

## March Madness: enjoy it or ignore it

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak  
COLUMNIST ([www.AdviceChief.com](http://www.AdviceChief.com))

I occasionally receive write-ins from people who complain about the office March Madness pools in full force at their place of employment during the NCAA basketball championship tournament. They complain that no work gets done while people are filling out brackets and watching games on television or the Internet during work hours. They also indicate their boss is in on it too so it's pointless complaining to them about it. Additionally, they feel it isn't fair to them because they don't participate--while everyone else is having fun with it, they're not.

Well then, this column will be short and simple to those who are complaining: either join in and play or ignore it.

Yes, it is true in some states office pools are illegal, but in others, they are legal under certain conditions. If you're

worried about this, though, I'll let you in on a little secret: the authorities are playing March Madness brackets too so don't think they'll put down their pencils and rush out the door to investigate your March Madness complaint. It's estimated that almost half of the American workforce fills out a bracket and plays in a March Madness tournament pool so it could become a pretty big burden for the government to try and investigate every place of business and prosecute every single person who gambles with a bracket.

The key to this kind of activity is common sense. The boss or office manager shouldn't be the one hosting or organizing the pool, and don't put identifying business credentials on profiles associated with an on-line pool.

Some managers don't actually mind when their employees are playing a March Madness bracket or if they are involved in a Fantasy Football league

because they notice improvement in morale and inter-office communications as a result of the enthusiasm associated with these types of activities. In fact, some bosses view office pools as a team-building opportunity!

Now I understand office pools aren't for everyone but don't let this situation stress you out. When your workmates are busy with March Madness agenda, take a break and go for a small walk. Or go get some fresh coffee, tea, or water and relax. Or work on a project that requires you to not be disturbed. Or fill out a bracket and get in on the fun! It's all up to you but I don't need to look into a crystal ball to know that office pools are not going away anytime soon.

There are times in life when you simply have to let people play. Whether it's March Madness brackets, Super Bowl squares, or Fantasy Football leagues, let it be and have some fun.

~ The End ~