

# The Coin Flip Challenge: Sports Betting Strategy, Bankroll Growth, and Optimal Hedging

In July 2025, I presented a workshop at a conference in London called Smart Bash. It was the first betting conference I had attended, let alone presented at, and my biggest fear (other than a water landing off the coast of Greenland) was boring my audience to death with math.

To avoid this disaster (the boring bit, not the crash landing), I created an interactive game for the attendees to play that would be analogous to common [sports betting](#) spots and illustrate some of the core principles of my work. I called it “Dan’s Coin Flip Challenge.”

## Dan's Coin Flip Challenge

The rules were deceptively simple: each player started with a bankroll of £100 and was given the opportunity to make a series of bets on a fair coin flip. The odds I offered were 2.05 (+105) on Heads, 1.95 (-105) on Tails, and 10.0 (+900) on a three-leg parlay of Heads, Heads, Heads. By playing the parlay, players would get an odds boost of about 18% over what they would expect given the 2.05 odds on a single Heads result. Pretty generous, huh?

Often, recreational sportsbooks will offer odds boosts like this on parlays to entice bettors to try and multiply their winnings this way. And often sharp bettors can find slightly +EV plays to roll into that parlay and build a pretty big edge, but at pretty long odds.

In my challenge, the catch with the parlay was that if it was still alive, then you couldn’t start another one. But you could still bet on Heads or Tails, or choose to skip a bet that round and let your parlay ride. This rule opened the door to the possibility of either hedging by betting on Tails or doubling down by betting on Heads while you still had an open parlay. And if you got two Heads in a row, then there would be two flips where you could choose to make those plays.

It was abundantly clear to the sharp bettors in the crowd that bets on Heads would be +EV, bets on the parlay would be even more +EV, and bets on Tails would be -EV. But what would the optimal strategy be?

Part of that answer required players to determine how much they should risk on each flip in their pursuit of the biggest bankroll. They were given the option to bet either a specific amount in pounds or a percentage of their roll.

To sweeten the pot, I offered a free T-shirt or copy of my book to whoever ended up with the biggest balance after 20 minutes. This was my first mistake. Now that there was some skin in the game for the players, their incentive was to win the free swag rather than to grow their bankroll in a compound (and safer) way. As a famous American once said, "If you're not first, you're last!"

## **Optimal Betting Strategy**

Given this goal, the optimal game play strategy was for them to maximize their EV, and many of them picked up on that. By going all-in on the parlay, they could turn £100 into £1,000 in three flips. Of course, if any of those flips came up Tails then they would go broke. No matter, the game allowed them to restart and gave them a fresh £100 each time. This was my second mistake.

As I discussed in my previous Pinnacle article on [bankroll strategy](#), having an easily replenishable bankroll gives players license to bet very aggressively. In this case, it was just too easy. Of course, many players went broke over and over this way, but two of them got to £1,000 and quit while they were ahead, splitting the prizes. Those who ended up broke got nothing. This is what happens when we measure our potential payouts in EV.

In a real-life scenario, what you should be measuring (and optimizing) is your expected bankroll growth, or EG. This is the way to increase your median bankroll amount in the fewest number of bets. But how could you do that given the rules of this game? I had the answer and presented it after the Challenge was over. But before I divulge it, you can try the game for yourself [here](#).

## **Compounding Mistakes**

How did you fare? Hopefully, you didn't all try to log on at once and overload the server. This happened at Smart Bash and was my third mistake: not getting 50 people to try it simultaneously during Beta testing.

In any event, I'm sure most of you realized that the parlay had the highest edge of any play, specifically 25 percent.

Some of you might have even realized that it also had the highest maximum expected growth (MEG) of your options, weighing in with almost 35 basis points (bps). That's pretty hefty on its own, but since you know that you can hedge against your parlay by betting on Tails (and you know the price you'll pay for it), you can increase your EG by intentionally over-betting the parlay (i.e., staking more than 1x Kelly) in order to capture more EV up front and then hedge against it if you get to the last leg. I call this strategy the NHG or Neutral Hedge Gambit because you shift the risk on your bet from losing it all if you miss the last leg to having to find decent odds to hedge against it.

THE NEUTRAL HEDGE GAMBIT SHIFTS THE RISK FROM LOSING IT ALL IF YOU MISS THE LAST LEG OF A PARLAY TO HAVING TO FIND THE BEST ODDS TO HEDGE AGAINST IT.

With this more advanced strategy, I touted that players could roughly double their EG compared to staking the parlay according to the simple Kelly size and letting it ride. Then I made a fourth mistake: I encouraged participants to try and think of ways to improve on the NHG. One other presenter, Miguel Figueres of Winner Odds, took me up on the challenge.

He not only discovered the correct answer for how to play the NHG, but he took it a step further by modeling the EG possible by hedging down his position each time the coin comes up Heads. This technique is done by hedging some on Tails before the second flip and then hedging even more before the third flip if you get that far. I also discussed this technique in my book, *But How Much Did You Lose?*, but I thought it would only make a small difference in this challenge. That was my fifth mistake.

As Prof. Figueres calculated, by staking 8.8 percent of your bankroll on the 3-Heads parlay, then betting 19 percent on Tails if your first flip comes Heads, and finally a whopping 50 percent on Tails if you make it to the last leg of the parlay, you can do much, much better.

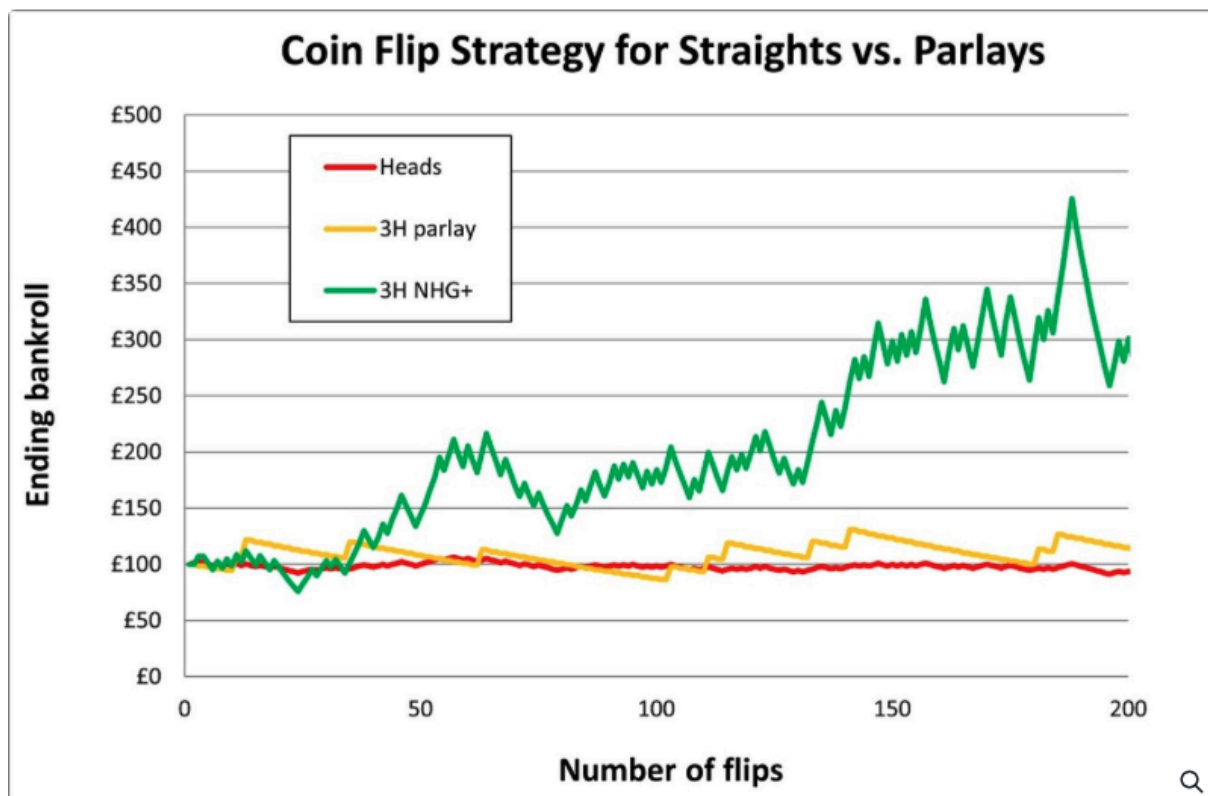
A MORE AGGRESSIVE APPROACH, WHICH INVOLVES BETTING A LARGER PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BANKROLL, ULTIMATELY YIELDS THE BEST EXPECTED RESULTS.

