



Two experts were asked the question:

Should sports betting be legal?
(here are their answers)

YES →

Sports betting is a challenge. It makes sports more exciting. It makes you a part of the contest.

Why shouldn't it be legal? Every state, besides Utah, allows some type of gambling, whether it's scratch tickets at the gas station, blackjack on a riverboat, or horses at the racetrack. I see no difference in betting on a score. Each state's residents should be allowed to decide whether to legalize sports betting.

Las Vegas sports books accepted over \$3.4 billion in wagers in 2012. Illegal sports betting in the United States is exponentially larger. Unfortunately, sports betting has long been associated with organized crime, but it is time for that to come to an end. J Eamonn Toland, president of Paddy Power (an online gambling site), has said that the "only way to stamp out corruption is to have a legal sports betting market."

But what about the integrity of the sport? The NBA, NHL, MLB, NFL and NCAA all hate the idea of betting on their games, but why? They're afraid the athletes will play differently? A truly competitive athlete plays his or her best all of the time.

Chris Ault, the former University of Nevada-Reno football coach, was known for telling his team the point spread on a game (that is the amount by which the gambling experts think a team will win or lose). "The book thinks you guys get beat by 21 today," he'd say. He thought that message would make his team play better.

NO →

Legalizing gambling in sports isn't so simple.... there are lots of factors to consider. The legalization of sport betting could make it harder for compulsive gamblers to control their impulses. It will also tempt newcomers to try gambling for the first time (sort of like a boy in the school yard giving a cigarette to young students).

It could also encourage gamblers to try to influence the outcome of a game and encourage athletes to bet on games in which they compete. Most athletes are young men and women who happen to be at the age when making a "quick buck" seems very tempting!

Wider legalization of sport betting could add another layer of challenges to the many that professional sports have already encountered, like performance enhancing drugs in baseball and concussions in the N.F.L. Add gambling's threat to the integrity of the games and you end up with disastrous complications.

Until our entire society is mature enough to handle the risks of gambling, legalized sport betting should be restricted. State revenues should not have to depend on the selling of false hopes or profiting off addiction. The short-term gains of legalizing sport betting in more states are not worth the long-term complication it will create for the professional leagues, and the citizens of our country.