

# Stadium Alcohol Management

Beer commercials during college sporting events perpetuate the idea that "partying" is an inherent part of watching any collegiate sport. In reality, spectator drinking at sporting events can increase the risk of traffic crashes and other alcohol-related injuries. Moreover, the disruptive behavior of alcohol-impaired patrons can dampen the fun of other patrons and may in fact discourage some people from attending. What can be done to effectively manage alcohol at college sporting events?

## Taking a Cue from the Professionals

Alcohol management strategies have been developed at many arenas and stadiums where professional sporting events are held, including 3Com Park in San Francisco and Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. Key in developing these strategies in many stadiums has been a nonprofit organization called Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM).

TEAM formed in the mid-1980s in response to the high number of traffic fatalities resulting from heavy drinking at sporting events and to increasing public awareness of the problem of alcohol-impaired driving. Team owners, operators, concessionaires, and public facility managers joined with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to form TEAM, a coalition of 17 private companies, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies.

TEAM has two major goals: to reduce the incidence of alcohol-impaired driving and to promote responsible alcohol service and consumption at public-assembly facilities. To further these goals, TEAM developed the comprehensive Facility Alcohol Management (FAM) program. FAM assists public facilities in developing effective alcohol management

strategies through a three-step process. All staff of a public facility, including management, concessionaires, and security, work together in this process, guided by FAM program staff.

First, working with facility personnel, FAM program staff assess a facility's policies and programs in such areas as admissions into the facility, alcohol sales, transportation alternatives, and public awareness efforts. After completing the assessment, FAM helps the facility management develop new policies and procedures.

Next, FAM program staff train in the new policies all facility employees who interact with patrons, not just those who serve alcohol, because all staff are needed to implement the policies effectively.

Training focuses on areas such as how to check age identification, identify impaired guests, and take action to prevent impaired guests from harming themselves or others.

Finally, FAM program staff help facility managers assess the effectiveness of the new policies and procedures and to identify any areas that require further development or modification. FAM gives detailed information on how to

## TEAM in Action at Stanford

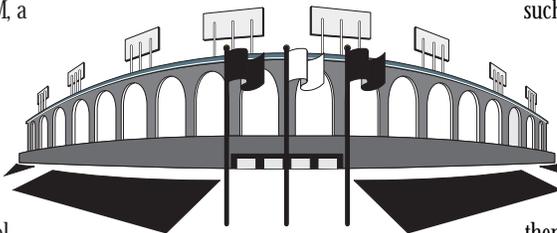
With funding from TEAM, alcohol and other drug abuse prevention staff at Stanford University have begun implementing FAM program activities. Program staff have (1) assessed the unique needs of Stanford's campus and stadium; (2) developed a "guest services" handbook, for all employees who work at athletic events, that includes job descriptions, policies, and procedures; and (3) instituted annual trainings of game-day staff conducted by representatives from the Athletic Department, the Department of Public Safety, and the Emergency Medicine Department. Trainings address issues such as skill building for staff who work the gates, so that they can stop obviously impaired patrons from entering the facility and can conduct more effective searches of patrons attending events at Stanford's stadium, as well as of any bags or ice chests that patrons are carrying. On rare occasions, staff also conduct a quick "pat down." Patrons must comply with this voluntary search or they will be refused access to the stadium; the cost of their ticket is refunded. An evaluation conducted during the first phase of the TEAM project at Stanford monitored drinking in and around the stadium and identified a number of alcohol "hot-spots," areas with an increased number of alcohol-related problems.

conduct this type of assessment and also provides sample data-collection instruments.

## Applying FAM at the University Level

In 1995, the TEAM coalition developed a pilot grant program to extend FAM to the university level. TEAM designed the pilot program to assist National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institutions in developing and implementing more effective alcohol management strategies. TEAM chose as pilot sites institutions that both wanted to develop an

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# PREVENTION UPDATES

alcohol management strategy for their athletic facilities and that had appointed an on-campus coordinator to work with the TEAM coalition. Four universities were selected as pilot sites for this program: Stanford University, Northern Michigan University, Colorado State University, and Texas A&M University at Kingsville.

