Gambling big business in Texas

The annual football season is at hand, and that means office pools will be organized, bookies will recruit their runners and police will fight their hopeless battle against

For police, the war is all but over before it begins. Gambling has gained such popularity and respectability, they say, that all they can do is try to stem the tide, and that tide for Texans alone amounts to

\$1.4 billion every year.
Dallas is without a doubt the biggest city in the state when it comes to gambling, the Las Vegas of Texas, police say.

"You've got to remember that Matan

Dallas is first and foremost a very sports-minded city," says Dallas police sergeant Jerry M. Curtis, a veteran gambling investigator who has matched wits with bookies for more than 14 years.

"It is a very rich city. We are more or less the hub of the Southwest. Basically, there's just a heck of a lot of money in Dallas

Behind Dallas in the scope of gambling operations, in the opinion of an executive with the Texas Organized Crime Prevention Council, are, in order: Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Austin, El Paso, Galveston, the Golden Triangle (Beaumont, Orange and Port Arthur), Texarkana, Midland-Odessa, Amarillo and Lubbock.

program coordinator with the state agency designed to monitor and coordinate efforts against organized crime. "Let me tell you, the reason El Paso is so big is because you've got the races across the border and situation will only become worse as

Wednesday Richard Olsen, a ham-

mer thrower from Norway, had enrolled at SMU and would be eli-

gible for competition in the 1981

THURSDAY (7-12)

FRIDAY (7-12)

SATURDAY (8-1)

you've got Ruidoso (Downs) in New

law enforcement officials have been willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about that few in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more willing to talk about in public: Police in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in Texas have a more will be about in the public in in Texas have a more serious probem than most states because Mexico is building a chain of gambl-

"Let's face it," said one law dangerous. to be named, "the Mexican govrnment sees a lot of money - one hell of a lot of money - and you'd obtained. better believe they're going to get

Matamoras across from Brownsville, Texas, said Solis, and an already popular racetrack is located at Nuevo Laredo across from Laredo, Texas, and an "open book" gambling parlor is under construction there. The Juarez racetrack, across from El Paso, attracts huge crowds.

A track is also under construction at Villa Acuna across from Del Rio, Texas, and "I believe there is talk of Texas". building another one across from

The tracks, where dogs and horses are raced, attract Texans year-round. Lots of them. "Have you ever been around El Paso when the races are on?" asked Solis. "I've been in the grandstands at Juarez and 65-70 percent of the people there were American citizens. What "El Paso is big," said Victor Solis, it does is attract organized crime. The profit, the money is there.

Solis said Texas border towns are

a collegian. He finished second at

Olsen is a member of the Norwe-

gian national team and will compete for Norway in the 1980 Olympics.

last year's NCAA championship.

SMU gets hammer thrower

United Press International

DALLAS — Southern Methodist track coach Ted McLaughlin said

Well and Press International

Olsen has a throw of 237-8 to his credit, the third best throw ever by

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tions grow in size and number.

'Any way you skin the cat, drugs will be related.

"Comparing the profit to the risk of apprehension, gambling is more lucrative (than drugs). It's less

Organized crime becomes involved in gambling, said Solis, because vast amounts of cash can be

"They're in there for the money from gambling," said Solis. "And Racetracks are being built at gambling money provides funds for narcotics trafficking, loan sharking, taking over legitimate businesses so money can be laundered.

A report published by the organized crime council in 1977 was based on a survey by a highly respected national research organization. It concluded that Texans spent

Adjusted for inflation, \$1.4 billion McAllen at Reynosa, Mexico," Solis is a conservative figure of what Texsaid. Curtis, the Dallas police anti-gambling veteran, said there are at least 250 bookies in Dallas taking

daily wagers on sports events. "Football is the predominant sport," he said. "When football starts, they start coming out of the

Dallas' smalltime bookies, he said, take bets as his \$75 while the "big ones" will take bets as high as \$5,000 on a single game. In Dallas alone, he said, residents spend \$10 million a week in illegal sports wagering — "and that's a very, very conservative figure.

Office pools have gained social acceptance, said Curtis, but are illegal. And, he said, some money from gambling eventually finds its way into the coffers of organized

'During football season, office pools are one of the most popular forms of gambling there is," said Curtis. "But under our state law,

holds the money for it, is guilty of won't be far behind.

who participates is guilty of gaming

- a Class C misdemeanor." Persons who coordinate office pools, he said, face up to 10 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine - although he admits police only investigate of-fice gambling activity upon receipt of a formal complaint.

"Gambling cannot be stopped, but we certainly can control it," said Curtis. "That is primarily our objective — and to keep organized crime out of the gambling field in the Dal-las area. Dallas is a clean city as far as organized crime

Curtis admitted he had been criticized for his unceasing action against gambling. It is argued, he said, that gambling is a victimless crime and that anti-gambling laws are so widely disregarded that enforcement of them creates disrespect for the rule of law itself.

But his job is to uphold the law said Curtis, and the law says gambl-Curtis. "But under our state law, this is a lottery and it falls under gambling promotion. It is a felony to conduct one of these things."

ing is illegal. "Any time you have any large sums of money that will exchange hands, you're going to attract the criminal element," he said. "The person that draws up the deal, that collects the money, that they'll be there and organized crime

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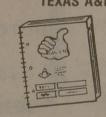
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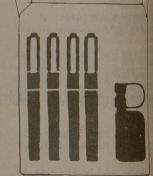
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