



OCCC ON DUTY

From the Ohio Casino Control Commission Division of Enforcement



OCCC Investigates Illegal Casinos



All photos courtesy of the Ohio Casino Control Commission.

In addition to enforcing Ohio's gaming laws at the state's four licensed casinos, Commission Gaming Agents are also investigating illegal casino operations. The Commission has served search warrants on several locations following complaints that local businesses were operating machines that paid out cash prizes in violation of Ohio law. These operations resulted in the confiscation of cash and documents, as well as the seizure or disabling of more than 400 illegal slot machines.

While several investigations are ongoing, we are pleased to announce a plea deal in our first illegal casino case. In February, Stephen Cline, the owner/operator of Spinners in Circleville, pleaded guilty to one felony count each of money laundering and operating an illegal casino after an investigation showed Spinners was operating machines that paid out cash. Cline was sentenced to 5 years of probation, fined \$10,000 and ordered to have no interests in any gaming operations during his probation. He will also forfeit 2 vehicles and \$160,000 as part of the plea deal. The Commission extends its thanks to the Pickaway County Sheriff's Office, the Pickaway County Prosecutor's Office and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation for their assistance in this case.

Staff Changes in Enforcement Division

There have been a few staff changes in the Enforcement Division. Mark Leatherman was named Deputy Director of the Enforcement Division last February. Mark first joined the OCCC in 2012 as the supervisor of our Columbus Office. He also spent 27 years as an officer with the Delaware Police Department, starting as a patrol officer before being promoted to Detective and then Sergeant.

Replacing Mark as the Supervisor for the Columbus Office is Bob Houghton. Bob started with the OCCC as a Gaming Agent, working in both our Columbus and Cincinnati Offices. Prior to joining the OCCC, Bob spent 20 years with the Wilmington Police Department and served eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps.

In addition, the Cleveland Office is now overseen by Don Michalosky. Don previously worked at the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office, where he oversaw the narcotics and K-9 units as well as the Detective Bureau during his 30-year career. Don also has extensive experience in providing security during high-profile sporting and political events.

Contact information for the Enforcement Division can be found on page 5.

Cleveland & Cincinnati Casinos Under New Management



In February, Rock Gaming announced the new name and branding for its Ohio casinos as it continues the process of assuming day-to-day oversight of the facilities from Caesars Entertainment. JACK Cleveland Casino completed its transition on May 11, and the Cincinnati casino transitioned to the JACK brand on June 8. The announcement also included details of the new player loyalty program for the properties, called ClubJACK. In addition, Rock Gaming is now known as JACK Entertainment.

Since the announcement last year that Rock Gaming/JACK would be taking over management of its two Ohio properties, Commission staff has been in regular contact with members of the Rock team regarding the changes that are needed. This includes critical systems such as accounting, document management and surveillance, as well as the properties' internal controls.

The OCCC Division of Enforcement is responsible for enforcing ORC 3772.99, which includes criminal statutes that relate to casinos and casino gaming. The Division has filed numerous criminal charges statewide since Ohio's casinos first opened in 2012. Statistics are updated quarterly.

Criminal Cases - All Ohio Casinos (Jan. 2016 - March 2016)	
Gaming Crimes (including Bribery and Underage Gambling)	55
Theft/Property Crimes Theft/Petty Theft/Grand Theft Receiving Stolen Property Criminal Mischief Possession of Criminal Tools Safecracking Vandalism/Criminal Damaging	55
Criminal Trespassing/Complicity to Trespass (includes VEP violators)	72
Underage Violations Underage Entry/Attempted Entry Aiding Underage Entry Underage Consumption Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor Prohibitions (Fake/False ID)	70
Financial/Fraud Crimes Counterfeit Forgery Falsification Fraud Misuse of Credit Cards Tampering with Records/Evidence	33
Drug Crimes Narcotics/drug possession Drug Trafficking	4
Other Assault Complicity Endangering Children Disorderly and/or Intoxicated Driving Under Suspension Obstructing Official Business Public Indecency Resisting Arrest	20

Statistics represent charges as presented to prosecutor and reflect date on which charges were filed.

OCCC On Duty is a publication of the Ohio Casino Control Commission Division of Enforcement. Questions or comments should be directed to: **Jessica Franks** (Jessica.Franks@casinocontrol.ohio.gov) or **Elise Koeppe** (Elise.Koeppe@casinocontrol.ohio.gov).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Joint Committee Recommends Additional Scrutiny of Daily Fantasy Sports, Queen of Hearts Game: The Joint Committee on Gaming and Wagering issued its annual report in December following a series of meetings discussing the various types of gaming in Ohio, Senator Bill Coley’s promotional play proposal, and the “Queen of Hearts” game. The Committee is tasked under the Casino Control Act with reviewing all laws and rules governing the operation and oversight of all authorized gaming and wagering activities in the State of Ohio and recommending any changes it may find desirable.

The Committee’s report included the following recommendations:

- Promotional play at Ohio’s casinos and racinos should be taxed, either wholly or partially.
- Games such as “Queen of Hearts” should be assigned to a regulatory agency to ensure proper oversight and compliance with state laws.
- Ohio should continue to explore daily fantasy sports.

We will provide updates in future newsletters should the Legislature decide to take up any of the Committee’s recommendations.

