



## It's time to fold on the NBA's gambling subculture

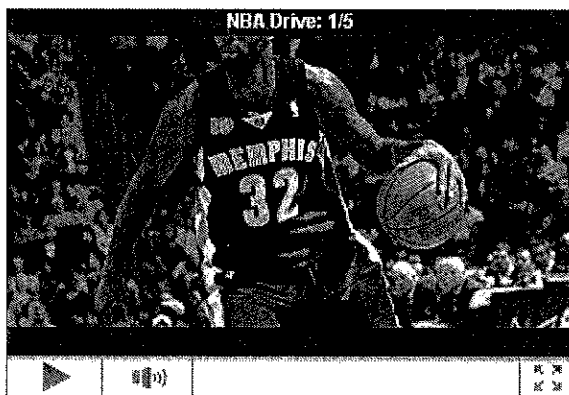
By Ken Berger  
CBSSports.com Senior Writer  
Jan. 5, 2011

Tell Ken your opinion!

Two pieces of advice come to mind, one for Tony Allen and one for every other player in the NBA. For the masses: Don't mess with Tony Allen. For Allen: Don't clown around in the pregame huddle before the Memphis Grizzlies' next game, throwing faux haymakers and pretending to knock teammates out.

Do that, and this really would be history repeating itself. It was nearly a year ago to the day when Gilbert Arenas displayed his infamous finger guns in the huddle before a game in Philadelphia, shedding new light on the arrogance and self-absorption of a few knuckleheads whose hubris, ignorance and bad decisions conspire to ruin a sport for everyone else.

A year after Arenas embarrassed himself, his organization, and late Wizards owner Abe Pollin -- while simultaneously exposing everyone who tries to hide the permissive gambling culture in the NBA -- here we are again. Watching Arenas get suspended for 50 games without pay, lose millions of dollars and his status as a loveable entertainer, and get reduced to a shell of the fascinating athlete he once was apparently wasn't enough of a teaching moment for Allen and O.J. Mayo, who scuffled on the Grizzlies' charter flight from Los Angeles on Monday over a gambling debt. Surprise, surprise, it was the same high-stakes card game -- *bourre* (pronounced boo-ray) -- in which Arenas and Javaris Crittenton engaged when employed by the Wizards, prompting Arenas' ill-fated prank of displaying handguns in the locker room with an invitation for Crittenton to "pick one."



Allen, who according to sources was subjected to constant mockery by Mayo over a debt Mayo owed, wasn't in a joking mood and didn't give his victim a choice of which fist he was going to hit him with first. While sources said Allen was doing everything he could to back down and defuse the situation, Mayo continued to mouth off at him -- demonstrating what one executive called "a gross lack of judgment on O.J.'s part."

"Most people don't quite get the denominations at stake or the testosterone that's at stake," said the executive, who requested anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss another team's business. "Tony Allen is one of the very few guys in the league I would greatly urge every NBA player not to [expletive] with."

The injuries inflicted were significant enough for Mayo to miss the Grizzlies' game Tuesday night against the Thunder under the chuckle-inducing guise of bronchitis. The predictable reaction came Wednesday, when the Grizzlies banned all gambling on team flights, effective immediately.

Is that the answer? Of the 23 teams that responded to a survey by CBSSports.com Wednesday as to their policies on gambling and card

games on team flights, only two said they're forbidden -- and one of them was the Grizzlies, who obviously just joined this very exclusive club. A common response was that playing cards for money is allowed on flights, but no cash can be displayed at any time. Three teams said they allow gambling but limit the stakes, while another one said it's allowed -- but not after a loss.

NBA gambling guidelines require players to obey local, state and federal laws but don't expressly prohibit anything short of wagering on NBA games.

