
Research Report:
The Evolution of Prop
Betting & Integrity in
the Age of AI



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Here is the research primer formatted with subheaders, lists, and other formatting for clarity.

Executive Summary

Key Insights: Sports wagering has surged since legalization. In 2024 U.S. sportsbooks took in \$13.71 billion of revenue from roughly \$150 billion in bets. Globally, however, illicit wagering still dwarfs the legal market (UN estimates ~\$1.7 trillion illegally wagered). This makes transparency and oversight vital: as the American Gaming Assoc. explains, “sports betting’s success requires absolute confidence in the integrity of competition. Fans will only bet...if they trust games are fair”. Prop bets – wagers on individual players or specific in-game events – have proliferated with micro-markets and in-play betting. This amplifies both risk and oversight opportunity. High-profile integrity cases (NBA’s Rozier and Porter, MLB’s Ortiz and Clase, etc.) have exposed how easily individual performance can be manipulated for betting. However, these same events also demonstrate how licensed sportsbooks and new AI tools can detect anomalies in real time. In short, the rise of prop betting demands adaptive integrity: not bans, but smarter monitoring, stronger disclosure, and collaboration. With proper controls and predictive AI, sports can benefit from prop markets while safeguarding fairness.

- **Massive Growth, Managed Exposure:** US sports betting revenue is skyrocketing (2024: \$13.7 B) with more Americans betting than ever (~1/3 of adults in 2024). Yet only a sliver involves individual players – e.g. college player props in Ohio were only 1.35% of wagers – even as abuse of those bets has serious consequences.
- **Transparency is Key:** Legal sportsbooks collect/share vast data with regulators and leagues. When atypical bets occur (like unusual parlays or prop activity), AI-driven systems can flag them instantly. In March 2024, DraftKings’ analytics detected an \$80K suspicious parlay on Jontay Porter’s minutes, triggering an NBA probe and his life ban.
- **Culture of Compliance:** All stakeholders – leagues, players, operators, regulators – emphasize integrity. Leagues now explicitly forbid personnel from betting on their sport (NFL memos even highlighted “strict prohibition...includes player prop bets”). The NCAA urges eliminating college player props as a matter of athlete welfare and fairness. At the same time, industry groups (AGA, IBIA) focus on collaboration: “integrity is becoming a shared responsibility” with data and AI tools to “monitor billions of data points” for suspicious patterns.

Implication: Bans alone won’t eliminate demand – they risk driving bets offshore, out of regulatory view. Instead, the successful path is adaptive integrity: robust tech and data systems, clear rules for participants, and transparent practices. This combination can let prop markets thrive (delivering fan engagement and revenue) without sacrificing fairness.

Primer & Definitions

Prop Bets (Proposition Bets): Wagers on specific in-game occurrences rather than final outcomes. Common examples include betting on an individual player's stats (e.g. number of points, yards, or shots), or on micro-events (first foul, exact score, etc.). Props can be pre-game or in-play (live bets during a game).

Micro-Markets: Extremely granular prop bets created by advanced odds-making tech. These might include dozens of markets per game (e.g. "first corner kick" in soccer, or whether a QB will complete a 50+ yard pass). The growth of micro-markets has been driven by real-time data feeds and mobile apps.

Odds and Lines: Game lines are traditional bets on team outcomes (point spreads, totals, moneylines). By contrast, prop odds reference individual or situational outcomes. Betting lines adjust as action flows; heavy betting on a prop can shift its odds, sometimes signaling insider knowledge.

Integrity: Ensuring fair competition and trust in results. In betting context, this means preventing match-fixing, spot-fixing, insider information leaks, or other manipulations. It also includes protecting participants (e.g. athletes) from undue pressure or abuse linked to gambling.

Insider Information: Non-public info about players (health, lineup changes, strategy) that can influence odds. Sharing such info (e.g. injuries, tactics) for bets is typically forbidden by league rules and gambling law.

Regulated vs. Offshore Betting: Licensed bookmakers are subject to AML/KYC and must report suspicious betting patterns. Offshore/unregulated pools have no such oversight, which historically allowed corruption to go undetected (e.g. the NBA's Tim Donaghy scandal).

Key Insights: Prop bets let individual performance matter in betting. This raises two main issues: athletes can more easily influence those outcomes, and disgruntled bettors can target players. Definitions clarify why data and rules are needed to keep competition honest.

A Short History of Prop Betting

Origins and Growth: Early betting centered on winners/point spreads, but curiosities (like the famous 1986 bet on Chicago Bears' "Fridge" Perry to score) led to proposition wagers on players. For decades U.S. law (the 1992 PASPA and later state bans) largely forbade single-game betting, so any props were either off-limits or on other sports. Globally, in-play and prop markets grew under platforms like Betfair (UK, 2000s) and Asian bookmakers. After the 2018 Supreme Court repeal of PASPA, U.S. states began legal sports betting. This unleashed a rapid expansion of offerings: games that once had 5-10 markets now have dozens of props. Sportsbooks introduced same-game parlays and micro-bets, fuelled by mobile apps.

Recent Era (2018–present): As legalization spread to 39+ states, prop betting became routine. Global industry revenues ballooned (US handle ~\$150B in 2024, legal revenue \$13.7B; worldwide illegal wagering was once estimated ~\$1.7T). All the while, notable integrity incidents surfaced:

1. **1940s-90s:** Early fixes (Black Sox 1919), isolated events (1980s soccer), all predating modern props.
2. **2000s:** NBA referee betting scandal (Tim Donaghy, discovered through FBI tip) and reports of Shohei Ohtani's interpreter's massive off-book losses highlighted dangers of unregulated betting.
3. **2020s:** High-profile cases involving prop bets emerged. In 2022 the UFC paused a fight amid suspicious betting. In 2023 Jontay Porter (NBA) pleaded guilty after manipulating his play (and betting against himself). In 2024 Terry Rozier (NBA) and Chauncey Billups (coach) were indicted for providing insider info on player injuries. Baseball saw two Cleveland players (Ortiz, Clase) held out of games pending investigation into unusual betting activity.

Legislation & Policies: Recognition of prop risk prompted action. The NCAA and some states moved to ban player-specific props (e.g. Ohio in 2024 removed all collegiate player props). Professional leagues also tightened rules. Technology enabled new markets faster than policy could catch up, which is why adaptation is now needed.

