



SECRET BETTING CLUB

US SPORTS TIPSTER REPORTS

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Welcome to the very first edition of the *Secret Betting Club's* US Sports Tipster Reports.

I have to admit to being very excited when Pete first asked me if I'd like to be involved in producing a magazine dedicated to US Sports betting. Not only did it present a stimulating challenge, I knew that the research involved in ensuring a high quality product would lead directly to a boost in my own gambling output. At the time, I knew very little about US Sports other than the fact that there seemed to be an interminable number of adverts during every NFL, NBA or MLB game I happened to catch on television. But the potential that exists in betting on US sports was something that I had been aware of for quite some time. I knew that if I could get to understand US sports betting, and find good, honest tipsters, then it would add a new dimension to my betting portfolio.

Having progressed in my journey as a semi-professional sports bettor I had reached the point that I'm sure so many of you will be familiar with: frustrated by the low staking limits imposed by European based bookmakers, and struggling to find the necessary room to allow a betting operation to grow and develop. Sure, I could use the likes of Pinnacle and SBOBet to get bigger stakes into the football markets, but I was mindful of the fact that for a betting portfolio to be properly balanced, it needs diversity. I didn't want to put all my eggs into one football shaped betting basket.

What I needed were strong, non-football related markets. Markets that offer high levels of liquidity, which are serviced by bookmakers that allow a good sized bet and don't impose ridiculous staking limits or even worse, close accounts completely, at the first sign of someone looking as if they might have an inkling about what they are doing. And if I was to be indulged by creating the perfect scenario modelled within an ideal world, I would ask for markets that were sturdy enough to prevent the odds from crashing on a bet issued by a good, profitable tipster service.

And that is what US Sports has to offer. The NFL American Football betting markets, along with those of the Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association and National Hockey League, tick all of the right boxes. They are massive markets which can each stand a decent bet. But that's not all. American Sports are getting more and more exposure now on British television – Sky cover the NFL thoroughly, and BT Sport televise a lot of MLB and NBA games through the season. It's no coincidence that bet broker Sportmarket Pro have recently added baseball and American Football lines to their service offering (they already covered the NBA). Without doubt, American sports are becoming more and more popular with gamblers based on this side of the Atlantic.

What's more, there are thousands of US-based tipping services offering their expertise, so if we can only find the best ones to use, then we're in betting clover! The trouble is, many of them are complete scams. The unregulated US Sports betting service world really is like the Wild West! It appears that tipsters can claim to be 'verified' even when, patently, they are not; not to our standards of expectation anyway. You can read about the problems surrounding the process of choosing which US Sports tipsters to follow, what pitfalls to look out for and how to make more educated decisions in the article on Page 5, 'The USA Tipster Wild West'.

One service we can trust is George Dempsey's 'NBA Expert' offering. George provided members with impressive profits following the launch of his service midway through last season, and when it comes to the NBA, I'd hazard a guess that there aren't too many people who know more than our George. So for those of you who perhaps could do with brushing up on their basketball knowledge in time for the season just started, George's article on Page 28, 'How To Bet on NBA - Not Just Orange Balls and Tight Clothing', will prove a very worthwhile read, I'm sure.

Of course, an SBC magazine wouldn't be an SBC magazine without a couple of in-depth, analytical subscription service reviews. We put the Procomputergambler MLB service under the microscope and our findings look like they could lead to strong profits being made through each MLB season (Page 7). We also have a detailed look at the record of the same service's NFL 'Raw Numbers' output on Page 17, with some similarly interesting findings. Finally we have the lowdown on the NBA tipster currently working as part of the BetAdvisor stable, Dmitry Lebedev, and have found a way for followers to increase their ROI significantly when following this profitable tipster's picks (Page 22).

So there we have it...our first US Sports betting magazine. As we move forward, we would very much like to tailor the content to what it is you want to read about. So please, do let us know about your experiences with US tipsters, your insights into US Sports/betting in general, and suggestions on what you would like us to cover in future. You can email me directly at rowan@secretbettingclub.com.

I hope you enjoy reading this first edition as much as I did putting it together.

Until next time,

Rowan Day

Folk interested in finding good, reliable tipsters, and who are based in the UK or Europe, really don't know how lucky they are! When trying to find out which are the best betting services to follow, they have the SBC to do the dirty and expensive work for them. In an unregulated industry, it is good to have somebody to go to that you can trust to be truly independent and who will tell you what a service is *really* like; someone who doesn't run affiliate schemes that compromise their neutrality or have any other vested interest in pushing customers towards a particular tipster.

Without an independent body to trial, follow, and report back on the hundreds of betting services in the market, then an individual could very easily waste thousands of pounds, euros or dollars on the ultimately futile exercise of trying to separate the wheat of the tipping world from the chaff. It is not uncommon to hear stories from those who have tried to do just this and who end up disillusioned by their experiences and seriously out of pocket. SBC members however, are warned about the scammers and charlatans, and are directed towards the honest and talented tipsters who work incredibly hard to establish an edge over the bookmakers and make their subscribers good profits. There are one or two other reliable proofing sites on the web too, and to those that take their betting as a means of serious investment, these resources are a godsend.

Casting our eyes across the Atlantic, our initial impression has been that the US tipster market is an absolute minefield, full of traps and pitfalls that are so easy for the unwary to fall into. Snazzy websites for services that only just fall short of claiming divine intervention when it comes to making their picks, so good are they, dominate the 'Capper' landscape. As an example, one service which claims to provide to the public the picks of the infamous, internationally focused Omega Betting Syndicate (with offices in Macau, Las Vegas, Madrid and Moscow), is called BettingJesus! Perhaps this service's claims are true. Perhaps members do enjoy a 70% win rate with their bets. And perhaps this really is the only service anyone could ever possibly need to make massive piles of moolah, but it sure would be nice if there was an independently monitored and verified record of their picks that could be examined prior to handing over \$299 (about £185) for just 30 days' worth of NFL picks, wouldn't it? Or even some sort of record and break down of their selections on their website possibly?

Hang on a minute, though. Looking at the BettingJesus website, it does say that they have earned an "A+" rating with the, "#1 Sports Monitoring service Cappertek, which monitors 2,583 services", and that, "only six services have earned the rating A+". As it happens, another service I have come across, Pucking Hockey (a service that has had mixed reviews in our forum over the past months), has a "Verified by Cappertek" badge adorning their site too.

So is Cappertek the body that keeps the US tipster industry in line then, providing 'Verified' status only to those cappers that have proven themselves?

Sadly, the answer is no, Cappertek is not. It soon became apparent when browsing over the Cappertek website that this is no independent, neutrally positioned organisation. This is a company that helps tipsters to market their wares, that promises to drive traffic to a tipster's website and even design that website, all for a fee of course. It is more accurate to label Cappertek as a 'Directory' of tipping services, and the rating it assigns to each tipster seems to be largely - and possibly exclusively - dependent upon the comments made about the capper left by customers on the Cappertek site. Get enough positive comments, and up the rating will go; a few negative observations, and presumably the level of rating shifts down a notch or two. Call me a cynic, but a dodgy tipster with a few mates could easily gain a good rating on this site, simply by buying those mates a beer or two and asking them to do him a favour! There are other things I found difficult to reconcile with the notion of Cappertek being an independent body, and these are:

- Pucking Hockey has an “A” rating, despite there being no picks registered with Cappertek over the past 12 months (at least).
- For \$600/month (the ‘Gold’ package), Cappertek will place the listing of a tipster at the top of their Directory and provide links to this tipster from the pages/listings of others.
- Cappertek will develop a tipster’s web page, design a logo, and assist in other marketing exercises aimed at maximising exposure of that capper to potential customers.
- The provision of a step by step guide as to how a tipster can become an officially “Verified Handicapper”, which subsequently allows them to use a badge to say they’re verified on their website. This is the one that you can see on the Pucking Hockey site...



We’re not saying that Pucking Hockey or Cappertek are scammers. We intend to properly review Pucking Hockey and their sister service Esquire Picks (which specialises in American Football) in future editions of our magazine before drawing any conclusions, either good or bad. Cappertek simply came to be under our scrutiny due to the high profile nature of their ‘monitoring’ service.

We are however, making the point that to European based sports betting investors, when it comes to the US tipping world, not all is necessarily as it might seem at first glance. Our advice is that if you’re looking at US Sports services, or at the numerous ‘sports monitors’ that seemingly verify the thousands of services trying to attract your attention, then tread very carefully. The best thing to do is to let us here at the SBC do the digging for you. That way, you can be confident that when you do subscribe to a US-based service, all is as it claims to be.

On that note, if there are any specific services that you either have experience of (good or bad), or that you have seen on the web and would like us to examine more closely for you, please do get in touch. Email me at the usual address, rowan@secretbettingclub.com.

Service Name: Procomputergambler	Sports Covered: MLB, NFL, NHL, NBA, NCAAF, CFL
Website: http://www.procomputergambler.com/	Bet Frequency: MLB Raw Numbers: c.600/season. Email picks: c.500-550/season.
Email: herbshackpicks@gmail.com	Pricing: \$40/month (approx.. £24.50/month)
Bet Delivery: Email; raw numbers accessed via website	SBC Discount: \$25/month (approx. £15.50/month) available only via this link

Service In Brief: High volume US Sports tipping specialist covering Baseball (MLB), American Football (NFL, College, and Canadian), Basketball (NBA, college basketball and WNBA), and Ice Hockey (NHL).

This review concentrates exclusively on Procomputergambler's (PCG's) picks in Major League Baseball. We intend that the service's performance in the other sports will be similarly scrutinized in future editions of the US Sports Magazine. We've looked at the MLB offering first, simply because this is the sport for which we have the most complete and relevant set of data to analyze.

Service in Detail: As a basis for their selections, PCG uses large scale data sets and statistical modelling which produce 'Raw Numbers' for each and every MLB game. The Raw Numbers highlight any possible edge that exists within each match, whether that be on the Moneyline, Spread (i.e. Handicap), or on the Totals line (i.e. number of points scored).

It is to the Raw Numbers that Tom, the service operator, will add his own knowledge of the sport to whittle down the Raw Number bets to produce his 'Email Picks', which theoretically represent the strongest bets highlighted by the data. Tom will take into account such considerations as injuries, the weather, player/coach/team trends, and where the weight of public money is going. This last factor has a significant guiding influence on what is primarily a contrarian approach to betting which Tom strongly advocates as a way of finding value in the markets.

In addition to Tom's knowledge, the Email Picks are also derived from the application of the rules of a series of 100+ systems, each of which are based on several parameters and are proven over several seasons of data, each with good sample sizes.

