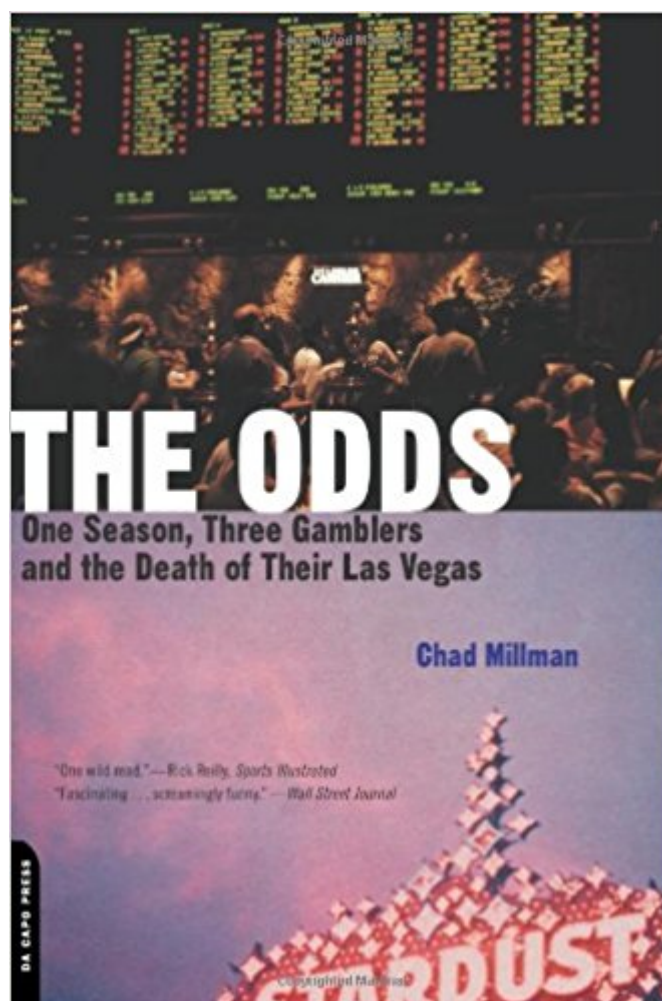


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The Odds: One Season, Three Gamblers, And The Death Of Their Las Vegas



Synopsis

One gambler is a manic former cokehead with an Ivy League degree. The second is a college dropout trying to make a living at the only thing he enjoyed at school—gambling. The third, one of Vegas's most respected bookmakers, is perilously close to burning out. The Odds follows the lives of these three professional gamblers through a college basketball season in a one-of-a-kind city struggling to reconcile its lawless past with its family-friendly makeover. With a wiseguy attitude and a faultless eye and ear for the sights and sounds of Vegas and its denizens, Chad Millman has created a portrait that the Wall Street Journal called "fascinating. . . often screamingly funny." The Las Vegas Review-Journal had just one word for the book: "Superb."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For sports gamblers in Las Vegas, nobody cares who wins; it's by how much that matters. In The Odds, Chad Millman follows three professional gamblers through a year of college basketball, where meticulous research, betting discipline, and instinct clash with addiction, and no one relaxes until they've lost it all. The three colorful gamblers Millman expertly portrays are a high-rolling career "wiseguy," a slacker wannabe, and a bookmaker who sets the lines on games (for example, Iowa over Indiana by 4-1/2 points, meaning if you bet on Iowa, you win only if Iowa wins by five points or more). The idea behind the betting line is to lure bets (hopefully, losing ones) and make a profit for his casino from the action, but more importantly to stay ahead of those who pounce on a weak line like hungry wolves. Millman provides the answer to what makes these wiseguys tick: "While the

