

NJ becoming 3rd state to offer Internet gambling

November 22 2013, by Wayne Parry



This Nov. 19, 2013 photo taken from a computer screen in Atlantic City, N.J., shows a game of online poker in progress on the global partypoker.com site. The site's parent company, bwin.party, is partnered with Atlantic City's Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa and will begin offering a test of Internet gambling to New Jersey residents on Nov. 21. Company officials say the global site is very similar to what New Jersey residents will experience when they log on. New Jersey is the third state in the nation to legalize online gambling. (AP Photo/Wayne Parry)

New Jersey is allowing adults in the state to click a mouse or swipe a screen for a chance to win money, making it only the third state to offer online gambling.

A five-day trial period of Internet gambling began Thursday night when players invited by casinos to test their systems made real-money bets online.

If all goes well, Internet gambling will be available to gamblers in New Jersey starting Tuesday. The only other states with [online gambling](#) are Nevada and Delaware.

It wasn't going so well for Joseph Brennen. The unemployed bartender from Ventnor was excitedly trying to log on to any [gambling site](#) that would take him. Sitting in a McDonald's, with the Atlantic City Boardwalk casinos glittering in the distance, he kept getting security messages saying complex technology designed to ensure all players are within New Jersey's borders didn't believe he was in the state and were shutting him out.

It was a possible scenario detailed by The Associated Press in a weekend story quoting online gambling officials who said they moved their "online fences" away from the state's borders to ensure that players from other states couldn't get online to gamble.

So Brennen drove 5 miles (8 kilometers) inland and 5 miles north to a highway rest stop, where he still encountered difficulty getting online.

"Over there, I was being told I wasn't in New Jersey," he said. "Here it's not telling me yes or no."



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Back in the car again, he drove 10 miles (16 kilometers) farther west, to a chain restaurant 15 miles (2 kilometers) from Atlantic City. One [casino](#) website still didn't recognize him as being in New Jersey. Another said it couldn't find him.

"It's frustrating knowing you're in the jurisdiction and you can't get anywhere," said Brennen, who vowed not to give up.

The seven casinos approved by the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement collectively offered 14 websites where customers can make real-money bets.

The participating casinos are the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa; the Tropicana Casino and Resort; Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino; the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort; Bally's Atlantic City and Caesars Atlantic City, along with the Golden Nugget.

The Tropicana Casino and Resort set up an interview for a reporter with one of its customers Thursday, then canceled it, saying it hadn't yet gotten the go-ahead from its information technology partners to launch the system.

The test period was established to determine whether sophisticated technology designed to ensure that all gamblers are in New Jersey and at least 21 years old works correctly. The test also will evaluate electronic payment technology and the integrity and functionality of the casino games.

Online betting will mark the biggest expansion of gambling in New Jersey since casino gambling began in 1978.

Alisa Cooper, a commissioner with the New Jersey Casino Control Commission, said it was a "very exciting time" for Atlantic City and the gaming industry.

"With the dawn of Internet gaming, we are on the cusp of perhaps the biggest change—and challenge—since the first casino opened here," Cooper said.

Hours before the test was to begin, a state lawmaker unveiled a proposal to lure foreign online [gambling](#) companies. Sen. Raymond Lesniak's bill

would entice foreign betting firms to set up shop in the state—even though they could take bets only from overseas gamblers—and be subject to its famously tough casino regulation.

The payoff to New Jersey would be a 15 percent tax on their winnings, plus payments into a fund to raise \$20 million a year for three years for its struggling horse racing industry. Lesniak said the foreign companies want the stamp of approval that strict New Jersey regulation would bring.

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