Sports Betting in Ontario

In Canada, sports wagering requires a person to make at least three bets on at least two separate sporting events. This is known as parlay betting; a single bet that links two or more individual wagers, and is dependent on all of those wagers winning together to generate a payout. Nevada is the only jurisdiction in North America that allows a person to bet on one outcome of a single game.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is illegal to wager on the result of a single sporting event. Bill C-290, a private member’s bill, was brought to Parliament Hill with the intention of permitting single game betting in Canada. If this Bill is passed, Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) will offer lottery schemes that involve betting on a race and/or on a single sport event.

What sports wagering activities are legal in Ontario?

Sports Select: OLG regulates sports betting, referred to as Sports Select games, such as Pro-line. Wagers can be made through the purchase of lottery tickets from over 10,000 authorized OLG retailers throughout Ontario or in person at two resort casinos, Casino Windsor and Casino Niagara. These casinos are privately operated.

Sports Pools: These can be licensed by OLG and run by charities as a fundraiser, and/or privately organized.

Charity-related Sport Betting Events: OLG also licenses charity events that could entail sports betting run by private groups/organizations for fundraising purposes.

Fantasy Sports Leagues: Fantasy sports leagues use statistics from a collection of players and/or teams to determine rankings for each owner's team. A typical format for a fantasy sports league involves assigning a point value for each statistical category item, with the winning owner having the most points at the conclusion of the league's season. Internet sites have enabled fantasy sports league "commissioners" to set up leagues online for daily tracking of results, automated calculation of point totals and centralized processing of transactions (such as player trades and releases).

What sports wagering activities do Ontarians engage in that aren’t regulated?

Privately Organized Sports Betting: Betting on personal recreational sports games, like golf, is another way people engage in sports wagering.

Sports Pools: These often occur around large events, such as during the NHL playoffs, and with charities.

Wagering with a Sports Bookie: This is illegal and in Toronto, it is estimated that there are over 1,000 bookmaking operations.

Internet Sports Betting: Offshore sports wagering allows Ontarians to wager on single events and on sports from around the world.

What sports betting activities are Ontario adults engaging in and are there any demographic trends?

- Among adults 18+, males are 7 times more likely than females to engage in sports-related gambling activities.
- Participation in sports pools and Sport Select is highest among those 18 to 24.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Betting Game/Activity</th>
<th>Frequency Among Males 18+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Pools</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Select</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illegal Sports with a bookie</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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What sports betting activities are Ontario students engaging in and are there any demographic trends?

- Males in grades 7-12 are significantly more likely than females in grades 7-12 to bet in sports pools, buy sports lottery tickets and bet over the Internet.³
- Wagering on sports pools and sports lottery tickets increases with grade and peaks in grades 11 and 12.³

What signs suggest someone may be having problems with sports wagering?

- Some of the main features of problematic sports gambling include:
  - excessive phone calls to sports betting services
  - significant pre-occupation with point spreads
  - association with other sports bettors
  - frequently asking friends or family for loans
  - shifting loyalty for/against the same team on different games ⁴
- Those who wager with a bookie bet more frequently and had higher problem gambling scores than those who participate in other forms of gambling.⁵

Ontarians place sports bets using non-regulated Internet gambling sites. What are OLG’s plans when it comes to regulating Internet gambling?

- There are over 2,243 non-regulated Internet gambling websites globally with rates of Internet gambling ranging from 0.4% to 10.5%.⁶
- OLG will be launching regulated “iGaming” for Ontarians, which will include online sports betting at a future date.
- In the first five years, OLG estimates this will generate $375 million for the province.
- For more information visit The Launch of Internet Gambling.

What do we know about Internet gambling and sports betting and its relationship to problem gambling?

- According to a survey, 8% of Canadian adults gambled over the Internet in the past year and 3% gambled over the Internet once a month or more.⁷
- Of Canadians who gamble online, 16.7% bet on sports.⁸
- Compared to Canadian non-Internet gamblers, Canadian Internet gamblers have higher yearly and weekly involvement in mostly all forms of gambling, especially for sports betting. For example, 13.6% of non-Internet gamblers engage in sports betting compared to 41.6% of Internet gamblers.⁷ Canadian Internet gamblers use it “preferentially for sports betting”.⁸
- Those who gamble online are 3-4 times more likely to develop gambling problems than non-Internet gamblers.⁷&⁹
- The percentage of contacts from individuals seeking problem gambling treatment services through the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH) for internet gambling and sports gambling increased significantly since 2006. 16.1% sought treatment services in 2006 for internet gambling concerns compared to 11.44% in 2012 and 2.71% sought treatment services in 2006 for sports betting concerns compared to 7.60% in 2012.¹⁰
- Underage gambling is of particular concern considering that Internet use tends to be highest among youth; “technological forms of gambling continue to place our children at even greater risk for gambling problems”. 9
- Since sports betting is linked to problem gambling, increased availability could open the door to higher rates of addiction, further impact on youth, as well as bankruptcy and other social harms.

References