



March = Spring, Basketball, Problem Gambling Awareness

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(Green Bay, WI) – March has arrived, which means spring is on its way and the basketball world will turn its focus to the big college hoops tournament. With so many eyes and so much money riding on the basketball games it's only appropriate that March is also National Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

“March is most often a busy month for Wisconsin’s Problem Gambling Helpline as college basketball tournament time arrives,” said Rose (Gruber) Blozinski, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG). “For those who are addicted to sports gambling, this is really the culmination of a difficult stretch – with the football bowl season, Super Bowl and now the basketball tourney.”

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) describes the month-long campaign as a grassroots public awareness and outreach effort with a goal of educating the general public, and health care professionals, about the warning signs of problem gambling. The campaign was previously held during the first week of March to coincide with March Madness, one of the most widely bet upon events in the U.S. Now, the campaign takes place during the entire month of March.

Blozinski says problem gambling is really a hidden addiction. “Unlike drug or alcohol addictions, a gambling addiction doesn’t have any outward signs,” she says. “Family, friends and co-workers usually don’t recognize that there is a problem until it’s taken a huge financial toll. We want people to be more aware of the signs of problem gambling and know that there are counselors and programs available to help.”

The warning signs of problem or compulsive gambling include:

- Always thinking or talking about gambling
- Spending more time or money on gambling than you can afford
- Repeated attempts to cut back or stop gambling

- Gambling to escape stress or other problems
- Gambling to win back your previous losses
- Gambling until all of your money is gone
- Lying to family members and others about your gambling activity
- Borrowing money or stealing money to gamble
- Neglecting work, family, household responsibilities or personal needs because of gambling

WCPG also holds its annual statewide problem gambling conference in March. The 18th annual conference is set for March 23-24 at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, Live Chat through the WCPG website at www.wi-problemgamblers.org or text (920) 799-4080.

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*The **Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling** is funded by a public awareness grant from the State of Wisconsin and additional funding from donors, including Wisconsin Native American Tribes. The Council operates a 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, distributes informational brochures, organizes an annual statewide conference, makes presentations on problem gambling and conducts training sessions for treatment providers interested in the special requirements for working with compulsive gamblers and their families.*

For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin-council-on-problem-gambling.org) website, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/wcpgambling>

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