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# A Powerball win is getting closer to being a sure thing

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KEITH SRAKOCIC/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**A patron bought \$10 worth of Powerball tickets in Pennsylvania.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 12, 2016

A Powerball win is getting closer to being a sure thing — for someone. That's because the army of dreamers who have bought tickets are moving closer to buying all the possible combinations in the game.

A total of 292,201,338 possible combinations exist for the lottery game, which allows players to choose five numbers between 1 and 69 and a sixth number, called the Powerball, from between 1 and 26.

At the time of the last drawing on Saturday night, more than three-quarters — or more than 227 million — of the possible combinations had been purchased.

Still, no one won.

Lottery officials representing the Multi-State Lottery Association, which runs the Powerball game, expect that for next drawing Wednesday night, about 85 percent of the possible combinations will be purchased.



## Powerball jackpot at \$1.5 billion — for now

The grand prize could get even bigger, depending on ticket sales leading up to the late-night drawing.

The Powerball jackpot has grown to \$1.5 billion as of Tuesday morning after a series of 19 drawings in which no one picked the lucky combination — and the jackpot grew.

In the early going, fewer people were attracted to the smaller jackpots — and thus fewer number combinations were bought. As the jackpots ballooned, more people have played, resulting in more number combinations being covered, lottery officials say.

Less than 5 percent of the possible number combinations were purchased nationwide for the first eight drawings as the grand prize rose from \$40 million to \$110 million, according to figures provided by Massachusetts State Lottery spokesman Christian Teja.

For the next seven drawings, less than 10 percent of the possible combinations were played as the jackpot increased from \$127 million to \$255 million.

For the \$300 million jackpot drawing on Dec. 30 and the \$334 million jackpot drawing on Jan. 2, about 13 percent and 16 percent of the possible combinations were covered, respectively.

But things have changed now. In the past two drawings, the jackpots have reached mindboggling proportions and drawn increasing media attention. The number of people playing and combinations covered has increased sharply.

When the jackpot reached \$500 million for the Jan. 6 drawing, about 45 percent of the possible combinations were played.

And on Saturday night, 77.8 percent of the combinations were covered.

Lottery officials said they were not sure what the record is for the highest percentage of combinations in play before anyone won.

Texas Lottery executive director Gary Grief told the [Associated Press](#) this week: “I’ve been in the



industry over 20 years, and I've seen jackpots hit when we hardly have any of the potential numbers covered — like 5 percent of the possible combinations covered. And I've seen other jackpots when we've had 95 percent of the combinations covered and [there's no winner].”

One thing is for certain: If everyone gets together and buys every possible number combination, someone will win.

Great news, right?

It's just the odds are astronomically small that it will be you.

## Percent of possible combinations in play for each Powerball drawing

The lottery game features a total of 292,201,338 possible six-digit combinations.

Date of drawing	Estimated jackpot	Percent of combinations purchased
11/7/2015	\$40,000,000	4.0%
11/11/2015	\$50,000,000	3.5%
11/14/2015	\$60,000,000	4.1%
11/18/2015	\$70,000,000	3.7%
11/21/2015	\$80,000,000	4.2%
11/25/2015	\$90,000,000	4.4%
11/28/2015	\$100,000,000	4.5%
12/2/2015	\$110,000,000	4.8%
12/5/2015	\$127,000,000	5.4%
12/9/2015	\$145,000,000	5.4%
12/12/2015	\$164,000,000	6.1%
12/16/2015	\$180,000,000	6.1%
12/19/2015	\$202,000,000	6.1%
12/23/2015	\$227,000,000	7.7%
12/26/2015	\$255,000,000	8.9%
12/30/2015	\$300,000,000	13.1%
1/2/2016	\$334,000,000	16.9%
1/6/2016	\$500,000,000	45.3%

1/9/2016

\$949,800,000

77.8%

**SOURCE: Lottery officials**

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