

Sports Betting Terms to Know and Use

Over 100 definitions to help you think, talk and act like a professional handicapper.



Hello and thank you for downloading my sports betting glossary. Below I have over 100 terms listed that I believe every beginner sports bettor needs to know to get started. Some are more advanced than others, but I am certain you will encounter most of these words at some point. I advise having this easily accessible to reference whenever you come across a term you do not know or simply need a refresher.

The terms are listed in alphabetical order. If a word or phrase you come across is not listed below, please feel free to send me a message by [clicking here](#). You can also check out my [Resources](#) page for other helpful tools and [subscribe to my blog](#) for more great sports betting advice!

Enjoy!
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**YOUR DAILY DIME FOR NBA BETTING PICKS,
TIPS AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.**



Action: Having a wager on a game.

Angles: Using key factors from previous events to predict the results for future outcomes.

ATS (“against the [point] spread”): A team’s record against the point spread. If a team is 5-2 ATS, it means it has a 5-2 record with the point spread factored in.

Backdoor Cover: When a team scores points at the end of a game to cover the spread unexpectedly.

Bad Beat: Losing a bet you should have won. It’s especially used when the betting result is decided late in the game to change the side that covers the spread. Also used in poker, such as when a player way ahead in the expected win percentage loses on the river (last card).

Bankroll: The total amount of money you have available for sports betting.

Beard: Someone who places a wager for another person (aka “runner”).

Bet: To risk something on the outcome of an event

Book: Short for sportsbook or bookmaker; person or establishment that takes bets from customers.

Bookie: A person who accepts bets illegally and charges vig.

Buying Points: Some bookies or sportsbooks will allow customers to alter the set line and then adjust odds. For example, a bettor might decide he wants to have his team as a 3-point underdog instead of the set line of 2.5. He has then “bought” half a point, and the odds of his bet will be changed.

Canadian Line: a combination of puckline (goal spread) and moneyline.

Chalk: The favorite in the game. People said to be “chalk” bettors typically bet the favorite.

Circle Game: A game for which the betting limits are lowered, usually because of injuries and/or weather.

Closing Line: The final line before the game or event begins.

Cover: The betting result on a point-spread wager. For a favorite to cover, it has to win by more than the spread; an underdog covers by winning outright or losing by less than the spread.

Data Mining: Searching through a large volume of statistics to find profitable situations to bet on in the future.

Dime: Jargon for a \$1,000 bet. If you bet “three dimes,” that means a \$3,000 wager.

Dime Line: A line where the juice is 10%.

Dog: Short for underdog.

Dog Player: Refers to one who mostly plays the underdog.

Dollar: Jargon for a \$100 bet. Usually used with bookies; if you bet “five dollars,” that means a \$500 wager.

Double Action: An “if bet” in sports betting that is processed if the precedent bet wins, ties or cancels.

Double Bet: In sports betting a double bet is a wager for twice the size of one’s usual wager; also known as “double pop” or “doubling up.”

Edge: An advantage. Sports bettors might feel they have an edge on a book if they think its lines aren’t accurate.

Even Money: Odds that are considered 50-50. You put up \$1 to win \$1.

Exotic: Any wager other than a straight bet or parlay; can also be called a “prop” or “proposition wager.”

Exposure: The maximum amount of money a sports book stands to lose on a game.

Favorite: The expected straight-up winner in a game or event. Depending on the sport, the favorite will lay either odds or points. For example, in a football game, if a team is a 2.5-point favorite, it will have to win by three points or more to be an ATS winner.

Fifty Cents: \$50.00 of sports betting action.

First Half Bet: A bet placed only on the first half of the game. Baseball typically has a similar bet for the first 5 innings.

Fixed: A situation where a participant in a particular game alters the result of that game or match to a completely or partially predetermined result. The participant did not play honestly or fairly because of an undue outside influence.