His recommended allocation of your capital (let's call it the NHG+) would yield almost 110 bps of EG compared to about 59 bps with the stock NHG and 35 bps with the naked parlay. I ran the numbers myself as well and calculated that an allocation of stakes like 12.5%/27.5%/60% of your bankroll does even better, producing an EG of 127 bps.

That's right, the quickest way to make real profits from this game (multiplying your EG by 3.5x over optimally staking a parlay and letting it ride) is to over-bet Kelly by *more than four times* and then prepare to get down your entire remaining bankroll in hedges if you convert the first two legs of the 3-Heads parlay. In fact, because the MEG of betting on Heads alone is only about 3 bps, optimally hedging down your parlay with the NHG+ produces more than 40x the bankroll growth of each wager on Heads.

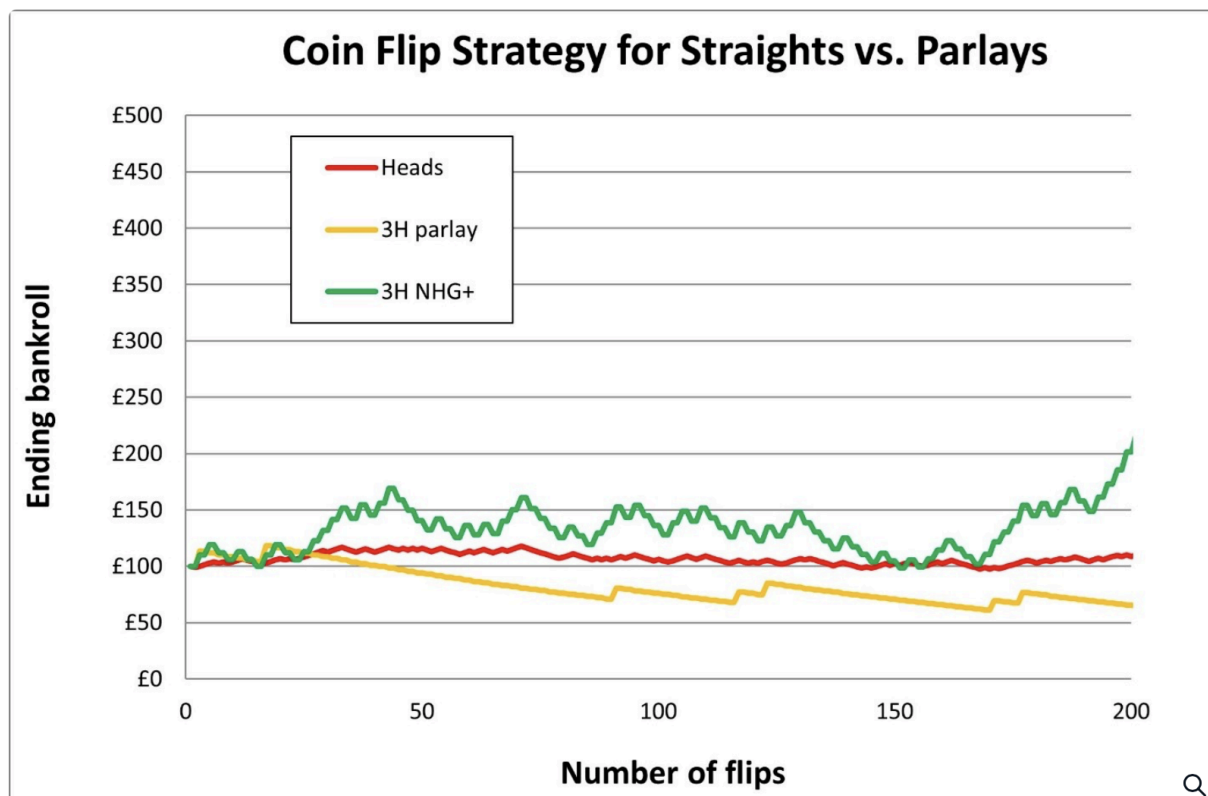
In practice, this kind of play will have very high variance, much like full [Kelly staking](#) on a naked bet that you never hedge. So, try the game again and decide if you want to go for maximum EG with high variance, or dial it back to the equivalent of half Kelly by staking 6% of your bankroll initially and then hedging 14% and 30% on Tails if you make it to the second and third legs.

I did just that in a Monte Carlo simulation (using the assumption that you can start a new parlay once every two flips on average) to compare my NHG+ method to half Kelly versions of simply betting on Heads every time or a naked 3-Heads parlay. Of course, the results were quite varied, but this is a representative graph:



The NHG+ strategy dominates both betting on Heads each flip and betting naked parlays. In fact, after 200 flips, the Heads-only strategy lost money because more Tails came up than Heads in this sample, yet the NHG+ triples your bankroll anyway.

In this other run of the simulation below, the naked parlay strategy, despite having a 25 percent edge, goes through such long losing streaks that it punts off more than one-third of the player's bankroll after 100 plays. Using the NHG+ strategy with the *same exact flip results* yields a bankroll growth of 100 percent instead.



While there's no guarantee of profit with this method, your 88 bps of EG with the half NHG+ should add a median of 88 pence to your bankroll on the first play and even more as your bankroll grows.

In fact, if you repeat this play 100 times, then you can expect a median bankroll of about £240 when you're done. I challenge you to do any better than that.

## How to Make Informed Bets: Bet Numbers, Not Teams

An important [sports betting](#) concept for those looking to make sharper picks is to bet numbers and not teams.

Sharp bettors focus on the **numbers**, the odds, spreads, and lines, rather than their emotional allegiance to teams.

It's about analyzing the odds to identify positive expected value (+EV) bets, not cheering for your favorite squad.

### Why Betting Numbers Matters

- **Lines shift with sharp action:** Pinnacle pays close attention when knowledgeable bettors place early bets. These “smart money” moves often influence how lines are adjusted, helping to shape a more efficient market — and occasionally creating better opportunities for value.
- **Margins matter:** Sharp bettors work with low-margin pricing and monitor over-rounds carefully. Pinnacle famously offers reduced-juice lines as low as -105/-104, allowing for tighter margins and more value for bettors.

## How Sharp Bettors Find Value in the Numbers

### **Build your own numbers before seeing the market**

Estimate what you think a fair line should be using data, probabilities, and trends. This preparation helps you bet either side objectively.

### **Compare your model versus sportsbook odds**

If the bookmaker’s line deviates from your calculation significantly, it may signal mispricing and a potential +EV opportunity.

### **Ignore team bias and trust the numbers**

Dedicate less weight to team narrative or public sentiment; trust disciplined, data-driven models.

## The Risks of Betting Teams vs. Numbers

Recreational bettors often fall prey to confirmation bias, betting “on” or “against” a team before checking the actual line. That can lead to negative EV bets if the [betting market](#) has already priced in what you anticipated.

Sharp bettors avoid this trap by:

- Doing independent research and line-making
- Placing early bets when value appears
- Remaining flexible and backing whichever side offers the best edge

## Tips to Emulate Smart Betting Strategy

- **Create your own lines:** Start with your own odds before referring to sportsbook lines.
- **Use statistical models:** Techniques like Poisson or normal distributions help forecast outcomes and build your number-based edge.
- **Track closing-line value:** Consistently beating closing lines over time is a

key measure of long-term betting skill.

- **Practice bankroll discipline:** Sharp bettors keep emotion in check. Size bets appropriately and manage loss limits rigorously.

## Final Thought

In essence, betting smart isn't about loyalty, it's about numbers. By focusing on value-driven odds rather than team loyalty, sharp bettors gain a sustainable edge. They build models, calculate a fair line, and only wager when the market offers mispricing.

Trust the numbers, not the narrative.