Proposal Seeks to Limit Promotional Play at Casinos, Racinos: A bill that seeks to limit the amount of promotional play that can be given out by the state’s casinos and racinos has been introduced in the Ohio Legislature by State Senator Bill Coley (R- Cincinnati). Senate Bill 140 would limit the amount of promo play a facility could provide to \$5 million per year. Additionally, a facility could only offer promo play if it met certain criteria regarding revenue and the number of machines/gaming positions installed.

The bill’s supporters argue that the amount of promotional play being given away is taking away from tax revenues that would otherwise go to Ohio’s schools and local governments. The bill is currently assigned to the Senate Finance Committee.

Seitz introduces Bill to Permit Casino Employees to Participate in Gaming in Ohio: State Senator Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) recently introduced legislation that would permit casino gaming employees to participate in gaming in Ohio except at the facility in which he/she is employed or at an affiliated casino in Ohio.

Currently, Ohio law prohibits any casino operator or employee to participate in casino gaming other than as part of employment anywhere in Ohio. This prohibition was included in the Casino Control Law to help mitigate the risk that casino employees would use their internal knowledge of casino operations to cheat at games in collusion with other employees.

Casino employees assert the law unfairly requires them to go out of state in order to participate in casino gambling.

Senate Bill 265 seeks to put Ohio in alignment with neighboring jurisdictions where a similar approach has proven fair and maintains the integrity of casino gaming. The bill is currently under consideration in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.

OCCC Given New Tools to Regulate Skill Games

As part of House Bill 64, the two-year state budget that was approved last year, the Commission was given rule-making authority with respect to skill games operations. Previously, our jurisdiction was limited to a single sentence in the Casino Control Act, which stated, “the commission shall assume jurisdiction over and oversee the regulation of skill-based amusement machines as is provided in the law of this state.” No further guidance was provided as to how this was to be accomplished.

We have seen growing evidence of establishments that purport to be legal skill games businesses, but are in fact operating illegal slot machines and/or paying cash prizes in violation of Ohio law. Together with our existing law enforcement authority, these new provisions will allow us to adequately address illegal casinos that masquerade as legal skill games establishments. The Commission is determining how best to go about licensing and regulating these operations, a process that will continue in the weeks and months ahead. This will enable the Commission to validate those following the law and effectively address those who are not.



New Responsible Gambling Campaign Launched

Ohio for Responsible Gambling - a partnership between the Commission, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Ohio Lottery Commission - has launched a new statewide campaign designed to prevent problem gambling and raise awareness of the resources available to those affected by gambling.

“Be the 95%” is based on public health science and aims to reach the “influencers” of problem gamblers - such as spouses, family members and friends. In addition, it seeks to encourage dialogue at the community level and create a positive approach to educating people about safe gambling practices.

The new campaign is being featured on billboards, radio spots and social media - along with a website: www.the95percent.org. The site features tips on low-risk gambling, provides warning signs and offers a problem gambling screening feature.

A portion of the campaign was funded through the 2 percent of casino revenue taxes that are set aside for the Problem Gambling & Addictions Fund, as well as funds confiscated from individuals who violated the terms of the Voluntary Exclusion Program.

OCCC in the News

Guilty Pleas in Cincinnati Cheating Cases

Several former employees of the Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati have pleaded guilty to felony gaming charges for their roles in cheating scams. The first involved a Table Games Supervisor who would place a predetermined sequence of cards into decks of cards used in mini baccarat. An accomplice – a former dealer at the casino – would then place significant wagers on the game. The scam resulted in a loss of more than \$25,000.

In the second case, a craps dealer facilitated cheating by a known felon by adding chips to his bets. The investigation found more than 150 instances of cheating, resulting in a loss of more than \$96,000.

All the defendants were sentenced to probation or community control and ordered to pay a fine/restitution.

Former Dealer at Horseshoe Casino Cleveland Sentenced

A former poker dealer at the Horseshoe Casino Cleveland has been sentenced to 18 months probation after being caught stealing chips and cash during his work shifts. He was also required to make restitution to the casino.

Charges Brought in Credit Card Scam

In Toledo, seven individuals have been charged with multiple felony counts of identity fraud and forgery for their involvement in using fraudulent credit cards at Hollywood Toledo to obtain cash advances. The individuals were parts of three separate groups that hit the casino on multiple occasions.

Member of Roulette Scam Caught

One of the original members of the roulette cheating scam that hit all 4 casinos was sentenced to 11 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution for his role in the scam.

Contact Us



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Different agencies in Ohio are responsible for enforcing state gaming laws.

Use the contacts below if you have questions or need information regarding a particular type of gaming.



Ohio Casino Control Commission:

Casino gaming, skill games

614-387-5858



Ohio Attorney General's Office:

Bingo, charitable gaming

1-800-282-0515



Ohio Lottery Commission:

State Lottery, video lottery terminals

216-774-5900



Ohio State Racing Commission:

Horse Racing

614-466-2757

Report A Gaming Crime

If you suspect or have witnessed a gaming-related crime, please contact our office at (614) 387-5858.

You can also report a gaming crime anonymously using our website: www.casinocontrol.ohio.gov.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING FUND

As part of the constitutional amendment authorizing casino gaming in Ohio, 2 percent of casino tax revenues is deposited into the Ohio Law Enforcement Training Fund. Money from the fund is used to to enhance public safety by providing training opportunities to law enforcement personnel across Ohio.

Total Deposited to Date: \$19,793,356.10

*Note: Figures from the Ohio Department of Taxation. Deposits made on a quarterly basis.