

News Release

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Check Before You Bet - Play Responsibly Ahead of March Madness

PHOENIX – On Sunday, March 16, 2025, the 2025 [March Madness](#) tournament begins with Selection Sunday at 6 p.m. ET on CBS. March Madness is the coined name for the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament, a single-elimination tournament of 68 teams that compete in seven rounds for the national championship. The penultimate (second to last) round is known as the Final Four, where only 4 teams remain. **Check out the full schedule below:**

- Selection Sunday: 6 p.m. ET Sunday, March 16 on CBS
- First Four: March 18-19
- First round: March 20-21
- Second round: March 22-23
- Sweet 16: March 27-28
- Elite Eight: March 29-30
- Final Four: April 5 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas
- NCAA championship game: April 7 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas

With March Madness being one of the most anticipated, watched, and wagered-on events in all of sports, the Arizona Department of Gaming ("ADG") is reminding Arizona residents and visitors to remember to play smart and bet responsibly, remaining within the bounds of the law.

"Every year, March Madness continues to rank among the top sporting events to wager on nationally, as excitement and anxiety builds as fans watch to see if their team will make it to the Final Four," said Jackie Johnson, ADG Director. "The Department wants to use this opportunity as a chance to remind and encourage Arizona residents, as well as our springtime visitors, to make sure they are enjoying the games responsibly. Protect your bet and ensure your wagers are placed legally and thoughtfully this March."

Sports Pools – Know What Rules to Follow

In the United States, it is common to see friends, families, and colleagues participate in sports pools for March Madness. These pools are legal as long as the state's social gambling rules are followed. According to Arizona Law ([A.R.S. § 13-3301\(9\)](#)), social gambling requires:

- That gambling cannot be conducted as business, which means that hosts cannot receive financial benefit, unless they are participating in the game;
- Hosts pay out **all** pool money to the winner(s);
- Only participants can win; and

- Players compete on equal terms with each other.

A few things to be on the lookout for that indicate illegal gambling:

- Paying a fee to participate, including “suggested” or “voluntary” donations.
- A host who keeps a percentage of the pool for administering the game.
- A required minimum purchase to participate (food or beverage, etc.).
- Unequal odds.
- Underage participants (under 21 years of age).

ADG takes complaints about illegal gambling seriously. To report suspected illegal gambling activity, visit our website at gaming.az.gov/about/contact-us, call (602) 255-3886, or email publicaffairs@azgaming.gov. You can remain anonymous.

Responsible Betting – What to Keep in Mind

With sports betting legal in the state, it has become increasingly important to educate yourself on how you can bet responsibly. Listed below are some helpful tips as part of the American Gaming Association’s (AGA) *Have A Game Plan*.[®] *Bet Responsibly*.[™] campaign:

- **Set a Budget** – It is crucial to keep in mind that everyone will have different budgets; never bet beyond your own means. Be cautious and make sure you set a limit – and stick to it – if you plan on wagering. More information on how to responsibly set a budget for wagering can be found on the AGA’s *Have A Game Plan* website: [How Much Should I Wager?](#)
- **Know the Odds** – There are plenty of key terms everyone should know when making a sports bet. What’s a parlay? Over/under? Moneyline? If you decide to wager, make sure you are briefed on [The Basics of Sports Betting](#).
- **Keep it Social** – Whenever gambling, be mindful that all forms of gambling are for the purpose of entertainment. This is **not** a way to make money. By gaming with friends, family, and colleagues, you can keep playing responsibly and have fun.
- **Keep Your Cool** – No one’s perfect, and in sports, winning and losing are all part of the game. Whether you’re wagering from the sidelines or watching from home, remember to keep your cool. Good sportsmanship isn’t just for the players on the field; it’s for everyone.
- **Play Legally** – Legal operators provide important player protections that are not found in the illegal market. Whether you are placing a wager on your phone or at a physical sportsbook, make sure you are using a legal operator in the state. Visit the ADG website to view a full list of the state’s approved operators and retail locations: [Approved Operators](#).

You can view more information on how to bet responsibly by visiting haveagameplan.org.

In recognition of Problem Gambling Awareness Month (“PGAM”), the Department wants to remind Arizonans that if you or someone you know has a gambling problem, the Division of Problem Gambling (“DPG”) urges you to get help now by calling 1-800-NEXT-STEP (1.800.639.8783), DPG’s confidential helpline, texting “NEXTSTEP” to 53342, or utilizing a chat feature on the DPG website. DPG’s helpline provides confidentiality and connects callers with a master’s level counselor who can connect them with available resources, including statewide treatment providers who specialize in problem gambling. The helpline is available 24/7 to everyone facing a problem with gambling – individuals and affected family members, friends, or co-workers. Learn more and access resources at problemgambling.az.gov. Additionally, the ADG published a press release on March 3 recognizing PGAM. Please view the press

release by visiting our website's [Media Room](#), as well as DPG's [PGAM toolkit](#) for more information.

About ADG

Established by the Arizona State Legislature in 1995, ADG is the state regulatory agency for [tribal gaming](#), [event wagering & fantasy sports contests](#), [racing and pari-mutuel/simulcast wagering](#), and [unarmed combat sports](#). ADG also provides and supports education, prevention, and treatment programs for people and families affected by problem gambling through its [Division of Problem Gambling](#) and 24-hour confidential helpline, 1-800-NEXT-STEP.

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