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PRESS RELEASE

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Alert Issued to Consumers on March Madness Wagering: Protecting Marylanders from Scams and Illegal Betting

BALTIMORE, MD (March 20, 2025) – With March Madness now in full swing, the Maryland Attorney General's Office is taking steps to protect consumers during this popular betting season. This guidance warns consumers to be wary of scams and aggressive marketing and helps them make informed choices about betting legally. This alert was issued to all consumers who have subscribed to receive consumer information from our office. Consumers can subscribe to this list here: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MDAG/subscriber/new>.

Illegal online gaming platforms are not regulated and pose many risks, including a heightened risk of fraud and identity theft. To protect yourself:

- Ignore online gambling pop-up ads and unsolicited emails, text messages, or social media messages, as they could link to fraudulent websites even if they appear legitimate.
- Use only legal sports wagering operators or registered fantasy competition operators. The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (MLGCA) regulates legal sports wagering and fantasy competitions and provides a list of the online platforms that are legal in the State. Visit <https://www.mdgaming.com/legal-vs-illegal-online-gaming/> to view the list.
- Marylanders can legally wager on sporting events at 12 retail locations or online with 11 websites/mobile apps licensed in the state. Visit <https://www.mdgaming.com/maryland-sports-wagering/> for a list of all licensed businesses. If you are unsure whether a website, app, or business is licensed, call MLGCA at 410-230-8800.
- MLGCA has prohibited licensed operators from using terms like “risk-free” or “guaranteed.” Do not place bets with operators using those terms. Remember that there is no such thing as a completely risk-free bet or free money when it comes to gambling.
- Check consumer reviews and ratings with the Better Business Bureau (www.BBB.org) and call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 410-528-8662 to ask if any complaints have been filed against a platform.
- Report suspected scams to the Consumer Protection Division or the Federal Bureau of Investigation at <https://tips.fbi.gov/>.
- Read the fine print on all promotions, especially those that look too good to be true.
- Read all conditions or penalties placed by sportsbooks that may limit how and when you can cash out winnings.

Remember that gambling causes financial losses and, if you are going to gamble, it should only be done in moderation. Maryland residents seeking help with a gambling problem are encouraged to call 1-800-GAMBLER, a free and confidential helpline available 24 hours a day, www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov

staffed by peer counselors and professionals from the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling, a division of the State of Maryland's Behavioral Health Administration. Additional information on problem gambling resources is available at www.mdgamblinghelp.org.

Stay safe and enjoy the tournament! If you believe you've been scammed or to report suspected scams, call 410-528-8662 or visit www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov.

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