



# Sports Betting and Bookmaking: An American History

*Arne K. Lang*

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Horse racing in America dates back to the colonial era when street races were a common occurrence. The commercialization of horse racing produced a sport that would briefly surpass all others in popularity, with annual races such as the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Stakes growing to rank among America's most celebrated sporting events. From the very onset, horse racing and gambling were intertwined. As the popularity of racing and betting grew, so, too, did the controversies and corruption. Yet, despite the best efforts of social reformers, bookmakers stubbornly plied their trade, adapting and evolving as horse racing gave way to team sports as the backbone of their business.

In *Sports Betting and Bookmaking: An American History*, Arne K. Lang provides a sweeping overview of legal and illegal sports and race betting in the United States, from the first thoroughbred meet at Saratoga in 1863 through the modern day. The cultural war between bookmakers and their adversaries is a recurring theme, as bookmakers were often forced into the shadows during times of social reform, only to bloom anew when the time was ripe. While much of bookmaking's history takes place in New York, other locales such as Chicago, Las Vegas, and Atlantic City—not to mention Cyberspace—are also discussed in this volume.

A comprehensive exploration of the evolution of bookmaking—including the legal developments and technological advancements that have taken place over the years—*Sports Betting and Bookmaking* is a fascinating read. This informative and engaging book will be of interest to anyone wanting to learn more about America's long history with gambling on horse racing and team sports.

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