

Risky bet? Canadians mindful of sports betting's revenue potential, but 28% worry a bettor they know is addicted

Seven-in-10 worried about rise of problem gambling as sports betting increases

May 19, 2026 – The rapid expansion of sports betting in Canada has led to a public that sees both opportunity and risk in the country's new gambling landscape. While legalized single-event betting has opened new revenue streams for governments and introduced millions of Canadians to mobile wagering platforms, concerns about addiction, financial loss, and ubiquitous advertising now accompany the industry's growth.

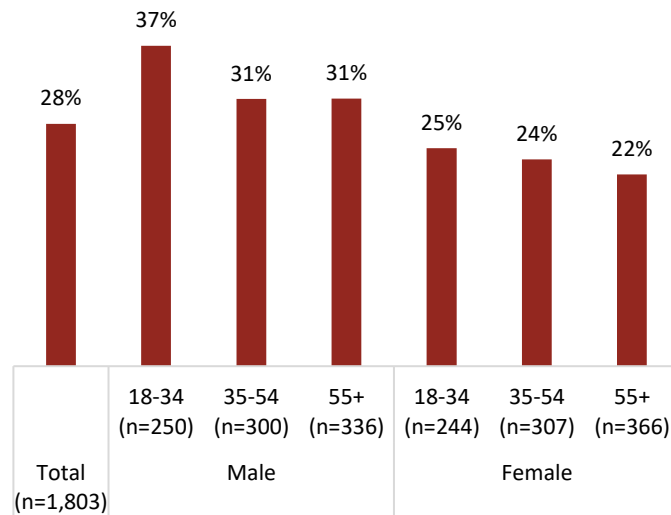
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds some of these potential challenges showing themselves, at least in how Canadians view the issue. Approaching three-in-10 say they are worried someone they know has an addiction to sports betting. This rises to 39 per cent among those who participate in betting, and to 37 per cent among young men. Among those who say they're worried about someone in their life, 81 per cent say that person is male.

This perception about addiction is underscored by an even greater number (69%) who say that they're worried that the number of problem gamblers is going to rise with the continued spread of betting options and marketing.

Overall, 13 per cent of Canadians say they have placed a sports bet in the past year. This proportion exceeds one-in-five for men ages 18 to 54.

For many bettors, sports gambling is both entertainment and aspiration. More than half say they participate in hopes of making money, while others describe betting as a way to make games more exciting. Alongside this personal appeal, the revenue draw for government is tantalizing. Three-in-five say the revenue from regulated sports gambling will be valuable for their province.

Percentage who agree "I'm worried someone I know has an addiction to sports betting"



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 7 – 11, 2026, among a randomized sample of 1,803 Canadian adults. Respondents are drawn from the [Angus Reid Forum](#), a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

For more information on our polling methods, [click here.](#)

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Overall, Canadians say increased sports betting in Canada is a bad thing (46%) at a much higher level than say it's a good thing (8%). Three-in-10 (31%) say it is what it is, neither good nor bad.

More Key Findings:

- Close to half of recent gamblers (bet within the last year) say they have utilized so-called “responsible betting tools”. The most common of these are deposit limits (20%) and spending trackers (16%)
- One-in-five parents with a child aged 10 to 17 say their child has already asked them about sports betting. Half of these say they were asked by a son, 24 per cent by a daughter, and 17 per cent by both.
- Ontario residents are most likely to say they have made a bet in the last year. That province was the first to offer private and international betting companies a place in the provincial market, which is governed by government monopolies in most of the country.

About ARI

The Angus Reid Institute (ARI) was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

INDEX

Part One: Profile of sports bettors in Canada

- Where, how, and how much are Canadians betting?
- Half have utilized responsible gambling tools

Part Two: Risks and benefits

- The perceived good: govt. revenue, fun
- The perceived bad: addiction, personal financial loss
- Three-in-10 worry someone they know is dealing with addiction
- One-in-five parents of kids 10-17 say they've asked about sports betting
- Is more betting a good thing or a bad thing?
-

