



WEEK 22

FRIDAY 30 MAY 2014

THIS WEEK

- Criticism for FA's new betting ban
- Column: Jens Bader on WC2014 preparation
- Stephen Hawking signs with Paddy Power
- Tweets of the week



TOP STORY

TABOR ACQUIRES BETVICTOR

Takeover deal sees Victor Chandler leave own company



Michael Tabor (pictured left) has completed the purchase of BetVictor for an undisclosed sum

Businessman Michael Tabor has acquired ownership of bookmaker BetVictor in a move which sees the firm's chairman and CEO leave their roles. The deal, which has been agreed for an undisclosed sum, signals the departure of company and industry figurehead Victor Chandler who assumes a consultancy role after more than 40 years in charge of the firm. Chief executive Michael Carlton is also relinquishing his position and will act as a consultant during the transition period.

Racehorse owner Tabor, a partner in the Coolmore breeding operation, was a founding shareholder in BetVictor and already owned 45% of the company prior to the takeover. He entered the business world through the purchase of two Arthur Price betting shops, selling the 114-strong chain in 1995 to bookmaker Coral for a reported £27m.

Victor Chandler assumed control of his longstanding family business in 1975 following the passing of his father and soon decided to sell off a collection of the firm's betting shops in order to focus on its main operation – a credit business for high-roller customers.

The company was one of the first bookmakers to offer online betting,

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in 1999, the same year as Chandler (pictured above) moved his firm's entire account operation to Gibraltar. In 2004 the business underwent a rebrand from Victor Chandler to VC Bet, a move which was reversed four years later, while in January 2012 the UK consumer-facing elements of the organisation were rebranded from Victor Chandler to BetVictor in order to bring them into line with other parts of Europe.

Victor Chandler said of the sale: "Having owned and led this business for more than 40 years, I looked towards the future and I decided that the company would be best served under new ownership and leadership.

"I have known Mr Tabor for many years and I am confident that the company will continue to thrive under his ownership."

Tabor said: "I believe the BetVictor brand has enormous potential and is well-placed to continue its expansion with further investment and strategic development."

The ownership change has been approved in principal by the Gibraltar Gambling Licensing Authority.

KEY POINTS

- Michael Tabor acquires operator BetVictor for undisclosed sum
- Deal sees longstanding chairman Victor Chandler switch to consultancy role
- CEO Michael Carlton also steps down; will consult during transition

SPORTS BETTING

FA BETTING BAN CRITICISED

Blanket ban derided as "pointless"

A worldwide football betting ban introduced by the FA has been described as "pointless" and "brainless". As of 1 August, those involved in the game from Premier League down to Northern, Southern and Isthmian League level will be prohibited from betting, either directly or indirectly, on any football match, competition or football-related matter that takes place anywhere in the world.

Racing Post editor Bruce Millington (pictured below) took to Twitter to criticise the move, stating: "So Isthmian League footballers can't bet on El Clasico. Pointless, brainless decision by the FA. Will not stop fixing. Will cause problems."

Mark Davies, who was part of the founder-management team of online



exchange Betfair, questioned on his blog why "the extreme end of the spectrum" was being used to address the issue.

He added: "I can find no-one who *really* understands punting who thinks it is a solution that makes any sense."

KEY POINTS

- The FA's forthcoming global betting ban is criticised by industry figures
- Ban would see players and coaches forbidden from betting on any match or football matter worldwide

WORLD CUP

PADDY POWER SIGNS STEPHEN HAWKING

Physicist produces World Cup study

Operator Paddy Power has commissioned a special report from renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking as part of its World Cup marketing. The study, which is accompanied by an online video of Hawking, offers a scientific analysis of which conditions suit England in a World Cup and how to take the perfect penalty in a World Cup shoot-out. Paddy Power is promising more content from the Professor during the tournament, with the fee for his services split between the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Save the Children's Syria Crisis Appeal.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ROUNDUP: AMAYA/POKERSTARS, BHA

The rest of the week's key stories on *GamblingInsider.com* and the web

- Rumours of a merger between **Amaya Gaming** and **PokerStars** persist after the former's stock rose nearly 14% on Friday 23 May.
- The **British Horseracing Authority (BHA)** is to consult with industry heads, with the aim of making betting on the horses 'sexier' and 'more innovative'.