# Top-Down Betting Explained: Is This the Best Approach for a New Sports Bettor?

Today we're diving into a [sports betting](#) strategy known as top-down betting.

You may have heard this term already, but what exactly does it mean and is it the best approach for someone that's just getting started in the sports betting world?

## Top-Down Betting Defined

Top-down betting is a method where you start by identifying inefficiencies or mispricing in the betting markets and take advantage of them.

The approach focuses on reading and reacting to line movements in the market rather than forming your own predictions or models about the games.

In other words, you're more concerned with how the betting markets behave than with predicting the outcomes of the games yourself.

Think of it like this: Instead of doing a deep dive into teams, stats, and player performance, you're using the market itself as your guide.

You spot opportunities by analyzing which way the lines are moving and why, and you act on those shifts.

Assuming that sharp bettors or big money are causing these movements, the idea is that following sharp line movements gives you a better chance of finding value, because pro bettors are influencing the lines in those directions.

Let's break it down into steps.

## **Top-Down Betting Challenges**

Top-down betting requires you to be quick and diligent.

You have to monitor the lines closely across multiple sportsbooks and act fast when you spot a discrepancy.

This can be time-consuming and, if you're just starting out, it can also feel overwhelming.

One challenge with top-down betting for beginners is bankroll management.

If you're constantly chasing line movements trying to place bets quickly, it's easy to get caught up in the action and lose track of your spending.

Without proper discipline, you might end up overextending yourself or making emotional bets based on market swings rather than sound reasoning.

Another challenge is access.

To successfully use a top-down approach, you need accounts at multiple sportsbooks, and in some cases, your bankroll won't be large enough to warrant spreading money across multiple books.

And if you're in an area with limited sportsbook options, that could hinder your ability to effectively use this strategy as well.

You might be wondering how top-down betting compares to a more traditional bottom-up approach where you analyze the teams, the stats, and other factors to make your own predictions.

## **Bottom-Up Betting**

Bottom-up betting is more data-driven and requires a deeper understanding of the sport, while top-down betting relies more on market analysis for new bettors.

The choice comes down to personal preference and how much time you're willing to dedicate to the work.

If you're someone who loves to dive deep into the numbers and study games, the bottom-up approach might be a better fit.

But candidly, it'll be much harder for you to win in the long run.

## Top-Down Betting Advantages

If you prefer to follow the market trends and don't have time for heavy research, top-down betting can be a simpler way to get started.

It's also the preferred method if you want to try to make money betting on sports without actually having any sports knowledge.

So, is top-down betting the best approach for new sports bettors?

It can be, but it depends on how comfortable you are with market analysis and quick decision making. It's not a "set it and forget it" type of strategy. You need to stay on top of line movements and have accounts with multiple sportsbooks.

But if you're willing to put in the time and follow the market's lead, top-down betting can help you find value without needing to be much of an expert in anything.

Ultimately, no betting strategy is foolproof. Top-down betting is no exception.

It can be a great tool in your betting arsenal, but like any method, it requires patience, discipline, and consistent effort.

## Bottom-Up Betting Explained: What is an Originator and How Do You Build a Basic Model?

Let's dive into a topic that's crucial for anyone interested in understanding [sports betting](#) from the ground up.

That's bottom-up betting.

We're going to break down what it means to be an originator and how you can get started at building a basic betting model.

### Bottom-Up Betting Defined

First, let's quickly define what we mean by bottom-up betting.

Bottom-up betting is an approach to sports betting that starts by analyzing individual components of a game or a match to understand what the true odds should be.

Instead of just looking at a betting line and betting based on general trends, bottom-up bettors will work to build their own predictions based on a fundamental analysis of the game, taking into account player statistics and situational factors as well.

This approach is different from top-down betting, which focuses on understanding the betting market as a whole, often looking for discrepancies in odds across different sportsbooks.

While top-down bettors may look for changes in line movements or sharp money coming in on certain bets, bottom-up bettors aim to originate their own lines using raw data and their own models.

## **What is an Originator?**

An originator is someone who generates their own predictions rather than just following market trends or betting tips.

Originators create their own betting models to create probabilities or predicted outcomes. Their goal is to determine what the odds should be, based on the stats and data that they have, and compare that to the odds being offered at sportsbooks.

Originators are highly sought after in the industry because they are not copying bets or going with the flow, they are creating the flow.

For example, if an originator's model suggests that a team has a 55 percent chance of winning a game, but the sportsbook odds only imply a 50 percent chance of winning, then that is a potential value bet.

It's about identifying those edges, where their analysis indicates that the sportsbook's odds are off.

## **How to Create a Betting Model**

Creating a model takes time, effort, and a willingness to learn and improve over time as well.

Even a basic model can give you an edge over betting with no data, or no strategy at all.

The first step is to pick a sport and focus on a specific market in that sport.

You may want to start with the NBA and look at point spreads. Or you might want to look at totals in the NFL.

Specializing in one area allows you to focus and gather better data around which to build your model.

Remember, each sport and each market is unique, so the factors you consider for an NBA point spread will be totally different from what you would consider for an NFL Over/Under.

Next, you'll need data. This is one of the most critical steps.

If you're betting on the NFL, you'll want player stats, team stats, injury reports, and weather data for outdoor games.

Free resources are a great place to start, but you may have to look into paid sources if you truly want to build out a valuable model. The more granular you can get, the better.

Now that you have your data, it's time to create a basic predictive model. Don't worry if you're not a data scientist. Even simple calculations can form the basis of a model. A good place to start is with an [expected value formula](#).

If you're modeling an NFL game, you can start by looking at average points scored by each team, average points allowed, then build in factors like injuries or recent form to adjust your expectations.

It's critical to understand that this is not going to be enough to allow you to profit with this approach, but it serves as a great starting point for someone who may be completely unfamiliar with generating their own model.

You could start by calculating each team's expected points based off their season averages, and adjust for things like home field advantage, pace of play, or any recent injuries.

Over time, you can start to layer in more and more factors and statistical models, but at the start, you're aiming for a basic version that gives you a rough idea of the outcome.

Once you have an idea of what you think the outcome might be, you calculate the implied probability.

Let's say your model suggests that a team has a 55% chance of winning. You then compare that to the probability of the sportsbook to see if there is value. If the odds offered by the sportsbook suggest a 50% chance of winning, this difference indicates potential value.

## **Evaluate Your Model**

The final step is to test your model and track its performance over time. This is crucial because no model is perfect right out of the gate.

Bet small initially, if at all, and instead focus on tracking your predictions against actual outcomes.

Over time, you can adjust your model based on the factors that seem to matter the most.

Think of it like this: every game and every bet is data that helps you refine your model.

Are there patterns in when your predictions pay off? Maybe you need to weigh home field advantage more, or maybe you're overestimating the worth of a particular stat. Testing and tracking helps you identify these adjustments.

That is a basic rundown on what it means to be an originator and the first steps to building a model.

## **Bottom-Up Betting Advantages**

Originating your own lines through a bottom-up approach is challenging, but it's also one of the most rewarding and potentially profitable ways to approach sports betting.

Remember, building a great model takes time, takes testing, and a willingness to learn, but it can be an incredible tool in finding betting value.

## **3 Simple Tips That Turn Losing Sports Bettors Into Winners**

Becoming a winning sports bettor isn't about luck, it's about discipline, analysis, and relentless improvement.

Here are three foundational [sports betting](#) pillars that separate successful bettors from the rest:

## Bankroll Management

Properly managing your bankroll is the cornerstone of long-term betting success. Betting a consistent percentage, typically between **1% and 3%** of your total bankroll on each wager, helps smooth out variance and protects against ruin. For example, with a \$1,000 bankroll, sticking to bets between \$10–\$30 per game keeps you in the game through winning and losing streaks.

Pinnacle emphasizes this in their comprehensive guide on [bankroll, edge, and variance](#) as well as [understanding and managing your risks of ruin](#): "Greater variance means...a higher probability of ruin...and the larger our stakes as a proportion of our bankroll, the greater the likelihood that an unlucky streak will wipe us out"

Using staking methods like [fractional Kelly](#) can optimize growth while buffering against sharp variance.

