

FACT: The FBI estimates more than \$25 billion is wagered illegally on March Madness.



## Beware of Bracket Challenges

In less than a month, one of the most exciting tournaments in the sports world will begin. College basketball fans across the nation will tune into the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments to watch their favorite teams, the country's best players, or to see a Cinderella team pull off the upset.

Beyond the aspect of watching the competition on TV, the average fan can become more involved with the outcome of each individual game through the many pools and bracket challenges offered during March Madness.

However tempting the idea of winning a million dollars in a nation-wide pool or just \$100 off your friends or co-workers is, it is in your best interest to refrain from participating. Money isn't the only thing you put at risk when you enter a sports pool. If you participate in a pool for any amount of money or prizes you will face consequences. There are many incidents where athletic department staff members have been suspended from their duties without pay, terminated from their position, or put on probation

from working in NCAA athletics for multiple years.

During this time of year, the popularity of the NCAA tournament affords masses of opportunities to gamble on the games. However, gambling on NCAA events isn't the only type of gambling that violates NCAA rules.

All athletics department staff or anyone else who has responsibilities with the athletic department at an NCAA institution are prohibited from becoming involved in any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition. So, even though the NFL or NBA playoffs do not involve NCAA institutions or athletes, it is not permissible to gamble on these sports and games.

You can still have fun with bracket challenges once March Madness begins. There are ample opportunities for bracket challenges which do not require you to invest anything and which do not award prizes.



**“Vegas doesn’t want a scandal to occur any more than we do. We may not agree on everything, but we both care about the integrity of the game.”**

**Rachel Newman-Baker**

**NCAA Director of Agents, Gambling and Amateurism**

### **Bylaw 10.3.2 Sports Wagering Activities**

**The following individuals 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) Staff members of an institution’s athletics department**
- (b) Non-athletics department staff members who have responsibilities within or over the athletics department (e.g. president, faculty athletics representative, individual to whom athletics reports)**

**“Those who believe that gambling is not affecting our sports are wrong. I spent 17 years on the street dealing in this business. We certainly did target athletes, we certainly did have athletes gambling with us and at times we forced them to compromise the outcome of a game when they couldn’t pay a debt.”**

**Michael Franzese**

**Former Mafia boss**

For more information or to read the NCAA’s official statement on gambling, please visit:

[The NCAA and Sports Wagering](#)

## **Survey Says There’s a Problem**

In 2004, the NCAA conducted a survey on gambling habits of student-athletes. Out of the 21,000 surveyed, 35% of the male athletes reported that they had bet on college sports in the past year. Ten percent of the female athletes reported the same.

It is bad enough that a third of male athletes participated in sports wagering, but the next statistic is even more worrisome. When asked

if they had been asked to influence the outcome of a game because of gambling debt they owed, 2.3% of Division I football and 2.1% of Division I basketball players said they had. Of those who were asked to influence the outcome of a game, 1% in both of these sports acknowledged they had agreed to do so. While 1% doesn’t sound like much, 1% is enough to seriously harm the integrity of NCAA sports.

When sports wagering influences the outcome of games, the purpose of NCAA sports becomes irrelevant and the well-being of student-athletes can be compromised.

As an athletics staff member, you have the responsibility to promote that sports should be appreciated for the tangible and intangible benefits they offer to participants and spectators rather than money that can be won or lost.

## **10 Warning Signs**

### **That a Student-Athlete has a gambling problem**

1. The student-athlete is always in need of money.
2. The student-athlete has extreme cash flow swings characterized by unexplained mounting debts or the display of large amounts of cash or other material possessions.
3. The student-athlete sells personal belongings to get money.
4. The student-athlete repeatedly borrows money or steals from family, friends, teammates, coaches or the institution.
5. The student-athlete seems distracted, moody, sad, worried or nervous.
6. The student-athlete misses commitments with the team, at home or at school, or experiences a sudden drop in grades.
7. The student-athlete becomes extremely agitated or nervous when watching sports events.
8. The student-athlete frequently uses gambling terminology in conversation.
9. The student-athlete seems preoccupied with gambling or betting.
10. The student-athlete goes to gambling establishments, such as casinos or betting parlors, with friends.

**If you suspect that a student-athlete has a gambling problem, you may refer them to Gardner-Webb Counseling Services  
704-406-4563**