Key Insights: Props are hardly new, but digital betting vastly scaled them. The Black Sox (1919) and Donaghy (2007) involved group collusion, whereas today's incidents often involve one player's stat or decision. The history shows that as betting expanded, scandals became visible – but only because regulation (and now data monitoring) pushed corruption into the light.

Product Evolution: From Game Lines to Micro-Markets

- **Traditional Markets:** Early legal betting (like Nevada's 1950s market) offered basic bets: moneylines, spreads, totals on final scores. Fans might parlay a team win with the over/under, but individual stats weren't standard.
- **Rise of Props:** As technology improved, bookmakers began adding props to appeal to casual bettors. These included obvious ones (first quarter leader, field goals, home runs) and quirky ones (coin toss outcome, mascots). Super Bowl prop betting is now legendary. Props let fans feel closer to star players.
- **In-Play Betting:** The introduction of legal real-time betting transformed the product landscape. Now sportsbooks offer bets that settle on events during a game, adjusting odds instantly. A bettor can wager, e.g., whether the next play will be a touchdown, or on player performance for each quarter. Live stats feed providers (e.g. StatsPerform, Sportradar) supply data streams used to set and update these odds.
- **Micro-Markets:** The newest frontier is the ultra-granular market. Using AI and high-speed data, operators now create "micro-bets" on nearly any aspect of play. In baseball a market may predict first-pitch strike or a hit in the next at-bat. Football bets extend to every throw/yards combination. This evolution means literally thousands of bets per game.
- **Hybrid Products:** Books are also bundling props into parlays (same-game parlays, which mix team and player bets into one wager) and offering novel promotions (bet insurance, bonus challenges).

Key Insights: Sports betting has shifted from simple team-based bets to complex individual and situational bets, powered by data. Each innovation opens new revenue but also new integrity questions – because every granular

market is a potential target. The technology that drives micro-markets (real-time data, algorithms, mobile UX) is the same technology that can detect anomalies, suggesting both risk and opportunity in the product evolution.

Market Size, Demand Drivers & Consumer Behavior

Rapid Growth: The U.S. market is exploding. A recent industry report puts US sports betting at \$17.94 B revenue in 2024, growing ~10.9% annually. This expansion is largely driven by widespread legalization of mobile betting and rising sports viewership. Globally, sports betting (dominated by soccer, cricket, etc.) is on a similar path: Grand View Research estimates ~\$100.9 B in 2024 (global) to ~\$187B by 2030 (CAGR ~11%).

Prop Share: Props represent a growing slice of handle. In one large regulated US market (Ohio, 2023) player props were just 1.35% of wagers, yet they generate outsized media attention. Same-game parlays and micro-bets also capture a notable share (exact numbers are proprietary), and are often among the highest-margin bets for sportsbooks.

Demand Drivers: Several factors fuel the demand for props and micro-markets:

- **Fan Engagement:** Betting on players/stats intersects with fantasy sports and social media. Fans enjoy having skin in the game on every snap or at-bat.
- **App Gamification:** Mobile apps use real-time odds and notifications to keep users engaged. Push alerts for “bonus odds” on a star player encourage constant action.
- **Demographics:** Younger bettors (millennials/Gen Z) favor fast-paced, interactive betting formats over the old-fashioned pregame spread. Surveys show nearly half of adult men have an online sports betting account. Engagement features (cash-out, bets contests) cater to this group.
- **Media and Sponsorships:** Leagues and media embrace betting partnerships (sports networks integrating odds graphics, betting-oriented programming) which normalize frequent wagering. For example, media deals with ESPN Bet and FanDuel are reshaping sports broadcasts.

Consumer Behavior: Research indicates that bettors treat props differently than classic bets. Many view props as “fun side bets,” but larger bettors watch the lines closely. Operators note that large, sudden bets on obscure props often trigger alerts, since these markets can be easier to fix or exploit. Data also shows bettors rarely gamble heavily on individual college players (hence the small prop share), reflecting risk-averse behavior or legal constraints.

Regulated vs. Illegal: Legalization has pulled much wagering above board: the AGA notes the illegal market shrank from ~\$150 B pre-2018 to ~\$64 B today. As legal books add new bets, demand moves in: more people play in regulated apps (benefiting from state protections) rather than black-market sites.

Key Insights: Sports betting demand is robust and increasingly driven by innovation (props, live betting). Technology and media make betting part of the fan experience. Although props are a small fraction of total volume, they draw intense interest. Importantly, legal expansion has greatly outpaced illegal wagering – indicating that bans

on bets often just shift where people bet. Sustainable growth depends on balancing fan appeal with effective safeguards.

Major Sports Betting Scandals (1995–2025)

Date/ Year	League/S port	Incident Description	Key Individuals Involved	Outcome / Consequences
2000	Cricket (South Africa)	South African captain Hansie Cronje admitted to taking bribes to influence match outcomes.	Hansie Cronje, Herschelle Gibbs, Henry Williams	Cronje received a lifetime ban. Gibbs was banned for 6 months. Sparked global anti-corruption reform in cricket.
2006	Soccer (Italy, Serie A)	“Calciopoli” scandal revealed clubs like Juventus influenced referee assignments to fix matches.	Luciano Moggi, Antonio Giraudo, others	Juventus was stripped of titles and relegated. Multiple officials received lifetime bans. Led to sweeping officiating reforms.
2007	NBA	Referee Tim Donaghy bet on games he officiated and shared inside info with gamblers.	Tim Donaghy	Donaghy pled guilty and was sentenced to 15 months in prison. NBA overhauled officiating oversight.
2007	NHL	“Operation Slapshot” exposed assistant coach Rick Tocchet’s financing of illegal betting operations.	Rick Tocchet, others	Tocchet pled guilty and received probation. Reinstated by NHL.

