

# GI FRIDAY

# WEEK 39

FRIDAY 28 SEP 2018

# G2E PREVIEW

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# EVOLVING ENTERTAINMENT





# WEEK 39

FRIDAY 28 SEP 2018

## G2E PREVIEW

### INDUSTRY HEADS TO G2E

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### THIS WEEK

- DraftKings and AGA in favour of state-by-state regulation
- IGT and William Hill US partner for lotteries
- FanDuel opts to pay out after pricing mistake
- G2E Preview: Organisers and exhibitors interviewed

#### GUEST COLUMNIST:

**Peter Causley, Managing Director, Lightning Box Games**



The largest gathering of global gaming professionals in North America, this year's G2E will focus on sports betting, education and innovation. There will be over 600 exhibitors showing off the latest technologies and products the industry has to offer. There will also be more than 100 conference sessions lined up for the three-day event in Las Vegas, where you can learn about all about the industry's latest trends in compliance, regulatory and technological issues to name but a few. G2E offers its attendees an extensive schedule which is guaranteed to attract people from all across the gaming industry and entertainment sectors. ▶



## EVOLVING ENTERTAINMENT

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# THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS



Reed Exhibitions and the American Gaming Association (AGA) have continued to run the show since 2011, helping to continually expand its reach and grow its reputation.

Affiliate marketing, bingo, compliance, game design, the science of emotional intelligence, marketing, millennials, networks, player tracking systems and technology will all be covered at G2E. Conferences will also cover crypto currencies, a tribal leadership roundtable, esports events and exhibitions on regulation.

This year's G2E will also include the first ever Sports Betting Symposium, following the United States Supreme Court's decision to repeal the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) and the increased appetite and opportunities it has created for the sports betting sector in the US. Attendees in Las Vegas will benefit greatly from attending the symposium, as they stand a chance to learn from, and share ideas with an impressive group of speakers, panellists and fellow guests.

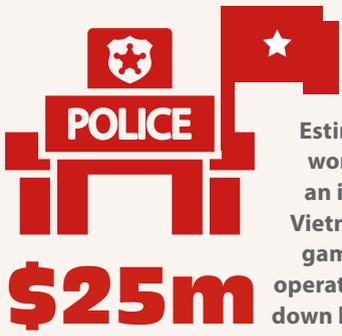
The AGA and Reed both believe the symposium appeals to all of those affected by the legal changes occurring within the US gaming industry, focusing on legislation and business strategy in particular.

Sara Slane, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs for the AGA, said: "The Sports Betting Symposium at G2E will offer the world's foremost experts, business leaders and operational solutions to build a thriving legal market in the United States."

Scott Van Pelt is set to be the keynote speaker on the future of legalised sports betting. The ESPN SportsCenter anchor, who is also an outspoken supporter of legalised, regulated sports betting, promises to be an entertaining and charismatic expert speaker. Slane will be joining him, as the two will be engaged in an interview-style discussion on the topic, exploring the implications for key stakeholders, such as sports leagues, the media, suppliers and operators. ▶

# LIVE BETTING IS DEAD

UNLESS IT'S GOT  
A PULSE



Estimated worth of an illegal Vietnamese gambling operation shut down by police

30

Ainsworth Game Technology has announced Danny Gladstone will step down as the supplier's CEO after 30 June 2019



Slane added: "From the start, Scott Van Pelt was one of the first to give attention to the potential of the legal, regulated sports betting market in the United States. Now that more jurisdictions across the country have begun offering sports betting, there could be no better time to hear his insight on the evolving state of play and the overarching benefits from this new sector of the American gaming industry.

Beyond sports betting, there will be G2E's usual emphasis and focus on the matters of education and innovation in the gaming industry. This is made abundantly clear by the number of unique and specific events that are aimed at both company expansion and growth. The Innovation Incubator is an example of such an event. It will be headlined by Daymond John, CEO and Founder of hip hop label FUBU, and The Pink Ceiling & Sprout CEO, Cindy Eckert Whitehead.

Taking aim at the problems faced by new businesses and their current opportunities, the Innovation Incubator will give an opportunity for start-ups and students to pitch their ideas to a live audience on the G2E main stage. Four of the most impressive ideas from these main stage talks will then be selected by a panel of gaming industry experts. They will then compete against one another, presenting their concepts to John and Eckert, followed by a Q & A session where the potential business opportunity of each presentation will be scrutinised and assessed.

Allie Barth, Vice President of Industry Relations at the AGA, said: "The gaming industry was built by entrepreneurs with innovation in their DNA. At G2E, we embrace and spotlight gaming innovation on the show floor, delivering a powerful platform to drive the industry forward.

"Innovation Incubator at G2E is about giving innovators- whether from gaming, hospitality or academia- the opportunity to bring their ideas to the forefront during one of gaming's largest events of the year." ◀



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XL Media's revenue for 2018,  
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## DRAFTKINGS CEO AND AGA SUPPORT STATE-BY-STATE REGULATION IN US

DraftKings CEO Jason Robins has come out in support of his belief that state-by-state regulation for sports betting in the US would be a safer option for the market than a federal framework. This opinion is also held by the American Gaming Association (AGA), as reflected in a recent letter to the Senate Minority Leader.

Since the repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) in May, New Jersey, Delaware, Mississippi and West Virginia have all legalised and expanded their sports betting offering, which is now within their rights to do so as individual states.

However, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer recently proposed a very different idea. Instead of state-by-state regulation, he has championed a federal sports betting framework that would be uniformly implemented across all of the US. This proposal has received the backing of major US sports leagues, such as the NFL, NBA, MLB and PGA Tour.

