



As more high school students participate in online sports betting, through apps such as Caesars, DraftKings and FanDuel, gambling addiction experts worry about the effects on youth. Lawmakers in several states are pushing schools to offer curriculum on gambling addiction.

Star Max via The Associated Press

With online and retail sports betting now legal in more than 30 states, the portrait of a new problem gambler is emerging: the high school student.

Although the legal age for gambling ranges from 18 to 21 depending on the state, between 60% and 80% of high school students report having gambled for money in the past year, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling. The group says the pandemic and easy access to online gambling have heightened risks for young adults.

And 4% to 6% of high schoolers are considered addicted to gambling, the group says.

“We believe that the risks for gambling addiction overall have grown 30% from 2018 to 2021, with the risk concentrated among young males 18 to 24 who are sports bettors,” said Keith Whyte, the council’s executive director, in an interview. The council is a nonprofit group that advocates for helping problem gamblers but is neutral on legalized gambling.

The percentage of high school students with a gambling problem is double that of adults, research has found. About 5% of all young people between 11 and 17 meet at least one of the criteria for a gambling problem, such as liking the rush felt when gambling, writing IOUs

to stay in the game and wanting to win “the big one” so much that they keep playing even when losing a great deal.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way to legal sports betting in 2018, states have raced to open the taps of tax revenue from the practice. Thirty states and the District of Columbia have live, legal sports betting, and five more states have live sports betting on the way.

Support for the practice has grown: About two-thirds of recently surveyed adults approved of legalizing betting on professional sports, up from 55% in 2017, according to polling from *The Washington Post* and the University of Maryland. However, roughly 60% of respondents said they were concerned that the increasing availability of sports betting will lead to children gambling.

But as sports betting becomes pervasive—in brick-and-mortar betting parlors and, often, for anyone with a cell phone—state gambling addiction services are underfunded, Whyte and state administrators say, and their focus is on adults.

“Kids who have problems fall through the cracks,” Whyte said.

There’s a growing recognition among state legislators and health departments that the youngest gamblers need help, but that awareness has yet to materialize into widespread gambling prevention programs for youth, according to Whyte and other experts.

“Children and young people are the fastest-growing segment of gamblers,” said Virginia Del. Sam Rasoul, a Democrat, who this year sponsored the first state law in the country requiring all public schools to teach students about the risks of gambling.

“I had some Virginia families contact me, saying, ‘This is a problem, what should we do about it?’” he said in an interview.

Rasoul’s law, which had nearly unanimous support in the legislature, requires the state Board of Education to develop and distribute to all school divisions educational materials on gambling as part of the existing curriculum on substance misuse. Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed the measure in April.

“This is a problem that needs to be addressed,” Rasoul said. “It’s a great first step for Virginia.”

Brianne Doura-Schawohl, a lobbyist on problem gambling issues, strongly supports Virginia’s new law as a first step, but asked: “Is it going to be enough to move the needle? I’m not sure.

“What we’re not taking into account,” she said, “is the normalization in our culture of gambling, and how quickly that’s happened—practically overnight—and how that affects the kids.”

Neither the federal government nor the states battle gambling addiction like they take on alcohol, drug and tobacco addiction. Gambling is regulated by the states, and no federal agency has responsibility for prevention and treatment of problem gambling. None of the \$7.6 billion in annual federal gambling tax revenue currently goes to help prevent or treat gambling addiction, according to the council.

“The vast majority of American kids never receive a focused message on the dangers of gambling addiction,” Whyte said.

In 2021, commercial gambling paid \$11.69 billion in direct state and local gambling taxes, reports the American Gaming Association.

And yet, gambling prevention and treatment programs in the states are a patchwork. The 40 states that allocated any funds for gambling services in 2016 spent a total of \$73 million—an average of 37 cents per capita, according to the National Association of Administrators for Disordered Gambling Services, whose members distribute the funds.

Since then, two more states have allocated funds, and a study publishing in late July by the association is expected to show a few pennies more in per capita spending for the 42 states.

Drug and alcohol addiction are seven times more prevalent than gambling addiction, but states allocate 318 times more for drug and alcohol services than for gambling services, said Linda Graves, executive director of the group.

Gambling is any game or activity in which someone risks money or something else of value in hopes of winning money—including scratch cards, lotteries, bingo, dice and card games, casino games, some internet wagering and sports betting.

