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Ohio State Takes Steps to Reduce Alcohol Marketing

Ohio State University may have given up its crown as NCAA Division I Football Champions, but the university has come out on top by announcing that it will prohibit alcohol advertisements on local radio broadcasts of its games in 2004.

In the wake of post-game rioting after the Ohio State vs. Michigan game in 2003, the university launched a serious effort to correct environmental factors that contributed to the problem, including the mixed messages the university communicated about alcohol use on campus. Specifically, the university disapproved of alcohol use by underage students, yet accepted funds from the alcohol industry for advertising rights during student games. In 2003, Ohio State sold advertising rights for \$1.4 million, big money in any budget.

Beginning this year, Ohio State will not allow alcohol advertising in the local contracts it controls or in any of its publications. In an article from *The Cincinnati Post*, Ohio State Athletic Director Andy Geiger said, "We can be accused of hypocrisy if we're sending one message at one level and doing something else at another."

For now, Ohio State cannot ban advertising on its nationally televised games since it belongs to the Big Ten Conference, and the Big Ten is responsible for selling television advertising rights. The current contract runs through 2006. However, Ohio State is making a real statement to other institutions of higher education by its latest announcement about local radio advertising.

Ohio State University President Karen Holbrook and Geiger are among a growing list of university presidents and athletic directors who back the idea of restricting all alcohol advertisements during nationally televised games. This effort is being led

nationally through the Campaign for Alcohol-Free Sports TV, an effort organized by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Geiger has discussed this idea with other Big Ten universities in hopes of convincing his peers to take similar measures.

Along with the university's announcement of the ban on alcohol advertising during local radio broadcasts, Ohio State is taking other significant steps toward changing the campus culture. In October 2003, President Holbrook and Ohio State served as host for a nation conference on celebratory riots. The event examined the impact of alcohol use on campus communities. The university also worked with the State of Ohio's Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) and Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth to host the "Power of the Press: Focus on Advertising" conference that discussed the relationship between alcohol advertising and alcohol-related problems.

Our Point:
Communities, institutions, and States are successfully changing laws, ordinances, and policies to reduce underage drinking.

The university's efforts to address underage drinking have not gone unnoticed. In December 2003, President Holbrook was given an award from the ODADAS for her "courageous leadership in alcohol and drug prevention."

For more information on Ohio State's efforts, contact:
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For more information on the Campaign for Alcohol-Free Sports TV, visit <http://cspinet.org/booze/CAFST/>