

# The Impact of Legalized Sports Gambling on Fan Engagement

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### Advisor: Dr. Pu

**Abstract-** Our group researched the connections, both current and potential, of fan engagement and sports gambling. With sports gambling being legalized across the country we expect sports fans to not only gamble more but engage in the events more. This could mean going to more games, watching games fully to the end, or even watching sports and events they would not have otherwise. This along with a variety of other engagement methods is already seeing increases due to sports gambling. Through a survey of gamblers and potential gamblers we expect to find a strong correlation between fan engagement and how much and what is being gambled upon. We hypothesize that all kinds of gambling, including Daily Fantasy Sports and live betting, will encourage fans to both become smarter about their teams and leagues and also spend more money on a variety of sports. In states that have legalized gambling there has been a larger economic impact than expected and teams and leagues are actively trying to see what trends they can exploit in order to increase engagement in a variety of ways with fans. With our research there will be concrete proof of what engagement methods should be focused on to attract sports gamblers.

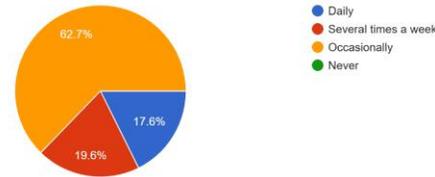
#### Materials and Methods:

Our cross-sectional study will be using a questionnaire survey in order to gather data to determine if there is a connection between Sports Gambling and Fan Engagement. Our population of interest is adults, ages 18-99 since sports gambling will likely only be legal for those 18 and older, who engage in sports in some way. Our sample within that will largely be University of Dayton classmates and colleagues that we currently can reach as well as neighbors, family, or other friends who engage or interact with sports. This includes any groups we are a part of or email lists that we might be able to get access to. We will be sending this out to as many people as we possibly can in order to get a wide variety of views and generate enough data to have a strong statistical conclusion.

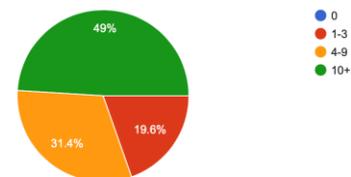
Our questions start with a basic yes/no question to determine if the respondent engages in sports. If the respondent doesn't engage with sports then the survey ends because their answers won't accurately reflect the data we are trying to collect. After that the respondent answers two basic demographic questions so we can see if there is a change in data based on age and gender. Then there are two main parts of the survey using nominal and ranked questions. The first part is about the current behavior of the respondents in regards to their current levels of fan engagement. The second part entails mostly the same questions but with a different spin; if sports gambling were to be legal. We use the same questions so we can compare and contrast the difference in behavior of fan engagement if sports gambling were legal compared to now. We finish the questioning with one qualitative short answer question. This is to allow the respondents a chance to explain or give their feedback or opinion.

**Results:** After conducting research of over 130 survey responses, the overall data suggests that a potential legalization of sports gambling in America would ultimately increase areas under the "fan engagement" umbrella. As our results show, nearly 41% of all participants say they would participate in sports gambling if legalized. Of those who said they would participate, nearly 63% said they would gamble occasionally while nearly 37% said they would gamble several times a week or daily. As mentioned earlier, results show an increase in fan engagement would increase, particularly attendance. When asked about an average amount of sporting events per year, 43% said they attend between four and nine per year, the most popular choice in our survey. When the question was changed under the circumstance of legalized sports gambling, 49% said they would attend 10+ sporting events per year, the most popular choice in our survey. In both questions the group of people who said they would attend 1-3 sporting events per year stayed relatively the same at 20% and 19.6% respectively. This provides a reasonable conclusion that there was an increase in people who would attend 4-9 events per year with no legalization of sports gambling and 10+ with a legalization of sports gambling. Our results also suggest fan engagement would be enhanced in the use of social media and merchandise sales. Our survey shows that 32% of participants would be willing to follow sports teams and leagues on social media to be updated on injuries, lineups, suspensions, scores and many more important factors. When looking at purchasing merchandise, results showed a modest increase from 25.6% to 31.4% in people buying sports merchandise currently compared to those who would purchase it if sports gambling were legal. Overall, according to our results if sports gambling was legalized in America, we would see an overall increase in fan engagement.

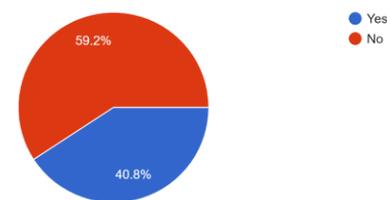
How frequently would you gamble on sports if it were legal?  
51 responses



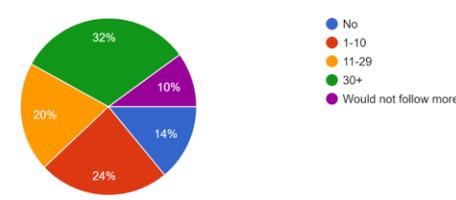
If sports gambling were legal, how many sporting events would you attend each year?  
51 responses



Would you participate in sports gambling if it were legal?  
125 responses



If sports gambling were legal, would you follow more sports teams or leagues to get updated information such as injuries, lineups, suspensions, etc.? if so how many?  
50 responses



*Disclaimer at top of survey: Before participating in this survey, we would like to remind you that sports gambling is currently ILLEGAL in most states. We are asking every question with intent to find out the HYPOTHETICAL behavior of sports fans if sports gambling WAS LEGAL.*

*At Bottom of Survey: Our research is purely hypothetical but Gambling is an addiction. If you are somebody you know is struggling with addiction please refer to the addiction hotline listed here: Compulsive Gambling Hotline: 1-410-332-0402 National Problem Gambling Hotline: 1-800-522-4700.*

#### Conclusions:

From the data collected we can infer that sports gambling would be a popular activity that those over the age of 18 would participate in if it were to be legal as 40% of the 125 people who were active in following sports that completed the survey said that they would participate in sports gambling. From that we also found that many are following sports accounts, bet on their favorite teams, and like to go see games. With this information, we are able to conclude that if sports gambling were legal states would be able to make a profit and sports teams would have higher interactions with their social media platforms.

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