



# WEEK 45

## FRIDAY 6 NOV 2015

### THIS WEEK

- Racing Levy talks end in stalemate
- Italy prepares new online licences
- Playtech enjoys revenue increase
- Columnist: David Chandler on interviews

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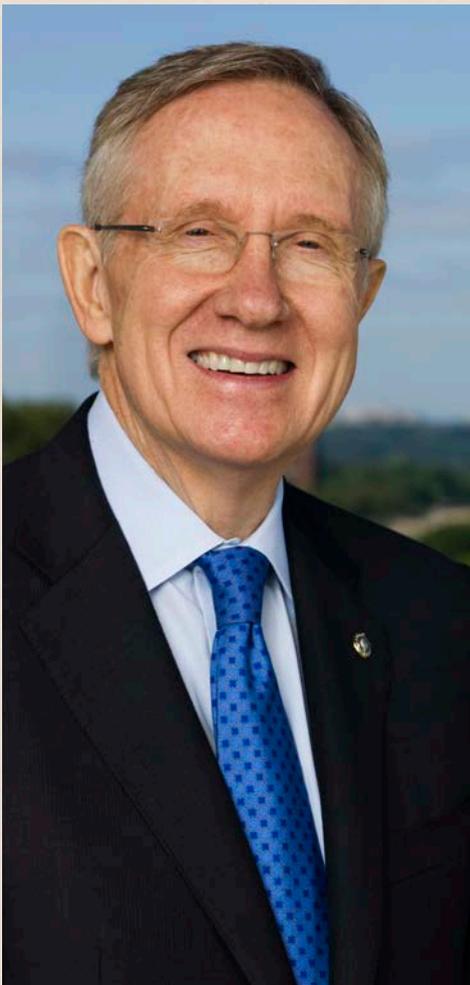


THE GAMING PRO

#### TOP STORY

## HEAVYWEIGHTS CLASH OVER DFS

Politicians disagree on regulation of paid fantasy sports



Outspoken politicians Harry Reid and Chris Christie have wildly differing views on DFS

A pair of leading US political figures have outlined staunchly opposing views on daily fantasy sports. Nevada Senator Harry Reid described DFS sites as “unregulated, illegal gambling”, while New Jersey Governor Chris Christie said the games should not be considered gambling and that regulating it would be a “stupid idea”.

Daily fantasy sports has been a hot regulatory topic in recent weeks, with the Nevada Gaming Control Board declaring last month that the product cannot be offered in the state without a licence.

The Justice Department is also reportedly looking into whether or not DFS falls outside the exemption fantasy sports were given from UIGEA. The Fantasy Sports Trade Association recently announced plans for the independent, self-regulatory Fantasy Sports Control Agency.

Nigel Eccles, CEO at leading DFS operator FanDuel, last week issued a letter to players in support of sector regulation. “A number of smart but tough proposals in various state legislatures have begun to emerge, which I believe can serve as the basis for the sensible regulation of the fantasy sports industry,” he said.

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**FROM FRONT PAGE ►**

It was these comments to which Senator Reid was responding when he described DFS as “the only unregulated gambling operation in the country” while referencing recent alleged insider betting and risks to children. He added: “Regulations are only good if they are enforced, and the self-policing solutions offered by the fantasy sports companies are not strong enough to instil public confidence. I encourage state and federal officials to examine this industry more closely and make sure they have the adequate tools to regulate what is essentially gambling by another name.”

Governor Christie, responding to a question about paid fantasy sports regulation during a radio appearance, said he doesn’t consider it to be gambling. He later told CNN: “They shouldn’t regulate fantasy football. It’s a stupid idea.”

Meanwhile a bill has been introduced into the New York State Assembly designed to give the state’s Gaming Commission jurisdiction over DFS. A draft New Jersey DFS regulation bill is also being circulated among relevant parties, according to Legal Sports Report.

**KEY POINTS**

- Leading politicians express opposing views on DFS status and regulation
- Senator Harry Reid calls DFS “unregulated and illegal”; Governor Chris Christie says regulation is “stupid idea”
- New York DFS bill introduced; New Jersey circulating draft bill

**UK  
 NO RACING LEVY DEAL REACHED  
 Culture secretary John Whittingdale is set to decide the 55th scheme**

The Horserace Betting Levy is set to be determined by culture secretary John



Whittingdale after no agreement was reached between the British racing industry and operators. Discussions on the 55th Levy Scheme for 2016/17 failed to bring about an arrangement, with the matter now referred to the secretary of state for culture, media and sport for the first time since 2010.

British Racing, represented by the British Horseracing Authority, the Racecourse Association and the Horsemen’s Group, said it attempted to assist the process by making its own proposal to operators.

**EUROPE  
 ITALY EYES NEW ONLINE LICENCES  
 Gaming taxes also set to rise**

Italy is looking to create 120 online gaming licences as part of a new law. Each permit will cost €200,000 and last for six years up to December 2022, with the licensing procedure set to launch by July 2016.

