



WEEK 51

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THIS WEEK

- **AGA names Intertops and BetVictor as websites to avoid**
- **Live Casino Evolution in Austria and the Netherlands**
- **Richard Harris moves from retail to Rank Group**
- **Five-year plan: Sportradar extends partnership with Bundesliga**

GUEST COLUMNIST:

- **Nolan Bushnell, Board Advisor, Esports Technologies**

BGC URGES UK GOVERNMENT TO OFFER COVID SUPPORT FOR "INTEGRAL" CASINOS

See also page 3

Round-up, round-up:
Elsewhere in US gaming



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM GI



The Betting and Gaming Council this week requested more Covid-19 support for casinos from the UK Government, and cautioned it against “blanket” spending checks for bettors

▶ The Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) has called on the UK Government to offer reassurances that casinos will receive support if subject to further Covid-related restrictions.

BGC Chief Exec Michael Dugher called casinos an “integral part” of Britain’s hospitality industry, as he sought a guarantee from Westminster that any future measures will be accompanied by an appropriate support package.

“Casinos are a major economic contributor to UK plc, as well as an integral part of the hospitality industry,” said Dugher.

“After a gruelling 18 months, they have started to recover from the various impositions, including prolonged closures and travel bans; but they are now understandably concerned that further restrictions over Christmas and into the new year will have a significant impact on their recovery.”

With gross gaming yield and tax revenue down, land-based casinos have been among the hardest hit players in the industry.

“After a gruelling 18 months, casinos have started to recover from the various impositions; but they are now understandably concerned” - Michael Dugher

As Dugher noted, they have begun a resurgence as Covid-related restrictions have eased, but a sudden rise in cases of the new Omicron variant has led to fears that Britain’s government could impose more severe measures to curb its spread.

While a return to lockdown-style restrictions has not yet been ordered, public health experts are advising people to avoid unnecessary contact, and some have expressed concerns that hospitality venues could be impacted.

This has sparked cries for Chancellor Rishi Sunak to implement an economic support package for businesses, as he did earlier in the pandemic.

And these cries have been leant further credence following a Downing Street press briefing during which Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the Government “reserves the possibility” to introduce further measures and it “won’t hesitate to take that action.”

While he held off from announcing any new restrictions, scientific advisors are reportedly urging more interventions and rumours have circulated that a “circuit-breaker” lockdown after Christmas could be implemented.

In a statement, the BGC highlighted casinos’ contribution to Britain’s economy, saying that some 11,600 people are

employed at the country’s 120 venues, which pay £600m (\$799m) in yearly tax and generate £1.2bn in gross value added. Dugher concluded: “Casinos, like many others in the hospitality industry, are simply seeking reassurances that if the pandemic requires yet more severe restrictions, they will be adequately supported by the Government.”

This came after the BGC published a report outlining the gambling industry’s contributions to communities, the economy and sport.

Not long thereafter, Dugher urged the Government to “take heed” over concerns its proposed spending checks could push punters towards black market gambling.

In a statement, he issued a dire warning to policymakers after a survey from horseracing broadcaster Racing TV showed opposition to affordability checks.

Customers may be forced to hand over payslips and bank statements to assess their spending capacity, a move aimed at preventing unaffordable losses that is being considered as part of the Government’s Gambling Review.

But some 95% of respondents to Racing TV’s survey were opposed to bookies having access to their bank accounts, while 85% were concerned that punters may turn toward unregulated operators if restrictions were imposed.

“I’m alarmed at the findings — particularly the high number who believe that punters will simply move to the unsafe, unregulated black market online if blanket enhanced spending checks are introduced — and hope that ministers will take heed of punters’ views,” said Dugher.

“We strongly support the Gambling Review as an evidence-led process, but it’s vitally important that it strikes the right balance between protecting the vulnerable and not spoiling the enjoyment of the vast majority of customers who enjoy a flutter safely and responsibly.”

However, Dugher and the BGC reiterated their support for spending checks, but argued they should be reserved for “people who are vulnerable or at higher risk” rather than “blanket checks on every punter.”

