

THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

**BETTING ACT
(CHAPTER 21)**

**1970 Ed. Cap. 95
Ordinance
30 of 1960**

Amended by
21 of 1973
8 of 1986

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Betting Act

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.
3. Offences relating to common betting-houses and betting information centres.
4. Advancing money for conducting business of common betting-house.
5. Betting in a common betting-house.
6. Penalty for unlawful announcement of information on horse-race, etc.
7. Money paid recoverable.
8. Presumption against person accepting or receiving stakes, etc.
9. Presumptions.
10. Court to make order for demolition of structural contrivances for facilitating betting.
11. Search warrant against premises used as common betting-house.
12. Search warrant against persons in possession of betting instruments.
13. Arrest and search upon suspicion.
14. Magistrate or police officer may himself enter and search.
15. Evidence by police officer to be presumptive evidence.
16. Protection of informers from discovery.
17. Obstruction of police officers.
18. Examination of offenders.
19. Binding over on second conviction.
20. Jurisdiction of courts.
21. Stakes.
22. Exemption.
23. Reward to informer.

An Act to suppress common betting-houses, betting in public places and bookmaking.

[20th May 1960]

1. This Act may be cited as the Betting Act.

Short title.

2.—(1) In this Act, unless there is something repugnant in the subject or context —

Interpretation.
8/86.

“access” includes access through the telephone, by post or by telegram;

“betting information centre” means any place kept or used for receiving or transmitting by telephone or other means any information relating to any horse-race or other sporting event for the purpose of betting or wagering in contravention of this Act;

“bookmaker” means any person who, whether on his own account or as penciller, runner, employee or agent for any other person, receives or negotiates bets or wagers whether on a cash or on a credit basis and whether for money or money’s worth, or who in any manner holds himself out or permits himself to be held out in any manner as a person who receives or negotiates those bets or wagers; but does not include a club, its officers or employees operating or conducting a totalisator or pari-mutuel or any other system or method of cash or credit betting authorised under section 22;

“common betting-house” means —

(a) any place kept or used for betting or wagering on any event or contingency of or relating to any horse-race or other sporting event to which the public or any class of the public has or may have access;

(b) any place kept or used for habitual betting or wagering on any such event or contingency as aforesaid, whether the public has, or may have, access thereto or not; and

(c) any place used by a bookmaker for the purpose of receiving or negotiating bets or wagers on any such event or contingency as aforesaid whether the bets or wagers reach the bookmaker by the hand of the person placing the bet or his agent or the bookmaker’s agent or through the telephone or by post or by telegram or by any other means;

Cap. 323.

“equipment” has the same meaning as in the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore Act;

“penciller” means a person who helps a bookmaker to keep his accounts or record of bets in connection with horse-races;

“place” means any house, office, room or building, and any place or spot, whether open or enclosed, and includes a ship, boat, or other vessel whether afloat or not, and any vehicle;

“runner” means a person employed by a bookmaker to collect and settle bets either on salary or on commission basis;

“sporting event” includes any race, fight, game, sport or exercise;

“telecommunication system” has the same meaning as in the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore Act. Cap. 323.

(2) A place shall be deemed to be used for a purpose if it is used for that purpose on only one occasion.

(3) A place shall be deemed to be used for habitual betting or wagering if betting or wagering is frequently carried on therein, notwithstanding that betting or wagering is not the primary purpose for which that place is normally used.

(4) Every person who demises or lets for hire a place shall be deemed to be the owner thereof.

(5) A common betting-house shall be deemed to be a common nuisance and contrary to law.

3.—(1) Any person who —

- (a) being the owner or occupier, or having the use temporarily or otherwise thereof, keeps or uses a place as a common betting-house or betting information centre;
- (b) permits a place of which he is the owner or occupier or of which he has the use temporarily or otherwise, to be kept or used as a common betting-house or betting information centre;
- (c) has the care or management of or in any manner assists in the management or in the business of, a place kept or used as a common betting-house or betting information centre;
- (d) receives directly or indirectly any money or valuable thing, for or in respect of any bet or wager on any such event or contingency, as is mentioned in this Act, in a common betting-house or betting information centre; or
- (e) announces, exhibits or publishes, or causes to be announced, exhibited or published, either orally or by means of any letter, circular, telegram, placard, handbill, card, print, writing, design, sign, advertisement or otherwise that a place is

Offences relating to common betting-houses and betting information centres.
8/86.

opened, kept or used as a common betting-house or betting information centre within or without Singapore, or in any other manner invites or solicits any person to commit a breach of any of the provisions of this Act,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than \$20,000 and not more than \$200,000 and shall also be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

(2) Any person who occupies or has the use temporarily of a place which is kept or used by another person as a common betting-house or betting information centre shall be presumed until the contrary is proved to have permitted that place to be so kept or used.

