

## Tobacco Sampling Spurs Mont. State To Pass On The College Rodeo Finals

AUDS & ARENAS

By James Zoltak

A rift over chewing tobacco samples has caused Montana State University to say 'thanks, but no thanks' to the return of the College National Finals Rodeo to the school's Brick Breeden Field House.

The event, which began in 1949 and takes place each year in mid-June, had been in Bozeman for 22 of the past 24 years. Two years ago, it moved to the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., when partners Jim Sutton of Sutton Rodeos Inc., out of Oneida, S.D., and David Allan of Champion Sports Group in Charlotte, N.C., made a successful pitch to stage the event.

Disappointing ticket sales have made it impossible to continue in Rapid City, however.

"The promoters didn't do as well as they wanted in terms of ticket sales and local sponsorships and support," said Tim Corfield, commissioner of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Assn., which puts on the CNFR. "The partnership dissolved, so we chose to take a look elsewhere."

In August an agreement was reached to return the event to MSU and Bozeman, but then the tobacco sponsorship issue, as it has else-

where in the sports and entertainment industry, reared its ugly head.

U.S. Tobacco Co.'s Copenhagen/Skoal chewing tobacco is a major sponsor of the CNFR and gives out over \$300,000 annually in scholarship money to participating schools and students. When the announcement was made the CNFR — and its tobacco sponsorship — was returning to MSU, a group called Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids ran a full-page ad in the local paper, urging the school not to "sell out to big tobacco."

Over the years, U.S. Tobacco has given \$3.8 million to the NIRA, Corfield said.

The main sticking point was the handing out of samples of Copenhagen and Skoal chewing tobacco.

After failed attempts at reaching a compromise — such as handing out coupons for free samples in-

stead of the samples themselves, for instance — MSU President Michael Malone decided to pass on the event.

Corfield said he doesn't know where the event will go. A recently raised possibility is for it to move to another facility in Bozeman, which he declined to identify. He said it was a privately owned, 1-year-old building that was built to house an ice hockey team. The NIRA is also talking to other venues outside of Montana.

"Basically, it's an issue of disagreement between the president of MSU and the association," Corfield told AB. "We receive, and have for 24 years, a substantial amount of sponsorship dollars, which go directly to student scholarships, from U.S. Tobacco Co. Our final rodeo was on the campus of MSU for 22 of those 24 years, and

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#### MARKETING

all of the sponsors rights were never at issue before. This time they became an issue. That's the crux of it right there."

Corfield said he questioned why tobacco is an issue now when it hadn't been before.

He said the event draws about 2,000 participants and accounts for at least \$2 million in direct eco-

nomic impact. That's according to the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce, which backed efforts to bring the rodeo back.

Corfield noted MSU allows beer sales at football games and other events on campus.

"If one is talking about vices, it appears one is a vice of choice and one isn't," he said. "Our relationship with U.S. Tobacco has been strictly a scholarship program. They've never asked us to do any-

thing but take their money and spend it on tuition and books. Unfortunately, our purpose is purely educational, and we use college rodeo as a mechanism to promote the earning of degrees and keep young people in school. We're not NCAA Division I football and we know it. It's hard for us to turn our back on a sponsor that has been with us all these years and given us \$3.8 million in scholarship money." □

## A Trip to the Collegiate National Finals Rodeo

By: Corina Bigham, CYAN Rodeo Project Coordinator

On July 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Collegiate National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) in Casper, WY. I am kicking myself for not having gone three years ago when I coordinated the Buck Tobacco project in San Luis Obispo. I now know more about the sport and have a deeper appreciation of the culture surrounding it after attending collegiate rodeo's biggest event.

Since 1974, the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC) has intertwined themselves with collegiate rodeo—a fact made very apparent at this year's CNFR. Company banners occupied every side of the arena; the LCD scoreboard, presumably donated by USSTC, displayed USSTC's logo every time results appeared; the announcer repeatedly thanked USSTC for their financial support; and a sampling tent lured many rodeo attendees and participants into its interior. It is clear USSTC has an "in" with the sport, but that doesn't mean times won't change.



While in Casper, I spoke with the director of Well Being of Wyoming, an agency dedicated to tobacco issues. They have been working hard to document USSTC activity and will some day hand over their findings to Wyoming's attorney general. Through their efforts and the efforts of California college students, we can tackle the issue of sampling tent presence and advertising, with the ultimate goal of severing rodeo's ties with USSTC.

Average	
6 ASHLEY MOREAU	9.8
5 LYDIA MARTIN	9.8
7 KIRBY EPPERT	10.0
8 CEE CEE TRYAN	10.1

Proceeds to support CNFR

However, on a more positive note, rodeo has stepped up to the plate to raise money for breast cancer research through their "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" campaign. This was the CNFR's second year participating in the nationwide campaign, an event where all of the rodeo participants and fans wear pink shirts and a percentage of the proceeds at the gate are donated to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and local chapters of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Over \$4000 was raised at this past CNFR. It is clear rodeo organizers and athletes are

interested in supporting health-related issues, and we hope we can capitalize on this positive shift and encourage the sport to dissociate themselves from a company that causes cancer, namely oral cancer.