One team said it banned gambling on team charters in the wake of the Arenas incident, but lifted the ban this season. Another said players voluntarily stopped playing after Arenas but gradually went back to their old ways. One team, reflecting the entitlement culture of sports, declined to divulge its policy, calling it "private information." If you were to guess that this team has, at one time or another, requested and/or benefited from taxpayer funds with respect to the arena it plays in or hopes to play in, you would be right.

Five teams said they don't have a ban on gambling, but stipulated that they don't currently have a regular group of card players. But one team official, who declined to be identified due to the sensitive nature of the information, said he recently saw a player lose \$20,000 playing cards on a single flight. It's easy to understand why tempers could flare, especially when players of vastly different incomes are engaged in high-stakes games.

"When you've got somebody making \$20 million vs. somebody making \$300,000," one former player said, "that's like a sword vs. a nuclear bomb."

Anecdotal evidence and interviews with team officials and former players Wednesday suggested that it's typical for a team to have a small but regular group of card players who pass the time on flights all over the country with games of various stakes. Blowups like the one between Allen and Mayo are rare, but there are -- and have been for decades -- incidents the public never finds out about.

"There's always that mysterious DNP in the middle of February when the guy isn't around for a couple of days," one of the team executives said.

Everyone knows the story of Charles Oakley hitting Tyrone Hill in the head with a basketball over non-payment of a reported \$54,000 gambling debt, or of Jerry Stackhouse slugging Christian Laettner, or of Vernon Maxwell allegedly hitting Carl Herrera with a weight plate. You'll be hard-pressed to find a former NBA player who hasn't witnessed a fight between teammates over money or women or both. In today's Twitter and Facebook society, it's just harder to keep those incidents "in house," where our arrogant sports teams like to tell us they belong.

"These guys think things like this won't happen involving them," one team official said. "But it's going to happen more and more because their fuses are short, they don't like people telling them anything, and they think they're all little gangsters. But at end of day, they're just basketball players."

In the case of the Grizzlies, what happened on the plane didn't stay on the plane, as team officials obviously were hoping it would. Whether or not you believe the Grizzlies' assertion that Mayo had bronchitis, league sources said Wednesday that team officials did inform NBA security of the incident before CBSSports.com and then Yahoo! Sports reported it Tuesday night. Beyond the Grizzlies' in-flight gambling ban, there was no word Wednesday on what, if any, disciplinary action would be coming from the team or the league.

Even in the wake of the Arenas fiasco, commissioner David Stern continued his standing policy of having such activities under the jurisdiction of the teams, not the league. This was hardly surprising, considering that Stern actually loosened some gambling restrictions on referees after Tim Donaghy was found to have wagered on NBA games he officiated and provided information to gamblers with ties to organized crime.

But the indisputable fact that many more incidents like Allen's TKO of Mayo -- and worse -- have unfolded without public scrutiny over the years is no excuse to allow this subculture to continue unchecked. A league-wide ban of gambling on team property, including planes and hotel rooms paid for by the teams? Probably over the top, unenforceable, and subject to a lengthy fight with the National Basketball Players Association at a time when owners and players have plenty of other issues to fight about.

But here's an idea that might be more practical and might also send the kind of message that some of these athletes, cloaked in what they perceive as the boys-will-be-boys locker-room sanctity, regardless of the time zone or altitude, obviously require.

Approximately one-third of NBA teams own chartered jets to fly players from coast to coast, according to league sources. The other two-thirds, nearly 20 teams, share a fleet of jets through the NBA's chartered plane program. Those teams share the planes and the cost and get first-class travel accommodations for their 41 road games a year. While it would seem to be a stretch to impose rules on owners' private property, why couldn't Stern issue a policy on Thursday banning gambling on all planes belonging to the NBA charter program?

Both the Wizards and Grizzlies were using NBA charters when their respective players embarrassed themselves and their sport in gambling disputes; two people familiar with those teams' policies said they both participate in the league charter program.