Part One: Profile of sports bettors in Canada

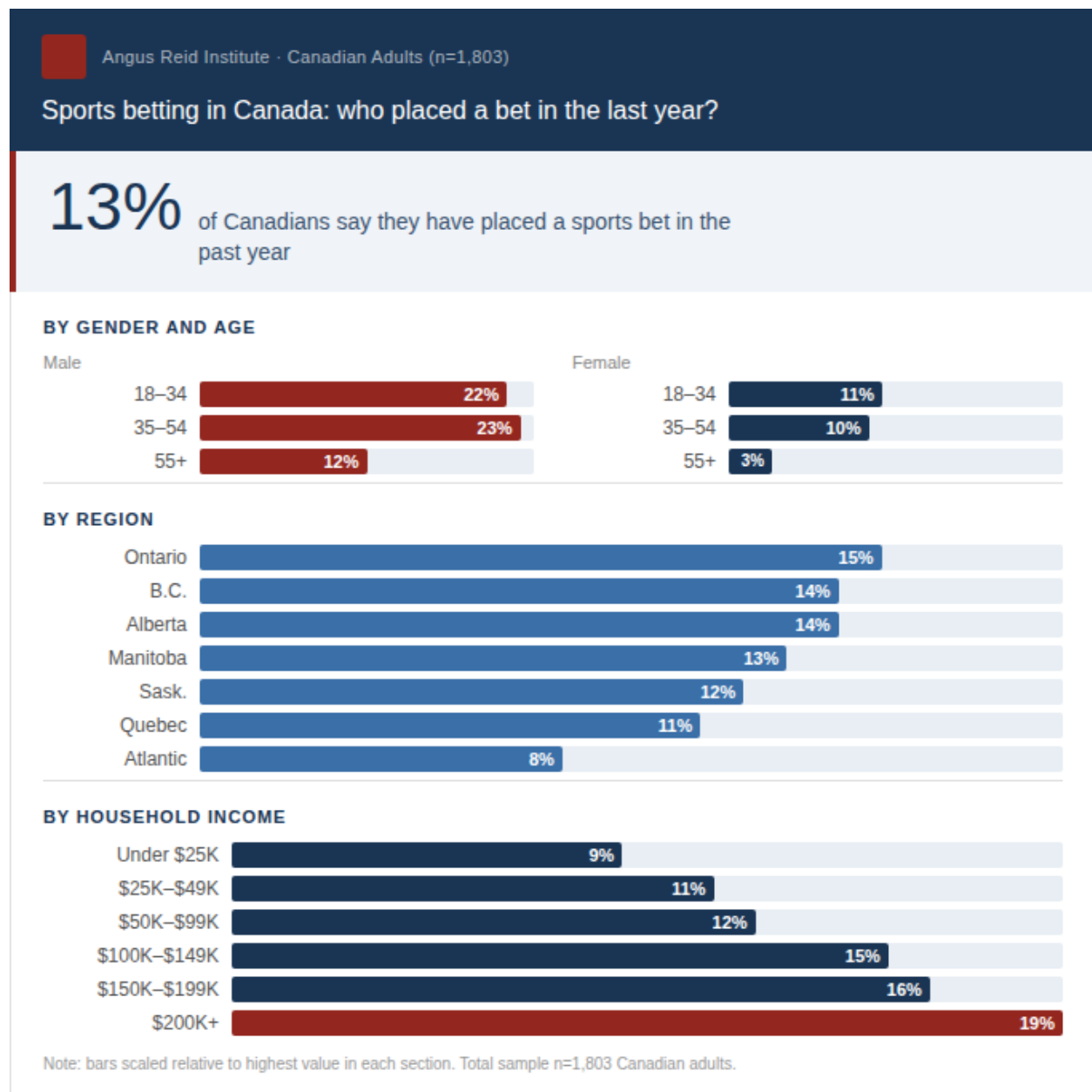
The landscape of sports betting in Canada has changed significantly in recent years. In 2021, the federal government [legalized single-event sports betting](#), paving the way for provinces to expand regulated gambling offerings beyond traditional lottery-style parlays. Since then, Ontario has opened its market to private and international operators through a regulated system, while other provinces have largely continued to offer sports betting through government-run platforms. Alberta is [set to open its market](#) to international competitors in July.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

The result has been a rapid increase in the visibility and accessibility of sports betting across the country, driven by mobile apps, online platforms, and an explosion of advertising during live sports broadcasts.

The Angus Reid Institute finds that 13 per cent of Canadians say they have placed a sports bet in the past year, with participation highest among younger men and higher-income households. More than one-in-five men younger than 55 say they have placed a sports bet in the last year, while participation among women is notably lower across all age groups. Regionally, Ontario reports the highest rate of sports betting participation at 15 per cent, while Atlantic Canada reports the lowest at eight per cent. Sports betting participation also rises steadily alongside household income, reaching 19 per cent among Canadians in households earning more than \$200,000 annually.



