



WEEK 48

FRIDAY 27 NOV 2020

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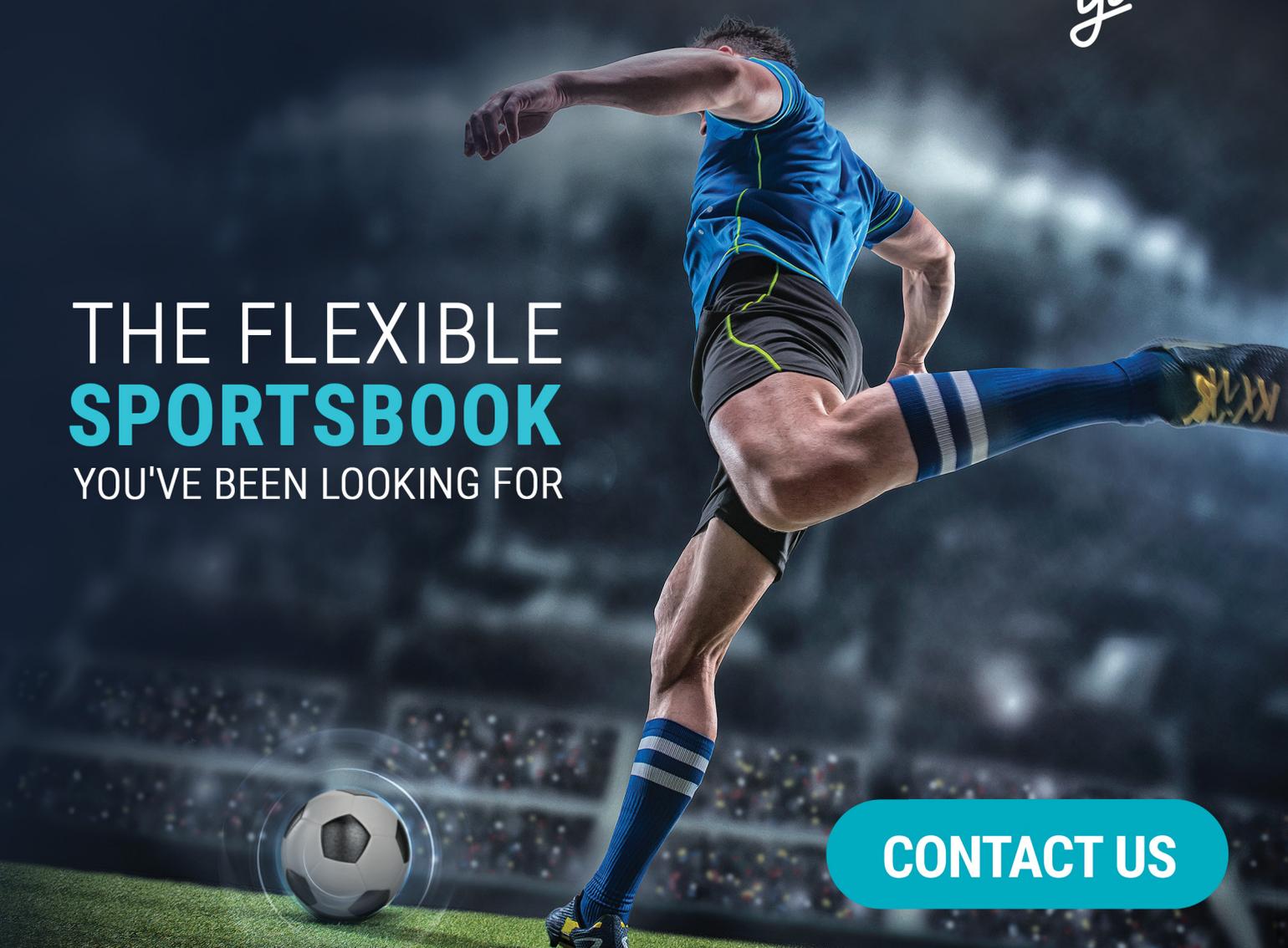
ANALYSIS: WHY SPORT IS THE SAVING GRACE FOR OPERATORS DURING SECOND LOCKDOWNS



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ANALYSIS: WHY SPORT IS THE SAVING GRACE FOR OPERATORS DURING SECOND LOCKDOWNS

THIS WEEK

- **New casino closures “credit negative”**
- **Camelot sales fall slightly for H1**
- **Kindred Group disputes Swedish restrictions**
- **Nevada, New Jersey report Q3 October figures**
- **Philippine casinos see 600% quarterly rise**

GUEST INTERVIEWS:

- **Peter Nolan, Digitain**
- **Yuri Muratov, Boongo**

PRODUCT REVIEW:

- **Jacob Kalms, 20Shots**



When UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that England was heading into a second lockdown starting 5 November, it must have seemed like a sense of déjà vu for the gambling industry.