If living in the UK, Tom's emails will hit your inboxes between 2.00pm and 6.00pm each day. Here is an example of what is sent:

7.6.2014 Selections for Sunday

Pro Computer Gambler x



The Computer <herbshackpicks@gmail.com>

6 Jul ☆

to bcc: me

MLB DAILY RAW NUMBERS

Game	Score	Status	Pick	Amount
Miami St. Louis	-	2:15 PM ET	Under 8	1.00
Toronto Oakland	-	4:05 PM ET	Oakland -1 +101 (Top Play)	1.20
San Francisco San Diego	-	4:10 PM ET	San Francisco +111	1.00

Raw total numbers are 77-46 +28.7 units this season
Unders are 35-16 +18.2 units...

*The Oakland Athletics are [28-4 \(87.5%, +22.41 units, +49.1% roi\) SU and +58% roi RL](#) as -130 to -175 home favorites facing plus.500 teams under Bob Melvin.

Good luck,
Tom

As you would expect from a Stateside-based capper, the American odds format is used. We can see from this email that San Francisco are to be backed on the Moneyline at odds of +111 (or 2.11 in European decimal format), that Oakland are to be backed at -1 on the spread (handicap) against Toronto at +101 (2.01), and that we're backing Under 8 total points in the Miami/St Louis match up. No odds are given for the Totals bets, but the main line is taken each time by Tom and the odds average 1.95.

The bets that Tom feels are the strongest are labelled 'Top Play' and as can be seen from this sample email, are often supported with a larger stake than the other picks.

Another thing to note from the email is the link to the details of any system relevant to the day's picks. Clicking on this link will take you to the database containing all data for that system including historical performance.

If it is the Raw Numbers that interest the subscriber to PCG more, then gaining access to these couldn't be easier. A simple click on the link 'MLB DAILY RAW NUMBERS' will take you to the relevant page of the PCG website, whereupon it is a simple task of inputting the date into the search box to bring up all the relevant information for the day's games.

The Raw Numbers are separated into Moneyline picks and Totals picks. Here's how the screen looks for the Raw Numbers relating to the Moneyline:

MLB Odds + 2014 Raw Numbers

Show entries Search:

Date	ROT	Team	\$Line	Starter	p:SUM	Type	Result	SUM
20140706	951	Brewers	115	Gallardo	0.66			-2
20140706	952	Reds	-125	Latos	-0.66			2
20140706	953	Cubs	150	Arrieta	0.17			-1
20140706	954	Nationals	-163	Zimmermann	-0.17			1
20140706	955	D-Backs	146	Miley	-0.34			2
20140706	956	Braves	-159	Wood	0.34			-2
20140706	957	Phillies	140	Burnett	-0.02			-4
20140706	958	Pirates	-152	Locke	0.02			4
20140706	959	Marlins	100	Alvarez	-0.85			4
20140706	960	Cardinals	-108	Gonzales	0.85			-4
20140706	961	Giants	111	Lincecum	1.42	Basic	Won	2

Showing 1 to 11 of 30 entries (filtered from 4,487 total entries) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

So we can see that the San Francisco Giants are a Raw Numbers pick on the Moneyline at odds of 2.11, which as we saw, was also an Email Pick.

There are some other variables detailed on the screen that require an explanation.

- **p:SUM** – a power, or value rating, where the larger the number (positive) indicates greater value on that selection.
- **Type** – blank for lower ratings (no bet), and populated as follows for higher ratings/possible bets; 'Basic' if p-statistic is in the range 1.22 to 2.44, 'Medium' if p-statistic is in the range 2.44 to 3.66, and 'Strong' if p-statistic is 3.66 or over.
- **SUM** – the result, e.g. San Francisco Giants won by/covered a spread of 2 runs.

A similar table is produced for the Raw Numbers totals:

MLB Odds + 2014 Raw Total Numbers

Show 12 entries Search:

Date	ROT	Team	O/U	Starter	p:OUm	Type	Result	(OUM)
20140706	951	Brewers	7.5	Gallardo	-0.22			-1.5
20140706	952	Reds	7.5	Latos	-0.22			-1.5
20140706	953	Cubs	7	Arrieta	-0.23			-4
20140706	954	Nationals	7	Zimmermann	-0.23			-4
20140706	955	D-Backs	7	Miley	0.00			-3
20140706	956	Braves	7	Wood	0.00			-3
20140706	957	Phillies	7.5	Burnett	-0.09			0.5
20140706	958	Pirates	7.5	Locke	-0.09			0.5
20140706	959	Marlins	8	Alvarez	-0.61			4
20140706	960	Cardinals	8	Gonzales	-0.61	U-Basic	Lost	4
20140706	961	Giants	6.5	Lincecum	-0.10			1.5
20140706	962	Padres	6.5	Hahn	-0.10			1.5

Showing 1 to 12 of 30 entries (filtered from 4,488 total entries) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

Again, some variables that you can see in the table need to be explained.

- A positive/negative **p:OUm** indicates an Over or Under bet respectively.
- **Type** is categorised in similar fashion to the other raw numbers, with an additional prefix (O or U) to indicate Over or Under the line. The strength of the bets is determined thus: 'Basic' if p-statistic is in range 0.59 to 0.88, 'Medium' if p-statistic is in range 0.89 to 1.17, and 'Strong' if p-statistic is 1.18 or over.
- **(OUM)** relates to the result, where a positive number indicates the total runs were over the O/U line, e.g. (OUM) = 4 for Cardinals line - the score was 8-4, i.e. Total of 12, meaning that the suggested bet (Under 8) lost.

Service Proofing: PCG have been proofing directly to the SBC since March of this year. This means that the entire 2014 MLB season to date has been proofed to us.

Tom also uses the US site Pickmonitor (<https://www.pickmonitor.com/>) to post his tips, although he does add some selections that aren't listed as PCG Email Picks, perhaps when trialing a new idea or angle that he wishes to explore further.

For the purposes of this review, we have used three sources of data:

1. The Raw Numbers provided by Tom directly, that covers the period 2006-2014.
2. The Email Picks since the beginning of this season, proofed to the SBC and followed by SBC member Henrik. This covers the period 1st April to 6th September.
3. Odds testing data for the Email Picks produced by our odds tester Edwin and covering the period between 10th July and 10th August.

RAW NUMBERS PERFORMANCE

Service Results: Let's start this section of the review by analyzing the performance of the Raw Number picks. The first table to look at is the annual performance of the selections **when backed to 1pt level stakes**.

MLB Daily Raw Numbers - Performance By Year

	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
2006	728	52.5%	25.3	3.5%	50.6%
2007	609	47.1%	-27.2	-4.5%	-54.4%
2008	642	51.9%	6.7	1.0%	13.5%
2009	640	54.4%	56.0	8.7%	112.0%
2010	696	56.8%	86.1	12.4%	172.2%
2011	588	53.7%	39.2	6.7%	78.3%
2012	578	52.4%	14.2	2.5%	28.4%
2013	591	55.5%	51.7	8.7%	103.3%
2014	341	60.6%	63.5	18.6%	126.9%
Total	5413	53.5%	315.4	5.8%	630.8%

Note: Analysis covers period from start of 2006 season to 23/7/14 - all bets 1 pt level stakes. Return on Capital (ROC) based on 50 point bank. Average odds = 2.03. Win-Lose-Push stats are 2895-2511-7

And by way of comparison, the next table provides details of how the Raw Numbers have performed if utilizing the US-favored **variable staking approach**. This method involves backing picks that are odds against with 1 point, and staking enough on odds on picks to *win* 1 point.

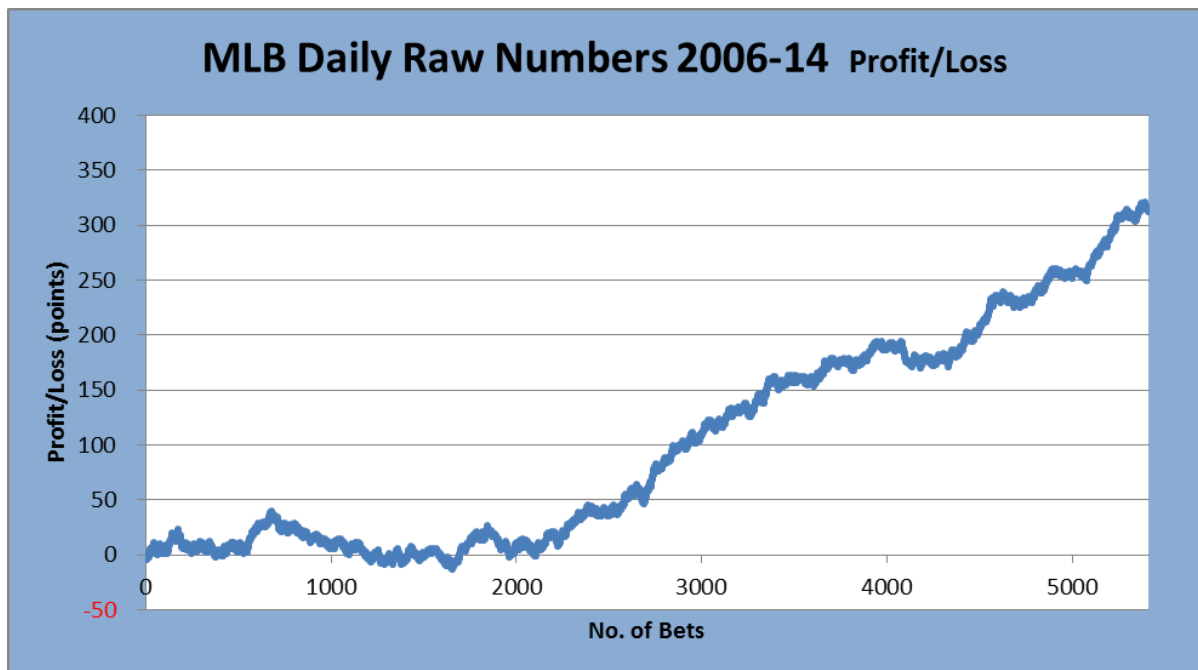
MLB Daily Raw Numbers - Performance By Year (Variable Stakes)

	Bets	Stake	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
2006	728	859.6	52.5%	36.6	4.3%	61.0%
2007	609	699.9	47.1%	-31.9	-4.6%	-53.2%
2008	642	770.0	51.9%	1.8	0.2%	3.0%
2009	640	764.9	54.4%	62.8	8.2%	104.7%
2010	696	844.6	56.8%	96.2	11.4%	160.4%
2011	588	671.7	53.7%	47.0	7.0%	78.3%
2012	578	711.3	52.4%	13.8	1.9%	22.9%
2013	591	689.0	55.5%	63.0	9.1%	105.0%
2014	341	386.5	60.6%	68.5	17.7%	114.1%
Total	5413	6397.5	53.5%	357.7	5.6%	596.2%

Note: Return on Capital (ROC) based on 60 point bank.

