

# UPEI makes beer available at sports games

by Marc MacDonald

If you enjoy drinking and watching athletic competition, then UPEI Panther home games may be the place for you this season.

Through a joint initiative of the Athletic Department, Cara foods and the UPEI Student Union, fans will be able to drink in designated areas at most UPEI games this season.

A beer tent with an orange gated area surrounding it is being used to serve soccer fans a little

## It's been well-received.

-Ron Annear

brew as they watch soccer players on the field. Drinkers are able to purchase beer at Student Union prices provided they remain within the designated boundaries.

The Athletic Department was able to add drinking areas to its on campus sports through the Cara foods who has a liquor license. Student Union employees will be working at the sites as Cara foods was unable to supply the personnel to run them.

Traditionally, hockey Panther games were the only University games where fans could drink beer in an official 'wet' section at the Civic Centre.

"We also use the VIP Lounge for special occasions," commented Ron Annear the Athletic Department Marketing Director.

For the winter sports at the Field House Panther enthusiast will be able to enjoy a 'tasty beverage' at the Court Club, a proposed bar that will be located in the back hallway looking down on the squash nets on one side and basketball court on the other side.

Whether or not being able to drink beer at UPEI Panther games will lead to any English

football-style riots or vastly increase student turnout remains to be seen.

"It's been well-received," said Annear when discussing the success of the venture so far. As for increased verbal participation from the crowd in the positive or negative form directed at the officials does not matter said Annear. "As long as it does not affect the playing of the game," he added.

However, not everybody is happy to see beer available at games.

Panther fan Kristen Little explained, "there are lots of kids at UPEI games and I do not think it would be good to have alcohol at the games. It would be different if we had big stadiums like in the United States and other parts of Canada where drinking could be confined to sections."

This leads to the question: would the addition of older university-age fans because of the beer be worth the loss of the younger fans who already attend the games?

When asked if he thought beer at games would increase the number of adult fans, first year men's basketball player Ed Postma said, "a little bit, but not drastically." When questioned as to whether he believed drinking at Panther games was a good idea Postma replied, "if it's done right and they put the right controls on it then its fine."

The success of beer at home games will be tested this season as the Panther green and white compete at their respective venues. Whether the inclusion of alcohol at university competition will remain a permanent fixture or not remains to be seen, but events this season may very well answer this question. □

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