



Marching Toward Madness – or Unemployment?

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Sports have long been distracting for much of the workforce, but with the Internet and the prevalence of email communications, these distractions are even more widespread - especially during March Madness and other major "sports holidays."

Just as with fantasy football, employers are getting more and more impatient with even the most efficient and talented employees spending work hours accessing gambling websites on company computers during March Madness, taking time to exchange money, trash talk the teams and other sometimes inappropriate behavior with co-workers, friends and family.

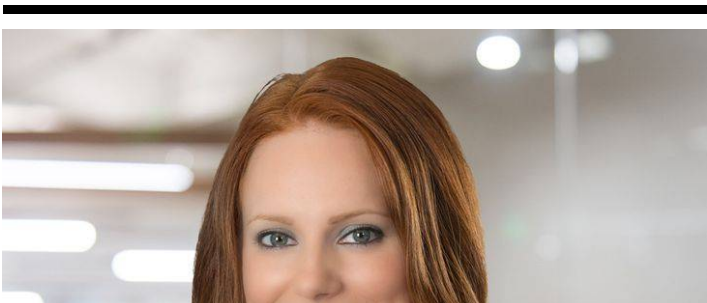
Human resources teams can be proactive this time of year by helping employees understand:

- Employers have the right to strictly enforce a non-recreational Internet use policy and monitor employee usage to ensure that workers stick to work while at their desks.
- Employers have every right to expect employees to devote 100 percent of their energies to the job between stated work hours, and as long as they act consistently, can fire employees who play fantasy sports instead of working.

They can also take this time to reach out to company managers to help determine if the office will take a hard line approach or try to be more flexible and accommodate their employees' month-long college basketball fixation. Once this is in place, it is easy to utilize the same logic for similar situations in the workplace.

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