We can see that using the variable staking strategy produces a few extra points of profit, but the lower bank needed for level staking means that the ROC figures are superior if backing all bets to the same stake.

Here is the profit graph, showing since 2009, a very smooth upward curve.



We asked Tom for his thoughts about the marked improvement in the performance of the Raw Numbers picks since 2009, and here is what he said:

"We actually had a drought there where things were just straight lining from [2006] until around June in 2009. Straight lining like that is fine though. At a minimum, I want the raw numbers to give me an edge slightly above break even, and that's what they did. I was able to pull profit for myself in all of those seasons pinwheeling my bets off of the raw number leans and then using additional capping methods".

Tom went on to say:

"[The] raw numbers do evolve. Everything is constantly evolving. I consider my career and Pro Computer Gambler itself a constant work in progress. Add to that, things change in sports. New teams are added, recently a team changed divisions, a new wildcard rule was made, you had the whole steroid and post steroid eras thing. You have to constantly be reassessing what you're doing and really have a firm foundation in conservative statistical analysis."

What is clear from Tom's thoughts is that he is a capper who errs on the side of caution, who sets realistic targets for himself, and who accepts that sports and betting related to those sports is constantly changing and evolving. All of these things are beneficial to a tipster and make him more likely for him to be able to refine his methods and add longevity to his tipping career.

Service Results - Deeper Analysis: We've seen that the overall, top line performance of the Raw Numbers has been strong. Now let's drill further down into the data, starting with an analysis of the results between the two different bet types, the Moneyline and the Totals.

MLB Daily Raw Numbers - Bet Types

	Bets	Av Odds	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Moneyline	4419	2.04	52.7%	197.4	4.5%
Totals	994	1.95	57.3%	118.0	11.9%

It's quite clear that backing the Totals provides more bang for the buck than does supporting the Moneyline bets, but this is only half the story. Although the ROI for the Totals bets is 264% better than that produced on the Moneyline, in terms of sheer cash profit, the Moneyline bets

offer too much to discard, accounting as they do, for 62.5% of the total income if following all bets to level stakes.

As previously mentioned, each Raw Number pick is given a strength rating based on perceived levels of value; Basic, Medium and Strong. The following table breaks down the performance of each:

MLB Daily Raw Numbers - Strength Rating				
	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Basic	4488	53.3%	250.6	5.6%
Medium	728	52.2%	16.6	2.3%
Strong	197	63.2%	48.2	24.5%

It's notable that the 'Strong' bets are performing at an extremely elevated ROI, albeit from a relatively small sample of bets. However, the waters are muddied somewhat by the fact that the 'Basic' selections are outperforming their supposedly stronger 'Medium' rated selections in terms of the ROI figures produced. Examining this phenomenon more closely, by separating the Moneyline picks from the Totals produces some interesting results:

MLB Daily Raw Numbers - Strength Rating by Bet Type				
Moneyline	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Basic	3781	53.0%	197.9	5.2%
Medium	556	49.8%	-12.4	-2.2%
Strong	82	57.3%	11.9	14.5%
Totals				
Basic	707	55.0%	52.6	7.4%
Medium	172	59.9%	29.1	16.9%
Strong	115	67.4%	36.3	31.6%

It does appear that there is a clear correlation between the strength of the Total bet and the ROI levels produced. The situation of the Moneyline picks becomes no clearer, but a strategy that involves staking more on the Totals 'Strong' rated bets than on the 'Basic' will, judging by past performance, maximize profit.

'EMAIL PICKS' PERFORMANCE - TOM'S REFINED TIPS

Now let's turn to the performance of the email picks provided by Tom in the daily email that members receive. Please note that the analysis conducted is from a much smaller data sample than the Raw Numbers.

Here is the monthly breakdown of performance from the start of the 2014 season to early September:

MLB Email Picks 2014					
	Bets	Stake	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Apr-14	126	136.6	52.8%	16.0	11.7%
May-14	64	70.15	54.7%	8.9	12.6%
Jun-14	59	63.6	48.3%	0.2	0.4%
Jul-14	49	53.7	48.0%	-2.2	-4.1%
Aug-14	78	88.75	48.7%	3.3	3.7%
Sep-14	25	30.7	42.0%	-2.5	-8.1%
Total	401	443.5	50.4%	23.7	5.3%

Note: Analysis covers period from start of season (first pick was 1/4/14) to 6/9/14. Average odds = 2.10. Win-Lose-Push stats are 185-182-34

The 2014 season obviously started with a bang but performance since then has fallen somewhat, to the extent that a small loss has been made from June onwards. This is in contrast to the figures produced by the Raw Numbers, the rate of profit making from which has slowed over the same period, but which has kept the profit line moving in an upwards direction, as we can see from the following table that compares performance between the two sources of picks and backing to one point level stakes.

MLB Daily Raw Numbers vs Email Picks

	Daily Raw Numbers			Email Picks		
	Bets	P/L	ROI	Bets	P/L	ROI
Apr-14	98	33.1	33.8%	126	13.9	11.0%
May-14	67	17.3	25.9%	64	8.2	12.8%
Jun-14	93	4.2	4.5%	59	-0.2	-0.3%
Jul-14	83	8.8	10.6%	39	0.8	2.0%
Total	341	63.5	18.6%	288	22.7	7.9%

Note: Analysis covers period where have data from both (1/4/14 to 23/7/14) and uses level stakes.

A question you might be asking is how do the bets that qualify from both the Raw Numbers and Email picks perform? Would the PCG equivalent of the Football Investor Combo system reap rich dividends?

MLB Daily Raw Numbers vs Email Picks

	Daily Raw Numbers ONLY		Email Picks ONLY		Qualified for BOTH	
	Bets	P/L	Bets	P/L	Bets	P/L
Apr-14	37	17.7	64	1.2	61	15.4
May-14	20	4.4	18	-5.1	47	13.0
Jun-14	37	5.5	3	1.8	56	-1.3
Jul-14	45	5.9	1	-1.0	38	2.9
Total	139	33.5	86	-3.1	202	30.0

Note: Analysis covers period where have data from both (1/4/14 to 23/7/14) and uses level stakes.

If using 2014 as a guide for this strategy, then the answer would appear to be 'No'. However, the sample is very small and the drawing of definitive conclusions should be avoided at this stage. This may be an angle worth paying close attention to whilst constructing a larger sample of bets and is something that we can revisit further down the line.

We've seen how a level staking approach works very well if dealing with the Raw Numbers bets, but what of Tom's weighting of selections with his Email Picks? Well, the following tables suggest that Tom does a good job of weighing up the variables and working out where and when there is extra, residual value in his picks.

MLB Email Picks 2014 - Advised vs Level Stakes

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
Advised Stakes	401	443.5	23.7	5.3%
Level Stakes	401	401	17.9	4.5%

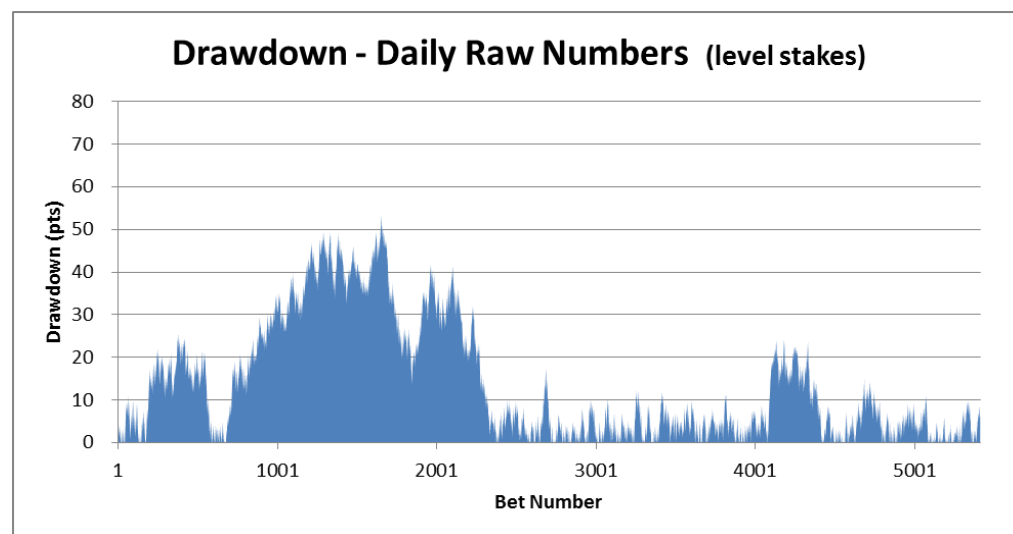
MLB Email Picks 2014 - Performance by Advised Stake

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
1 pt or less	254	248.6	-6.3	-2.5%
1.1 - 1.2 pts	74	88.7	7.1	8.1%
1.3pts or more	73	106.2	22.8	21.5%

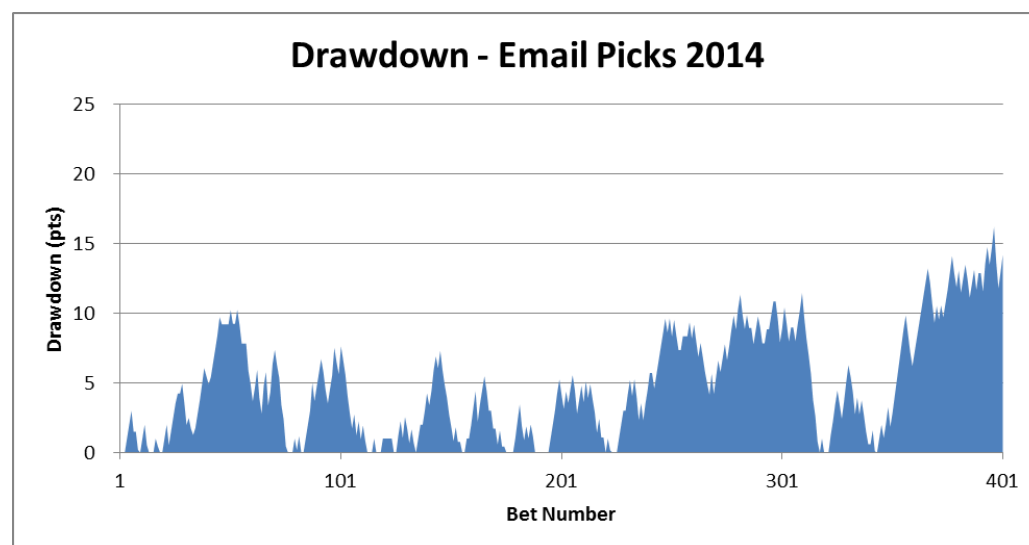
Note: Smaller stakes used at start of season. After that, bulk of bets were advised at 1 pt, 1.2 pts or 1.5 pts

Betting Bank: Looking at the strike rate, average odds, our simulation data and the historical drawdowns, we recommend a 50 point bank for following the Raw Numbers, if backing to our preferred method of one point level stakes. We must acknowledge that such a bank would have been bust back in the turbulent days of 2007-08, but over the last 3,000 bets, 50 points is seen to be a more than adequate size. The conclusion we draw is that the Raw Numbers have now evolved and have been refined, as Tom stated.