## Find and Sustain Your Edge

### Top-Down Market Strategy

Sharp bettors monitor line movements, public vs. sharp money, and closing line value (CLV). Market movement tools are perfect for this: they show where sharp money is going, even before the public follows, offering insight into mispriced lines.

Pinnacle's piece on [Efficient Market Hypothesis](#) confirms this: "Opening odds ... reflect limited information", meaning early bets can yield CLV gains before sharp money shapes the closing lines.

### Bottom-Up Deep Research

Not all edges come from following the market. Bettors can carve out profitability by mastering niche segments, such as NBA player props or mid-tier college football sides and totals.

If you've identified a variable overlooked by the public or oddsmakers, that's your edge. But it only pays if you can justify your advantage with data and consistency.

## Record-Keeping & Continuous Improvement

Tracking bets is the secret behind every consistently profitable bettor. Record the date, sport, bet type, stake, odds (opening and closing), result, and notes on your reasoning.

Pinnacle underscores the value of tracking expected value (EV) and return on investment (ROI) over many bets to measure [true betting skill](#).

Once logged, you can analyze trends:

Are you strong in NBA player props but weak in parlays?

Do you consistently beat closing lines?

Does variance distract you into makeshift bets?

Pinnacle highlights the mental game: skilled bettors “grind out edges over time” and maintain emotional control, unlike recreational bettors who chase luck. Identifying personal biases (loss-chasing, overconfidence) and refining your process is how you shift from trial to mastery.

## Final Takeaway

Combined, these elements build the foundational pillars of long-term profitable betting. Pinnacle's content reinforces all three: [managing bankroll vs. variance](#), [understanding market efficiency and CLV](#), and mastering record-based self-improvement.

Becoming a winning bettor means combining:

**Smart bankroll rules** that control risk.

**Proven edges that are either market-driven or niche-driven.**

**Relentless record-keeping and behavioral awareness.**

With these in place, and the discipline to follow them, you can turn sports betting from a gamble into a calculated strategy.

Pinnacle not only provides the tools to manage this process, but encourages “[Winner's Welcome](#)” success through education, low margins, and the best odds.

# A Week in the Life of a Professional NFL Bettor

The National Football League is a dominant presence on the [sports betting](#) landscape and professional bettors are in tune with the business every day of the week throughout the NFL season.

[NFL betting](#) isn't just a Sunday activity; it's a full-week grind, especially for professional sports bettors. While casual fans may focus on game outcomes or fantasy lineups, seasoned pros are constantly analyzing injury news, market movements, betting limits, and pricing inefficiencies to gain their edge.

This article breaks down the structure of an NFL betting week from a professional bettor's perspective and shows how strategy, timing, and value management come together, especially with the sharp odds offered by Pinnacle.

## Sunday Night: The Real Beginning

For the pros, the week starts as soon as the late afternoon games finish on Sunday. This is when they:

- Review **post-game analysis** and stats.

- Take an early glance at **look-ahead lines**.

- Identify key injuries that might impact opening lines.

- Start preparing for **early bets** before the market adjusts.

Sportsbooks like Pinnacle offer early NFL betting lines, and pros often look for **inefficiencies** in those numbers before limits rise.

## Monday–Wednesday: Monitoring and Patience

Most professionals will wait until mid-week to place bigger bets. Why?

- Betting limits** are still relatively low on Monday and Tuesday.

- By **Wednesday**, limits increase significantly, making it easier for pros to move larger amounts.

- This is also the time to **track practice reports**, especially for players listed as questionable.

- Professionals use this phase to adjust their **betting models** and confirm market positions.

## Thursday: Thursday Night Football and Prop Market Openings

Thursday is a turning point.

It's the first game of the week—**Thursday Night Football**—and pros are often watching closely to take notes and scout future matchups.

More sportsbooks begin releasing **player props**, including markets with smaller hold percentages, ideal for value betting.

Pinnacle offers extensive **NFL prop markets**, which are gaining popularity among sharp bettors who can spot **mispriced lines**.

Even if the liquidity in props isn't always sufficient for big wagers, many pros treat them as a growing edge in the market.

## Friday: Market Shifts and Injury Reports

Friday afternoon is a critical window.

**Final injury reports** are published, giving the clearest picture of the Sunday slate.

This surge in reliable info leads to **line movement**, often in response to confirmed lineup ins/outs.

It's also the last chance to catch any **pricing inefficiencies** before Saturday's prop market rush.

Sharp bettors often use tools and data to anticipate which games will move dramatically based on player availability.

## Saturday: Final Checks and Prop Sweep

Saturday is about **fine-tuning** the week's bets.

Professionals check for late injury news or weather updates.

Fully released **prop markets** allow pros to round out their positions.

Any last-minute shifts in odds are closely monitored for late value grabs.

This is a lower-volume day for bets, but it's crucial for **tying up loose ends** before the real action hits.

## Sunday: Game Day, In-Game, and Closing Value

The big day.

As sportsbooks like Pinnacle **raise their limits**, pro betting groups finalize large wagers right before kickoff.

In-game betting becomes critical. Pros who excel at reading game flow and **spotting live odds inefficiencies** can profit mid-game.

Smart bettors also keep an eye on **line movement just before kickoff** for any final edge.

At this point, everything comes down to **execution**—both in managing positions and spotting new opportunities in real time.

## Conclusion: NFL Betting as a Full-Time Strategy

For professional bettors, NFL betting is much more than predicting outcomes. It's a **week-long process of extracting value** through:

- Early analysis
- Injury monitoring
- Market watching
- Exploiting prop markets
- Leveraging live betting

And with Pinnacle offering **the best lines, with high limits, and the lowest margins** in the industry, it's no surprise that professionals rely on it to **maximize profitability** throughout the NFL season.

## How To Control Your Emotions When Betting on Sports

Betting on sports can deliver thrilling highs, crushing lows, and everything in between.

Whether you're new to betting or an experienced bettor, one constant remains: emotional control is essential for long-term [sports betting](#) success.

Without it, impulsive decisions, frustration, and irrational choices can derail even the most promising betting strategy.

# The Psychology Behind Poor Betting Decisions

## 1. Gambler's Fallacy

The belief that past outcomes affect future results is one of the most damaging illusions in betting. Each game, spin, or play is independent. Watching red hit three consecutive times on the roulette wheel doesn't mean a black is "due", and a team's most recent winning streak does not guarantee future success.

## 2. Overconfidence

Just because you nailed a few bets doesn't mean you've cracked the code. Studies suggest 98% of bettors lose long-term. Always ask: *What am I doing that 98% aren't?*

## 3. Chasing Losses

Attempting to win back your money by increasing stakes is a common but fatal strategy. It ignores logic, distorts discipline, and increases your risk exposure.

## 4. Recency Bias

Placing too much weight on recent outcomes can skew your judgment. Whether it's a hot streak or a bad beat, zoom out and look at the bigger picture.

## 5. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

The urge to jump on popular bets or follow social media hype often leads to emotionally driven decisions. Stay focused on your strategy, not the noise.

## Proven Strategies to Keep Emotions in Check

### Bankroll Management

Set a fixed budget for betting and never exceed it. This reduces stress, limits impulsive decisions, and gives you a clear framework to operate within. Discover advanced [bankroll strategies](#) from Pinnacle.

### Betting Discipline

Create a rulebook for your bets—max wager size, bet types, risk thresholds—and stick to it religiously. Think of it as a trading strategy; emotions should never override logic.

## Track Everything: The Betting Journal

Documenting your wagers, thought process, and emotional state can reveal patterns and provide insights. Use tools like Excel, Google Sheets, or dedicated tracking apps like [betstamp](#) to stay organized and objective.

## Use Technology to Stay Objective

Modern betting platforms let you set automatic limits, alerts, and bet confirmations. These tools can act as emotional guardrails. Learn more about Pinnacle's [Responsible Gaming](#) features.

## Handle Losing Streaks Like a Pro

Even seasoned professionals experience losing streaks. The key is how you respond.

**Take a break** when emotions run high.

**Talk to peers or communities** to share experiences and decompress.

**Refocus on your long-term plan.** Betting is a marathon, not a sprint.

Need help staying disciplined? Explore Pinnacle's [Betting Resources](#) hub with articles on everything from betting psychology to advanced tactics.

