

## March Madness at Your Location: What's Allowed — and What's Not

March Madness is one of the most exciting times of the year for sports fans. With the NCAA Basketball Tournament just around the corner, many locations see increased foot traffic as guests gather to watch the games, cheer on their favorite teams, and enjoy the atmosphere.

However, it's critical to remember that **excitement around March Madness does not change Illinois gaming regulations**. To help protect your business and your gaming license, we want to clearly remind all location owners of what is **strictly prohibited** during the tournament.

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### Zero Tolerance for Illegal Gaming

The Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) has reiterated its **zero-tolerance illegal gaming policy** during March Madness — and year-round.

- **No wagering of any kind** on NCAA games is allowed in your establishment. This includes “friendly” or informal bets between guests.
- **Bracket pools involving money or anything of value** are also prohibited.
- Even if you are *not* sponsoring the event, the IGB holds the **location responsible for all gaming activity on the premises**.

In the past, violations could result in fines up to \$15,000 — but the IGB has made it clear that **fines are no longer the primary enforcement tool**. Current policy allows for **license revocation** if illegal gaming occurs on your property. They mean business, and have asked us, as Terminal Operator, to remind you once again of this prohibition.

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### New: Advertising and Promotions Rules You Must Follow

In addition to illegal gaming restrictions, the IGB has adopted **updated advertising and marketing rules** that your locations must comply with — especially during high-profile sports events like March Madness.

Here's what's **now prohibited or required** under the new rules:

## ✗ No Ads or Promotions on College or University Campuses

- You **cannot publish, display, broadcast, or distribute** any gambling advertisements or promotions on **college or university campuses**.
- This includes **college-affiliated media**, like student newspapers, campus radio, campus TV broadcasts, or sports venues primarily used for collegiate events.
- The rule is intended to prevent exposure to gambling messaging among underage and vulnerable populations.

## ✗ No Depictions of Colleges, Universities, or Students

- Any marketing materials used by your locations **must not depict college students, universities, college campuses, or college settings** — even in imagery or themed promotions.
- This holds true even if the content is used **inside your establishment** or online promotions tied to your business.

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### Why This Matters

Even well-intentioned promotions — like a fun March Madness bracket contest you might want to highlight on social media — could potentially violate these advertising restrictions if they:

- Use a college logo or team name in marketing materials
- Depict students or campus scenes
- Target college audiences or placements

These rules apply **all year long**, not just during March Madness. Compliance helps shield your location from enforcement actions and supports responsible gaming practices across Illinois.

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### Tips for Staying Compliant This March Madness

To avoid any issues:

- **Eliminate all wagering and betting activities** in your establishment.
- **Avoid bracket contests** with entry fees or prizes (monetary or otherwise).
- Train your staff on **what constitutes prohibited activity**.
- Review your **social media posts, signage, and promotions** to ensure none include college imagery or references that could be interpreted as advertising related to gambling.

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## **Let the Games Be About Fun — Not Risk**

March Madness brings enthusiasm and opportunity for increased business, but it should not create compliance risk.

Let's focus on making this a great event for your guests while protecting your license and reputation by adhering to both the **illegal gaming and advertising rules** set by the IGB.

If you have questions about compliance or want clarification on specific promotions, don't hesitate to reach out before the tournament tip-off.

## **Prairie State Gaming**

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