Dugher added: “The Racing TV survey — like the poll we commissioned earlier this year — shows that the unsafe, unregulated black market online, which has none of the safer gambling measures used by our members, stands to benefit if the Government fails to get the necessary changes in the Gambling Review right.”

GI Verdict: Casinos were hit hard by Covid-19 and have recently started to thrive. With a post-Christmas lockdown rumoured to be on the cards, the industry should brace itself for another blow. Many land-based operators have expanded their online business to counter Covid-related restrictions, but in-person operations are still at the heart of the industry. Further closures would provide a significant roadblock, while the uncertainty remains unpalatable.



THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

\$2.17bn

Purchase of Sisal by Flutter Entertainment. More in next week's *GI Friday*...



AU\$7,000



Borrowed by a gaming manager from her staff at The Star Sydney (US\$5,000)

3,837

People who completed YGAM's training programme in 2021



€50.8m



Gaming Innovation Group's initial offer to acquire supplier Sportnco Gaming (\$57.4m)

50

NFTs in Betano's new Atlético Brazilian Championship collection



ROUND-UP, ROUND-UP: ELSEWHERE IN US GAMING

▶ A statement released by the **American Gaming Association (AGA)** has outlined a list of illegal offshore websites that Americans should not be using for online betting. This statement comes in conjunction with an anticipated busy college bowl game season, as well as a record-breaking few months for American operators. The AGA suggests these offshore operators are taking advantage of the ever-growing engagement in sports betting within the US and that they do not disclose their illegal status. The specific sites in question include 5Dimes, BetAnySports, BetDSI, BetNow, BetOnline.ag, BetVictor, Bookmaker, Bovada, GTbets, Heritage, Intertops, MyBookie.ag, Xbet and Youwager, among others. (More on this story overleaf)

In the meantime, **bet365** has recently been granted approval for a temporary licence by the Colorado Limited Gaming Control Commission. The UK-based company applied for licence under the name Hillside (Colorado) LLC d/b/a bet365 and received a unanimous vote with no call for public comment required.

Sportsbook and casino provider **Digitain** has announced its sportsbook has earned certification from Gaming Laboratories International. After a long process of evaluation, Digitain attained both the GLI-33, which focuses on interactive gaming systems, and the GLI-19, which centres on event wagering systems. This certification aims to provide independent technical analysis, highlighting whether an operator or supplier meets GLI standards.

In a similar story of success, lead generation company **Leadstar Media** has been granted an affiliate licence to operate in the state of Virginia. Previously obtaining vendor registration status in the Old Dominion State, Leadstar Media has prepared for US expansion by quickly launching four new websites, all of which focus on online sports betting. The

company aims to offer a comparison and recommendation service of legal sportsbooks in Virginia. The US remains a strong focus for Leadstar Media, with future licences set to be acquired in other regulated states.

The expansion online has been widely felt with companies such as **Luckbox**, a subsidiary of **Real Luck Group**, launching casino games on its online betting platform. This will see a strong expansion of features to its repertoire, with Luckbox having previously only featured esports and sports betting.

And of course we have recently witnessed many acquisitions, such as that of **Gaming Innovation Group (GiG)** and **Sportnco** through a share purchase agreement. This agreement will see Sportnco's turnkey betting and gaming solutions technology become integrated into GiG's working platform. Following this, GiG and SkyCity Entertainment Group have also reached an agreement that will see SkyCity invest \$28.3m upon the final acquisition of Sportnco. This will result in a new company that functions within the world of iGaming. Commenting on the move, Sportnco founder and CEO Hervé Schlosser called the two organisations the "perfect match" with regards to product and geographical business focus.

As a continuation on the same thread of financial growth, **Pennsylvania** sportsbooks this week announced a record \$85m in revenue for the month of November, from \$761.6m in handle (total wagers). This latest amount more than supersedes the previous record of \$49.3m set in January 2021 and sees a positive addition to state income, adding a potential \$23m in taxes. In general, these strong November numbers continue a positive run for Pennsylvania's sports wagering market. The last three months have seen \$2.1bn in wagers and \$175.3m in operator revenue.

