

Gambling Awareness and Education: Learning From Lived Experience

Greg Weber, Lived Experience Consultant
EPIC Global Solutions
PA Conference
2025- 2026 Season



Content Warning

At EPIC, people are at the heart of everything that we do.
With that in mind, we are committed to creating a safe
learning environment.

The following presentation will address topics including addiction, loss, suicide and traumatic events that may be triggering to some.

Pre-Game: Overview of Our Session

- 1 Introduction to EPIC: A little bit about us
- 2 Athlete Vulnerability: How and why athletes are more at risk
- 3 My Lived Experience: Personal story of gambling harm
- 4 First Responder Vulnerability
- 5 Spotting the Signs: Understanding the gambling spectrum
- 6 Questions & Conversations: An open dialogue









Introduction to EPIC

What we believe.

Who we are.

How we deliver our message.

Our world-class partners in sports.



U.S. Legal Sports Betting

-  Live, Legal (38 states + DC)
-  Legal - Not Operational (0 states)
-  Active or Pre-Filed Legislation/Ballot (2 states)
-  No Legislation in 2024 (5 states)
-  Dead Legislation in 2024 (5 states)



Athlete Vulnerability

Why are athletes at a 6X higher risk of gambling harm?



Sport Knowledge



Stress & Pressure



Love of Winning



Time



Team Culture



Financial Gain

How can I jeopardize the integrity of the game?

Sports Wagering

includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest

Match Fixing

involves the manipulation of an outcome by; the deliberate fixing of the result of a contest, an occurrence within the contest, or of a points spread (points shaving);

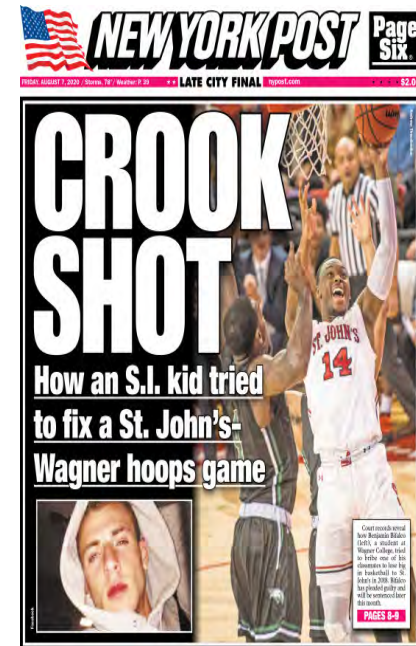
- deliberate underperformance
- withdrawal (tanking)
- an official's deliberate misapplication of the rules of the contest
- interference with the play or playing surfaces by venue staff



Inside Information

Information that you are aware of due to your position in the game / sport and which is not publicly available;

- Injury
- team selection
- Tactics





What about threats to the athlete?

Oral Roberts upsets Ohio State in 2021 NCAA Tournament

Following the game, Buckeyes' star E.J. Liddell (who wasn't the reason they lost) was pelted online with racist and homophobic slurs and literal threats against his life if he sets foot on campus.

Liddell's response was a blend of genuine hurt and bewilderment, asking, **“What did I do to deserve this?”**

A man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a black watch, is sitting at a poker table. He has his hands clasped in front of him and is looking intently at the camera. In front of him are several stacks of colorful chips (pink, blue, yellow, and orange). The background is blurred, showing other people at the table. A white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

My Lived Experience

A man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark grey sweater, is seated at a poker table. He is looking intently at the camera. The table is covered with a green felt and has several stacks of colorful chips in front of him. The background is dark with blue lighting. The Borgata logo is overlaid in yellow script, with 'HOTEL CASINO & SPA' in a smaller yellow font below it. The table's edge features logos for 'PlayWPT' and 'CasinoWPT'.

