Monthly Cybersecurity Tips Newsletter
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Don’t Bust Your Bracket: Online Gambling Safety

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With the NBA and NHL Finals and, of course, March Madness fast approaching, spring is a busy time for sports fans and people that like to gamble. Betting on sporting events can bring excitement–the possibility of financial reward and loss–and cybersecurity risks.

At first you might think to yourself, what does cybersecurity have to do with online sports betting? Due to the recent popularity of online betting, especially during the pandemic, online gambling sites have become a hot target for bad actors. This is because these sites collect and manage large amounts of financial and personal information. This means online gambling companies need to have many layers of defenses to protect themselves. Even with all these layers of defense, cyber threats are an ever-present risk to the industry and the millions of people accessing these sites every year.

According to a recent article from *The Wall Street Journal*, gambling during the Super Bowl this year reached record highs. It stands to reason that this increase in online betting will continue during the upcoming playoff season. Online betting is dependent on allowing users to easily access their sites, set up profiles, place bets, and more. However, ease of use and access should not supersede the need to protect users and their data.

With any seasonal, popular, or hot topic in the news, sporting events have become a prime target for spammers and bad actors. It might be sharing insider information on injuries, the latest upset, or a new deal, bad actors will leverage any headline that might be considered popular to get users to click on a link or open a document. Untrustworthy sites will even mimic popular sporting and betting sites to get people to click on a link and share their personal and financial information.

So, what can you do to protect yourself? Here are some helpful tips:

- Only use trustworthy online gambling sites that have good cybersecurity and privacy practices, such as enforcing strong passwords, multi-factor authentication, and more
- Only go to known and trustworthy news sites

- Use strong and unique passwords
- Review the privacy terms of online gambling sites before using them
- Watch out for phishing emails and spam
- If you're using an app, make sure you have installed the latest software updates
- Keep your devices and firewalls up to date with antivirus and advanced threat protections
- Set up monitoring and alerts on your banking accounts
- Educate yourself, your organization, family, and loved ones on the cyber risks
- Set up internet filters to block traffic to online gambling sites
- Sporting events are exciting, and many feel that betting on the events heightens the experience. But don't let your thrill of the game or the win cause you to lose—to a cyber incident.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a gambling addiction, please reach out to the National Problem Gambling Helpline for help.