Many professional bettors are starting to adapt in order to get better situations at +EV. As I've talked about before, +EV is expected value, and that should always be a positive amount. One of the ways that bettors are doing this is by focusing on half wagers instead of full game plays. It's becoming increasingly difficult to get a full game effort out of basketball teams, especially late in the season. The obvious move to counteract that would be to look at bets one half at a time.

These do take knowledge of season-long trends and possibly a feel for the game, only gained by watching it. If a star player is injured in the first half and is going to try and play through it in the second half, you won't be holding a full game wager and hoping for the best. You can simply make a second half play at +EV with the information that you know.

A lot of times, oddsmakers have set lines for second halves. In a lot of cases, the second half lines for sides will try to mirror the full-game line as much as possible. If the Knicks are a five-point favorite and the game is tied at halftime, the second half line will probably come out around Knicks -5. The books don't want to give hedging options or middles. If the second half line came out Knicks -8, somebody holding Knicks -5 could come back on the other team and have a three-point middle, encompassing some of the NBA's key numbers.

Second half totals tend to come from a pre-existing chart. My good friend Bryan Leonard and his good friend, Steve Fezzik, a very successful professional bettor put together this video over at Pregame.com regarding second half wagering. Fezzik, who has seen "the chart" uses the example of a college basketball game with a 130-point total. The default value for the first half is 61 and the second half is 69, with a slightly inflated number due to the chances of late game fouls and free throw shooting. If the game comes in under the total, the oddsmakers will take 15 percent of what they are under by and re-adjust the second half total. Fezzik uses an example of 51 first-half points. They are 10 points under the projected pace. Fifteen percent of 10 points is 1.5. So, the second half total will come out at 67.5 instead of 69.

Another nice thing about betting second half totals is that you have a point of reference. You have seen the pace of the game and can make informed decisions on second half bets. The score can help to dictate what happens. If a game is close, the second half may stay under because neither team wants to make the mistake that kickstarts a 9-0 run. If a game is a blowout, one team is excited and having fun and is ready to put up more points. The other team wants to score to avoid getting embarrassed.

On the flip side, if it's the favorite with a big lead at the half, they may empty the bench late and the other team may check out completely. Like Leonard mentions, a lot of his second half concepts work better in the NBA, where losses aren't as critical as in college. Road dogs in college tend to have problems closing games out. You can use that to your advantage as well, but that team may totally fall apart and completely blow their lead within the first 10 minutes of the half and wind up playing catch up.

There's less risk and volatility involved because you have a lot more control over your bet when you make a second half wager. Seeing the game unfold in front of you is infinitely more advantageous than making a full game wager and planning out your every move ahead of time. Just because teams put up certain averages for the season or have certain trends does not mean that they will carry over into this game as well. There are expectations that have to be met for a full game wager to be a winner. With a second half play, you have real-time information at your disposal and can look at things like progression/regression to the mean, the score, the pace, the body language, the effort level, etc.

There are a lot of advantages to second half bets and something that should be added to every bettor's arsenal, especially as full game lines get tighter and tighter. The oddsmakers are the best in the world and the lines always get tighter the deeper into the season a league is. Negating some of that advantage by jumping on second half lines that are more or less predetermined numbers is a good way to make money in the betting market.