

BBC One Announces New Documentary Series, the Bookies

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We might be living through the age of austerity but the British public has never enjoyed betting more. But where there has been an explosion in online gambling, new regulations and the changing face of the high street means that traditional local betting shops are under more pressure than ever before. The Bookies (w/t) is a three-part documentary series that for the first time goes behind the scenes of one of the UK's biggest high street and online bookmakers, Coral.

Produced for BBC One by Boundless, The Bookies will lift the lid on the inner workings of an increasingly popular British pastime enjoyed by eight million people each year, rich and poor alike. Capturing everything from the highs and lows of life on the betting floor to the technological wizards that set the odds, this major access series will take a revealing look at the customers and shop staff that keep the industry afloat. With unprecedented access, The Bookies will explore the complex, billion pound industry that touches millions of lives each year.

Emma Willis, Head of Documentaries, BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Four, says: "Betting shops are a key part of the high street and an unwavering part of modern British life. The Bookies will take a compelling look at how the industry works, the everyday realities of life on the betting floor and why we're betting more as a nation."

Over three episodes, The Bookies will follow the big spenders who gamble thousands to the low-stake punters who use their high street bookmakers as a social club. BBC One will track the national events - from big football games to Strictly Come Dancing - that drive the business and will follow the Coral team as they open new shops and fight off competition. The series will find out how the industry is responding to issues of problem gambling and public opposition to new shops and will follow the customers for whom betting is part of everyday life.

Patrick Holland, Managing Director, Boundless, says: "We are very excited about this major commission for BBC One. Betting is something that millions of British people take part in, yet we know very little about the world and how it operates. The series will engage with the excitement, the characters and the issues from this major industry."

The Bookies (3x60) will be executive produced by Patrick Holland, managing director for Boundless. It was commissioned by Charlotte Moore, Controller, BBC One and Emma Willis, Head of Documentaries, BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Four.

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