

Football Next to Racing as Gambling Industry, Lardner Says

A Notre Dame Alumnus Offers to Bet the Writer 1 to 3 the Irish Go Through the Remainder of Season Undeclared and Untied—Layden's Men Are Good "Upsetters."

By JOHN LARDNER.

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NEW YORK, Nov. 7—A flaming Notre Dame alumnus—born in Montana, educated at Gonzaga, earning his pay check in New York, and never any closer to Notre Dame in his life than the dining car of the Twentieth Century as she lopes through Niles, Mich.—in other words, a typical Notre Dame alumnus—offers to bet me ten bucks to thirty the Hoosier Hibernians will go through the remainder of their season undefeated and untied.

This is not a very good bet, technically, from the point of view of the spurious South Bender. Say, for instance, that his ball club is an even money shot against each of its three remaining opponents. Allowing this to be true, he should net \$70 for his parlay, instead of \$30.

It's fair to call each of those three games an even thing. Minnesota, Northwestern and Southern California come up in a row. If the Irish might be said to have an edge over any one of the three in a game to be played tomorrow, the same edge will be against them at the end of the string, because of injury, physical deterioration and mental pressure.

Breaks Unlikely 3 Games in Row.

They took a hammering from Navy last week, while winning. They meet another hammering team this Saturday in Minnesota, and another in Northwestern the week after. Over and above all which, the greatest football outfit in the world does not figure to get the winning breaks for three games in succession. Notre Dame has had them in two games already, against Carnegie Tech and Army.

Therefore, I would seem to be robbing the earnest absentee alumnus of Notre Dame by taking his bet. I will take it anyway, and the chances are he is robbing me.

There is something about those Irish, the Slavic Irish, the Dutch Irish, and the Irish Irish alike, that raises Cain with form and precedent. A real good football team, such as Cousin Elmer Layden has formed this year, is not enough to take a terrible schedule in stride, without defeat or tie. But the Notre Dames are screwy enough to do it anyway. A man who bets a nickel against them is a sucker, which is the best description I can think of for your correspondent at this juncture.

What I started out to say was that, in most football parlays, excluding Notre Dame, the fellow who bets the short end has the worst of it. He seldom gets odds as long as he should get.

Dr. John Tecumseh Doyle and other practitioners of man-to-man football betting, involving single games, have asked me to point out what terrible rookery is committed in the name of college sport by the

operators of the so-called "parlay card" or pool system.

Percentage Always Works for the House.

Dr. Doyle and the other man-to-man bettors enjoy all the best of it themselves, with their professional percentage. For the Ohio State-Purdue game last week, for instance, if you bet with a professional, you were asked to lay 3 to 1 if you liked Ohio State, and you got only 2 to 1 if you liked Purdue. That's the percentage. It always works for the house.

But this is petty larceny compared with the grandiose operations of the "card" men. We will take, for blackboard drill, a typical card, issued last week by one of the East's most notable gamblers. These are the games he listed:

Tulane vs. Alabama; Auburn vs. Villanova; Colgate vs. Syracuse; Washington vs. Stanford; U. S. C. vs. California; Arkansas vs. Rice; Boston college vs. Indiana.

You could pick four, five, six or seven winners. All your choices had to win, naturally, or the bet was lost. Ties counted against you. The card offered 10 to 1 for four winners, 16 to 1 for five, 25 to 1 for six and 50 to 1 for seven.

Assume all games to be even. This is a fair assumption, when you consider last Saturday's results. You probably know parlay mathematics. You bet \$1, say, on the first game. Winning, the \$2 rides on the second game. Winning, the \$4 rides on the third game. Winning, the \$8 rides on the fourth game. Winning, you

ADDITIONAL SPORT ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

have \$16. Deduct your original investment, and your net profit is \$15. In other words, the odds against picking four winners should be 15 to 1.

By the same reasoning, the true odds against five winners are 31 to 1, against six winners 63 to 1, against seven winners 127 to 1. And look what the card operators give you.

I hope I have done my duty by Dr. Doyle and the man to man bettors. To tell the truth, I bet on the cards myself. And anyone who refuses to believe that college football is the biggest gambling industry in the country next to the horses has probably got a slight case of total blindness.