

Ohio Casino Control Commission Announces Legalized Sports Betting Starting New Year's Day 2023



Ohio gamblers can't start placing legal sports bets until Jan. 1, 2023, the Ohio Casino Control Commission announced on Wednesday.

The decision to begin legalized sports betting on New Year's Day 2023 came after rumors and speculation that Ohio would start sports gambling in time for the NCAA and NFL seasons. The first regular-season games for college football are scheduled for Aug. 27 and the NFL on Sept. 8, meaning Ohio sports bettors will miss a large portion of both seasons.

"This date was chosen to give all stakeholders time to start offering gaming on the same date," said Matthew Schuler, the director of the Ohio Casino Control Commission.

House Bill 29 was passed by state legislators and signed by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine on Dec. 22. Schuler said his department still has work that needs to be done before Ohio gamblers can move forward with legal sports betting.

"Leading up to the universal start date, prospective licensees will be completing build-outs or buildings, distributing kiosks, hiring and training employees, obtaining partners and making all the other necessary arrangements to begin offering sports gaming from the very same starting line," Schuler said.

"The commission is aware that some stakeholders — specifically many online operators — have (fewer) preparations to make leading up to the launch and could possibly start sooner, however pursuant to House Bill 29, all forms of sports gaming must have the opportunity to launch on the exact same date."

The Ohio Casino Control Commission will create applications, forms, rules and other essentials to launch sports betting in the state. It will begin accepting applications for sports gaming licenses on June 15. Schuler said Jan. 1, 2023, will mark the largest expansion of sports gaming in Ohio's history as the state will offer brick-and-mortar, online and kiosk options.

Ohio legislators estimate that sports betting will be a \$1 billion industry in its first year, with an upward growth of over \$3 billion in less than five years. In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 1992 federal law that had prohibited most sports betting, allowing all 50 states to set up individual gambling

systems. Since then, Americans have bet more than \$125 billion (in legal dollars) on sports.

Ohio Sen. Niraj Antani, R-Miamisburg, who was instrumental in bringing name, image and likeness deals to the state, said he pushed for the Ohio Casino Control Commission to start legalized betting at an earlier date but understands this monumental moment will take time.

“I was optimistic that sports betting would be able to be implemented before the legal deadline of Jan. 1,” Antani said. “As it’s now clear that it will not be before then, I assure the public that it will be here before we know it, and I look forward to betting on the Bengals to win the Super Bowl with them.”

Should Ohio State football make the College Football Playoff, their semifinal game would occur before the Jan. 1, 2023, start date. If the Buckeyes were to win that game, fans could bet on the CFP Final that is scheduled for Jan. 9, 2023.

If Ohio State misses the playoff, the team will likely travel to the Rose Bowl for the second consecutive year. With New Year’s Day 2023 on a Sunday, the NFL takes priority over the college football bowl schedule, moving the “Granddaddy of Them All” to the following day, meaning Buckeye fans could legally bet on that game.

Either way, keep your wallets open. Ohio sports betting is coming, and it’s coming fast.