casual bettor weighs common sense and financial realities with every bet, the wiseguy pushes those aside... [his] battle isn't with what makes sense; his battle is with anyone who gets in the way of making his bet a euphoric experience." Along with lurid details of what these gamblers do to feed their frenzy, Millman enriches us on gambling's history and sobering statistics, on Vegas's decline and the rise of offshore casinos, and on the effects of media coverage and politics on sports and gambling. While you won't learn how to get rich off the next office pool, you will get an inside look at those who make or lose money on some kid's buzzer-beater or a garbage-time lay-up. --Michael Ferch --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To some, sports betting is good clean fun it adds spice to the game to put a little down on your alma mater. To others, it's big business federal agents estimated that before the 2000 Super Bowl that nearly \$5 billion would be bet both legally and illegally, and the 2000 NCAA basketball tournament drew nearly \$80 million in legal Nevada bets and estimates running from \$2.5 to \$7 billion in illegal action. Here, sports reporter Chad Millman goes to Las Vegas, the legal gambling mecca threatened by recent legislation and offshore Internet betting sites, and follows the men who make the odds and those who try to beat them. This is not a Reefer Madness-style expos designed to scare gamblers straight, but its depiction of the lives of a young bookmaker, a big player, and a rookie gambling professional still might make bettors consider dialing 1-800-BETS-OFF. Recommended for larger public libraries. Jim Burns, Ottumwa P.L., IA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It has been over 15 years since the publication of *The Odds: One Season, Three Gamblers, and the Death of Their Las Vegas*, Chad Millman's insightful look at the world of sports bettors. At the beginning of the 21st century, the industry was undergoing a period of radical transformation. Offshore books were taking business away from the Nevada casinos. But the Nevada desert was still a powerful allure for men (and a few women) with fool-proof systems and a yearning to live like a wise guy. Millman portrays the Las Vegas gambling lives of three men in great detail. Alan Boston, genuine wise guy, will bet any amount (\$2,000 to \$20,000) on any game, using a system that only he understands. Rodney Bosnich, wise guy in training, a recent arrival from small-town Indiana, has a smaller bankroll but no less ambition than the established Vegas bettors. Joe Lupo, sports book manager, tolerates the squares, the nickel and dimers, the convention goers who flock to the Stardust to spend \$22 to win \$20. On the other hand, Joe Lupo despises the wise guys. Wise guys take up space in his head every waking moment of every day as he carefully crafts each Opening

Line of every game. Before we go any further, it needs to be mentioned that I have bet on college basketball games. I've never been to Las Vegas and never patronized the ubiquitous neighborhood bookie. I had no need for an envelope stuffed with fifties in my side pocket or a clandestine account at Vince's Butcher Shop; my transactions were done with mouse clicks. I only bring this up because I'm pretty sure Millman his own-self has wagered a few pesos on the outcomes of young men's games. His observations about gamblers' delusional thought processes and descriptions of game-day heart palpitations and mood swings are spot on. Only a man who has watched a walk-on hit a three-pointer with :02 on the clock, moving the final margin from 19 to 22, can give us "On November 30, like a drunk reaching for the whiskey, he decides he can't hold back anymore. Alan put low five figures on New Orleans plus-9.5 against Southern Mississippi and the same amount on then sixteenth-ranked Illinois, who were 2.5-point underdogs against seventeenth-ranked Duke. Or this "The pattern was the same every time. The game looks good so he gets some money down early. Then it moves his direction and he puts a little more down. By game time he's acting like a full-blown addict, binging on the line in massive doses, unable to hold back from tossing around obscene amounts of money. The Odds is not a sermon and Millman is not a preacher. Readers looking for a moral tome on the evils of the gambling life will need to look elsewhere.

This book inspired me to make personal changes in my life. After reading the book my senior year of college, I submitted an application to the Las Vegas Sports Consultants (LVSC) and attained a summer internship with the group. I referenced this book in my interview, and that my interest in LVSC was driven by Chad's portrayal of the firm. It was a fantastic experience that I will never forget. Needless to say, I am slightly biased when it comes to reviewing this book. I typically take something from all books, but this book obviously delivered more than I expected (A JOB!). Here is my best objective summary of the book. The greatest strength of this book is the development of the many characters in the book. I say the word "character" because these are definitely not your average Joe. My personal favorite is Alan Boston. Alan is a lovable curmudgeon that means well, but often shoots himself in the foot. I pleasantly laughed out loud at some of the remarks he made while watching games (primarily because I have made the same comments myself). If I would change the book in any way, I would strike the section on legislation and legalization of sports wagering. Although it is relevant to the story, I felt like it dragged on at times, and took away from the excitement of the "action." Also, like most things concerning the law, a lot has changed amongst the wagering landscape since this book was released (DraftKings, FanDuel, etc.). The writing is

strong, and not without moments of "tongue-in-cheek" humor. Chad is an interesting guy himself, who I have corresponding with since reading the book. He is a very friendly person who cares deeply about his audience. Buy this book, and if you don't enjoy it, find a degenerate gambler to give it to. He or she will be sure to find a special place in their heart for it.

I enjoyed this book. It takes the reader on the roller coaster ride of betting on college basketball in Las Vegas. Although there were far too many typographical and grammatical problems, the story is engaging. If you ever wondered how the sports books set the lines or what the lifestyle of the full-time "professional" sports bettor is, this book is illuminating. Interestingly, Millman predicts the imminent demise of the Vegas sports book 14 years ago, but today the business seems to be as strong as ever. A fun read.

I found it interesting to read this "behind the curtain" book about sports betting. As a fan of Chad Millman's podcast, I enjoyed reading the book that had such a significant impact on his future. Also, this introduced me to some of his guests on the podcast and provided background information on them. It also provides some interesting tales of the transition of sports betting from its early days to the more corporate set up today and discusses the impact of the internet on sports betting. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would love to read a sequel that updated where some of the people are today and the changes in the more than a decade since the book was written.

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