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Where, how, and how much are Canadians betting?

Among Canadians who have placed a sports bet in the past year, making money and having fun appear to be equal contributors to motivation. More than half say they participate in order to make money (57%), though notably, just 11 per cent say that one of their core motivations is that they feel their knowledge gives them an edge. Entertainment is cited by 51 per cent, while one-in-three say that betting makes games more exciting (34%).

While most bettors report relatively modest wagering habits over the past six months, a notable minority are placing larger bets and engaging with increasingly dynamic forms of betting. Three-in-five sports bettors say their largest single bet in the last six months was \$50 or less (57%), while one-in-five say they have placed a bet of at least \$100 over that period (21%), including five per cent who report placing a bet larger than \$500.

Most betting activity remains focused on traditional pre-game wagers, which account for 61 per cent of the average share of bets placed, though proposition bets and live in-game betting now represent a substantial portion of activity. Canadian-licensed online platforms are the most commonly used option for sports betting, cited by nearly half of bettors (46%). Others continue to rely on lottery products such as Pro-Line or Mise-o-jeu+ (19%), offshore or international sites (10%), or an online platform for which the origin is uncertain (12%):

CONTACT:

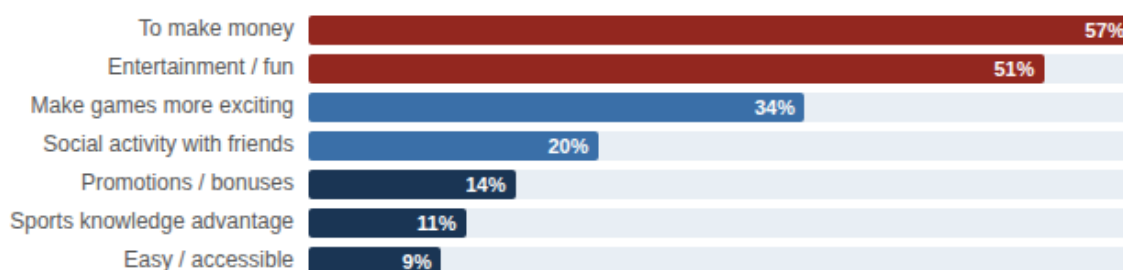
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Angus Reid Institute · Canadian sports bettors

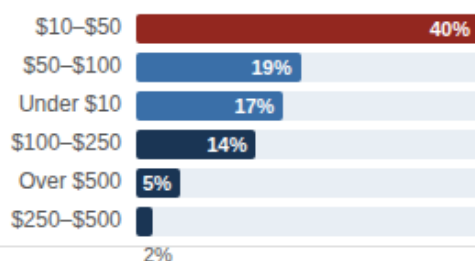
Sports bettors in Canada: motivations, behaviour, and platform use

57% of sports bettors cite making money as a main reason they participate — ahead of entertainment (51%) and making games more exciting (34%)

MAIN REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS BETTING



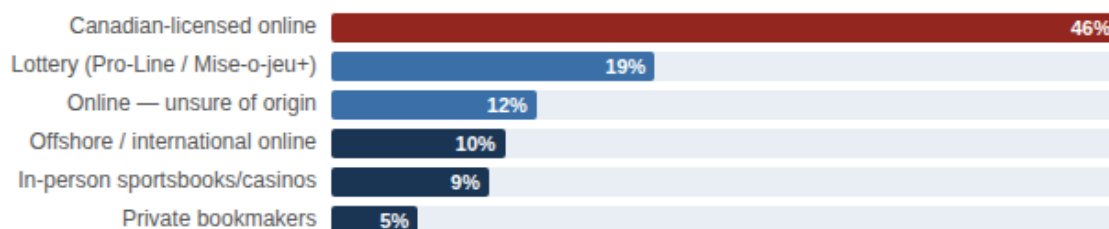
LARGEST SINGLE BET (LAST 6 MONTHS)



BET FORMAT (AVG. SHARE OF BETS)



PLATFORM USED MOST OFTEN FOR SPORTS BETTING



Note: reasons question allows multiple responses; bars scaled relative to highest value in each section. Among those who have placed a sports bet in the past year.

