

Don't bet on legal sports lottery in Pennsylvania

(Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on the possibilities of sports betting in Pennsylvania in the near future.)

By JERRY LUCCI
Collegian Sports Writer

For many Pennsylvanians, gambling becomes a way of life early. Childhood memories of Mama playing her favorite number every week or Papa placing a \$10 parlay on Johnny Unitas and the Colts are commonplace. Junior got into the act when he was introduced to the ever popular sport sheet in junior high. And so it goes.

Gambling is an activity most law-abiding citizens just take for granted. Yet all types of gambling were illegal in Pennsylvania until 1972. Then, sagging Social Security program revenues prompted the legislature to start a state-wide lottery, giving Pennsylvanians their first chance to gamble legally.

In September, after Delaware started the first legalized football lottery, many Pennsylvania bettors looked to Harrisburg for similar action. Unfortunately for them, sports pool betting will not be taking place in Pennsylvania in the near future.

Instead, the state has other plans to supplement its basic lottery operation, according to Revenue Secretary Milton Lopus.

"I don't know if Pennsylvania will ever consider sports pool betting," Lopus says. "We're heavily involved in the introduction of a new daily numbers game and we'll have quite an investment in it. If we had thought sports pool betting would have increased our revenues dramatically, we could have always gone to that. But the thing is that we had a very substantial investment just in setting up the daily numbers game."

Once the new game starts in March, Lopus hopes to receive about \$3 million a week in revenue — \$1 million from the present lottery and \$2 million from the new numbers game.

Donald Cox, a member of the state Lottery Commission, believes the Commonwealth could have gone into a football lottery before Delaware and still maintained plans for the daily numbers game. "I'm rather disappointed that the staff has had a myopic view of the situation, including the secretary of revenue," he says. "The good sign was that this past summer the state attorney general gave us the green light and said there was nothing standing in the way of moving into sports pool betting and that we wouldn't need legislative approval."

"Delaware beat us to the punch because they had a more foresighted staff and moved into it with the approval of the governor and they're moving right ahead and pioneering."

Cox and four other Pennsylvania citizens make up the state

Lottery Commission, a public interest group appointed by the governor to advise Lopus on ideas concerning the kinds, management and money-making possibilities of lotteries. Since it is just an advisory group, the commission has no legislative power, a fact Cox believes should be changed.

"Right now we're neither fish nor fowl," Cox explains. "We're halfway under the governor because we're appointed by him, but then for purposes of administration, pay, and travel expenses, we're under the secretary of revenue. We are only advisory so we are a weak commission with no muscle unlike other commissions that are paid and have budgetary control of their agencies, like the turnpike commission which can make decisions that are firm."

Lopus respects Cox's concern but feels the matter of deciding who runs the lotteries is up to the state legislature. "In the last decade everyone has been very concerned about citizen input and the commission provides that kind of input," Lopus says. "They are sincere people. They are hard working people. We really value their drive. But they're an advisory body and not an administrative body. If the general assembly had intended that the lottery commission have the powers Mr. Cox wants, they would have passed such legislation. It's very clear under the law that they're an advisory group to me."

Still, Cox is perturbed. "They can just turn a deaf ear to us and go their merry way," he says, "because we don't have the

legislative backing that we want to have and should have."

Legislation is currently being studied in the state House of Representatives that would create a single state agency to regulate all forms of gambling in Pennsylvania. The agency, to be called the Pennsylvania Gambling Commission, would absorb the current functions of the state Harness Racing Commission, the Horse Racing Commission and the Bureau of State Lotteries. It would also license and regulate all bingo games in the Commonwealth and oversee any form of gambling that might be legalized for Pennsylvania in future years.

The Gambling Commission reported that 61 per cent of the country's adult population — about 88 million people — participated in some form of gambling in 1974. These persons wagered about \$24 billion, at least \$5 billion of which was bet illegally.

While Cox disagrees with the Commission estimates, he still feels it is imperative that the state get a piece of the action. "I go with the New York Times' estimate that there is \$20 to \$50 billion bet on sports alone," he says. "I want to see some of that come in legally through sports betting. I've estimated that the state can make anywhere from \$200 million to \$500 million a year in revenue and the sooner we get moving in this area the better because right now the Mafia is running it (illegal numbers and sports betting) and Delaware is moving their action (football lottery) into Pennsylvania."

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UNIVERSITY CALENDAR
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MEETINGS

Association of Women Students, 6 p.m., Room 323 HUB.
Alliance Student Fellowship, 7 p.m., Room 318 HUB.
Chess Club, 7 p.m., Game Room, HUB.
Phi Sigma Society, 7:30 p.m., Room 112 Buckhout.
SIMS, 8 p.m., Room 111 Chambers.

SPECIAL EVENTS

G.S.A.-Free U. Wine and Cheese Tasting, 7 p.m., Room 101 Kern.
University Theatre, "The Beggar's Opera," 8 p.m., Playhouse Theatre.
Penn State Brass Chorale, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. recital hall.
Department of Architecture slide show, "Europe on the Slide," 8 p.m., HUB Main Lounge.
"Prospects for the Jewish People in the Soviet Union," a lecture by Dr. B. Gurevitz, Institute of Research for USSR and Eastern Europe, University of Tel Aviv, 8 p.m., Room 321 HUB.
Leonard Nimoy, of Star Trek, 8 p.m., Rec. Bldg. Sponsored by Colloquy.
HUB-Free U. Coffeehouse, 8:30 p.m., Room 301 HUB.

EXHIBITS

Chambers Gallery: Contemporary Tapestries by Joy Rushfelt and Vicki Haskell; Ceramic Stones by Paul Nowicki.
Hammond Gallery: Engineering Career Displays.
HUB Gallery A: Drawings and paintings by Shirley Buell Bernreuter.
Kern Gallery: Sculpture by Nabil El-Husseini; Photographs by Marcela Tason; Cuna Indian molas.
212A Arts Bldg: Photographs by Marcia Prager.

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