Borgata[®]

HOTEL CASINO & SPA

PlayWPT

CasinoWPT

PlayWPT & CasinoWPT





DOYLE BRUNSON'S SUPER SYSTEM

A COURSE IN POWER POKER

Contributions by:

TWO WORLD CHAMPIONS

Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson
Bobby Baldwin

TWO GREAT THEORISTS

Mike Caro
Dave Sklansky

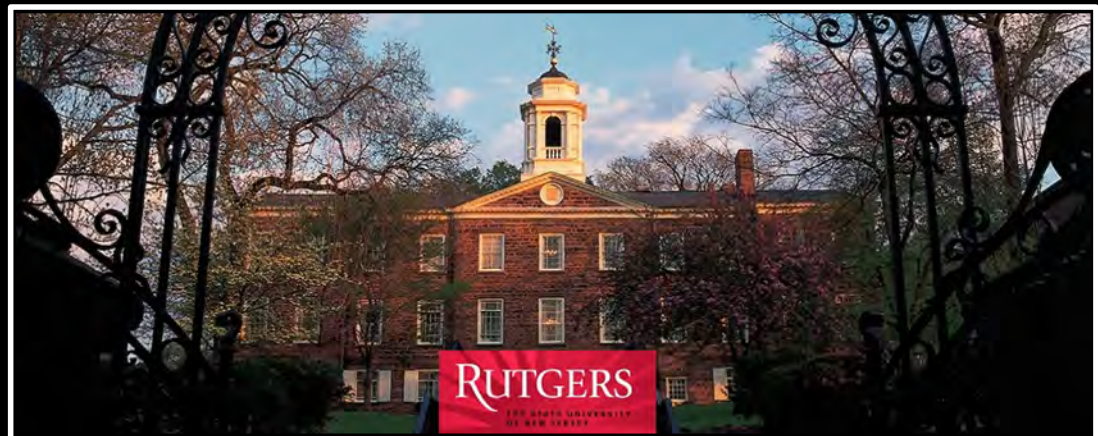
TWO BRILLIANT PLAYERS

Chip Reese
Joey Hawthorne



Acknowledged by professional poker players as the greatest poker book ever written, this underground classic, originally titled "How I Made Over \$1,000,000 Playing Poker," has never before been sold for under \$50!

DOYLE BRUNSON





The New York Times

SUBSCRIBE FOR \$11/WEK

New Jersey Now Allows Gambling via Internet

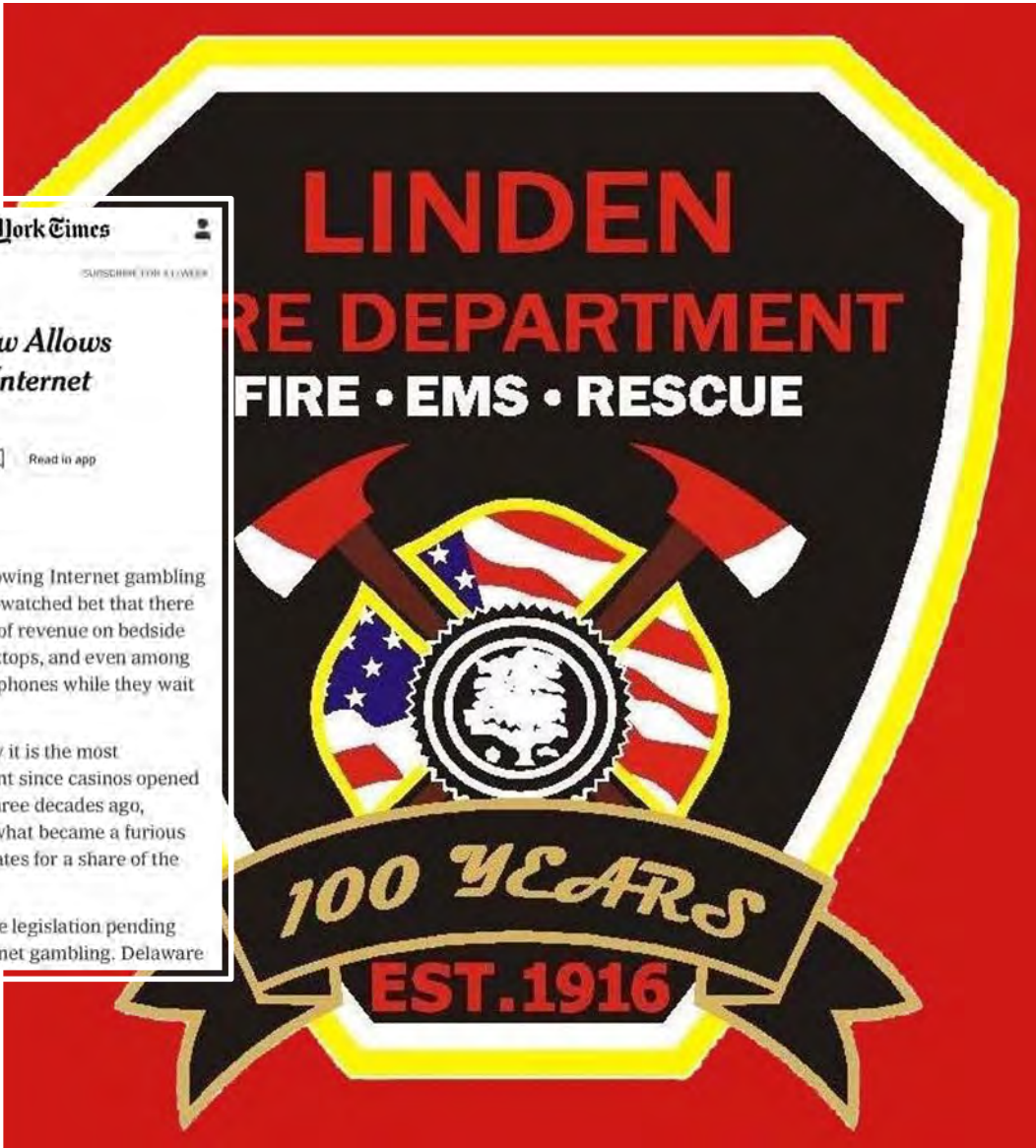
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By Kate Zernike
Nov. 26, 2013

