY*

November 17, 2005

If Angie Gratzl could make kids understand one thing about the dangers of underage drinking, it’s that bad things can happen to you.

She knows, because they happened to her son. Some 15 months ago, during move-in time last year at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, her son Jason, then 18, drank too much at a house party and fell from a second-floor balcony, where a friend told police he had gone to vomit.

He suffered serious head injuries. After being rushed to the emergency room, he spent about a year in hospitals and rehab centers, returning to his mom’s home in Burlington, WIS., in September. There, he is undergoing continued therapy.

Jason Gratzl had planned to major in engineering. Today, his mom hopes he will someday be able to attend some type of school or get a job. He remembers nothing of the incident that changed his life.

Angie Gratzl isn’t sure what she could have done differently. “They say you need to sit down and talk. I did, I sat down and talked and talked,” she says. But, “students, including my own children, have told me that the ‘speech’ only works when children want to absorb what is presented to them.”

At some point, she started writing about her experience. The result was later distributed at Jason’s high school and posted on a UW website (pace.uhs.wisc.edu/gratzl.php).

Her message: “Make Jason’s mistake serve as a reminder to you that anything *can* happen on any given day.” She doubts most students will give her story a second thought.

“But if it impacts just one,” she says, “that’s what is important.”

**6. Beer Sponsorships Make NCAA Uneasy During Postseason**

By Steve Wieberg - ***USA Today***

**November 17, 2005**

No one is willing to say, or even guess precisely, how much value the NCAA adds to its $6.2-billion basketball television contract with CBS by allowing the network to sell and air beer and other malt-beverage ads.

Its relationship with alcohol brands may make the NCAA uneasy, but there is no doubting the sponsorship deals are profitable.

"(With) a truly national property, which is obviously what the NCAA and its championships are, you're talking a significant investment from these alcoholic beverage concerns," says Steve Angelucci of the media and marketing handler Host Communications. "Certainly in the the millions and millions — high millions."

Nonetheless, NCAA officials say the decision to allow the limited number of ads is not about the money.

Before the 11-year deal was negotiated with CBS in 1999, then-NCAA President Cedric Dempsey says he and members of the association's Division I men's basketball committee discussed whether to keep alcohol in the advertising mix. They ultimately reasoned that a vast majority of member schools had made their positions clear, permitting the ads on their own radio and TV broadcasts, and that an NCAA ban would be "contradictory," he says.

"The general feeling at that stage was that it might be more beneficial to try a 'responsible drinking' approach rather than totally eliminating them," Dempsey says.

The university presidents and chancellors who sit on the top-level Executive Committee largely maintained that position in August, disappointing critics who charge that the association talks a better game than it actually plays.

All told, there were an average of 2.5 alcohol TV ads per college football game and 2.6 per college basketball contest in 2003, the most recent year for which such figures are available, according to Georgetown University's Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. Pro basketball had more (4.5). Pro football had virtually the same number (2.5).

The alcohol industry's spending on college sports-related TV advertising that year: $52.2 million, accounting for about 4.5% of all television advertising tied to those sports. That figure climbed to $66.2 million in 2004.

What individual schools do during the regular season is up to them. In part because some schools play in city-owned facilities and thus can't dictate policy, and in part because bans on local sales and advertising could constitute illegal restraint of trade, the NCAA hasn't imposed across-the-board restrictions.

The NCAA controls its championships, however, and there it bars both sales and on-site ads. It limits broadcast advertising to beer and other malt beverages and wine products, permitting no more than 60 seconds per hour and two minute per overall broadcast. And it lays out guidelines for game programs.

Beth DeRicco of the Department of Education-supported Higher Education Center, which offers consulting and research on alcohol and other drug abuse, says, "It's up to the organization to kind of come up with a middle-ground approach that everybody can agree to. That's a hard job. Would it be helpful if they banned alcohol? Would it send a certain type of message? Of course, it would. But that might not be the most judicious tack for them to take."

**7. Colorado Treads Carefully in Relationship With Coors**

By Steve Wieberg – *USA TODAY*

November 17, 2005

The line the University of Colorado walks on alcohol may be one of the most delicate in higher education.

On one side is a campus image clouded by party-school rankings, several alcohol-related tragedies, including the death last year of an 18-year-old freshman, and a sex-and-booze recruiting scandal that staggered the Buffaloes’ football program.

