

STUDENT ATHLETES

Gambling Among College Student Athletes (Cross & Vollano, 1999)

- Seventy-two percent of student athletes have gambled at least once since entering college; forty-five percent of male athletes gamble on sports.
- One in 20 male student athletes admitted providing inside information for gambling purposes, bet on a game in which they participated, or accepted money for performing poorly in a game.
- Student athletes who gambled on sports with bookies gamble an average of \$225 per month.

Dangers of Student Athlete Betting

- Athletic and academic failure
- Crime
- Relationship problems
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Debt
- Suicide

NCAA Gambling Rules for Student Athletes (www.ncaa.org)

- Student athletes “shall not knowingly participate in sports wagering activities or provide information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition.”
- “A student-athlete who participates in any sports wagering activity through the Internet, a bookmaker or a parlay card shall be ineligible for all regular-season and postseason competition for a minimum of a period of one year...”

Stage Theory of Gambling Addiction in Athletes (Miller et al., 2001)

Winning

- Gambler continues to win as a risk taker.
- Leads to increasingly skillful betting, playing, risk-taking.
- Increases confidence & enthusiasm about risks taken.
- Sensation seeking quality to risks, leading to more competitive spirit.
- Winning reinforces belief that skill can lead to more success in gambling as it does with competitive sport.
- Developing "compulsion" to gamble due to successes and wishes to increase skill.

Losing

- Athlete bets compulsively and "chases" to get money back that has been lost.
- Athlete gambler falls deeply into debt.
- Borrows money.

- Sometimes includes point shaving that improve control gambler has over sporting events outcomes.
- Hope exists that losses will be won back.
- Athlete gambler tries to hide losses from family.

Desperation

- Gambling continues with all-consuming intensity.
- Apparent disregard for family, friends, job.
- Irritability, hypersensitivity, restlessness.
- Depression.
- Diminished interest in usual activities or hobbies.
- Sleep disturbance, weight change, fatigue.

Signs of a Problem Sports Gambler

- Excessive use of Internet or phone calls to 900-number services.
- Obsession with point spreads or "fantasy" scores.
- Unusual interest in obscure games or shifting of allegiances of teams.
- Association with other sports bettors.
- Frequently borrowing money from friends or family.
- Defensive when questioned about gambling behavior.
- Debts, unpaid bills, financial troubles.
- After losing, desiring to bet again to win back losses.

Identifying the Problem and Getting Help

- Provide screening for athletes as part of a routine annual physical.
- As a primary, inexpensive measure, use Lie/Bet questions (Johnson, Hamer, Nora, Tan, Eistenstein, & Englehart, 1988) to rule out problem gambling behaviors:
 - Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?
 - Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled?
- If positive response to one or both questions, call the helpline numbers listed below.
- Develop a comprehensive Code of Conduct for athletes that specify standards for activities such as gambling.
- Provide athletes with awareness education, including available help resources for gambling and other disorders.

Did You Know...?

Nevada and Oregon are the only states where sports betting is legal (only the State Lottery form in Oregon is legal). In 1999, it was estimated that as much \$380 billion each year is illegally wagered on sporting events (NORC, 1999).

Famous College Gambling Incidents

- 2003, University of Washington: Football head coach Rick Neuheisel fired for participating in a NCAA basketball betting pool.
- 1997, Arizona State: Two basketball players pleaded guilty to point shaving on four home games. Fifteen of 22 fraternities turned up in records of an illegal gambling ring on campus.
- 1996, Boston College: Thirteen football players were suspended for gambling on games; two players were found to have bet against their own team.
- 1995, University of Maryland: Five football players, including the starting quarterback, were suspended for gambling on sports.
- 1994/1995, Northwestern: Two players, one a starting running back on the football team and the other a starting guard on the basketball team, were suspended for betting on college games.

If you suspect a student athlete has a gambling problem call:

**The Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA Helpline at
1-800-GAMBLER**

Don't wait for the problem to get worse!