

Skipping sleep to watch sports is the real March Madness

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No matter whether your favorite team wins or loses, March Madness will

likely put a slam dunk on your sleep habits.

For many Americans, staying up late to watch NCAA basketball tournament games is a much-anticipated annual rite. But the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) warns that those late-night games can cause problems.

"A [lack of sleep](#) can lead to trouble making decisions, solving problems, controlling emotions and more," AASM president Dr. Kelly Carden said in an academy news release.

An AASM survey found that 58% of Americans said they stayed up past their bedtime to watch sports, including 72% of men.

"It's important to ensure sleep is a priority—even if there is a great game on—because getting healthy sleep on a regular basis positively impacts health, well-being and performance," Carden explained.

And, sleep isn't only important for fans. Athletes who get more sleep perform better, according to the AASM.

A 2011 study published in the journal *Sleep* found that when members of Stanford University men's basketball team got more sleep, their shooting accuracy improved, with both [free throw](#) percentage and 3-point shots increasing by 9%.

The players also improved their average sprint time.

This year's tournament begins March 15 and concludes April 6 with the national championship game in Atlanta.

More information: The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has more on [sleep deprivation and deficiency](#).

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