Advancing money for conducting business of common betting-house.
8/86.

4. Any person who advances or furnishes money for the purpose of establishing or conducting the business of a common betting-house shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 and shall also be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Betting in a common betting-house.
8/86.

5.—(1) Except as permitted by an exemption under section 22, any person who bets or wagers in a common betting-house, or with a bookmaker in any place or by any means, or who for the purpose of betting or wagering loiters in any place to which the public has or may have access shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(2) A person found in a common betting-house, or found escaping therefrom on the occasion of its being entered under this Act shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, to be or to have been betting or wagering therein.

(3) Any person who —

- (a) acts as a bookmaker in any place;
- (b) for the purpose of bookmaking or settling bets loiters in any common betting-house or in any place to which the public has or may have access; or
- (c) assists, by giving warning or otherwise, any person committing an offence under this Act to evade arrest or detection,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than \$20,000 and not more than \$200,000 and shall also be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

(4) When any person is convicted of an offence under this section all books, accounts, documents, telegrams, writings, circulars, cards or other articles used as a subject or means of betting or wagering, or in connection therewith, and all moneys or securities for money found in his possession which a Magistrate's Court or District Court is of opinion were used or intended to be used for betting or wagering shall be declared by that Court to be forfeited to the State and shall be dealt with accordingly.

(5) An offence under subsection (3) shall be a non-bailable seizable offence and any person making an arrest for such an offence may seize and detain any articles liable to be forfeited.

(6) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in section 21/73. 352 of the Criminal Procedure Code a police officer shall have power to release on bail a person accused of an offence under subsection (3). Cap. 68.

6. Any person who for the purpose of betting or wagering in contravention of this Act announces or publishes or causes to be announced or published in any manner information relating to any horse-race or other sporting event shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$50,000 and shall also be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years. Penalty for unlawful announcement of information on horse-race, etc. 8/86.

7.—(1) Any money or valuable thing received by any person convicted under section 5 (3) as a deposit on or in settlement of any bet or wager shall be deemed to have been received to or for the use of the person from whom it was received. Money paid recoverable.

(2) Such money or valuable thing, or the value thereof, may be recovered accordingly with full costs of suit in any court of competent jurisdiction.

8.—(1) Any person accepting or receiving bets, stakes or wagers or found in possession of any books, accounts, documents, telegrams, writings, circulars, cards or other articles which are used or appear to have been used or Presumption against person accepting or receiving stakes, etc.

intended to be used in connection with or which relate or appear to relate to the business of a bookmaker shall be presumed until the contrary is proved to be acting as a bookmaker.

(2) Any person who settles or pays money or money's worth in respect of bets or wagers relating to a horse-race or any other kind of race shall also be presumed until the contrary is proved to be acting as a bookmaker.

Presump-
tions.
8/86.

9.—(1) Where in any proceedings under this Act it is proved that any place entered under this Act was provided with 3 or more telephones or telephone lines and —

- (a) was installed with any telecommunication system or equipment which was arranged in such a manner as to suggest that it is or was being used for the receiving or transmitting of any information relating to any horse-race or other sporting event notwithstanding that such telecommunication system or equipment has been disconnected or tampered with;
- (b) any person found in a place so entered was erasing, tampering with or destroying any writing, sign, mark or symbol relating to the results or dividends payable on any horse-race or other sporting event; or
- (c) two or more telephone calls were received at any such place enquiring about the results, commentary or dividends payable on any horse-race or other sporting event,

it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that the place is a betting information centre and that it is so kept, used or permitted to be used by the owner or occupier thereof, and that any other person found in such place is assisting in the business of the betting information centre.

