

## Tailgating at Athletic Events Prevention

The importance and influence of intercollegiate athletics cannot be understated. College sports—especially Division I football and basketball—generate a substantial amount of money and attention for many campuses. This often translates into an increase in student applications, alumni donations, and prestige for the university.

Underage drinking, excessive consumption, and alcohol--related problems frequently convene around college athletic events. College students who were sports fans are more likely to engage in binge drinking and report more alcohol--related programs than nonfans. Likewise, a higher percentage of sports fans at a particular school is related to higher binge drinking rates and students experiencing secondhand effects of alcohol misuse.<sup>1</sup>

Tailgating before, during, and after athletic events is a deeply rooted tradition on many campuses and the source of underage and excessive drinking. A few strategies that many colleges have taken to reduce problematic alcohol--related behavior include:

- Banning kegs, beer balls, and other large sources of alcohol in tailgating areas;
- Increasing the enforcement of underage drinking laws;
- Prohibiting drinking games (such as beer pong) and paraphernalia (funnels) that encourage the rapid consumption of alcohol;
- Allowing tailgating activities to before and after the game only;
- Limiting the length of time permitted for tailgating before and after the game; and
- Providing an alcohol--free tailgating area that encourages a family--friendly environment.

These strategies have been employed on many campuses; however, more research is needed to determine the extent of their effectiveness in reducing underage and high--risk drinking and related problems around sporting events in tailgating areas and other locations on campus and in the surrounding community.

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson, T.F. & Wechsler, H. (2002). School spirits: Alcohol and collegiate sports fans. *Addictive Behaviors*. 28(1): 1--11.