Tweets of the week

"Nevada reports real-money online poker revenues declined -14.5% m/m to \$792k in April '14."
Eilers Research MD Adam Krejciak [[@akrejciak](#)]

"Bad news for casino industry in Asia. Approval for gambling in Japan - possible \$40 billion market - unlikely soon."
Wall Street Journal's Ken Brown [[@kenbrown12](#)]

"Every time @philivey busts from a tourney, a unicorn dies..."
Pro poker player Maria Mayrinck [[@maridu](#)]

GUEST COLUMNIST

"THE BALL IS IN THE OPERATORS' COURT"



by **Jens Bader**
commercial officer,
payments firm

"When the World Cup kicks off on 12 June, it will spark a four-week frenzy of activity in the online sports-betting arena. With 32 countries all rooting for their home teams, and the eyes of the world fixed on the home of football flair and carnivals, online betting operators in every country across the globe will be presented with an enormous opportunity to grow their customer base and rake in the revenue during what is set to be the biggest World Cup ever.

This year, especially in Europe, the time difference means that the majority of people will be watching matches in the evening, which we expect to lead to a huge surge in online and mobile betting transactions.

Now is the time for online sports-betting operators to assess their online and mobile platforms in order to retain current customers while enticing new ones in the process.

Virtually all operators will be competing with each other for the biggest slice of the World Cup pie. But it's important that they acknowledge that their attractive offers, quirky bets, exciting odds and heavy advertising campaigns could all amount to

nothing if their platforms and payment gateways aren't up to scratch.

We have already seen the likes of Ladbrokes undertake a full migration to Playtech's software suite in preparation for one of "the biggest events in the company's history", in order to help it create a seamless customer experience.

Operators need to look for effective ways to differentiate themselves from the competition and ensure return on investment. This doesn't necessarily require expensive solutions and heavy investment.

A simple way for them to do this ahead of the World Cup is to ensure their website is equipped with a smooth player identification solution and a simple sign-up process for first-time customers.

It is important that they have a robust and efficient payment area, in order to process large surges of transactions efficiently, as well as having the responsiveness to deal with peaks in demand during important matches. Those with backup scenarios and load-switching capabilities will have the upper hand as they are able to avoid disruptions to the payment service should issues arise.

As the World Cup will attract high levels of international traffic, operators that offer relevant local deposit options and different currency solutions will also greatly expand their pool of potential customers on a global scale.

With higher traffic comes an increased risk of fraud, and when trust can have a big impact on both customer retention and attracting new customers, it's important that operators heighten their security in

order to safeguard customer details from cyber threats. The best way to do this is to ensure their payment gateways are embedded with anti-fraud measures that complement their offering. Geo-location and IP address identification solutions are particularly useful for alerting suspicious activity in this sector, especially in markets regulated by geography, such as the US.

As we are expecting record levels of mobile sports-betting activity during this year's World Cup tournament, the operators with a strong mobile betting platform will give themselves a home advantage. Those with an efficient, user-friendly mobile platform will offer convenience to customers and no doubt see a steep rise in their profits throughout the World Cup and beyond.

Operators who dare to under-prepare could put themselves at a serious disadvantage and will be at risk of missing out on one of the largest sporting events in history. They should ensure they are fully equipped with the technology required to back up their advertising campaign, in order to take advantage of this fantastic and rare opportunity."

Jens Bader is chief commercial officer at independent payment management firm Secure Trading, which has experience and specialist expertise in the online gaming sector

Want to be a guest columnist in GI Friday? Write to: editor@gamblinginsider.com

OUT NOW: Look out for the May/June issue of Gambling Insider's print magazine, featuring an in-depth and insightful World Cup Special as we assess the industry's preparations for Brazil 2014, as well as the first in our new 'Bright Sparks' profile series



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