

Opinion: New accusations are reason to legalize online gambling

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If federal prosecutors are right, poker players who looked to the Internet hoping to make some easy money were taking a bigger gamble than they thought.

There have been lots of stories of cheaters working in boiler rooms to beat too-trusting players. When you can't see what's happening in front of your opponents' computers, anything is possible.

But, in a revised lawsuit filed Tuesday in New York, the feds said that one of the most popular online poker sites, the now-closed Full Tilt Poker, wasn't even a legitimate Internet casino. Rather, the lawsuit alleges, it was a giant Ponzi scheme, using the players' money deposited in Full Tilt accounts to pay off company owners and board members. Among those who profited by receiving millions of dollars from the accounts, the lawsuit alleges, were several well-known professional poker players.

Full Tilt already was facing money-laundering charges, and the federal government seized its bank accounts. But players who'd made deposits with the website and were hoping to get their money back once the charges were settled now appear to be out of luck.

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