UNDER THE YGG-MAS TREE



16 DECEMBER – 9 JANUARY

€250,000 PRIZE POOL



3

States in which BetMGM's horseracing mobile app is live following approval in Florida and Louisiana

£780,000

Fine handed to Buzz Bingo for AML and social responsibility failings (\$1.04m)



€444m

French iGaming turnover for Q3 2021 (\$502m)

AGA TELLS AMERICAN BETTORS TO AVOID ILLEGAL SITES LIKE INTERTOPS AND BETVICTOR

Intertops and BetVictor have been named in a list of unlicensed offshore betting websites US customers should avoid.

Ahead of the college bowl season, the American Gaming Association (AGA) has published a list of offshore operators players should beware of.

"Offshore gaming operators have been the subject of federal prosecutions for illegally targeting American consumers for decades," it stated.

"These sites are often vehicles for supporting nefarious activity and organised crime, as well as predatory behaviour that may increase the risk of problem gambling for consumers."

Alongside Intertops and BetVictor, the AGA listed some common offenders, including 5Dimes, BetAnySports, BetDSI, BetNow, BetOnline.ag, Bookmaker, Bovada, GTbets, Heritage, MyBookie.ag, Skybook, Sportbet, SportsBetting.ag, WagerWeb, Xbet and YouWager.

Its statement encouraged media outlets to avoid showcasing these brands and only include "legal, regulated sports betting operators" in their coverage. To

this effect, the AGA provided a list of 50 legal sportsbooks, which included the likes of BetMGM and DraftKings.

The AGA's warning comes as states continue to report record revenue for sports betting month-after-month. Pennsylvania sportsbooks generated \$85m for November from over \$760m in handle.

November also saw New Jersey become the first state to produce more than \$100m in sports betting revenue when its sportsbooks accepted \$1.26bn in bets. Michigan, meanwhile, reported similarly healthy sports betting numbers for November, generating \$500m in handle across retail and online.

GI Verdict: The AGA initially included Coral in its list of brands, an intriguing prospect given the fact it is owned by Entain, which part owns BetMGM. However, the AGA later said this was a mistake and removed Coral from the list. Still, many brands on here are considered safe, regulated operators in other markets. So the lines can blur quite easily...



THE WEEK IN QUOTES

"We will not tolerate gambling businesses behaving in the way IMME did. Gambling operators in Britain must follow our social responsibility and anti-money laundering rules, and a failure to do this will lead to us taking tough action. There is no room in Britain's gambling industry for operators who fail in the way IMME have."

Gambling Commission Executive Director Helen Venn on operator International Multi-Media Entertainments' anti-money laundering and social responsibility failings

"Wearing my punter's hat, while the current service we have is invaluable, it can be frustrating when you can only research five of the greyhound's last few runs in a race, you nail the 'winner' of the quintet, but the other one wins the race. Now, there can be no excuses!"

Jim Austin, creator of Greyhound Bet, discussing Racing Post's archive expansion

EVOLUTION EXTENDS LIVE CASINO IN AUSTRIA AND LAUNCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Evolution has launched three live casino tables for win2day, an online gaming platform owned by Österreichische Lotterien, or Austrian Lotteries.

And the supplier has also launched a localised live casino environment for JVH gaming and entertainment group (JVH) in the Netherlands. Served by Dutch-speaking dealers, the tables are now accessible at Jack's Casino & Sports.

The opening of the dedicated environment in the Dutch market comes after a recent launch in November of Evolution's first-person RNG games, alongside several other live games.

Eric Olders, JVH CEO and Chairman of the Board, said: "Operators and players have waited a long time for the opening of the regulated Dutch online gambling market. We are pleased to offer our players the richest possible choice of online games; from live dealer casino classics to a new generation of live online game shows, soon to be extended with Speed Blackjack, and a huge choice of slots titles too."

Evolution's partnership with Austrian lotteries has seen the operator host various live games developed by Evolution on its win2day platform, including Lightning Roulette, Immersive Roulette and Infinite Blackjack.

Patrick Kittl, Austrian Lotteries' Product Manager for Casino Games/win2day, commented: "At Austrian Lotteries our philosophy is to act responsibly, to always look to introduce innovation to better entertain our players, and to work in partnership."

GI Verdict: Evolution is upping its game (no pun intended) in providing an expansion in its portfolio. It's been a long wait for the opening of the regulated Dutch online gambling market, and players will be happy with the amount of slots games the supplier has accessible.

