

British Universities Lifesaving Clubs Association

Sensible Drinking Policy

October 2006

Introduction

The 2006 BULSCA AGM suggested the need for a sensible drinking policy for a number of reasons:

- Alcohol consumption is a key component of University Lifesaving post-competition socials;
- Bearing in mind different people's perceptions of peer pressure, it is important that nobody should consider themselves excluded from attending a post-competition social if they do not drink alcohol, or will not do so on a particular occasion;
- It might have been perceived by some that there is implicit peer pressure to consume alcohol in post-competition socials;
- The "drinking games" played in post-competition socials might be seen to encourage excessive alcohol consumption;
- Some "drinking games" (particularly "boat races") have involved free alcohol being used at the expense of all present, which causes those who do not drink alcohol to subsidise this whilst not gaining any consumptive reward for their money;
- This is a current time of intensified health education surrounding alcohol consumption and a perceived social problem of "binge-drinking".

Personal Drinking Habits

There are many reasons why on a particular occasion, a person may not consume alcohol.

- They may never consume alcohol because:
 - They dislike the taste;
 - They prefer sobriety to drunkenness;
 - They or a family member is alcoholic and are at risk of dependency;
 - Of cultural choices.
- Those who do consume alcohol normally, may not consume alcohol on a particular occasion because:
 - They have drunk to full satiety (for now) on this particular occasion;
 - They are unwell;
 - They are on medication which becomes toxic when combined with alcohol;
 - They are driving;
 - They have specific reason to avoid a "hangover" the next day.

The Government suggests that men should aim to drink no more than 3-4 “units” of alcohol per day (women: 2-3 units) and that there are significant health risks involved with exceeding double this on an occasion (men: 9+; women: 7+). A pint of lager or a double vodka equate to 2 “units” of alcohol. However, it is hard to quantify what a dangerous amount of alcohol is for a person because of many physiological variables, and it is necessary to respect personal autonomy in alcohol consumption; therefore this policy necessarily focuses on respecting the choice of not drinking alcohol rather than “policing” high alcohol consumption.

Guidelines for after-competition socials

It should be made explicitly clear in all drinking games that participants can choose to consume **either** alcoholic **or** non-alcoholic (“soft”) drinks.

Social tickets must **only** be spent on the hire of the venue (including decorations) and food; all forms of alcohol (reception drinks; prizes; etc.) should be **excluded** from ticket prices.

Therefore;

- Entrants to boat races must buy their own drinks.
- Clubs may buy bottles of alcohol as gifts (which therefore will not be paid for from competition or social ticket fees) to share amongst social attendees but attendees must choose how much to consume (no “dentist chair” administration of alcohol).

During the post-competition social, the host Club should ensure sufficient people of each sex remain sober throughout the evening in order to assist competitors and guests in any way necessary, particularly to maintain the safety of their person and property.

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