(2) Where in any proceedings under this Act it is proved that —

- (a) any document or thing designed, adapted, or intended for use or used for the purpose of betting or wagering was found in any place entered under this Act or upon any person found in such place;

- (b) any person found in a place entered under this Act was erasing, tampering with or destroying any writing, sign, mark or symbol relating to bets or wagers on any horse-race or other sporting event; or
- (c) two or more telephone calls were received at any place entered under this Act and the calls relate to the receiving or negotiating of bets or wagers or to any results, commentary or dividends payable on any horse-race or other sporting event,

it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that the place is a common betting-house and that it is so kept, used or permitted to be used by the owner or occupier thereof, and that any other person found in such place in possession of any such document or thing as is referred to in paragraph (a) is assisting in the management of such common betting-house.

10. Whenever it appears to the court upon the trial of any offence under this Act that the place in or in respect of which the offence is alleged to have been committed is a common betting-house and that the place is fitted or provided with any of the means or contrivances mentioned in section 9, the court shall order the demolition and destruction of such of them as consist of staircases, doors, partitions, ladders, planks, platforms, posts, palings, bars, bolts and other things which appear to the court to have been specially erected or constructed for the purpose of facilitating the carrying on of betting on the premises.

Court to make order for demolition of structural contrivances for facilitating betting.

11.—(1) A Magistrate or a police officer not below the rank of assistant superintendent on being satisfied, upon written information, and after any further inquiry which he thinks necessary, that there is good reason to believe that any place is kept or used as a common betting-house may by warrant under his hand or by writing under his hand, as the case may be, authorise any person therein named, or any police officer, with such assistance, and by such force, as is necessary, by night or by day, to enter or go to that place and to search the place and all persons found therein, and to seize all books, documents, telegrams, writings, circulars, cards or other articles reasonably supposed to have been

Search warrant against premises used as common betting-house.

used or intended to be used as a subject or means of betting or wagering, or in connection therewith, and all moneys and securities for money which are found in that place or on any such persons, and also to detain all such persons until they and that place have been searched.

(2) If any of the things or circumstances which are by this Act made presumptive evidence of guilt are found in such place, or on any person therein, every person therein shall be arrested and taken before a Magistrate's Court or District Court to be dealt with according to law.

(3) All books, documents, telegrams, writings, circulars, cards or other articles used as a subject or means of betting or wagering, or in connection therewith, and all moneys or securities for money, found in a common betting-house, or on any persons found therein, or escaping therefrom, which a Magistrate's Court or District Court is of opinion were used or intended to be used for betting or wagering, shall be declared by that Court to be forfeited to the State, and shall be dealt with accordingly.

Search warrant against persons in possession of betting instruments.

12. A Magistrate or a police officer not below the rank of assistant superintendent on being satisfied upon reasonable information and after any inquiry which he may think necessary, that there is good reason to believe that any books, documents, telegrams, writings, circulars, cards or other articles used as a subject or means of betting or wagering, or in connection therewith, are likely to be found on any person may by warrant under his hand or by writing under his hand, as the case may be, order any police officer to arrest and search that person and if any such article is found upon his person he shall be taken before a Magistrate's Court or District Court to be dealt with according to law.

Arrest and search upon suspicion.
21/73.

13. Any police officer having reasonable suspicion that such articles as are mentioned in section 12 may be found on any person and having reasonable ground for believing that by delay in reporting the offender may escape, may arrest and search that person himself and if any such article is found upon the person searched the offender shall be taken before a police officer not below the rank of sergeant to be dealt with according to law.

14. A Magistrate or a police officer not below the rank of assistant superintendent may himself do what he may under sections 11 and 12 authorise a police officer to do whenever the Magistrate or police officer not below the rank of assistant superintendent is competent to issue a warrant or written authority under those sections respectively and also in any of the following cases:

Magistrate or police officer may himself enter and search.

- (a) if any person has, within the preceding 6 months, been convicted of having kept or used as a common betting-house the place proposed to be entered;
- (b) if the place proposed to be entered is occupied by a club or society which has not been exempted under section 22 and he has reason to believe that betting or wagering on horse-races, fights, games or sports is frequently carried on there;
- (c) if he has personal knowledge of such facts and circumstances as satisfy him that there are sufficient grounds for a search under section 11; or
- (d) if he receives the required information orally under such circumstances that the object of the search would in his opinion be defeated by the delay necessary for reducing the information to writing to enable a search warrant or written authority to be issued under section 11 (1).