It is true that many NCAA institutions do not sell alcohol during sporting events. Even so, alcohol-related problems still occur during sporting events at these institutions because many patrons either drink before attending events or attempt to bring alcohol into the facility with them. Elise Lenox, director of the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention program at Stanford University, described the situation at Stanford games: Stanford does not sell or serve alcohol in their sports facilities. It does, however, allow for the sale and lawful distribution of alcohol outside the stadium. At Stanford, alumni association pregame activities frequently provide alcohol to invited guests. In addition, some students at Stanford either drink in their residences prior to sporting events or attend tailgate parties. These issues need to be addressed in an effective alcohol management strategy.

## Alcohol Management Strategies

TEAM develops alcohol management strategies in four areas: transportation alternatives, admissions policies, public communications, and vending practices. A comprehensive alcohol management plan for a university facility can draw from each of these areas. For example, a university stadium can provide its patrons with transportation alternatives, such as a free shuttle service back to campus residence halls or subsidized cab rides for impaired guests. In addition, a facility can offer nonalcoholic beverages at reduced prices to guests who are "designated drivers."

Admissions policies that can be implemented as part of an overall alcohol management plan include having security patrols in parking lots to detect drinking by patrons, confiscating any alcoholic beverages that patrons try to bring into the facility, and providing a special security patrol to deal with impaired patrons. Strict enforcement of admissions policies can be effective in preventing alcohol-related problems inside a stadium.

In facilities that allow alcohol sales, public communications strategies can include having messages about responsible drinking printed on buttons, signs, or beverage cups. Universities can also launch public communications campaigns on

their campuses aimed at preventing excessive pregame alcohol consumption. For example, these campaigns could remind patrons that impaired guests are not allowed to enter the sports facility and that admissions policies are strictly enforced.

Modifying vending practices can be a key policy development area for those facilities that sell alcohol. Facility employees can implement a number of strategies to help control patrons' alcohol consumption. Some facilities halt alcohol sales either at a specific time before the game ends or at any time that trouble seems to be developing due to alcohol consumption. Other facilities place limits on the number of beers that can be purchased in a single trip. Smaller cup sizes may also help reduce the volume of alcohol that a patron consumes. Facilities can also offer free or reduced-priced soft drinks to patrons who pledge to remain alcohol free so that they can drive their friends home after the event. Strategies such as these can contribute to a safer and more enjoyable event for all patrons.

## Resources

### Organizations

For more information on **TEAM**, please contact Heidi Puff at the TEAM Secretariat, Global Exchange, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 400, Bethesda, MD 20814; (301) 656-3100.

For information specific to the **FAM** program initiative at the university level, please contact Frank Uryasz, director of Sports Sciences of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, at (913) 339-1906.

### Publications

*Setting and Improving Policies for Reducing Alcohol and Other Drug Problems on Campus: A Guide for Administrators*, by W. DeJong and S. Langenbahn. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education,

## Tailgating

Over the past few years, Boston College (BC) has implemented a number of changes to their policies on tailgating. These changes seem to have reduced alcohol-related problems at those events where tailgating is permitted. BC's current tailgating policies include the following:

- Patrons who leave the stadium are not permitted to return while the game is still in progress.
- Tailgating is allowed only for two hours before and two hours after the game.
- Excessive quantities of alcohol (e.g., kegs) are not allowed in the tailgating area; cars entering the area are stopped and checked in an effort to enforce this policy.
- If tailgating privileges are abused, the athletic director contacts the person with the privileges and can take further action, including removal of the necessary permit.
- Alcohol is prohibited from the stadium; patrons with alcohol can be evicted and may face further sanctions.
- BC police stop patrons carrying alcohol if they look under age 21.
- The athletic director sends information about responsible tailgating to season ticket holders and alumni with tailgating privileges.
- The Alumni Office promotes the idea of alcohol in moderation.

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, reprinted 1997. Available from the Higher Education Center.

Provides a guide for developing and instituting effective alcohol prevention policies.

*Alcohol Practices, Policies, and Potentials of American Colleges and Universities: An OSAP White Paper*, by L. Eigen. Rockville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1991. Available from NCADI (1-800-729-6686).

Describes strategies colleges can implement as part of a comprehensive AOD prevention effort.