On the other side is the locally owned, long-supportive Coors Brewing Co. The Coors name, by virtue of a $5 million gift, is on Colorado’s basketball arena, and family foundation donations to the school have totaled nearly $9.5 million in the last three decades. A $392,000 annual sponsorship pads the school’s athetics budget.

The university has launched a number of initiatives targeting student drinking in recent years, establishing an education and awareness program and requiring incoming freshmen to complete an online alcohol education course.

“There’s a lot of talk amongst ourselves. ‘Who are we, and who do we want to be?” says Ron Stump, CU’s vice-chancellor for student affairs. “A lot of people say, ‘Not this image that some people may have. It’s not who we are.’”

That sentiment, however, hasn’t swept Coors signage from football’s Folsom Field or changed the name of basketball’s 11,000-seat Coors Events Center. Public alcohol sales have been banned at Folsom since 1996 but not at the arena, where fan misconduct is less common.

The six-figure sponsorship by Coors was extended through this season, and athletics director Mike Bohn says, “I would anticipate some type of relationship to continue. . .We are very proud to be a partner with them.”

The university’s overall approach has been successful in at least one respect. In August, Colorado fell out of *The Princeton Review’s* rankings of top party schools for the first timem in eight years. It was No. 1 in 2003.

Officials considered a couple of years ago whether to keep the Coors name on the events center marquee. They opted to maintain it and get little argument today from Denver-based Drew Hunter, who works with the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Issues.

“It’s easy to have these symbolic reactions – if you want to send a message that you’re anti-alcohol, ban it. But that doesn’t get rid of the problem,” Hunter says. “In CU’s instance, they’ve resisted going for symbolic change for just change’s sake.”

The ban on alcohol sales at Folsom Field, which became permanent in 1998, once seemed to be working. The number of game-day incidents at the stadium dropped dramatically the first two years.

But they’ve climbed again. The 39 arrests and 208 stadium ejections through this season’s five home games are an 11-year high (compared with six arrests and 58 ejections in 1999). There’ve been 42 student referrals to judicial affairs, up from 16 in ’99.

And that’s before a likely emotional Nov. 25 home finale against Nebraska that CU Police Lt. Tim McGraw says “may prove to be a busy game.” The ban, McGraw maintains, still is a “step in the right direction. If alcohol were served in that stadium, people would just get drunker.”

**8. Too Much Alcohol in Sports Stadiums?**

By Edie Magnus - *NBC News*

November 6, 2005

If you have ever been to a major sporting event, inevitably you’ve seen them: the fans who have one beer too many.

Sure they are loud, and sometimes obnoxious— but are they dangerous?

One New Jersey family says “yes,” and claims a “culture of intoxication” at sporting events, encouraged by concession companies, is to blame. And after you hear their tragic story and look at what we captured with our hidden cameras, you may agree.

Without question, beer and sports are an inseparable pair in American culture— but a tragic accident has placed the concession companies that serve alcohol at sporting events in a unflattering light.

A Dateline hidden camera investigation provides some troubling evidence that rules intended to limit dangerous drinking at stadiums across the country are not being enforced.

It’s a problem with consequences not just for those at the game—but for anybody who might run into a drunk fan afterward.

Ronald Verni hadn’t thought much about buying beer at ball games until October 24, 1999.

It was on that day that Ronald, a New Jersey accountant and his wife Fazila took their daughter pumpkin picking in Pennsylvania. They liked doing weekend trips. Antonia, the couple’s only child at the time, was just 2 years old.

**Fazila Verni:** She’s very special because I had a hard time having a baby. And Antonia made it through. That makes her even more special.

**Ronald Verni:** We went on an old train ride with Antonia. And we went around the villages, a little pumpkin picking on the way home.

While the Vernis were off enjoying time together, several miles away, Daniel Lanzaro, a 30-year-old carpenter, was spending a very different kind of day with his family, drinking and watching football.

He arrived at Giants stadium around 10 a.m., well before the start of the afternoon game between the New York Giants and the New Orleans Saints so he could partake in the traditional sports ritual called tailgating. Sports arenas commonly open up their parking lots as many as six hours before gametime so that fans can gather to party.

Lanzaro partied all right. He would later admit he drank outside the ballpark— then kept on drinking inside while he was watching the game.