2010–11	Cricket (Pakistan)	Players caught in undercover sting for deliberately bowling no-balls during a match in exchange for money.	Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Amir	All three received bans (5–10 years) and UK jail sentences. Reinforced global spot-fixing countermeasures.
2021	Soccer (England)	Player leaked private transfer info to friends who placed bets.	Kieran Trippier	Suspended for 10 weeks and fined. Highlighted importance of information control.
2022	NFL	Falcons WR Calvin Ridley placed bets on NFL games, including his own team.	Calvin Ridley	Suspended for entire 2022 season. Reinstated in 2023. NFL reinforced zero-tolerance betting policy.
2023	NFL	Multiple players suspended for gambling on NFL games and facilities.	Jameson Williams, Quintez Cephus, others	Suspensions ranged from 6 games to indefinite. Reinstatements followed. Sparked renewed training on betting policies.
2023	Soccer (UK & Italy)	Multiple players, including Ivan Toney and Sandro Tonali, placed bets on football matches involving their own teams.	Ivan Toney, Sandro Tonali, Nicolo Fagioli	Bans ranged from 7–10 months. Raised concerns about education and accountability.
2023	NHL	Player was investigated for gambling violations, though not linked to betting on NHL games.	Shane Pinto	Suspended for 41 games. First NHL discipline of its kind.
2024	NBA	Player shared injury info with bettors and wagered on games, including ones he played.	Jontay Porter	Banned for life by the NBA. Marked first lifetime ban post-legalization.

2024	MLB	Player placed hundreds of bets, including on his own team's games.	Tucupita Marcano	Banned for life. First active player banned in nearly a century.
2025	NCAA	Three basketball players coordinated to manipulate their stats for prop bet wins.	Mykell Robinson, Steven Vasquez, Jalen Weaver	Declared permanently ineligible. Escalated integrity controls on college betting.
2025	MLB	Sportsbooks flagged suspicious betting on specific pitches; two players investigated for pitch-related prop bet anomalies.	Luis Ortiz, Emmanuel Clase	Placed on administrative leave. Investigations ongoing. Highlighted new betting behavior surveillance tools.
2025	NBA	FBI arrested players and a coach linked to two gambling conspiracies: insider betting and rigged poker tied to organized crime.	Terry Rozier, Chauncey Billups, Damon Jones	Rozier and Billups were charged; league and congressional investigations launched. Triggered broad scrutiny of prop betting and media conflicts.
2025	Tennis	Six players linked to a Belgian match-fixing syndicate. One received a 15-year ban; others admitted guilt.	Agustín Moyano, David Guez, others	Sanctions ranged from 2 to 15 years. Ongoing enforcement against lower-level match-fixing.

Integrity Risk Taxonomy

Integrity risks can be categorized by actor and action. Major types include:

- **Individual Performance Manipulation:** A player or coach alters play to influence a bet. Props magnify this risk, as an athlete can control certain stats (e.g. a running back can intentionally score a touchdown to win a yards-based bet). Cases like Jontay Porter (betting against his own playing time) and the MLB pitchers

investigation (Ortiz allegedly throwing balls on purpose) exemplify this. Such risks also include more subtle forms of underperformance or feigned injury to benefit bettors.

- **Spot-Fixing:** Relatedly, specific moments are fixed without affecting the overall game. For example, a cricketer might agree to bowl a no-ball at a predetermined time for a micro-market wager. Prop markets on, say, the first pitch of a baseball game or the next free throw in basketball are vulnerable to spot fixes because one person's action decides the outcome.
- **Insider Information Abuse:** Leaking non-public information (player injuries, line-up changes, game strategy) to bettors undermines fair odds. Recent indictments (Rozier/Jones) involved sharing injury info, as did the Damon Jones tip about LeBron's availability. Insider leaks are a subtle risk: a gambler armed with secret knowledge can bet big, and the resulting line movements can go unnoticed if offshore.
- **Harassment and Coercion of Athletes:** A growing risk unique to player-focused bets is pressure on the athletes themselves. As NCAA warns, prop bets "put a target on their back," leaving college athletes vulnerable to harassment and even threat. The NFL and NBA players increasingly report social-media abuse tied to missed prop lines. In extreme cases, criminal elements (e.g. organized crime loansharks) might coerce players to comply with fix arrangements or repay debts.
- **Match-Fixing and Event Manipulation:** While more common in team-level betting, match-fixing (entire game outcome) can be facilitated by props. If an entire game is rigged (e.g. point shaving), prop outcomes become easier to predict. Oddsmakers watch for unusual team-bet shifts (e.g. a line moving inexplicably after a large wager) as a signal of possible fix.
- **Referee/Official Corruption:** Officials are not immune. In-game referees or umpires might be bribed to make calls (carding in soccer, strike calls in baseball) that benefit prop bets on those events. This generally has been harder to prove but is part of the risk landscape.
- **Data and Cyber Risks:** Modern betting relies on digital data flows. Tampering with data feeds (e.g. introducing false stats) or hacking into betting systems could be exploited. Another concern is unauthorized streaming or leaked data (e.g. corporate-tracked analytics). While emerging, these tech risks are on regulators' radar.
- **Offshore Betting and Money Laundering:** Illegal markets pose a broad integrity threat. In an unregulated pool, suspicious patterns remain unseen. As AGA notes, criminals (e.g. Donaghy, Ohtani case) used offshore betting to hide corruption. Laundering money through seemingly innocuous bets also ties into integrity.

Key Insights: These risks aren't novel, but prop betting has made them more granular and visible. Players can now single-handedly sway a bet, and bettors can directly target individuals. The taxonomy highlights that solutions must address everything from individual compliance to global data oversight. Effective monitoring systems (using data analytics and collaboration) are needed to detect each category – for instance, spotting a spike in bets on an obscure stat or harassment of an athlete. Weaving the above categories together, the message is clear: risk is ever-present, but so are new detection tools.

Case Studies — Professional Ranks

NBA Basketball: The NBA has seen multiple prop-related scandals. Terry Rozier (2025 Indictment): Rozier allegedly told associate Damon Jones he would sit out the second half due to foot issues, allowing others to cash “under” stat-line bets. This triggered a federal investigation (he was charged in Oct 2025). Jontay Porter (2024): NBA banned Porter after DraftKings flagged an \$80K parlay on reduced performance. Porter admitted he feigned injury at gamblers’ behest. Chauncey Billups: The Portland coach was also indicted in the same NBA probe for illegal betting. League Response: The NBA relies on licensed books for alerts (e.g. DraftKings report on Porter). Commissioner Silver called such betting “the cardinal sin”. NBA rules now strictly forbid players/coaches from betting on any team or statistics (enforced via education and penalties). The NFL similarly issued memos after these incidents, reminding personnel “no bets on your own league”.

