



## Getting the Goods on Props and Futures

### Propped Up

#### Part One of a Two -Part Series

**By Hansel Wei**

A buddy of mine has always loved the phrase “if I were a betting man...” and uses it whenever he wants to speculate on the outcome of anything going on in the world, whether it’s “if I were a betting man, I’d put money on Brad and Angelina getting married,” or “if I were a betting man, I’d sure like those Nationals right now,” or “if I were a betting man, I’d say Mike Tyson will be in the ring again before the end of 2006.”

Well, I **am** a betting man. In fact, it’s the industry in which I’ve chosen to make a living. For those of us who want to do more than just talk about various happenings in the world such as the ones mentioned above, many books including GoSportsBet offer props and futures. In this two-part article, I’ll look at how each of these wagering opportunities should be approached.

Let’s briefly define what each of these betting opportunities entails:

**Props:** Less-than-ordinary wagering opportunities where a player speculates on various events in the world, whether it is the result of a national election, the actions of a celebrity, or a sports or television event (such as what a star will wear to an awards show or who will win an Oscar). There are plenty of other examples. Players generally do not see props as a serious opportunity to make a lot of money, (as these events are impossible to consistently handicap) but they can be profitable ventures, and regardless of the outcome, wagering on props will add excitement to the event in question.

**Futures:** Advance lines posted on the winners of major sporting events, including but not limited to the Super Bowl, the World Series, the NBA Championship, the Stanley Cup (when there is a season), pennant winners, etc. Betting futures is generally considered easier to predict successfully, and is just as entertaining as betting props.

Now, let’s look at how to bet each type of wager. In this article we’ll look at props, and in the second half of the article, we’ll turn to futures.

**Props** are generally far more outlandish than futures. Futures can be handicapped by analyzing rosters, looking at trends over the course of a season (eg. “oh, the Yankees always play well in August and September), or comparing a team to divisional rivals.

When it comes to props, though, you can sometimes make the case that *no one* can predict the outcome, perhaps not even the person being wagered on! A month before the Oscars, does Halle Berry know what color dress she's going to wear? Probably not. Does 50 Cent know if he's going to go to jail before the end of the year? One would hope not! As you might imagine, props tend to be more entertaining than serious investments.

Particularly when it comes to the more outrageous props (people serving jail time, future arrests, celebrity marriages/divorces, fan-selected awards such as the Teen Choice Awards, etc.) one should approach these as pure entertainment. If you're looking to strictly increase your bankroll, then, as I've said before, you should stick to traditional straight wagers. You are unlikely to find better odds in your favor than the 11 to 10 you usually risk for a straight bet. However, props can be far more entertaining than straight wagers, and can deal with subjects outside the sporting world.

Often a group of friends will plan to follow an event, and to make things more interesting, each will pick a "player" and put a small amount of money on that player. For instance, one year a group of buddies and I each chose one of the films nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars, and we each put \$10 on a film. The money wasn't of supreme importance; we just wanted a little extra excitement, and it made for an enjoyable night.

In sports betting, a prop bet is a wager that is not directly related to the final score in that game or event. One instance in which props can be useful is when you don't have a great read on a game's outcome, but you have a strong feeling about how one player will perform. Books often offer over/unders for how many yards a running back will run for, or how many passing yards a quarterback will throw for, for example. These add excitement to a game and may make an otherwise non-bettable game more attractive.

In the second part of this article I will look at futures and how they should be bet.

**Until next time, do yourself a favor...**

**Keep doing things Hansel's Wei.**