Such a partial ban would send a strong message. Would it solve the problem? Not completely. You can't police the players wherever they go, and several teams said it was their responsibility to draft and acquire players who understand that laws and common sense still apply at 37,000 feet. But to some degree, as long as there are cards and money in the NBA, there will be gambling -- and the potentially ugly repercussions that go with it.

"Throughout history, two things are undefeated: [women] and greed," one of the executives said. "They both have an amazing record, home and away. And there's usually retribution when one of those two are violated in some way."

For more from Ken Berger, check him out on Twitter: @KBerg\_CBS

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It's time to fold on the NBA's gambling subculture

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**mojo4395** January 6, 2011 9:36 am Fights over gambling debts aren't limited to NBA team planes. I've seen arguments and fights over betting on games of pool in bars and games of poker in family basements. You put a group of people together as often as basketball players are, and conflicts are going to develop and occasionally get physical. Especially since this is a group of young men whose livelihood is playing a physical spor...(more)

**Ndog\_13** January 6, 2011 9:20 am Who Cares.... Give them guns and they can shoot it out. One less thug to worry about. they will all be in the poor house when they retire anyhow because they can't manage their money and read at a 5th grade level. And lets not forget the 30 kids they all have accross the country which they pay child support too. THE NBA.... FANTASTIC!!!

**mauxdeverite** January 6, 2011 9:13 am The article didn't mention what game they were playing. Doubtful they're playing Poker. They are probably playing "Tonk", which is the intellectual equivalent of shooting dice. Hey, there's an idea. Shooting dice on the longer plane trips. They could hold the "Dice Shooting World Championships", as depicted on Chapelle's Show, featuring Leon Washington and Ashy Larry.

**rbg4life** January 6, 2011 4:51 am LMAO over "BearzDen".....I hope he's being sarcastic. If not, what a tool

**VSMACK44** January 6, 2011 3:40 am Here's a fact, pro sports wouldn't be as popular as they are today if it weren't for sports gambling...especially the NFL. Another fact, white males between the ages of 25-45 would never watch a minute of an NBA game if they didn't have a wager on it. The fact is that people love to gamble on sports & that will never change. Competitive people love to defy the odds, that's why they try to win at...(more)

**Epharias** January 6, 2011 1:05 am the league should provide a pitboss for every team plane, to make sure all the gambling is legit, rules are followed and all debts are paid, immediately after the game. Only NBA poker chips should be allowed, in denominations of \$100 each.

**redwings1969** January 6, 2011 12:23 am who cares is right... thugs will be thugs.. ghetto boys will always be ghetto boys... money doesn't change them at all.

**NFLrealist** January 6, 2011 12:22 am Without gambling, no one would give a rat's a\*\* about these sports...I can't remember the last time I sat and watched an entire NBA game, unless I had some \$\$\$ on it...Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley, ect. all gambled alot of their money away on anything they could...People can actually care about who wins if they have something on it...Otherwise it's pride about your city---which doesn't mean ne...(more)

**BearzDen** January 6, 2011 12:15 am hmm teammates fighting over a gambling debt? Totally immature. These are supposed to be professionals who young people look up to and inspire them to do well in life. This kind of act only helps young people onto the wrong paths. What a couple of idiots. Especially Mayo. I used to respect him. Not now.

**onlineisdumb** January 5, 2011 11:17 pm i like how a vet (allen) whooped a young and up comer ass (westbrook) i wish more vets would nut up

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# Match-fixers targeted gambling addicted players

Posted 4d 21h ago

By Nesha Starcevic, AP Sports Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany — If convicted match-fixers are to be believed, cash-carrying gamblers seeking to manipulate games easily found willing accomplices in susceptible players and referees across Europe.

Several witnesses who have testified in Bochum at a trial of four men charged with fraud in what officials have called the biggest match-fixing scandal in Europe have described how they recruited players and referees.

One of their soft targets seemed to be players with a gambling problem and debts. One German player revealed this week that he received —100,000 (\$129,600) from a gambler to fix five games in 2009, although he denied manipulating any games.

