

## Bettor Safe Than Sorry

By Seth Palansky, Conscious Gaming

As sports betting rapidly spreads across the United States, it is important all industry stakeholders do their part to uphold the integrity of the games people are wagering on.

State gaming regulators, gaming operators and sports leagues all have a vested interest in making sure that wagering taking place is on the up and up.

Currently 17 states offer some form of mobile sports betting, and state regulators have done a good job in crafting regulations to properly address this new opportunity.

These states have specific guidelines around “Prohibited Wagering Activity” which detail persons who must be prohibited from placing wagers. Groups like coaches, players and referees, or even state regulators or gaming operators who prohibit their employees from placing bets as well.

Let’s look at Illinois as an example of the state regulation in this area. (Most states have very similar language)

*Illinois - Section 19-1120 - Prohibited Wagering Activity*

*<https://www.igb.illinois.gov/FilesSportsLaw/SWA20200604PermanentRules.pdf> Section 1900.1120 Prohibited Wagering Activity a) Persons Prohibited from Wagering 3) No person located outside a 5-block radius from a sports facility may place a wager with that sports facility or its designee. 4) No person enrolled in the self-exclusion program may place or redeem a wager. 5) No athlete, competitor, referee, official, coach, manager, medical professional or athletic trainer or employee or contractor of a team or athletic organization who has access to nonpublic information concerning an athlete or team may engage in sports wagering on an event or the performance of an individual in an event in which the person is participating or otherwise has access to nonpublic or exclusive information. 6) No key person or employee of a master sports wagering licensee or management services provider licensee may place a wager with that master sports wagering licensee or a master sports wagering licensee for which the management services provider licensee is a designee.*

It is clear why these stipulations exist. But, how are they enforced? How does a gaming operator get the names of individuals to prohibit betting? How do you do it in a manner that protects data privacy? How ultimately do you block these wagers from occurring?

Unfortunately, the answers differ tremendously depending on who you ask. The complexities of managing this grows as data privacy laws are introduced and altered and state lines are crossed. Couple that with new states being added and different lists and pieces of information that need to be shared with different stakeholders and it quickly becomes unwieldy and prone to error and oversight.

But what if I told you there is technology that could solve all these issues and unite the industry around a multi-state solution that upholds the regulations of each state and protects consumers and the stakeholders?

Meet *PlayPause*. It is a national repository established by the non-profit organization Conscious Gaming, taking the individual databases of each stakeholder -- state gaming regulators, gaming operators and sports leagues -- and anonymizing the data using technology. The data is then shared with iGaming operators in real-time to block wagering, without using personally identifiable information of any individual.

For PlayPause to be effective though, it requires all industry stakeholders to collaborate. Information-sharing and broad adoption are key.

If you think about professional sports leagues, their teams and personnel travel in and out of cities regularly playing their games. What good is it to have a team on their own state's prohibited list if they can go ahead and wager when they are playing road games? What prevents a consumer living in New York who is participating in iGaming in New Jersey from walking into a New York gaming facility after self-excluding in New Jersey?

You quickly see the need for everyone to work together, to information-share and to contribute their databases -- self-exclusion lists (voluntary exclusion) and employee impermissible bettors lists (involuntary exclusion) into one giant repository.

PlayPause is customizable too. For a state regulator, PlayPause can be your self exclusion registry if you don't have one, or it can plug into your existing registration platform and allow consumers to opt in to PlayPause if they wish to extend their coverage outside their state of residence. Regulators and operators, likely through their HR team's back office, can contribute their employee impermissible bettors lists as well, and easily add or remove someone just like they do when employees join or depart the organization. For sports leagues, they can customize based on their sport and policies and tailor it based on game type or other criteria.

Technology really can be the great equalizer here.

Now you may be wondering what the cost is to implement PlayPause. Valid question. Conscious Gaming, who created this technology, is a non-profit organization. They are offering PlayPause to state regulators and operators at no cost. They will supply the technology and work with your IT teams to find the simplest way to integrate. The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board has already implemented PlayPause for their state's self-exclusion. It took them 20 hours of tech work to be up and running.

Let's all work together to be better safe than sorry. Visit [www.consciousgaming.org](http://www.consciousgaming.org) to learn more.