

# Should You Bet Same-Game Parlays?

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Same-game parlays have exploded in popularity over the past half-decade. Its origin can be traced back to the British gambling company SkyBet's "Request a Bet" feature a decade ago, but they have truly taken off in the American market since FanDuel introduced SGPs in 2019.

Books aren't required to report numbers for SGPs specifically, but other numbers indicate sportsbooks regularly profit more from parlays than they do on straight bets, all while holding a significantly higher percentage — sometimes in the 20-30% range as opposed to single digits on straights. It's fair to assume hold percentages on SGPs are at least that high, if not far higher. ESPN's David Payne Purdum noted in [a 2023 article](#) that the typical SGP bettor fits the mold of a recreational player:

"The typical SGP bettor likes to create narratives about how the game will play out and fill their parlay with a variety of point spreads, over/under totals, and player props that align with their expected storylines. They play for small stakes, \$5-\$20 on average, hoping to bet a little with a chance to win a lot."

SGPs are interesting because prices for the same (or very similar) bet can vary wildly across books based on their proprietary algorithm. However, it's a foregone conclusion that all of these books are printing money on these bets despite differences in how they price them. Today, we'll dig into how SGPs work, whether you should bet them, and why they are potentially desirable from an account longevity perspective. I will preface by saying that since same-game parlays are pretty different from one book to the next and I have no experience working at a book, I don't have all of the answers (especially on the first and third topics), but this article should still hopefully provide some insight.

## HOW DO SAME-GAME PARLAYS WORK?

Basically, same-game parlays let you pair multiple bets from the same game together. They are just like parlays, except the book also has to price in the correlation factor. Different books price different correlations differently. For example, if you are betting rushing yardage overs for two running backs on the same team, one book may price that as negative correlation and another may price it as positive correlation. You can sometimes find vastly different prices across books on the same SGP.

Additionally, some books may charge a tax (for lack of a better word) for betting same-game parlays since the engines are flawed. I logged onto DraftKings and clicked the first NBA game I saw (Hornets at Cavaliers) and randomly clicked on **Brandon Miller** under 17.5 points at -120. Then, I tried to find something that was relatively uncorrelated and landed on **Jarrett Allen's** 2.5 assists line, which was +100 to the over and -130 to the under. If you pair -120 and +100, the fair price on an uncorrelated parlay is +267. If you pair -120 and -130, fair is +224. However, DK was only offering me +258 and +208, respectively, meaning that they were technically assuming positive correlation on both sides. In practice, this just serves as an extra defense mechanism for the book. You can check what the uncorrelated odds for a parlay should be using [this calculator](#), and then it's a helpful exercise to think about how you think the events in your SGP should be correlated.

## SHOULD YOU BET SAME-GAME PARLAYS?

Despite everything we just discussed, same-game parlays are beatable. You just have to be very careful when betting them because if you're betting without an edge, you will go broke much faster betting SGPs than you would betting straights. Furthermore, much like DFS, there's no immediate feedback (e.g., CLV) telling you that you made a good bet but got unlucky. You are on your own in terms of gauging whether you are running bad or playing bad.

Most people who bet on sports lose money doing it. Same-game parlays accelerate that behavior since parlays multiply your edge — positive or negative — by definition and SGPs have higher hold on average than normal parlays. But that doesn't mean they can't be beaten. If you aren't certain you can beat SGPs, I would recommend not betting them or acting very conservatively with them. However, there are ways to beat them and certain angles that may be mispriced by a book.

For example, some books let you parlay one quarterback's passing yards under with the opposing QB's passing yards under. That SGP would usually have negative correlation, but if the forecast was calling for 30 mile-per-hour winds, suddenly the game environment means those two outcomes are positively correlated. That's just one angle that some books have allowed in the past, but there are certainly more, including countless that I have never heard of. It's your job as a bettor to find them.

Pricing disparities across books also present opportunities if you can figure out which side is the right one. If one book prices something as positive correlation and another book has it as negative and you know which is right, you can make a good chunk of change attacking the book with the poor pricing. Of course, this is one of those scenarios where you have to be careful because if you are wrong in your belief about the correlation, you can drain your bankroll pretty quickly. The differences across books also shows they don't have a perfect way to price SGPs, so it's also possible for sharp bettors to flat-out make better fair prices than what the books offer. This requires a fairly sophisticated process considering the books invest a fair amount of money into their SGP engines, but it is possible.

Most bettors should avoid SGPs like the plague. However, there is a minority of users that can beat them, and the potential edge on SGPs is high given the lack of uniformity across the industry and the enormous offering creating a large attack surface for the book to defend.

HOW DO THEY LOOK ON ACCOUNTS?


I'll preface this section by saying I have never worked at a sportsbook and, as such, don't have an exact understanding of how the trading and limiting process works. However, this is what I have picked up from reading and talking to people who have more hands-on experience with this topic.

Most sportsbooks will limit you if you look like a sharp bettor. The simplest way to tell if someone is a sharp bettor is by examining whether they get closing line value or not. With main markets like sides and totals and even with player props, this is relatively straightforward. With SGPs, it's more difficult to tell if someone beat the close because each book's SGP engine is not emblematic of a real market. Rather, it's an algorithm that may not act efficiently and/or could be more subject to random movement. That means books don't have a perfect way of profiling whether SGP action is sharp or not until they have a pretty large sample size of results.

Furthermore, since there is so much same-game parlay action that is massively +EV for the book, traders may not take the time to look as closely at SGP action. That means you may get approved for bets that the traders don't really want to book. The most recent example of this was when DraftKings accidentally set Nikola Jokic's points prop at 9.5 in January. Per Purdum, **there were hundreds of parlays placed within a 13-minute period before the number was taken off the board**. One would think the book would notice so many wagers coming in on the same leg of a same-game parlay; the fact that it lasted so long demonstrates some books' apathy toward tracking SGP action. Again, this only occurs because most SGPs are a huge net positive for the book.

Because of this, if you can beat SGPs, it's a gold mine. The caveat is what we discussed in the previous section — most people don't have the skills to beat them, and you have to be very confident your process is correct because betting SGPs without an edge is perhaps the quickest way to go broke in gambling.

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