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WEEK 19

FRIDAY 13 MAY 2022

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GAMBLEAWARE, PHIL MICKELSON & BETMGM

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THIS WEEK

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Head of Sales, SoftGamings

RISK MANAGEMENT

ASSESS RISK
CONTROL RISK
REVIEW
IDENTIFY RISK

**HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?
GAMBLEAWARE REITERATES
CALL FOR LEVY**

**US ROUND-UP:
BETMGM,
PHIL MICKELSON
& HARD ROCK**



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OMNI-CHANNEL PLATFORM ● ENHANCED PLAYER ENGAGEMENT ● RETAIL NETWORK MANAGEMENT

GambleAware receives highest ever annual donations but doubles down on call for mandatory levy

▶ While the Gambling Review seems to be forever on the horizon, it will one day become a reality. And, when that day comes, what can operators expect?

A simple way to determine, roughly, what line lawmakers will take is to ask ourselves: are companies doing enough to reduce gambling harm?

This is a tough question, and raises even tougher questions when you dig a bit deeper, but spending is a useful way to measure the industry's contributions to gambling harm reduction.

Put simply, how much money do companies give to problem gambling projects and organisations?

Fortunately for us, GambleAware recently published its annual donations list. In total, between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the charity received £34.7m (\$43m) from Britain's gambling industry, a £15m year-on-year increase and the charity's highest ever amount received.

But GambleAware is still calling for a mandatory 1% levy on gross gambling yield (GGY). From GambleAware's perspective, a mandatory levy would offer a more consistent and sustainable funding model, enabling better long-term planning and commissioning for problem gambling services.

A 1% levy would also massively increase funding for harm reduction initiatives. Based on last year's donations to GambleAware, its annual income could rise by over 300% to £140m.

What's more, nearly 90% of last year's donations came from the "Big Four" operators: Entain, William Hill, Flutter Entertainment and bet365.

None of the four currently contributes 1% of GGY to GambleAware, though all have pledged to do so by 2024.

While GambleAware's CEO, Zoë Osmond, welcomed their donations, she still stressed that more needs to be done and pushed for a mandatory levy.

"These donations fund essential services for the prevention of gambling harms, helping build a coalition of expertise to tackle and prevent gambling harms across Great Britain," said Osmond.

"We welcome the commitment from the 'Big Four' operators to increase their donations over the coming years; however, there remains an inconsistent approach to funding across the wider gambling industry, which leads to uncertainty and instability."

GambleAware published its donations list not long after issuing a renewed call for such a levy. In a statement published on its website, Osmond said: "Without action now, many more people and families could suffer.

"That's why we are calling on the Government to introduce a mandatory, 1% levy of GGY on the gambling industry as a condition of licence.

"This could be delivered in a matter of months and could almost treble the amount of funding going to preventing and treating gambling harms."

But a levy, like other so-called "sin taxes" creates new problems. In 2020/21, gambling contributed just under £3bn to the public purse.

That's a considerable sum which would likely be adversely impacted by a mandatory levy. When forced to pay 1% of their gross gambling yield, companies may cut corners elsewhere.

It's important to remember that the Big Four's donations to GambleAware do not constitute their sole efforts to tackle problem gambling.

These are major, multinational companies; while their donations are a useful benchmark, they don't tell the whole story.

For example, Entain was recently awarded GamCare's Advanced Safer Gambling Standard, highlighting the operator's UK-facing player protection and social responsibility efforts.

To achieve this award, Entain was assessed in 10 different areas and against up to 58 separate criteria.

This included a review of the group's safer gambling strategy, policies, procedures and controls. GamCare also conducted interviews with Entain employees and on-site visits.

To quote Dan Whitlam, Head of Industry Standards at GamCare, Entain has "adopted a wide range of safer gambling measures that go beyond the social responsibility provisions of their gambling licence."

This came after Entain published its annual and gender pay gap reports for 2021 in March, detailing the operator's sustainable gambling efforts.