“A lot of youth don’t think of gambling as a problem. They don’t think it’s a risky behavior,” said Heather Eshleman, who, as prevention manager at the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, works with teens in several community settings.

“They say the stores don’t care if they try to buy a lottery ticket. And nobody talks about it—not their doctor, not their school—they’ve never heard messages in those settings,” she said. But teens do receive a barrage of gambling ads on their phones, on TV and on the radio.

In Maryland, where mobile sports betting is expected to go live this fall, Republican state Sen. Bryan Simonaire said, “We should be informing young people of the dangers.”

Simonaire, the Senate minority leader, has tried for the past three years to pass a bill authorizing the Maryland Board of Education to prepare a problem gambling curriculum that local school districts could use, if they choose, in high schools.

His first bill in 2020 would have required curriculum use, but after pushback from teachers’ groups, he made the teaching optional. His bill passed the Senate before COVID-19 upended the session. For the following two years, though, his bills have failed to get out of committee.

“The education community lobbied for casinos, to have money for education, and legislators pushed for gambling as a way to help education,” Simonaire said in an interview. “The point I made is, you got all this money, and now you have a moral obligation to inform and to teach kids to see the warning signs.”

He is also personally passionate about the issue: “My father ended up penniless because of gambling.”

His father was a millionaire who moved to Arizona and would fly to Las Vegas to gamble for fun, Simonaire said, but when a casino opened 5 miles from his home, “that’s when he had the problem. He was a wonderful person, but we all have issues in life.”

In West Virginia, Democratic state Del. Sean Hornbuckle, a professional financial adviser, tried this year to create a three-year pilot program in five public high schools to teach about problem gambling in a financial literacy class. The bill quietly died in the Republican-controlled education committee. He plans to try again, potentially with a GOP co-sponsor.

How much information youth get about gambling varies greatly, in part depending on where they live.

“We were starting to hear and see that the risk for teens with gambling disorder was high,” said Rose Blozinski, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling, a nonprofit affiliated with the national council. “We thought it was better to give the information to them sooner rather than later.”

So, in 2015, the Wisconsin council developed a free, 45-minute gambling prevention class for high schools. Last year, the council created a similar video presentation for virtual schooling. About 16,500 students have seen one or both presentations.

Since 2011, North Carolina has offered the Stacked Deck program to students in about three dozen middle and high schools and community centers. Stacked Deck consists of six lessons of 30 to 45 minutes, each a week apart. Students learn about the history of gambling, probability theory and other aspects of gambling through role-playing, designing posters and producing videos with gambling prevention messages.

“Problem gambling is not a sexy topic. Teachers have to be committed,” said Amanda Winters, problem gambling administrator in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Teachers conduct pre- and post-tests and follow up in six months. More than 9% of middle school students who participated in 2020 said their gambling had led to serious psychological, financial and legal consequences and impaired their functioning. The follow-up indicated students’ attitudes changed and they gambled less.

“We don’t want them to gamble at all, but we say, ‘If you’re going to gamble, gamble wisely,’” Winters said. “And know when to stop.”

STATELINE ARTICLE

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Sports betting is now legal in Ohio. Experts worry about a rise in gambling addiction

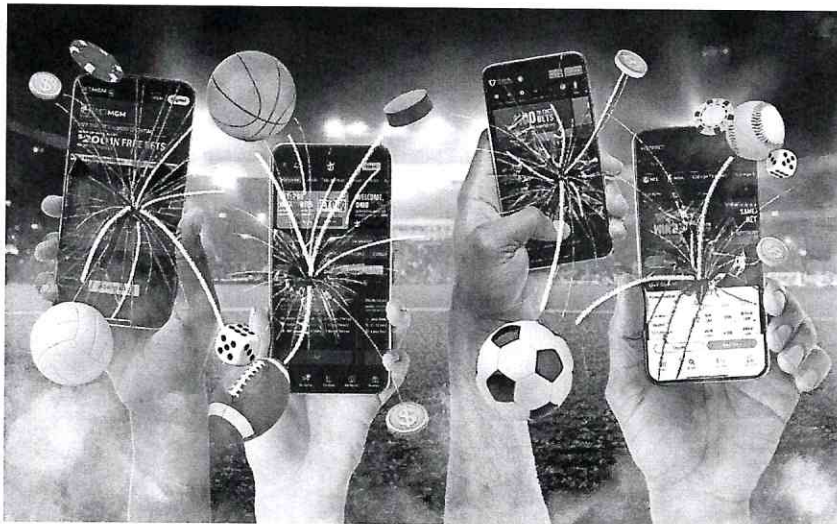
Ideastream Public Media | By Abigail Bottar

Published January 4, 2023 at 6:00 AM EST



suicide # →

LISTEN • 1:10



Lauren Green / Ideastream Public Media

Sports betting became legal in Ohio on Jan. 1. Experts are warning this will lead to an increase in problem gambling.

