



Planning to Celebrate the “Big Game”? **PLAY IT SAFE!**

(JANUARY 20, 2017) The “big game” (on February 5, 2017) is the single most watched sporting event in the U.S. It’s a great time to get together with family and friends to enjoy all of those football themed snacks, not to mention the amazing commercials. But for some, the partying and gambling can get out of control.

“Game Day has become an unofficial national holiday in the U.S.” commented Dr. Lori Rugle, president of the Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators. It is the single most wagered sporting event in our country. The Nevada Gaming Control Board reported that in 2016, Nevada sports books reported taking in the most legal wagers in history - \$132.5 million! In addition, the American Gaming Association estimated that Americans bet \$4.2 billion on the game in illegal wagers.

The Sunday of the game is a recreational and social phenomenon, an annual rite of celebration. Aside from indulging in food and drinks, opportunities abound to bet on the game. There are office and home parties, online sports betting sites, and mobile sports betting as close as your smart phone. There are also limitless possibilities for what you can bet on throughout the game - will the coin toss be heads or tails, how long to complete the National Anthem, number of points per quarter, and so on.

For most people, it’s just a game, and they can bet on it safely and responsibly. Wagering on this game should be viewed as entertainment only. For those who gamble more frequently, this particular game may be considered a chance to make up for past losses, the belief that you are one bet away from winning all your money back.

If you are planning “big game” activities in your home, work place or community setting please be aware that there may be individuals in your family, community or where you work that are struggling with gambling addiction. Here are some suggestions for making it fun for everyone:

- Don’t pressure anyone to participate in football pools or gambling activities.
- Have information about Problem Gambling and resources for help available.
- Be creative – think of ways to enjoy the game without having to gamble.
- If you do include gambling, suggest low limits for amount of bets.

Here are some strategies to put in place for your celebration, before and during the game to keep yourself a winner!

- If you place a bet, look at it as entertainment and NOT a way to make money or win back previous losses.
- Limit the amount of drinking when you’re gambling – the more you drink the more money you’re likely to bet.
- Don’t bet more than you can afford to lose – set a money limit and stick with it!
- If you or someone you know struggles with gambling call the 24-hour, free and confidential National Helpline: **1-800-522-4700** or chat at www.ncpgambling.org/chat.

About the APGSA

The Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators (APGSA) is a national membership organization of state administrators of public funds for problem gambling services. The organization was formed in 2000 to support the development of services that will reduce the impact of problem gambling in the United States. To learn more about APGSA and problem gambling services across the nation, visit www.apgsa.org.

Contact

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