15. In all proceedings under this Act any evidence given by a police officer that any book, account, document, telegram, writing, circular, card or other article produced before the court had been used or was intended to be used for betting or wagering, shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to be sufficient evidence of the fact.

Evidence by police officer to be presumptive evidence. 21/73.

16.—(1) Subject to this section, no information laid under this Act shall be admitted in evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings whatsoever, and no witness shall be obliged or permitted to disclose the name or address of any informer under this Act or state any matter which might lead to his discovery.

Protection of informers from discovery.

(2) If any books, documents or papers which are in evidence or liable to inspection in any civil or criminal proceedings whatsoever contain any entry in which any informer is named or described or which might lead to his discovery, the court shall cause all such entries to be

concealed from view or to be obliterated so far as is necessary to protect the informer from discovery but no further.

(3) If on the trial of any offence under this Act the court, after full inquiry into the case, believes that the informer wilfully made in his information a material statement which he knew or believed to be false or did not believe to be true, the court may require the production of the original information and permit inquiry and require full disclosure concerning the informer.

Obstruction
of police
officers.
8/86.

17. Any person who obstructs any police officer in the exercise of any powers under this Act shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to both.

Examination
of offenders.

18.—(1) Whenever two or more persons are charged with any offence under this Act, the Magistrate's Court or District Court may require one or more of them to give evidence as a witness or witnesses for the prosecution.

(2) Any such person who refuses to be sworn or affirmed or to answer any lawful question, shall be dealt with in the same way as witnesses so refusing may by law be dealt with by a Magistrate's Court or District Court.

(3) Every person so required to give evidence who, in the opinion of the court, makes true and full discovery of all things as to which he is lawfully examined, shall be entitled to receive a certificate of indemnity under the hand of the Magistrate or Judge, as the case may be, stating that he has made a true and full discovery of all things as to which he was examined, and such certificate shall be a bar to all legal proceedings against him in respect of such things as aforesaid.

Binding over
on second
conviction.

19.—(1) If a person, who has been convicted of an offence under this Act, is again convicted of the same or any other offence under this Act, the Magistrate's Court or District Court may, in addition to the punishment provided for such offence, make an order requiring him to give security, by bond with one or more sureties, that he will not offend against this Act for such period not exceeding one year, as the court thinks fit to fix.

(2) Every such order shall be made as nearly as may be in the same manner, and shall have the like effect and consequences as if the order were made under section 74 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Cap. 68.

20. A District Court or a Magistrate's Court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all proceedings under this Act and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Criminal Procedure Code, shall have power to impose the full penalty or punishment in respect of any offence under this Act.

Jurisdiction
of courts.
8/86.

21. Nothing in this Act shall extend to any person receiving or holding any money or valuable thing by way of stakes or deposit to be paid to the winner of any race or lawful sport, game or exercise or to the owner of any horse engaged in a race.

Stakes.

22.—(1) The Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, either generally or in any particular case and subject to such conditions as he may impose, exempt from all or any of the provisions of this Act the members and officers of any racing club or association in respect of any totalisator or pari-mutuel betting or any other system or method of cash or credit betting held, promoted, organised, administered or operated by it where the betting takes place on places subject to the control or supervision of any one or more of the officers of that racing club or association.

Exemption.
8/86.

(2) Every racing club or association exempted under subsection (1) shall place on the totalisator or pari-mutuel under its control or supervision all bets made under any system of cash or credit betting held, promoted, organised, administered or operated by it.

(3) It shall be lawful at any time for any racing club or association exempted under subsection (1) to admit members of the public to its premises when racing takes place on payment of an admission fee or to places under the control or supervision of any one or more of its officers either without payment or on payment of an admission fee.

(4) Where an admission fee is charged, the admission fee shall be subject to the payment of duty under the *Entertainments Duty Act*.

Cap. 94.

23. The court may direct any fine or any portion of any fine imposed and levied under this Act to be paid to the informer.

Reward to
informer.