On Jan. 1, Ohio became one of the latest states to legalize sports betting. More than three fifths of the country has made this move in recent years. These states have seen a massive increase in problem gambling, Problem Gambling Network of Ohio Associate Director Mike Buzzelli said.

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He warns what to watch out for.

"It's going to be very similar warning signs to any other addiction," Buzzelli said.

That includes spending more time and more money gambling, restlessness, irritability, isolation, borrowing money, lying and mood changes. Untreated gambling addictions can have serious outcomes, said Bill Newberry, a problem gambling and substance abuse counselor at Townhall II in Kent .

"It's also the highest rate of suicide of any addiction," Newberry said.

One in five people who struggle with problem gambling commit suicide, Buzzelli said, and it's likely that sports betting is more addicting than other forms of gambling.

"When more folks are engaging in it and at higher levels, we see problem gambling rates go up, so we obviously are adding a new form," Buzzelli said. "We're making a new previously illegal form legal, but we're also making it incredibly accessible."

As of Jan. 1, people not only can place bets on sporting events at in-person betting facilities, they can also place bets on their phones.

"When individuals again have that ease or accessibility, then they can bet more often and quicker," Buzzelli said, "and what I can say is that when we're betting quick, then that becomes more addictable, right?"

The culture around sports isn't going to help sports betting's addictiveness, Newberry said.

"Because people are so obsessed with sports already, there's a possibility of it becoming more addicting," Newberry said.

Another concern Buzzelli has is sports betting's impact on college athletes. Sports fans will be able to bet on every move athletes make, which Buzzelli worries will put too much pressure on young student athletes. The Problem Gambling Network of Ohio advocated for sports betting to not include betting on Ohio college sports, but he said that never was going to be possible.

This wraps into another concern Buzzelli has: college-aged men being the most susceptible to problem gambling. Newberry warns men in this age group who already participate in betting will be more prone to gambling addictions.

"It's more the people who are already doing some betting who are going to get in trouble," Newberry said.

Most college students can't legally place bets, as the age to legally gamble is 21 in the state. Newberry worries that underage gambling will be an issue.

"That possibility is pretty high, especially because on the mobile apps you can lie about your age or you can sign in under somebody else's name and date of birth," Newberry said.

Treatment for problem gambling is accessible and effective, both Buzzelli and Newberry said.

One effective tool Newberry often suggests to his clients is the Voluntary Exclusion Program, where people can ban themselves from casinos and racinos for different amounts of time.

"That will be connected to sports gambling so the sports books that are in those venues and the ability to download the apps and things like that," Buzzelli said.

Ohio is ready to take on problem gambling with the legalization of sports betting, Buzzelli and Newberry said. They feel hopeful the precautions and laws in place will help prevent and provide treatment to those struggling.

"The one thing I can say about Ohio is we are known as one of the number one states in the country in problem gambling treatment and prevention," Newberry said.

One example of problem gambling prevention in the state is the way sports betting companies advertise. Advertisements right now tout risk free bets, but that will change once it's legalized.

"Come Jan. 1, they won't be able to advertise risk free bet," Buzzelli said, "because every bet has a risk involved in it."

If you or someone you know is struggling with problem gambling, contact the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-589-9966. And if you or someone you know is considering suicide, please call the suicide prevention lifeline at 9-8-8.

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Abigail Bottar

Abigail Bottar covers Akron, Canton, Kent and the surrounding areas for Ideastream Public Media. A Northeast Ohio native and lifelong listener of public radio, Abigail started in public radio as a news intern at WKSU. She graduated in 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Kent State University.