New Jersey began allowing Internet gambling on Tuesday in a much-watched bet that there are untapped sources of revenue on bedside iPads and cubicle desktops, and even among people checking their phones while they wait in line for coffee.

Gambling analysts say it is the most significant development since casinos opened in Atlantic City over three decades ago, ultimately setting off what became a furious competition among states for a share of the take.

Eight other states have legislation pending that would allow Internet gambling. Delaware









ATL NO Sun 1:00pm Depth Chart
 NYJ Sun 1:00pm Depth Chart
 TB Sun 1:00pm Depth Chart

Avg. Rem./Player: \$0 | Rem. Salary: \$0

LINEUP

POS	PLAYER	OPP	FPPG	SALARY
QB	R. Tannehill	KC @ TEN	15.2	\$5,100
RB	C. McCaffrey	CAR @ GB	32.7	\$10,500
RB	J. Samuels	LAR @ PIT	8.8	\$6,300
WR	A.J. Brown	KC @ TEN	10.0	\$4,300
WR	M. Thomas	ATL @ NO	24.5	\$8,300
WR	B. Perriman	ARI @ TB	3.4	\$3,000
TE	Jonnu Smith	KC @ TEN	5.6	\$3,500
FLEX	T. Kelce	KC @ TEN	14.5	\$6,400
DST	Steelers	LAR @ PIT	11.8	\$2,600