## Final Thought

Mastering your emotions isn't a switch you flip, it's a skill that is built over time. Every successful bettor has faced tough losses and soaring wins. What separates them from the crowd is their ability to **stay rational**, remain disciplined, and always stick to their strategy.

If you're serious about betting, start by gaining control of the one thing you can: **your mindset**.

## Why Overbetting Early Can Be Smart: Bankroll Strategy for Bettors with Time

In the 1998 film *Rounders*, the protagonist Mike McDermott is a poker-playing prodigy with a fatal flaw. He takes too much risk and overbets his bankroll in pursuit of poker glory. His friend and confidant, Joey Knish, eschews such

aggressive bankroll management and manages to eke out a comfortable living by playing many hours at minimal stakes.

The conventional lesson that viewers take from this movie is that Mike is a degenerate who will eventually go bust (again) and that he should listen to the schmaltzy advice of Mr. Knish.

But is there a rational argument to be made for McDermott leveraging his future to make a big score? My answer is yes, and here's why. Most people in any risk-taking pursuit (poker, [sports betting](#), crypto, finance, etc.) do a very poor job of defining their bankroll.

In order to follow sage advice like "play within your means" and "don't overbet your roll," you need to be able to define and calculate your bankroll accurately first. While this might seem as simple as adding up the balances in your assorted accounts, this oversimplification is probably costing you money. Maybe a lot of it.

Mike is young and talented, even Knish admits that much, and he has more than just the wadded-up bills hidden around his apartment in his true bankroll. He also has his human capital, or his ability with enough skill and time to earn more money to rebuild his bankroll and take another shot. (Let's ignore that fact that he eventually begs for money from his professor to do that in the movie).

The ability to replenish a bankroll might be hard to quantify, but you have to account for it somehow. Once you do that, aggressive plays that seem like overbets, or at least full-Kelly bets, look far more rational and less degen. To paraphrase Gordon Gekko's famous line in the movie *Wall Street*, "Greed is good, if you know when to use it."

## **It's Either a Lambo or Food Stamps**

Sharp bettor @Sports\_Proj is co-host of the aptly-named Risk Takers podcast and asked some very relevant questions on Twitter. "How much should I bet on a coin flip at +900 with \$100k net worth? Does that [answer] change if I'm 18 years old versus 65? What if I make \$500k [a year] versus minimum wage? [Or am] receiving an inheritance in a year? If you consider bankroll net present value of all future earnings, full Kelly betting on present net worth is generally under betting."

Much like McDermott, he's willing to go broke with a smallish bankroll that's replenishable in order to accelerate his bankroll growth and take better advantage of big edges if luck is on his side. To paraphrase Teddy KGB from Rounders, "Pay that man his respect."

Another pro bettor with the handle @AbsolutelyAlpha tweeted, "I was a broke college kid who took \$500 to try betting and had to start betting with \$5 units." This was in response to the theory that those with a small bankroll should build it by using low variance plays like [arbitrage](#) and [middling](#) instead of wasting time betting \$5 at a clip for an expected value of roughly \$0.25 on each wager.

#### TIME OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND PROFITABLE BETS OR EVEN A JOB TO REBUILD A BANKROLL.

While he may have had only \$500 in liquid cash at the time, one thing he clearly had a lot of was *time*. Time to find bets with an average edge of 5%, place them, grade them, track them, analyze them, and learn from his successes and failures. He also presumably had time to work a part-time job if he got broke in order to rebuild his \$500 bankroll and start again. Maybe he should have been greedier and been even more aggressive in his risk taking when starting out in order to optimize his time and human capital.

One greedy strategy that I wrote about in my book *But How Much Did You Lose?* is the Neutral Hedge Gambit or NHG. This technique shows the benefit of initially overbetting a longshot play (usually a futures bet or a parlay) with the intention of hedging against it before it settles.

Ideally, there will be one last leg or event that needs to occur before your original bet grades, and you can find a neutral EV bet to hedge against it and lock in the current EV of your ticket at that time. In practice, you might have to settle for a slightly -EV play when making your hedge, so in that case you hedge out only part of your exposure.

But the benefit is that you can get more money down on your original bet (and take advantage of the large edge these longshots will often have) without increasing your risk at the same time. And I proved that you optimize your EV this way, rather than by taking a more conservative route of staking your original bet at half Kelly size or less.

### Using the Same Principles in Personal Finance

There's a strategy in personal finance that's making news lately that works in a similar way: the use of leveraged ETFs. Specifically, using them to get effectively more money into the market when you're young to take advantage of its high expected returns rather than grinding up your retirement bankroll slowly.

As examined in the book *The Missing Billionaires*, by Victor Haghani and James White and based on the work of Barry Nalebuff and Ian Ayres of Yale, this method accepts more risk initially in exchange for outsized returns with a plan to reduce your variance before retirement (i.e., before the last leg of your investing parlay) by diversifying to help lock in your earlier profits. They call it "temporal diversification." I'm calling it TD.

With TD, the Yale profs recommend starting out with two times leverage in the stock market. These days, an efficient way to do this is by using a broad US index ETF like the Direxion Daily S&P 500 Bull 2X Shares, but not something exotic like a 2X Tesla short or Brazilian banking ETF.

[AS YOUR PORTFOLIO GROWS, YOU REDUCE YOUR LEVERAGE ACCORDING TO YOUR AGE.](#)

As your portfolio grows from compounded returns and/or regular contributions, you reduce your leverage according to your age. Eventually, you'll eliminate the leveraged part of your portfolio, and when close to retirement, you'll diversify from all stocks to a more balanced (i.e., less volatile) mix to lock in some of your hard-earned gains. But how much do you lose if the market goes down while you're highly leveraged? Probably a lot, but it will be only a temporary setback.

Because young investors have a bankroll of time and human capital, they can invest more money over time (usually at bargain prices, if their original investment has dipped) and wait for the inevitable rebound. Like Warren Buffett said (sort of), "No one ever went broke betting on America!"

In fact, Haghani and White ran a simulation of this investing method that showed a 12% higher median wealth when adopting this higher variance approach. Likewise for sports bettors, if you have a replenishable bankroll, then you should be taking bigger risks in search of bigger profits early. If you get lucky and run good, then you'll quickly build your bankroll to a size where getting as much money down as you want becomes your biggest challenge. If you don't, then invest more money into your bankroll over time and start again.

It's like hedging against the possibility that your smaller bets will go on a hot streak, but your later, larger bets will run cold.

## **Time Is an Asset**

But just as mature and wealthy investors should adjust their strategy nearing retirement, professional sports bettors should do the same. When your bankroll has become a counted-on source of income to support yourself and/or your family, you should scale back the level of risk you take and look for more regular and guaranteed income.

At that point in time, the answer to the question "But how much did you lose?" should be "not much." In other words, sports bettors should start out wanting to be like Mike, but when they have truly made it, they should round out their bankroll with as little variance as possible, like Knish.

## **How Sportsbooks Make Money: Do They Always Want Balanced Action?**

A common belief among those new to [sports betting](#) is that sportsbooks aim to balance action on both sides of a wager to guarantee profit through the vig or juice. This small percentage is their fee for taking the bet.

While this strategy can mitigate risk, it's not the sole approach employed by sportsbooks.

In reality, operators like Pinnacle often take calculated positions based on their risk assessments and market insights.

Sportsbooks are in the business of managing risk and sometimes that means taking a position on a game when they believe that they have an edge.

## **Embracing Risk: The Pinnacle Approach**

Pinnacle is renowned for its low-margin, high-volume model, which allows for the acceptance of larger bets and attracts sharp bettors.

Rather than solely focusing on balanced books, Pinnacle leverages its sophisticated risk management systems to identify value and adjust lines accordingly.

This dynamic approach enables the sportsbook to capitalize on market inefficiencies and maximize long-term profitability.

## **Case Study: Mayweather vs. McGregor**

The 2017 boxing match between Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor serves as a prime example of strategic risk-taking.

Most recreational bettors were backing McGregor, lured by the enticing payout on the underdog. Meanwhile, customers that were profiled as sharper bettors were betting Mayweather with more regularity.

Despite a surge of public bets on underdog McGregor, sportsbooks maintained their position on Mayweather, recognizing the value in the odds and the likelihood of a Mayweather victory.