CONTACT:

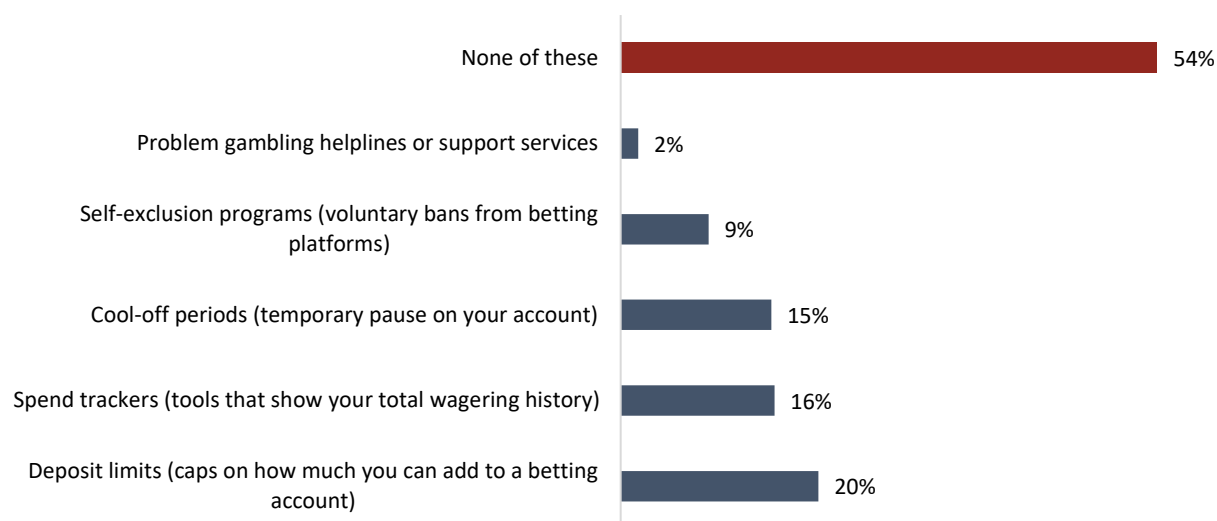
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Half have utilized responsible gambling tools

As sports betting grows, so too do the messages about its risks, and ways to manage them. Canadian gambling operators are increasingly required to [include responsible gambling messaging and player-protection resources](#) in advertising and platform design, particularly in regulated markets like Ontario.

Many Canadians have evidently seen and considered this messaging, as 46 per cent are utilizing some form of “responsible gambling tools”. The most common of these are deposit limits and spending trackers, which are used by approximately one-in-five:

Which of the following features have you ever utilized?



Part Two: Risks and benefits

As regulation proceeds, there are clear risks and benefits for provincial governments to consider. For Ontario, the revenue has been an obvious indication as to the size of demand. For the 2024/25 fiscal year, sports betting generated [C\\$724 million in revenue from C\\$11.4 billion](#) in total wagers. This potential for revenue is top of mind for Canadians when they consider the calculation of encouraging more betting.