Lanzaro, just 5-foot-5 and weighing only 145 lbs., downed between 8 to 12 12 oz. beers during the first half of the game.  And still he kept knocking it back. Lanzaro said he bought six more beers at one time during halftime.

And yet, Lanzaro got behind the wheel that day after drinking a estimated 192 ounces of beer — that’s about 16 cans. He left the football game at the third quarter, drove to two different strip clubs, where he said he did not drink, and then, shortly before 6 p.m., Lanzaro was finally headed home.

As was the Verni family. Ronald says Antonia got sick toward the end of their ride, so her mom, seated next to her in back, removed the child from her car seat and placed her in a regular seatbelt.

**Ronald Verni:** We were about 10 minutes away from home.  Edie Magnus, Dateline correspondent: Did you see the truck coming?

**Ronald Verni:** No, no I didn’t.

They were driving down this street when a red Ford pickup truck suddenly crossed the double yellow line and hit the Vernis’ Toyota Corolla head on.

The driver of the pickup was Daniel Lanzaro.

**Ronald Verni:** He hit us head on. See that’s the thing that’s really—rough about drunk driving accidents because they are more severe then regular accidents.

New Jersey police would later say the accident was one of the worst they’d ever seen.

Magnus: When did you learn that the man who had hit you was drunk?

**Ronald Verni:** About 10, 15 seconds after the accident. He was staggering. He was really swaying back and forth. He was significantly drunk.

Lanzaro refused to take a breathalyzer at the scene, but later on in the hospital, several hours after hitting the Vernis, his blood alcohol level measured .26 — nearly 3 times the legal limit.

Ronald’s wife was in a coma for two weeks. She faced months of healing, Ronald was told, but she’d be ok. The news about Antonia however was devastating.

**Ronald Verni:** I went into the emergency room where she was, she had alligator clip marks on her arms and legs. We were just looking for, like a reaction.

The impact of the crash had broken Antonia’s neck and crushed her spinal cord. It left the child a quadriplegic, permanently paralyzed from the neck down.

In August 2003, when Antonia was 6 years old, Daniel Lanzaro pleaded guilty to vehicular assault.  He was sentenced to 5 years in prison.

And that might have been the end of it, but New Jersey, like most states, has laws on the books that say if you have a liquor license, and you serve someone who is visibly intoxicated, you’re responsible for what happens after that person is served. So the Vernis went after not just the drunk driver, but Aramark, the billion dollar concessions company that sells beer here at the meadowlands and at several dozen other stadiums around the country.

**Ronald Verni:** They sold the beer. They’re responsible.Magnus: Did you go after them because they had he deep pockets in this case and your drunk driver did not?

**Ronald Verni:** No, not necessarily. They were responsible. They served an excessive amount of alcohol. Somebody knew he was intoxicated and they served him anyway.

The case came to trial in December 2004. Antonia Verni was then 7 years old. Lawyers for Aramark argued the company does everything it can to prevent fans from abusing alcohol inside the stadiums it serves.

Employees agree in writing never serve anyone who is visibly intoxicated, and to serve a maximum of two beers per person per purchase.

But Daniel Lanzaro, you’ll remember, said he’d bought himself 6 beers at once during halftime of that Giants-Saints game in 1999.

**Magnus:** How did he manage to get a beer vender to sell him that many beers at once? David Mazie, attorney representing the Verni family: He gave him a $10 tip.  But he said that he always did that. Magnus: And it wasn’t a problem.

**Mazie:** It’s not a problem. What we learned here was that they have rules for public perception.  And then we have the reality. The reality was, they don’t enforce their rules. They serve as much beer as they possibly can, and they look the other way.

Aramark’s attorneys argued it was unreasonable to expect the vendors to detect the intoxication level of an experienced, high tolerance drinker like Daniel Lanzaro — an admitted alcoholic.

But Lanzaro’s sister-in-law who was with him at the game testified he was noticeably “slurring his words” and that his eyes looked “like floating eyeballs in your head.”  “I saw the eyes of a drunk,” she said.

Aramark has never been able to figure out which of its employees violated company policy and sold Lanzaro all those beers.

**Magnus:**  What is the company supposed to do?  I mean, if they have training, and they have a policy.  And they have spotters, right?  Undercover spotters, who are supposed to be identifying any infractions.  What more can they do?

**Mazie:** Enforce the policies.

According to David Mazie Aramark’s documents show that the company rarely disciplines vendors who sell more beer than they are supposed to.

