



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF GAMING

TRIBAL GAMING • RACING • BOXING & MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

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News Release

March 16, 2017

Nice Bracket. Is It Legal?

PHOENIX – As Arizona gears up to host its very first Final Four and with the first games of the 2017 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament officially in the books, it’s not just sports fans who will be paying close attention to this year’s March Madness. The Arizona Department of Gaming will also be keeping an eye on all the action.

“It’s an exciting time of year. We are rebounding from the Presidents’ Day holiday, MLB Spring Training is in full swing, and everybody is engaged by the NCAA Men’s and Women’s Basketball Tournaments. We want Arizonans to enjoy everything March Madness has to offer, but everyone should do it safely, and within the bounds of our state’s laws,” said Department of Gaming Director Dan Bergin.

The easiest way to determine whether that intra-office pool is being conducted legally is to see whether anyone other than the participants benefits from it. In Arizona, only those individuals participating in the office pool can win and all pool money must be paid back out. If anyone other than a participant receives any portion of the money that is wagered, he or she could be violating the law.

Some other telltale signs that should lead to concern include:

- When a fee is charged to participate (“suggested” or “voluntary” donations, rental fees, etc.)
- When a percentage of the pool is taken to “run” or “host” the tournament
- When a purchase is required to participate (food or beverage, etc.)
- When a participant is given an advantage over others (e.g. multiple brackets for one entry)

“So, before you jump at a shot at winning your office-pool, please, take a time out and make sure that it doesn’t run afoul of any law first,” added Bergin.

The Arizona Department of Gaming takes complaints about illegal gambling very seriously. If you have a tip concerning suspected illegal gambling, or would simply like additional information, please contact us at (602) 771-4263 or publicaffairs@azgaming.gov

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