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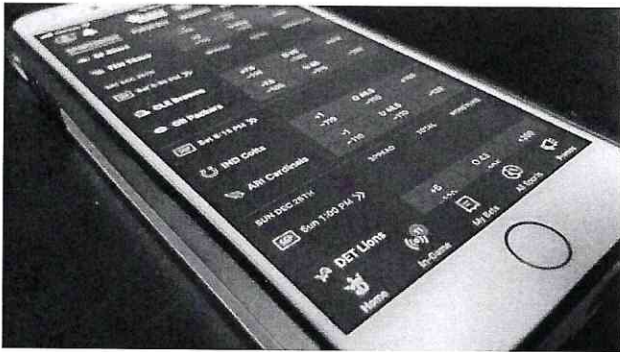


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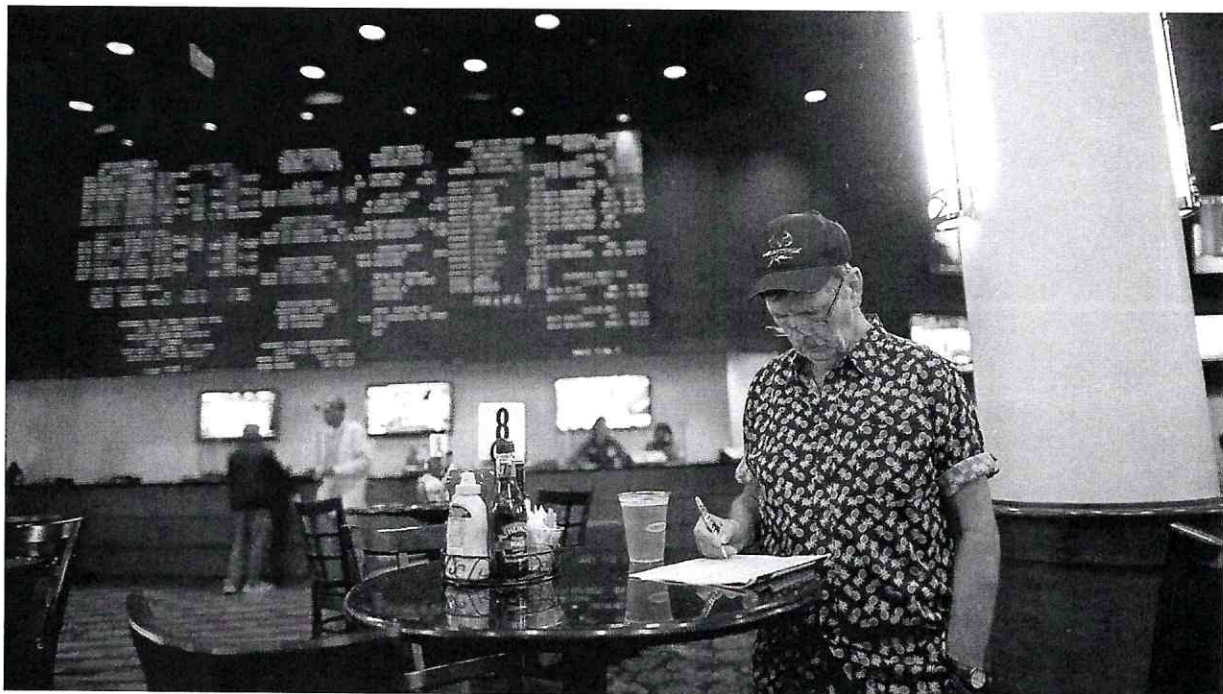
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SEPTEMBER 14, 2022



As more states legalize the practice, 19% of U.S. adults say they have bet money on sports in the past year

BY JOHN GRAMLICH



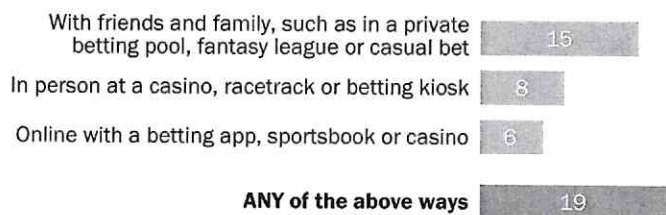
A man reviews a betting guide after placing a wager at the Harrington Raceway and Casino in Harrington, Delaware. (Mark Makela/Getty Images)

Around one-in-five U.S. adults (19%) say they have personally bet money on sports in some way in the last 12 months, whether with friends or family, in person at a casino or other gambling venue, or online with a betting app, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

The survey comes more than four years after the Supreme Court effectively legalized commercial sports betting in the United States. As of this month, 35 states and the District of Columbia have authorized the practice in some form, with Massachusetts becoming the latest state to do so in August.

