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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“All or Nothing” - New Lottery Ad is Extremely Misleading

Raleigh, NC - The NC Lottery continues to publish misleading advertising. Most of these advertisements would be banned if the NC Lottery were subject to the Federal Trade Commission’s standards that private businesses must follow. The advertising is now getting worse.

A recent advertisement from September 2014 that I attach promotes a new game called “All or Nothing.” It opens by stating that a darts player can win a game by hitting the bullseye with all three darts that he or she throws. Next it shows three darts that hit a wall far to the left of the bullseye. The advertisement goes on to state, “But what if you could win with nothing.” The advertisement cuts to a new screen that explains the new “All or Nothing” lottery game; a player can win if the player is able to get all of the numbers correct or none of the numbers correct. Do you recognize the misleading nature of the advertisement?

The crux of the problem is that the advertisement compares a person not hitting a dart board three consecutive times to that of a person not being able to match numbers with any of the winning lottery numbers. If I were able to win a darts game by not hitting the bullseye three consecutive times I could easily do so with unerring certainty a million times in a row. I would turn around and throw three darts in the complete opposite direction of a dartboard.

Can you use a similar method to win this lottery game? No. A player cannot purposefully select none of the winning numbers in the lottery game as he or she can purposefully lose a darts game. By comparing a game of skill to a game of chance the Lottery Commission is falsely claiming that skill can prevail.

A similar advertisement also aired in September 2014 that compared the “All or Nothing” game to that of a billiards game. It opens by stating that a billiards player can win a game by hitting the cue ball so that the player sinks all the balls into the pockets. Next it shows the cue ball missing all the player’s balls. The advertisement goes on to state, “But what if you could win with nothing.” The advertisement cuts to a new screen that explains the new “All or Nothing” lottery game; a player can win if the player is able to get all of the numbers correct or none of the numbers correct.

This time the advertisement compares a person not sinking any balls to that of a person not being able to match numbers with any of the winning lottery numbers. If I were able to win a billiards game by not sinking any of my balls I could do so with 100 % certainty. I would lightly tap the cue ball in the opposite direction of my balls. A comparative method cannot be used to win the “All or Nothing” lottery game because it is a game of chance. A billiards player, however, has some control over where

and how hard he hits the cue ball.

Two similar advertisements were published in September that perpetuate this same fallacy. One involved a cornhole game and the other bowling. The same conclusion applies to these ads: A player in games of skill, such as cornhole and bowling, has some control over outcomes that lead to points or a win by a value of “nothing”. In the “All or Nothing” lottery game a player has no control over the selection of winning numbers.

By comparing a game of chance to a game of skill, our lottery commission intentionally tells its customers that there is something they can do to affect the odds. But there is not.

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