THE DRAKE GROUP EDUCATION FUND

Realizing The Promise Of College Athletics

Press Release

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Clear and Present Dangers – Sports Gambling and the NCAA

WESTPORT, CT. September 5, 2023 – Julie Sommer, Executive Director of The Drake Group Education Fund, issued the following statement cautioning higher education and athletics leaders to take immediate action on college athlete gambling and improper relationships between higher education institutions and the gambling industry:

> "A tidal wave of match-fixing, corruption, and gambling addiction is about to take place in intercollegiate athletics. We call upon higher education associations, athletic conferences, and national collegiate athletics governance organizations to take immediate action. We have already seen high-profile cases of inappropriate gambling by football players and an assistant coach at Iowa and Iowa State, and the firing of a University of Alabama head baseball coach after reports of suspicious betting on an LSU v. Alabama game. The NCAA is on record as having found 175 sports betting infractions since 2018 and 17 currently active investigations are underway. These are simply the cases that authorities know about.
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> There are also inappropriate relationships between universities and bookmakers where the college administration either takes payments from the betting companies for each of their students who sign up for a gambling account ("bounties") or places highly-visible sponsorship advertising around the campus. It is difficult to imagine another addictive industry like tobacco or alcohol being allowed to engage in such practices, but currently many American universities have embraced these deals.
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> Some of these questionable business dealings even offer 'Free Bets' to the institution's students. Would a university offer their students 'Free Drinks' or 'Free Cigarettes,' particularly when so many students are under the legal age for gambling? These deals run counter to the American Gambling Association's own industry recommendations. Universities should know that young people, particularly men, are at high-risk for gambling addiction. In the United Kingdom, gambling charities estimate that

there are 2 million high-risk young gamblers and close to two suicides a day due to gambling addiction.

The most serious risk of gambling addiction is young male athletes. Studies have shown that NCAA athletes are four times more likely to develop addiction problems from gambling than the general population. Everything that makes them great athletes makes them terrible gamblers: obsession to beat the odds, never giving up, and dedicated focus.

The international sports world has seen a tsunami of match-fixing related to sports gambling in over sixty different countries. The United States and the NCAA are ill-prepared to defend American college sports from this wave of corruption.

The Drake Group Education Fund urges:

- National athletic governance organizations to provide full, well-resourced, and independent educational programs on the risks of gambling addiction for all college athletes. While the 2022 NCAA/EPIC gambling education program reached 10,000 athletes in 2022, there are 500,000 athletes competing under NCAA jurisdiction.

- Proper Congressional oversight with clear, universal regulations for this industry.

- A complete separation between the highly addictive gambling industry and American universities."

For more information, see TDGEF's May, 2023 webinar recording: *Sports Betting: What are the Risks for Intercollegiate Athletics?*

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Media inquiries on this topic may be addressed to Julie Sommer, TDGEF Executive Director – Jsommer@realizingthepromise.org

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The Drake Group Education Fund (TDGEF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit education organization whose mission is to ensure that the promise of college athletics is realized for all stakeholders. TDGEF produces *The Allen Sack National Symposium on Integrity in College Sports* and the *Critical Issues in College Sports Webinar Series*, conducts fact-based research on intercollegiate athletics and develops position papers and other educational materials that influence public discourse on current issues and controversies in college sport.

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