**Magnus:** But Aramark did not hit a family on a road.

**Mazie:** Aramark’s the one who made the decision to serve somebody who was visibly intoxicated, repeatedly. To get him to a .27 blood alcohol concentration.  They don’t serve him, the accident doesn’t happen.

The trial lasted a month and included a dramatic appearance by the wheelchair-bound Antonia Verni which left jurors weeping.

They awarded the Verni family $135 million— one portion, largely symbolic, to come from the drunk driver; and the rest $105 million from Aramark.  It was the largest alcohol liability ruling in U.S. history.

Aramark declined to be interviewed by Dateline for this story, but did issue a statement: “We are sorry about the injuries suffered by Antonia Verni in this automobile accident and our thoughts are with her and her family.” It went on to say Aramark was “disappointed with the verdict and we are currently in the appeal process.”

Verni: They could try it once.  They could try it a 100 times.  Okay?  I love the exposure. Let’s bring it on again. It’s that simple.  Because, what it’ll do is it’ll prevent future Antonias from happening across the country.

So did the verdict send a message that’s gotten through?

**'Dateline' undercover**

This summer “Dateline” armed with hidden cameras went to major league baseball games in four different cities across the country.

The first stadium we went to is serviced by the Aramark concession company, the same company found liable for the drunk driving accident that paralyzed Antonia Verni.

Dateline undercover producer: Can I get three Coors? Vendor: You can get two.

**Dateline:** Two is the most?

**Vendor:** Yeah.

Aramark vendors, you’ll remember, are only permitted to sell two beers per customer  per purchase...  and at this stadium are required to ID any customer appearing to be under the age of 40.

**Vendor:** ID please.

**Dateline:** Sure.

When our Dateline producers attempted to buy beer at this game, the majority of the time they were asked for proof of age, and whether ordering from their seats or from a beer stand — our producers were denied more than two beers per purchase.

There was one exception. One of our Dateline producers was served three beers without being ‘ID’ed — both violations of the stadium Aramark’s stated alcohol policy. Yet as the Dateline producer walks away with his three beers, the seller runs up to him.

The seller didn’t take the beer and offer to give us our money back—but he did carry it for a while... and then eventually gave it back to our undercover "Dateline."

Apart from that one infraction, Aramark seemed to be doing a good job enforcing stadium and company policy, including cutting off beer sales at the start of the 8th inning.

And at another game we attended, at another stadium serviced by Aramark, the vendors again followed the rules.

Did that multi-million judgment against Aramark change the way the company does business?

In a letter to Dateline, an Aramark representative said, “Aramark continues to have the most rigorous policies in the industry for the safe service of alcohol.”

But at two other stadiums where Dateline took its hidden cameras serviced by a different concession company, what we found was troubling.

The concessions at one stadium were operated by SportService— like Aramark, a large concession company that handles sales of alcohol at stadiums and arenas all over the U.S. But at the night game we attended, we observed SportService alcohol policies rarely being enforced.

Half of the time when our Dateline producer with the hidden camera asked for three beers for himself, he got them even though vendors are not permitted to sell someone more then two at one time. And while these beers are called “small,” each one is 24 ounces. So although our undercover producers drank none of the beer we purchased, with one trip to the concession stand, we walked away with the equivalent of a six pack.

In one instance when our “Dateline” attempted to purchase three beers, the vendor at first refused.

**Vendor:** I can give two at a time.

But then one beer seller gave our “Dateline” two beers—and then a third for an imaginary guy behind him...

Vendor: Here is two for you and one for the guy behind you.

Time and time again we found SportService vendors who were either ignorant of the rules or simply choose to ignore them.

And aside from the concessions, the drinking goes on long after the last pitch: our “Dateline” saw fans in the stadium parking lot after the game downing still more of their own beers before getting into their cars and onto the road.

Our “Dateline” producers were repeatedly served beer in excess of the stated two beer limit at another stadium also serviced by the SportService concession company. And while we were refused more than two beers on occasion, more often we were able to buy more than two and without being asked for ID. In fact, on two separate occasions, our undercover producers were permitted to purchase four beers for themselves. That's 8 cans worth of beer.

One of our producers purchased three glasses of wine for himself twice— from the same vendor. That's also a violation of SportService policy.

