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### 3 levels of dogfighting

# From street corners to puppy mills

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Tio Hardiman, founder of the Chicago Coalition to Stop Dog Fighting, and Officer Tom Barker of the Chicago Police Animal Crimes Unit said there are three levels of dogfighting.

The first type is a basic fight that typically occurs on street corners. The dogfight organizers, usually between 10 and 14 years old, believe the dogs are born to fight, Hardiman said.

In the second level, dogs are fought in basements in a more organized way. Typically teenagers and early twentysomethings gamble between \$500 and \$5,000. Hardiman said this is the most common type of fight his group finds in the Chicago area.

The third level—the kind Michael Vick is accused of participating in—involves sophisticated dogfighting rings and puppy mills. The stakes are usually between \$10,000 and \$100,000, Hardiman said. Barker said these fighting rings aren't common in Chicago, though professional fighting "is very discreet and underground."

Vick pleaded not guilty to charges that he participated in a widespread dogfighting ring that involved the execution of eight dogs by "various methods, including hanging, drowning and/or slamming at least one dog's body to the ground," according to the indictment. Prosecutors allege Vick's property was used to house and train the pit bulls used in fights.