The measures imposed that all 5,681 betting shops in the country, along with casinos and bingo halls, close until 2 December to curb the rate of coronavirus infections.

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THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

2

Years it could take before international travel returns to pre-COVID levels, according to Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong



7%



The gross gaming revenue tax rate for Cambodian casinos, according to the country's new casino bill signed into law this week

1.53bn

Gross gaming revenue for the Danish market for Q3 2020, a drop of 5% year-on-year (\$243.5m)



3

Weeks-long statewide "pause" in Nevada, which will mean increased restrictions for casinos as a result of rising COVID-19 cases in the state



However, the announcement by Johnson, incidentally made on Halloween, wasn't quite as scary for operators as the first lockdown implemented in March in the majority of European countries. That initial lockdown led to a suspension in all major sporting leagues and competitions across the world.

It's no secret how much the closures of betting shops and the halt in live sport affected operators globally, particularly in Europe. In August, William Hill said it expected 119 of its high street betting shops to close permanently as a result of the pandemic. Meanwhile, the *Racing Post* was forced to cease publication of its newspaper from 25 March until 1 June, on the basis there wasn't enough relevant content to justify its price.

The impact on live sport led to figures in July from gambling data specialists H2 Gambling Capital forecasting betting sector gross gaming revenue (GGR) to drop to \$60bn for 2020, a 21% downgrade from the \$75bn predicted at the start of the year.

But the return of Europe's biggest leagues from May, starting with the German Bundesliga and followed by the English Premier League a month later, demonstrated how important and popular sports betting is to operators. This is particularly evident when taking a closer look at several Q2 and Q3 financial results from major sports betting operators.

GVC Holdings was one of the biggest operators to feel the pinch of a lack of sports betting offered.

Its net gaming revenue (NGR) fell 11% year-on-year for Q2, with its sports NGR decreasing 6%. However, a return of the aforementioned major football leagues in May and June, followed by a summer-style UEFA Champions League knock-out tournament in August, led to an upturn in fortunes with NGR from its sports segment increasing 24% for Q3. This was a significant rise when compared to the same period in 2019. Overall NGR was up 12% from last year.

For Kindred Group, the operator's sports betting GGR plummeted 45% quarter-on-quarter for Q2, but for Q3, it was 11% higher than in 2019, increasing to £120.9m (\$160.6m), a stark rise on £67.5m posted in Q2.

Flutter Entertainment saw an increase in total revenue for Q3, which was up 27% from 2019 on a pro forma basis to £1.33bn. In terms of sports betting revenue, that rose 32% from 2019 to £798m.

Perhaps the return to a near full helping in the sporting calendar means it's no real surprise the British market finally posted online growth for September. After two months of decline, online gambling revenue in GB rose 3% month-on-month for September, to £420m, and sports betting gross gambling yield (GGY) from the biggest operators, representing 80% of the online market, rose 15% to £189.7m, according to Gambling Commission data.

This growth, however, is not exclusive to Great Britain, with France's online gaming market seeing revenue for Q3 climb to €405m (£361.5m), which also represented a 25% increase from Q2.

Online sports betting revenue grew 6% in this period, to €228m, with football representing the majority of that total.

Despite other verticals such as esports and virtual sports proving credible substitutes while sports betting was incapacitated on the sidelines earlier this year, all of this financial data points to the significance that sports betting still has for both customers and operators throughout the industry.

So while first lockdowns worldwide spelled a period of gloom for the gaming industry (especially sports betting firms), this time around should be different; especially as countries start to open up post-lockdown.

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5%

Increase in online gambling tax rate from 2% to 5% in 2021 according to a new law passed by the Argentine Chamber of Deputies



\$150,000

The fine received by professional Bulgarian tennis player Aleksandrina Naydenova for match-fixing offences, in addition to a lifetime ban



MOODY'S SAYS NEW US CASINO CLOSURES "CREDIT NEGATIVE" FOR GAMING SECTOR

Moody's Investors Service, the bond credit rating business, believes temporary casino closures in the US will be "credit negative" for the gaming industry.

