



December 20, 2011

To the Orange Bowl Committee and the NCAA:

As public health groups that combat the use of tobacco and its devastating toll on American families every day, we urge the Orange Bowl Committee and the NCAA to cancel a cigar company sponsorship of the Discover Orange Bowl. Tobacco has no place in sports, and the promotion of cigars at such a prestigious sporting event entices youth and young adults, putting them at risk of developing a deadly addiction.

We were deeply disappointed to read the recent announcement by Davidoff of Geneva, parent company of Camacho Cigars, that it has signed a three-year agreement making Camacho Cigars a corporate sponsor of the Orange Bowl Festival, which includes the 2012, 2013 and 2014 Discover Orange Bowls, the 2013 Discover BSC National Championship game and related fan events. The 2013 Discover BCS National Championship game will draw particularly intense fan interest and media attention.

Under the sponsorship agreement, Camacho Cigars will have a substantial presence at Sun Life stadium, with cigar lounges open to fans, and there will be a Camacho Club Lounge at the Orange Bowl Game Day Fan Zone, the largest pre-game event. The Camacho Cigars logo is also featured on the official Orange Bowl website.

The sponsorship should be cancelled because it promotes tobacco use, the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. The association of cigar smoking with one of the nation's top collegiate sporting events sends the wrong message to impressionable young fans and helps market cigars as athletic, masculine and cool. Linking tobacco use to sports also downplays the serious health risks of tobacco products.

This blatant promotion of cigars at a high-profile sporting event continues the tobacco industry's decades-long practice of using sports and entertainment sponsorships to promote tobacco products, especially to youth. Cigarette and smokeless tobacco brand sponsorships are not allowed – for good reason – under the landmark federal law giving the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate tobacco products. The FDA has authority to assert jurisdiction over cigars.

The cigar company sponsorship also is at odds with NCAA rules that forbid student-athletes and all game personnel from using tobacco in any form at practice or in competitions. The NCAA correctly prohibits tobacco use to set a good example for fans and because it leads to a harmful addiction that has deadly consequences. Tobacco has no place in athletics, and certainly should not have a place at the Orange Bowl, one of the nation's premier sporting events.

Cigars contain the same toxic and cancer-causing chemicals found in cigarettes, are addictive and harm health in many ways. According to the National Cancer Institute, cigar smoking causes lung cancer, as well as cancer of the oral cavity, larynx and esophagus. Heavy cigar smokers, especially those who inhale, have an increased risk of heart disease and chronic obstructive respiratory disease (COPD).

It is also important to note that cigar smoking is not limited to adults; it is the second most common form of tobacco use among youth. About 14 percent of high school students – including 18.6 percent of high school boys – smoke cigars, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Florida, more high school students smoked cigars than cigarettes in 2011, state data shows.

The Orange Bowl Committee and the NCAA have an obligation to eliminate the Camacho Cigar sponsorship to protect the health of fans and to ensure that college athletic events provide proper role models for youth. We ask that you do your part to help curb the terrible toll of tobacco use on America's children and families.

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Dental Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
Legacy
Oral Health America