MLB Baseball: Baseball’s granular props have drawn scrutiny. In mid-2025, MLB investigated two Cleveland Guardians pitchers (Luis Ortiz, Emmanuel Clase) amid reports of suspicious wagering on individual pitches. The concern was that bettors were wagering on whether Ortiz’s first pitch of innings would be a strike or ball – an ultra-micro prop. No rules were broken, but the incident exemplifies how even one pitch can become a betting market. MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred has emphasized that any player-influenced bets breach integrity. MLB is reportedly working with its sportsbook partner to remove certain props (an unprecedented move).

UFC / Boxing: Combat sports have also faced betting issues. In 2Check2, sportsbooks detected irregular wagering ahead of a major UFC fight. They suspended betting and alerted regulators about unusual action on an undercard bout. This early intervention (made possible by shared data among operators) led to an investigation and is cited as a success story of the regulated model. Boxing has known match-fixes (often outside the U.S.), but micro-betting (round-by-round outcomes) presents new vulnerabilities that commissions are now monitoring.

International Spotlight: Outside the US, sports betting scandals involving props have emerged. In tennis, investigations uncovered players allegedly fixing set wagers (e.g. first-set winner) after a series of odd results. In soccer, governing bodies (FIFA/UEFA) have cracked down on betting rings targeting card or corner props in youth matches. These cases underline that anywhere detailed bets are offered, corruption attempts can follow.

Key Insights: At the pro level, prop-related cases have already surfaced. Importantly, each case was uncovered because licensed sportsbooks and monitoring units flagged anomalies. For example, the NBA’s detection system (drafted in its betting partnership) caught Porter’s plot. Similarly, BetMGM’s alert on a \$100K baseball bet led to a coach’s firing. These success stories show the positive side: regulated betting creates a data trail. If operators and leagues work together (sharing suspicious patterns), they can catch cheats. Thus, while risk is very real in the professional ranks, the professional example also shows the solution pathway.

Case Studies — College Sphere

College sports face unique challenges with prop betting.

Harassment of Student-Athletes: Since sports betting legalization, many college players report abusive messages tied to prop bets. The NCAA found that when props on student stats proliferate, harassment “has really

steadily increased in almost direct correlation”. An NCAA official explained that bets on individual college athletes “put a target on their back... leaving them much more susceptible to... harassment”. A stark example: after North Carolina legalized college prop bets, basketball star Armando Bacot received over 100 angry DMs because fans had bet he would get more rebounds (he did not). Another player threatened to quit social media over the abuse. These incidents show that even without any rules being broken, the spillover effects of props can hurt young athletes’ welfare.

Regulatory Response: In 2024–25, several states moved to ban college player props. Ohio became the first on Feb 23, 2024, removing all NCAA player props from betting menus. Governor DeWine and the Ohio Gambling Commission noted protecting student welfare “must come before chasing betting dollars”. Ohio’s gaming head pointed out college props were only 1.35% of bets, implying lost revenue was minimal compared to risks. Soon after, Vermont, Maryland, Louisiana, and others enacted similar bans. North Carolina’s legislature and New Jersey lawmakers have also proposed restricting college props after seeing the negative fallout. The NCAA itself is calling for elimination of player-specific prop bets entirely, citing both integrity and mental-health reasons.

Educational Measures: Beyond bans, colleges are investing in education. The NCAA now provides e-learning and on-campus programs warning athletes and staff about betting pitfalls. It even uses an AI “Threat Matrix” to scan social media for abusive content aimed at student-athletes. Coaches have spoken out publicly (e.g. Dayton’s Anthony Grant said players are “coming home to hate” from tweets) and have joined administrators in demanding safeguards. Some schools have integrity officers; others coordinate with state gaming regulators to monitor prop lines.

Key Insights: The college context highlights the human side of prop risk. Young athletes are not just assets in a league — they’re students with legal protections. Bets on them carry a direct reputational and psychological cost. As a result, states and the NCAA have taken stricter stands than professional leagues on prohibiting player props. However, these moves also show the broader theme: when risks materialize, stakeholders adapt rules. Instead of insisting on prohibition only, many colleges see value in combining rules with technology (social-media monitoring, reporting hotlines) and education – an “integrity playbook” for campus sports.

International Lens

While the U.S. story is one of rapid legalization, global trends provide useful contrasts. In Europe, regulated betting predates the U.S. roll-out. The UK for example established a multi-stakeholder Sports Betting Integrity Forum (SBIF) in 2012 to coordinate industry, sports bodies and law enforcement. The UK Gambling Commission also follows the Macolin Convention (a Europe-wide anti-fixing treaty) and operates a dedicated Sports Betting Intelligence Unit. Europe typically allows single-game betting (unlike pre-2018 U.S.), and the regulatory focus has been on collaborative oversight from the start. This means sharing data across borders and leagues, and rigorous licensing.

Other regions vary: Australia long allowed in-play bets (with strict codes for integrity) and relies on state-based integrity bodies; Asia (with large illegal betting markets in China/India) struggles with mostly unregulated play.

Globally, the International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) aggregates data: its members (major operators) submit alerts to a global platform. IBIA reports 219 suspicious-betting alerts in 2024 and an 11% increase in Q1 2025. It is now spearheading a “Mission 2030” global strategy, emphasizing detection, collaboration and education worldwide.

Key Insights: In many countries with mature betting industries, the emphasis has been on integrated monitoring rather than bans. The UK model shows how early cooperation can set norms. IBIA’s expanding network – covering over half of the regulated world market – is working to spread such practices internationally. For U.S. stakeholders, this means there is a wealth of global precedents for tech-based oversight and cross-border data sharing. It also shows that even with ubiquitous betting, clean sports are possible when industry and sport collaborate across national lines.