Rene Schnitzler, whose then-club St. Pauli was in the second division but has since been promoted, said he has been a compulsive gambler since the age of 18.

"There are many players who spend their entire free time in betting shops," a witness identified only as Mario C. told the court.

Ante Sapina, the most notorious witness, told the court that lower-division player Thomas Cichon "was for me the chief figure."

Cichon has been implicated before but has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Sapina was convicted as the mastermind of a match-fixing ring in Germany in 2005 and sentenced to 35 months in prison. He was released early and told the court he resumed betting large sums on manipulated games shortly after the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Prosecutors in Bochum have said they expect to

bring charges against Sapina, Mario C. and others shortly. Sapina has been in investigative custody since Nov. 19, 2009.

Sapina has described how he traveled to Sarajevo in September 2009 to meet with a Bosnian referee and arrange for the otherwise meaningless World Cup qualifying match between Finland and Liechtenstein to be fixed.

In exchange for —40,000 (\$52,000), referee Novo Panic agreed to make sure two goals would be scored in the second half. The match ended in a 1-1 draw with both goals coming in the second half. One of them was the result of a blatantly wrong penalty, according to Sapina.

Panic and another referee contacted by Sapina have been suspended for life by UEFA, the governing body of European football. UEFA has declined to comment while the case is unfolding.

Prosecutors consider Sapina the major figure in the betting scene and the Croat himself has said he bet an average of —1 million (\$1.3 million) a month, placing wagers on 30 games and one fixed match a week.

The various testimonies, however, have failed to clarify how closely connected individual gamblers were. Sapina has said he placed bets for others in Asia.

The Bochum trial is the first to result from a massive probe by prosecutors, who have compiled 14,000 pages of documents and are investigating more than 300 people.

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## Gambling a strong temptation for Packers fans

### Sunday's game could become most bet-on game of season

By Alex Morrell • Gannett Wisconsin Media •  
January 20, 2011

The Packers upcoming NFC championship game against the Chicago Bears has generated feverish excitement in both home states, but the teams' successful playoff campaigns could compound debts for the states' problem gamblers.

Fans are responding to their teams' playoff success by putting their money where their mouth is, and Sunday's game could become the most bet-on game of the season, according to Richard Gardner, sportsbook manager for the online gambling site Bodog.

He said betting for the NFC championship game has been heavy so far, especially in the Chicago and Green Bay areas, with an unsurprising 65 percent of bets placed on the Packers to cover the 3.5 spread.

"Every playoff game is very popular in terms of betting, but this one will probably be one of our heaviest bet games of the season. However, it is still too early in the week to tell for sure," Gardner said. "The fact that this is such a big rivalry game and how well the Packers have been playing as of late I am sure is influencing the volume of bets we are taking in."

Dennis Lorenz, an associate professor in human development and psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay who studies attitudes toward sports gambling, said though the Super Bowl is the largest betting event of the year, the playoff games leading up to the event are another popular excuse to get involved.

"It's a very strong temptation for those who are problem gamblers," Lorenz.

Lorenz said many participate in sports betting because they feel more connected to the event, and that betting makes them part of the game.

And because of the Packers' success, loyal fans with gambling problems may feel a stronger urge to bet on the green and gold.

"It's going to be a little different this time ... because it's our team this time," Lorenz said. "The temptation gets even stronger to participate."

The influx of bets from the fans' host cities isn't an uncommon phenomenon, Gardner said, especially for betting on the odds to win the Super Bowl — currently 8 to 5 for the Packers to win it all and 5 to 1 for the Bears.

"When a team is doing well, it seems that their fans tend to put their money where their mouth is or bet with their heart," Gardner said.

Additionally, the ubiquity of the game in the paper, TV and among conversations with friends and coworkers can also make it difficult to avoid, according to Lorenz.