Back in June, Moody's exclusively told *Gaming America* it expected short-term struggles for the sector, though it held optimism for 2021. In October, it then improved its outlook for US gaming.

But temporary closures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, Rhode Island, Detroit and Philadelphia could be "just the tip of the iceberg," according to Moody's.

The bond credit rating firm believes the measures are credit negative for the industry, also suggesting operators in Michigan will be hardest hit.

Moody's did indicate that casinos have performed "better than expected" since reopening in the summer, with regional casinos dramatically cutting costs and exceeding expectations in regard to demand and profitability.

However, Moody's added: "A second extended closing could hurt casino performance over both the near and

longer term because it will make it increasingly difficult for regional gaming issuers to bring down their already high leverage."

It's clear a second wave of closures is affecting US gaming and leisure establishments across several states.

In Nevada, for example, Governor Steve Sisolak has announced a three-week "statewide pause". This will include bars and restaurants reducing operations from 50% to 25%, with prohibitions on service without advance reservations.

GI Verdict: It was always going to be a long road to recovery for casinos in the US, but the toughening of COVID-19 restrictions will only hit them further. Even when the majority of casinos in the country were open, operating with severe capacity restrictions and other safety measures were stopping the industry from making a full recovery.

Those restrictions and measures aren't going away anytime soon, which is why several gaming analysts are citing 2022 as the year the casino industry can finally return to pre-COVID levels.

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10pm

Swedish land-based casinos and gaming venues with an alcohol license are now subject to a 10pm curfew, under a new COVID-19 ordinance



CAMELOT REPORTS SALES OF £3.85BN FOR H1

Camelot UK Lotteries Limited has reported sales of £3.85bn (\$5.14bn) for the first six months of the 2020/21 financial year, a 2% decrease from the first half of 2019/20.

The £3.85bn total was recorded from 1 April to 26 September 2020.

The National Lottery operator has recovered in recent months, having suffered an 18% sales hit at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initial decline meant overall retail sales fell by £522m, but that was soon stabilised as Camelot urged players to go online at the height of the pandemic.

A total of 1.3 million new registrations then helped digital sales increase by £455.2m.

Camelot CEO Nigel Railton said: "Like most other businesses, we've faced a lot of upheaval and challenges this year.

"At the start of April, we found ourselves in an unprecedented situation, with a sharp decline in sales, retail uncertainty and our EuroMillions game in jeopardy as some of our partner countries were under strict lockdowns.

"To add to this, we had to move overnight to the vast majority of our employees working from home, so we're enormously proud of this set of results."

Over the six-month period, the company awarded £2.24bn in prize money to players, creating 203 new millionaires.

Camelot holds the license to operate the National Lottery until 2023.

GI Verdict: No doubt Camelot will be feeling the pressure with the race for the next National Lottery operator well underway. Camelot is expected to enter the tender process after operating the lottery since 1994.

With Sazka Group, Française des Jeux and Sugal & Damani all among those competing for the Lottery's fourth license, Camelot will aim to demonstrate its ability in the lead-up to the competition. However, a loss for H1 of its fiscal year will certainly not be beneficial towards this ambition.

The winner of the license will run the lottery for a 10-year fixed term, with the winning applicant to be announced in September next year.

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“The effect of the recent measures and limitations has been even lower channelisation within casino. One key issue is that problem gamblers in Sweden, who have suspended themselves from playing via the central self-exclusion system, have been able to continue playing with unlicensed gaming companies where there is no consumer protection.”

LeoVegas CMO Dersim Sylwan speaks with Gambling Insider about the extension of Swedish online casino restrictions

“After the success of the Las Vegas Awards, we are excited to switch our focus to the Global Gaming Awards London. Despite the challenges thrown up by the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been plenty of recent success stories within global gaming, and we intend to honour and celebrate the industry’s finest.”

Gambling Insider COO Julian Perry comments after the launch of the self-nomination window for the Global Gaming Awards London 2021

KINDRED: DECISION TO EXTEND SWEDISH GAMBLING RESTRICTIONS “STEP IN THE WRONG DIRECTION”

Kindred Group believes there is no evidence that problem gambling has risen in Sweden, despite the Government extending the temporary online restrictions it introduced in the summer.

