

Betting battleground: The fight over where people bet in the future

David Purdum, *ESPN.com*

A battle to be the place to watch and bet on sports is raging around the country, and the Las Vegas casino owner sitting on his corner barstool chuckling like Norm Peterson from "Cheers" is very much in the fight.

Whether drinking with guests at Longbar at The D hotel casino, or making big sports bets with competing bookmakers around town, Derek Stevens has emerged as the most approachable casino owner in Las Vegas since arriving from Detroit in the 1990s. Now everyone is watching his next move, as if the future of sports betting in Sin City depends on it.

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The coronavirus pandemic crushed Las Vegas' gaming and tourism industry back in the spring. The sportsbooks sat dormant for months, and revenue plummeted. According to the Nevada Gaming Control Board, gaming revenue in April suffered a 99.6% decrease compared with April 2019. Casinos are back open now, and crowds (of mostly locals) have returned to sportsbooks, which are operating at limited capacity during their most lucrative time of the year, football season. But the pandemic is just one of many challenges facing giant sportsbooks such as Caesars Palace, The Mirage and the SuperBook.

The professional sports leagues themselves have entered the bookmaking business and are aiming to lure fans out of the casinos and into placing bets inside their own stadiums and arenas. The location of sportsbooks, however, has become

somewhat irrelevant. As regulated sports betting spreads across the United States, most bettors have access to bookmakers in their pockets, on their phones. The bulk of sports betting now takes place online, so it's understandable that casinos outside Nevada are more often opting to build sports bars rather than the giant amphitheater sportsbooks that are so popular in Las Vegas...

Rest is here.

For more on sports betting, see [here](#).