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ONE-THIRD OF AMERICANS THINK NBA PLAYERS AND COACHES ARE INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES TO INFLUENCE BETTING, QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY SPORTS POLL FINDS; CONFIDENCE IN NBA COMMISSIONER TO CURB ILLEGAL BETTING IN ITS RANKS IS TEPID AMONG FANS

In the wake of a major gambling scandal involving the National Basketball Association (NBA) and allegations of illegal betting, 33 percent of Americans think NBA coaches and players are either very often (12 percent) or somewhat often (21 percent) involved in illegal activities to influence betting on NBA games, according to a Quinnipiac (KWIN-uh-pea-ack) University Sports Poll of adults nationwide released today. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the Quinnipiac University School of Communications.

Sixty-six percent think NBA players and coaches are either occasionally (43 percent) or rarely if ever (23 percent) involved in illegal activities to influence betting on NBA games.

Among NBA fans, the results are similar.

Thirty-five percent of NBA fans think NBA players and coaches are either very often (12 percent) or somewhat often (23 percent) involved in illegal activities to influence betting on NBA games, while 65 percent think NBA players and coaches are either occasionally (46 percent) or rarely if ever (19 percent) involved in illegal activities to influence betting on NBA games.

“Perception is important, and right now the NBA clearly has a perception problem. It might, too, have a trust problem,” said Nick Pietruszkiewicz, Assistant Professor of Journalism and Program Director of Sports Communications, Quinnipiac University.

NBA & ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING

Nearly 7 out of 10 Americans (68 percent) think involvement of NBA players and coaches in illegal sports betting is either a major problem (32 percent) or a not major problem (36 percent), while 30 percent think it is either a minor problem (20 percent) or not a problem (10 percent).

FAIR PLAY?

Americans are split on whether NBA games are played fairly.

Nearly half of Americans (49 percent) are either very confident (8 percent) or somewhat confident (41 percent) that NBA games are played fairly, without being influenced by players and coaches involved in illegal sports betting, while 48 percent are either not so confident (34 percent) or not confident at all (14 percent).

NBA fans are more confident.

Roughly two-thirds of NBA fans (67 percent) are either very confident (14 percent) or somewhat confident (53 percent) that NBA games are played fairly, without being influenced by players and coaches involved in illegal sports betting, while 32 percent of NBA fans are either not so confident (29 percent) or not confident at all (3 percent).

ILLEGAL SPORTS BETTING TACTICS

NBA fans were asked about three specific ways that NBA players or coaches could be involved in illegal sports betting and how often they think each of them happens:

Players missing shots or rebounds on purpose or faking injuries in order to influence bets:

Twenty-nine percent think it happens either very often (9 percent) or somewhat often (20 percent), while 69 percent think it happens either occasionally (41 percent) or rarely if ever (28 percent).

Coaches making roster decisions in order to influence bets:

Twenty-eight percent think it happens either very often (8 percent) or somewhat often (20 percent), while 71 percent think it happens either occasionally (38 percent) or rarely if ever (33 percent).

People with inside knowledge leaking confidential information about NBA player availability in order to influence bets:

Forty-five percent think it happens either very often (15 percent) or somewhat often (30 percent), while 53 percent think it happens either occasionally (39 percent) or rarely if ever (14 percent).

“Even with recent gambling scandals looming over the NBA season, most fans are feeling fairly confident they’re watching fair games. Those feelings waver, though, as fans also recognize that legalized sports betting has opened the door to questionable tactics,” said Brittani Webb, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Media Studies, Quinnipiac University School of Communications.

NBA COMMISSIONER

NBA fans are split when it comes to NBA Commissioner Adam Silver’s ability to prevent and catch the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting. Fifty percent are either very confident (9 percent) or somewhat confident (41 percent) in Silver’s ability to prevent and catch the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting, while 47 percent are either not so confident (38 percent) or not confident at all (9 percent) in his ability to do so.

A majority of Americans overall are not confident in Silver’s ability to prevent and catch the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting. Fifty-five percent are either not so confident (40 percent) or not confident at all (15 percent) in Silver’s ability to prevent and catch the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting, while 41 percent are either very confident (6 percent) or somewhat confident (35 percent) in his ability to do so.

“With two major gambling scandals in as many years, fans and the American public are expressing doubt about Adam Silver’s ability to protect the league’s integrity amid an era defined by legalized sports betting,” added Webb.

BETTING ON THE NBA VS. OTHER SPORTS

A vast majority of Americans (72 percent) think the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting in the NBA is about the same compared to other professional sports leagues, while 17 percent think it is more common in the NBA, and 8 percent think it is less common in the NBA.

SPORTS BETTING IN THE U.S.

More than 6 in 10 Americans (64 percent) think the growth of legal sports betting in this country has increased the amount of illegal activity by players and coaches to influence sports betting on games, while 28 percent think it has had no impact, and 5 percent think it has decreased the amount of illegal activity by players and coaches.

