

*Old addiction hits new crowd*

# Gambling craze goes all-in for area teens

By Tiffany Chilcote

Studies show that the rate of high school student gamblers - at 11.3 percent - significantly exceeds the rate of adults - at 5.4 percent.

Students do not realize that gambling is illegal and if caught, there are consequences.

The actual odds of winning a state lottery are approximately 14 million to one, the same odds as being hit by lightning seven times while waiting in the lottery line.

Buying lottery tickets is not the only type of gambling teens participate in.

Students as young as grade school generally favor card games like poker and blackjack.

In high school, gambling on sports has become extremely popular. NCAA is a very popular betting pool.

Deans have told students not to play cards because it most likely leads to gambling.

ACHS, however, cannot control the amount of gambling that takes place off school grounds. Some students participate in matches 2-3 times a week.

During the summer the number increases significantly.

"Gambling is both condoned and glamorized by our society," said Dr. John Crawford, ACHS Principal.

Students like to gamble for many reasons like: being able to hang out with friends or finding something to waste time on.

"It is exciting, and it is a good way to make money," said ACHS senior, Ryan Leng.

When students were asked if they have a limit for gambling, almost all said yes. Those limits however, are a wide range.

Steve Nystrom, ACHS junior stops himself at \$10, however Leng has a \$100 limit.

Mr. Sean Garrison, ACHS Dean, says he does think underage gambling is a problem when too much money is at stake.

"Gambling makes watching sports a little more interesting, especially fantasy leagues," stated Garrison.

Gambling is like drinking because it can and can be addictive. It can also lead to huge financial problems in the future.

If people have addictive personalities, it is more likely they will have a gambling problem if they start.

**"I have told a few of my friends to quit because they lose too much money."**

-Ryan Leng  
ACHS student

Teen gambling can be caused by history of gambling

in the family, problems at home, low self esteem, peer pressure, the action of the game, or to gain attention from peers.

Many students gamble because they have older role models that gamble as well.

Numerous students stated that if they had friends with a gambling problem they would tell them to quit.

"I have told a few of my friends to quit because they lose too much money," said Leng.

Just like drinking, there are warning signs of a teenage gambling problem.

These include: asking for money, having gambling "stuff" at home, unexplained debts, decreased concentration, or increased anxiety and mood swings.

So when is the appropriate age for teens to gamble?

"When they are legally able to independently enter binding contracts," said Crawford.

Gamblers must be mature and know when to stop.

**10 Questions you should ask yourself about your Gambling Behavior:**

1. Have you often gambled longer than you had planned?
2. Have you often gambled until your last dollar was gone?
3. Have thoughts of gambling caused you to lose sleep?
4. Have you used your income or savings to gamble while letting bills go unpaid?
5. Have you made repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stop gambling?
6. Have you broken the law or considered breaking the law to finance your gambling?
7. Have you borrowed money to finance your gambling?
8. Have you felt depressed or suicidal because of your gambling losses?
9. Have you been remorseful after gambling?
10. Have you gambled to get money to meet your financial obligations?

*If you or someone you know answers "YES" to any of these questions consider seeking assistance from a professional regarding a professional.*

Questions courtesy of [www.keystonetreatment.com](http://www.keystonetreatment.com)



Photo by Kristen Baiocchi

Texas Hold'em is the new craze swarming over high school and college students. Queen Jack suited of hearts, shown here, is one of the top ten hands in Texas Hold 'em. This hand puts the player in a good position to win the pot.

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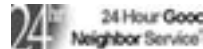
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