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Gambling Alert - November 21, 2022



How Colleges and Sports-Betting Companies ‘Caesarized’ Campus Life

In September 2021, an official in Michigan State University’s athletic department sent an email to his boss with exciting news: An online betting company was willing to pay handsomely for the right to promote gambling at the university.

“Alan, if we are willing to take an aggressive position, we have a \$1 M/year deal on the table with Caesar’s,” Paul Schager wrote to Alan Haller, the university’s athletic director.

The offer from Caesars Sportsbook turned out to be even bigger than that, according to emails obtained by The New York Times. In the end, the company proposed a deal worth \$8.4 million over five years. It was, a member of the negotiating team said in another email, “the largest sportsbook deal in college athletics.” Other schools, too, have struck deals to bring betting to campus. After Louisiana State University signed a similar deal in 2021 with Caesars, the university sent an email encouraging recipients — including some students who were under 21 and couldn’t legally gamble — to “place your first bet (and earn your first bonus).”

And when the University of Colorado Boulder in 2020 accepted \$1.6 million to promote sports gambling on campus, a betting company sweetened the deal by offering the school an extra \$30 every time someone downloaded the company's app and used a promotional code to place a bet.

All three deals were part of a far-reaching but secretive campaign by the nascent **online sports-gambling industry**. Ever since the Supreme Court's decision in 2018 to let states legalize such betting, gambling companies **have been racing to convert** traditional casino customers, fantasy sports aficionados and players of online games into a new generation of digital gamblers. Major universities, with their tens of thousands of alumni and a captive audience of easy-to-reach students, have emerged as an especially enticing target. [READ](#)

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