Given the recent bad PR that saw Evolution's share price take a massive hit, these new partnerships will redress the news agenda a little for the company, as well as providing long-term benefits for the organisation in key markets.

MAY
YOUR
DAYS
BE
MERRY
HAPPY HOLIDAYS





“With more financial and family pressures, we know that the festive holidays can be a tough time for people trying to control their gambling... We are always here to listen and support you when you might feel you have no other options. A message of hope — that is essentially what we’re giving people.”

GamCare’s Director of Clinical and Communities Fiona Macleod on its concern for people struggling with gambling over Christmas

“We are delighted to be able to support the important work Women in Racing are doing to benefit women in the horseracing industry. At Kindred, we strongly believe that a diverse workforce enhances our performance, and we focus on improving our diversity across the group.”

Ed Nicholson, Kindred Group’s Head of Racing Communications and Sponsorship, on the company’s support for Racing Home and Women in Racing

RICHARD HARRIS NAMED RANK GROUP’S NEW BOARD DIRECTOR AND CFO

Richard Harris has joined the Rank Group from Foxtons Group, a London estate agency, where he served as CFO since June 2019.

He will replace Rank’s current CFO Bill Floydd, who resigned to join British retailer Watches of Switzerland for a reported £380,000 (\$503,462) salary earlier this year.

During his time at Foxtons, Harris helped the estate agency navigate the financial impact of Covid-19, led a broad range of M&A activities and delivered significant cost improvements across the business. Before this, Harris was Group Financial Controller for Laird, and held various senior finance roles at Marks and Spencer.

“I am delighted to announce Richard’s appointment as our incoming Group CFO,” said Rank CEO John O’Reilly.

“His extensive experience across a number of senior financial and operational roles will be invaluable as

we continue to deliver the next phase of Rank’s transformation plan. I look forward to welcoming Richard into the group in 2022.”

Simon Hay, Rank’s current Director of Group Finance, will serve as interim CFO from 1 January 2022 until Harris assumes the role in May.

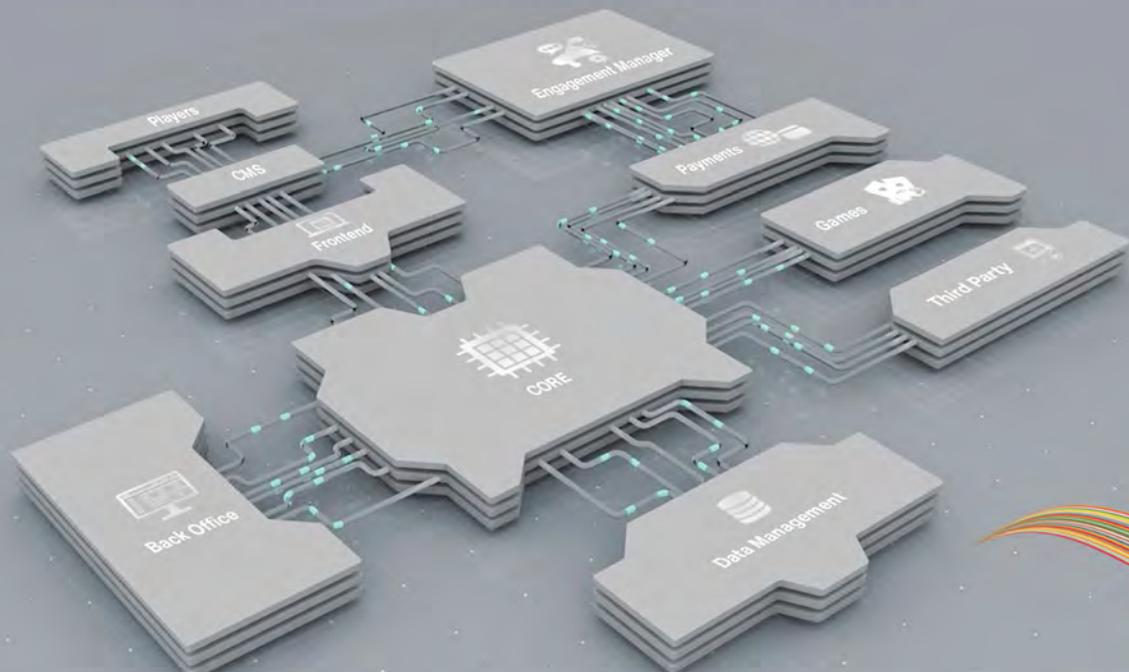
“I am delighted to be joining Rank at this exciting time in the group’s journey,” remarked Harris. “I have enjoyed meeting various members of the team and look forward to working closely with them, John and the Board to deliver the group’s strategy.”