By contrast, the AGA sent a letter to

Schumer reaffirming its commitment to working with all stakeholders to shut down the US' "vast illegal market."

In its letter, the AGA wrote: "AGA has long been a leading advocate for eliminating the vast illegal sports betting market in the US, which was largely enabled by the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act.

"We believe this can best be achieved through law enforcement oversight and robust state regulation. The AGA firmly believes that additional federal engagement is not warranted at this time."

Speaking at an industry event, Robins echoed the AGA's sentiment, commenting: "There are pros and cons. The pro is that, instead of being state-by-state, with a bunch of rules taking a while to be implemented, it would be done consistently.

"The con is that, if it's not done well, everything is not done well as opposed to a few states getting it right and others not. I think state by state is a little safer."

The month-to-month rise in Macau's visitor numbers in August, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service

## 12.2%





The pre-tax loss reported by The Ritz Hotel Casino in London (\$15.3m) for 2017



Sterling Suffolk Racecourse is seeking over \$1bn in damages from Wynn Resorts, which could triple under the racketeering law

## IGT AND WILLIAM HILL PARTNER UP FOR US LOTTERIES

Subsidiaries of IGT and William Hill have announced a multi-year agreement to offer US lotteries a full service solution for sports betting in the country.

The new partnership means the supplier and operator will jointly consider future sports betting opportunities and bid requests from lotteries in the US on a mutually exclusive basis.

IGT Global Solutions Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of IGT, and William Hill US, a subsidiary of William Hill, will combine their technologies and know-how to offer "US lotteries a fully-managed solution to meet all their current and future needs in sports betting".

This combined offering of IGT's PlayShot Platform, which is already live in four US states, and William Hill's track record as an operator, already gaining a foothold in all five US states that have legalised sports betting, could prove extremely beneficial for the pair and lotteries that chose to utilise their services.

The new partners are looking at US

states hoping to increase revenues through the expansion of sports betting services, following the Supreme Court's decision to repeal the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA).

Renato Ascoli, IGT CEO, North America, said: "IGT is uniquely positioned as a leader in both lottery and sports betting technologies that will expand the possibilities for players and for lotteries themselves in this exciting new market. By forming this partnership with William Hill, we are able to bring to our lottery customers in every state a world-class combination of technology and operational expertise."

Joe Asher, CEO of William Hill US, added: "William Hill's track record as an operator globally, and our clear leadership as a sportsbook operator in the US in particular, mean that US lotteries can be confident that in choosing IGT and us together, they will be benefiting from a reliable, trustworthy and responsibly-managed solution."

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## 2022

The year in which the next UK general election is scheduled, when Labour could ban credit-card gambling if it takes power



### FANDUEL PAYS OUT ON “ASTRONOMICAL” PRICING ERROR

Operator FanDuel has addressed its sports betting pricing error during the Denver Broncos and Oakland Raiders NFL matchup that took place on Sunday 16 September, agreeing to pay out on “erroneous tickets.”

On the FanDuel sportsbook, fans were able to place 750/1 wagers on a successful field-goal opportunity in the last 18 seconds of the NFL game, an outcome that FanDuel has since estimated as 85% likely. The Denver Broncos managed to convert the field-goal opportunity, beating the Oakland Raiders 20-19 and turning FanDuel’s pricing error into a winning bet.

The mistake caused by FanDuel’s in-game pricing system was described as an “obvious pricing error” and, as such, FanDuel would only honour the “small number” bets placed in the final 18 seconds for the Broncos to win at the “accurate market price.”

However, in a later announcement, FanDuel u-turned on its earlier decision, claiming that despite having established house rules for such events, it would still pay out the odds offered by the pricing error.

FanDuel said: “For those familiar with the industry these rules are understood, but we realise a lot of our customers are new to sports betting and were not familiar.

“We want FanDuel to be a sportsbook for all bettors, and we want sports betting to be fun. So, this one’s on the house. We are paying out these erroneous tickets and wish the lucky customers well.”

Customers will be delighted with the decision, but FanDuel has already begun to discuss ways to improve its processes and procedures with the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement.

For now, it might just seem to be a learning curve and a potential opportunity for positive press coverage from its handling of the situation. But FanDuel will be well aware that if it wishes to establish itself as the leading sportsbook in the US, it must continue to improve its offerings.

One lucky bettor will now receive a payout of \$82,000 from a \$110 wager thanks to FanDuel’s mistake, proving just how costly pricing errors can be.



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**THE WEEK IN QUOTES**

*"We follow our growth strategy by strengthening our position on regulated markets and we are very pleased that our popular games are now also available for players in Lithuania."*

**Henrik Fagerlund, MD NetEnt Malta and CPO of NetEnt, on the supplier's launch of its games in the Lithuanian market**

*"Monica has outstanding global human resources leadership experience in the hospitality industry. Caesars is expanding its global footprint to include both gaming and non-gaming hotels and resorts, as well as gaming acquisitions. Monica will help us recruit, engage and develop US and international workforces while ensuring our talent strategies are fully aligned with Caesars' overall business objectives."*

**Mark Frissora, President and CEO of Caesars Entertainment, on Monica Digilio's appointment as Chief Human Resources Officer**

**MGM RESORTS AGREES \$275M HARD ROCK ROCKSINO DEAL**

MGM Resorts is set to acquire operations of the Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park, Ohio, from MGM Growth Properties (MGP), for \$275m.

