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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Alert Issued to Consumers to Beware of Sports Betting Scams in Advance of March Madness

**BALTIMORE, MD (March 15, 2024)** – With March Madness right around the corner, the Maryland Attorney General’s Office is cautioning Marylanders to be vigilant and wary of scams and aggressive marketing meant to persuade bettors to make bigger and riskier bets. 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>.

Marylanders have many sports betting options, including mobile apps, online, and in-person. These entities and venues are good at enticing bettors, and very good at getting you to bet more money than you were planning to spend in the first place, but are hoping that you won’t take the time to read their fine print. Additionally, online and app-based gambling is a target for cybercriminals hoping to defraud you out of money or personal information.

To protect yourself from misleading information when considering using sportsbook platforms:

- Check consumer reviews and ratings with the Better Business Bureau ([www.BBB.org](http://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 the platform.
- Read the fine print on all promotions, especially those that look too good to be true.
- Read all the conditions or penalties placed by the sportsbooks that may limit how and when you are able to cash out winnings.
- There is no such thing as a completely risk-free bet, or free money, when it comes to gambling.

To protect against fraudulent platforms and scammers:

- More information about legitimate, licensed sports betting programs and entities is available from the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency ([www.mdgaming.com](http://www.mdgaming.com)).

- Ignore online gambling pop-up ads and unsolicited emails, text messages, or social media messages. Even if these look like they are coming from a legitimate sportsbook, they could link to a fraudulent website.
- Report suspected scams to our Consumer Protection Division or the Federal Bureau of Investigation at <https://tips.fbi.gov/>.

Lastly, remember that you could experience devastating financial losses if gambling becomes problematic. For assistance with problem gambling, visit the Maryland Alliance for Responsible Gambling at <https://www.mdgamblinghelp.org/> or call 1-800-Gambler.

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<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2024/031524.pdf>