

## THIS WEEK

- NYX revenue up 98%
- Macau down 37% for May
- PokerStars sportsbook launches
- Columnist: Henry Oakes on 'gamebling'

Sponsored by



### TOP STORY

## PLAYTECH TO PURCHASE PLUS500

Provider set for another acquisition



Photo: Business Insider

Playtech target Plus500 announced a sponsorship agreement with Atlético Madrid earlier this year

Provider Playtech has agreed to acquire trading platform Plus500 for an approximate £459.6m. The terms of the deal mean that Plus500 shareholders will be entitled to receive 400 pence per share.

The agreement follows an announcement made in April confirming that Playtech is to purchase a majority stake in platform and payments services provider Trade FX for an initial €208m, as well as the completion of Playtech's \$16.4m acquisition of GameMaker: Studio creator Yoyo Games in February.

Playtech CEO Mor Weizer said in a statement published by the London Stock Exchange: "Having recently completed the acquisition of TradeFX, the opportunity to acquire Plus500 will prove transformational for our ambitions to expand Playtech's wider offering.

"As an immediately earnings enhancing acquisition, the combination of the two businesses is compelling, enabling us to apply our market-leading products and services to the enlarged financial trading business as we continue to execute our growth strategy for the group."

Plus500's shares were suspended in May after some customer accounts were

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# GAMBLINGINSIDER



# energycasino PARTNERS

Our Energy  
+  
Your Energy

# Let's Synergize



See you in Amsterdam!  
23rd – 26th June Booth: E20

[www.energycasinopartners.com](http://www.energycasinopartners.com)

#### FROM FRONT PAGE ►

frozen, pending a review into its anti-money laundering checks, conducted by the Financial Conduct Authority. The AIM-listed company lost over two-thirds of its value last month, with its share price at one point falling to 248p, having been 750p earlier in the month. Hedge fund Odey Asset Management became the largest shareholder in Plus500 in the same month by increasing its stake in the company to 19%.

Plus500 CEO Gal Haber said: "We are very proud to have built Plus500 in a short time into a significant player in the CFD market. Having been admitted to AIM at a share price of 115p on 24 July 2013 and paid significant dividends during this time, we believe that now is the right time to combine the business with Playtech who can provide additional infrastructure and expertise to add to our core skills in products, technology and marketing."

Both parties are expecting the acquisition to be completed by the end of September.

#### KEY POINTS

- Playtech is to acquire Plus500 for approximately £459.6m
- The announcement follows Playtech's acquisition agreement with Trade FX and the completion of its Yoyo Games takeover earlier this year
- Plus500's share price dropped by over two-thirds in May, in the same month that the Financial Conduct Authority began investigating its anti-money laundering checks

#### FINANCIAL

#### **NYX REVENUE UP 98% FOR Q1** **Ongame acquisition helps drive revenue to CAD\$9.9m**

Provider NYX Gaming Group has recorded a 98% year-on-year revenue increase to CAD\$9.9m for the first quarter of 2015. NYX has in part put the increase down to its acquisition of poker network Ongame from provider Amaya Gaming in November; the revenue upturn is 79% when "excluding Ongame".

Gross profit went up 105% to CAD\$8.8m and gross margin improved to 88%.

Net loss increased to CAD\$5m from CAD\$1.1m, which NYX said was "mainly

driven by the losses from Ongame and the fair value adjustment to the embedded derivative related to the Amaya note".

Negative adjusted EBITDA of CAD\$453,000 was reported, down from positive adjusted EBITDA of CAD\$355,000. NYX CEO Matt Davey [pictured] said: "With our proven abilities to identify accretive opportunities, I am confident that our track record of operational and financial success will continue."

#### KEY POINT

- NYX Gaming Group reports a 98% year-on-year upturn in revenue for the first quarter of 2015



**ASIA**

**MACAU DECLINE REACHES ONE YEAR**

**May's 37% downturn marks the 12th consecutive year-on-year monthly fall**

Gross gaming revenue (GGR) in Macau has now declined year-on-year for 12 consecutive months, following May's 37% drop to 20.35bn patacas. The monthly total is an increase on April's 19.17bn patacas, which was the lowest monthly figure posted since January 2011. May's year-on-year decrease is up from April's 39% downswing, while a decrease of over 30% has now been recorded in each of the past four months. The year-to-date GGR figure of 104.29bn patacas is down 37%.

The record for the highest ever year-on-year monthly downturn in the region was broken three times in the space of five months within the 12 consecutive months of decline, as February's 49% fall to 19.54bn patacas broke December's record 30% decrease to 23.29bn patacas.

**KEY POINT**

- Macau's gross gaming revenue has decreased in each of the last 12 months



**UK**

**POKERSTARS SPORTSBOOK UP AND RUNNING**

**UK players can bet on seven sports, with more to come**

Operator PokerStars has launched its sportsbook offering to UK players. Wagers are currently being offered on football, tennis, basketball, rugby union, handball, ice hockey and volleyball via the PokerStars 7 software, with more sports set to follow.