The Swedish Government introduced online gaming restrictions from 2 July, to combat a potential rise in problem gambling amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions include a maximum weekly deposit limit of SEK 5,000 (\$586.47) for online casino players and a SEK 100 limit on bonus offers.

The restrictions were originally meant to last until the end of the year but earlier this month, the Ministry of Finance in Sweden proposed the temporary measures be extended until at least 30 June 2021.

Kindred has slammed the proposed extension, saying the Government “has not accounted for any facts that support the need for restrictions” and has failed to take measures to encourage players to choose licensed operators instead of unlicensed ones.

The operator believes the channelisation rate in Sweden was already below 72 to 78% for online casino before the restrictions were introduced.

Kindred Group CEO Henrik Tjärnström said: “During these seven months that the restrictions have been in place, the Swedish Government have not been taking any measures to determine the level of channelisation.

“What we can see is lower channelisation and increased activity at unlicensed operators with zero consumer protection. That is a step in the wrong direction and it is not the gambling policy decided by the Swedish Parliament.”

GI Verdict: Kindred follows a long line of those criticising the proposed extension. Swedish trade association BOS has also been vocal in voicing its displeasure, arguing the measures will have the opposite effect on player protection. However, the Swedish Government seems to be ignoring all its critics and sticking to its principles.



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"In one week, every phone call we took was from a current player talking about their relationship with gambling, so we really have seen a rise in it. There was a move to casino games and playing games online. There had to be a change because there was no sport to bet on, so we have seen a massive increase in people with problems."

Sporting Chance CEO Colin Bland speaks with Sky Sports News, about the increase in professional athletes seeking help for gambling problems during the pandemic

"This is great news for our customers in communities across large parts of England and for the thousands of people employed in high street betting shops. On top of the stringent anti-COVID measures betting shops already adhere to, our members have agreed to further restrictions to limit any chance of COVID being transmitted in their premises."

Betting and Gaming Council CEO Michael Dugher welcomes the UK Government's decision to allow betting shops to reopen in Tier 3 areas from 2 December

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR NEVADA AND NEW JERSEY DESPITE YEAR-ON-YEAR REVENUE FALLS

Atlantic City's casinos reported a 37% fall in revenue for the third quarter, with casinos in Nevada also reporting a decline for October.

According to the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, casinos in Atlantic City earned \$151m for the months of July, August and September, down from \$240m a year ago. However, each of the nine casinos maintained a gross operating profit.

New Jersey officials allowed the state's casinos to reopen at the start of July, following a two-and-a-half-month shutdown.

Ocean Casino Resort was the lone property to see an increase in revenue, growing from \$10m to \$24m year-on-year. The Borgata, which waited until 26 July to reopen, reported a 97% drop to \$2.3m.

Harrah's fell 42% to \$19m, Tropicana dropped 44% to \$18m, Caesars was down 25% to \$18m, Hard Rock dropped 14% to \$21m and Golden Nugget declined 11% to \$16m. Resorts fell 17% to \$8m.

Bally's Atlantic City, which recently changed hands from Caesars Entertainment to Bally's Corporation, fell 8% to \$13m.

Meanwhile, Nevada casinos earned \$823m in revenue for October, a slight improvement from the prior month but still down 20% year-on-year.

The Las Vegas Strip won \$376m, down 30%. Though the Strip is still underperforming, y-o-y percentage decline improved greatly from September. Downtown Las Vegas was down 23% to \$58m. Washoe County fared better, with win of \$78m for a 6% y-o-y improvement.

Sportsbooks set a new handle record of \$660m in October, smashing the previous high of \$615m. Handle was up 22% from a year ago but sports betting revenue fell 12% to \$42m.

GI Verdict: It remains a difficult time for land-based operations across the US, although these results show encouragement for the most part.

As Moody's has stated, casinos have actually performed better than expected since reopening.

But with local lockdowns being reinstated across the US, it's difficult to predict a timeline for a full recovery.



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3%

LeoVegas AB
33.20 SEK



3%

Sands China
33.20 HKD



2%

GVC Holdings
1,020.50 GBp



5%

Caesars Entertainment
69.37 USD



6%

PHILIPPINE Q3 REVENUE INCREASES 600% FROM Q2

According to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp (PAGCOR), the casino industry in the Philippines accumulated PHP15.95bn (\$331.5m) in gross gaming revenue for Q3, a 603% rise from the previous quarter.

However, GRR was 71% lower compared to the PHP55.34bn reported for Q3 2019.

