

UNL police monitor, investigate gambling

By Michael Hooper
Senior Reporter

UNL police are investigating and monitoring gambling at UNL, but declined to say what methods are being used.

During the football season the police are likely to encounter more information to develop cases, Lt. Joe Wehner said.

Last December, 11 UNL students were arrested for first-offense promotion of gambling. The arrests, the result of a 14-month investigation, were prompted by a number of reports that students were becoming financially desperate because of gambling, Wehner said in a Daily Nebraskan article last January.

According to reports, a fraternity president complained of 20 thefts in 45 days. He attributed these thefts to students' efforts to pay gambling debts, the article said.

Police also were told that students sold their cars and other property to pay off debts.

Police collected tips and other information over a long period of time," Wehner said in the article.

After the arrests police uncovered evidence that one of the arrested students had been in contact with "a major gambling figure" in Omaha. Although the arrested students may have known each other, Wehner said in the article that they were not part of an organized network of gamblers. Any connection between the students and professional gamblers was indirect and remote, he said.

The students collectively handled \$52,000 a week in bets, the article said.

Typical bets ranged from \$100 to \$200, the article said, but the amounts handled weekly varied widely for each student.

UNL police estimated between 500 to 1,000 of UNL's 24,000 student population are involved with sports betting, the article said.

Wehner said students arrested for promotion of gambling are turned over to the Lancaster County District Court.

First-degree promotion of gambling is when a person accepts one or more bets totaling \$1,000 or more. Second-degree is when a person accepts one or more bets totaling less than \$1,000.

Jan Sharp, deputy county attorney, said first-degree, first-time offenders can be put in jail for up to one year, pay up to \$1,000 or a combination of both. Last year offenders had to pay fines plus court costs.

Second-degree offenders can be imprisoned for up to six months, pay up to \$1,000, or a combination of both. One student last year had to pay \$250 plus court costs for second-degree promotion of gambling.

Lt. Ken Cauble said the police are trying to alleviate the gambling problems through presentations and referrals, such as to Gamblers Anonymous or the Health Center before gamblers hit the judicial process. In other words, he said, before they get arrested.

One of Cauble's jobs as a member of the Gambling Awareness Committee is to communicate the legal aspects of gambling with university students and staff.

An interactive television course, Contemporary Programs of Adult and Continuing Education, will meet on Fridays from 4 to 6:30 p.m. instead of Thursdays as previously scheduled.

The course, taught by Mary Jane Even, UNL associate professor of adult and continuing education, is for graduate students and students in adult education and for doctoral students in

other programs.

The class will meet in Bancroft 242.

For more information or to enroll in the course, contact Even at 472-3853.

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