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Contact: Aaron Chimbel: 716-375-2040, achimbel@sbu.edu
Don Levy: 518-944-0482, dlevy@siena.edu
PDF version; crosstabs; website: [American Sports Fanship Survey](#) / sbu.edu/communication

Siena/St. Bonaventure Annual Sports Fanship Survey: Part 3 – Online Sports Betting

22% of All Americans, Half of Men 18-49, Have Active Online Sports Betting Account

Bettors Bullish on Gambling Apps; But 52% Have ‘Chased’ a Bet, 37% Ashamed After Losing, 20% Lost Money Couldn’t Afford, 34% Know Someone with Online Sports Betting Problem; Only 9% Ever Sought Help with Problem Gambling

By 50-34% Americans Support Online Sports Betting Being Legal in all 50 States But 65% Think It Will Create Compulsive Gamblers; 58% Say Federal Govt. Should Regulate to Protect Customers; 63% Support SAFE BET Act

February 18, 2025 – Twenty-two percent of Americans including 48% of men 18-49 years of age have an account with at least one of the online sportsbooks according to a new poll of residents released today by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) and St. Bonaventure University’s Jandoli School of Communication. Bettors overwhelmingly say placing wagers on online sportsbooks is fun and exciting, makes them more interested in the games, stimulates conversations with friends and that they think they can make money. But 52% have ‘chased’ a bet, that is, bet an increased amount in hopes of getting money back after a loss, 37% have felt ashamed after losing, and 20% have lost resulting in having trouble meeting financial obligations. One-third of online sports gamblers know someone that has or had a problem with online betting but only 9% of bettors have ever called a problem gambling helpline or sought other help to control gambling behaviors.

“Online sports betting is everywhere. Nearly 60% of Americans have often seen the ads and while over one in five have an active account, another five percent of Americans have an account that they no longer use,” said Don Levy, SCRI’s director, “Bettors, overwhelmingly young men, say online betting is fun, interesting and exciting and 54% of them place bets at least once or twice a week. Nearly 80% benefitted from promotions in which they were awarded money for participation and while most think they can make money gambling, only 30% say in hindsight they’ve won more than lost.”

A majority of all Americans, 50-34% agree that online sports betting should be legal in all 50 states. However, by 65-22% they also agree that online sports betting will end up creating compulsive gamblers that will cause pain to them and their families and by 48-35% they think it will corrupt organized sports.

A small plurality, 39-33% say that the tax revenue generated by online sports betting benefits taxpayers. A majority, 58-28% call on the federal government to aggressively regulate online sports betting to specifically protect customers from compulsive gambling. A specific legislative proposal, the SAFE BET Act that would prohibit ads for sportsbooks during live events, require sports books to place limits on the deposits bettors can make, and ban the usage of AI by sportsbooks to track user's behavior is supported by 63-16%.

“Online sports betting has become widespread and a majority of Americans endorse it being legal,” said Aaron Chimbel, dean of St. Bonaventure University's Jandoli School of Communication. “But with 78% saying that any smartphone app that lets people drain their bank accounts in one evening is a bad idea, the call for federal regulation is loud and clear.”

“A plurality of all Americans and a large majority of online bettors say that if you have a system to control your betting, online sports betting is not dangerous,” Chimbel said. “While overall respondents are split as to whether or not online sportsbooks are doing a good job of monitoring and responding to the dangers of compulsive gambling, two-thirds of those with accounts think they are doing a good job. Half of bettors say that they do use features online designed to help users bet responsibly.”

“Americans tend to oppose the way gambling commentary has become part of sports broadcasting,” Levy said. “By 53-26% they say that sports commentators offering remarks on sports gambling and potential bets during live games is bad for sports and by 47-28% they say AI-powered predictions on the outcomes of sporting events being made available to fans during the live games is also bad for sports.”

Odds & Ends

- 73% of bettors like to participate in prop bets, or bets made on small events that don't affect the outcome of a game, such as a player making a certain number of shots or passes or who will score first.
- Of concern, a majority, 60-21% agree that prop bets open individual college student athletes to potentially harmful public pressures.

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The American Sports Fan ship Survey was conducted January 6 - 11, 2025, among 3047 responses drawn from a proprietary online panel (Lucid) of United States Residents. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region, race/ethnicity, education, and gender to ensure representativeness. It has an overall margin of error of +/- 1.9 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social, and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Don Levy at 518-944-0482. St. Bonaventure University's Jandoli School of Communication offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in sports media, journalism, communication and related fields. For more information or comments, please contact Aaron Chimbel at 716-375-2040.