This decision resulted in significant profits when Mayweather won, demonstrating the effectiveness of informed risk management over mere balance.

This is just one example, but it highlights a key point: sportsbooks are not in the business of avoiding risk, they're in the business of embracing it.

## **The Influence of Sharp Money**

Sharp bettors, characterized by their informed and strategic wagering, play a pivotal role in line movement.

Pinnacle monitors betting patterns and adjusts odds not just to balance action but to reflect the most accurate probabilities.

This responsiveness to sharp money ensures that the sportsbook remains competitive and profitable.

## **Conclusion: Strategic Risk Over Balance**

The notion that sportsbooks always seek balanced action is a simplification. Operators like Pinnacle prioritize strategic risk management, leveraging data and market insights to make informed decisions.

By embracing calculated risks and adjusting lines based on sharp betting activity, Pinnacle exemplifies a model focused on long-term success rather than short-term balance.

# Efficient Market Hypothesis in Sports Betting: Why Early Bets Beat the Market

It is an important principle for players to understand market efficiency in [sports betting](#).

The efficient market hypothesis (EMH) takes the position that betting markets assimilate all available information to set fair odds.

This means that the opening odds are not necessarily the most accurate, because they reflect limited information, which could present an opportunity to find value in the market.

As more bets are placed, especially by sharp bettors, sportsbooks adjust their lines to reflect this information, leading to what's known as the closing line.

This closing line – the price just before the start of the game – is often considered the most accurate representation of a game's true odds.

## The Impact of Timing on Betting Outcomes

Many bettors wait until the last minute to place their bets, aiming to gather as much information as possible.

However, by this time, the market has already adjusted for most variables, and the opportunity to capitalize on mispriced odds diminishes.

There are times when a bet is placed early, only for a key player to be ruled out closer to game time due to rest or injury, leaving the bettor stuck with a negative expected value bet.

However, the opposite can also happen. An early bet might gain value if the opposing team unexpectedly loses a star player.

Since that unpredictability cuts both ways, it should not deter from making bets earlier.

Betting earlier creates more opportunity to gain value ahead of any significant market movement. It allows bettors to take advantage of opening lines before the market adjusts.

## Balancing Information and Opportunity

While betting early may mean acting without complete information, over time, the advantages can outweigh the occasional misstep.

By understanding and leveraging market efficiency, bettors can make more informed decisions.

Consistently betting early can lead to better [closing line value](#) (CLV), a key indicator of long-term betting success.

It's a good idea to track your bets to see if you are consistently getting CLV. If you are, it's a positive indication towards long-term profitability.

Bet early, beat the market, and let the closing line be your scoreboard.

## **Luck vs. Skill: What Really Wins in Sports Betting?**

In the realm of [sports betting](#), distinguishing between skill and luck is paramount.

While skill involves analyzing data, understanding odds, and making informed decisions, luck pertains to the unpredictable elements that can influence the outcome of a bet.

Recognizing the interplay between these factors is crucial for long-term success.

How much of sports betting success is based on skill, and how much is just pure randomness?

### **The Role of Variance in Sports Betting**

Variance refers to the natural fluctuations in betting outcomes due to randomness.

Even the most skilled bettors can experience losing streaks, not necessarily due to poor decisions but because of inherent unpredictability.

The reality is that even the best bettors in the world only win around 55 to 57 percent of their bets on sides and totals.

That means even the sharpest bettors are losing 43 to 45 percent of the time, and sometimes they'll go through brutal losing streaks just due to randomness.

Understanding variance helps bettors maintain perspective during both winning and losing periods.

## Evaluating Betting Performance: Key Metrics

How do you know if you're actually a winning bettor or just running hot?

To assess whether your betting success is due to skill or luck, consider the following metrics:

**Sample Size:** Evaluating performance over a large number of bets provides a more accurate picture of your betting prowess. Short-term results can be misleading due to greater variance.

**Closing Line Value (CLV):** Consistently securing better odds than the closing line suggests you're making informed bets. CLV is a strong indicator of long-term profitability.

**Expected Value (EV):** [Calculating the expected value](#) of your bets helps determine if you're making positive EV decisions, which are essential for sustained success.

**Betting Patterns:** Relying on high-risk bets like parlays or needing a last-second miracle to win, may indicate a dependence on luck rather than skill. Consistent, value-driven betting is a hallmark of skilled bettors. Truly sharp bettors grind out edges over time.

## Managing Emotions and Bankroll

Emotional control is vital in sports betting. Avoid chasing losses or becoming overconfident after wins.

The key is to stick to your process. If your process is sound, the results will follow over a long period of time.

Implementing sound bankroll management strategies ensures you can withstand the ups and downs of betting, preserving your capital for long-term opportunities.

## How to Make Your First \$1,000 in Sports Betting: A Beginner's Guide

Embarking on sports betting can be both exciting and profitable, even for beginners.

By focusing on foundational strategies and leveraging available resources, you can set yourself on the path to making your first \$1,000.

First and foremost, there are tons of different approaches that one can take to make a profit at [sports betting](#), but let's start with the low-hanging fruit. You don't even have to have a real knowledge of sports to implement these methods.

You're going to want to focus on a few different things:

## **1. Bankroll Management and Diversification**

### **Distribute Your Bankroll Wisely**

Begin by allocating your starting bankroll across multiple reputable sportsbooks. This diversification allows you to take advantage of various promotions and odds offerings. However, ensure you don't spread yourself too thin; managing a few accounts effectively is better than juggling many poorly.

## **2. Capitalize on Welcome Bonuses and Free Bets**

### **Seek Out Lucrative Promotions**

Many sportsbooks offer welcome bonuses, such as deposit matches or free bets, to attract new customers. These promotions can provide a significant boost to your initial bankroll.

### **Maximize Free Bet Value**

When using free bets, consider placing them on longer odds selections. Since you're not risking your own money, the potential return on higher odds can be more beneficial in building your bankroll.

## **3. Utilize Odds Boosts with Positive Expected Value**

### **Identify Valuable Odds Boosts**

Sportsbooks often offer odds boosts on specific events. Not all boosts are created equal; focus on those that provide positive expected value (+EV).

### **Compare Across Sportsbooks**

Use odds comparison tools to evaluate the boosted odds against standard

market prices. If the boosted odds offer a better return than the market average, it's likely a +EV opportunity.

**Read:** [The Importance of Line Shopping in Sports Betting](#)

## **4. Implement Top-Down Betting Strategies**

### **Follow Market Movements**

Instead of relying solely on personal predictions, observe how odds shift across sportsbooks. Significant movements can indicate valuable betting opportunities.

### **Exploit Stale Lines**

A "stale line" occurs when a sportsbook hasn't adjusted its odds in line with the market. Identifying and betting on these discrepancies can lead to profitable outcomes.

## **5. Leverage Pinnacle's Low Margins and Best Odds**

### **Benefit from Lower Margins**

Pinnacle is renowned for offering some of the lowest vig (or juice) in the industry, often around 2 percent compared to the standard 5-8 percent. This means better odds and higher potential returns for bettors.

### **Use Pinnacle as a Benchmark**

Due to their sharp odds, Pinnacle's lines are often used as a reference point. Comparing other sportsbooks' odds to Pinnacle's can help identify value bets.

### **Final Thoughts**

By strategically managing your bankroll, taking advantage of promotions, and employing informed betting strategies, reaching your first \$1,000 in sports betting is an attainable goal. Remember to bet responsibly and continuously seek value in the market.

## **Free Pizza and Bitcoin: What Rebalancing Teaches Us About Smart Betting**

One of the oldest adages in investing is that "There's no such thing as a free lunch." The implication of this saying is that if you're going to get anything of value, there's a cost associated with it.

If you don't realize what the cost is, then you'll find out later. Someone who really found out later was Laszlo Hanyecz, who thought he could get something for nothing when he was hungry and wanted pizza for lunch.

He's the infamous Florida man who, in May 2010, bought two pizzas for a stack of what he thought were magic beans: 10,000 BTC. It's the understatement of the century to say that he overpaid. But this is only true with hindsight bias, with which we've seen the exchange rate go from:

*2 pizzas=10,000 BTC*

*To:*

*2 pizzas= .000235 BTC*

It would seem Florida Man's free lunch wasn't so free. But as any financial advisor is obligated to tell you, past results are not necessarily indicative of future performance.