The historical drawdowns suffered when backing to level stakes can be seen in this table:



Compare with the drawdowns suffered by the Email Picks through the 2014 season:



Analysis Summary: It is clear that the Raw Numbers have performed at an outstandingly high level for six consecutive seasons, during which time a subscriber to the service would have struck over 3,400 bets. In the absence of proofed data for the email picks, other than for this current 2014 season, we would steer people who are interested in following PCG towards the MLB Raw

Numbers. Even at the average ROI of 5.8%, the high bet volume and the relatively modest size of bank required mean there is excellent bank growth potential.

The staking approach applied to the Email Picks has generally worked well, showcasing Tom's expertise in weighing up other factors.

The Totals bets have noticeably outperformed the Moneyline/Spread bets. Furthermore, whilst the small sample of 'Strong' bets has certainly performed well, the overall patterns are quite mixed – particularly for Moneyline ratings. The relationship between the ratings and profitability seems to be much clearer with the Totals bets.

Odds Availability: The results from our odds testing (conducted by SBC members Henrik and Edwin) are very encouraging.

MLB Email Picks 2014 - Odds Testing (Henrik)

	Bets	Stake	Av Odds	P/L	ROI
Advised Odds	401	443.5	2.105	23.65	5.9%
Achieved Odds	401	443.5	2.093	21.09	5.3%

Note: Based on data collected by Henrik - all picks over period 1/4/14 to 6/9/14. "95% of all odds are recorded 0-15 min after the bets are released. In some rare occasions when I have been busy or had no internet I have taken the odds later"

MLB Email Picks 2014 - Odds Testing

Odds Time	Bets	Stake	Av Odds	P/L	ROI
Advised	67	74.35	2.157	5.25	7.8%
After 0 Mins	67	74.35	2.154	5.30	7.9%
After 10 Mins	67	74.35	2.153	5.10	7.6%
After 30 Mins	67	74.35	2.148	4.90	7.3%
After 60 Mins	67	74.35	2.149	4.68	7.0%
Kick Off	67	74.35	2.174	6.48	9.7%

Note: Based on data collected by Edwin over period 10/7/14 to 10/8/14

The data from both of our testers suggests that the ROI is only marginally impacted when comparing the achieved odds at various time points from bet release with the advised odds (ie. a 0.6% hit on ROI from Henrik's larger sample of bets struck).

Service Practicality: PCG is a simple service to follow. Emails are sent each day within a consistent timeframe, and there is no need to rush to get bets on to secure the best prices as the odds hold up very well in what are particularly strong markets.

Service in Summary: There is a huge amount to like about the Procomputergambler MLB service. Our only concern, borne out of a natural caution when it comes to anything betting related, is that we would like to see more proofed Email Picks before drawing any definitive conclusions about this part of the package.

As far as the Raw Numbers are concerned, then we can be more confident as we have a much larger sample of bets to go on.

To conclude, what we like about PCG (MLB) is summed up as follows:

- Excellent ROC potential from the Raw Numbers with a high strike rate of winning bets.
- Bets are placed within extremely strong and liquid markets and prices hold up very well.
- Affordable service, especially when compared to flashier US based cappers charging significantly more \$/month (and note further discount available to SBC US Sports members).

- Tom is highly personable and provides a strong level of customer service.

Please note too that other US sports are covered by PCG, and seemingly profitably so. We will be looking to review the performance in detail of these other areas in future issues of our US Sports magazines, but even at this stage, we suggest that they add significant value to this service offering.

Service Ratings:

Returns (Raw Numbers): 4/5.

Risk: 2.5

Cost: 3.5

Transparency: 4

Odds Availability: 4

Suggested portfolio weighting: 3.5

Customer service: 3.5

Overall: 4

Patience: 6 months

Rating: Buy

Betting Bank: 50 points

STEADY GAINS FROM NFL ARM OF THE PROCOMPUTERGAMBLER STABLE

Service Name: Procomputergambler (NFL)	Sports Covered: NFL
Website: http://www.procomputergambler.com/	Bet Frequency: c.125-150 official picks per season; more if following the Raw Numbers.
Email: herbshackpicks@gmail.com	Pricing: £24.50/month for full PCG package
Bet Delivery: Email; raw numbers accessed via website.	SBC Discount: \$25/month (approx. £15.50/month), available only via this link

Service In Brief: Official NFL picks from this all-US Sports capper issued each week, plus access to the raw numbers associated for each and every NFL match played.

This review will concentrate more on the performance of the Raw Numbers as we have a series of questions to ask about the official picks and further analysis to execute before drawing definitive conclusions from the figures we have. We're currently working with Tom to provide the answers to our queries and will be able to report back fully in the next issue of the US Sports magazine. We emphasize that the questions relate to the format of some of the data and not over the veracity of the results. It is simply a matter of being able to convert the information we have into a format that UK/European based residents can easily understand. Tom has never had such requests before, but is helping to provide the answers we need as best he can.

To avoid the need for unnecessary repetition, it would benefit readers of this review, if they haven't already, to first read the PCG (MLB) review above to gain an understanding of the differences between the Raw Number data and the official picks provided by Tom.

Service in Detail: The NFL official picks are sent via email each Thursday during the NFL season. Here is a recent example:

Game	Score	Status	Pick	Amount
San Diego	-	8:25 PM ET	San Diego +9.5	1.00
Denver	-			
Game	Score	Status	Pick	Amount
Minnesota	-	1:00 PM ET	Minnesota +3*	2.00
Tampa Bay	-		(Top Play)	
Green Bay	-	8:30 PM ET	New Orleans -1.5	2.00
New Orleans	-		(Top Play)	

We can see that on this particular week Tom is advising we back San Diego with a 9.5 point start on the handicap against Denver, Minnesota with a 3 point head start on Tampa Bay, and New Orleans on the -1.5 handicap line.

The "Top Plays" are Tom's most confident picks, hence the increased stake for such selections.

Tom does like to include some rationale behind his NFL plays too. Here are his thoughts for the Minnesota/Tampa Bay game:

In Tampa Bay (Top Play):

We've got the Buccs ranked 30th in the league. The Minnesota Vikings aren't a ton better, but the difference is the schedule they've had.

Here's who the Vikings have played: New England must win for NE), New Orleans (must win for NOR), Green Bay, Detroit, Buffalo (who are better than people think).

Here's who the Buccs have played: Carolina, St. Louis, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New Orleans....mostly garbage teams and they're only 1-5. At least Minnesota got 2 wins.

Since 2003, teams get undervalued if they play two consecutive road games in the second one (or more): going [471-359-20 \(56.7%\) ATS](#). That is a huge thing to pinwheel selections off of or use as a filter. I definitely recommend keeping this one in your back pocket. Teams to consider or not bet against this weekend under this system include: Vikings, Dolphins, Seahawks, Texans. All with modest lines...

Also, the Vikings are off of what many people think is a disheveling loss. How can you pick yourself up after a 1 point loss? Well, it turns out that since 1990, road dogs off of a 1 point loss on the road are 15-15 SU and [20-10-0 \(66.7%\) ATS](#).

*The Tampa Bay Bucc's are just 14-29 (-5.56 ppg, 32.6%) SU and 13-29-1 (31%) ATS since 2009 at home.

*The Vikings are [12-0 ATS](#) as a dog the week after a road game in which they had at least three more minutes of possession time than their season-to-date average and committed fewer than five turnovers.

So, just as we saw with the MLB, we gain an insight into Tom's thinking and the rationale behind those plays he makes his official picks, plus access to the stats behind the systems Tom is utilizing to filter down the Raw Number data and produce his final bets.

The Raw Number data looks very similar to that produced for the MLB, the difference being that we are given the information for potential bets on the spread (as opposed to on the Moneyline) and for 'Totals', in the same table. Here is a section of the table relating to the matches making up Week 8 of the current NFL season.

Wk#	Date	Rot	Team	Final	ATSm	OUM	Line	OU	p:SUm	p:ATSm	p:OUM
Wk8-	20141026	276	New Orleans	-	-	-	-1	55.5	11.3	10.3	3.0
Wk8-	20141026	253	Minnesota	-	-	-	2.5	42	6.4	8.9	1.7
Wk8-	20141023	103	San Diego	21	-4.5	4.5	9.5	51.5	-0.7	8.8	11.6
Wk8-	20141026	261	Buffalo	-	-	-	3	40	2.6	5.6	3.6
Wk8-	20141026	269	Philadelphia	-	-	-	3	47.5	2.5	5.5	6.9
Wk8-	20141026	271	Indianapolis	-	-	-	-3	49	7.7	4.7	13.1
Wk8-	20141026	264	Jacksonville	-	-	-	6	43	-1.7	4.3	-7.8
Wk8-	20141026	258	Kansas City	-	-	-	-7	44.5	11.1	4.1	6.8

The variables we need to take particular notice of are:

- **p:ATSm** - Projected against the spread margin.
- **Line** - the relevant line to bet against (eg. if we are backing San Diego, we're backing them on the +9.5 handicap line, ie. with a 9.5 point start).
- **p:OUM** – projected Over/Under margin. A positive number in this column indicates an Over bet, a negative number an Under bet.
- **OU** – the Over/Under line we're backing against (eg. in the San Diego match the bet would be Over 51.5 total points scored).

We can see then, that it is the p:ATSm and p:OUM ratings that we can utilize to gauge whether the ratings provide an edge. As with the MLB ratings, the larger the number in these columns, the bigger the discrepancy between the model and the bookmaker forecasts.

Service Results: As previously stated, we are still working on collating an accurate record of official pick performance over past seasons.

We are able however, to look closely at the performance figures of the Raw Numbers, starting with the figures for bets against the spread. For example the calculation P: ATSm =0.1 to 3.0 includes those bets where the 'against the spread' margin was between 0.1 and 3.0. The 'P: ATSm' term certainly isn't the catchiest but after a while, it will make sense!

