

## WCPG Discussion Case #1

### March Madness of Policy Mess?

XYZ Corporation is a mid-sized marketing firm with a casual, friendly workplace culture. Employees often collaborate on projects and socialize after work. Recently, a long-standing office tradition—the annual **March Madness betting pool**—has sparked controversy.

Steve, a senior account manager, has organized the pool for years. Each participant contributes **\$20**, and the winners receive cash prizes at the end of the tournament. No one has ever complained, and even **some managers participate**.

However, **Lisa**, a new HR director, has discovered the pool and is **concerned about potential legal and ethical issues**. She has reviewed the company's policies and found that gambling is **not explicitly mentioned**. However, XYZ Corporation operates in **Texas**, where workplace gambling could be considered illegal under state law.

#### The Conflict

Lisa meets with **Mark, the company's COO**, to express her concerns. Mark, who has been at XYZ for years, **dismisses her worries**, saying:

*"It's harmless fun! We've been doing this forever, and no one has had an issue. Clamping down on this will just make employees resentful."*

Lisa, however, believes it's a **liability risk**. If an employee loses money they can't afford to lose, or if someone reports the pool to authorities, the company could face legal consequences.

Adding to the complexity:

- **David, a junior analyst**, recently told HR he feels uncomfortable with the pressure to participate. He declined to join, but his co-workers **joked that he was "no fun" and "not a team player."**

- **Steve, the organizer, is upset** that Lisa is considering shutting the pool down. He argues that the pool **boosts morale and camaraderie** in the office.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **What are the potential risks** of allowing the office pool to continue?
2. **Should the company intervene, and if so, how?** Should it outright ban the pool or modify the rules (e.g., remove the money aspect)?
3. **How should HR address employees who feel pressured** to participate in workplace gambling?
4. **Would your answer change if the company operated in a different state** with more lenient gambling laws?
5. **How can XYZ Corporation balance company culture, legal compliance, and employee concerns?**

### **WCPG Focus Question:**

What “actions” can Problem Gambling professionals take to help organizations address the issues raised by this case? Remember the “Omne Trium Perfectum” Session Challenge for three recommendations.

## WCPG Discussion Case #2

### The High-Stakes Office Pool

Jordan is a mid-level manager at TechSphere Solutions, a fast-growing software development company. The company has a friendly and collaborative culture, and employees frequently engage in team-building activities, including fantasy sports leagues and occasional poker nights.

The company's March Madness office pool is one of the most anticipated events every year. Employees contribute **\$20 each**, and the winner takes the pot. The event is informal, and participation is **entirely voluntary**. Even some senior managers join in, which seems to signal that leadership is comfortable with the tradition.

This year, **several issues arose** that put Jordan in a difficult position:

#### 1. A New HR Policy

- The company recently updated its **Employee Conduct Handbook**, explicitly prohibiting all forms of gambling, including office pools.
- HR sends a company-wide reminder emphasizing that workplace gambling could lead to **disciplinary action**, including termination.

#### 2. A Concerned Employee

- One employee, Alex, approaches Jordan privately, expressing concerns.
- Alex states they feel **pressured** to participate, as many colleagues are involved and frequently discuss the pool at work.
- Alex is also worried that participating in gambling could trigger personal issues related to **a past gambling addiction**.

### 3. A Leadership Gray Area

- Although HR has banned gambling, some **senior managers still participate** in the pool.
- This sends mixed messages about **whether the rule is genuinely being enforced**.

### 4. A Financial Dispute

- The employee organizing the pool is accused of **not distributing the winnings fairly** and taking a “commission” from the total pot.
- This raises questions about whether the pool is still **a friendly game** or **an unregulated gambling operation**.

### Discussion Questions

1. **Ethical and Policy Issues:** How should Jordan handle the fact that leadership is ignoring the new gambling policy?
2. **Pressure & Inclusion:** What steps should Jordan take to address Alex’s concerns about feeling pressured to participate?
3. **Enforcement:** Should Jordan report the office pool to HR, given that some managers are participating? Why or why not?
4. **Workplace Culture:** How can Jordan maintain a **positive office culture** while ensuring compliance with company policy?
5. **Risk Management:** What broader risks could workplace gambling pose to the company, and how can they be mitigated?

### WCPG Focus Question:

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## WCPG Discussion Case #3

### Winning Big, Losing Focus

ABC Tech Solutions is a growing software company known for its fast-paced work environment. Employees often work long hours, and the company prides itself on offering **flexible work policies**, including allowing personal internet use during breaks.

Recently, **Jessica, a team leader in the sales department, noticed a troubling trend**. Several employees on her team—especially **Mike and Jason, two high-performing sales reps**—have been spending significant time on sports betting apps during the workday.