“Even if people think the increased popularity and availability of sports gambling has also led to more corruption, don’t look for the professional leagues to back off their association with the gambling companies. There is too much money available,” added Pietruszkiewicz.

“PROP” BETTING

Americans were asked about so-called “prop” betting, which lets people bet on specific events or outcomes within a game, rather than just the final score. Sixty-seven percent of Americans think “prop” betting should not be permitted, while 29 percent think it should be permitted.

1,013 U.S. adults nationwide were surveyed from October 31st – November 2nd, via the random-sample Ipsos KnowledgePanel, in which participants are recruited via address-based sampling to take surveys online. Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points for the full sample, including the design effect. Error margins are larger for subgroups. The sample included 399 self-identified NBA fans with a margin of sampling error of +/- 5.1 percentage points, including the design effect. Sampling error is not the only source of differences in polls.

The Quinnipiac University Poll, directed by Doug Schwartz, Ph.D. since 1994, produces independent, non-partisan national and state polls on politics and issues. Surveys adhere to industry best practices and are based on probability-based samples.

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Topline results follow. Dash in columns indicate <0.5 percent. "Skip" shows the share of respondents who skipped the question. Response options in parentheses were rotated.

1. Thinking about professional basketball, would you describe yourself as...

	MORE OF A FAN.....			LESS OF A FAN.....			
	Tot	Super fan	Fan	Tot	Casual fan	Not a fan	Skip
All	13%	3	10	87%	27	60	-
NBA fans	32%	7	25	68%	68	*	*

2. Given what you've heard or read, how often do you think players and coaches in the National Basketball Association are involved in illegal activities to influence betting on NBA games?

	MORE OFTEN.....			LESS OFTEN.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Occasionally	Rarely if ever	Skip
All	33%	12	21	66%	43	23	2
NBA fans	34%	12	23	65%	46	19	1

3. Overall, how confident are you that NBA games are played fairly, that is, without being influenced by players and coaches involved in illegal sports betting?

	MORE CONFIDENT.....			LESS CONFIDENT.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Not so	Not at all	Skip
All	50%	8	41	48%	34	14	2
NBA fans	67%	14	53	32%	29	3	1

4. These are some specific ways that NBA players or coaches could be involved in illegal sports betting. How often do you think each of the following happens?

a. players missing shots or rebounds on purpose or faking injuries in order to influence bets

	MORE OFTEN.....			LESS OFTEN.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Occasionally	Rarely if ever	Skip
All	30%	11	19	67%	41	25	3
NBA fans	29%	9	20	69%	41	28	1

b. coaches making roster decisions in order to influence bets

	MORE OFTEN.....			LESS OFTEN.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Occasionally	Rarely if ever	Skip
All	29%	10	19	68%	40	28	3
NBA fans	28%	8	20	71%	38	33	1

c. people with inside knowledge leaking confidential information about NBA player availability in order to influence bets

	MORE OFTEN.....			LESS OFTEN.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Occasionally	Rarely if ever	Skip
All	44%	16	28	53%	38	15	3
NBA fans	45%	15	30	54%	39	14	1

5. Regardless of how often it happens, do you think the involvement of NBA players and coaches in illegal sports betting is...

	MORE OF A PROBLEM.....			LESS OF A PROBLEM.....			
	Tot	Major	Not major	Tot	Minor	Not a problem	Skip
All	68%	32	36	30%	20	10	2
NBA fans	70%	32	38	29%	21	8	1

6. How confident are you in NBA Commissioner Adam Silver's ability to prevent and catch the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting?

	MORE CONFIDENT.....			LESS CONFIDENT.....			
	Tot	Very	Somewhat	Tot	Not so	Not at all	Skip
All	41%	6	35	55%	40	15	4
NBA fans	50%	9	41	47%	38	9	2

7. Do you think the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting is (more) common in the NBA than in other professional sports leagues, (less) common, or about the same?

	More common	Same	Less common	Skip
All	17%	72	8	3
NBA fans	21%	66	12	2

8. Overall, do you think the growth of legal sports betting in this country has increased or decreased the amount of illegal activity by players and coaches to influence sports betting on games, or has it had no impact on that?

	Increased	No impact	Decreased	Skip
All	64%	28	5	2
NBA fans	69%	24	6	1

9. Do you think the federal government is doing (too much), (too little) or about the right amount to prevent the involvement of players and coaches in illegal sports betting?

	Too much	About the right amount	Too little	Skip
All	5%	48	43	4
NBA fans	7%	50	41	2

10. So called "prop" betting lets people bet on specific events or outcomes within a game, rather than just the final score. Critics say this increases the opportunities for individual players or coaches to illegally influence bets. Others say it's just another way to let people bet if they want to. Do you think prop betting should or should not be permitted?

	Should be permitted	Should not be permitted	Skip
All	29%	67	4
NBA fans	34%	64	2