"It's like an open bar for an alcoholic," Lorenz said.

According to the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling, its gambling helpline fielded 14,380 calls in 2010, a slight dip from the record 14,604 received in 2009.

The average debt of the callers was \$43,800, and 68 callers reported thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts.

Lorenz, a board member of the council, said the hotline has grown in popularity in recent years and it would be difficult to compare other successful seasons with this year's, though they would know more after the season's conclusion.

Online gambling is legal in Wisconsin, but all other

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sports betting is illegal.

— Alex Morrell writes for the Green Bay Press-Gazette

gambling hotline

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling estimates 5 to 7 percent of the state's population — or 338,000 people — have a gambling problem. To get confidential help, call their helpline at 1 (800) GAMBLE-5 or visit www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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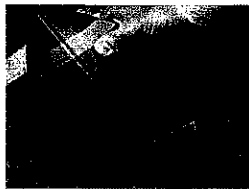
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## Keeping Super Bowl betting under control

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Posted: Jan 20, 2011 12:53 PM EST



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LA CROSSE, Wisconsin (NEWS RELEASE) - As the Super Bowl nears, many people are placing "friendly wagers" on the big game. For some people, gambling like this is harmless. But for many, it can cause big problems, especially in these tough economic times.

"Our current struggling economy has created major financial stress for many people and may lead to an increase in problem gambling," says Tim Fuhrmann, MS, LPC, CSAC, Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Health. "When folks are desperate, a large bet on playoff games or the Super Bowl may seem like a quick way to solve their financial worries." Problem gambling impacts more people than you might think. The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling estimates five to seven percent of people in Wisconsin are problem or compulsive gamblers. A compulsive gambler can be a man or woman of any age, race, income or religion. Compulsive gamblers look for any situation that provides him or her with "action," like sports events, lotteries, bingo, dog races, card games, slot machines, dice, and even the stock market.

Compulsive gambling is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as an impulse control disorder. As a person loses his or her ability to control the impulse to gamble, it can lead to excessive gambling. This can result with problems in finances, work, legal issues, and relationships.

"People who are able to gamble safely have full control over how much money they can afford to lose," adds Fuhrmann. "Safe gambling activity also includes the ability to control how much time they spend gambling and they do not experience losses that hurt them financially or cause problems in their relationships."

If you think you or a family member may have a problem with gambling, ask yourself these questions:

- Has gambling on football, the stock market, card games, lotteries or any situation which provides "action" ever made your home life unhappy?
- Have you ever borrowed or raided money (from others or savings accounts) to gamble?
- Have you ever lost time from school or work due to gambling?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you or a loved one may have a gambling problem. Help is available. If you or someone you know needs help because of problem gambling call the Coulee Council on Addictions at (608) 784-4177, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling at (800) GAMBLE-5 or Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Health at (608) 776-7991.

### Facts about gambling

1. Five to seven percent of Wisconsin/Minnesota's population is problem/compulsive gamblers.
2. Not only does compulsive gambling shatter the lives of men, women and their families, it results in economic loss to society.
3. Compulsive gambling can be diagnosed and is a treatable illness.
4. Compulsive gambling is called the "hidden illness" because it cannot be detected by an odor on the breath, stumbling of steps or slurred speech. Nonetheless, it can be as debilitating as alcohol or drug addiction.
5. It is treatable.