At first, Jessica didn't think much of it, as they were **still meeting their sales targets**. However, she soon noticed:

- **Frequent distractions** – Mike and Jason often **check their phones during meetings** and take long “breaks” right before game start times.
- **Encouraging others to join** – They **talk excitedly about their bets** and encourage coworkers to place wagers.
- **Work performance decline** – A few **missed deadlines** and **poor client interactions** have raised concerns about their focus.

#### The Conflict

Jessica raised the issue with **Tom, the HR manager**, who is unsure how to proceed.

- The company has **no official policy on sports betting** at work.
- **Online gambling is legal in their state**, so banning it outright might be **difficult to justify**.
- Mike and Jason are **strong performers**, and Tom worries that a crackdown might **damage morale**.

At the same time, Jessica fears that **if left unchecked, workplace gambling could grow into a more significant problem.**

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. Is sports betting during work hours a problem if employees still meet their performance goals? Why or why not?**
- 2. Should ABC Tech Solutions implement a formal policy on workplace gambling? If so, what should it include?**
- 3. How should HR address Mike and Jason's behavior? Should they be disciplined, warned, or simply reminded of expectations?**
- 4. What potential risks does online gambling pose to workplace culture and productivity?**
- 5. If sports betting is legal in the state, should the company still restrict it at work? Why or why not?**

### **WCPG Focus Question:**

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## WCPG Discussion Case #4

### Office Bets and Corporate Regrets

**Summit Financial Services** is a large investment firm with a **strict policy against workplace gambling** due to concerns about **productivity, ethics, and potential legal issues**. The policy, outlined in the employee handbook, states:

*“Employees are prohibited from engaging in gambling activities, including but not limited to sports betting, office betting pools, and online gambling, during work hours or using company resources.”*

Despite this policy, **Derek, a senior financial analyst**, has been observed **regularly placing bets on his phone and computer during work hours**. He follows multiple sports and **frequently discusses betting odds** with coworkers. Some employees **join in the conversations**, while others feel **uncomfortable or distracted by the gambling talk**.

#### The Conflict

**A junior employee, Emma**, reports to HR that she feels pressured to participate in betting discussions to fit in with her team. She also overheard **Derek using company Wi-Fi to place bets** on a sports gambling website.

HR brings this to the attention of **Mark, the department manager**, who is reluctant to act because:

- **Derek is a top performer** and brings in significant revenue.
- The company **has not actively enforced the policy in the past**, so disciplining him now might seem unfair.
- Other employees **engage in casual gambling discussions**—so should the company police all conversations about betting?

However, HR is concerned that if they **ignore** the situation:

- It could set a **bad precedent** that gambling at work is tolerated.
- Employees who **dislike gambling culture** might feel excluded or pressured.
- Using **company resources for gambling** could pose **compliance risks** for a financial firm.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Should Summit Financial enforce its policy strictly, or should there be flexibility? Why?**
2. **What consequences, if any, should Derek face for violating the policy?**
3. **Should the company distinguish between talking about sports betting and actually placing bets during work hours?**
4. **How can HR ensure employees feel comfortable reporting gambling-related concerns without fearing workplace backlash?**
5. **What steps should Summit Financial take to reinforce its gambling policy and prevent similar issues in the future?**

### **WCPG Focus Question:**

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## WCPG Discussion Case #5

### The Shop that Bets Together

**Wilson's Auto Repair**, a family-owned auto shop with **45 employees**, has a tight-knit culture where everyone knows each other. Employees often **joke around, take lunch breaks together, and talk about sports** while working.

Recently, **sports betting has become a major topic of conversation** in the shop. A few employees, led by **Kevin, a senior mechanic**, have started **placing bets on their phones** during work hours. They often **talk loudly about odds, wins, and losses**, sometimes distracting others.

#### The Conflict

**Sarah, the office manager**, has noticed a few **red flags**:

- **Employees frequently check phones and stop work** to follow games.
- A couple of workers **borrowing money from co-workers**, allegedly **after losing bets**.
- One technician, **Luis, asked to get paid early**, saying he had "a rough week."

The owner, **Tom Wilson**, is unaware of the full situation but has **noticed productivity slipping** and heard arguments about unpaid bets. When Sarah brings up her concerns, Tom is **hesitant to get involved**:

- **"They work hard; let them have some fun."**
- **"As long as the cars get fixed, does it really matter?"**
- **"I don't want to start making rules about what people do on their breaks."**

However, Sarah worries that:

- Gambling could **cause financial stress** for employees.
- Arguments over **bets and money** could hurt workplace relationships.
- If a customer saw employees betting, it could **hurt the shop's reputation**.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Should Tom take action, or is this just harmless fun?**
2. **What risks does workplace gambling pose in a small business setting?**
3. **How should Sarah handle employees borrowing money due to gambling losses?**
4. **Should Wilson's Auto Repair create a formal policy, or would that be overreacting?**
5. **If you were Tom, what steps would you take to address the situation without damaging morale?**

### **WCPG Focus Question:**

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