The transaction between the gaming operator, MGM, and the real estate investment trust, MGP, is expected to be accretive for both parties within the first year of operations.

In the agreement, MGM will acquire all of the operating assets of the Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park from MGP, and lease the property from a subsidiary of MGP.

Rocksino is a 200,000 square-foot gaming facility with over 2,300 video lottery terminals and a 1,900 seat music venue, with reported net revenue of \$293m for the first half of 2018.

Despite not having table games, the property's "superior non-game offerings" and "attractive location" were both listed as reasons behind the deal.

Jim Murren, Chairman & CEO of MGM Resorts International, said: "We believe the Rocksino is a great fit for

the MGM portfolio and will benefit from our capabilities as a leading global entertainment company and our award-winning M life Rewards Program. We anticipate revenue and profit growth from this combination."

The deal is in line with previous acquisitions and leases that MGM and MGP have entered into over the last few years, with the Rocksino added to an existing master lease, increasing it by \$60m annually.

As consistent with master lease terms, 90% of the rent is fixed and will increase by 2% a year until 2022, with this transaction expected to close in the first half of 2019.

When MGP was established in 2015, it began to acquire MGM properties such as The Mirage, Mandalay Bay and Luxor Las Vegas before leasing them back to MGM via NNN leases.

The Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park was acquired by MGP in 2018 for \$1.02bn from operator Hard Rock International.

*“This is an important milestone in the integration of GVC and Ladbrokes Coral and demonstrates the benefits to customers of bringing the businesses together. At GVC, content is king and we believe building a unique gaming offer, which marries exclusive in-house developed games with the very best titles from third-parties, is a win-win for our players.”*

**Liron Snir, GVC’s Chief Product Officer, on integrating proprietary Ladbrokes Coral gaming content**

*“The Malta Gaming Authority hereby notifies its licensees and the general public that with the coming into force of the new Gaming Act (Cap. 583 of the Laws of Malta), the regulatory treatment of what previously used to be called ‘intermediaries’ is to be assessed in light of the Gaming Authorisations Regulations (S.L. 583.05) and the Gaming Authorisations and Compliance Directive (Directive 3 of 2018).”*

**The MGA addresses the Treatment of Intermediaries under the new Gaming Act**

## BALL STREET CEO DISCUSSES ADVERTISING REGULATIONS

Matt Wilson, CEO of social video publisher and full-service agency Ball Street, believes advertising regulations will have a huge impact on how gambling firms can reach out to their customers.

Wilson told *Gambling Insider*: “This is one of the key challenges facing the betting industry. They’ve got to be aware of it rather than being in denial.”

Where most firms are currently advertising through traditional media, such as television and sponsorships, Ball Street has bucked the trend and possesses tangible results to show for it. Through its XO Youtube channel and fan media such as AFTV (formerly Arsenal Fan TV) and The Redmen TV, Ball Street has amassed 250 million organic views a season for brands and received positive feedback about the nature of its advertising.

But this kind of marketing, Wilson believes, is not just about success; it’s a necessity for the gambling industry right now in light of what’s

happening within regulatory circles. Italy’s blanket advertising ban is a prime example and Labour Deputy Leader Tom Watson’s comments about prohibiting gambling advertising during live sport in the UK seem to confirm Wilson’s fears.

He continues: “What you need to invest in is building your own community and content for when TV or shirt sponsorship is no longer available. I’m pretty sure you will still be allowed to make content for those who have opted in to your CRM or social media feeds. That’s a challenge and that’s what they should be focusing on. But I’m not seeing many that are doing it.

“If they are doing it, they’re working left to right rather than right to left. What I mean by that is you should be reverse engineering that and saying ‘if I want fans to sign up to my page, I need to work with people who understand fans – and fans on social media.’”

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## THIS WEEK'S WINNERS AND LOSERS

### WINNERS

*Peru, where Bill 3415/2018-CR, which looks to regulate sports betting in the nation, received its second address in Congress*

*Gateway Casino & Entertainment announced it will file a confidential draft registration statement for a proposed IPO*

*More than 3.4 million people visited Macau in August, up 12.2% month-to-month*

## SKY BET CEO ARGUES AGAINST LABOUR PLANS

Sky Betting and Gaming (SBG) CEO Richard Flint has opposed the Labour Party's proposals to ban gambling advertising during live sporting events and credit-card betting within the UK.

Labour has this week concluded its year-long review into gambling regulations, and Deputy Leader Tom Watson believes further regulation is required in tackling the country's "hidden epidemic" of problem gambling.

The Italian government has recently decided to ban all gambling advertising and Watson has advised a BBC Radio programme that he wants similar action, albeit not as wide-ranging.

Flint, however, believes such a ban would disincentivise legitimate operators from entering the UK market, fearing this would leave customers more vulnerable to disreputable operators.

Warning signs of this effect can be seen in Italy, where Facebook and Google have said unlicensed

bookmakers have appeared at the top of their customer search lists.

On a potential credit card ban, Flint also advised more attention being placed on gamblers at risk, rather than a complete ban.

The SBG CEO is quoted as saying by the BBC: "We'll study the advertising proposals carefully, but think any type of blanket ban removes a key incentive for operators to get a UK gambling licence and therefore could leave UK customers more vulnerable to disreputable operators.

"And our data on credit cards suggests that it is those customers with multiple cards that are at greater risk of harm, so we believe attention should be placed on that rather than a complete ban."

Labour had initially called for a ban on gambling advertising during live sporting events, with Watson telling BBC Today: "We're not anti-gambling. We just think we need to tighten up regulations because there has been a digital revolution in these new products since the last piece of legislation."

