

Sports Gambling Guide for Picking Winners



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Whether you're new to gambling or an old pro, there is always more to learn about the art of competitive wagering. Like most things in life, you need money to make money. It helps if you have thousands of dollars to lay down, but if you don't, here's my guide for productive sports gambling under a hundred dollars a month.

1. KNOW THE BASICS: There is a wealth of terminology and information within the gambling world. Here's a quick rundown of the factoids and phrases that you'll need to be comfortable with to make effective wagers.

The Spread: In most games (especially basketball and football) there is a point spread which is very popular for bettors (other sports like baseball, only offer the money line and odds for bettors). Favorites are denoted with a - sign while underdogs are assigned a + sign. For instance, the Knicks if the Knicks were 3-point underdogs against the Nuggets, they would be +3 (you could also say the Knicks are getting 3). The Nuggets would be -3 (or giving 3).

If you felt that the Knicks were likely to lose by 2 points or less or win the contest, you would take the Knicks (+3). If you like the Nuggets to win by a margin of 4 or more, you would pick the Nuggets (-3). If

the Nuggets won 99-96, this would be considered a PUSH- and all money would be returned. Betting on the spread in singular games usually pays slightly less than 1-1 (or if you wagered \$20 and won you would receive around \$19 in return, or \$39 total back)

The Money Line: If you don't want to get mixed up in the spread or want to bet on baseball, then you must understand the money line. The money line is simple- pick a winner. If you pick a favorite to win without using the point spread (for example, UCONN is -12 vs. Notre Dame) the payout will be very low (you will only win about \$5 on a \$20 wager).

It works in the reverse when you pick an underdog to win out right as well, however (if you have a hunch that Notre Dame will upset UCONN, the payout will be more like \$60 on your \$20). The oddsmakers determine the odds for the money line and they are constantly changed and updated.

Parlays: If you want to really make some money gambling, then you can try a parlay. A parlay is a combination of multiple games, and the payouts can be huge. You can pick on the money line or the spread. An example of a three-game parlay would be picking the Knicks (+3), Hawks (+7), and Clippers (-8) (If you win the payout would be about \$100 on your \$20). You can also play it safe and pick straight winners on the money line, however, the payout is much less.

Teasers: You can tease the spread up or down to increase your chances of winning. For example, take the same parlay from the example above and make it a 5-point teaser. That would make the bet as follows: Knicks (+8), Hawks (+12) and Clippers (-3) ...the payout is not as good as a parlay, but your chances of winning are better.

2. FIND THE RIGHT OUTLET: Unless you know someone, who is attached to the mob, your best bet is to gamble online. There are plenty of safe and legal sites for sports gambling, but, for my money, the best is www.sportsbook.com. It's user friendly and very secure. But don't take my word for it, do your own homework to find out what site has the most to offer.

3. DO YOUR RESEARCH: If you're not a high roller, you must make every single cent count when you put it on the line. Think small the first couple weeks. Turn \$50 into \$75 or \$100 into \$150 and do it slowly. Each night takes the time to research the games. Look up stats, injury reports, trends. There are plenty of websites out there for you to choose from. ESPN and Yahoo Sports are two simple, yet reliable places to start for beginners. Here's some of the basic stats and facts you want to keep in mind:

A) Who's Home? A simple yet reliable bit of information for determining winners, a more prevalent advantage in football than any other sport, but something that you never want to overlook. Look at team's records at home vs. on the road as well.

B) Who's Hot? Don't pick a team just because they have the better record. The Cavs might have a better record than the Clippers but don't forget to see how they've played LATELY. The Cavs might be 4-6 while the Clips may have gone 7-3 in the last 10 games

C) Who's Healthy? Check often for the latest injury reports. Even if it's only a role player and it's only this one game, it can make a difference, so don't ignore it.

4. HEDGE YOUR BETS: For every \$1000 parlay you make, make sure you are making "safe" bets to cover the amount you risk. Here's a good distribution for splitting your money.

\$10 on a risky parlay (6-12 games, something that pays up to 10-1)

\$10 on a "safe" parlay (less games, and pick winners not the spread, make it for a 3-1 or 5-1 payout)

\$10 on a 7pt teaser (must pick 3 games, some gambling sites do not allow this kind of bet because it pays the gambler so often, it pays the winner \$8 on top of their \$10)

5. DON'T GET OVER CONFIDENT: The safer the bet, the better. Think about the long term. Turn your \$100 into \$300 during a month. If you think about winning ridiculous bets to make \$1000s in a day, you might as well play the lottery. Sports betting can be a science, a unique and skillful hobby for the sports enthusiast, but it can also become a horrible addiction.

Don't bet if you are depressed, using drugs and alcohol, or have addictive tendencies. Don't bet unless you have the money to do so. Gambling money should be extra spending cash, do not rely on it to pay your bills or rent, it doesn't work that way. There is no such thing as a "safe" bet... some bets are safer than others, but because of the nature of sports, anything can happen; so, expect that it will.

6. HAVE FUN AND ROOT FOR YOUR TEAMS: Relax and enjoy yourself. If you root for your team they will scientifically do better (just kidding, but it can't hurt). Good luck picking winners!