Private sector casinos earned PHP15.04bn in GGR, with Entertainment City contributing PHP12.96bn in GGR for Q3. PAGCOR-owned casinos earned PHP914.7m in GGR, a 90% drop year-on-year.

According to GGR Asia, the Philippine gaming industry reported PHP17.66bn in revenue. Income from gaming operations for January to September was PHP22.33bn. Net income for the same period was PHP132.7m.

The rising GGR can be attributed to resumed operations in the country's casinos, but the venues reopened with limited capacity. The casinos closed their doors in mid-March and in June were allowed to open at 30% capacity.

Despite the slow recovery of the

industry, PAGCOR announced it will provide PHP2bn to build multi-purpose evacuation centres in the country's provinces suffering from floods. There will be three types of centres on 31 sites.

PAGCOR chairman and CEO Andrea Domingo has said that, this year, Filipinos have suffered from both the ongoing pandemic and recent typhoons: "Hence, despite our revenue losses, we have committed to provide a long-term solution to the most vulnerable sectors and communities.

"Our multi-purpose evacuation centres will be designed to withstand strong typhoons so that evacuees will feel safe and comfortable while they are away from their homes."

GI Verdict: The slow recovery of casinos in the Philippines is certainly expected given the current pandemic, but the huge 603% increase in quarterly revenue is perhaps beyond any expectations.

It is undoubtedly a cause for celebration for those within the sector, with the latest figures showing just how popular casinos are to citizens of the Philippines.



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OCTOBER: NV, STRIP FALL

Nevada's gaming revenue fell 19.5% to \$822.677m for October as the Las Vegas Strip fell 30.22% to \$375.760m.

However, the state and the Strip had slight improvements over September.

Baccarat on the Strip grew despite low hold compared to last year. Baccarat would have risen 84% with the same hold both years.

Casinos operated at 50% capacity during the month.

Sports betting handle grew 21% to \$659.222m. But bettors played lucky as revenue fell 11.48% to \$42.388m.

| LOCATION | OCTOBER REVENUE (M) | YEARLY CHANGE (%) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Nevada | \$822.677 | -19.50 |
| Las Vegas Strip | \$375.760 | -30.22 |
| Clark County | \$671.839 | -23.57 |
| Downtown LV | \$52.824 | -22.68 |
| North LV | \$19.335 | -26.65 |
| Laughlin | \$38.570 | -13.27 |
| Boulder Strip | \$59.067 | -24.77 |
| Mesquite | \$12.992 | +6.81 |
| Balance of County | \$113.291 | +2.35 |
| Las Vegas Locals Market | \$191.693 | -11.07 |

| LOCATION | OCTOBER REVENUE (M) | YEARLY CHANGE (%) |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Washoe County | \$78.154 | +6.12 |
| Reno | \$56.413 | +6.08 |
| Sparks | \$12.180 | +2.57 |
| North Lake Tahoe | \$2.261 | +21.98 |
| Balance of County | \$7.300 | +8.39 |

| LOCATION | OCTOBER REVENUE (M) | YEARLY CHANGE (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| South Lake Tahoe | \$21.622 | +10.87 |
| Elko County | \$25.497 | +1.26 |
| Wendover | \$17.031 | +1.69 |
| Balance of County | \$8.466 | +0.42 |
| Carson Valley Area | \$10.065 | +1.90 |
| Other Areas | \$15.500 | +5.32 |



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OCTOBER: NV, STRIP FALL - STRIP COMPONENTS

MAJOR STRIP SEGMENTS

| SEGMENT | OCTOBER REVENUE (M) | YEARLY CHANGE (%) | WIN PERCENTAGE | |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------|
| | | | 2020 | 2019 |
| Blackjack | \$39.537 | -42.79 | 14.77 | 10.95 |
| Baccarat | \$57.692 | +3.51 | 8.08 | 14.55 |
| Total Games | \$167.636 | -28.23 | 12.48 | 12.4 |
| Total Slots | \$208.124 | -31.75 | 7.4 | 7.43 |

TABLE DROP (BN)

| SEGMENT | 2020 | 2019 | YEARLY CHANGE (%) |
|-------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Blackjack | \$0.267 | \$0.767 | -65.11 |
| Baccarat | \$0.714 | \$0.387 | +84.37 |
| Total Games | \$1.343 | \$2.413 | -44.34 |
| Slots | \$2.812 | \$7.803 | -63.96 |

GUEST INTERVIEW



PETER NOLAN
STRATEGIC CONSULTANT, DIGITAIN

Nolan reflects on 2020 with Gambling Insider and predicts more mergers in 2021

What have been the biggest challenges for Digitain during 2020?