David Baazov [pictured], CEO of provider Amaya Gaming, PokerStars' parent company, announced at Amaya's Q1 2015 conference call that the

sportsbook product would be rolling out "across the dot-com global network through the next two quarters of 2015", after PokerStars took its first sports bet on 31 March, when the sportsbook was in its beta phase.

Amaya also plans to launch a daily fantasy sports product in time for the start of the 2015 NFL regular season in September.

**KEY POINT**

- PokerStars' new sportsbook product has gone live in the UK



**bet365affiliates**

**AAC 2015**

VISIT US AT **STAND D26**

Enjoy gambling responsibly. [www.gambleaware.co.uk](http://www.gambleaware.co.uk) 18+

## GUEST COLUMNIST

## “GAMEBLING: THE FUTURE OF BETTING”



by **Henry Oakes**  
Co-founder,  
Geonomics

“Gambling and gaming have always been close relatives. After all, when you buy Park Lane in Monopoly you’re not really buying Park Lane – you’re buying the possibility that someone will land on it. The feelings of excitement and anticipation you get when someone moves into dice-roll range of an expensive property aren’t all that different to the rush a seasoned roulette player gets watching the spin of the wheel.

Equally, video games often use a quest format to disguise the basic simplicity of their risk/reward structure. In a role-playing game like Diablo, you’re technically saving the world from giant flaming demons, but it’s no coincidence that you’re always given bright, shiny loot after doing so.

The critical difference: stakes. With these games, the outcomes that matter are entirely internal. The risks involved are artificial, but they’re still exciting. Applying this to gambling, where you’ve got a chance of winning big or forfeiting your stake, should, in theory, be a slam-dunk.

It’s worth mentioning that gambling has been ‘gamified’ for some time already. Subtract game elements and what’s left, more or less, is an algorithm. Without this, you might as well just give players direct access to the Random Number Generator.

Think about the levers on a slot machine – the simple action of pulling it downwards gives the player a sense of control and a feeling of ownership over gameplay. That there are numerous stylised console and PC versions of casino games further proves that the interest is there. Despite this, online gambling hasn’t taken full advantage of game mechanics yet.

### The gamer revolution and online gambling’s creative rut

Online gambling is missing a huge creative opportunity. This may be because it is accustomed to simply ‘porting’ existing offline games onto the internet and has achieved relative success doing so. However, innovation is somewhat lacking and players don’t go with these games because they’re hugely enamoured of them – they simply don’t have alternatives.

Gambling could learn a lot from the online gaming camp to make gambling more fun and engaging, and improve the overall user experience and embrace the new gaming/gambling concept that I’ve come to call ‘gamebling.’

### ‘Gamebling’: what it is, and why it matters

The social gaming revolution has brought products like Candy Crush and Clash of Clans into the mainstream. Gamebling represents the intersection of the two disciplines. Despite the name, it’s not an attempt to get players to ‘bet’ on the outcome of Candy Crush (how would that even work) or otherwise stitch gambling onto social gaming in entirely inappropriate ways. The intention is to make the gambling experience more enjoyable and rewarding by implementing certain game mechanics.

While companies like Paddy Power and Betable have made attempts to move into this space, it has been with limited success and often incongruous resulting products.

Gambling companies are hard to differentiate, and offer largely the same experiences. There needs to be a radical rethink in the way gaming companies are developing these formats. Think about the rise of multiplayer online role-playing games like World of Warcraft. Individual players have spent years of their lives in Blizzard’s Azeroth, and it’s not because they’re really into the story: the game mechanics hit that ‘sweet spot’ between repeatability and entertainment value.

At Geonomics we created an interactive gambling platform for a series of games based on Google Maps – players choose lucky squares that represent real-life locations. It’s given us a solid foundation upon which to innovate and build in modern games features that players enjoy. We were willing to try something new – and were successful.

This is what operators need to do if they’re to succeed in this new landscape. It’s easy to be afraid of changing things up, but if you see a need to rethink your offerings and ignore it you’ll miss out. Push boundaries, and don’t be afraid to shake things up – a feature at a time, if necessary. Your audience will reward you for it.”

*Henry Oakes is the co-founder of Geonomics, a gaming company that creates location-based lotto games*

**Want to be a guest columnist in GI Friday? Write to: [editor@gamblinginsider.com](mailto:editor@gamblinginsider.com)**

**OUT NOW: Look out for the May/June issue of Gambling Insider’s print magazine, featuring a USA Special as we speak exclusively with Scientific Games president and CEO Gavin Isaacs about his ambitious plans for the expanding provider following some major acquisitions**





mediaskunkworks.com

## Infinitely Scalable SEO with Predictive Modelling

1997 was Gary Kasparov  
beaten by Deep Blue IBM® Super Computer

2019: The computational capacity of  
9a \$4,000 computing device  
(in 1999 dollars) is approximately equal  
to the computational capability  
of the human brain (20 quadrillion  
calculations per second)



Media Skunk Works, IT Centre, York Science Park, University of York, York



*Don't take chances with  
your gaming business*



Apply for your **FREE** membership today at [gamblinginsider.com](http://gamblinginsider.com)

**GAMBLINGINSIDER**