GI Verdict: From real estate to Rank Group CFO, Harris has excelled in his career to date. Having been successful as CFO of Foxtons, there are high hopes that Rank’s financial performance will improve after the appointment of Harris. Time will tell if he has more than just the real estate gift of the gab.

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TAKING STOCK

SHARE PRICES COVER THURSDAY
16 DECEMBER TO THURSDAY 23
DECEMBER (10.00AM GMT)



Flutter Entertainment ↑ 8%
11,670.00 GBp

888 Holdings ↑ 3%
303.40 GBp

Penn National Gaming ↑ 14%
50.87 USD

Evolution ↑ 6%
1,205.60 SEK

Inspired Entertainment ↑ 1%
11.53 USD

SPORTRADAR EXTENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH BUNDESLIGA

Sportradar has agreed to a five-year extension of its long-term partnership with Bundesliga International.

Sportradar is the official provider of betting and streaming rights for the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2, outside the US and DACH regions (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) until the end of the 2025-26 season.

This means Sportradar can sublicense the rights for moving images from those competitions to its network of sportsbook operators.

As per the agreement, Sportradar is also allowed to continue collecting and distributing live match data, providing its customers with access to a fast and reliable feed.

Additionally, Sportradar will provide bookmakers with several tools to enhance the ways fans experience and interact with international Bundesliga content.

Sportradar has also launched Virtual Sports Bundesliga, an AI-driven virtual sports gaming solution. It integrates real match video highlights from 3,500

Bundesliga archive matches so fans can benefit from an interactive gaming experience.

Robert Klein, Bundesliga International CEO, said: "This is a long-term and trusted partnership, built up over many years and with a shared vision for excellence. We see this extension with Sportradar as a blend of working with established partners to create innovative opportunities and products."

Ed Blonk, CCO, Sportradar, said: "We're excited to embark on the next phase of the relationship, using our technologies developed specifically for the world of sport to help Bundesliga International develop new and exciting ways to engage fans around the world."

GI Verdict: Sportradar has been in a successful partnership with Bundesliga for two decades. Having supported the company for so long, over so many years, the extension furthers Bundesliga's expansion and range of opportunities and products, a positive step in the future for both itself and Sportradar.

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NOVEMBER: PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania gaming revenue rose 54.95% to \$447.203m year-over-year in November and 51.95% vs. the same month in 2019, as analysed by Fantini Research.

Sports betting revenue jumped 75.09% year-over-year to \$84.922m. Flutter's FanDuel led market share at 44% followed by DraftKings at 19% and Barstool at 9%.

IGaming revenue rose 57.07% to \$93.889m, and Penn National's Hollywood led market share with 40% of revenue. Operator partners are DraftKings and Entain and MGM Resorts' BetMGM.

Legacy revenue grew 1.64% over 2019 to \$268.392m.

Revenue from fantasy sports was \$3.358m, rising 11.38% year-over-year and 12.64% vs. 2019. DraftKings led market share at 60.59%.

Revenue from slot routes grew 40.99 and 383.17% respectively to \$3.185m year-over-year and vs. 2019.

