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SPORTS, 1D

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Wanna BET?

Ohio's gambling addiction rises as options soar

Stephanie Warsmith and Amanda Garrett
Akron Beacon Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

A Northeast Ohio man was playing blackjack at a Florida casino when his phone rang. • It was a friend who had nudged him into Gamblers Anonymous two years before. • When the Ohio man answered — with the ding, ding, ding of slot machines echoing behind him — his friend didn't yell, nag or try to shame him. • Instead, he asked a simple question: Are you having fun? • The man was taken aback. • He thought about the money he owed, which was now in the six figures. He thought of the high interest rates on his credit cards, the people he stole from to pay his bets and the stress of it all. **See GAMBLING, Page 6A**

Millions in revenue being net from betting, but at what cost?

Charita M. Goshay Canton Repository | USA TODAY NETWORK

Sports betting is big business in the Buckeye State. Ohio's sports gaming market surpassed \$10.3 billion in total wagers in 2025, just two years after sports betting became legal in the state, according to the Ohio Casino Control Commission. That's a 15.6% increase from the previous year, when \$8.9 billion was wagered. Ohio has risen to become the fourth biggest sports betting market by revenue, trailing only New York, Illinois and New Jersey, according to the American Gaming Association. Online platforms dominate, with FanDuel handling \$3.4 billion in total wagers in Ohio last year and DraftKings \$3.3 billion. The sports betting industry has generated millions of tax dollars for the state, primarily benefiting Ohio's K-12 schools. But questions remain about how big the economic win really is and whether the tax windfall is worth the societal risks

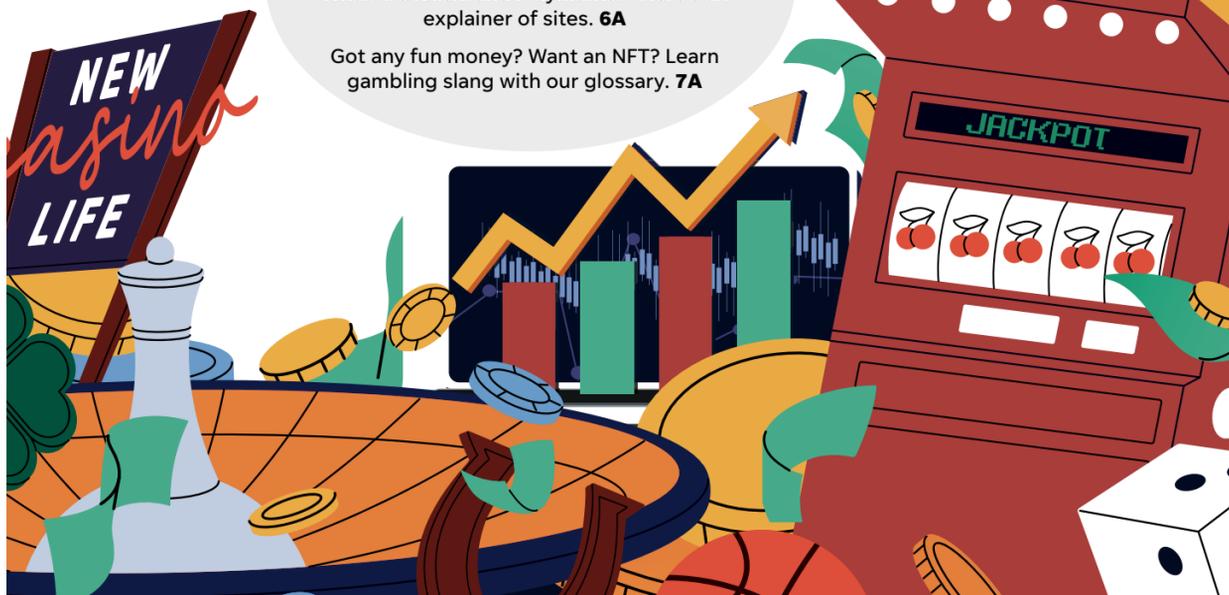
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MORE COVERAGE INSIDE

Resources that can help you if you have a problem with gambling. **6A**

What are Kalshi and Polymarket? Here's an explainer of sites. **6A**

Got any fun money? Want an NFT? Learn gambling slang with our glossary. **7A**



ANALYSIS

Iran war provides boost to Netanyahu

But Trump, Gulf states now face spiraling risks

Samia Nakhoul and Rami Ayyub
REUTERS

DUBAI — If the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran ended tomorrow, one verdict is already clear: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would walk away stronger, while President Donald Trump would be left to manage the shock to global markets and to Gulf allies who have borne the heaviest costs.

For Netanyahu, analysts say, the war has redrawn Israel's political map on his terms, pivoting attention away from Gaza and toward Iran, where national consensus is strongest and his security and economic credentials resonate most.

For Trump, it has done the reverse: trapping him in a conflict with no clear exit, exposing his Gulf Arab allies to spiraling risks, and undercutting the economic storyline that powered his return to office.

"There is a clear winner and a clear loser," said Aaron David Miller, a former U.S. Middle East negotiator. "Netanyahu is by far the key winner. He has demonstrated Israel's military competence. The Gulf states are by far the biggest losers."

For Trump, Miller said, there is no off-ramp that would allow him to declare victory and walk away.

Trump, who demanded Iran's

See IRAN WAR, Page 4A

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