

# 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.

## **Most Common Types of Sports Bets**

(Palermo, 1997 (as cited in "Betting on Boxing," July 1, 1997):

## **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](http://www.ncaa.org))

- "You may not place any bet of any sort on any college or professional sports event."
- "You may not give information to anyone who does place bets on college or professional sports."

## **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 & 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 bills 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, could 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, refer to 1-800-522-4700 24-hour Help Line.
- Provide zero-tolerance for gambling activities on campus.
- 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). It is estimated as much \$380 billion each year is illegally wagered on sporting events (NORC, 1999).

### **Famous College Gambling Incidents**

2003, Washington: Football head coach Rick Neuheisel fired for participating in a NCAA basketball betting pool.

1997, Arizona State: Two basketball players pled 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, Maryland: Five football players, including the starting quarterback, were suspended for gambling on sports.

1994, 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.