Here we have broken down each bet into size of margin against the spread, as explained above:

NFL Raw Numbers - by Spread Rating Bands				
	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
p:ATSm = 0.1 to 3.0	555	53.3%	23.3	4.2%
p:ATSm = 3.1 to 6.0	449	58.8%	66.7	14.9%
p:ATSm = 6.1 to 9.0	97	60.3%	17.3	17.9%
p:ATSm = 9.1+	15	66.7%	4.5	30.2%
Total	1116	56.3%	111.9	10.0%
p:ATSm NEGATIVE	1116	43.8%	-161.5	-14.5%

Note: Analysis covers last four full seasons - all bets 1 pt level stakes

What is immediately apparent is the basic edge that following the Raw Numbers provide. It is pleasing to see that the bigger the margin the bigger the ROI figure attained, which is as it should be.

So we now have a basis for moving forward with these figures and can conduct further analysis.

The first thing we can do is separate the bets into quartiles, each containing a roughly equal number of bets:

NFL Raw Numbers - by Spread Rating Quartiles				
	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Q1 p:ATSm = 0.1 to 1.4	270	53.0%	9.4	3.5%
Q2 p:ATSm = 1.5 to 3.0	285	53.7%	13.9	4.9%
Q3 p:ATSm = 3.1 to 4.4	275	58.4%	38.5	14.0%
Q4 p:ATSm = 4.5+	286	60.1%	50.0	17.5%
Total	1116	56.3%	111.9	10.0%
p:ATSm NEGATIVE	1116	43.8%	-161.5	-14.5%

Note: Analysis covers last four full seasons - all bets 1 pt level stakes. Positive rated teams divided into four groups of equal volume (quartiles)

By making such a simple split, it is easy to see that there is significant potential to increase ROI and ROC levels by taking all bets with an Against The Spread rating of 3.1+. The next table demonstrates the returns gained if adopting such a strategy over the course of the past four complete NFL seasons...

NFL Raw Numbers - Top Spread Rating Quartiles (Q3 and Q4) by Season

	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
2010	157	58.6%	22.7	14.5%	75.7%
2011	128	64.5%	33.2	25.9%	110.6%
2012	106	53.3%	4.4	4.1%	14.6%
2013	170	59.7%	28.3	16.6%	94.3%
Total	561	59.3%	88.6	15.8%	295.2%

Note: Analysis covers last four full seasons - all bets 1 pt level stakes. Return on Capital (ROC) based on 30 point bank. Win-Lose-Push stats are 320-224-17

Now let's repeat this procedure to examine the performance of the 'Totals' bets.

First, the top line results by size of margin:

NFL Raw Numbers - by Totals Rating Bands

	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
p:OUm = 0.1 to 2.0	436	53.3%	18.1	4.2%
p:OUm = 2.1 to 4.0	357	47.5%	-25.9	-7.3%
p:OMm = 4.1 to 6.0	225	55.3%	18.1	8.1%
p:OMm = 6.1+	98	64.3%	25.0	25.6%
Total	1116	52.8%	35.4	3.2%

Note: Analysis covers last four full seasons - all bets 1 pt level stakes

The performance isn't as strong as that we have seen for the Handicap bets, but there is still potential there, which becomes more apparent when we separate the bets into quartiles:

NFL Raw Numbers - by Totals Rating Quartiles

	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI
Q1 p:OUm = 0.1 to 1.2	278	52.9%	9.1	3.3%
Q2 p:OUm = 1.3 to 2.6	270	49.3%	-10.2	-3.8%
Q3 p:OMm = 2.7 to 4.4	293	51.2%	0.0	0.0%
Q4 p:OMm = 4.5+	275	58.0%	36.5	13.3%
Total	1116	52.8%	35.4	3.2%

Note: Analysis covers last four full seasons - all bets 1 pt level stakes. Matches divided into four groups of equal volume (quartiles) according to ratings

Whilst acknowledging that the sample size is a little small and that therefore it is impossible to draw any truly definitive conclusions, it appears that there is some considerable potential in the bets that fall into the highest quartile (Q4):

NFL Raw Numbers - Top Totals Rating Quartile (Q4) by Season

	Bets	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
2010	90	66.1%	26.2	29.1%	87.3%
2011	115	49.6%	-3.7	-3.2%	-12.2%
2012	40	56.3%	4.0	9.9%	13.2%
2013	30	68.3%	10.0	33.5%	33.5%
Total	275	58.0%	36.5	13.3%	121.7%

Betting Bank: We have used a flat 1 point staking approach when conducting our analysis, and using this method we recommend a 30 point bank for following the handicap bets, and 30 points for the Totals picks.

Odds Availability: Although there is no immediate rush to place the bets when the Raw Numbers are issued on the Thursday, we have noted incidences of lines moving prior to the games kicking off on the Sunday. We suggest therefore that if following the Raw Numbers, it is advisable not to wait until the day of the game before striking your bets.

Service Practicality: The NFL function of the Procomputergambler service is extremely easy to follow. Official picks are sent in one email, issued each Thursday at the same time that the Raw Numbers are published. The NFL markets are particularly strong and prices do not immediately collapse but tend to shorten over a period of time indicating that the model is adept at identifying good value.

Service In Summary: As we have already noted within the PCG (MLB) review, Tom runs a tight and efficient tipping ship. Whilst it is difficult for the NFL tips to have quite the same potential for high ROC returns as does the MLB - simply due to their being far fewer bets - the performance of the bets against the spread hold considerable potential if a few simple filters are applied.

We would like to see a larger sample of data for both the handicap and Totals picks before being completely committed in our recommendation for following the PCG (NFL) plays, but suffice to say we are impressed and encouraged by the potential they show.

Service Ratings:

Returns: 3/5.

Risk: 2.5

Cost: 3.5

Transparency: 3

Odds Availability: 3.5

Suggested portfolio weighting: 2

Customer service: 3.5

Overall: 2.5

Patience: 12 months

Rating: Watch

Betting Bank: 30 points for each of the Handicap and Totals bets.

Service Name: Dmitry Lebedev (Bet Advisor)	Sports Covered: Predominantly NBA basketball; some European basketball.
Website: www.betadvisor.com	Bet Frequency: During NBA season, c.50/month
Email: support@betadvisor.com	Pricing: £79/month
Bet Delivery: Email notification plus the BA website	SBC Discount: 15% discount available on all Bet Advisor services to all SBC members by using the code 'HYXTE5' when making your purchase.

Service In Brief: Dmitry Lebedev is a basketball specialist, tipping predominantly within the NBA. He is on the roster of tipsters at Bet Advisor and has been providing picks for Bet Advisor members since the 2011/12 season, making 1,255 selections up until the end of the 2013/14 season.

Service in Detail: Dmitry explains his personal approach to betting on basketball very nicely on the Bet Advisor website. In his own words:

"Most cappers are either stats cappers or situation cappers, but I try to combine the two systems. I believe that one can't ignore stats, but on the other hand, bookies usually have just as much stats as cappers, if not more, so we must look at stats, but look for situations to have advantage over bookies. Factors that are much harder for bookies to take in to account, setting the line (special revenge angle, huge match up advantage in certain position, coach advantage and so on)."

Certainly Dmitry has been able to hone his strategies over a period of years. He originally worked for the PriceForm tipping site where he went by the name of Divol, before becoming a part of the Bet Advisor stable when BA purchased the PriceForm site. In all, Dmitry has been betting on basketball for eight years and providing selections for BetAdvisor members since December 2011.

The majority of picks are played on the Asian Handicap lines but Over/Under bets are also popular (which cover both match totals and individual team totals), with the occasional Two Way - or Moneyline - selection making an appearance too.

Staking levels alter depending on how much value Lebedev perceives his selection to hold. The staking range runs at 20 point intervals from 20 points to 100, the most commonly advised being 60 points which accounts for 55% of the overall number of picks.

Here is an example of an email sent out to members containing the details of a selection. You can see that it states quite clearly which bookmaker is offering the best price, the stake, and the minimum acceptable price to take...

Details of the tip:

Tipster: [Dmitry Lebedev](#)

Event: [SAN ANTONIO SPURS vs OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER](#), Basketball, USA, NBA Playoffs

Date: [30th May 2014 at 3:00](#)

Time Left: [28h28'](#)

Type of bet: [Handicap](#)

Bet on: [OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER +4.00](#)

Best Odds: [2.01 \(Pinnacle Sports\)](#)

No bet under: [1.80](#)

Stake: [3 % bankroll \(60 units\)](#)

Service Proofing: Bet Advisor has been proofing all of their tipsters' selections to the SBC since inception. Please note that a small sample of 34 bets, issued during the 2010/11 season, are included in our analysis of results but were in fact proofed to the PriceForm site acquired by BetAdvisor.

Service Results: A full set of results for Dmitry Lebedev can be downloaded from the BetAdvisor site (<http://www.betadvisor.com/tipsters/basketball/dmitry-lebedev>). From this page it is also possible to see a breakdown of the results for the past month, the past three or six month period, or from the date tipping originally commenced.

The 1,255 bets advised have produced an overall ROI of 5.4%, equating to an ROC of 153.4% (based on our recommended 2,500 point bank) over the course of what is essentially three seasons of tips being issued (please note a break in tipping between December 2010 and November 2011).

Performance Summary - By Season

	Bets	Stake	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
10/11	34	2400	67.6%	686.0	28.6%	27.4%
11/12	305	16280	52.1%	484.6	3.0%	19.4%
12/13	531	28680	53.5%	2191.8	7.6%	87.7%
13/14	385	23760	50.4%	473.0	2.0%	18.9%
Total	1255	71120	52.6%	3835.4	5.4%	153.4%

Note: Analysis covers period from Sep 2010 to Jun 2014 (end of 13/14 season). No tips between December 2010 to November 2011.

An optimal strategy: Our intention in the US Sports betting magazines is to dig deeper than the top line results when reviewing any individual service. By doing so we may be able to identify areas of relative strength and weakness in a tipster and make suggestions as to how you as followers, may squeeze more value from your service subscriptions. So let's take a closer look at Dmitry Lebedev's figures and see if there are any areas which are stronger for him than others.

Looking at the 'Performance Summary' table, it is fair to say that Lebedev's top line figures are promising, without being outstanding. An average annualized ROC of 51% and an overall ROI of 5.4% is not to be sniffed at, but nor do these figures elevate Lebedev into the highest echelons of tipping services. Are there any ways in which we can obtain higher performance figures when following Lebedev's picks?

The first thing we can look at is a breakdown of the type of market Lebedev targets to see if any category of bet is notably stronger than another.