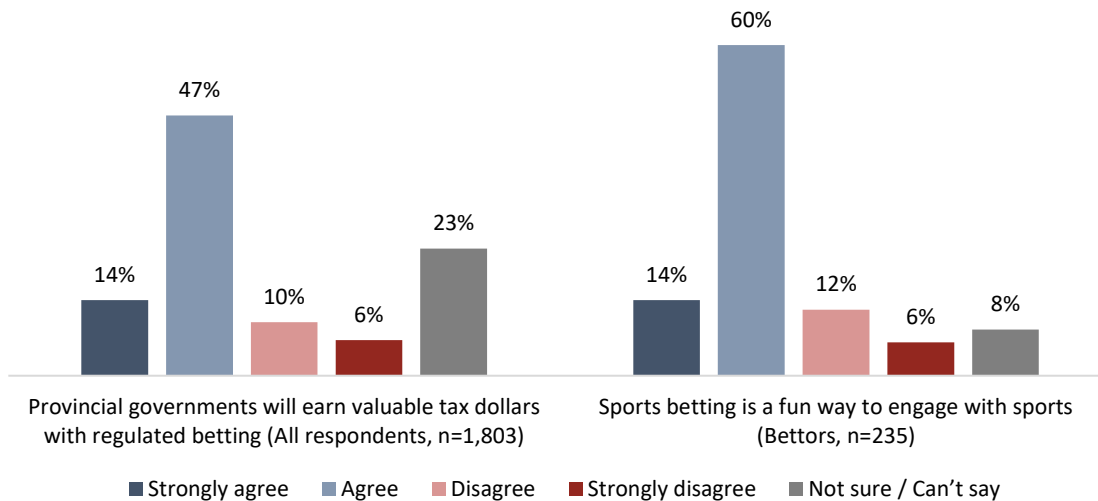
The perceived good: revenue, fun

Three-in-five Canadians say that provincial governments will garner valuable revenue for programs if they allow for regulated betting markets. Fewer than one-in-five (16%) push back and say they don't believe this to be the case. The other main perceived benefit for sports betting is the fun it can bring to the experience. Among bettors, 74 per cent say this is something to consider:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Agree vs Disagree with each statement:



The perceived bad: addiction, personal financial loss

While the financial windfall is tempting, there are clear risks to some populations that come alongside legalized betting. Seven-in-10 say they're worried about an increase in the number of problem gamblers. An early study in Ontario has indicated that:

“The introduction of online gambling and subsequent privatization with single-event sports betting were each associated with substantial increases in gambling-related helpline contacts, specifically in adolescent boys and young men, suggesting increased gambling problems, care-seeking, or both.”

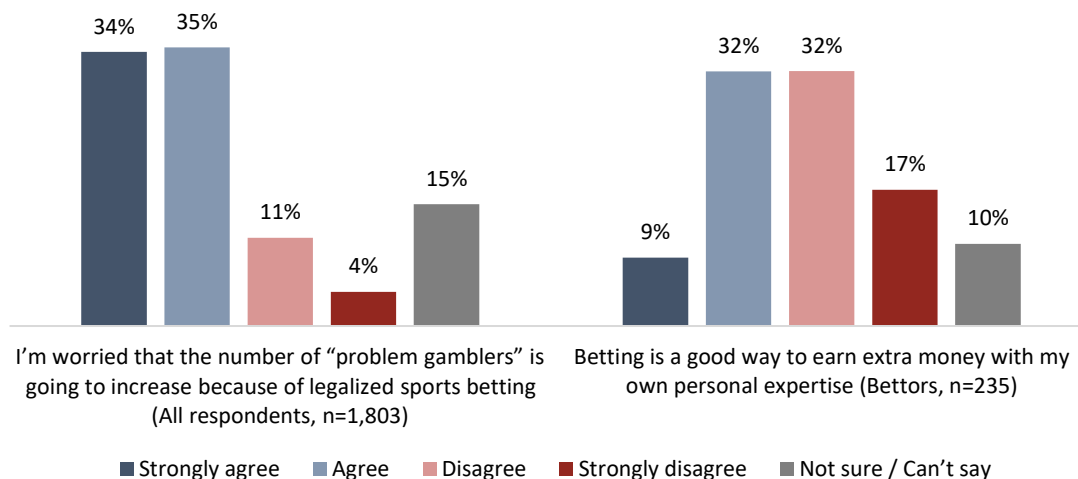
Source: Help-seeking for gambling problems following expansion of Ontario's online gambling market and legalization of single-event sports betting, March 2026

The other potential challenge with increased betting is increased financial loss. Consider that only nine per cent of recent bettors strongly agree that betting is a good way to earn extra money. Overall, 41 per cent agree with that statement, while half disagree. This suggests that even those who are trying to earn money are not necessarily convinced it's a good plan:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