Betting with friends and family is the most commonly reported form of sports gambling in the U.S.

% of U.S. adults who say they have personally bet money on sports in the following ways in the last 12 months



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

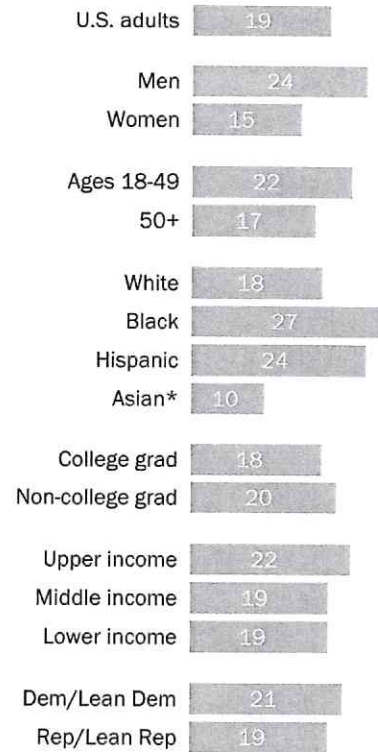
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Despite the growth of commercial sports betting in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2018 ruling, the most common way that Americans bet on sports is with friends or family, according to the Center's survey, which was fielded July 5-17 among 6,034 adults. Some 15% of adults say they have bet money on sports with friends or family in the last 12 months, such as in a private betting pool, fantasy league or casual bet. Smaller shares say they have bet money on sports in person at a casino, racetrack or betting kiosk in the past year (8%) or that they have done so online with a betting app, sportsbook or casino (6%). All told, 19% of adults have bet money on sports in at least one of these ways in the past year.

How we did this ⊕

Black and Hispanic Americans are among the groups most likely to report betting on sports

% of U.S. adults who say they have personally bet money on sports in the last 12 months with friends or family, in person at a casino, racetrack, or betting kiosk, or online



*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2020 earnings. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

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Men are more likely than women (24% vs. 15%) to say they have bet on sports in some form in the past year, as are adults under the age of 50 when compared with those 50 and older (22% vs. 17%). There are also differences by race and ethnicity: Black (27%) and Hispanic adults (24%) are more likely than White (18%) and Asian American adults (10%) to report doing so.

There are no significant differences in self-reported sports betting by educational attainment or household income level. For example, 18% of college graduates say they have bet on sports in some way in the past year, as have 20% of non-college graduates. Similar shares of adults in upper-income (22%), middle-income (19%) and lower-income households (19%) say they have bet on sports in the past year.

There is also no significant difference by party affiliation: 21% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they have bet on sports in some way in the last 12 months, as have 19% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents.

Public awareness of legal sports betting

Overall, 56% of adults say they have read or heard a lot (12%) or a little (44%) about the fact that sports betting is now legal in much of the country, while 44% say they have read or heard nothing at all about it.

Awareness of legalized sports betting varies by demographic group. Men are far more likely than women to say they have read or heard at least a little about it (69% vs. 44%). Americans ages 50 and older, those with a college degree and those in upper-income households are also among the groups who are more likely to have read or heard about it.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Americans who have read or heard a lot about the widespread legalization of sports betting in the U.S. are far more likely than other Americans to say they personally have bet on sports in the past year. Among this group of Americans, nearly half (46%) report betting on sports in some way in the past year, compared with 23% of those who have read or heard only a little and just 9% of those who have read or heard nothing at all about the fact that sports betting is now legal in much of the country.

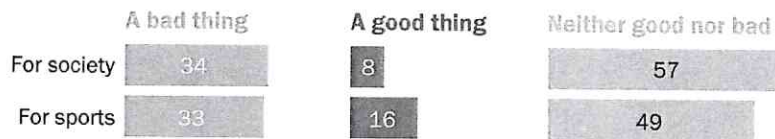
Perceptions about legal sports betting's effect on society, sports

The widespread legalization of sports betting has created a new revenue stream for many state governments, but it has also raised concerns about gambling addiction and other societal harms.

So how do Americans feel about the fact that sports betting is now legal in much of the U.S.? Regardless of how much they have heard or read about it, a majority of adults (57%) say it is neither a good nor bad thing for society, while about a third (34%) say it is a bad thing. Only 8% say it is a good thing for society.

