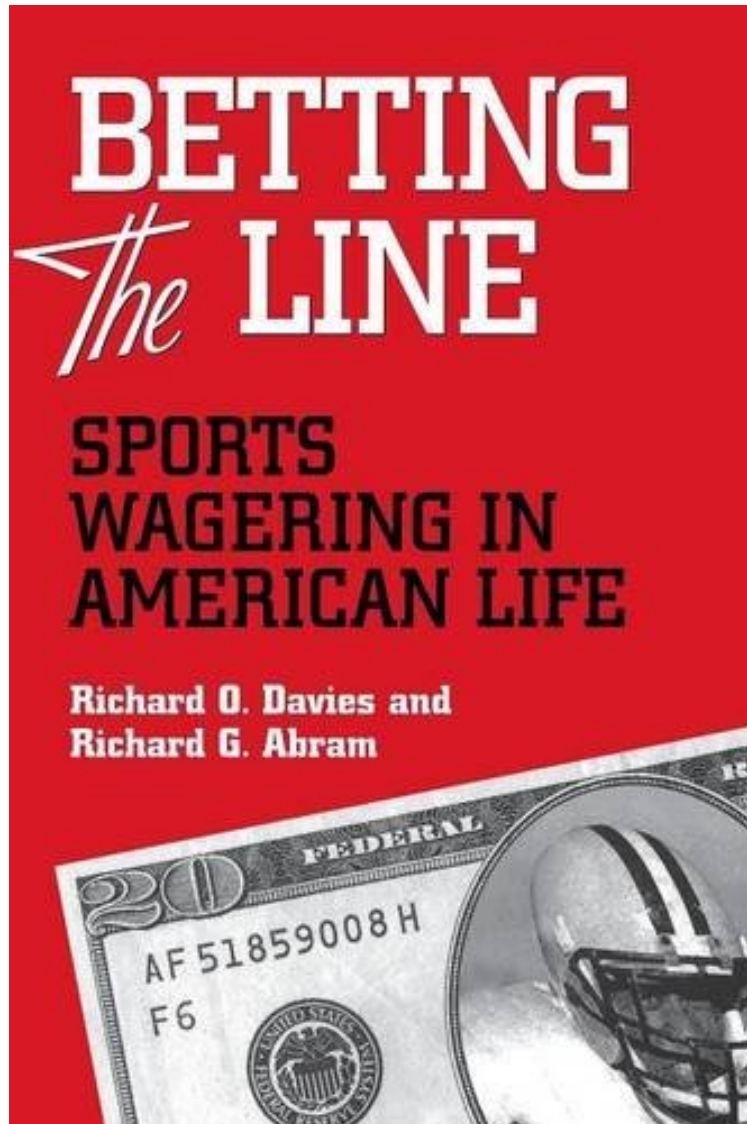


# BETTING THE LINE: SPORTS WAGERING IN AMERICAN LIFE

*RICHARD O. DAVIES, RICHARD G. ABRAM*  
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**RICHARD O. DAVIES, RICHARD G. ABRAM : BETTING THE LINE: SPORTS WAGERING IN AMERICAN LIFE** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **BETTING THE LINE: SPORTS WAGERING IN AMERICAN LIFE:**

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Non FictionBy averageAn overview of American sports betting, done in a bit of an academic style. The author is not particularly familiar with the inner workings of the industry it

seems, and is looking at it from mostly a historical and sociological point of view, so only get this is that is the sort of book you are after, it really isn't that good.

*Betting the Line: Sports Wagering in American Life* is a study of gambling, particularly sports gambling, and how it has thrived in American culture. According to Davies and Abram, the culture of betting results from two complementary influences in American society: risk taking and speculation. This is the first effort by academic writers to describe and interpret the history of sports wagering in the United States. Although many books have been written about "how to bet and win," *Betting the Line* presents a serious history of this popular activity, from the colonial and Civil War eras to today, from early betting on horse racing and baseball to the modern venues of basketball and football. By considering topics as diverse as the business of a bookie, the expansion of legalized gambling, and the increase in popularity of televised sports, the authors offer readers an insightful look into a practice that has become commonplace in American popular culture. In a mere seventy years, the number of states where gambling is legal jumped from one to forty-eight. Yet Nevada remains the only state where sports betting is legal. This book challenges many long-standing myths and stereotypes that revolve around the enterprise, arguing that sports gambling is reflective of the American free enterprise culture. Blending historical facts with interesting tidbits and anecdotes, this lively book both engages and informs. *Betting the Line* makes a major contribution to American social and cultural history as well as to sports history. Richard O. Davies is a professor in the Department of History at the University of Nevada, Reno. Richard G. Abram is an instructor in the Core Curriculum Program at the University of Nevada, Reno.

From Booklist Davies and Abram deliver a comprehensive history of one form of gambling you won't find on a riverboat--sports betting. Even early American settlers bet on games, say the authors, which is why they call their first chapter "A People of Chance." The book covers the gamut, from the infamous Black Sox scandal of 1919 to the birth of the point spread; from Damon Runyon's romanticized version of the thugs and mugs of the '30s and '40s to the birth of sports on television, which brought "betting the line" to the average Joe's doorstep and led to an uprising by high-minded congressmen. When sports betting made its way to Las Vegas, a whole new world emerged, culminating in the state-of-the-art, bet-on-anything sports books found in every Vegas casino today. This thoroughly researched, engagingly written account of the history of sports betting should prove fascinating to anyone who has ever put a fiver down on the home team. Mary Frances Wilkens Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved