

How Gambling Works

Get the facts. Take a minute and get to know how gambling works. Learning about gambling involves understanding three concepts: randomness, odds, and house advantage.

That's so...Random

All legalized forms of gambling are random. Random means something that has no pattern. This means that you can't predict what will happen next. For example, if you roll one die you might be able to guess what number will be rolled but you really can't predict what that number will be.

Part of our human nature is to look for patterns; it helps us learn about the world around us. Did you ever look for patterns... say in clouds, for example? Looking for patterns in chance events like gambling can cost money. For example, if we roll a die 6 times and the last 4 rolls out of the 6 are 3's, we might see a pattern or a streak of 3's. People often look to the past to try and predict the future. Some people might think the streak of 3's will continue and others might think it will end.

What are the Odds?

You may hear "What are the odds?". This is a way of asking what the chances of winning are. It is also sometimes called probability, the likelihood of something happening.

Let's look at dice.

There are six numbers on one die. What is the chance that any one number will be rolled? If you answered 1 in 6, you're right! The odds, chance or probability is 1 in 6. Keep in mind that each roll is separate. The die does not know what was rolled last. We call that independence of events.

House Advantage

In all legalized gambling the games have a built-in advantage for the operator called the "House Advantage". This means that the operator of the game is guaranteed to make money over time. Because of the house advantage, someone who gambles regularly will spend more money than they win in the long run. Just like any other entertainment, it will cost you money.

It does not mean the operator is cheating you

It does not mean that no one will ever win

It's the cost of playing the game

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