ALL-SOURCES REVENUE

PROPERTY	REVENUE (M)	CHANGE (%)	
		2020	2019
Live! Philadelphia (Cordish)	\$18.352	+6,140	N/A
South Philly Turf Club (Greenwood)	\$0.520	+472.62	+53.23
Live! Pittsburgh (Cordish)	\$8.364	+269.66	N/A
Hollywood (PENN)	\$61.197	+76.32	+190.28
Valley Forge (BYD)	\$65.377	+70.06	+213.08
Presque Isle (CHDN)	\$10.843	+62.09	+6.20
Rivers (Rush St)	\$32.915	+56.11	-3.32
Wind Creek Bethlehem	\$42.733	+54.87	+6.50
Rivers Philadelphia (Rush St)	\$46.876	+51.76	+55.74
The Meadows (PENN)	\$30.719	+49.96	+43.91
Mohegan Sun	\$20.253	+29.42	+6.17
Lady Luck Nemacolin (CHDN)	\$1.890	+28.47	-30.86
Parx (Greenwood)	\$56.181	+11.69	+3.84
Mohegan Lehigh Valley	\$0.186	+9.59	N/A
Mount Airy	\$20.866	-6.61	+9.28
Harrah's Philadelphia (CZR)	\$14.919	-7.61	-29.02
Hollywood York (PENN)	\$7.139	N/A	N/A
The Oaks (Greenwood)	\$0.000	N/A	N/A
Hollywood Morgantown (PENN)	\$5.728	N/A	N/A
Caesars Interactive	\$2.146	N/A	N/A
Total	\$447.203	+54.95	+51.95
Same Store	\$436.482	+52.77	+40.19



WATCH NOW



**GAMINGTEC,
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR**

ANDREI BEU

GUEST COLUMNIST



NOLAN BUSHNELL,
*BOARD ADVISOR
AT ESPORTS
TECHNOLOGIES*

*Bushnell, also Founder
of Atari, writes about the
coming together of esports
and betting*

It is still early days for the esports and betting industries, and in particular for the coming together of the two. That being said, the worlds of esports and betting are exploding right now, and I think the scale and scope of this growth will only ramp up – as the intrinsic links between esports and betting on esports are further explored.

Over time, the fanbase of esports will evolve to eclipse that of traditional sports such as American football, baseball and soccer in terms of viewership. The potential addressable audience for esports is frankly unrivalled and because of this we will see other stakeholders look to get in on the action, which will ultimately drive growth further.

This includes the sponsorship of esports players, teams and tournaments. While this is already happening, more household companies and brands will forge big-money partnerships as they look to leverage this growing global audience.

Ultimately, businesses and brands will spend more money marketing to esports audiences than they will traditional sports audiences.

Esports and the American Dream

While traditional sports betting is only just being rolled out across North America, it will not be long before esports and esports betting gains significant traction too. Up until now, there has been an Asian dominance of the sport in terms of players, teams and audience viewership, but we are now starting to see a (very welcome) shift.

Given time, it will become more evenly distributed across Asia, Europe and of course the USA with competitors and

viewers coming from all over the world. This will make esports the first truly global sport with mainstream appeal. This is not the case in traditional sports, where different sports are more popular in certain markets – football in the UK and cricket in India, for example.

In my opinion, the US has the potential to be one of the largest markets but currently the pace of growth is being hampered somewhat by regulations. Things are starting to loosen up – regulators are now considering esports betting within their frameworks – which will help to unlock the full potential of esports betting across North America.

Technology driving exports into the mainstream

In markets across the world, technology is helping to drive esports betting into the mainstream. The penetration of gaming consoles is on the rise and for those that do not have access to one, they are more than likely to have access to a smartphone. Modern smartphones could be considered gaming consoles in their own right – a large percentage of users play games on them.

The awareness of esports is also high. While some people will not be familiar with individual players, specific teams and the latest tournaments, they are aware of competitive gaming; and more often than not the most popular titles, such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive, Dota2 and Call of Duty. Even if they are not a viewer, their children, wider family or friends likely are.

This is exposing esports betting to new audiences all the time, and this is another factor in the rapid growth the industry has seen and will continue to see.

I also believe we will witness esports reach a more diverse audience. At present, when you say esports, most people think of millennials and Generation Z, but the wider industry and stakeholders are working to address this; and ensure as many people as possible can enjoy the fun, entertainment and thrills that esports betting delivers.

Right now, it is a young man's game, so I'd like to see it a little less ageist. Of course, as the industry continues to evolve and mature, we will see just that. At the same time, I think we will see the lines between esports and betting continue to blur until they are as symbiotic as traditional sports and sports betting.

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