

Students and gambling; symbiotic or destructive?

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With March Madness and the Super Bowl in the past, students had many gambling opportunities right in front

gamble at least once a year. It's these kinds of statistics that worry experts. Compulsive or pathological gambling is defined as being unable to resist impulses

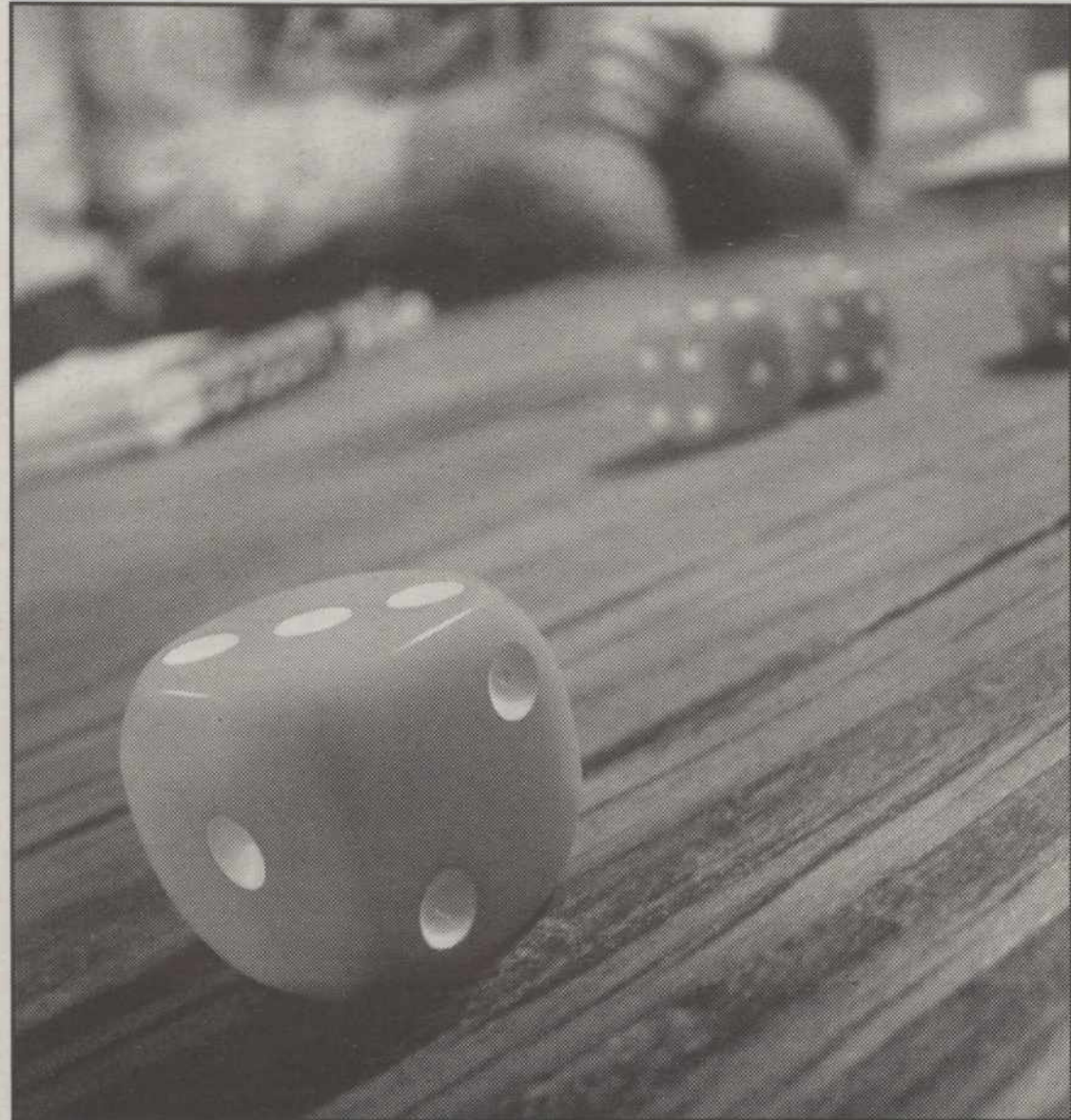


Photo by Marissa Ness

Rolling dice and other activities involving gambling are among popular free time activities for teens. A recent study estimated that over 80 percent of students have gambled within the past year according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