Few Americans see the widespread legalization of sports betting as a good thing for society or for sports

% of U.S. adults who say the fact that betting on sports is now legal in much of the country is ...



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

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The public is slightly more divided on a separate question about whether the widespread legalization of sports betting is a good or bad thing for *sports*. Around half of Americans (49%) say the fact that sports betting is now legal in much of the country is neither a good nor bad thing for sports, while a third say it is a bad thing for sports and 16% say it is a good thing.

On these questions, too, there are some demographic differences. Americans 50 and older are more likely than adults under 50 to say that legalized sports betting is a bad thing for both society (41% vs. 27%) and sports (38% vs. 29%). College graduates and those in upper-income households are also more likely to see the widespread legalization of sports betting as a bad thing for both society and sports.

While there are no significant partisan differences on most of the Center's questions related to sports betting, one such divide does appear on the question of whether legalized sports betting is a good or bad thing for society. Republicans are slightly more likely than Democrats to say this is a bad thing for society (38% vs. 31%). Still, more than half in both groups (54% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats) see it as neither a good nor bad thing for society.

Note: Here are the questions used for this analysis, along with responses, and its methodology.

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NCAA
(see pg 4 on
"normalizing gambling")

Mind, Body and Sport: Gambling among student-athletes

AN EXCERPT FROM THE SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT-ATHLETE MENTAL WELLNESS

By Jeffrey L. Derevensky and Tom Paskus

Gambling remains one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, with multinational corporations investing billions of dollars to attract customers. While age restrictions exist in most jurisdictions (the age often is dependent upon the type of gambling), it is an activity in which many colleges students participate.

Most individuals gamble legally, occasionally and in a generally responsible manner (that is, setting and maintaining time and money limits). However, for a small but identifiable subset of youth, gambling can quickly escalate out of control and affect both psychological and physical well-being.

Excessive, problematic or pathological gambling has been repeatedly shown to result in consequences that can include deviant anti-social behaviors, decreased academic performance, impaired athletics performance, and criminal and legal problems.

Generally, the social and problem gambling experiences of college student-athletes are similar to those of other youth gamblers. Results of a 2012 study that the NCAA commissioned found that 57 percent of male student-athletes and 39 percent of female student-athletes reported gambling in some form during the past year, with those student-athletes in Division I reporting the lowest incidence of gambling (50 percent for males; 30 percent for females).

While pathological gambling is a problem that affects relatively few student-athletes, it is nonetheless a persistent health concern for some individuals: 1.9 percent of males and 0.2 percent of female student-athletes are exhibiting some clinical signs of problem gambling, placing them at extremely high risk for mental health issues.



SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE

from betting money on any sporting event (college, professional or otherwise) in which the NCAA conducts collegiate championships. Violations of this regulation can result in a student-athlete losing his or her athletics eligibility, which has clear negative repercussions for the individual and his or her team.

Despite NCAA regulations prohibiting sports wagering for money, 26 percent of male student-athletes report doing just that, with 8 percent gambling on sports at least monthly. Of particular concern is the culture surrounding golf, where on-course wagering is considered a normative aspect of the experience. Males who participate in NCAA golf are approximately three times more likely to wager on sports (or engage in other gambling behaviors) than other student-athletes.

While most student-athlete sports wagering occurs solely among friends and teammates, many are now placing bets with online sites or using bookmakers they can access easily via their smartphone. Technology is also allowing outside gamblers seeking “inside” betting information easier access to college student-athletes (for example, through social media). Nearly 1 in 20 Division I men’s basketball student-athletes in the 2012 study reported having been contacted for such inside information.

Unlike other more publicized addictive behaviors (for example, alcohol, drug abuse, tobacco consumption), gambling problems often go undetected. It is important that student-athletes and athletics personnel understand that a gambling problem parallels other addictive behaviors. Helping student-athletes with a gambling disorder requires education, early assessment, an acknowledgment of a potential problem and effective referrals into the mental health care system.

The ability to identify the college-age problem gambler may be more difficult today because more of it is occurring online. But two-thirds of student-athletes believe that teammates are aware when a member of the team is gambling. They also report that the coach has a strong influence on tolerance for gambling behaviors and for empowering members of the team to intervene when a teammate needs help. Athletics departmental personnel, including athletic trainers and coaches, are in a unique position to observe and interact with student-athletes on a daily basis and help refer student-athletes for the appropriate assistance should such a need arise.

