



Oregon State Capitol, Salem, Oregon.

Sports Betting Looms in Oregon's Future

BY STEPHEN DOW BECKHAM

Repeal by the Supreme Court of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) in May, 2018, raises the real prospect for sports betting in Oregon. The state is hungry for non-tax revenues. The State Lottery and a variety of video games generated \$1.25 billion in 2017 and is seeking more “voluntary” funds to meet the state’s needs.

The Oregon State Gaming Commission is currently implementing “Progressives” over three years. It is working with the state’s eleven Indian casinos operated by nine tribes to open larger and larger jackpots to bettors.

Oregon’s Penal Code declares illegal gambling a Class C Felony with a fine of up to \$125,000 and up to five years in prison. The Code does not mention betting online. No Oregon residents have been prosecuted for using offshore betting sites.

Oregon was one of four states exempted in 1992 when Congress implemented PASPA. The state initiated Sports Action betting in 1989 and ran the program until 2007 when it became a bar to Oregon hosting the NCAA basketball tournament. Oregon has also legalized Fan Duel. The past success of these gaming options contributes to the likelihood of the state’s embrace of Sports Betting.

The Indian casinos, widely distributed across the state, operate slot machines, blackjack, and other table games. They have the infrastructure to run sports books and several tribes have publically stated their interest in adding sports betting services.

The Oregon Gaming Commission anticipates legalized Sports Betting by 2020. Implementation hinges on authorization, likely to be considered by the legislature when it convenes on January 22, 2019. Legislators face a September, 2018, deadline for draft bills. ❄️

“We have been interested and have been talking for some time now about reintroducing some level of sports-based play into our portfolio.”

—Matt Shelby,
Public Information Manager,
Oregon Lottery