As we have already said, the bulk of Lebedev's picks utilize the Asian Handicap lines or the Over/Under line, with the less frequently used Moneyline making up the numbers. Here is a breakdown of performance achieved in each category:

Bet Types

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
Handicap	705	41680	2292.6	5.5%
Over / Under	470	25120	1382.4	5.5%
Two Way	80	4320	160.4	3.7%

Note: Percentages of total volume are Handicap 56%, Over / Under 37%, Two Way 6%

It appears that Lebedev is equally as strong across each bet type. Although the Two Way - or Moneyline - ROI figure is lower than that achieved for the Handicap and Over/Under picks, the small sample size of just 80 bets (or just 6% of total bet output) means that no firm conclusions can be drawn.

However, our analysis did reveal an angle that those subscribing to the Lebedev service might want to consider incorporating into the way they follow. Take a look at this table:

Performance by Advised Stake

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
20-40 pts	393	15400	-0.8	0.0%
60 pts	691	41460	1923.6	4.6%
80-100 pts	171	14260	1912.6	13.4%

Note: Stake of 60 points is most commonly advised (55% of all bets). The staking advice is clearly working well, with the lower stakes bets just breaking even and the rarer large staked bets highly profitable (14% of bets generate 50% of profits)

This is a very encouraging breakdown of results and the figures support the theory that Dmitry Lebedev has an obvious talent as a basketball tipster. We all know that to be a successful sports handicapper, the ability to identify value is an absolutely fundamental necessity. This table not only proves that Lebedev has that ability - as does the fact that advised staking produces an ROI of 5.4% compared to level staking which produces an ROI of 4.3% - but that he is able to stake his picks appropriately, ie. he increases the advised stake when he perceives a higher level of value to exist within an individual bet. Not only does this encourage a stronger belief in Lebedev's abilities, but it also provides an opportunity to increase the ROI levels achieved for those following. All we have to do is drop the lower staked (20 – 40 point bets).

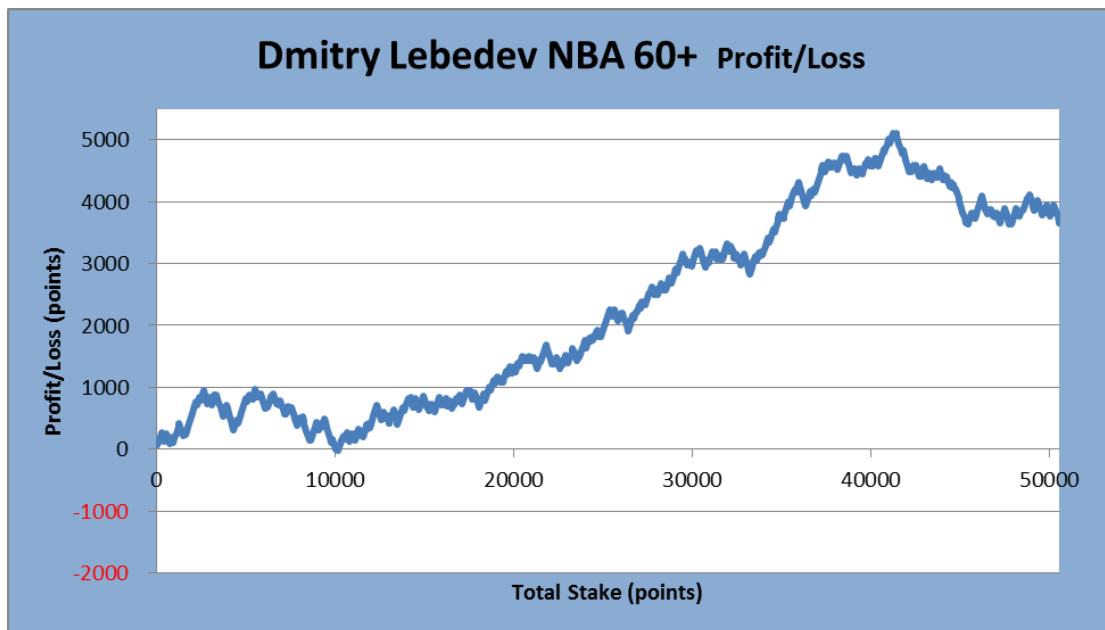
Performance Summary - By Season (NBA 60+ pts staked)

	Bets	Stake	Strike Rate	P/L	ROI	ROC
10/11	22	1560	63.6%	292.6	18.8%	11.7%
11/12	171	10900	51.5%	298.4	2.7%	11.9%
12/13	285	17920	57.9%	2658.8	14.8%	106.4%
13/14	308	20140	51.3%	406.6	2.0%	16.3%
Total	786	50520	54.1%	3656.4	7.2%	146.3%

Note: ROC based on 2500 point bank

We can see that the overall ROI figure achieved has risen from 5.4% to 7.2% simply by betting only those picks that carry a stake of 60 units or more.

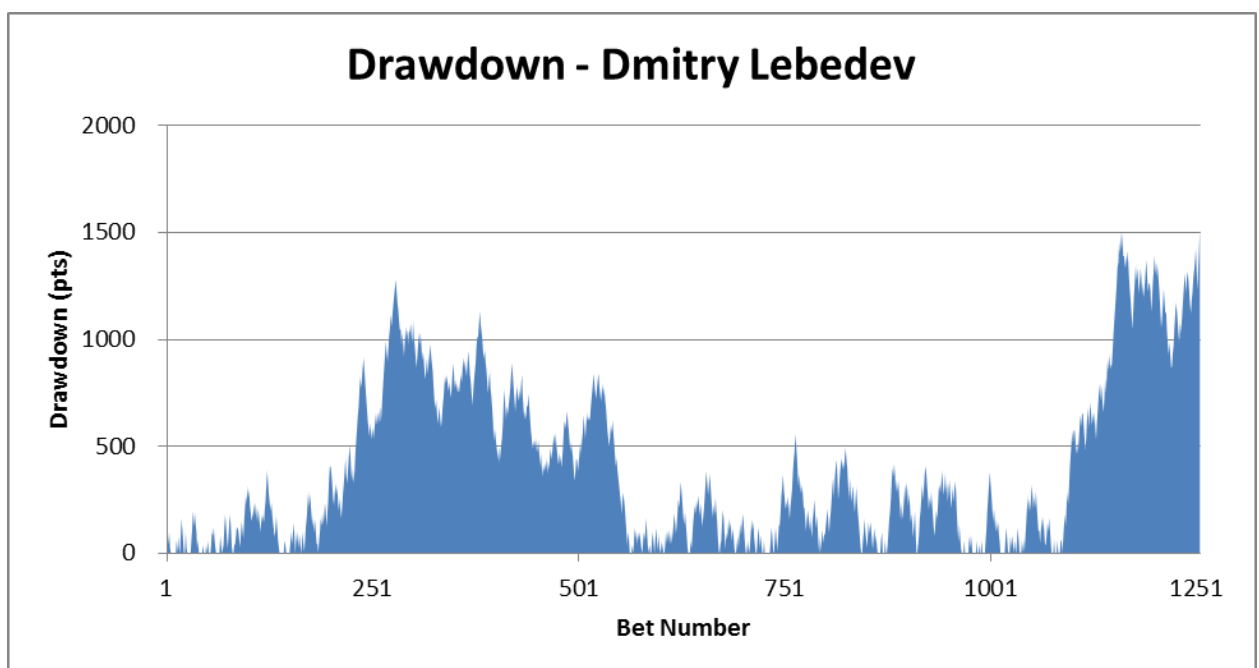
Here is the graph showing performance for these more heavily staked bets.



Before we get too excited about the increase in ROI levels we can achieve when following Dmitry Lebedev, it is worth noting that the ROC level has actually decreased a little from 153.4% if following all picks, down to 146.3% if adopting the more selective strategy. This is down to the fact that the largest drawdown suffered when following 60+ unit bets exclusively is 1,484 units, only marginally lower than the 1,504 units suffered if backing all picks. Such a small difference renders it difficult to justify using a smaller bank than the 2,500 units we recommend, even if being more selective in terms of which bets to put our money on. The conclusion we can draw at this stage therefore, is that if prepared to sacrifice a little ROC, we can significantly increase our ROI figures and lower the workload by placing fewer bets. Whether this is an attractive proposition is of course, down to the individual.

Betting Bank: Based on historical data and the results gleaned from our simulation models, we recommend a bank of 2,500 units.

We can see the drawdown periods of the Lebedev service here:



To date, the deepest drop from peak has been 1,504 units which also happens to be the most recent drawdown.

European Basketball Bets: 91% of Dmitry Lebedev's picks are taken from the US, so we can say with some confidence that he is a tipster who specialises in the NBA, but he does also provide some picks within the European basketball leagues and cup competitions. The sample of European based bets is as yet, far too small to allow any meaningful conclusions to be drawn from the stats. They essentially break even after just 110 picks.

Leagues Covered

	Bets	Stake	P/L	ROI
European Leagues/Cup	110	6500	2.8	0.0%
NBA Main Season	942	52840	3150.8	6.0%
NBA Playoffs	203	11780	681.8	5.8%

Note: Percentages of total volume are Europe 9%, NBA main season 75%, NBA play-offs (including one pre-season bet) 16%

Odds Availability and Service Practicality: The NBA markets are extremely strong and robust. It is not uncommon for prices on Lebedev's picks to contract by two or three ticks upon bet release, but it is our experience that the prices generally recover fairly quickly. It is unusual for the prices to shorten massively and indeed, it is usually a simple task to match the prices recommended in Lebedev's emails.

Followers of Lebedev are given a ten minute warning via email prior to bet release and picks are generally released at least nine hours prior to the start of the relevant game. There are odd occasions when perhaps not quite so much time is provided between bet issue and the start of the match, but at the least there has always been a four hour window within which followers can strike their bets.

Although most selections are released between midday and 8.00pm GMT, it is not unknown for picks to be sent outside of these times. Fortunately, with the NBA markets being strong, prices do hold up pretty well so it is no great disaster if unable to pounce as soon as the email is received. All bets are sent by email although details can also be found by logging into a personal account at the Bet Advisor website, where it is also possible to read Dmitry's pre-event analysis. After each game, Lebedev will send another email containing a post-event analysis for each match. This allows subscribers to see where things have gone right, or wrong, with their bets.

Subscribers to the Lebedev service can expect to receive approximately 10 picks each week through the NBA basketball season; naturally more through the regular season which runs from late October to mid-April, and then fewer during the play off season that covers April through to June.

Bookmakers Used: Unfortunately for UK-based followers, who will recently have had their SBO Bet, Pinnacle and 12Bet accounts closed (or likely to be soon closed) following those companies' reaction to changes in UK gaming legislation, the majority of Lebedev's picks through the last year have quoted the price at Pinnacle. However, most of the larger bet brokers provide access to these books.

The US firm 5Dimes is also used, particularly we have noticed, for the less mainstream type of bet, eg. First Half Team Totals. Historically a wider base of books were used and we are pleased for our European readers to see the shift in emphasis to Pinnacle which ought to mean that followers need not worry about getting on and to large limits too. 95% of bets last season were taken at Pinnacle or 5Dimes.