Gambling behaviors among male student-athletes

2004 STUDY		2008 STUDY		2012 STUDY	
PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +	PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +	PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +



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Slots	19.8%	3.6%	15.1%	2.0%	11.9%	1.8%
Lottery tickets	36.2%	11.1%	31.4%	9.1%	35.2%	11.1%
Played stock market	10.2%	4.7%	9.2%	4.5%	7.4%	3.6%
Commercial bingo	6.5%	0.9%	6.9%	1.1%	5.3%	1.2%
Gambled in casino	-	-	22.9%	3.8%	18.7%	3.3%
Bet on sports	23.5%	9.6%	29.5%	9.6%	25.7%	8.3%
Casino games on Internet for money	6.8%	2.8%	12.3%	4.7%	7.5%	1.9%

Percentages displayed are cumulative rather than independent. A student-athlete reporting having wagered "once/month or more" is also included in the "past year" figure.

Gambling behaviors among female student-athletes

	2004 STUDY		2008 STUDY		2012 STUDY	
	PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +	PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +	PAST YEAR	1/MONTH +
Played cards for money	19.0%	4.4%	10.7%	1.3%	5.3%	0.6%
Bet horses, dogs	4.8%	0.4%	3.2%	0.1%	2.8%	0.2%
Games of personal skill	14.1%	3.2%	7.2%	1.2%	4.0%	0.7%
Dice, craps	3.5%	0.7%	2.2%	0.3%	2.0%	0.3%
Slots	14.3%	1.3%	9.9%	0.5%	8.4%	0.6%
Lottery tickets	29.7%	5.4%	24.0%	3.5%	30.5%	5.1%
Played stock market	3.5%	1.3%	2.1%	0.6%	1.1%	0.4%



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money	2.1%	0.8%	1.9%	0.2%	1.8%	0.3%
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Percentages displayed are cumulative rather than independent. A student-athlete reporting having wagered "once/month or more" is also included in the "past year" figure.

Q&A with Jeff Derevensky

When it comes to understanding the effects of gambling behavior on student-athletes (or the population in general), few people are more knowledgeable than Jeff Derevensky, the director of the International Center for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University in Montreal.

Following is a Q&A that probes Derevensky's insights on gambling behaviors.

Question: What are the most alarming trends you've seen to date?

Jeff Derevensky: There are several. Perhaps the one from which all others emerge is the global normalization of the behavior. The gambling industry has done a terrific job in that regard - they don't even call themselves gambling anymore. Now it's "gaming." They're selling entertainment. They've gotten away from the sin-and-vice image that had been associated with gambling to where it's now a normal socially acceptable behavior. TV also has done a remarkable job advertising gambling, not just through sports but through poker tournaments. ESPN has been able to develop inexpensive programming along those lines that has attracted millions of people. The electronic forms of gambling have made it accessible to the average person 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Even the government is in on the act, supporting lotteries as an easy kind of "voluntary taxation."

Self-reported personal beliefs of student-athletes about sports wagering

(all divisions, among student-athletes who reported wagering on sports in the last year)

2012 STUDY	MALES	FEMALES
Most athletes in college violate NCAA sports-wagering rules	59%	48%
Wagering is acceptable as long as you don't wager on your own sport	57%	41%
Coaches see wagering as acceptable as long as you don't bet on your own games	41%	26%
Athletes and coaches take NCAA sports-wagering rules seriously	62%	68%



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JD: The landscape has changed dramatically. There are more states with casinos than ever before. When the NCAA initiated its first gambling task force in 2003, only Nevada and New Jersey had casinos. Now there are plenty of casinos in Florida, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Louisiana and many other states. Also, electronic forms of gambling are becoming increasingly popular. In 2003, very few people even thought of gambling online. Now you can wager virtually on anything online. There were odds on what Prince William and Kate Middleton were going to name their baby. You can gamble on who's going to be the next pope, or the next president. There were odds on where Angelina Jolie would adopt her next child from. In that vein, there is now live in-game betting - odds generated in real time for participants to bet on various aspects of a game as it unfolds. About 10 percent of male student-athletes in the 2012 study who wager on sports have engaged in live in-game betting. "Spot fixing" is another one. Spot fixing is just a single midgame event or portion of a contest needing to be fixed for a bet to pay off. It's generally seen as easier to do and harder to detect than manipulating a final outcome.

Q: What about the technology? Has gambling through social media become pervasive?

