



## **Safer Sports Betting and the Super Bowl**

*Planning Needed as Sports Betting Becomes Ever More Available*

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**Washington, DC** – While the Super Bowl is one of the most widely viewed and biggest betting events of the year, 2021 is an especially challenging time for governments seeking to generate income as well as individuals struggling with gambling problems, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG).

Due in part to the pandemic, state governments are seeking to generate tax revenue to fill their depleted coffers in any way possible. Many see sports betting and online gambling in general as a relatively easy way to do that. In addition, the incessant media hype and personal conversation topics engendered by what some call ‘the most-watched event of the year’ make it hard to avoid and put pressure on people trying to maintain their recovery, reduce their gambling, or simply gamble only as much as they can afford. NCPG’s National Survey of Gambling Attitudes and Experiences ([www.ncpgsurvey.org](http://www.ncpgsurvey.org)) found that sports bettors were at least twice as likely to have gambling problems. One estimate is that at least 25 million Americans will bet a total of almost \$7 billion dollars on the game. This means approximately 4% of those gamblers, or about one million individuals will:

- Fail to set and stick to a limit of money and time spent gambling;
- Bet to escape feelings of anxiety, stress or depression; and
- View gambling as a good means of making money.

Through its ‘Keep Your Super Bowl Safer’ message and Safer Sports Betting Initiative, NCPG urges individuals, public health agencies, sports betting operators and media outlets to be aware of and promote these tips to prevent gambling from becoming a problem:

- Set specific limits on the time and money spent gambling;
- Seek help to manage negative feelings that can fuel addiction; and
- Recognize gambling is inherently an activity with long-term losses, due to house advantage and chance.

“Unfortunately, NCPG expects the number of people with gambling problems to grow with each passing year, because both the amount of money and the number of people who bet on sports grows with each passing year,” said Keith Whyte, NCPG Executive Director.

This trend is the direct result of the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) declaring a nationwide ban on sports betting unconstitutional on May 14, 2018. In response, twenty states and the District of Columbia, including eleven in the last year, have legalized [sports betting](#). In fact, two states went live with online sports books in late January – Virginia and Michigan – just in time for the Super Bowl between the Kansas City Chiefs and Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday, February 7.

NCPG has responded to this dynamic by working aggressively with its allies to push the public and private sector to implement policies and invest the resources to strengthen the responsible gambling experience for consumers and make treatment options more widely available, affordable and accessible.

Whyte added, “We want everyone to enjoy the Super Bowl, but we also want people to recognize the challenges that come with the rapid expansion of sports betting—especially on mobile phones. If you are placing a wager on the Big Game, we urge you to follow our tips, and if you are struggling with a gambling problem, we urge you to seek free, confidential help. That is available 24/7 through the National Problem Gambling Helpline. Call or text 1-800-522-4700 or visit [www.ncpgambling.org/chat](http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat).”

In addition to the Helpline, resources including a free, anonymous online screening tool for gambling problems are available at: <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/screening-tools/>. Resources are also available for family members or concerned individuals who are seeking to help someone they believe is affected by gambling problems.

#### **About the National Council on Problem Gambling**

Based in Washington DC, the National Council on Problem Gambling is the only national nonprofit organization that seeks to minimize the economic and social costs associated with gambling addiction by working with stakeholders in all facets of gambling. NCPG is neutral on legalized gambling. If gambling becomes a problem, NCPG urges people who gamble, as well as their loved ones, to contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline, which offers hope and help without judgment or shame. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call or text 1-800-522-4700 or visit [www.ncpgambling.org/chat](http://www.ncpgambling.org/chat). Help is available 24/7 – it is free and confidential.

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