Isn’t sports wagering harmless? No! Sports wagering can be a serious crime that threatens the well-being of student-athletes and the integrity of the game. Financially troubled student-athletes are viewed by organized gambling as easy marks for obtaining inside information or affecting the outcome of a game. Student-athletes who gamble are breaking the law and jeopardizing their eligibility. The NCAA believes sports should be appreciated for the benefits of participating or watching, not the amount of money that can be won or lost depending on the outcome of the games.

What exactly is the NCAA policy on sports wagering? The NCAA opposes all forms of legal and illegal sports wagering on college sports. NCAA rules prohibit student-athletes, and athletics department, conference office, and NCAA national office employees from wagering on intercollegiate, amateur, and professional sports in which the Association conducts championships.

How does the NCAA define sports wagering? The NCAA defines sports wagering as putting something at risk — such as an entry fee or a wager — in return for the opportunity to win something.

Does the NCAA conduct background checks on officials? The NCAA conducts background checks on officials and umpires in the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships, FBS bowl games, the Men’s Frozen Four and the Men’s College World Series.

What is the NCAA doing to stop sports wagering? Campus-level programs across the country are using NCAA-supplied educational materials. The NCAA’s Enforcement group continues to process cases involving student-athletes and coaches across all divisions and sports. Despite differing motivations, the NCAA and Las Vegas sports wagering officials work closely together to identify instances in which the integrity of college sports may be threatened.

Facts on college sports gambling

- The FBI estimates more than $2.5 billion is wagered illegally on March Madness.
- According to the NCAA’s 2008 gambling survey, about 30 percent of male student-athletes and 7 percent of female student-athletes reported wagering on sporting events within the past year.
- The Don’t Bet on It Web site (www.dontbetonit.org) is an NCAA Web site used to educate student-athletes, coaches, athletic administrators and the general public about NCAA rules on sports wagering.

For more Behind the Blue Disks, go to www.ncaa.org/bluedisks.