

Ball girl's incredible catch is an Internet hit

What was supposed to be an ad, then shelved, wound up on YouTube and elsewhere.

By Chris Hine, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

July 3, 2008

A determined ball girl chases a deep fly ball down the left-field line, knowing she's the only one who can make the play. A video shows her climbing several feet up the wall, turning around at just the right moment and making a spectacular catch as the left fielder watches.

There's only one small problem -- it's fake.



Quite a catch

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- [They too pulled a fast one](#)

The young woman was helped up the wall with cables while creating an advertisement for Gatorade, though the ad was never distributed.

No one is claiming responsibility for [getting the video posted](#), but it has received more than 3.5 million hits on various websites in the last month, Gatorade spokeswoman Jill Kinney said. And that's just fine with the folks involved with the energy drink.

Gatorade ended its association with the agency that created the ad, Element 79, shortly after the video was completed and shelved the campaign.

"We were not planning to release the ball girl video," Kinney said. "However, now that it's out there, we're thrilled with the response it's getting."

Kinney said Gatorade doesn't know who posted the video, and Element 79 said on its website that it had nothing to do with posting the video.

There is no mention of Gatorade in the video, though there is a bottle by the chair where the ball

girl sits near the end of the clip. And Gatorade has clearly become associated with it, to the company's delight.

When the video was initially posted, many viewers questioned whether it was an authentic event, something that was intended when the ad was conceived.

"It had the desired effect of 'Wow, is that real?' " Kinney said. "What we've noticed from the comments is that if people know it's not real then they're still entertained."

The clip is a type of viral video, one that gains traction as people e-mail or message to each other via YouTube or social networking websites such as Facebook or MySpace.

Tom Pirko, president of Bevmark, a Buellton, Calif.-based beverage industry consulting firm, said the key to a successful viral video, such as the ball girl ad, is providing entertainment quickly.

"In the time of YouTube, surprise is compelling, everybody is looking for this quick hit of emotion, everybody wants to have some new sensation and see something that's unusual," Pirko said. "This ad carries along these fun sensations and can translate into some equity for the brand."

So it has been good for Gatorade, and entertaining, but a hoax on those who have watched it and accepted it as a real event.