The pandemic and the impact on live sports was probably the biggest challenge for the business and also our network of operators. Our sportsbook is definitely our hero product and in-play bets our biggest source of revenue. We had to re-focus our development roadmap

to mitigate the damage to our partners' businesses, quickly launching a number of new virtual, esports and other games.

From a people perspective, overcoming the logistical challenge of enabling over 1,700 members of the team to work remotely in a short period of time was a highlight.

Despite the problems, we still have had a good year in terms of both new partners and new suppliers signing up, and building momentum to take us into 2021.

Given how the industry has come together this year, what have been your highlights of 2020?

It's been encouraging to see the industry come together to support individuals who have been made redundant. The camaraderie on LinkedIn has been encouraging and seems to be an extension of the

All-In Diversity Project.

I think the efforts of the people behind the various industry conferences should be recognised; pivoting to virtual only expos must have been very challenging. The innovative results and the general support from the industry has been good to see.

What are your predictions and expectations for gaming in 2021?

Prediction-wise, given the likely economic challenges, I expect to see more mergers at both operator and supplier sides, as businesses look to cut costs.

Valuations based on customer numbers and media hook-ups, rather than revenue, will still cause headlines in the US. Return of full crowds to sports venues will have a positive effect on sportsbook revenues, as will the roll-out of the vaccines and the likely boost to the economy.

Localisation and flexibility will be the words to look out for in our industry next year, as well as AI and personalisation.

Regulation, particularly responsible gaming, will continue to be a significant issue to consider in legal markets, and could impact revenue, particularly in the UK market.

What is Digitain specifically aiming to achieve next year?

Product development-wise, we will launch our new Live Dealer product to the market. We also look forward to developing our own new Fast Games portfolio.

Moving into Digitown and launching the business support campus is also very exciting. Opening our new regional offices in Asia, LatAm and Africa is a specific aim as well, as we seek to be more global.

Finally, from a personal point of view, I want to be able to visit my colleagues in Yerevan and have a pint or two with them.



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**Jim Allen, Chairman of Hard Rock International
& CEO of Seminole Gaming**



PRODUCT REVIEW



JACOB KALMS
CO-FOUNDER, 20SHOTS

Like many football fans, I'm one of the six million people that play fantasy football, evaluating my squad all week then watching my team come alive every Saturday (or Friday to Monday at the moment). The tactical ingenuity, interactive aspect and the inherent risk taking creates a complete experience that has been sporting and has social currency, traded with like-minded friends and my business partner Declan Spiro for years, shaping our consumption and enjoyment of the beautiful game.

It has become an institution in today's mobile world, which is a reason why we built Fantasy 5. The scope of the market is huge, as is the opportunity to create a product – not just for the UK but globally – that gives the seasoned fantasy football player the chance to enjoy the quick gratification of a sports bet, compared to the season-long slow burn of playing in a traditional fantasy league. This can reshape the recreational betting experience and I'm not sure the industry has fully seen its potential.

According to our own research, 45% of weekly sportsbook customers play fantasy sports, but in the UK, the two habitual and ritualistic elements of a Premier League weekend remain confined distinctly within their own silos, despite the huge overlap.

Fantasy5 goes the extra step by allowing customers the chance to win a weekly £10,000 (\$13,300) jackpot by simply picking five players who they think will outperform their points target each week, with scoring metrics aligned with the traditional FPL systems fans are familiar with.

While the game is completely free to play, there's potential to cross-sell another betting event in a space that's not as crowded as the traditional fixed-odds sportsbook environment. Players are able to bet on something they already understand and obsess over: players' fantasy points.

I'm confident that fantasy betting can overhaul the likes of request-a-bet in terms of popularity in the next two or three years. They're already very similar propositions in terms of the novelty factor compared to age-old WDW and derivative markets, as well as the

personalisation and granularity of events.

Similarly, there's the potential for operators to create a much bigger margin on fantasy bets in comparison to the vanilla 1X2 markets, where even those without a keen eye for value know when they're being served something uncompetitive.

In terms of yield, fantasy could easily end up contributing 10% of an operator's sportsbook revenue in time.