For more information on the CNFR or collegiate rodeo issues, contact Corina Bigham at [corina@cyanonline.org](mailto:corina@cyanonline.org) or (916) 339-3424 x24.

*Note: The CNFR is an annual event held in Casper, WY. The event formerly was held at Montana State University until 1998 when the University requested that USSTC no longer distribute free samples of their product on campus grounds. Once this request was made, NIRA promptly dropped Montana State University as the site for the CNFR event.*





# Collegiate Rodeos 101

## NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE RODEO ASSOCIATION

The National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA), established in 1949, is the governing body of collegiate rodeos. NIRA is divided into 11 regions with over 135 colleges and universities having a recognized rodeo organization on their campus.

## CALIFORNIA NIRA MEMBER COLLEGES

There are 7 colleges in California that are active NIRA members - 3 California State University (CSU) colleges and 4 California Community Colleges. These campuses are: Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, CSU Fresno, Feather River College, Lassen College, Questa College, and West Hills College.

## NIRA AND US SMOKELESS TOBACCO

The US Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC) is the title sponsor of NIRA. Since 1974, USSTC has awarded collegiate rodeo athletes with over \$4 million in scholarship prizes.

USSTC Regional awards: Rodeo athletes in each region receive scholarships for placing first or second in the final regional standings in each event and the all around. USSTC provides a yearly total of \$108,900 toward regional awards.

USSTC College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) awards: USSTC awards a total of \$88,700 to rodeo athletes at the CNFR. The top three finishers at the CNFR Qualifying athletes at the CNFR receive an additional \$34,700 divided among the top three finishers at the CNFR. In addition, an impressive \$54,000 is awarded to the top five men's and women's teams at the CNFR.

## USSTC SPONSORSHIP RULES

As part of the NIRA Rule Book, all member schools must agree to honor NIRA national sponsorship contracts and provide certain minimum signage and media exposure to sponsors as required by those contracts.

Up until 1998, the CNFR was held at Montana State University (MSU). In 1998, MSU asked USSTC not to distribute their products at the CNFR. MSU was promptly dropped as the site of the CNFR ending a 25 year tradition of hosting the annual event. The CNFR is now held in Casper, Wyoming.

Two California colleges have policies which do not allow tobacco advertising at their rodeo event. At their spring 2007 events, only one of those colleges (Cal Poly San Luis Obispo) complied with their advertising policy and did not put up USSTC signage. USSTC did not put up their advertisements even though they continue to give Cal Poly athletes' prize money. Reportedly, USSTC agreed to abide by the policy because "this is California."



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## CSU Board of Trustees Begin to Address Tobacco Sponsorship

The issue of tobacco industry advertising and sponsorship is gaining new attention at California State University (CSU). Throughout the past few months, COUGH advocates and partners have successfully forged new relationships within the CSU system as well provided the Board of Trustees with new and relevant information to promote the adoption of a policy prohibiting tobacco advertising and sponsorship.

At the end of April, representatives from CYAN and the American Lung Association of California - Superior Branch met with a CSU Trustee. The Trustee was educated on tobacco industry marketing and sponsorship activities at CSU as well as current efforts to rid CSU campuses of tobacco industry presence. By the end of the meeting, the Trustee expressed his interest in being a proponent for this issue. The Trustee's support on this issue is a tremendous boost to the campaign.

In mid-May, two COUGH representatives presented to the Board of Trustees during public comment time at their regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting. The students reiterated the need for the Trustees to adopt a comprehensive policy which would deny tobacco industry advertising and sponsorship on all CSU campuses. After the comments by the students, the supportive Trustee asked the Chancellor to look into current advertising and sponsorship on the 23 CSU campuses. The Chancellor was asked to report back his findings to the full Board at the July 11 meeting.

Following the Board of Trustee meeting, the California State Student Association (CSSA) Chair approached the COUGH representatives to reiterate their support on this issue. In March 2005, the CSSA unanimously endorsed a resolution to deny tobacco advertising and sponsorship on all CSU campuses. The Chair voiced his concerns over the pictures the COUGH advocates provided the Board of Trustees and the CSSA with of tobacco industry activities at CSU event. These pictures included images from CSU rodeo events and fraternity parties — all sponsored by the US Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC).

The Trustees are scheduled to hear the report back from the Chancellor at their July meeting in Long Beach, CA. If you are interested in attending the meeting or learning more about this campaign, please contact Corina Bigham at (916) 339-3424 x24 or [corina@cyanonline.org](mailto:corina@cyanonline.org).

## Local Collegiate Rodeo Updates

### Cal Poly Pomona Rodeo Update

Despite Cal Poly Pomona's (CPP) policy prohibiting tobacco advertising and marketing at any University activities or events, U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company advertisements were prominently displayed at the CPP rodeo held at the Chino Fairgrounds on March 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Three CPP students are actively working with the appropriate policy enforcement entities on campus to ensure the ads are not displayed next year.

### Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Rodeo Update

The Cal Poly San Luis Obispo rodeo was held on April 20 - April 21. The campus currently has a policy which prohibits tobacco industry advertising at campus events. Student advocates attended the event and were unable to find any tobacco industry advertisements are marketing promotions at the collegiate rodeo. Way to go Cal Poly SLO!



*The above pictures were taken by student advocates at the Cal Poly Pomona rodeo in March.*