## **Bitcoin Price Fluctuation**

Whether you're a Bitcoin fanatic, or a blockchain luddite, if you think about this commodity at all, then you think about this question: will it continue to go up, or will it come back down?

Let me suggest a third option: will it go sideways? There's no indication that its volatility will subside anytime soon, but maybe for the next few years its destiny (when compared to the value of the fiat US dollar) is a lumpy sideways path that ends up right back where it started.

There's a precedent for this possibility over a couple of periods of the coin's history. For instance, from January 2021 to October 2023, the USD value of Bitcoin surged, then plummeted, then ended up almost exactly where it started. What's the optimal strategy for a Bitcoin investor if this is its most likely future?

Without accounting for interest or inflation, an investor with an all-cash portfolio and one with an all-Bitcoin one end up with roughly the same value. The same could be said for someone who invests 20%, 50%, or 80% of their current cash into Bitcoin and just holds. But can a savvy investor do better than any of these strategies, even if the only options available are to hold cash and/or Bitcoin? The answer might be surprising.

What if you started with a certain mix of Bitcoin/cash, and then rebalanced your account at the beginning of each month to match your chosen percentages?

## Bitcoin and Rebalancing

In other words, if you started with 20% of your asset value in Bitcoin and 80% in cash, and Bitcoin goes up, then you sell off enough Bitcoin to hold only 20% of your overall wealth in it at the start of the next month. If Bitcoin goes down, you do the opposite and buy some more.

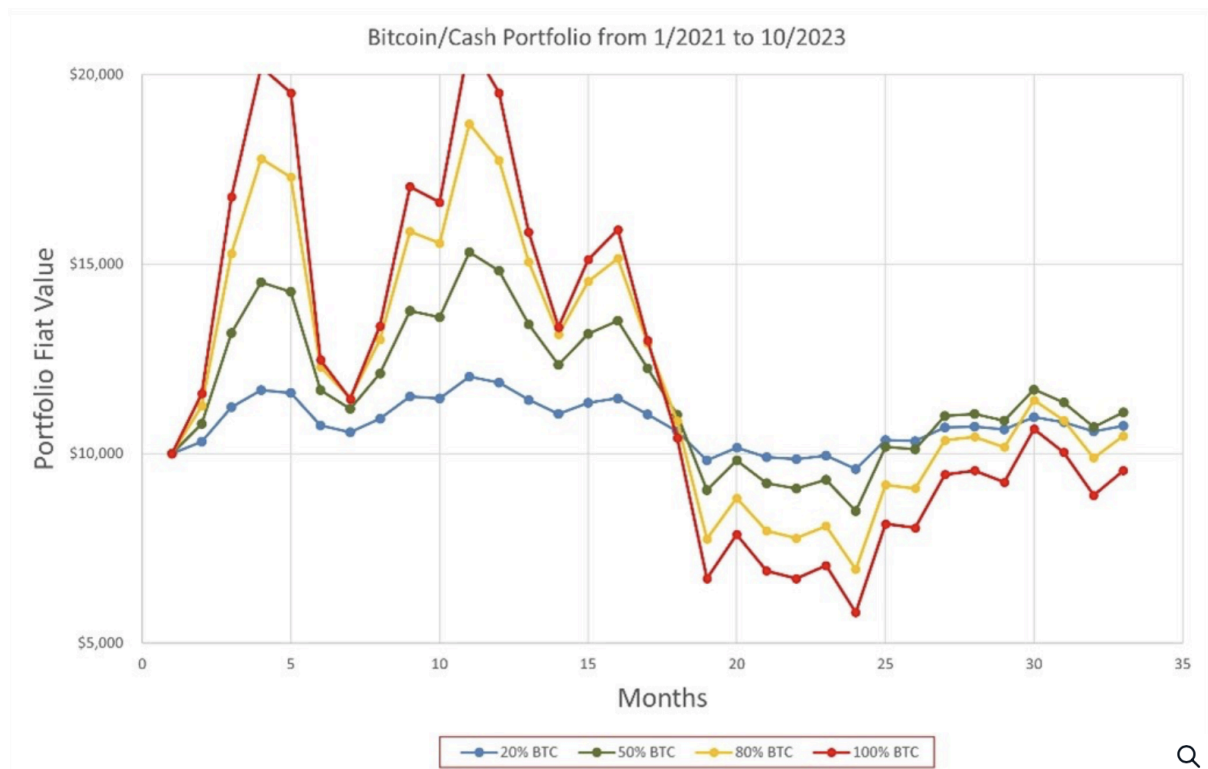
I realize that Bitcoin transactions like this aren't a free lunch either, so I'll assume you have to pay a fee on the amount bought or sold each month (as much as 1.75%!) Do you think you could come out ahead of the holders, even after paying the transaction fees?

You'll find the answer in the chart below. The red curve shows the portfolio value of a Bitcoin truther who has all his net worth on the blockchain (starting with \$10,000 USD) and might only sell a tiny fraction when craving pizza.

His net worth rides with the price of Bitcoin: up at first, then almost dies in month 24, before rebounding to take a small loss. On the other extreme, an all-cash holder would simply trace a flat line across the graph.

The investors in between, who choose to stake 20%, 50%, or 80% of their wealth in Bitcoin and rebalance their portfolio at the start of each month, follow the paths of the blue, green, and orange curves respectively.

The portfolio of the 20% rebalancer shows very little volatility, as you might expect, and ends up with a modest gain of about +7% return even after accounting for high transaction fees. It's also worth noting that, if this investor needed emergency funds in month 24 (when BTC temporarily tanked), he could easily have used cash and wouldn't have had to sell off Bitcoin at a large loss.



The 80% rebalancer must withstand most of the volatility of the BTC price fluctuations, but he still ends up with about a 5% gain rather than a 5% loss. But the 50% rebalancer does the best. By taking some profits when BTC is high, and reinvesting when BTC is low, he ends up with an almost 11% gain at the end of our selected period.

How is it possible to make a decent profit using only cash and a commodity that nets a small loss?

The answer is that the price of Bitcoin represents its *geometric* growth rate and not its *arithmetic* one. What does that even mean? The price of an asset might go up 10% one month, and then back down to its original price the next. But in the second month, it doesn't go back down by 10%. It only goes down by around 9%, because the final price is:

$$\text{Final price} = \text{Original price} \times 110\% \times 91\%$$

If it went back down by 10% in the second month, then the final price would be 99% of the original price instead because:

$$110\%*90\%=99\%$$

This effect is known in financial circles as volatility drag, meaning that if the value of something goes up and down by the same percentage, a fixed investment in it will always lose money due to that volatility. (I previously wrote about this phenomenon in sports betting terms in my January 2022 Pinnacle article [Placing a Bet: The Cost of Variance](#)) The bigger the volatility, the bigger the loss.

For example, if an asset goes up in price by 50% in the first month, and down by 50% in the second, it would lose a quarter of its value (do you see why?). So, how can a volatile asset end up at the same price after some wild swings? By having enough *arithmetic* gain to counteract the volatility drag.

## Bitcoin Price Volatility

This gain is hidden by the volatility of an asset like Bitcoin during periods where its price fluctuates but doesn't have lasting movement. During periods of even higher arithmetic gain, the price will go up, and 100% holders will usually come out ahead of other strategies.

This experiment is actually an illustration of the strategy known as "Shannon's Demon," which is described in many books and online articles. For example, Richmond Quantitative Advisors explained in their [article](#) on the subject: "The general idea behind Shannon's Demon is that two uncorrelated assets, each with zero expected long-term returns, can actually produce a combined portfolio that consistently generates positive returns if intelligently balanced and rebalanced at regular intervals."

Of course, Shannon was long gone by the time Bitcoin debuted, but his thought experiment with a volatile stock used the same rebalancing method with the same general effect. At the time, few real stocks had this level of volatility, so it's mostly been considered an interesting academic exercise. Until now.