Futures Bet: A long-term wager that typically relates to a team's season-long success. Common futures bets include betting a team to win a championship at the outset of a season, or betting whether the team will win or lose more games than a set line at the start of the season.

Gamble: To risk money on the outcome of an event.

Halftime Bet: A bet made after the first half ended and before the second half begins (football and basketball primarily). The oddsmaker generally starts with half of the game side/total and adjusts based on what happened in the first half.

Handicapper: A person trying to predict the winners of an event.

Handle: The amount of money taken by a book on an event or the total amount of money wagered.

Hedging: Betting the opposing side of your original bet, to either ensure some profit or minimize potential loss. This is typically done with futures bets, but can also be done on individual games with halftime bets or in-game wagering.

High Roller: A high-stakes gambler.

Hook: A half-point. If a team is a 7.5-point favorite, it is said to be "laying seven and a hook."

Hot Game: Sports betting term for a game that is drawing a lot of action on one side by knowledgeable handicappers.

In-Game Wagering: A service offered by books in which bettors can place multiple bets in real time, as the game is occurring.

Juice: The commission the bookie or bookmaker takes on a losing bet. Standard is 10 percent. Also called the "vig/vigorish."

Layoff: Money bet by a sportsbook with another sportsbook or bookmaker to reduce that book's liability.

Laying the Points: Betting the favorite by giving up points.

Laying the Price: Betting the favorite by wagering on moneyline odds.

Limit: The maximum bet taken by a book. If a book has a \$10,000 limit, it'll take that bet but the book will then decide whether it's going to adjust the line before the bettor can bet again.

Line: In sports betting, the current odds or point spread on a particular event.

Linemaker: In the sports betting industry this is the person who establishes the original and subsequent betting lines.

Line Movement: This occurs when a line on a certain game is adjusted or "moved." This can be based on the amount of bets being received on one side, weather conditions, injuries, etc.

Line Shopping: The act of seeking the best sportsbook line, for the best possible number before placing a wager.

Listed Pitchers: In sports gambling a listed pitcher is a baseball bet which will be placed only if both of the pitchers scheduled to start a game actually start. If they don't, the bet is cancelled.

Lock: A guaranteed win in the eyes of the person who made the wager.

Longshot: This is a team or individual that is perceived to be unlikely to win.

Middle: When a line moves, a bettor can try to "middle" a wager and win both sides with minimal risk. Suppose a bettor bets one team as a 2.5-point favorite, then the line moves to 3.5 points. She can then bet the opposite team at 3.5 and hope the favorite wins by three points. She would then win both sides of the bet.

Moneyline: A bet in which your team only needs to win. The point spread is replaced by odds.

Move the Line: A player pays an additional price to receive half a point or more in his favor on a point spread game.

Mush: A bettor or gambler who is considered to be bad luck.

Nickel: Jargon for a \$500 bet. Usually used with bookies; if you bet “a nickel,” that means a \$500 wager.

Nickel Line: A sports wagering line where the juice is 5%.

Odds: The likelihood of the outcome occurring, stated in numbers form.

Odds maker (also linemaker): The person who sets the odds. Some people use it synonymous with “bookmaker” and often the same person will perform the role at a given book, but it can be separate if the oddsmaker is just setting the lines for the people who will eventually book the bets.

Off the Board: When a book or bookie has taken a bet down and is no longer accepting action or wagers on the game. This can happen if there is a late injury or some uncertainty regarding who will be participating.

Opening Line: The earliest line posted for a particular sporting event.

Outlaw Line: Term for the earliest line in sports betting. This is an overnight line that only a handful of players are allowed to bet into.

Over/Under: A term that can be used to describe the total combined points in a game (the Ravens-Steelers over/under is 40 points) or the number of games a team will win in a season (the Broncos’ over/under win total is 11.5). Also used in prop bets.

Parlay: A wager in which multiple teams are bet, either against the spread or on the money line. For the wager to win (or pay out), all of them must cover/win. The more teams you bet, the greater the odds.

