

Newsweek

Colleges condemn NCAA tourney beer ads

College presidents: Beer ads "embarrassingly prominent" during NCAA tourney

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AP

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For more than 100 college presidents and athletic directors, beer and the NCAA men's basketball tournament don't mix.

The college leaders — among them the top officials at Harvard, Abilene Christian and Georgia State — wrote a letter to NCAA President Myles Brand on Wednesday calling beer advertising "embarrassingly prominent" during tournament broadcasts. They asked the organization to reconsider its policies on alcohol advertising.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington, D.C., which helped organize the letter, accused the NCAA of violating its own policies that supposedly limit beer advertising to 60 seconds per hour and no more than 120 seconds per telecast. The center said it counted 200 seconds and 240 seconds of beer advertising during Saturday's two semifinal games, and 270 seconds during Monday night's final, when Kansas defeated Memphis 75-68 in overtime.

The NCAA bylaws do not allow any advertising for hard alcohol.

"Given the persistent problems caused by underage and excessive college drinking, much of it in the form of beer, we find it inconceivable that the NCAA's profiting from beer promotion during the telecasts of college basketball games comports with the best interests of higher education, sports, or student welfare," the letter said.

The NCAA did not immediately respond to requests seeking comment, nor did a spokeswoman for CBS Sports, which broadcast the Final Four.

Among the signatories were four schools that qualified for this year's tournament — Baylor, Winthrop, Cornell and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. All four lost in the first round.

On the Net:

<http://www.beerfreesportstv.org>

<http://www.ncaa.org>

URL: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/131266>