



WEEK 10

FRIDAY 7 MAR 2014

THIS WEEK

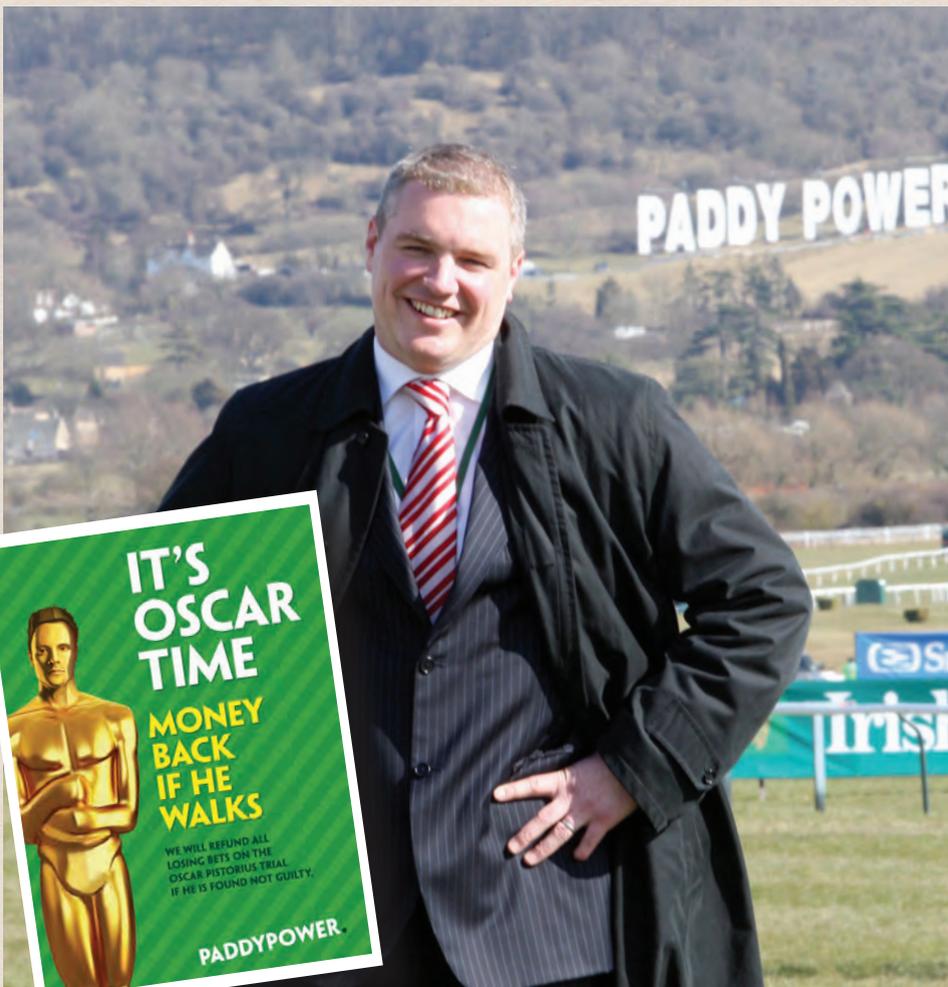
- **FOBT group dismissive of new code of conduct**
- **Column: Rabcat CEO on innovation in gambling**
- **Sheriff Gaming declared bankrupt, lose licence**
- **Full Tilt start repaying US players**



TOP STORY

PADDYS DEFIANT OVER PISTORIUS ODDS

Bookmakers defend murder trial betting, ASA step in after ad complaints



Paddy Power have refused to apologise for offering odds on the outcome of the Oscar Pistorius murder trial. The bookmakers are taking bets on whether the athlete will be found guilty or not guilty of the murder of his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp and recently launched an ad campaign promoting the market. A newspaper ad titled "It's Oscar Time" saw the South African mocked-up as an Academy Award alongside the words "Money back if he walks" and details of a promotion refunding all losing bets on the trial if the defendant is found not guilty.