The recently published draft budget law also provides for 10,000 betting shop licences to be granted at an initial bidding price of €32,000 and 5,000 betting corner licences at an

initial bidding price of €18,000. A total of 250 new land-based bingo licences would each cost €350,000.

Taxation on AWP's will increase to 15% of turnover, with VLT tax rising to 5.5% of turnover.



There were also increases for sports, bingo and land-based, with poker the only faller, down 25% to €2.5m. The firm's financials division made €27.5m during the period.

CEO Mor Weizer said: "Three quarters of our growth in Q3 came from regulated markets which now account for over half of all group revenues."

with the city's three casinos over wages, healthcare and benefits.

An update from the Detroit Casino Council, which is made up of a consortium of unions, stated that members had "authorized the Detroit Casino Council Negotiating Committee to call whatever actions are needed, up to and including strike authorization, to reach a contract settlement".

Further negotiations with MGM Grand Detroit, Greektown Casino and MotorCity Casino Hotel are scheduled between 9-17 November.

**FINANCIAL**

**PLAYTECH REVENUE SOARS**

**Increases for casino and services sectors**

Playtech has reported a 47% year-on-year revenue increase to €170.9m for Q3 2015, representing underlying growth of 17%. The upturn was supported by revenue rises in the provider's two biggest sectors, with casino jumping 21% to €75.4m and services improving 18% to €40.1m.

**US**

**DETROIT CASINO WORKERS SUPPORT STRIKE ACTION**

**Negotiations ongoing in dispute over wages and healthcare**

Detroit casino staff have authorised union leaders to call a strike if necessary as negotiations continue



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GUEST COLUMNIST

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE PERSPECTIVE



by David Chandler  
Head of customer experience,  
BetConstruct

So how do you hire those great agents that will turn your call centre around and produce demonstrable improvements to customer experience?

Marginal gains is the buzzword in sport right now: a skin-tight vest shaves off a few thousandths of a second, a lighter bike increases speed and reduces drag. Small amendments in themselves, but combining to make a significant difference. So if this concept works for sports, why not apply them in your interviews?

They may help you identify the correct candidates and steer you away from copy/paste answers to copy/paste interview questions. Here are five examples of marginal gains that can help you:

**Be Prepared**

It's a busy day and HR walks through the door with an unannounced interviewee. It happens, but, being the consummate professional – despite the evidence, the directors still believe this about you – you're prepared for this unforeseen event. Or at least you appear to be, and that's what matters.

Your interview question sheets are pre-printed, your team leader is on hand and you have working pen.

Remember also that the nature of the candidate's arrival in the above scenario is not necessarily their fault. Greet them

politely, thank them for coming, offer them a drink of water. This first impression is vital in keeping or losing potential agents.

**Strength in Numbers**

Never interview alone. Regardless of how professional you are, you may be swayed by a candidate's sporting preferences, their dress sense or small tattoo. You may miss certain traits or phrases as you're making notes, or misunderstand a perfectly acceptable answer. Two people is better (hence the team leader), but three is great.

**An Agent's Thanks**

Consider inviting a customer service agent to the interview. After all, they are actually doing the job and, no matter how 'hands-on' you are, they know the minutiae of the role better than you. You also display your trust in the judgement of an existing employee and, from her perspective, rescue her from 20 minutes of dealing with irate customers.

**Left Field Questions**

Include the obligatory "do you have any hobbies?" question if you must, but throw in a curve-ball too, something non-standard that makes them sit up, pulls them out of their interview comfort-zone and makes them think. I'll share my personal favourite with you: "Given the choice, would you prefer to live in New York or Venice?" Surprisingly, I've had confident candidates stutter and stammer, actually calling this a hard question. Conversely, I've seen timid applicants' eyes light up as they enthuse about their preferred location. So what does this question tell us? Will the Venice candidate be too quiet and easily upset by aggressive callers, or will they be more reliable because they eschew the lights and seduction of the big city for

the calming contentment of the canals? Their reaction to the question matters as much as their answer. Customer service is not a series of well delivered, linear questions from customers, but a rapid attack of disassociated queries, complaints and demands. The ability to seamlessly jump from one topic to another, after standard questions like "tell us about yourself" and "have you used your German in a professional capacity?"; is vital for a great agent. With this question, you may glimpse a candidate's capacity to deal with such situations.

**Filling from Need**

No matter the need, or the pressure from above, never employ unsuitable applicants just because you desperately require a particular skill-set – it will cost you dearly in the long run. Being in such demand, they may become inattentive full of self-importance and start ignoring basic procedures.

*David Chandler's background as an illusionist is perhaps unique in the gaming world, but as a Supervisor with Ladbrokes International, Training Manager for 888.com and now, as Head of Customer Experience with BetConstruct, inclusion and entertainment have always played a key role in the education and development of his Customer Service teams.*

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

**COMING SOON: Look out for the November/December issue of Gambling Insider's print magazine, featuring a Security Special in which we explore the various security issues operators and suppliers are grappling with in this constantly evolving industry.**

