



March Madness - A Tough Time for Problem Gamblers

For Immediate Release

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(Green Bay, WI.) – March Madness is set to swing into full gear with college basketball’s opening round tournament games starting March 16th. Across the country, brackets will be filled in by those hoping to pick the most winners and win a few dollars. For most, it’s fun and games. But for those addicted to gambling, March Madness is a difficult time.

“No doubt there’s a lot of excitement when it comes to the college basketball tournament,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG).

“But add March Madness to the recent stress of the holidays and the Super Bowl, and the tournament may be the last straw for some gamblers. It’s definitely a very busy time of year for the Problem Gambling Helpline in Wisconsin.”

The good news is that help is available and compulsive gambling is treatable. “Certainly, those who have a gambling problem, or feel they may be headed that way, are encouraged to call the Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5,” Gruber said. “We put people in touch with resources to help them deal with the problem.”

In 2009, Wisconsin’s Problem Gambling Helpline received a record 14,604 calls. Gruber notes that an estimated five percent to seven percent of Wisconsin’s population may be problem or compulsive gamblers. That percentage is much higher young people at six percent to 12 percent.

The Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling also holds its annual statewide conference during March Madness. This year’s conference is set for March 18-19 at the Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan.

For more information about problem gambling, the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling or the 12th Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference, visit www.wi-problemgamblers.org.

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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 www.wi-problemgamblers.org. Become a fan of WCPG's Facebook Fan Page, search for "Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling" when logged into Facebook.*

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5 for confidential help.

Media Contact:

Scott Stein

Leonard & Finco Public Relations

(920) 965-7750

sstein@lfpublishrelations.com