The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) have taken the unusual step of telling the firm that the ad must be pulled immediately, after they received 5,200 complaints. However Paddy Power have stated that the promotion was a one-off designed to capitalise on the buzz around the Academy Awards last Sunday.

When asked by BBC Radio 5 Live whether an apology was in order, the firm's head of communications, also called Paddy Power, replied: "No, I don't think so." He said the operators were offering odds on the trial "not because it's a murder trial and not because someone is dead, it's because it's the most talked about global news story in the world at the moment".

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Head of communication Paddy Power, and the controversial ad (inset pic)

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FROM FRONT PAGE ►

An online petition calling for the bookmakers to stop taking bets on the trial had received over 125,000 signatures at time of writing. Started by domestic abuse victim Jean Hatchet (not her real name), it calls for Paddy Power to “remove your offensive betting on the outcome of the Oscar Pistorius trial and donate any profits to a charity fighting violence against women”.

Shadow women and equalities minister Gloria De Piero has written to Paddy Power CEO Patrick Kennedy to say that “rather than making sport out of the death of a young woman, I would urge you to consider the impact offering odds will have on a grieving family”.

Paddy Power told BBC Radio 5 Live: “Everybody around the country, around the world, is standing at their water coolers at work talking about this trial, wondering whether he’ll be found guilty or not. Our betting is a reflection of that.”

Pistorius has pleaded not guilty to the murder. The trial continues.

KEY POINTS

- Paddy Power refuse to apologise over Oscar Pistorius trial betting.
- Firm claim market is a reflection of the story’s high profile.
- Online petition signed by over 125,000 people; 5,200 complaints; ASA say ad must be pulled.

**UK
FOBT GROUP DISMISS NEW
CODE OF CONDUCT**

Campaign for Fairer Gambling deem voluntary measures ineffectual

A lobby group pushing for limits on fixed- odds betting terminals (FOBTs) have declared that a new code of conduct will have no affect on the activities of machine players in betting shops.



The new voluntary code includes the introduction of mandatory alerts after punters spend £250 or play for 30 minutes and will also allow players to set their own limits on time and money spent on the terminals.

Adrian Parkinson of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling [pictured above] said that the measures were “not going to have any impact on gamblers in betting shops”.

Parkinson was speaking at a briefing at the House of Commons on Tuesday, during which he revealed data estimating that UK gamblers lost £1.6bn on FOBTs in 2013.

For a detailed report on the event see the May/June issue of Gambling Insider magazine

KEY POINTS

- Campaign for Fairer Gambling criticise a new FOBT code of conduct.

**ONLINE POKER
FULL TILT BEGIN US REPAYMENTS**

Initial \$76m refunded to players
Approximately \$76m has been returned to US customers of Full Tilt Poker who saw their funds frozen in the wake of Black Friday. The payments,

which have been confirmed by claims administrators Garden City Group (GCG), are the first made to players in the US. The initial batch of 27,500 remissions only applies to those who did not dispute their Full Tilt balance as presented to them by the GCG. Full Tilt Poker are believed to owe a figure in the region of \$160m to US players.

KEY POINTS

- Full Tilt begin their US repayment process by returning \$76m to a total of 27,500 players.

CASINO



**SHERIFF GAMING BANKRUPT
Developers also lose AGCC licence**

The parent company of suppliers Sheriff Gaming have been declared bankrupt and stripped of their gaming licence.

A notice from regulatory body the Alderney Gambling Control Commission (AGCC) confirmed that the Category 2 Associate Certificate of the Bubble Group MV had been withdrawn after the firm were deemed to be “no longer fit and proper to hold such a certificate”.

The Dutch company have also been declared bankrupt by a court in East Brabant.

