

Gambling adverts on TV can 'mislead' football fans

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Football fans are being 'misled' by complex gambling adverts on television, a University of Stirling study has found.

Behavioural scientist Dr Philip Newall analysed live-odds gambling adverts displayed during two months of televised English Premier League matches and found they were biased towards complex and highly specific bets.

The research, published in *Addiction Research and Theory*, found almost 60% of televised bets involved a specific player scoring, while odds for a team to win with an exact score line were also popular. Gambles like this are particularly difficult for punters to accurately predict due to the many potential goal scorers or score lines.

Dr Newall, of Stirling Management School, said: "Live-odds TV gambling adverts that promote betting on specific, complex gambles during sporting events are becoming increasingly prominent in the UK. These types of bets are attractive to gamblers due to the high potential win: however, due to the vast number of potential outcomes, they are very difficult to rationally quantify and forecast and, as a result, result in significant average losses."

Complex gambles were advertised most often and had the highest bookmaker profit margins. The study found that as the complexity of the bet increased, [football fans](#)' optimism about their chances also grew, yet the odds became less fair.

During the two-month window, only a minority of adverts were based on simpler events, such as "Manchester City to win", that participants are more likely to correctly identify.

Dr Newall added: "It seems football fans are rarely able to rationalise the likelihood of a win for the complex events that now dominate gambling advertising in the UK. Everyone, from die-hard football fans to novice gamblers, struggled to estimate the outcome of live-odd bets and may be underestimating the cost of these gambles."

The gambling industry has spent £500 million on advertising since 2012 and takes in more than £13.6 billion a year from the public.

Dr Newall said: "Bookmaker profit margins on advertised bets are much higher than the average losses on the likes of fixed-odds betting terminals. At a minimum, an industry committed to promoting responsible gambling should disclose the average profit margin with all advertised football bets. Providing people with this information could help them become more sensitive to the risks of costly complex gambles."

Adrian Parkinson from Campaign for Fairer Gambling, said: "The betting industry has, for some time, been developing these bet types with a particular focus on attracting the young, football supporting demographic. They are creating the illusion of an easy big win, based on something the consumer feels knowledgeable about, but the reality that is tied up in these complex bet structures means you're odds of winning are negligible. It's manipulation of consumers and it's time bookmakers came clean on the real value of these bets."

More information: Philip W. S. Newall, Behavioral complexity of British gambling advertising, *Addiction Research & Theory* (2017). [DOI: 10.1080/16066359.2017.1287901](https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2017.1287901)

Provided by University of Stirling

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