



National Gambling Board
South Africa
a member of the **delc** group

1085 Francis Baard Street, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028

Tel: +27 (0) 10003 3475 Fax +27 (0) 86 618 5729 E-mail info@ngb.org.za
Web www.ngb.org.za

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL GAMBLING BOARD WARNS THE PUBLIC ABOUT ILLEGAL GAMBLING SCAM PLATFORMS AND FAKE BETTING APPS DURING THE 2026 SOCCER WORLD CUP TOURNAMENT.

Pretoria, 1 June 2026

As we approach the anticipated 2026 Soccer World Cup season, the National Gambling Board (NGB) encourages members of the public to practice responsible gambling and cautions them to remain vigilant against the growing number of illegal online gambling scam platforms and fake betting applications targeting South Africans.

The NGB reminds the public that gambling should be conducted responsibly and strictly for entertainment purposes. Excessive or compulsive gambling may lead to serious financial, social, and psychological harm.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to monitor online activity to prevent under-age gambling, particularly during the tournament period when gambling-related advertising and online promotions may increase significantly.

Major sporting tournaments often result in increased betting activity, with criminals exploiting the excitement surrounding these events to lure unsuspecting consumers. Members of the public, particularly punters in South Africa, are urged to exercise extreme caution regarding the increasing number of illegal gambling scam platforms operating through fake mobile applications, phishing links, and social media advertisements promising unrealistic winnings and bonuses.

These fraudulent platforms often disguise themselves as legitimate betting operators and lure members of the public with false promises of free sign-up bonuses, guaranteed winnings, instant cash rewards, easy money and fake jackpots. After users register and deposit money, the platforms display fake winnings or inflated account balances. However, when punters attempt to withdraw their “winnings”, the scammers demand additional payments, often claiming that customers must first pay.

“Once payment is made, victims either lose communication with the operators or are pressured into making further payments. The illegal operators mainly target victims through Facebook advertisements, WhatsApp messages, Telegram groups, SMS push links, fake social media pages and mobile applications downloaded outside official app stores”, says the Acting CEO of NGB, Mr. Lungile Dukwana.

These illegal platforms also impersonate or imitate legitimate licensed bookmakers operating in South Africa. In some instances, they misuse names, logos, colours, or branding elements associated with recognised bookmakers.



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IMPORTANT REMINDER TO THE PUBLIC

The public is reminded that legitimate and licensed bookmakers in South Africa:

- Operate through official websites using their correct registered domain names
- Clearly display their provincial gambling board licence information on their websites
- Do not request customers to pay taxes or fees before releasing winnings
- Do not guarantee winnings or offer unrealistic profits
- Are regulated by recognised Provincial Gambling Boards in South Africa

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Members of the public are encouraged to take the following precautions:

- Always type the correct bookmaker website address directly into your web browser
- Verify that the operator displays a valid provincial gambling licence
- Avoid clicking on suspicious push links or social media advertisements
- Never pay upfront fees to withdraw winnings
- There will be no apps or pushed links as our bookmakers are only accessible through their official websites.
- Report suspicious gambling platforms to the relevant authorities

Consumers are further advised never to share banking passwords, one-time pins (OTPs), identity documents, or confidential financial information with unverified gambling platforms. Unlawful gambling winnings emanating from illegal gambling operators are confiscated by the NGB and there is no protection or legal recourse offered to victims in recovering financial losses.

The NGB therefore urges members of the public to exercise heightened vigilance, verify the legitimacy of gambling operators before participating, and only engage with licensed and regulated betting platforms authorised to operate within South Africa. Members of the public are encouraged to verify licensed operators through the NGB's Verified Gambling Operators Web Portal available on <https://www.ngb.org.za/verified-operators/>

Additionally, Mr. Dukwana said, "This sporting season can escalate risky gambling behaviour. We encourage the public to remain vigilant and to educate family members, friends, and communities about these scams. Illegal gambling platforms not only defraud consumers but also operate outside South African gambling laws and regulations.

The NGB further urges families, communities, and individuals to look out for early warning signs of compulsive or problematic gambling, including:

- Spending more time and money on gambling than intended
- Chasing losses or believing a "big win" will solve financial problems
- Borrowing money, selling possessions, or using credit to gamble

- Hiding gambling activities or lying to friends and family
- Neglecting work, family, or social responsibilities
- Feeling anxious, guilty, or irritable when unable to gamble
- Using gambling as an escape from stress, loneliness, or frustration

The NGB encourages consumers who choose to gamble during this season to adopt the following responsible gambling practices:

- Treat gambling as entertainment, not a source of income
- Set a budget and never exceed it
- Never gamble under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Avoid gambling when feeling stressed or emotionally overwhelmed
- Take regular breaks and avoid long gambling sessions
- Do not use money intended for essentials (rent, food, school fees)
- Only gamble with licensed operators

The South Africa Responsible Gambling Foundation (“SARGF”) provides free, confidential assistance for individuals and families affected by gambling harm. If you or your loved one is affected by gambling harm, you can contact the SARGF using any of the following:

- 24-Hour Toll Free Counselling Line: 0800 006 008
- WhatsApp or SMS SARGF: 076 675 0710
- Email is available: counsellor@responsiblegambling.co.za

Self-exclusion programmes are also available, allowing consumers to be barred from accessing licensed gambling venues and platforms in the event a customer identifies that they have a gambling problem. A customer may contact their nearest Provincial Licensing Authority (“PLA”) or a licensed gambling operator to volunteer to self-exclude.

To report any suspicious or illegal gambling activities contact the NGB switchboard on 010 003 3475 or send an email to info@ngb.org.za.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GAMBLING BOARD

The National Gambling Board (NGB), an agency of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), was established in terms of the National Gambling Act, Act No 33 of 1996 which was repealed on 01 November 2004 by the National Gambling Act, 2004, (Act No 7 of 2004) (‘the Act’). The Act makes provision for the oversight of matters relating to casinos, bingo, betting and wagering and Limited Payout Machines (LPMs), and promotes uniform norms and standards in relation to gambling throughout South Africa.

The strength of the NGB is informed by multiple decades of regulating a gambling industry which was fragmented with low credibility from the pre-1994 era. Its performance outcome is an effectively regulated and continuously supervised gambling industry, which is a significant economic sector that upholds national and internationally recognised standards of compliance and consequently national and international industry reputation.

The NGB is a regulator with concurrent competencies with the provincial gambling regulators. Its work is to ensure harmonisation and consistency with the National Gambling Act and its statutes. The NGB provides a stable environment within which the gambling industry can grow its operations for the benefit of all.

Additionally, the NGB prioritises broad-based public education around illegal gambling and responsible gambling in the best interest of the South African public, balancing a capable state, with the economic growth of the industry and social cohesion.

Vision

To position South Africa as the pre-eminent jurisdiction with an exemplary and effectively regulated gambling industry.

Mission

Lead the regulation of the gambling industry in the fulfilment of the National Gambling Act, 2004, through an effectively regulated and supervised gambling industry that upholds domestic, continental and internationally recognised standards of compliance.

THE END