Bubble Group CEO Stijn Flapper was

Tweets of the week

“So when will we begin to hear stories of refunded players failing to hand over FTP funds that they sold off the rights to many months ago?”
QuadJacks editor Matt Kaufman [[@KaufmanPoker](#)]

“Chinese regulated lottery generated £30bn+ sales in 2013, second largest lottery market globally after US #iga2014.”
Plumbee CEO [@Raf_Keustermans](#)

“With a gross revenue of MOP38.0 billion (US\$4.8 billion), February’s take by Macau’s casinos surpassed the MOP36.5 billion previous record!”
Macau lawyer Luis Mesquita deMelo [[@LuisMdeMelo](#)]

arrested in November on suspicion of money laundering.

KEY POINTS

- Sheriff Gaming declared bankrupt and have AGCC licence withdrawn.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ROUNDUP: SAGI, CAESARS, WILLIAMS
The rest of the week's key stories on *GamblingInsider.com* and the web

- **Playtech** founder **Teddy Sagi** is to sell £212m (\$353m) worth of shares, which amounts to 10% of the group's equity.
- **Caesars Entertainment** are continuing to restructure their debt with a \$2.2bn asset sale.
- Nineteen gaming groups have expressed an interest in building casinos in **Queensland**, Australia.
- Suppliers **Williams Interactive** are to provide slot content to the New Jersey online operations of the **Gamesys Group**.

GUEST COLUMNIST

"THERE'S ROOM FOR INNOVATION IN GAMBLING"



by **Thomas Schleisnitz**
Game design firm founder and CEO

"In my experience, creative game concepts can be conceived in the strangest of places and, often, the best ones are.

In mid 2010 I tried to design a new breed of video slot machines for the

simple reason that – having worked on numerous videogame productions for Microsoft, Disney, Rockstar and many others since 1998 – I spotted a lack of game mechanisms within video slots that keep the gaming audience engaged.

In fact, I could find very few examples of video slots on the market that featured some sort of noteworthy game progression, comparable to a typical videogame. I got the impression that if a player spends five minutes on a standard video slot he has already seen the entire package – nothing more to achieve, nothing more to discover. This equals a lower return rate, less enjoyment and drives a need for content by volume and speed of delivery rather than quality.

As a result, I crafted a rough game design starting from a conventional 5-reel slot, but enriched it with a level-based game progression and dozens of player achievements (some of them connected to the Return To Player). My major goal was to keep it simple; I wanted to avoid anything that may scare traditional video slot players away. In other words, the game I had in mind should be easy and intuitive to play in spite of the richness of its features and content.

Once the initial game design was ready I still felt that something very important was missing: a suitable theme embedded into good-looking visuals, suitable for a big target audience. I had many ideas but rejected all of them.

On a Sunday in late summer 2010, I was playing with my four-year-old daughter, Leni, in a sandpit. Naturally, we built sandcastles. I created one which was slightly bigger than the castle built by my daughter. Leni looked at my castle, looked at me and

showed me a big grin. Shortly after, there was third sandcastle, bigger than both the previous ones. I thought: "That's it! Let's build castles in a video slot!"

Certainly, it's one thing having an idea. Applying it to reality is another entirely. That's where the strong production team we've been able to build here came into play. Led by head of production Florian Schmid and art director Simon Kaiser, they did an impressive job in transferring a left-field idea into a final, effective, polished and shippable product. We're also pleased to have been able to build the game using the latest HTML5 technologies via Odobo's platform and GDK.

First and foremost, Castle Builder managed to build a bridge between real-money gambling, social/F2P and videogames in a commercially successful way. Taking the occasional gamble can really pay dividends and we enjoy the comments we get about the innovation and the fresh feel this game brings to real-money gaming. We would encourage other developers who haven't necessarily considered RMG to do so. It's been a revelation. This has certainly been my most creative, risky and, at the same time, successful game in the online gambling market. For me, it's proof that it's worth taking risks to make innovation possible."

Thomas Schleisnitz is the CEO and founder of Rabcat, a firm specialising in gambling and game art

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