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Gatorade Scores With 'Ball Girl'

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An online video dubbed "Ball Girl" has been getting a huge viral boost. The video, which began appearing online a few weeks ago, features a ball girl for the Fresno Grizzlies minor-league baseball team scaling the outfield wall to make a stunning catch of a foul ball. She then insouciantly tosses the ball to the left fielder, who looks on disbelievingly, and quietly returns to her seat along the foul line.

The video, which was created by **Omnicom Group's Element 79**, has attracted 1.2 million views on Digg.com alone.

Turns out the spot is a fake. The key to the source of the spot comes at the very end of the ad, as the girl returns to her seat -- a bottle of Gatorade appears briefly at her feet. The ball girl is, in fact, a stunt woman who uses cables to help elevate her in the air, the ad agency says. **Element 79**, which shot the spot in April, intended to release the film online and tried to make the ad look like a homemade video.

The sleeker version of the ad (which was to carry the tagline: "Never Underestimate the Power of Superior Hydration") was supposed to air on TV. But the spot and online video were never green-lighted because the Chicago agency was dropped from PepsiCo's Gatorade and Tropicana ad account, according to Dennis Ryan, chief creative officer at **Element 79**. He says he doesn't know how the spot made its way to the Web -- nor does Gatorade.

"We didn't put the Ball Girl video out there but clearly we are pleasantly surprised at all the attention," says a spokeswoman for Gatorade.

Creating the ad was no easy feat. The agency says it had to wait for just the right foul ball to left field during the game and then had to persuade more than 1,500 fans to stay after the game ended so it could shoot the stunt woman making her leap and the crowd reacting.

While Element 79 has done many well-known ads for sports drinks over the years, PepsiCo executives had been dissatisfied with **Element 79's** recent creative work, according to a person familiar with the matter. The Gatorade business was shifted to Omnicom's TBWA/Chiat/Day.