IMPORT RESERVE ENTER | \$100
 Clear

EPIC



POKERSTARS



FANDUEL



DRAFT KINGS



ESPN

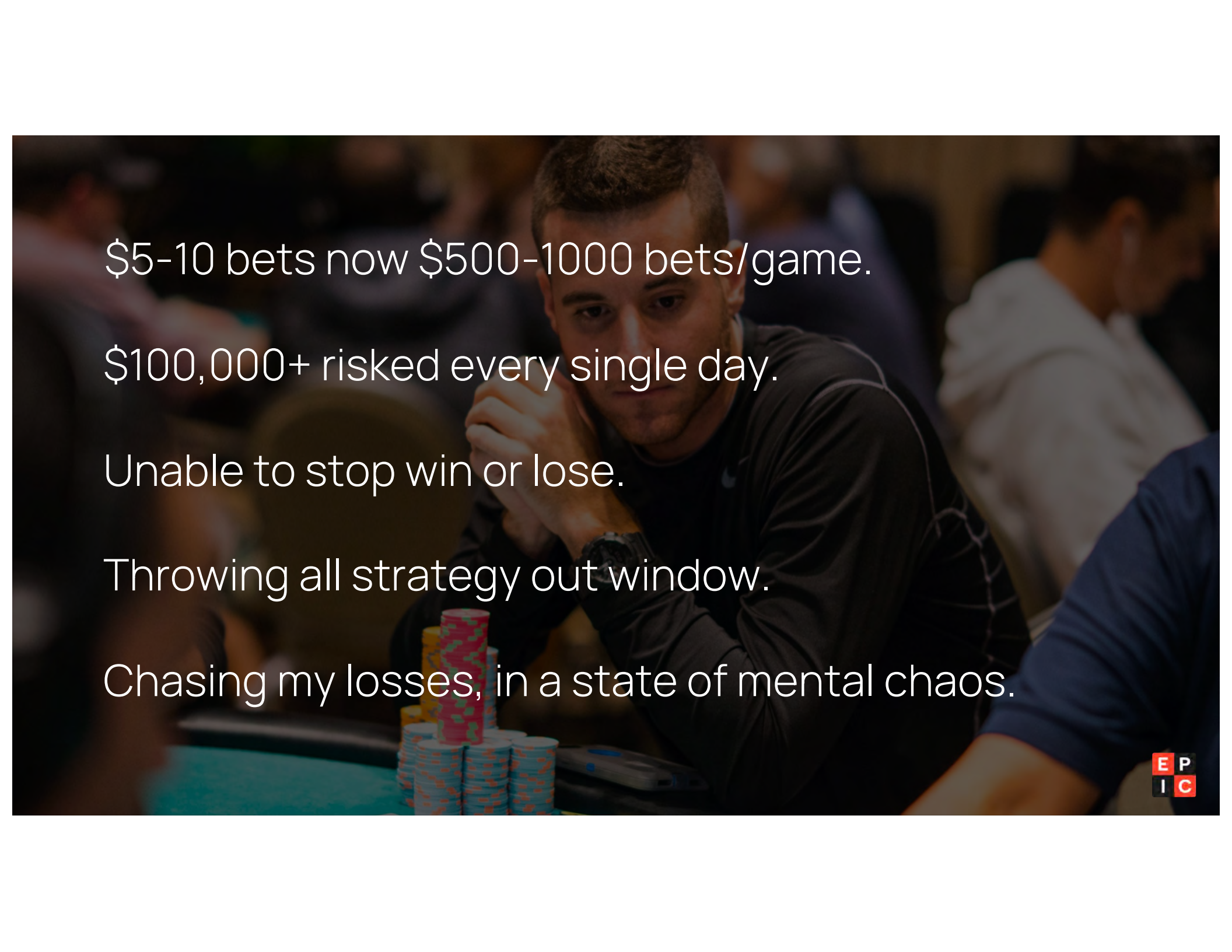




SC

BAD
BEATS\$

EPIC

A man with short dark hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a poker table. He has his hands clasped near his chin, looking intently at the camera. In front of him are several stacks of colorful chips (pink, yellow, blue, and orange). The background is blurred, showing other people at the table.

\$5-10 bets now \$500-1000 bets/game.

\$100,000+ risked every single day.

Unable to stop win or lose.

Throwing all strategy out window.

Chasing my losses, in a state of mental chaos.

SEP
23
12:18 AM

Championship: 2nd Place – Greg Weber (\$471,059)

POSTED BY: kaelaine
CATEGORY: 2017, WPT BPO
Championship - Event 15 (Day 5),
WPT BPO Championship Event 15

