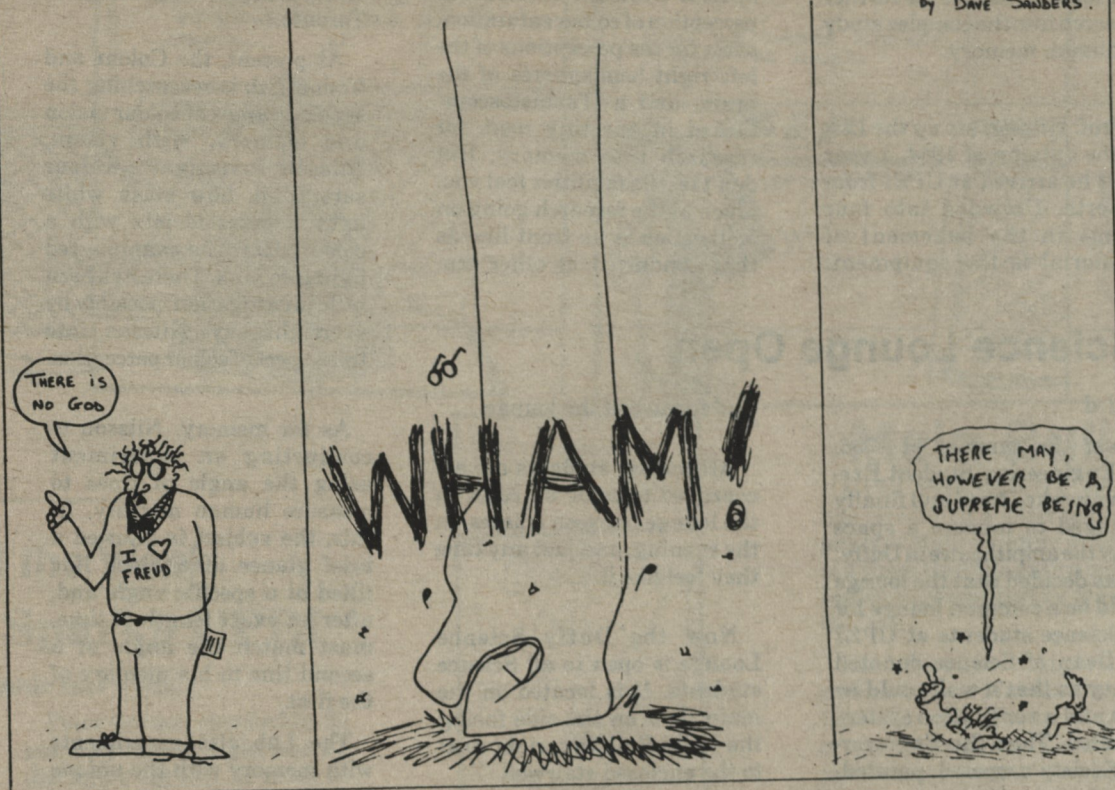


The Lunatic Fringe

By Dave Sanders



BEER SPORTS SPONSORSHIPS MAY BE ON WAY OUT

by Mark Evans
University of Toronto Varsity

TORONTO (CUP) — Brewery sponsorship of university athletics may become a thing of the past if the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) has its way.

The COU, which consists of the presidents of the province's 15 universities, is concerned about student drinking and the relationship between alcohol and athletics.

Earlier this year it asked its members to review their policies on brewery sponsorship of athletic events.

As a result, many athletic departments could find themselves losing lucrative advertising revenue and scrambling for new forms of sponsorship.

William Sayers, COU's Director of Communications, said the recommendation resulted

from the findings of a special committee on athletics.

"It came to their attention," he said, "that the volume of sponsorship and the dollars involved were considerable."

Convincing some universities to give up on this type of revenue might prove to be easier said than done.

Gib Chapman, Director of Athletics and Recreation at U of T, said a move to ban brewery sponsorship would have a large financial impact on U of T's athletic program. He said Labatt's has been heavily involved in at U of T, and a move to stop its sponsorship would result in a huge loss of advertising revenue.

Some universities, however, abandoned brewery sponsorship long before the COU's recommendation.

In 1982, McMaster University's athletic department established a policy of refusing sponsorship from companies promoting beer, wine, or tobacco.

Mary Keyes, McMaster's director of athletics, said allowing such activity was not consistent with what the school was trying to teach its students.

"We feel that in our academic programs we're promoting knowledge of the effects of tobacco on healthy lifestyles," she said, "and to be promoting that through advertising is not very consistent."

She said the total sponsorship package from the breweries was only worth \$15,000, so there was not a large financial loss involved.

Chapman said McMaster's administration made the deci-

sion easier by re-imbursing the athletics department for the money it lost by initiating the policy.

Keyes said her department replaced the lost revenue by actively pursuing other types of corporate sponsorship. One sign of their success, she said, is the new \$30,000 football scoreboard built through the sponsorship of Domino's Pizza and Coca-Cola.

Two years ago Ryerson Polytechnical Institute adopted a similar policy restricting advertisements from beer companies. Chuck Matthews, Assistant Athletics Director at Ryerson, said at one time Labatt's and Molson's were involved in the school's intramural programmes.

"We have gone away from that because we didn't want to

have a reliance on sponsorship from the beer companies to offset our costs. If they pulled out we'd be stuck, so we basically have gone on our own and tried to stay with the policy."

Bruce Pierce, a sales representative for Carling O'Keefe, said if the universities decided not to allow brewery sponsorship, Carling O'Keefe would re-evaluate its promotional activities, including scholarships and bursaries it awards.

Because these awards are presented by the company itself, the total amount of money involved is not known, but Pierce said Carling O'Keefe had student awards at every Ontario university and college. The largest is a \$5000 scholarship awarded to a student in the University of Guelph's Hotel and Food Administration course.

Rick Shaver, a sales representative at Labatt's said his company's actions in the event of a decision to ban brewery sponsorship would not be as drastic.

Beer companies sponsor events and programmes in order to increase their shares of the market, not to recruit new beer drinkers, Pierce said.

"Were not trying to get anybody that's not currently a beer drinker to support our brands of beer," Pierce said.