Advised Bookmakers		
	Bets	%
Pinnacle	767	61.1%
5 Dimes	160	12.7%
William Hill	96	7.6%
Paddy Power	37	2.9%
SBOBET	33	2.6%
10Bet	31	2.5%
12bet	22	1.8%
Centrebet	21	1.7%
Other	88	7.0%
Total	1255	

Service In Summary: There is an awful lot to admire about the Dmitry Lebedev service, not least of which is a longer term ROI of 5.4% (increasing to 7.2% via the implementation of a simple staking filter, as discussed above) within betting markets that are robust and which allow high limits. Certainly the track record so far boosts confidence in a service which is still in the process of recovering from the deepest drawdown it has suffered thus far.

We believe that Dmitry Lebedev has demonstrated an edge in NBA betting and the fact that his picks are provided within the framework of the BetAdvisor site means that the subscriber really has no concerns over the levels of customer service he or she can expect to receive. Concise analysis of each pick, plus a post-event review of the outcome of each bet means that the follower is able to get a 'feel' for the service which in our opinion, can help when negative variance hits and a period of poor results has to be endured.

At the price of £79 (€99/\$139) per month, this isn't a service for those playing to smaller stakes. With an average ROC per season around the 50% mark, a £2,000 bank (which would equate to an average stake of just under £50/bet) would render a profit of just £368 after fees if performing to historical levels. For the heavier bettor though, the relative ease with which it is possible to secure odds that equal or get very near to equaling those advised, plus the ability to get big stakes into the market, make Lebedev a potentially appealing prospect.

Overall then, we feel that Dmitry Lebedev is unlikely to be a standout performer within a portfolio. There is a lot to be said however, for a service that can offer steady and reliable growth. From what we have seen from Lebedev so far, this NBA specialist is capable of providing just that.

Service Ratings:

Returns: 2.5/5.

Risk: 2.5

Cost: 3

Transparency: 3.5

Odds Availability: 3.5

Suggested portfolio weighting: 3

Customer service: 4

Overall: 3

Patience: 6 months

Rating: Watch

Betting Bank: 2,500 points

HOW TO BET ON NBA – NOT JUST ORANGE BALLS AND TIGHT CLOTHING

AUTHOR: GEORGE DEMPSEY

LeBron James, Miami Heat, orange balls and beautiful ladies in tight clothing shaking their pom poms. If your knowledge of Basketball stops there, you may want to keep reading, for with over 1,200 games per season and roughly 50 games each week, the NBA is one of the best sports in the world to bet on.

This article will tell you how, but for now, let's start with the basics of this great sport so that you will understand exactly what you are betting on.

So, what do the letters 'NBA' stand for? 'NBA' stands for National Basketball Association, and since it was founded in 1946, the NBA has become the highest competitive level of basketball in the world. Originally founded as the Basketball Association of America, the league merged with its rivals, the National Basketball League, and it is the coming together of these two bodies that created the product that exists today.

RULES AND SCORING SYSTEM

The NBA can seem a complicated beast at first. There are many rules and regulations that can take a while to pick up, so we'd like to keep it simple and just tackle things at their most basic level. When you get your head around it all, it's actually a pretty simple sport. I'm sure that even those of you who know next to nothing about the sport will know that basketball is played between two teams on a court, so we'll get right into the important stuff.

Player Numbers: Plenty of you will know this already, but some of you won't – basketball is played by two teams that must have no more and no fewer than five players on the court at all times. There are no limits in terms of 'substitutions', as a player may leave and re-enter the court as many times as the coach wishes.

Substitutions: On top of that, there is no limit to how many players can be used from the bench. Unlike football where you may make up to a maximum of three substitutions during the game, in basketball the coach can use as many players as he can fit on the bench! Typically, teams keep things simple and don't travel with huge squads, but you can expect to see teams use at least 12 different players during a basketball game.

Game Time: Basketball play is split into four quarters of 12 minutes each, equaling a full game time of 48 minutes. Players receive a short break to take on water and discuss tactics at the end of the first and third quarters, and there is an extended half-time break after 24 minutes (two quarters) of play. Should the game still be tied after 48 minutes, the teams will continue to play in 'overtime' periods of five minutes apiece, until a winner is found. Typically, it will only take one overtime period to force a result, but they can be very tight and competitive, and on several occasions last season, teams were tied at scores of 125+ going into a third overtime period!

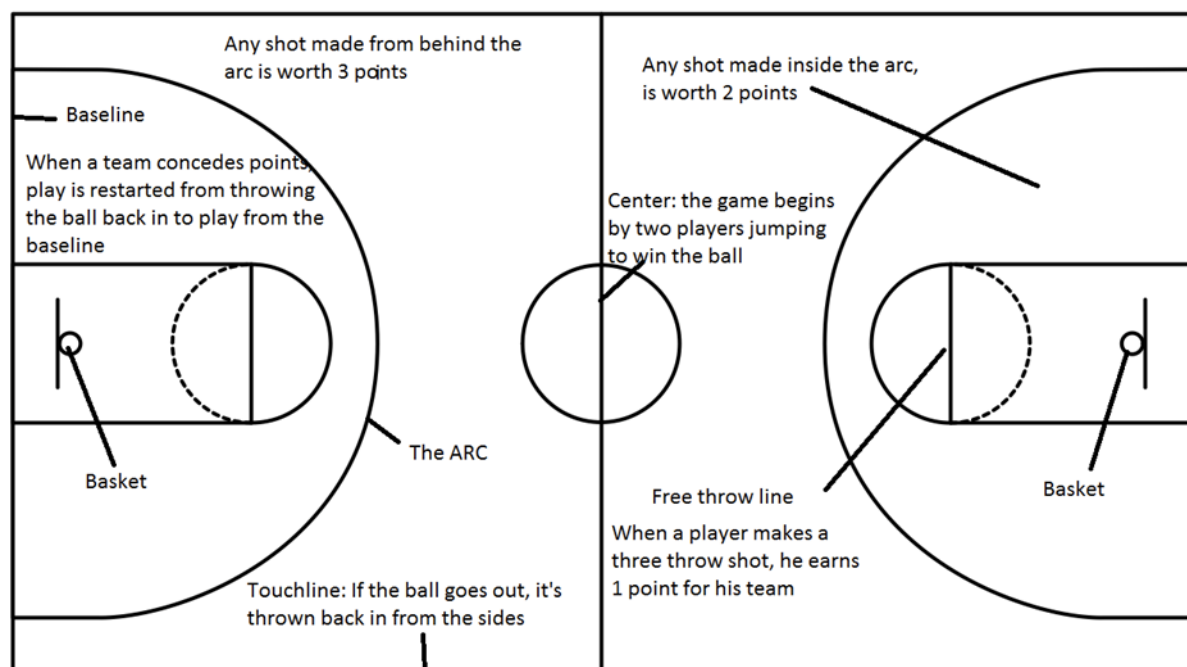
Timeouts: On top of the breaks at half time and at the end of each quarter, each team can opt to use something known as a 'timeout'. A timeout can be used to allow time for a player to recover from a minor injury, to talk tactics, or sometimes simply to allow the team to re-group and slow down the momentum of the opponent. A timeout can be called at any time by the coach, and each team has use of eight time outs during the match. Six of these last a full minute, and each team has one 20 second timeout allowed per half. There are specific rules as to how and when these can be used, but we won't complicate things for now.

On top of the optional timeouts, the NBA enforces mandatory timeouts that must be observed. Really, these are for no other reason than to give the sponsors time to fit their commercials in. Welcome to the commercialized world of US Sports!

Fouls and Free Throws: One other set of key rules of the game that we need to address before we move on to the subject of scoring, are those relating to fouls and the award of free throws. There is some leniency provided in that a team is allowed to commit a certain number of fouls before being punished. Each team is granted a limit of five fouls per quarter. Once a team has committed five fouls, for every subsequent foul the other team is granted what is known as a free throw. Basically, a free throw is like a penalty in football.

Breaking foul limits aside, there's another way for a team to get to the free throw line. If a player is deemed to have committed a foul whilst his opponent is in the act of shooting (e.g. raising his arms to shoot or perhaps jumping towards the basket) then the offended against team will automatically receive two free throws.

As well as a team limit on the number of fouls that can be committed prior to the award of free throws, there are also player limitations. Each player is allowed to commit a maximum of five fouls over the full 48 minute game. Should a player commit a sixth foul, he's kicked out of the game and not allowed to return. It's like a red card in football, but the suspension only applies to the rest of the game and not subsequent games.



The above diagram tells you what you need to know about a basketball court. Any shot made from inside the arc is worth two points and any shot from outside the arc is worth three. Each successful free throw is worth one point. The NBA scoring system starts and stops there, so it's all very simple. Naturally there's an overlap between scoring and betting, and we'll cover that when we talk about 'Totals' later on in the betting section, but typically you can expect to see between 180-210 points in an NBA game.

There are plenty of games that drop below the 180 point mark, and other games that fly past 210 points. It all depends on the pace of the game and the style (defensive or offensive) of the two teams competing, but between 180-210 points is a fairly common total in the NBA.

LEAGUE STRUCTURE

There are currently 30 teams participating in the league and each team play 82 games. Unlike other sports (football for example) teams do not compete in one home fixture and one away fixture against each of the other teams. The NBA schedule (fixture list) can seem complicated to the uninitiated, but we're going to break it down into its simplest form.



First, you need to know that the 30 NBA teams are divided equally into two separate leagues, known as 'conferences'. There are 15 teams in the Western Conference and 15 teams in the Eastern Conference. As their names suggest, the Western Conference includes those teams located in the west of America, whilst the Eastern Conference covers the east.

One of the fundamental reasons for splitting the NBA into two conferences like this is travelling distance. As we all know, America is a huge country. Travelling the length and breadth of the country day after day isn't a fair ask of our NBA athletes, so the NBA Conference and Scheduling structure means that each team will travel less and play more 'road' (away) games that are closer to home.

NBA SCHEDULE

One of the fun things about the NBA Schedule is that it stops for no man! Apart from a quick rest on Christmas Eve and during All-Star Weekend (we'll talk about this later!), the NBA action flows right through from October to the end of the playoffs in July. This includes five games back to back on Christmas Day that traditionally, are all televised live.

Despite the logical structure to the NBA, even travelling a quarter of the way across America can involve a lengthy 'plane journey', so each conference is separated further into three divisions. As illustrated in the graphic below, the Western Conference is split into the Northwest division, the Pacific, and the Southwest. As teams play more games against teams in their own division than against anyone else, this divisional structure is another measure used to cut down on excessive travelling for the players.