**\$3,300+\$200 WPT Borgata Poker Open
Championship NLH
\$3,000,000 Guaranteed**

**Level 36: Blinds 250,000/500,000/75,000 ante
Total Entries: 1,132
Players Remaining: 2
Average Stack: 17 million**







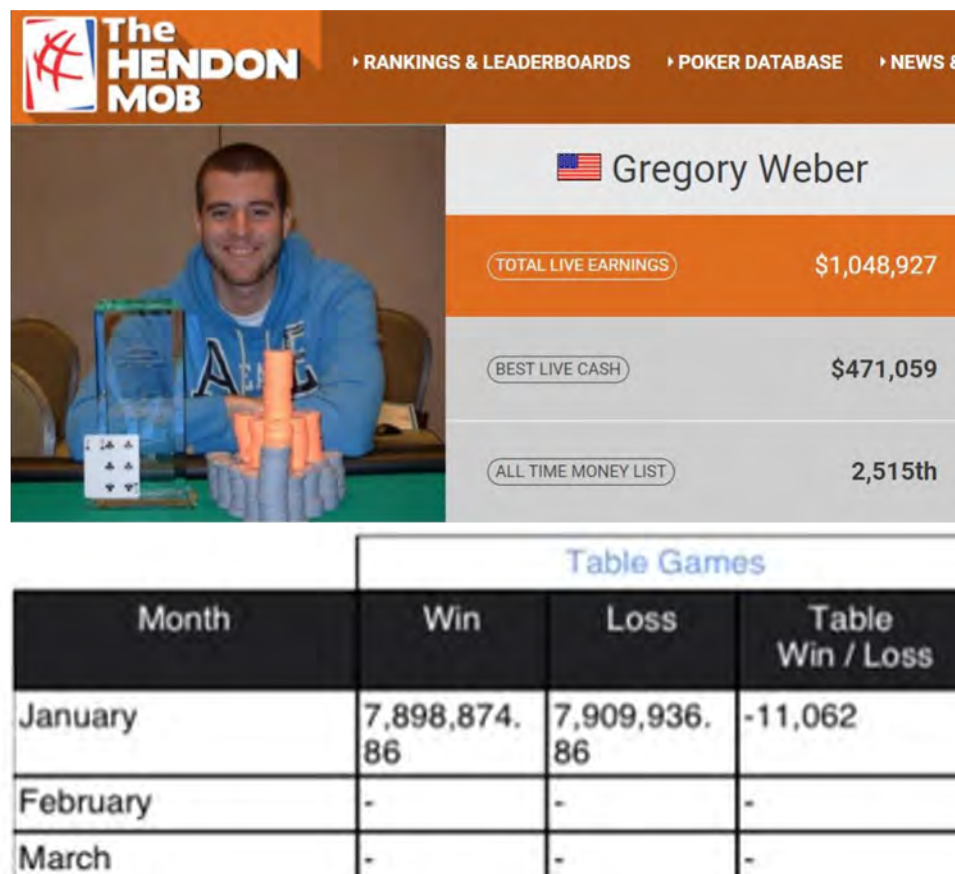
My Last Gambling Experience

Came clean in February 2020


Online Blackjack in a Shoprite
Parking Lot, maximum betting

6 Figures of debt: Multiple personal
loans, credit cards, 401k

No more access to money



The HENDON MOB | RANKINGS & LEADERBOARDS | POKER DATABASE | NEWS & MORE

 **Gregory Weber**

TOTAL LIVE EARNINGS \$1,048,927

BEST LIVE CASH \$471,059

ALL TIME MONEY LIST 2,515th

Month	Table Games		
	Win	Loss	Table Win / Loss
January	7,898,874.86	7,909,936.86	-11,062
February	-	-	-
March	-	-	-

My Support Network



PROBLEM GAMBLING SUPPORT GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE	
MONDAY (early) 12PM EST, 9AM PST, 5PM GMT	MONDAY (Younger Members) 5PM EST, 2PM PST, 10PM GMT
TUESDAY 12PM EST, 6PM PST, 2AM GMT	WEDNESDAY (Younger Members) 12PM EST, 9AM PST, 5PM GMT
THURSDAY 12PM EST, 6PM PST, 2AM GMT	FRIDAY 5PM EST, 2PM PST, 10PM GMT
SATURDAY 9AM EST, 6AM PST, 2PM GMT	SUNDAY 4PM EST, 1PM PST, 9PM GMT

A happier outcome...



Why is this relevant for **First Responders**?

Gambling problems are pronounced in the fire/police service due to shift work induced stress, job duties, and occupational hazard and danger. Despite limited statistical reports about the number of firefighters with gambling addiction in the U.S., there is an upward trend of gambling addiction prevalence.

With increased legalization across states, accessibility has never been easier. Gambling is often not seen as addiction, like alcohol or drugs. Awareness and Education can help stop the problem before it starts.



Why are First Responders at a higher risk of gambling harm?



Risk Taking Behavior

Many first responders enjoy the thrill and rush of responding to a working fire. Looking for this type of dopamine rush outside of work can lead to gambling becoming out of control.



Trauma and Escape

High stress, traumatic calls, lack of sleep, and shift work are common in the fire service. Gambling can be seen as a 'healthy' form of escapism because of the lack of direct impact on physical health. Drugs & alcohol can easily be detected, so gambling can be seen as an easier option.



Injury/Down time

The reality of shift work is that there is inevitably down time. Accessibility and easy access to mobile gambling fills that downtime and can cause problems. Injuries are also quite common, which lead to time away from the job and more boredom and isolation. Gambling often fills this void.



Financially Driven

Young firemen see their older peers who are in a good financial position and may see gambling as a way to accelerate that process and get rich quick. Gambling is often glamorized and the speed in which money can be won is appealing.