## EVENS

*Catena Media will be replacing Board Member Anders Brandt with Øystein Engebretsen*

*Operators with Swedish permits reported a gross gaming revenue decline of 2% year-on-year*

*Crown Perth saw its casino revenue fall by almost 10% year-on-year, with baccarat takings declining by 24%*

## LOSERS

## LAWYER CRITICISES “DANGEROUS” ITALIAN ADVERTISING BAN

An Italian gaming lawyer and specialist says he still has nightmares thinking about the “short-sighted” nature of the Dignity Decree.

The policy, brought in by Italian Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio, has outlawed all forms of gambling advertising and sponsorship.

However, Quirino Mancini, partner at Tonucci & Partners, believes the “stupid” policy sets a “dangerous precedent” for other European governments.

Mancini says the Dignity Decree was brought in to tackle problem gambling within the retail sector - but insists banning online gambling advertising has no effect whatsoever on slot machine players.

Speaking at an industry event, Mancini explained: “The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Di Maio, came up with this proposition to get the gambling threat out because he kept talking about very desperate people that go to the nearby slot outlet every day.

“The beauty is this will continue as usual. The ban hits the pure online operators because it prohibits any type of gambling advertising. But, when it comes to retail, you can continue to have your nice sign outside the door and those desperate guys can still come in and gamble at the slot machines.

“I still have nightmares when I wake up in the middle of the night, thinking about how stupid, short-sighted and biased this policy was, and how dangerous the precedent it sets – that could spread out across Europe – is.”

Mancini also feels the underlying motivation behind the Dignity Decree is politicised, rather than aiming to genuinely tackle problem gambling.

He said: “This is the paradox. An excess of regulations are coming from politicians who know nothing about the business. They are just trying to achieve something for their constituents, with the message: ‘I said I would do something and I did it.’”

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## LA RISES

Louisiana gaming revenue improved 8.88% to \$261.748m in August, as last year's revenue was dampened by Hurricane Harvey's hit on Houston, which feeds the Lake Charles, Vinton market.

That helped offset the 9.07% decrease from Baton Rouge's three casinos. The city implemented a smoking ban in June.

Evangeline Downs, which sits about an hour outside of Baton Rouge, is not included in the ban.

August had nine Fridays and Saturdays this year versus eight last year.

PROPERTY/MARKET	REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE
Shreveport/Bossier City		
Horseshoe (CZR)	\$16.518	+22.84
Eldorado (ERI)	\$9.756	+6.13
Margaritaville	\$12.834	+4.20
Sam's Town (BYD)	\$6.217	+2.47
Louisiana Downs (CZR)	\$3.715	+1.17
Diamondjacks (Legends)	\$2.857	+2.47
Boomtown (PNK)	\$4.527	-8.87
SP/BC Total	\$56.424	+6.95

PROPERTY/MARKET	REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE
Lake Charles/Vinton		
Golden Nugget	\$28.884	+29.93
Delta Downs (BYD)	\$15.135	+27.48
L'Auberge (PNK)	\$26.697	+10.90
Isle of Capri (ERI)	\$8.585	-1.98
LC/Vinton Total	\$79.301	+18.47

PROPERTY/MARKET	REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE
New Orleans		
Fair Grounds (CHDN)	\$3.524	+10.10
Treasure Chest (BYD)	\$9.339	+8.67
Harrah's (CZR)	\$22.914	+7.48
Boomtown (PNK)	\$9.883	+7.26
NOLA Total	\$45.661	+7.87

PROPERTY/MARKET	REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE
Baton Rouge/Central LA		
Evangeline Downs (BYD)	\$6.507	+2.29
L'Auberge (PNK)	\$12.660	-0.41
Hollywood (GLPI)	\$4.408	-15.95
Belle (TPCA)	\$3.110	-26.55
BR/C.LA Total	\$26.683	-6.54

PROPERTY/MARKET	REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE
Elsewhere		
Amelia Belle (BYD)	\$3.921	+11.99
Routes, Truck Stops, OTBs	\$49.757	+7.38
State total	\$261.748	+8.88

Multiple property companies		
Boyd	\$41.118	+12.98
Caesars	\$43.148	+12.25
Pinnacle	\$53.767	+5.49
Eldorado	\$18.341	+2.17

## MARKET UPDATE

**No US gaming stocks hit 52-week highs as of Wednesday.**

However, Empire Resort, which has seen revenue at its slots casino Big M halved since the opening of its sister property Resorts World Catskills, hit another 52-week closing low.

NYNY is 73.37% below its 52-week high, trading at \$8.65.

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## GLOBAL GAMING AWARDS LAS VEGAS NEARS

8 October, Sands Expo, Las Vegas

The most trusted awards ceremony in the gaming industry is back. The Global Gaming Awards is a celebration of the great achievements and accomplishments during the past 12 months made by companies across the industry. This year's Awards will see a gathering of some of the industry's biggest names and most impressive newcomers all under one glittering roof at the Venetian Ballroom, located in the Sands Expo.

Last year's Awards saw the likes of Sportradar, Betgenius, IGT, Wynn Resorts, LeoVegas Affiliates and MGM Resorts all go home with a coveted prize. A total of 70 judges cast their votes for the 12 Award categories. The voting process was independently audited by KPMG Isle of Man.

This year has undoubtedly seen huge developments across the global gaming landscape and in particular in the US following the Supreme Court's decision to repeal PASPA. Perhaps rather fittingly then, our categories have also changed to reflect these developments. The four new categories created for this year's ceremony include: Slot of the Year, Property of the Year, American Executive of the Year and Product Innovation of the Year.

