

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Hong Kong Sevens organisers vow to clamp down on underage drinking at annual extravaganza

PUBLISHED : Monday, 10 April, 2017, 6:32pm

UPDATED : Monday, 10 April, 2017, 10:41pm

Sport › Hong Kong

Chan Kin-wa kinwa.chan@scmp.com

Incoming HKRU chief executive Robbie McRobbie acknowledges that the problem is still prevalent despite alcohol laws being put into place

Organisers of the Hong Kong Sevens are determined to crack down on underage drinking at the popular event after teenagers continued to be seen getting alcohol during the three-day event.

Incoming HKRU chief executive Robbie McRobbie said he personally reminded vendors of their responsibilities but acknowledged the problem still existed.

One person was evicted on Friday and only two on Saturday when binge drinking and partying is at its height.

“Obviously we realised there were youngsters who were clearly underage drinking and it’s an issue that we take seriously,” McRobbie said.

“We spoke about it with the stadium management and the police on Friday and I spoke personally to all the concession holders reminding them of the central nature of checking that anybody who they suspect to be underage to check their identity cards.”



Despite the three evictions and 37 verbal warnings over the first two days, underage fans were still buying and consuming alcohol at will.

“This issue will be very high on the agenda of our review and we are determined to continue to take all efforts both as our organisation and collectively to address it,” said McRobbie.

“As a starting point we need to look at what we have done [this weekend] and that should be the baseline from which we go forward.”

[Another Sevens in the Wall as the curtain falls on a weekend of thrills and spills in Hong Kong \[1\]](#)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department , which manages the facility, said on the eve of the event that security guards and patrols would be conducting age checks and that if anyone was found to be underage drinking, they would be evicted immediately.

According to the Stadia Regulation (CAP132BY), no person shall sell any intoxicating liquors to any person under the age of 18 years and no person under the age of 18 years shall consume any



intoxicating liquor in a stadium.

Over the three days, there were, however, numerous young teenagers that could be easily identified on the concourses of the stadium where a series of food and beverage vendors were selling alcohol.

A sales woman at one of the vendors who identified herself only as Ms Yip, said they rejected over 20 suspected underage customers on Saturday.

“We can tell from their faces if they are underage. Most of them turn away immediately but some show us something very interesting ... one produced a hard copy of his identity card which had a blurred image and of course we didn’t accept it.

[Squeezed out of our own event: World Rugby restricts media from Hong Kong Sevens ceremonies \[2\]](#)

“We all understand the rules very well. There is no way we are going to risk our business to allow teenagers under the age of 18 to buy liquor. There are indeed patrols from the LCSD and police to



check customers' ages.”

But Yip believed many of the young customers found others way to obtain beer and other alcoholic drinks.

“They don't have to actually come to the counter as they can ask their senior friends to buy it for them. We can do little about that,” she said.

[What does the Hong Kong Sevens have to do with Hongkongers?](#) [3]

Support group KELY, which has been partnering with the rugby union for six years to raise awareness of alcohol-related issues, said the problem was not going away.

KELY set up two tents and chill-out areas on the stadium concourse to provide a safe, alcohol-free space for young people and to intervene in cases of potential alcohol poisoning.



Photo booths and interactive games were also offered in alcohol-free zones to engage youths in an alternative to drinking alcohol.

“We treated over 30 cases for those who needed our help on Saturday,” said Sky Siu, the group’s executive director. “The problem has been around for a long time and we also query where these youngsters get the liquor which they are not supposed to.”

Topics: Hong Kong Sevens 2017

More on this:

[Near-misses and shattered glasses: Sevens revellers descend on Wan Chai when the action ends](#) [4]

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/sport/hong-kong/article/2086421/hong-kong-sevens-organisers-vow-clamp-down-underage-drinking-annual>

Links

[1] <https://www.scmp.com/sport/rugby/hk-sevens/article/2086202/another-sevens-wall-curtain-falls-weekend-thrills-and-spills>

[2] <https://www.scmp.com/sport/rugby/hk-sevens/article/2086177/squeezed-out-our-own-event-world-rugby-bans-media-hong-kong>

[3] <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2086296/what-does-hong-kong-sevens-have-do-hongkongers>

[4] <http://www.scmp.com/sport/rugby/hk-sevens/article/2086064/near-misses-and-shattered-glasses-sevens-revellers-descend-wan>