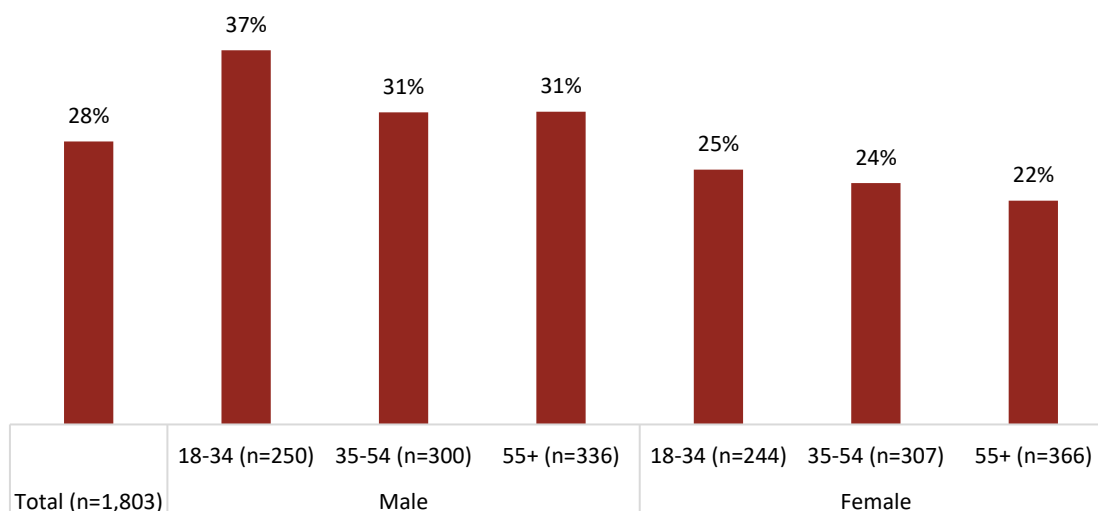
Agree vs Disagree with each statement:



Three-in-10 worry someone they know is dealing with addiction

Researchers note that more time will be needed to fully understand any potential deleterious impacts from increased sports betting, but it would appear that Canadians, themselves, are already perceiving potential addiction issues. Three-in-10 (28%) say that they're worried someone they know has an addiction to betting, suggesting this is a relatively common sentiment. Proportions are higher among men than women, and this rises to 37 per cent among young men:

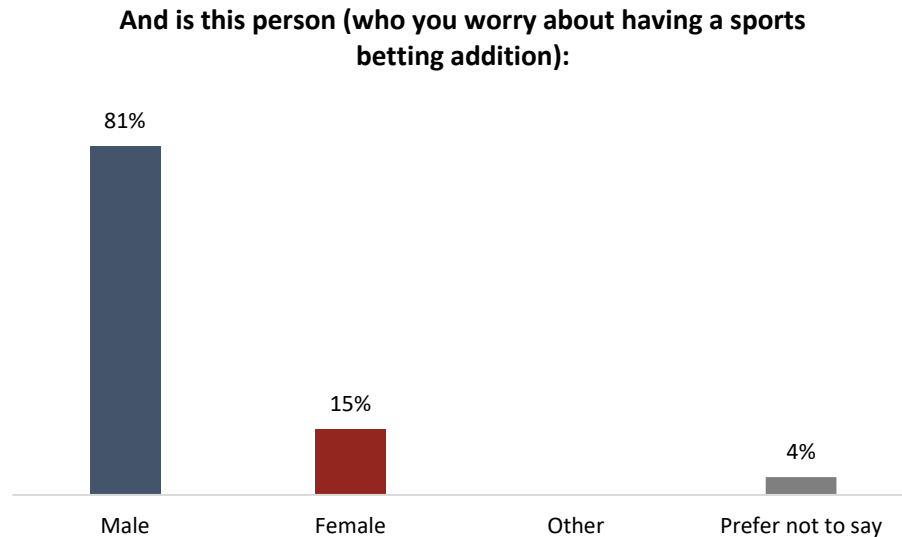
Percentage who agree "I'm worried someone I know has an addiction to sports betting"



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

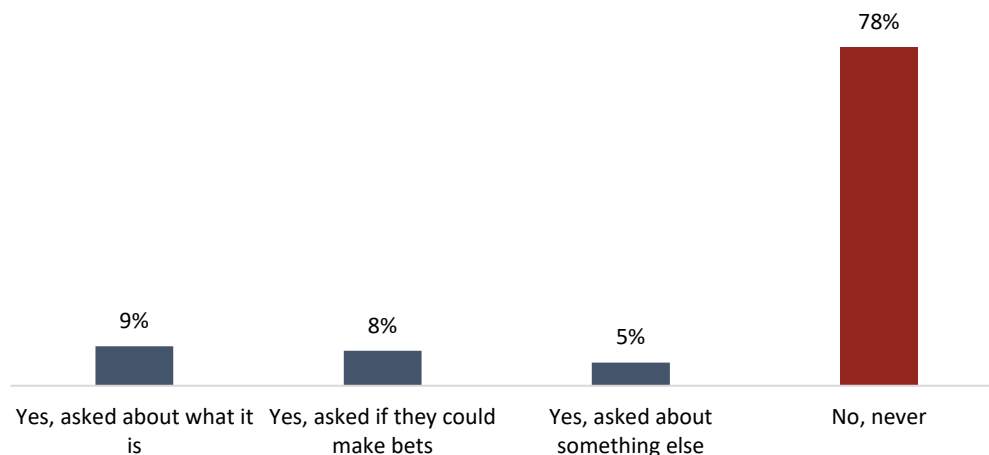
Asked whether the individual they're concerned about in their life is male or female, men are overwhelmingly the choice:



One-in-five parents of kids 10-17 say they've asked about sports betting

Gambling companies have [reportedly been targeting teenagers](#) in recent years through advertising and apps, leading many to voice concern about youth gambling, [particularly among young boys](#). Angus Reid Institute asked parents with kids 10 to 17 years of age if their children had asked about sports betting, finding that 22 per cent have already had conversations about it:

**Have any of your children ever asked you about sports betting?
(Parents with child 10-17, n=278)**

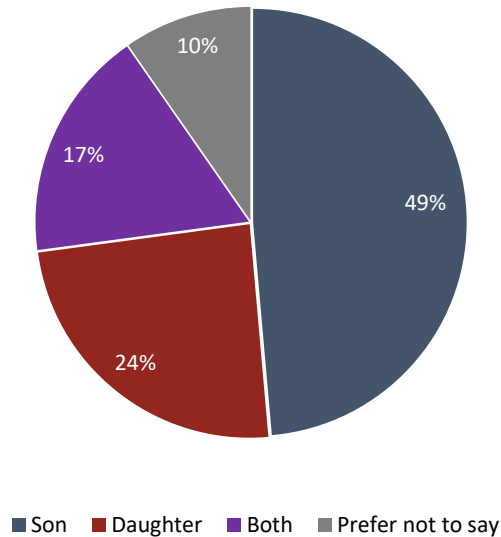


CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

The majority of those questions have come from young boys.

And if you're comfortable sharing, was this your son or daughter?

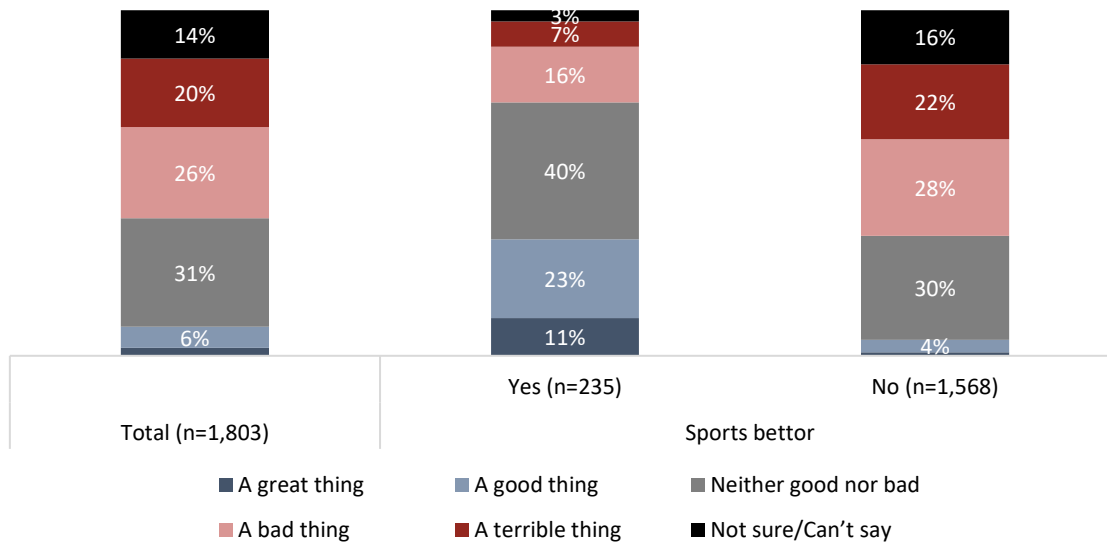


Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

Overall, when they consider the growing presence of sports betting, Canadians are more negative than positive in their assessments of what it all means. Eight per cent say it's a good or great thing, while nearly half (46%) lean the other way. A group of three-in-10 are agnostic.

Among those who participate, one-quarter say that the increase is a bad thing, but one-in-three say it's good. Non-bettors are much more critical:

Regardless of your personal support or opposition to sport betting, do you feel that the growing presence of sports betting in Canada is...



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results by bettors and non-bettors, [click here](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org