Of course, the Awards ceremony is not all about competition; it is also a great opportunity to make new connections as well as strengthening old ties. Over 700 industry leaders will be present at the Awards, including leading executives from the industry's biggest and most renowned companies. Whether you are looking to discuss the latest trends and developments or perhaps seek new partnerships, then this is the perfect opportunity for you and your company.

BetConstruct is this year's Lead Partner for the Awards, and Konami Gaming is the Awards' Content Sponsor.

The ceremony will open its doors at 11:30am, with the Awards proceedings beginning at 12:15pm.



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# GLOBAL GAMING AWARDS 2018 SHORTLIST AVAILABLE!

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## LAND-BASED OPERATOR

Industry stalwarts MGM Resorts, Las Vegas Sands and Hard Rock International are joined by new entrants Churchill Downs Racetrack and William Hill US

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## DIGITAL OPERATOR

Bet365 is in with a chance of winning the Award for the third time in four years, while 2016 winner 888 Holdings is also on the list of nominees, along with successful US operators NYRA Bets and Play Sugar House

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## LAND-BASED PRODUCT

IGT was last year's winner for its Cardless Connect product, and the supplier is back this year with its PlayShot sports betting solution. NOVOMATIC's Otium OT300 cabinet and SG Gaming's 88 Fortunes cabinet are also on the list

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## DIGITAL PRODUCT

Following Scientific Games' acquisition of NYX Gaming Group earlier this year, SG Digital has joined the list with its OpenBet sports betting platform. SBTech and Kambi Group have also been nominated for their sportsbooks, while NetEnt's Live Beyond Live product appears on the shortlist

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## CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAM

MGM Resorts is in the running to win the Award for the fifth consecutive year for its M life Rewards program. MGM will face stiff competition from Caesars Entertainment's Total Rewards and Wynn Resorts' Wynn Red Card among the other programs on the list

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## LAND-BASED INDUSTRY SUPPLIER

Scientific Games was victorious in this category last year, and it is in with a chance of winning the Award again. Aristocrat, IGT and NOVOMATIC will be among the other contenders

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## DIGITAL INDUSTRY SUPPLIER

This Award is one of the least predictable, as it has been won by four different companies in the last four years. Previous winners NetEnt and Playtech are nominated this year

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## PRODUCT INNOVATION

The Award is making its debut at this year's ceremony, and the shortlist includes last year's Digital Gaming Innovation of the Year winner Betgenius, which has been nominated for its BetBuilder product. IGT's Virtual Zone and Play'n GO's OMNY have also made the list

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## RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Last year's winner Sportradar is back again, but competition will be provided by returning nominees such as BMM Testlabs, Caesars Entertainment and GeoComply

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## SLOT

Another new category in this year's Awards will see the likes of Aristocrat's Game of Thrones, Greentube's From Dusk Till Dawn and NetEnt's MAX compete for the prize of the best slot game in the industry

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## PROPERTY

Operators will compete for the very first Property of the Year Award, and there is a strong tribal presence, with Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun Casino making the list. There is a truly global feel to the category, as Argentina's Casino de Tigre and Studio City, Macau are nominated

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## AMERICAN EXECUTIVE

The last of this year's new categories will showcase some of the industry's most successful executives, including SG Digital's Matt Davey, BetConstruct's Vigen Badalyan and IGT's Renato Ascoli

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## G2E PRE-SHOW Q+A

*Korbi Carrison, Event Director, Global Gaming Expo, Reed Exhibitions US*



### **What will make this year's G2E more unique than previous G2E shows?**

Anyone that attends G2E 2018 will get an inside look at cutting-edge developments in slots, table games, security, online gaming, casino design, casino management systems, staff resources and casino property marketing solutions. We'll present robust educational programming on topics including tribal gaming, sports betting, illegal gambling, integrated resorts, esports, skill-based and next-generation games, regionalisation, millennial customers and financial compliance. If you want to accelerate your business and personal growth, you won't want to miss G2E.

### **To what extent will the repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) in May lead**

### **to higher attendances and more interest in the show this year?**

We are very excited to have confirmed ESPN's SportsCenter anchor, Scott Van Pelt, as a keynote speaker on Wednesday, 10 October at 9am. The interview-style discussion, led by AGA's Senior Vice President of Public Affairs Sara Slane, will focus on the implications of a legalised sports betting market for key stakeholders, such as sports leagues, the media and the gaming industry, following the Supreme Court's decision to overturn PASPA in May.

Additionally, this year will be the industry's debut of the Sports Betting Symposium at G2E. As states and the private sector look for the best practices to adopt legalised sports betting, the Sports Betting Symposium at G2E will bring together the world's

foremost experts and business leaders to provide a specific vision for the future. An exciting element of the Sports Betting Symposium will be an interactive tour of the G2E expo hall designed to connect attendees with the top manufacturers of sports betting technologies.

**What are you most looking forward to at this year's show?**

Something I've always enjoyed at G2E are the education sessions and offerings from Global Gaming Women (GGW). Their mission is to support, inspire and influence the development of women in the

gaming industry, which they do through educational seminars, discussions and inspiring events. GGW brings together women at the forefront of the gaming industry to assist other women in reaching their full professional potential by providing them with the insight, education and connections needed to succeed.