Even if you're not much of an investor, and have never owned Bitcoin, this example can teach a valuable rule of thumb for sports bettors: The riskier a play is (i.e., the more volatile it is), the more reward you need to be able to get

from it to make it worth taking a bite. The bigger the bite you take (e.g., when risking 2% or more of your bankroll), the tastier the deal needs to be.

So, even with something as delicious as pizza, fitting the whole thing in your mouth is usually not the best strategy.

## **The Importance of Line Shopping in Sports Betting**

Line shopping.

You've probably heard this term before. You may have even dismissed it entirely at some point.

Why should you open a lot of different sportsbook accounts? That seems like a lot of work.

This article should show you why this is an absolute no-brainer for every bettor.

Line shopping is one of the easiest ways for you to improve as a sports bettor.

### **Line Shopping**

What is line shopping?

Line shopping refers to the practice of comparing the odds and betting lines offered by multiple sportsbooks to find the most favorable odds for a wager.

Different sportsbooks might have slightly different opinions or liabilities or clientele, so their odds and lines can vary. This creates an opportunity for bettors to potentially get better odds just by shopping around for the most advantageous lines.

The reluctance to line shop in sports betting is odd, considering that most people tend to routinely shop for the best prices in their day-to-day life.

It can be as simple as going to a different gas station to save a few cents, using different sites to compare prices when online shopping, or using travel sites like Expedia or Trivago that compare prices. These are all common occurrences in our day-to-day lives that we don't give a second thought.

The same should apply to sports betting.

## Line Shopping Example

To show just how valuable line shopping can be, let's take a look at a real-life, concrete example using [betstamp](#), an odds comparison tool.

Using a random day on the MLB schedule, Sunday, August 20, here is a look at the prices for one recreational sportsbook, with a bet for every visiting team and then for every home team.

For simplicity, using a standard bet size of \$100, betting on the visiting teams for this day would bring in \$505 total. Bets on the home teams would result in losses of \$665.

Bet Visitor	Line	Result	Profit/Loss	Bet Home	Line	Result	Profit/Loss
SEA	+160	W	160	HOU	-180	L	-180
SF	+195	W	195	ATL	-235	L	-235
BOS	-110	W	100	NYY	-110	L	-110
TOR	-110	W	100	CIN	-110	L	-110
DET	-115	W	100	CLE	-105	L	-105
PIT	+115	L	-100	MIN	-135	W	100
NYM	+105	L	-100	STL	-125	W	100
KC	+175	L	-100	CHC	-210	W	100
MIL	+175	W	175	TEX	-210	L	-210
CWS	-140	W	100	COL	+120	L	-100
BAL	-200	W	100	OAK	+170	L	-100
PHI	-225	L	-225	WSH	+185	W	185
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$505</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-\$665</b>

## Line Shopping Advantage

To see the value of line shopping, use that same process, but instead use four sportsbooks, including a low-margin sportsbook like Pinnacle, to instantly bring better results.

By taking the best available lines from each of the four sportsbooks, the same bets yield better returns, with visiting teams bringing in \$555 and home team wagers losing \$583.

Bet Visitor	Line	Result	Profit/Loss	Bet Home	Line	Result	Profit/Loss
SEA	+172	W	172	HOU	-175	L	-175
SF	+195	W	195	ATL	-212	L	-212
BOS	+103	W	103	NYY	-108	L	-108
TOR	-110	W	100	CIN	+104	L	-100
DET	-109	W	100	CLE	+100	L	-100
PIT	+119	L	-100	MIN	-129	W	100
NYM	+110	L	-100	STL	-119	W	100
KC	+190	L	-100	CHC	-209	W	100
MIL	+198	W	198	TEX	-189	L	-189
CWS	-125	W	100	COL	+124	L	-100
BAL	-181	W	100	OAK	+170	L	-100
PHI	-213	L	-213	WSH	+201	W	201
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$555</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-\$583</b>

Making the same bets on the visiting teams would bring in \$50 more for a \$100 bettor. On the home wagers, the losses decreased by \$82, and all of this is by making the same bets, only shopping around to get the best available price.

Consider that those differences – .5 units for betting on the visiting teams, or .82 units betting on the home sides – are not necessarily a huge deal for a single day, but as the days accumulate, finding better prices can bring in significant results.

## Line Shopping Conclusion

Adding just three sportsbooks to your repertoire could pay immediate dividends because you have more lines to choose from.

The more sportsbooks you can wager at, the less vig you are paying on games, and the easier it is going to be for you to win in the long run.

There are some people that are not going to win, that's the reality of betting, but if you are in it for entertainment, to have some fun, make some bets, and sweat some action, that's fine as well. Line shopping still helps these bettors prolong their bankroll.

### **Another Pricing Example**

Think of it this way: instead of betting on sports, if your hobby was going to the movie theatre, watching movies and eating some popcorn, you might be able to get a ticket and a bag of popcorn for \$20.

Hypothetically, if you could find a theater that was just as convenient, playing the same movie, with the same seating, the same sound, the same experience, the same popcorn, and they charged \$15 instead of \$20, then why wouldn't you go to the theater charging \$15?

Applying this principle to sports betting prolongs your entertainment value.

### **Easy to Apply**

Best of all, with line shopping, is that you don't need a particular skill set to accomplish this.

Some principles of sports betting are hard and require years of learning difficult concepts or learning through experience.

Line shopping is something that any bettor can start, without much effort at all, and it will immediately improve your sports betting results.

## **The Importance of Timing Your Bets Properly**

Let's look at a crucial aspect of [sports betting](#) that often gets overlooked: timing your bets properly.

Betting as early as possible has potential value, but if you're a casual bettor there are a lot of instances where patience truly is a virtue.

Here are some examples of when you'd be better suited to wait until you make your bets.

## Understanding Bet Patterns

Timing your bets isn't just about choosing the right team or player; it's about staying ahead of the market and recognizing patterns and trends.

KNOWING WHEN TO PLACE YOUR BETS CAN BE A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR TO DETERMINE LONG-TERM PROFITABILITY.

For example, if a particular team consistently drives the total over when they play, then there's no point in betting the under early on, as you will probably get better value on the under closer to game time.

We can look at some real-life examples to better illustrate this point. When the Vegas Golden Knights burst onto the NHL scene, they were a hot ticket for the first couple of years. They consistently attracted big money in their home games, causing the odds to shift significantly close to puck drop.

Due to the amount of betting volume on the Golden Knights in their home games, lines would shift drastically relative to other NHL games.

If you were looking to bet against Vegas during those early years, betting early would have been a very costly mistake, whereas waiting until closer to game time would have given you a much better price, showcasing the importance of staying on top of market trends.

Often, you aren't going to be able to catch on to this immediately, but if you're paying close enough attention you can start to use these consistent market moves to your advantage.

## Options Available Due to Betting Trends

Shifting focus to the NFL, week after week during the 2022-2023 season, the Philadelphia Eagles saw significant betting action on game day at the absolute highest limits.

UNDERSTANDING HOW AND WHEN MARKETS MOVE CAN PROVIDE AN ADVANTAGE FOR THE BETTOR.

Someone with deep pockets and heavy market influence really liked the Eagles that season. This was the year Philadelphia went 14-3 and lost in the Super Bowl to the Kansas City Chiefs.

Depending on your betting style, you could have used this market movement to your advantage.

Option one, you could have bet on the Eagles early, knowing that the odds would very likely improve by game day over the course of the week.

If you bet Philadelphia at opening prices or midweek prices, you would have earned yourself some great closing line value on their games that season.

Option number two is if you thought the market was overrating the Eagles and you wanted to bet against them.

Waiting until the last minute would have provided you with a more favorable price, because there would have been absolutely no reason to bet against the Eagles at any point earlier in the week.

## **Reacting to the Reaction**

The timing of player injuries can also greatly impact the market. Whenever a key player is sidelined, the market is bound to react.

If you anticipate an overreaction to that information, it's often best to wait for the news and wait for the subsequent market shift before you place your bet.

This might seem like common sense, but it's one of the biggest mistakes that casual bettors make.

Remember, price matters in every single sport.

So what's the main takeaway here?

While betting early can often be advantageous, it's crucial to stay flexible and adapt to market trends, whether it's recognizing a team's consistent pattern or capitalizing on market overreactions to player injuries.

Timing truly is everything in sports betting.