It's a surprise to see so little happen in this space, but then for operators who continue to grow, innovation isn't a necessity. Yes, other operators have begun to introduce their own free-to-play games, but none have stood out as much as SkyBet's Super 6.

It's an environment where, quite rightly, operators are going to have to think increasingly more creatively when it comes to competing for customers. The traditional routes to player acquisition are impeded by cost, regulation and saturation of marketing. This means free-to-play offering is going to play an even bigger role in generating soft recruitment at the top of the funnel, by referral and other far cheaper forms of advertising, while keeping players sticky.

With next to no marketing expenditure, we have been able to recruit 10,000 players during our soft launch phase before the most recent international break. We have found 40% of those recruited have ended up playing every week and our effective CPA has been in pence, not pounds. The delayed start to the new Premier League season meant most fans' rituals were already out of kilter, so there was a gap for a new experience; wall-to-wall broadcast coverage also hugely favours those who want to study every player in every game with a forensic eye.

I'm not going to give all the secrets away, but if you're reading this and fancy a shot at the £10,000 yourself, the tip is to pick not the best players, but the most underrated. There are no prizes for knowing Mo Salah, Harry Kane and Kevin De Bruyne will bag points by the bucketload. But one to watch might be Chelsea's Christian Pulisic. When he returns to full fitness, he could be one of the best players in the league this season.

Fantasy5, developed by 20SHOTS, a Gambling Commission licensed B2B gaming software supplier, is the brainchild of former Bookee head of marketing Jacob Kalms and Declan Spiro, who ran the in-play trading models at Football Radar. The free-to-play game allows customers to win £10,000 if their five Premier League players exceed their fantasy points target.

GUEST INTERVIEW



YURIY MURATOV
*HEAD OF ACCOUNT
MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT, BOOONGO*

*Muratov speaks to Gambling
Insider about how slot game
interfaces are evolving*

How have slot game user interfaces developed in recent years?

Updating user interfaces has been a necessary focal point due to the incredible growth in mobile-first gaming we've seen in recent times. Up to 85% of players now enjoy a gaming experience from their mobile, and in our titles, we know 55% of all of our customers are playing in a portrait orientation.

This has forced developers to change how products look, putting many buttons under info-panels within the game, maximising the space reels can take up on the screen rather than extra buttons and features.

However, we still see providers that haven't improved their portrait modes, with games not adapting fluidly to the increasing demands of mobile players. Players still need to be able to see important features, such as their stakes, balances and the options for autoplay. But it needs to be captured without jeopardising what players are really there for: a great slot experience.

How much further innovation does the area of UI require in the coming years?

While innovation takes lots of forms, the marriage of game interfaces with promotion tool interfaces will be something that, if done right, can elevate suppliers to the next level. Features and promo tools are increasingly key to the gaming experience and bringing out the best of these for all kinds of players on all devices is a must.

That may mean taking less important UI features and collapsing them into menus or pop up-style features that don't take up screen space, leaving that extra space for

promo interfaces. More efforts from many suppliers will be required for portrait-mode gaming to be as exciting and immersive as landscape gaming currently, and a lot of that is due to a lack of attention to user interfaces. If there's investment in user interfaces, players will be able to enjoy a smooth, hassle-free gaming experience where they can focus on the gameplay they came for.

How much of a consideration is responsible and safer gambling when designing slot game interfaces?

It remains the most serious consideration, regardless of how new or old the interface is. All requirements are adapted to any user interface, including autospin settings, session duration pop-ups and other features, ensuring all safer gambling tools that need to be displayed are visible.

Responsible gambling principles should be followed and honoured by everyone who's delivering this experience in online gaming, to ensure players receive the right amount of protection and can have a safe, enjoyable experience.

How is Booongo aiming to stand out in this department?

We've identified that the Promo UI component has already become something very important for campaign management and improved player experience, so many of our UI updates are driven at ensuring player experience is enhanced, not compromised. We don't think there should be any game UI elements that are visible or presented in the interface without any clear reasoning.

Additionally, our attention to mobile-first gaming has allowed us to thrive. We test our products on mobile devices first, before reverting to desktop solutions after to ensure nothing is missed from a mobile-first perspective. Taking inspiration from social casinos and native apps, which already have smooth UIs, has allowed us to further broaden our horizons.

All visible and non-visible game UI elements pass the same severe process of reasoning, as to where we should put it and why it needs to be there. This ensures the continued popularity of our products, regardless of the devices players use.

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