

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
GAMBLING CONTROL DIVISION
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Date: March 15, 2021
To: Gambling licensees operating sports pool boards or sports tabs
Re: *COVID-19*

Interpretation of Sports Pool/Sports Tab Administrative Rules

Authorized by: Rusty Gackle, Administrator

Because of the actual possibility that sports events may be canceled at the last minute due to teams' or leagues' COVID-19 safety protocols, the Gambling Control Division is announcing this interpretation of ARM § 23.16.1702. At this moment, licensees across the state are offering sports pools/sports tabs on the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments scheduled to start in days. Those pools can represent several hundreds to several thousands of dollars which could be thrown into confusion and discord if one or more games are canceled. This interpretation avoids that chaos and is effective immediately. This interpretation applies only to sports events officially canceled because of COVID-19.

Currently there are two allowances for canceled or rescheduled sports events in § 23.16.1702.

1. If a sports event is canceled, the sports pool must be refunded to each participant.
2. If the sports event is rescheduled, the sponsor may:
 - (a) cancel the board and refund all monies to the participants; or
 - (b) change the sports pool board only so as to reflect the new date of the sports event.

A sponsor may still choose one of these alternatives.

Allowance granted by the Gambling Control Division interpretation:

Sports pool board or sports tabs for a single game or series of games.

1. **If a sports event is canceled due to a team or teams (competitors) being unable to play their game due to COVID-19 and no replacement team or teams are substituted in their place, the winner of the sports pool will be determined by the sponsor conducting a random drawing of numbers 0-9 for the horizontal axis and a second random drawing of numbers 0-9 for the vertical axis to determine the sports pool winner. These two numbers will substitute for each competitor's score and will be applied in the common fashion described in § 23.16.1705(3)(a). All other laws and rules pertaining to sports pools/sports tabs remain in effect.**
2. If a sports event is rescheduled, the current rule (§ 23.16.1702) remains in effect.

This interpretation will remain in effect for any sports event canceled due to COVID-19 or until discontinued by the Gambling Control Division Administrator.