JD: Simulated forms of gambling - often referred to as "practice sites" - that's the new phenomenon. We currently don't know if there's a causal relationship between simulated forms of gambling (for virtual currency) and actual gambling. We do know, however, that as simulated gambling goes up, so does actual gambling and gambling-related problems.

Percentage of student-athletes reporting that they played simulated gambling activities in the past year

	MALES	FEMALES
Played activity via video game console	18.2%	4.8%
Played activity via social media website	12.0%	4.2%
Played activity via Internet gambling site	10.3%	2.4%
Played activity on a cell phone	14.5%	5.4%
Played a free sports-betting or bracket game online	11.7%	2.2%

Q: What do you mean by simulated forms of gambling?



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real money, look how much I would have made. One of the most interesting findings we've recently found in terms of motivation for gambling is that children, teens and even young adults are gambling either for virtual or real money to relieve boredom. It's just a click away.

Q: How do audiences accept you when you're presenting around the world?

JD: These days, the most receptive crowd is the industry itself. Years ago, I gave a talk to the Internet gambling industry and they regarded me as a pariah. Somebody in the audience emailed me afterward in fact and said that while it was an interesting presentation, why was I walking back and forth across the stage so much? I answered, "It's harder to hit a moving target." Now, the industry is looking at "responsible gaming." They are concerned about keeping players safe; making sure that people don't lose their homes, drop out of school, get involved in illegal behaviors or commit suicide because they're overwhelmed by their gambling problems. Nobody wants that.

Q: What about the reception from colleges and universities?

JD: It's a little more under the radar at the collegiate level. Most people are more familiar with drug and alcohol issues and violence on campus. But gambling is just like alcohol. While it's a normalized behavior - for example, with drinking, the message is "as long as you're old enough and you drink responsibly, then you're OK." But you can't become an alcoholic if you don't start drinking. And you can't become a problem gambler if you don't start gambling. At the youth level, authorities talk with young people about drinking, but not about gambling. We do need more prevention, education, awareness and treatment programs for our youth and their parents.

Q: What's your advice for colleges and universities now?

JD: First of all, don't ignore it. Does it affect, or is it harmful to, the majority of your student population? Probably not. But is it negatively affecting at least some of your students? Absolutely. I was with a university president once whose school had collected research on gambling behaviors on campus, but he said he wasn't going to release the results. I asked him why, and he said he couldn't trust "gambling researchers" because they would make a big deal of three people out of 5,000 having a problem. I said I understood, but I added that by not releasing the findings, people think you've got something to hide. That convinced him to be more transparent. Just like most campuses have policies on drugs and alcohol, they need a policy on gambling.

Q: What is a good way to spot problem gambling behavior?



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credible, then problematic gambling might be at the root of these behaviors.

Q: Are there approaches on campus that are known to work?

JD: Student-athletes report that coaches and teammates are their primary influences, so programs targeting those people – particularly coaches – are helpful. I like the idea of involving student services groups as well. The more campus-wide involvement, the better. This is a more general student issue, and not one that affects only student-athletes. It's important to understand that what starts off as a fun, harmless activity can lead to other serious problems. One or two out of 100 college students having a problem isn't likely to set the world on fire, but if you approach the gambling issue as being among a number of things that can negatively impact student health and well-being, then your odds of resonating, so to speak, are much greater. It's important to remember that every problem gambler tends to seriously impact a dozen other people: boyfriends, girlfriends, peers, teammates, coaches, parents and employers. And for student-athletes, it can jeopardize their eligibility.

Most effective ways to influence student-athletes not to wager on sports

(as reported by student-athletes who have wagered on sports in the past year)

RANK	MALES	FEMALES
1	Coach	Teammates
2	Teammates	NCAA penalties
3	NCAA penalties	Coach
4	Pro athlete presentation	Pro athlete presentation
5	Parents	Law enforcement presentation
6	Athletics department info	Athletics department info

Jeff Derevensky is the director of the International Center for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University in Montreal. The National Center for Responsible Gaming recently honored Derevensky with its coveted Scientific Achievement Award, one of dozens of accolades he has earned from his research over time. He and NCAA Principal Scientist Tom Paskus co-authored the 2008 and 2012 NCAA studies on student-athlete wagering behaviors.



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He received his Ph.D. and M.A. in quantitative psychology from the University of Virginia, and an M.B.A. in psychology from Dartmouth College.



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