And remember unlike the man convicted of the drunk driving accident near Giants stadium, at no time did any of our producers offer vendors any bribes or tips for all that alcohol.

And once again, the drinking did not stop after the game as fans filtered, some staggering, out to the parking lots to drink beer they had brought themselves.

We sat down with a Rick Abramson, president of the SportService concession company to discuss what we found inside the stadiums serviced by his company.

Rick Abramson, president of SportService: You have to be responsible.  You know, sobriety is no accident.  We have to watch that each and every game.

He assured us his company has high standards on alcohol awareness. In fact, at a recent meeting of SportService general managers from across the country, they played a videotape of Antonia Verni to underscore the stakes of serving too much to the fans.

Abramson: It had an affect on me personally. If you see what happened to that young girl. That’s why we take it so seriously.

**Magnus:** How would you describe your company’s level of awareness about alcohol consumption?

**Abramson:** Oh its very high. You know, vendors take it very serious. It’s their livelihood. They realize the importance of it. If we catch somebody doing more then two beers ah, they’re in trouble.

He says SportService makes its employees sign an affidavit saying no serve someone who is visibly intoxicated— that it trains them to spot drunks— and that the company has undercover people to make sure its vendors follow the rules.

**Magnus:** How successful do you think you are in enforcing your policies?

**Abramson:** Well, I think we’re very successful.

**Magnus:** I have something to show you.

We played portions of our undercover video showing how, over and over, his employees served our Dateline producers too much beer in clear violation of company policy.

**Magnus:** Is that your uniform?

**Abramson:** That’s our uniform. This is not our policy.

**Magnus:** Were you surprised by what you saw?

**Abramson:** I was surprised, shocked and disappointed. Magnus: We sent four different people to two different stadiums. And 18 separate times they were allowed to purchase in excess of the stated rules for alcohol.

**Abramson:** It’s just not acceptable. It’s upsetting for me to see somebody breaking the rules. And to see that much is very upsetting for me. We are gonna have to be more diligent with it.

SportService, like Aramark, is now on the receiving end of a lawsuit by Coach Tom Gamboa who claims he was injured by a father and son who’d been overserved by SportService during a baseball game in 2003. SportService says the father and son alone are liable for his injuries.

David Mazie, attorney for the Verni family, says the Vernis believe stadiums should have only a dry tailgate— a one beer per purchase maximum— and random sobriety checkpoints for people leaving stadiums to help insure there aren’t more Antonia Vernis.

David Mazie, attorney for the Verni family: People need to take responsibility for their own actions.  But once you become intoxicated you start losing your judgment. The server, the holder of the liquor license has to serve responsibly.

Antonia, now 8 years old, is not terribly concerned with alcohol policies or who’s to blame for how she ended up.  Her father says she knows only that long ago, somebody hit her and hurt her.

**Ronald Verni:** She had said to a nurse, I remember I used to be able to walk. When she’s playing with her friends, they’ll see that, they’ll say, “Oh you can’t walk.” She goes, “Well, I can pretend. Or I could imagine.”

As their multi-million dollar victory is being appealed by Aramark, the Vernis have received no money for their daughter’s round the clock care. Antonia can’t move her arms or legs. She can’t eat enough to sustain herself with a feeding tube, and can’t breathe without the aid of a ventilator.

**Fazila Verni:** I would not wish this on my worst enemy.  It’s very, very hard.

Still, the child is amazingly upbeat: She likes Barbie books, Dr. Seuss, and singing.

**Magnus:**  What would you like to be when you grow up?

**Antonia Verni:** Three things:  A kindergarten teacher, a singer, and a ballerina.

Doctors tell the Vernis that Antonia has a 50/50 chance to live to her mid-40s.

**Magnus:** Do you know how you ended up in this chair?

**Antonia Verni:** No.

**Magnus:** You don’t wanna know?

**Antonia Verni:** No.

**Magnus:** And why is that?

**Antonia Vernia:** Because.  Well, I was born happy, I always stay happy.

When contacted by “Dateline,” the owners of Miller Park and Busch Stadium both said they have programs in place to enforce their alcohol policies and that any violations of their alcohol policies are unacceptable.

In the years since Antonio was left paralyzed by the drunk driver from Giants stadium, the New Jersey Police Department that responded was apparently so affected by the crash, it has made the highest number of drunk driving arrests per officer in the state.