Source: Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling

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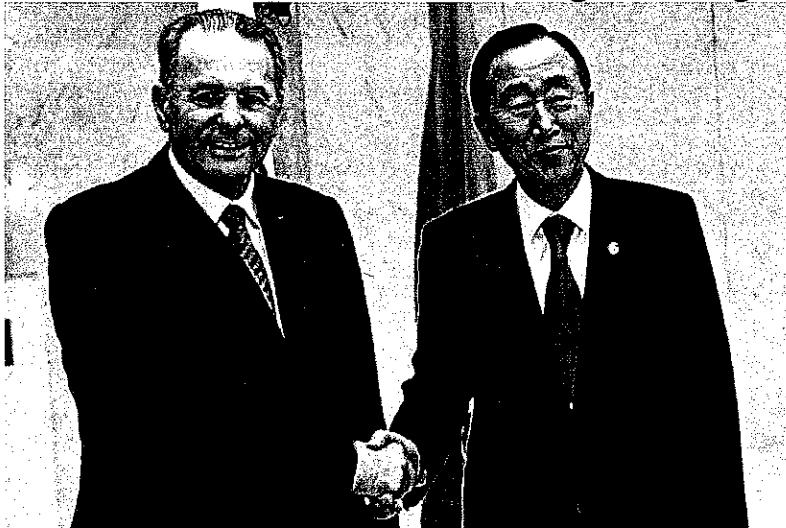
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## IOC to meet with governments, other sports bodies on March 1 to discuss illegal betting



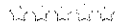
International Olympic Committee, IOC, President, Belgian Jacques Rogge, left, welcomes United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, right, for a formal call at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2011. (AP Photo/Keystone, Dominic Favre) (Dominic Favre. AP / January 25, 2011)

By Associated Press

11:34 a.m. CST, January 27, 2011

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LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — The **International Olympic Committee** will meet with governments and other interested organizations in March to discuss illegal betting in sports.

IOC President Jacques Rogge, speaking Thursday at a symposium on the subject, said illegal betting is a threat that needs to be met with the same "seriousness and unity" as doping. He said the IOC is doing more to combat the problem.

"We are strengthening communication channels with all parties," Rogge said. "This of course includes symposiums such as this and the IOC's first meeting between the sports movement, governments, public international organizations and sports betting operators on March 1."

Rogge compared illegal betting to doping.

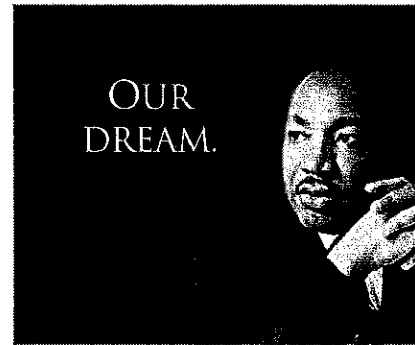
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"While doping remains our No. 1 threat, billion-dollar betting scams run by criminal gangs and unlicensed gambling outfits are a growing concern," Rogge said at the symposium, hosted by the International Sports Press Association. "And this new scourge needs to be fought with the same seriousness and unity with which we are fighting doping."

Separately, Rogge wrote in a newspaper opinion piece that the IOC is stepping up its efforts to fight illegal gambling.

"Illegal or irregular betting ... is potentially crippling. Each instance that comes to light undermines confidence in sport, which can lead to spectator apathy and drops in attendance, TV viewership and sponsorship," Rogge wrote. "At its worst, it can deter people from participating in sport in the first place."

Rogge also called on sports bodies and governments around the world to write legislation against illegal betting.

"We are currently in the process of encouraging all our partners in the Olympic Movement to adopt rules that forbid betting on each respective sport," Rogge wrote. "Without it, there are no grounds on which to punish the cheats."

"The support of governments is also paramount. They are the ones with the authority to create a legal framework in which legal and regular betting can take place."

The IOC-established International Sports Monitoring was created to monitor the Olympics for suspicious betting activity. Rogge noted there have been no instances of concern yet at the games.

If there is a suspicious case, "we launch an inquiry and the betting companies transfer all the necessary information regarding the bet and the bettor to the IOC. Thankfully, we did not have to activate this system at the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 or in Vancouver last year," Rogge wrote.

Match-fixing and suspicious betting have come up more and more in recent years, particularly in soccer and tennis. The International Tennis Federation has created the Tennis Integrity Unit to help keep its sport clean.



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