GGW will start the show off on Monday, 8 October, with a keynote address from WNBA President Lisa Borders. She's a fantastic speaker who has an inspirational message to women looking to succeed in any industry. The GGW seminars and

sessions will range in topics from The Power of Technology to Mentoring Matters: The Why, The How and The Affected. G2E really values this partnership as it celebrates the smart and powerful women who make up our industry and aspires to help others rise to their level. It's a valuable networking opportunity for these women to work and grow together.

**Are there any new additions or events that have been added to the show this year?**

New for G2E 2018, we've hand-picked entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations. The one addition we are very excited about is the Innovation Incubator at G2E, which will give students, start-ups and industry veterans the opportunity to pitch their greatest gaming and hospitality ideas to FUBU CEO and Founder Daymond John, as well as The Pink Ceiling and Sprout CEO Cindy Eckert Whitehead. ▶

*“Attendees are invited to come together to share ideas, receive valuable feedback and learn from esteemed leaders”*



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The winning presentation, dubbed the Judges' Choice, will be awarded a cash prize, as well as a complimentary booth at G2E 2019 to showcase their technology. The audience will vote for a second prize - the Customer's

Choice - which will also receive a complimentary booth at G2E 2019.

**In what other ways is G2E showcasing innovation at this year's event?**

The AGA's Innovation Lab, in Booth #5883, serves as a centralised hub in the expo hall that encourages networking and brings innovation relevant to the gaming entertainment world to the forefront of the industry. Partnering with UNLV, operators and allies, the Innovation Lab hosts a collection of 15-minute TED-talk-style sessions designed to foster conversation and inspire innovation among the gaming industry. In addition to the pioneers in gaming, the 2018 Innovation Lab has brought in leaders from outside the casino world - including Microsoft, Allied Esports, and Pandora - to provide a different perspective on how the industry can advance into the future.

Attendees are invited to come together to share ideas, receive valuable feedback and learn from esteemed leaders who are driving innovation forward across multiple industries.

**What are the standout networking opportunities at this year's show?**



Like in previous years, there's an assortment of networking events to fit the variety and diversity of our industry. Some of the receptions and events include the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Networking Reception, the Global Gaming Awards Luncheon, the G2E Welcome Reception, sponsored by Novomatic, which is featuring an esports tournament, as well as the Kick Up Your Heels event hosted by Global Gaming Women.

### Which conferences particularly stand out?

This year, we've focused on really listening to what the industry wants in an education program and have translated that to the sessions we'll be offering this year. New tracks will be launching, including Marketing Analytics: Customer Acquisition & Retention, Non-Gaming Growth Opportunities in Esports, Optimizing Gaming

Operations: Guest Service & Experience are just a few.

We've also dedicated a track in our education program to gaming leadership and career development, which we've continued to grow. Sample sessions in the track for 2018 include Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace; Taking Charge of Your Career to Realize Your Preferred Future; and Managing People, Priorities and Power.

### How can attendees prepare in advance to get the most out of the show?

We recommend the show's pre-show planning tool, My Show, which is available on the G2E website and on the G2E mobile app, sponsored by Konami. Not only does it allow users to build out a schedule, but it will also recommend custom exhibitors to visit education sessions based on your registration profile and what you are looking to achieve at G2E.

**The floor is also home to many different areas devoted to special disciplines, like table games, online gaming, security and surveillance. Does this work for both exhibitors and attendees?**

Gaming operators and suppliers are continuing to look for new ways to grow their businesses. The mission of G2E is to exceed those demands, and one way of doing that is providing a platform for developers to showcase their newest advances relevant to casinos and the world of gaming. This has given attendees a place to learn and experience innovative products and technologies that they may have not previously considered. The inclusion of varied disciplines is vital, as it ensures that professionals from across the world can see the entire spectrum of possibilities for their business. The demand from exhibitors and attendees for such showcases at G2E only continues to grow. ◀



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## PRE-SHOW Q+A JULIA BOGUSLAWSKI

MARKETING OFFICER AND  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
OF INVESTOR RELATIONS,  
AMERICAN GAMING SYSTEMS

### What are you most looking forward to about G2E in Las Vegas this year?

First and foremost, it's always about having the opportunity to connect with our customers against such an innovative and high-energy backdrop. We take great pride in our booth – from the overall design and layout to the little touches that we obsess over to create a warm, inviting and playful atmosphere. This year is no exception and in addition to unveiling a creative new booth design, we are officially launching our partnership with the Vegas Golden Knights at G2E. Their ambassadors, the Golden Aces and their mascot Chance the Gila monster, will open the show with a parade through the conference that ends in our booth. We'll be doing Vegas Golden Knights ambassador appearances, hockey-themed promotions, prize drawings and giveaways throughout the show, both



in our booth and near show registration. Visitors to our booth will be able to see a Vegas Golden Knights-themed animation on our roulette sign, and a Vegas Golden Knights-themed Big Red promotional-use slot machine. Finally, we are looking forward to our first G2E as a public company; we completed an IPO in January and our stock price has since doubled, so we have many booth tours lined up with the investment community. It is going to be a fast-paced three days!

### What makes G2E stand out on people's calendars?

For AGS and the other gaming equipment suppliers, G2E is like our 'Super Bowl'. It

is the largest trade show we attend and a chance for us to touch base with all our stakeholders – customers, investors, industry analysts, regulators, and other key partners. Not only is it an opportunity to showcase our latest products, G2E is a great time to catch up with people and bolster our business relationships and friendships.