Stakeholder Perspectives

- **Leagues and Sports Governing Bodies:** Professional leagues (NFL, NBA, MLB, NCAA) uniformly forbid players/coaches from wagering on games or stats in their sport. The NFL’s 2024 gambling policy, for instance, explicitly bans players from betting on NFL games or statistics. Pro sports have also embraced regulated betting partnerships for revenue, but these come with conditions: licensed operators must report anomalies. Leagues now often insert “integrity clauses” in partnerships. Many league officials publicly assert that legal betting, with its data transparency, is better than illegal wagering. For example, NFL Commissioner Goodell noted that in the era of legal betting, strange odds shifts immediately raise flags. At the college level, NCAA leadership has taken a precautionary stance: NCAA President Baker said eliminating player props is vital to protect student welfare.
- **Players and Unions:** Athletes’ views are mixed. Union leaders (e.g. NBA/NBPA) share in betting revenue gains via their collective bargaining agreements, but players fear new risks. A recent NBA player poll found 46% considered the league’s betting deals “bad” for the league, citing abuse from fans who lost bets. Many players say they often hear hecklers chanting stat-lines they should achieve. In response, leagues have increased education: the NFL, for instance, sends gambling-awareness briefings to teams each season. Star players also exercise caution publicly. (Notably, Cam Newton’s social-media promotion of prop odds in 2021 drew a league warning.)
- **Sportsbooks and Vendors:** Betting operators (e.g. DraftKings, FanDuel, BetMGM) are enthusiastic about props as revenue drivers, but also keen on protecting the market’s integrity. They invest heavily in surveillance technologies (Sportradar, Genius Sports, OpticOdds etc.) and compliance teams. Trade associations like the American Gaming Assoc. promote the message that regulated betting is an ally of fair play. Operators often lobby regulators against outright bans (citing user demand and black-market risks), but they support sensible limits on the riskiest bets (for example, Missouri banned props on college players while legalizing others). Data companies (Sportradar, Genius) actively market their integrity monitoring systems to leagues and books.
- **Regulators & Legislators:** State gaming regulators are charged with balancing revenue vs. risk. They require sportsbooks to adhere to KYC/AML rules (e.g. verifying identity on large bets) and to report

suspicious activity. Some states, like Ohio and Tennessee, acted to ban college player props after seeing abuse. Others worry that bans merely push bettors offshore – indeed Ohio’s Gambling Commissioner noted college props were a tiny slice of bets (1.35%) and that the black-market threat was “low”. Federally, Congress has so far deferred to states, but lawmakers on both sides have expressed interest in national integrity standards. Internationally, bodies like the Macolin Convention and IBIA are gaining support; U.S. regulators often consult these global frameworks.

- **Fans and Bettors:** Recreational bettors largely celebrate the variety of prop bets. Many see player props as a way to engage with specific athletes. Surveys show American bettors increasingly place in-play wagers during games. However, some segments express concern over addiction and manipulative ads. Consumer advocates (e.g. in gambling research) argue that the most granular markets (in-play props, micro-bets, daily fantasy overlap) carry higher problem-gambling potential. In any case, fans demand transparency: polls indicate a majority will stop betting if they suspect games are unfair. This “market pressure” aligns with the integrity argument: public confidence depends on seeing robust safeguards in place.

Key Insights: All stakeholders agree on the need for some integrity protections, but they differ on extent. Leagues and educators focus on player protection, while operators emphasize technological oversight. The confluence point is data: everyone benefits when oddsmakers, regulators and sports bodies share information. As IBIA puts it, the era of competing to fix bets is ending; instead the industry is pivoting to “shared responsibility” for integrity. In practice, this means coordinated playbooks, regular communication (integrity hotlines, joint task forces), and public messaging (all stakeholders stressing that misconduct will be detected and punished).

The Policy Debate: Restrict, Ban, or Adapt?

This question frames much of the current discussion. Ban advocates (including some players’ unions and legislators) argue that limiting certain wagers – especially those on individuals – is necessary to protect integrity and athletes. For example, a recent analysis urged a national ban on prop bets, citing risk to player safety and game fairness. Similarly, NCAA President Baker and other college leaders are pushing for outright elimination of player props, especially at the collegiate level. They argue that even a few incidents (harassment, potential fixes) justify preemptive prohibition.

On the other hand, adaptation proponents emphasize regulation over prohibition. They point out that outright bans have limited effect in open markets (banned sports often see parallel illegal markets spring up). Ohio regulators specifically noted that college props were a very small part of wagering, and that most bettors stick to legal apps, reducing the black-market risk. The AGA and IBIA highlight that bringing betting into the light – not banning – provides the “guardrails” that uncover wrongdoing. Leagues like the NFL have also reinforced that strict enforcement (education, monitoring) of existing gambling rules is more productive than proposing new bans.

The debate also involves public health concerns. Some analysts liken rampant micro-betting to gambling on steroids, calling for guardrails (e.g. Forbes notes certain formats have higher addiction risk). Opponents of bans

argue that well-designed regulations (age limits, bet-size limits, risk disclosures) combined with strong integrity controls can address most harms without stifling legal business.

Key Insight: The prevalent view among experts is that adaptation is the only realistic path. Complete prohibition of prop bets would likely push activity underground and reduce transparency. Instead, policymakers are exploring nuanced approaches: limiting or banning the riskiest prop categories (e.g. college players, in-game waivers), while mandating robust monitoring for others. Governor DeWine’s remark – “protecting the fairness of competition must come before chasing betting dollars” – captures the synthesis: pursue new revenue only if paired with integrity safeguards. This aligns with the principle that legal sports betting itself enhances integrity (by generating data), rather than diminishing it.

Tech Stack for Integrity: Data, AI & Predictive Monitoring

Modern integrity efforts leverage cutting-edge technology. The core components include:

- **Rich Data Feeds & APIs:** Integrity systems are only as good as the data they use. Reputable providers (e.g. Sportradar, Genius, StatsPerform) supply real-time game statistics, player trackers, and betting odds via high-speed APIs. These “secret tunnels” carry live play-by-play, player biometrics (in some leagues), weather, social sentiment, and more. Without robust, low-latency data pipelines, odds models and fraud detectors would work on outdated information. Many sportsbooks require multiple data feeds to avoid blind spots.
- **AI and Machine Learning Engines:** Specialized algorithms continuously scan betting and sports data. These include statistical anomaly detection and predictive models. For example, machine-learning systems ingest historical betting patterns and learn what “normal” looks like. When a new situation (e.g. prop bets on a little-known player) deviates significantly, an alert is raised. AI can also adjust odds dynamically: if heavy money comes in on one side of a prop, the system tightens the line instantly. This same tech that balances risk for the book doubles as a 24/7 fraud watchdog. As one industry blog notes, AI can flag “if multiple accounts suddenly max-bet a low-profile event... the AI will flag it or freeze that market”.
- **Predictive Analytics Platforms:** Beyond reactive detection, predictive tools forecast risk. These platforms integrate customer profiles (e.g. betting history from KYC) and gameplay analytics. They might predict, for instance, that unusual betting is 95% likely to be fraudulent, prompting preemptive action. Some systems cross-reference social media, news feeds and betting lines to anticipate anomalies. Notably, the NCAA has started using an AI “Threat Matrix” to predict and identify harassment cases among college communities, illustrating how analytics can protect athletes off-field.
- **Integrity Monitoring Networks:** Companies and regulators have built shared networks. In the U.S., the Multi-State Monitor coordinates suspicious activity reports among the sportsbooks. Globally, IBIA’s platform aggregates alerts from dozens of operators worldwide. When any member flags a suspicious bet on a given event, others (including the affected league) are notified. For example, when DraftKings flagged

Porter's prop parlay, the NBA – which might have been a separate operator – quickly received the information. This collective intelligence is a powerful guardrail.