of them. Whether it be a \$100 pool, or a five dollar buy-in for a bracket, students gambling on sports is now just as common as watching the game. How harmful can small bets like these be? Very, if the wrong student participates in them. These kinds of small bets can lead to bigger problems, such as gambling addiction. Research by the Harvard School of Public Health, published on FamilyFirstAid.org, indicates that over 15 percent of students in 2005 gambled each week, and 80 percent of teens

to gamble. Ed Looney, the executive director for The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc., told Teenagers Today that 12 percent of teenagers struggle with compulsive gambling. This is what makes minor gambling an issue.

If a student prone to compulsive gambling begins to gamble, even in a minor way, it often leads to more serious problems. Pathological gamblers are pushed by "the need to be 'in action' - to feel the arousal and euphoria from betting that other addicts gain

from drugs or alcohol," as defined by rjhresearch.com.

Gambling addiction does not appear in the headlines the way drug or alcohol addiction does, but it is just as dangerous. In recent years, however, the public has become more aware through celebrities falling to this addiction. Former NBAer Antoine Walker was arrested for a debt to a casino. Charles Barkley, TNT analyst and former NBA great, spoke of losing upwards of a million dollars due to gambling.

Gilbert Arenas was suspended for the rest of the season by the NBA after he brought guns into the locker room after a dispute between him and a teammate about unpaid gambling debts.

However, many students do not worry about compulsive gambling. One anonymous freshman, who admitted that he gambled and called it a "way to make money," said that he did not think compulsive gambling was an issue for himself or others.

"I don't really think about it," he said. But some number of students think that gambling will take its toll on students if they go overboard with it.

"If we lose all of our money, whose fault is that?" an anonymous sophomore said. Michael Glane, science teacher, agreed with this sentiment.

"I think there is a natural consequence for everything we do," Glane said.

Gambling

continued on page 6

Students direct one act plays in Shorts XI

Shorts

continued from page 2

"He told me his story, and I thought, 'I have to write something for him'," Dudley said. She hopes a lot of people will see her play and it will open their eyes to child abuse and what a problem it is.

Mink's play "Lost at Sea" is about a 17 year-old girl who is faced with many decisions and has to chose what path is right for her. Her decisions change her world, and she has to decide whether to go to college or save the whales. The choice of waiting, or not.

"I know it sounds cliché," Mink said, "But it's something a lot of people have had to go through."

"Four for Amore" is a selection from Commedia Dell' Arte, which is a type of theater that was traced back to 15th century Italy. Commedia uses

masks, which forces the actors to emphasize voice and movements. Commedia breaks the fourth wall and the characters interact with the audience often.

The Shorts cast of 32 actors has dedicated its time to rehearsals from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. every day after school. The middle school musical, "Beauty and the Beast", rehearses in the auditorium, so the Shorts cast has to rehearse on Porch 2D.

"We're grateful to Adam Betzelberger, Anastasia Conlin and Monica Emerick for letting us use their classrooms," Murray said.

Shorts features one-act plays, ranging from 15-40 minutes maximum. Every play in print can be chosen for Shorts, but this year it is

featuring all locally written plays.

"I think the one-acts are more accessible and the rehearsal schedule is not as demanding," Murray said.

No experience is needed to participate in the performing aspect Shorts, but Murray said that "acting class helps." All directors need to have taken or be taking an Acting/Directing Seminar. All designers should have taken Technical Theater.

Shorts will be showing May 13, 14, and 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased starting the week of April 25 through the Theater web site.

"Shorts is really fun every year. There are always new people, new shows and new parts.

It's really cool and unique," Dudley said.

STUDENTS speak out

When do you think that student gambling crosses the line?



"Gambling is hard to explain. My brother who is 13 was gambling and he lost almost \$15 and I think that if he is gambling then high school students are too and with higher stakes."

—Austin Parish, freshman

"When it goes past \$5 and gets into big numbers."

—Elaine Schrader, sophomore

"I don't think it's too much of a problem. It is a private affair that is only the business of the wagers."

—Robert Austin Meyer, junior

"When you bet a large amount of money, more money than you have, the sharks with laser beams coming out of their heads will come after you and then you have a problem."

—Kaylyn Schaber, senior

All photos by Alex Houston