Declaration of Financial Interests or Relationships

I have the following financial interest or relationship to disclose regarding the subject matter of this presentation:

RBE has received research funding (as PI and Co-I) from the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling (AFSG), Bristol Hub for Gambling Harms Research, Bournemouth University, and GambleAware. He has received honoraria for peer-review of AFSG Exploratory Research Grants (2025), and travel/accommodation expenses covered for Keynote presentation and conference presentation (2024) by Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

As part of the Gambling Research Group at Bournemouth University, RBE received regulatory settlement funding for a project entitled 'The impact of gambling advertising on people with sub-clinical depression' (October 2023).

Matched Betting: Exploring Gambling-Related Harms

Dr Reece Bush-Evans
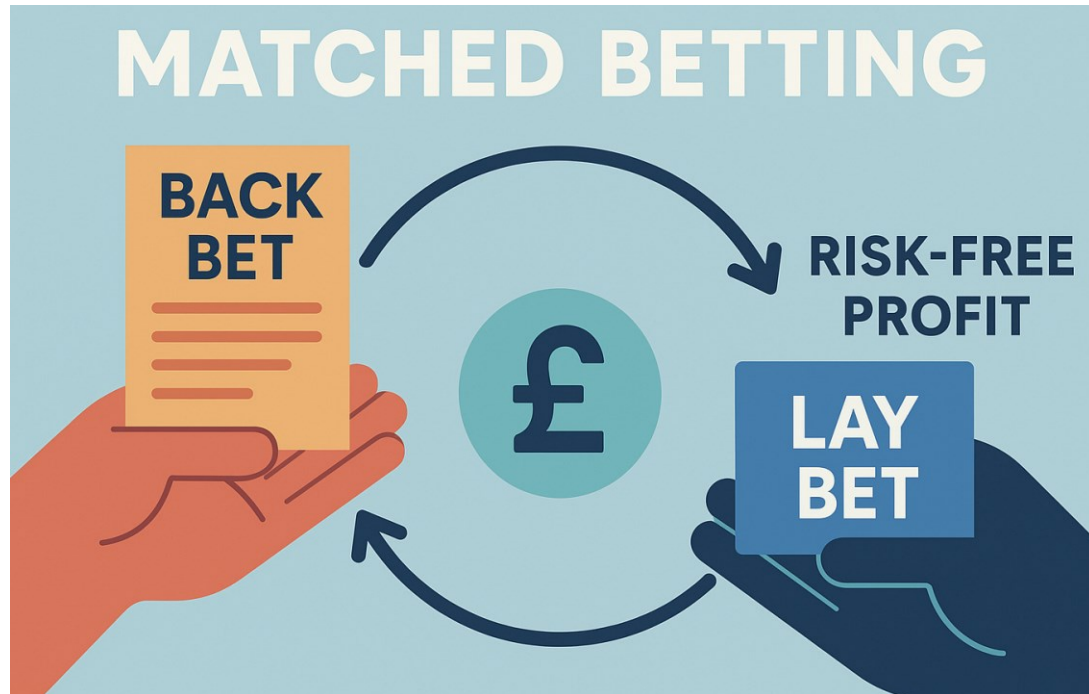Bournemouth University
rbush@bournemouth.ac.uk

"You are winning every time"

"It is risk free. There is no gambling. I always win"

"There are no chances of loss, only profit"

"You cannot lose any money. there is no risk"

Bournemouth University

Bristol Hub for GAMBLING HARMS RESEARCH

Matched Betting: Opportunity or Risk?

A betting technique that uses free bet promotions from bookmakers to '**guarantee a profit**' by placing bets on all outcomes of an event

⚽ Place a **back bet** with a bookmaker
🎾 Place a **lay bet** on a betting exchange
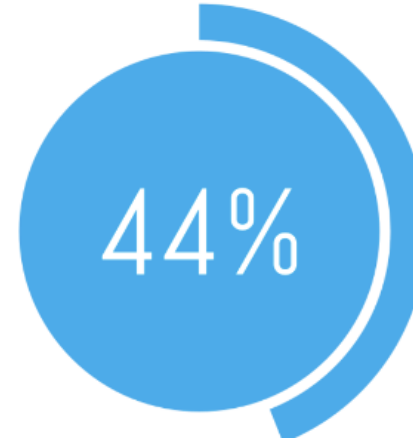🏏 Exploit **promotional offers** to fund bets

Why it matters:

⚠️ Claimed to be 'risk-free' – but is it?
📺 Heavily advertised to students and new mothers
💷 A small error can mean substantial losses

Screening Survey (*n* = 7041)

75% Have engaged with Matched Betting

44% Currently engage with Matched Betting

Matched Bettors show significantly greater gambling severity than those with no Matched Betting experience (*p* < .001)

Follow-Up Survey (n = 2112)

46% view Matched Betting as gambling

50% lost money at some point

52% reported issues with Matched Betting

GAMBLING SEVERITY (PGSI):

23.3% (LOW RISK; 1-2)

18.6% (MODERATE RISK; 3-7)

14.2% (HIGH RISK; 8+)

GAMBLING HARMS (GHS-20):

22.5% (LOW HARM; 1-2)

14.8% (MODERATE HARM; 3-5)

19.3% (HIGH HARM; 6+)

"I've lost £500. Losses come but my wins are typically more"

"I lost £5000 because I didn't gamble responsibly"

Next Steps and Take-Aways

Next Steps:

- Data analysis on quantitative data
- Sentiment analysis on qualitative data

Study Two:
- Think-Aloud activity
- Semi-structured interviews

Matched Betting is not risk free

Associated with elevated gambling severity and harm