- **RegTech (KYC/AML Systems):** Legal sportsbooks use standard AML tools. Customers must verify identity (often via SSN checks) before wagering large amounts. All significant bets trigger reviews; repetitive suspicious betting patterns can lock accounts. Bookmakers automatically file reports to financial regulators on any odd transaction. These controls significantly raise the bar compared to offshore sites, where anonymity is the norm.

Key Insights: The tech stack enables proactive integrity. Sophisticated data and AI systems transform raw info (sports stats, betting logs, social signals) into early warnings. For instance, legal operators are now required to “monitor billions of data points” using analytics and AI. The NCAA's use of AI to detect online abuse is a step toward harnessing technology for player protection. In practice, this means integrity teams can identify threats before they materialize – e.g., freezing a suspicious bet, retraining algorithms, or contacting law enforcement. The consistent theme is: no data point goes unused. Every bet placed becomes a data point for our integrity “weather radar,” making corruption visible in patterns.

Prevention in Practice: Playbooks & Controls

Beyond technology, prevention hinges on policies, education, and controls – essentially operationalizing “know the signs and know what to do.” Key practices include:

- **Education & Training:** All leagues and betting companies run mandatory programs. Players, coaches and staff receive clear guidelines: what bets are forbidden, how to report violations, how to avoid suspicious situations. IBIA's Mission 2030 explicitly makes education a pillar, aiming to train “athletes, coaches, and betting staff to recognize warning signs”. The NCAA provides e-learning modules on gambling culture and mental health risks. Some teams hold regular seminars (for example, the NFL holds a pre-season betting seminar). Betting operators also train risk analysts to spot illicit patterns.
- **Codes of Conduct and Policies:** Every pro sport has a written gambling policy. These codify prohibitions (e.g. “no betting on games involving your team”) and outline penalties (often immediate suspension or ban). At the college level, athletes sign similar agreements (enhanced now to mention social-media rules, offline behavior, etc.). Clear policies remove ambiguity – if an incident occurs, enforcement is straightforward. Some leagues go further: the NFL in 2024 reminded its entire personnel, “yes, everyone,” that no NFL-related betting is allowed.
- **Reporting Channels:** Organizations establish hotlines and internal platforms for tips. Leagues encourage players or coaches who hear of fixes (e.g. odd betting patterns, suspicious approaches) to report immediately. The NCAA's proposed system for harassing bettors (a list of banned accounts) is an example of an escalation channel being built. Betting companies must file official Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) with regulators when triggering thresholds, creating a formal channel between business and law enforcement.

- **Operational Controls:** This includes setting bet limits and speed bumps. Very large bets (especially on obscure props) trigger automatic review. In practice, a \$100K prop wager prompts immediate inquiry in many sportsbooks. Similarly, operators may cap the maximum allowable wager on higher-risk markets. Pre-game restrictions (e.g. closing player prop markets once the lineup is announced) ensure that last-second info can't be abused.
- **Collaboration Playbooks:** Leagues and regulators publish guidance. For example, MLB and the Players Association update joint integrity standards each year. Multi-agency task forces (like the NCAA's Tournament Integrity Unit) have been formed to coordinate between schools, regulators, and books during big events. The U.S. is moving towards something akin to the UK's SBIF – annual summits where stakeholders rehearse responses to hypothetical threats.

Key Insights: Prevention is about process as much as tech. Well-executed playbooks train everyone to be part of the solution. When players know the rules and risks (NBA players often say, “we can’t even have \$0.01 line moves” on our stats), the chance of accidental violations falls. Simultaneously, betting staff trained to spot red flags (per the AGA’s model) can intervene early. Ultimately, these real-world controls – education, policies, channels, caps – are what stop a glitch in the data from becoming an integrity crisis on the field.

Transparency Standards & Disclosure

Transparency builds trust. In regulated markets, this means clear visibility into betting activities and enforcement. Key elements include:

- **Data Sharing Mandates:** Legal frameworks (and book licenses) compel sportsbooks to share detailed records of every wager with oversight bodies. Leagues like the NFL or NCAA require daily betting reports from operators. For example, the AGA notes that “rigorous state regulation requires legal sportsbooks to collect and share betting data with regulators, sports leagues and sports integrity monitors”. This 360-degree transparency ensures no suspicious bet vanishes unseen.
- **Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR):** Operators file SARs to financial authorities for large or odd betting behavior (just as banks do for money laundering). Regulators aggregate these reports to spot broader trends. The sharing of alert data (e.g. via IBIA or state integrity units) means even bets in another state or country can prompt action.
- **Public Disclosure:** Leagues and regulators increasingly disclose integrity efforts and findings. The NBA and other leagues now include integrity summaries in annual reports (number of investigations, policy violations, etc.). Several states publish sports betting audits (including metrics on suspicious activity). Such transparency lets the public see that suspicious cases are detected – ironically, more public exposure of fixes (as in the New Yorker’s recent exposé) often indicates an effective legal system, not its failure.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** Some proposals call for transparency around prop creation itself. For instance, regulators could require sportsbooks to report which props they offer (to ensure prohibited ones – like certain college props – are removed) and to justify rapidly changing lines. 360° visibility also extends to tournament organizers (e.g. ATP, NCAA) requiring wagering policies to be posted publicly.

- **Open Communication:** Integrity bodies often issue alerts or educational bulletins. The NCAA, for instance, publicly announced its stance on harassment and called for legislative action (raising awareness of the issue). Bet operators sometimes inform betting pools when they void a suspect wager (as DraftKings did in the Jontay Porter case), signaling to all customers that the system is active.