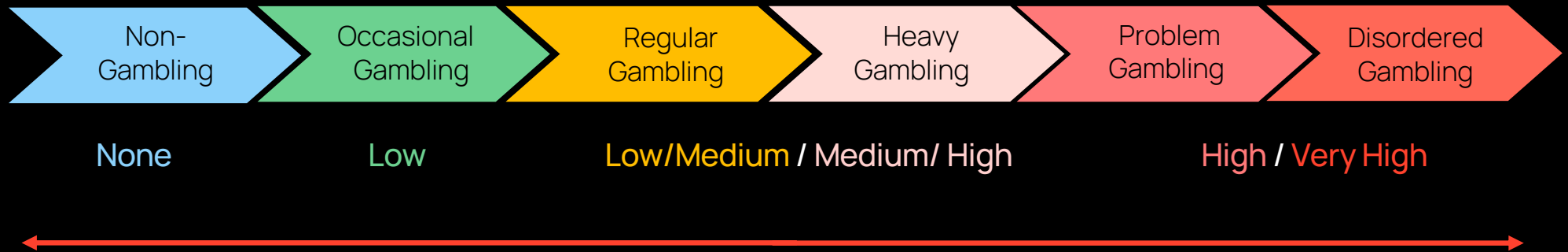
Competitive Nature

First responders are often competitive, some coming from a sport background. The firehouse often feels like a team environment and many of us are competitive and hate to lose. This leads to traits such as chasing losses in gambling.

A young man in a red soccer uniform is sitting on the grass, looking at a tablet. In the background, two other players in red uniforms are standing, and a yellow and blue soccer ball is on the grass. The scene is set outdoors on a grassy field with trees in the background.

Spotting the Signs

Gambling Spectrum



“Say, Do, Feel”



NON-GAMBLER

Gambling is not part of your life
No money spent on bets or gambling
Do not think about it or care to participate

UNDERSTAND

Learn more and pay attention to your friends



OCCASIONAL GAMBLER

Spending controlled

Not chasing losses

Possible impact on mental performance

Late night once in a while

LEARN

Learn more and pay attention to your habits



REGULAR TO HEAVY GAMBLER

Losing control of time and \$

Multiple accounts

Placing bets on sports you know nothing about

Anxiety, depression, loss of sleep

Missing practice, being late, borrowing money

SEE AND TALK

Identify risk and talk to someone you trust

A man wearing a red baseball cap is shown in profile, looking intently at a television screen. The screen displays a baseball game in progress, with a pitcher in a red uniform on the mound and a batter in a blue uniform ready to swing. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a home or a sports bar.

DISORDERED GAMBLER

Spending way more than can afford

Trying to bet 24/7

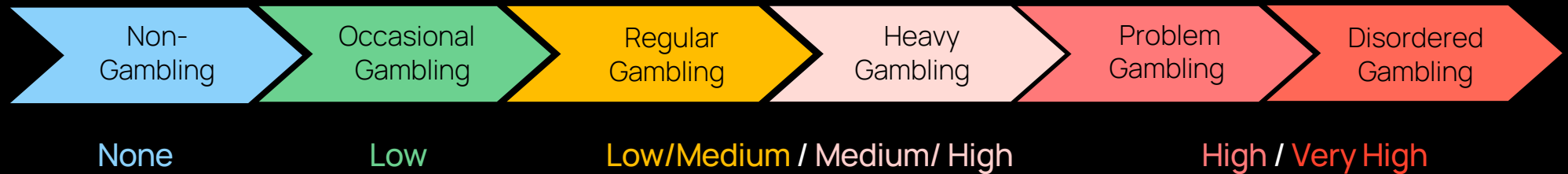
Numb to Ws and Ls

Athletic and personal life “the ship be sinking”

TAKE ACTION

Get help with team, NCAA, or external supports

Gambling Spectrum in your life



Where are you located on the spectrum?

Think of someone else you know who gambles.

Where do they sit on the spectrum?



How to Take Action

DRAW THE LINE



To learn more about the NCAA's sports betting efforts, on campus e-learning resources, membership toolkit, and initiatives visit ncaa.org/SportsBetting.





National Council on Problem Gambling

(24-hour confidential national gambling helpline):

Call: 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)

Text: 800GAM

Chat: 1800gamblerchat.org

Contact

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A photograph of a classroom from a rear perspective. Students are wearing red shirts and have their hands raised. A teacher is visible at the front of the room. A white text box is overlaid in the center.

Questions & Conversation