Pick ’em: A game with no favorite or underdog. The point spread is zero, and the winner of the game is also the spread winner.

Point Spread (or just “Spread”): The number of points by which the supposed better team is favored over the underdog.

Power Ratings: The strength of a team in comparison to another team.

Press: To wager a larger amount than usual.

Price: The odds or point spread of a given line.

Proposition (or prop) Bet: A special or exotic wager that's not normally on the betting board, such as which team will score first or how many yards a player will gain. Sometimes called a "game within a game." These are especially popular on major events, with the Super Bowl being the ultimate prop betting event.

Puckline: Unlike point spreads in most other sports, hockey lines are almost always +/- 1.5. As a result, sportsbooks will alter the spread of a hockey game by adjusting the odds attached to each puckline.

Push: When a result lands on the betting number and all wagers are refunded. For example, a 3-point favorite wins by exactly three points.

Reduced Juice: Offered at several sportsbooks, this allows sports bettors to place bets at much more attractive odds. Instead of the standard 10% juice (-110 odds), odds are reduced to -105 for only a 5% commission. This significantly lowers the win percentage needed to break even.

Reverse Line Movement: An excellent indicator of sharp money that involves line movement shifting against the betting percentages. For example, if only 20% of the public is betting on Seattle +3, but the line moves to Seattle +2, that is a great sign that sharps are betting on Seattle to cover.

Round Robin: A series of three or more teams in 2-team parlays.

Run Down: This is all the lines for an specific date, sport, time, etc.

Run Line: In baseball a spread used instead of the money line. Like hockey, these are almost always +/- 1.5

Runner: Someone who makes bets for another person (aka "beard").

Scout: person who waits for what he thinks is an unusually strong wager.

Sharp: A professional, sophisticated sports bettor.

Sharp Money: Bets received by bookmakers from sharps. This can often be tracked by reverse line movements

Sides: In sports betting, the names of the two teams playing: the underdog and the favorite.

Single Action: An "if bet" in sports gambling that is processed only if the precedent bet wins.

Sportsbook: A person or company that accepts bets. Also known as the “House”.

Spread: Short for point spread.

Square: A casual gambler. Someone who typically isn’t using sophisticated reasoning to make a wager.

Steam: When a line is moving unusually fast. It can be a result of a group or syndicate of bettors all getting their bets in at the same time. It can also occur when a respected handicapper gives a bet his followers all jump on, or based on people reacting to news such as an injury or weather conditions.

Straight Up: The expected outright winner of the money line in an event or game, not contingent on the point spread.

Systems: Using trends for the past that you are consistent with to predict future outcomes.

Taking the Points: Betting the underdog and its advantage in the point spread.

Taking the Price: Betting the underdog and accepting money odds.

Teaser: Betting multiple teams and adjusting the point spread in all the games in the bettor’s favor. All games have to be picked correctly to win the wager.

Ticket: A sports betting wager.

Total: The perceived expected point, run or goal total in a game. For example, in a football game, if the total is 41 points, bettors can bet “over” or “under” on that perceived total.

Tout (service): a person (or group of people) who either sells or gives away picks on games or events.

Trends: Using the past to predict the future focusing in on only one team or situation.

Underdog: The team that is expected to lose straight up. You can either bet that the team will lose by less than the predicted amount (ATS), or get better than even-money odds that it will win the game outright. For example, if a

team is a 2-1 underdog, you can bet \$100 that the team will win. If it wins, you win \$200 plus receive your original \$100 wager back.

Value: Getting the best odds on a wagering proposition; the highest possible edge.

Vig/Vigorish: The commission the bookie or bookmaker takes; also called the “juice.” Standard is 10 percent.

Wager: A bet.

Welch: To not pay off a losing bet.

Wiseguy: A professional bettor. Another term for a “sharp.”