Key Insights: Transparency is not just ethical; it's practical. When stakeholders publish data on detected incidents and enforcement actions, it deters cheaters (they see the system works) and reassures fans (they see vigilance). By making reporting standardized (e.g. all U.S. operators in IBIA or multi-state compacts), we create a clear paper trail. In sum, the model is: open books = cleaner play. As evidence, legalization has already led to public knowledge of cases that would have remained secret offshore.

A Framework for “Adaptive Integrity”

“Adaptive Integrity” means a dynamic, data-driven approach that evolves with the game. Its foundations are:

- **Continuous Monitoring & Feedback:** Integrity measures cannot be static. They must adapt as markets and threats change. This means regularly analyzing integrity metrics (alerts, incident patterns) and updating rules or models accordingly. For example, if a new type of prop bet becomes popular, it should be assessed for risk and, if needed, added to monitored lists.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** All parties – leagues, sportsbooks, regulators, data providers – must work in concert. IBIA’s message captures this: “Integrity is becoming a shared responsibility” where the playing field is transparent. Practically, that means data sharing agreements, joint investigations, and standing committees that meet frequently. An “integrity council” for each sport or region can oversee the framework’s implementation.
- **Technology Integration:** The latest tools (AI, predictive analytics, blockchain for auditable bets, etc.) should be integrated into the ecosystem. This includes automatic rule updates in odds engines and cross-platform alert systems. The NCAA’s adoption of AI to flag harassment exemplifies using tech to protect stakeholders beyond the field. Future expansions might include wearable biometric checks (to detect if an injury is feigned) or using distributed ledger technology for verifiable bet records.
- **Education & Culture:** Adaptive integrity requires a culture of vigilance. Everyone from rookies to veteran officials must be alert. Institutions should constantly reinforce integrity values – for example, updating training modules each season and sharing case studies internally. NCAA leaders emphasized this ethos: “We can help our student-athletes compete in a safer... atmosphere... The NCAA will continue to do its part to lead in this space to identify practical solutions”.
- **Risk-Based Regulation:** Rather than one-size-fits-all bans, rules should reflect assessed risk levels. High-risk bets (e.g. small-game live props) might face stricter controls (like lower bet caps or pre-approval by a regulator), while routine bets remain open. This flexibility allows innovation to coexist with protection.

Key Insights: Adaptive integrity is proactive and iterative. It does not rely on fear of punishment alone but on predicting and preventing issues. For instance, if data shows player prop abuse rising, the framework would trigger

enhanced checks and player education. By contrast, a reactive or rigid system (e.g. blanket bans) would fail to adjust to new threats. The goal is an equilibrium: sports betting markets can expand (and use AI and data to become more efficient) while integrity measures dynamically counterbalance each new element. In other words, the approach evolves as quickly as the bets do.

Implementation Roadmap

To turn principles into practice, stakeholders can follow these steps:

- **Establish Governance Structure:** Form an integrity oversight board for each major sport (including league officials, players' reps, regulator liaisons, and operators). This board sets standards and reviews metrics.
- **Mandate Data Connectivity:** Require all licensed sportsbooks to feed real-time bets into a central monitoring system (IBIA/MLS or a national Integrity Monitoring Center). Ensure compatibility of data formats and confidentiality safeguards.
- **Enact Targeted Regulation:** Update gambling laws to restrict only the riskiest bets (e.g. all-in-game college player props) while permitting others under oversight. Introduce clear guidelines for what constitutes suspicious betting (e.g. any single bet exceeding a defined percentage of total handle on that market).
- **Deploy Tech Solutions:** Invest in or contract proven integrity software. For example, sports leagues could subscribe to a service like Sportradar's Fraud Detection System, and sportsbooks should integrate AI risk engines (such as OpticOdds' risk tools) directly into their trading platforms.
- **Roll Out Education Campaigns:** Launch annual integrity training for athletes, coaches and staff. Clubs should hold seminars before each season. Betting operators must train customer-facing and risk teams on recognizing fix schemes.
- **Enhance Reporting Protocols:** Create or publicize hotlines and digital portals for reporting suspicious activity. Collaborate with law enforcement to define when to trigger formal investigations (as was done with Porter and Rozier). Also, set up a "whitelist"/"blacklist" mechanism so that bettors proven to harass players are barred from betting.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Leagues should negotiate data-sharing agreements with all domestic operators. Continue liaison with international bodies (like IBIA and Interpol) to cover offshore betting leaks.
- **Periodic Review and Update:** Commit to annual reviews of the integrity framework. After each major event or high-profile incident, reassess policies. Use metrics (see next section) to gauge effectiveness and adjust "pressure valves" accordingly.

Each step includes accountability milestones (e.g. 100% operator compliance by Year 1; all athletes completing training by Year 2). The timeline should be aggressive enough to keep up with market changes.

Measuring Success

Effectiveness of an integrity framework can be gauged through both quantitative and qualitative metrics:

- **Suspicious Activity Alerts:** Number of alerts flagged and investigated. A rise in alerts (like IBIA's 219 in 2024) often means better detection, not necessarily more cheating. The crucial metric is action rate: what fraction of alerts lead to validated interventions (book voids, player bans)? Over time, a stable or rising action-rate suggests the system is catching real problems.
- **Case Resolution Times:** How quickly suspicious bets trigger league investigation. For example, DraftKings alerted the NBA on the Porter bet and the league banned him within days. Short detection-to-resolution timeframes are a success indicator.
- **Integrity Incident Count:** Number of confirmed integrity breaches (fixed games, corruption cases) per year. The goal is to hold this as close to zero as possible. Ideally, any detected fix is caught before large-scale betting, leading to minimal actual damage.
- **Regulatory Compliance Rates:** Percentage of operators meeting standards (timely reporting, system upgrades, etc.). For example, IBIA membership growth (over 50% of regulated market covered in 2025) shows strong buy-in. Similarly, how many leagues/states adopt recommended rules? High adoption rates indicate success in spread of best practices.
- **Illegal Market Share:** Legal vs. illegal wagering volumes. As of now, U.S. legal sports betting revenue is rising rapidly, and the estimated illegal market has already fallen (~\$150B to \$64B). Continued shrinkage of the black market (tracked via surveys or financial intelligence) would validate that regulated integrity controls are winning bettors' trust.
- **Athlete Welfare Metrics:** In college: number of reported harassment cases (tracked via the NCAA's Threat Matrix or hotlines) and mental-health outcomes. A decline in betting-related abuse reports, or positive survey feedback from players, would signal progress.
- **Public Trust and Engagement:** Long-term fan surveys can measure confidence: e.g. "Do you trust games are untainted?" and compare with betting participation rates. Sustained or growing legal betting volumes (and lower attrition after scandals) imply maintained trust.