To help you further understand the NBA schedule and the role these divisions play, here is a basic breakdown of how a team's schedule (or fixture list) is put together.

Within each division, every team plays every other team four times. This accounts for 16 games.

Within each conference, every team will play four games against six teams that aren't in their division. This accounts for 24 games.

A team will then play the remaining four teams in their conference three times each. This accounts for 12 games.

Finally, a team will play everyone in the opposing conference twice. This accounts for 30 games. There are set systems designed by the NBA schedule compilers as to how and when teams will play each other, but we'd only be complicating things if we were to delve any deeper. Hopefully this gives you a basic understanding of how the NBA schedule works.

ALL STAR WEEKEND

If you're new to American Sports, then the concept of what is known as an 'All-Star Weekend' may be unfamiliar to you. So, what is it? Well, it's basically the best players in the league (as voted for by fellow players and fans) getting together for a weekend of fun and frolics on the court.

The showpiece event of the weekend is the All-Star Game. This consists of the best players from the Eastern Conference combining to face the best players from the Western Conference (as voted). There's no real reward other than some friendly bragging rights, but it's a well received break in the NBA season for the players, and it offers the fans the chance to see their everyday idols in a different light. The pre-cursor to the NBA All-Star Game is the 'Rookie' version. A 'Rookie' in US Sports is basically what you'd call an apprentice or a youth player in a UK sport such as football. The 'Rookies' are the future stars of the NBA and will be looking to impress on the big stage, in the hope that an NBA side takes a note of their talents. The weekend is made up of many fun events such as the slam dunk contest. The format is simple; the competing players attempt a set amount of slam dunks. The judges score the dunks on categories such as athleticism and style, and in short, it's a chance for the NBA's more athletic stars to show off and do something outrageous for the fans to get excited about.

If this is your first season watching the NBA, the three point contest is another event that you may enjoy. It does what it says on the tin. Now that you've read about the scoring system, you will know that any shot made from behind the arc is a 3 pointer. In the three point contest, each player competing gets to shoot five racks of five balls from different angles behind the arc. The first four on each rack are worth 1 point each, and the last ball is worth 2 points. The players with the most points advance until a winner is found. There are other events and goings on over the weekend too. They'll never really be relevant to our betting, but it's always good fun to watch, so it's definitely something you should look out for.

PLAYOFFS

The diagram below is an example of what a 'Playoff Bracket' will look like. To start with the most obvious point, it's the same as any knockout format in sport. Each team that wins will advance to face a fellow winner, until we have two teams remaining that compete for the NBA Trophy. I should point out that teams do not need to win one game of Basketball to advance, but four.



Each matchup is what is known as a best of seven 'series'. The first team to win four games advance, and the next opponents are always pre-determined by where the teams finished in the final standings.

The playoffs are split into two different halves: the Eastern Conference and the Western Conference. As you can see in the diagram, the Eastern sides will only play other Eastern sides, and Western sides will only play other Western sides. The one time that there is a clash between the two is at the finals – where the winner from the East meets the winner from the West.

Match ups for the first round are determined by seeding. The team that finishes top of a conference has the theoretical advantage of playing the team that has finished in eighth place in the conference, which is the lowest spot from which a team can qualify for the finals final.

As the best of seven series contains an uneven amount of games, one team will always have an extra game at home, giving them what is known as 'home court advantage'. This perk is intentional, and it's another way of rewarding the teams who finish higher up the standings during the season.

In the case of the finals where the number one team from each Conference may collide, home court advantage will go to the side that leads on head to head results. After that, there are further methods such as winning percentages and points differentials that can be utilized if necessary.

The format in a seven game series is this: 2(home)-2(away)-1(home)-1(away)-1(home).

BETTING

We can now move on to the important stuff! Now that we've helped you build a basic understanding of the game, the rules, scoring system, structure and schedule, let's look at how all of the above translates to profitable betting on the NBA.

There are a wide range of markets you can bet on when it comes to basketball. You can bet on such things as how many points or assists a player may get, who may be the highest rated player in the game, and occasionally there are even novelty markets. They can all be good fun but if you want to bet basketball seriously, then you shouldn't be considering those markets as a viable betting option. When it comes to betting basketball for the pros, there are only really two markets that exist.

The **Point Spread** and the **Game Total** are the traditional ways of betting on the NBA. Firstly, let's consider the 'Point Spread'. What does that actually mean? Well, it's simple. To liken it to a European sport, it essentially means a handicap. It's like an Asian Handicap in Football (Soccer), but you're dealing with bigger numbers.

Below is an example of a Point Spread when betting on the handicap:

Miami Heat -10 – 1.90/-110
Charlotte Bobcats +10 – 1.90/-110

In the above example you can see the Point Spread is 10. Miami Heat is shown as -10, whilst the Charlotte Bobcats are shown as +10. Anytime you see a '-' in front of the number, you're dealing with the favourite. Any time you see a '+' in front of the number, you're dealing with the underdog.

What does that mean for betting? Well, like a football team will be required to win by two or more should you bet on them -1, Miami in this case would be expected to win by 11 points or more and if you bet on them you would need them to win by 11+ points to win your bet. You would get your money back if the Heat were to win by exactly 10 points, thus matching the line.

So that's what the favourite line means, but what about the underdog? Charlotte '+10' means the Bobcats, as an underdog, need to lose the game by 9 points or fewer for you to win if you bet them. +10 just means they need to stay within that many points of Miami. Again, if the Cats were to lose by exactly 10 points, you would take your money back.

Not every line will be a whole line when you're betting on the NBA. Bookmakers often use half numbers, which means there's no way of taking your money back – you simply win or lose. Below is an example of such a spread, and the same rules as above apply to betting on this number.

Houston Rockets -5.5
Memphis Grizzlies +5.5

Due to the absence of a whole number, it isn't possible to void the bet and take your money back. Either the favourite, The Rockets, win by 6 or more, or they don't. The same rules apply with this line, meaning if you bet on Houston you would need them to win by 6 or more. If you bet on Memphis +5.5, you'd require them to lose by 5 or less.

That all sounds pretty simple, right? Of course it does! So let's move on to the subject of betting on the 'Game Total', which refers to betting the amount of points that will be scored in the game. Below is an example of an NBA game total.

LA Clippers	Over 209
Golden State	Under 209

A typical NBA total will range between 180 and 210. On occasion, you'll see a game between two high scoring teams that may be set around the 220 mark. On the flip side there are some pretty defensive teams in the NBA, and they often play with totals of 189 or less slapped on the game by the bookmakers.

The above example shows that the total our bookmaker has created for the Golden State Warriors visiting the LA Clippers is 209 points. Much like spread betting, if this game finished with exactly 209 points, all bets would be voided and everyone would have their money returned. So let's say that we've chosen to bet on Under 209 as we think this total is too high. We know that we'll take our money back should 209 points be scored (although that sounds an unlikely outcome, you'd be surprised how frequently the bookmakers call it right; voids are a regular enough occurrence). One way to look at this bet when watching the game is that 55x4 makes 210. As long as there are fewer than 55 points scored in each quarter, we know we'll win. Of course, it rarely works out that way.

One good example happened last year on an LA Clippers game (against Golden State, actually!) where I bet on Over 208. The first half was crazy, producing nearly 120 points. The second half went on, inexplicably, to produce fewer than 80 points! An extremely harsh and unexpected loss, but the NBA is an unpredictable beast at times.

Anyway, Under 209 would mean that we'd need these two teams to combine for 208 or fewer points. If you were to bet on Over 209, then you'd be looking for these teams to score 210 or more.

How does betting affect NBA odds? They don't! This is the interesting part. With US Sports, the price is fixed. You will always be betting on odds of roughly 1.90. If a team comes under particularly heavy backing, then the only thing that will change is the point spread. If a team opens at -5.5 and is consistently backed, the odds will stay at 1.90 but the point spread may jump up to -6 or -6.5!

The same logic is applied for the Totals. The price of 1.90 stays but the more money is bet on a Total line, that line may start to rise or drop depending on whether people are betting over or under.

What other factors go into betting the NBA? The NBA is not like any sport you've bet on before. If you go in to it with the attitude that you'll just bet on the form teams and win some money, you'll likely make incredibly large losses.

You really have to look at each individual game in isolation in the NBA, taking into account home court advantage, historical meetings, player matchups, and so many other factors. If you're looking at a tempo, you want to consider things like the pace of the game, shooting percentages, maybe even history. Sometimes it can get much, MUCH more technical than I'm making it sound, but we want to keep this basic, so these are just a few things you may want to research before making a pick.

Where should you place your NBA bets? I'm not here to promote any bookmakers, but it depends who you are and what you're betting. If you're reading this you're probably quite new to the sport, so your regular bookmakers like Bet365 for example, are quite good to bet with.

They often provide spreads and totals, and also provide live NBA streaming.

If you're a serious bettor who's looking to branch out into NBA and you bet serious money, then it goes without saying you should have an account with the US bookmaker 5Dimes, Pinnacle Sports or seek to use a bet brokerage firm like SportmarketPro which caters for the NBA.

Getting the Best Odds for your NBA bets! Best odds are important. Certain bookmakers will always offer 1.87 on a spread whilst others offer 1.91. It's a small change, but it adds up over a season, so best odds are quite important. To find them you can use your regular comparison sites like Bestbetting, Oddschecker, Oddsportal or BetBrain.

Where do I check scores and watch the games? If you're going to commit to this fully, buying the NBA League Pass gives you full access to scores and live streams of EVERY single NBA game throughout the season. Alternatively, you can use the Bet365 in-play service to watch some games for free, and they're also often screened on BT Sport for UK viewers.

If you're happy to just check the scores then you can click the 'Basketball' tab on the LiveScore website, but unless you have an expert betting for you, your knowledge won't improve without watching the NBA action unfold!

So there we have it, a breakdown of all you need to know if following my NBA Expert tipping service, or intend to start an interest in the sport that will lead you to making your own selections.

GLOSSARY

Here you can find explanations for a number of key terms that are often referenced in our magazines.

Proofed Results: This relates to a service who has proven or verified their results to be accurate via a independent and trusted source.

ROI (Return On Investment): This is a key metric to equating just how much you would had to risk to make a profit. The calculation is a simple figure of profit divided by total amount staked AKA profit on turnover. 10% ROI means £10 profit for every £100 put at risk.

ROI+: This takes the ROI figure above to a second level as it gauges over how many bets it was generated via. The calculation is a simple figure of ROI multiplied by the number of bets. This rewards tipsters who maintain a solid ROI over a large number of bets.

ROC (Return on Capital): This gauges just how profitable a service is in relation to the betting bank. I.E. 43% would mean a profit of £430 on a £1000 bank.

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