### Which products will you be showcasing?

In our booth No. 1253, we are highlighting a host of new products from our slots, table products and interactive divisions. Taking centre stage will be our newest cabinet innovation, the Orion Upright, which ▶

adds another unique offering to our successful Orion cabinet family. We will also be unveiling a host of new game content for our Orion Slant and Orion Portrait platforms for both Class II and Class III markets.

In table products, we think gaming operators are going to be excited about our next-generation Bonus Spin progressive side bet – Bonus Spin Xtreme. Available with both community and player-envy experiences, Bonus Spin Xtreme generates huge excitement with three virtual wheels that can generate multiple winners at the same time with each spin, awarding a linked progressive jackpot and smaller cash or casino-configurable non-cash prizes.

In the first year following our Gameiom acquisition, we're also looking forward to sharing more about our online gaming strategy and giving live demos of our robust game aggregation platform.

**Are there any particular events at this year's show you are looking forward to?**

As part of our commitment to advancing women in our industry and at AGS, we're

excited to support the Global Gaming Women track; our Vice President of Marketing, Laura Olson-Reyes, is a table host at the popular Lean In Breakfast and I'll be participating in their Power of Technology session. We always look forward to the Global Gaming Awards luncheon; this year we are shortlisted for the "Land-Based Supplier of the Year" award.

And of course, we host several of our own events for investors and customers; these are great opportunities to share AGS' vision for the future, our product roadmaps, and spend time networking in a more personal setting.

**What do you think the main industry talking points will be at G2E this year?**

Following the US Supreme Court's overturn of the federal Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA), I expect there will be a lot of buzz around sports betting and how online gaming fits into that equation. I anticipate there will still be a lot of discussion around esports and how to attract millennials. Diversity and inclusion will likely continue to be hot topics, as gaming operators and suppliers

accelerate their focus on diversifying their workforce. As always, technology will be on the minds of many exhibitors and attendees, with a continued focus on mobile technology, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, cardless, cashless, wireless and more.

**What do you hope to get out of the show?**

Our primary goal for G2E is to connect with as many customers and other key stakeholders as we can, getting them into our booth to see our many innovative products designed to drive revenue. We are obsessed with the game, and we hope this fanatical focus on slot hardware, game content, table solutions, and exceptional customer service will be apparent and well received during the show. We also hope that visitors to our booth will get a sense of our unique and renowned corporate culture. We're very proud to have achieved the nation's Best & Brightest Companies to Work For designation last year and we hope attendees will get a sense for how we live our core values, such as "Aspiring to Win" and "Letting Our Inner Geek Shine"! ◀

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**PRE-SHOW Q+A  
MIKE ROBINSON**

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCT PR AND MEDIA MANAGER, NOVOMATIC



backdrop for us going into G2E 2018., where we will have a vibrant stand that we share with Ainsworth.

**Which Novomatic products do you think will stand out?**

We have a big focus on slot content this year and our highlight IP title is MacGyver™ that features engaging gameplay with a retro feel. We are looking to create a similar impact to our launch of From Dusk Till Dawn™ last year that has since rolled out worldwide and returns to G2E alongside its interactive counterpart from Greentube. Other titles include new games from our Mount Prospect studio in Chicago like Prize of the Nile™ and Prized Panda™, as well as new content from our Winfinity Games and 707 Games studios in Austria such as Riches Ahoy!™ and Princesses of War™.

Other highlights will be electronic table games based on the NOVO LINE™ Novo Unity II platform that has several updates since last year and further GLI

approvals. The system will be displayed with automated, virtual and dealer assist games with a live baccarat table, as well as new baccarat and blackjack side bets. There will be a completely new presentation for the Octavian myACP casino management system, which is set to roll out in the US later this year.

**What do you think the main industry talking points will be at G2E this year?**

I think sports betting will be the main talking point this year, following the repeal of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act in May. We'll have an area on the stand dedicated to the sector.

**What do you hope to get out of the show?**

We look forward to showing operators, especially from the US, Latin America and the Caribbean, the strength and depth of our portfolio. G2E is a key annual event in the industry's calendar.

**What are you most looking forward to about G2E in Las Vegas this year?**

Novomatic is currently driving growth outside its core markets of Europe and Latin America, especially in the US, as well as Asia. We also completed a 52% takeover of Ainsworth Game Technology at the beginning of the year, which has accelerated the expansion. This sets the



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**WHAT'S ON SHOW?**

*BetConstruct will showcase a range of US-centric products for the first time at this year's G2E*



BetConstruct travels to the byword of gambling and entertainment, Las Vegas, to impress all the top figures and decision makers of the industry in the US with its market-leading products.

As the doors open up for online sports wagering in the US, BetConstruct joins G2E Vegas, a critical event for all companies in the igaming industry. This year at Stand 4818, we are proud to show an even wider line-up of our products

which have not been featured in the US in the past.

"The key for BetConstruct at G2E is to show the immense capabilities of our products and our team and to show our commitment to the US market," comments Jonathan Aiwazian, BetConstruct Regional Director in the US. "We are looking to make big moves in the US market for the rest of 2018 and into 2019, and the plan is to use G2E to ignite

some of these plans. With all the leaders in the industry in one place, we will look to exchange ideas and strengthen our path forward."

Due to the recent changes in the US legal landscape and the intense demand by land-based casinos to get their hands on sportsbook technology, sportsbook is at the centre of the attention. BetConstruct being a veteran in the European sports betting market, will eagerly show off its new American view of sportsbook, tailored specifically for the market. With our huge library of live match betting choices, we are looking to educate the US market on the excitement of in-game betting, which has become so popular outside the country.