Ultimately, success is when sport is demonstrably clean despite widespread betting. For example, the case where legal betting underpinned a cheat exposure (like the Jontay Porter case) can be spun positively: it shows the system works. Conversely, repeat scandals suggest gaps. Quantifying success involves cross-referencing data: e.g. if sudden spikes in prop market volumes no longer correspond to uncaught incidents, that's a good sign of robust monitoring.

Future Outlook

Looking ahead, prop betting and integrity controls will co-evolve:

- **Technological Advance:** AI/ML will deepen. Expect even more precise predictive monitoring, perhaps using computer vision (game footage analysis) or natural language processing (flagging insider chatter online). Betting apps will integrate augmented reality or social features, increasing user base but also

requiring new detection (imagine live fan-betting feeds). The sports analytics market itself is projected to quintuple, reflecting this trend.

- **Product Innovation:** Props will become more creative (AI-driven proposition suggestions, personalized bets). Same-game parlays and bet mixers will grow. Meanwhile, virtual betting (on simulations or e-sports equivalents of real players) may emerge, raising new integrity angles. Regulators will have to clarify rules for these novel bets.
- **Regulatory Harmonization:** Within the U.S., we may see moves toward uniform standards (possibly via interstate compacts or federal guidelines) for integrity monitoring. Globally, more jurisdictions might join frameworks like Macolin or IBIA. For instance, if a federal law once emerges (it's been discussed in Congress) it could mandate nationwide integrity systems akin to those states use.
- **Market Balance:** As analytics maturity grows, operators might restrict some high-risk bets by default (U.K. operators already voluntarily limit certain in-play bets due to addiction/ integrity concerns). We may also see consumer protection measures (e.g. “smart wagering” settings in apps that flag a user betting on their favorite player).
- **Cultural Shift:** Over time, betting on individual players might become normalized with safeguards, much as fantasy sports acceptance grew. Young athletes of the future will likely be trained from day one about betting risks. Meanwhile, sports bodies will refine transparency: publishing more data on suspected infractions and resolved cases to reinforce trust.

Key Insight: The next decade will test how well we learned from the early pitfalls of prop betting. If the sports industry and tech companies remain agile, they can transform data analytics and AI into a lasting guardian of fairness. The foundational thesis holds: prop markets offer new excitement and engagement, and with “adaptive integrity,” they can coexist with clean competition.

Appendices

A. Timeline of Major U.S. Betting Integrity Events (2018–2025)

- **2018:** Supreme Court strikes down PASPA; state-by-state legalization begins.
- **2019:** First state lotteries and tribes launch sports betting (e.g. Illinois Dec 2019). MLB and NBA partner with DraftKings/FanDuel. First NCAA Tournament after legalization.
- **2020–2021:** Rapid roll-out of online betting in many states. NBA and MLB expand official partnerships. NCAA approves sponsorships but maintains athlete betting ban.
- **2022:** UFC fight flagged mid-event for suspicious bets (integrity success). FBI indicts NCAA football players in minor prop-fixing case.
- **2023:** Jontay Porter (NBA) admits to betting on his own game; NBA bans him. FBI investigates other NFL/NBA bettors. MLB investigates minor suspicious pitching series.
- **2024:** High-profile NBA indictments (Rozier, Billups) for prop-stat betting, prompting NFL warnings. Alabama coach Betties flagged and fired for insider betting on college game. Ohio bans NCAA player props

(Feb 2024). NCAA leads calls to ban collegiate player props. IBIA records record suspicious alerts (219) and launches Mission 2030.

- **2025:** Continued growth in legal markets (\$13.71B revenue). MLB considers removing certain micro-props due to integrity concerns. Federal and state debates intensify on prop regulation vs. oversight.

B. U.S. Policy Snapshot: College Player Props

- **Ohio:** Banned in 2024 after NCAA request. Regulators noted low revenue impact (1.35% of bets).
- **Louisiana/Maryland/Vermont:** Banned player props following Ohio's lead (mid-2024).
- **New Jersey:** Legislation introduced in 2024 to ban college props (bipartisan support).
- **North Carolina/Texas:** Illinois recently allowed college props (Oct 2024) but passed a rider to forbid athletes from being referenced. Some states like NC and NJ see active bills to prohibit player props after seeing harassment cases.
- **Federal:** No federal law yet; proposals have surfaced but the 50-state regime means national action is slow.
- **Leagues:** NFL/NBA prohibit any player betting on league stats. NCAA prohibits all athlete betting on sports (and generally pushes for props bans).

C. Integrity Tech & Vendor Landscape

- **Data Providers:** Sportradar, Genius Sports, StatsPerform (real-time stats feeds for betting and integrity).
- **Integrity Monitoring:** Sportradar Fraud Detection System; Genius Integrity Services (Bet Monitoring); local regulators' systems; IBIA Global Alert System.
- **Odds Engines/Risk Tools:** OpticOdds (AI trading and risk mgmt platform); BetGenius; proprietary models at major books.
- **Compliance & Education:** eLearning platforms (e.g. Sports Integrity Alliance training), consultancy services (e.g. BerryDunn, Eilers & Krejcik).
- **Sample RFP Checklist:** High-frequency data APIs; 24/7 anomaly detection; multi-market alert sharing; KYC/AML integration; audit logs and reporting; user-role security; player-insider alert filters; social media monitoring.

D. Sample Integrity Education Syllabus

- **Introduction to Sports Betting:** Basics of betting markets, how lines are set (software demos).
- **League Rules & Ethics:** Review of NFL/NBA/NCAA gambling rules; examples of infractions (Porter, Donaghy).
- **Recognition of Red Flags:** Case studies of spot-fixing and harassment; identifying suspicious requests (e.g. if a gambler asks for game insights).
- **Reporting Protocols:** How to use hotlines and report concerns (what information to provide, whistleblower protections).

- **Mental Health and Harassment:** Effects of betting abuse on athletes; campus resources for support; promoting a culture that rejects online abuse.
- **Q&A and Pledge:** Participants pledge to follow rules and encourage peers to do likewise.