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WTO upholds complaint against online betting laws

The United States on Friday lost another round in its battle to block offshore Internet casinos from taking bets from U.S. customers.

A three-member appellate panel of the **World Trade Organization** upheld a 2003 complaint by the tiny Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda that the United States discriminated against and prosecuted offshore operators while sanctioning domestic online gambling on horse races in at least 18 states.

The United States argued that other laws, including the Wire Act, offered ample evidence that gambling on the Internet and by other electronic means was unlawful in the U.S.

The WTO panel was not convinced, saying the **Department of Justice** apparently had never investigated any domestic Internet gambling concern for possible violations of the Wire Act if that firm had the go-ahead to operate under the Interstate Horseracing Act.

If the U.S. does not appeal, Antigua will be free to seek WTO permission for trade sanctions against the U.S.

| Rick Alm, ralm@kcstar.com



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