Live casino has also shown to be quite popular in the states. We look forward to displaying our Live Studio solution featuring real-life croupier as it presents an amazing opportunity to unearth new players and new revenues. So does our Fantasy Sports software, which had a huge appeal during World Cup 2018, and is enhanced with Tournaments mode and a redesigned interface.

# WHAT'S ON SHOW?

*Supplier Greentube explains what visitors can expect to see at the Novomatic stand at G2E*



9 - 11, 2018. Together with parent company Novomatic, the interactive gaming specialist Greentube will showcase a tailored selection of its latest online gaming solutions for international markets at G2E in Las Vegas.

One of the many highlights will be the launch of the online version of the Tales of Darknes™ series with Lunar Eclipse, Full Moon and Break of Dawn themes. The chilling tales with massive winning chances are available just in time for Halloween!

In addition, after the online version of From Dusk Till Dawn debuted in July at iGB Live in Amsterdam, Greentube is bringing the explosive themed title to G2E, showcasing it alongside the Novomatic land-based version on the NOVOSTAR® VIP 3.50 and VIP Lounge™ 2.32 cabinets. These online versions

of Novomatic slot games, popular on US casino floors, will showcase a range of omni-channel offerings.

Greentube's display will also feature new slot titles, such as Almighty Reels™ - Realm of Poseidon, Jaguar Moon™, Stein Haus™ and Asian Diamonds™ that will be among other latest releases.

Michael Bauer, Greentube CFO/CGO, commented: "The Americas is a future market of growth for Greentube and we are actively preparing our market entry for content delivery into Colombia. Additionally, we are closely monitoring and evaluating other opportunities in Latin America and of course, the US. From a content portfolio perspective, we have been developing games specifically for these markets for some time now and are confident to offer games that the players will love."

Greentube is looking forward to presenting an exciting online and mobile content offering in the Novomatic Interactive area of Booth #1259 at the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas.

The annual trade show that connects gaming industry peers at the 'heart of gaming' will take place at the Sands Expo & Convention Center on October



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## GUEST COLUMNIST



**PETER CAUSLEY**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
LIGHTNING BOX GAMES

*According to Causley, the real measure of performance is theoretical GGR*

The quest for better performance is at the heart of the design algorithms all suppliers use in the production of their games. After all, better performance leads to better revenues for both us and our operator partners.

Many operators judge this on turnover rankings. In the past, these have been a good indicator of the popularity of games when most had the same Return to Player (RTP) percentage. But in my view, this way of thinking is not nearly as effective as it once was - and it's high-time we were more honest with ourselves about measuring success.

These days, lots of suppliers rarely produce anything other than games with high RTP rates. Truthfully, this is in a bid to cheat online casinos' ranking algorithms and be placed much higher up the page than they are truly performing. I appreciate that observation isn't going to be a popular one in the supplier community, but they are the facts as I see it.

As an example, a 97.5% RTP game (2.5% casino hold, or house win, if you prefer), must generate twice the turnover of a 95% RTP game (5% casino hold), just to pull level with

the same performance in gross gaming revenue (GGR). Obviously, ranking this 97.5% game higher than the 95% game would be false, unless it was doing more than twice the turnover, of course. But surprisingly to me (and I can't be alone, can I?) this falsehood is what we are now commonly seeing occur.

Casinos should obviously offer a range of games and RTPs, because that's what the players want. But they should rank them correctly for those players too. By correctly, I mean where the players spend their money represents true popularity of a game and any product. If they turnover \$100 on a 95% game, then that player has spent/lost \$5; if they turnover \$100 on a 97.5% game, they have only spent \$2.50.

This chink in some of the casinos' performance-ranking algorithms is being exploited. That has led to a build-up of underperforming products which are propped up by higher RTPs, placing the games more prominently than they deserve. This is purely because they are still judging them solely on turnover.

Operators are always under pressure from regulatory and taxation burdens - it's a constant battle. But what would help combat them would be a collective focus on the quality of the product, rather than letting turnover dominate the operator's performance ranking - and hence, indirectly, the game supplier's developmental process.

When most games enjoyed the same or very similar RTP percentage, turnover was always the best indicator of



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*“Generating turn-over is rarely a bad thing, but the industry must act to avoid an unwitting decline in profit”*

performance. This smoothed out the highs and lows in GGR. But now with this preponderance of high RTP games in the market, ‘true performance’ is best gauged via theoretical GGR. This is still a factor of turnover, but it also takes the theoretical percentage hold into account, to balance out and account for the high and low RTP games.

To put it into a simple mathematical formula, theoretical GGR irons out the big wins and losses. At the same time, it accounts for different RTPs and is the best way to judge true performance:

**Theoretical GGR = Turnover x (100% - RTP%)**

I’m not convinced that this is on the radar of all online casino

operators yet. For some, I suspect it is completely new. If it was me, I’d want to make the most of the products I was selling and the best way to work out the profitability of them. Now I’m not suggesting they only take 95% games - far from it. But if they are taking games across a range of RTPs, then they should strive to have the best practices in place to measure the performance of them all.

I also believe that suppliers should focus on GGR generation when designing their games. Generating turn-over is rarely a bad thing, but the industry must act to avoid an unwitting decline in profit made on that turnover. This will be better for the industry’s longevity, which must be at the forefront of all our minds.

If operators want to address this growing concern and minimise a self-imposed pseudo-tax, then I strongly suggest they consider updating their ranking algorithms to replace turnover, with the more appropriate theoretical GGR into the mix of variables used to rank games. Only then will they be projecting the true performance and understanding the real popularity of the games on their sites.

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