In total, it made nearly £13m in contributions to safer betting and gaming initiatives, alongside trialling its Advanced Responsibility & Care (ARC) programme, a technology-driven project to proactively identify at-risk individuals.

But while £13m may at first glance seem like an impressive figure, compared to Entain's £3.83bn in revenue for 2021, it doesn't constitute anywhere near 1%. And, let's face it, Entain has made plenty of headlines for player protection failings over the years.

More needs to be done; but if a levy wouldn't work, what can be done? Put simply, companies need to voluntarily raise their contributions.

Not every business is currently positioned to donate 1% of its GGY and the immediate implementation of a levy may result in less being done as opposed to more.

Ultimately, problem gambling won't go away overnight. Tackling this issue will take time, but that doesn't mean businesses should shy away from strengthening their internal safer gambling efforts and procedures now.

GI Verdict: GambleAware has outlined its position time and again, but as we near the publication of the Gambling Review, its calls for a mandatory levy may gain more weight. *Gambling Insider* does not believe that a levy is the right course of action. From a pragmatic standpoint, it could make things worse rather than better. Whether lawmakers will bow to GambleAware's demand is hard to say, but it does put pressure on politicians to come down harder on the industry. However, economic considerations may outweigh these concerns, especially given recent recession warnings. The industry keeps calling for self-regulation... so let's see something proactive and meaningful.

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

\$971.3m

In March 2022 wagers for Illinois sportsbooks, up 53% from March 2021



5,000

Locations throughout Italy for Elys Game Technology to deploy virtual sports wagering and amusement products, after entering into retail distribution agreements

\$20.2m

Q1 2022 revenue for Gaming Innovation Group, a 27% increase from Q1 2021



2nd

Regulated market for Canada's Rivalry Corp, with the group bringing its esports and traditional sports betting services to Australia



1 Sep

Start date for new Holland Casino CEO Petra de Ruiter, replacing Erwin van Lambaart



US ROUND-UP: BETMGM, PHIL MICKELSON AND HARD ROCK

► **Pariplay** has partnered with online casino PlayStar to support its imminent launch in New Jersey. The partnership will also see the Aspire Global group's in-house development studio, Wizard Games, provide its content to PlayStar customers. This includes popular hits from the group, such as Dragons of the North, Rumble Rhino Megaways and Wildwood Buffalo. Pariplay noted that it has targeted North America as a major growth area for the business, with the company signing a number of key commercial deals over the past year.

Remaining in the Garden State, **BetMakers Technology Group** launched fixed-odds betting on horseracing, making it legal in New Jersey for the first time in many years. As of Saturday 7 May, New Jerseyans can make fixed-odds and pari-mutuel bets at Monmouth Park. Guests at Monmouth will be able to use the new self-service terminals from Global Tote's BetLine series. BetMakers also installed a new "big board" that offers odds, results and messages alongside the races.

Heading south, **BetMGM** announced a partnership with MLB (Major League Baseball) franchise the Houston Astros, its first such deal in the state of Texas. Per their agreement, BetMGM signage will be prominently featured at the Astros' Minute Maid Park home stadium. Areas of signage include the stadium's outfield wall sign and behind the home plate, where promotional messaging will rotate on an advertising wheel. Astros fans will also be eligible for participation in various BetMGM VIP experiences.

In other BetMGM news, **Fantasma Games'** content will debut exclusively on the BetMGM Casino platform in Michigan and West Virginia. Wins of Nautilus Megaways and Bounty Showdown are among the first games set to be made available to players, with additional titles expected to follow soon. All of the group's slots will be delivered to BetMGM via US distribution partner Light & Wonder, formerly Scientific Games.

Also in West Virginia, Supplier

EveryMatrix secured a licence from the state's Lottery Commission. This comes after the company completed licensing applications for both West Virginia and Michigan back in December 2021. Erik Nyman, President of EveryMatrix Americas, commented: "EveryMatrix has filed several licences in states that have regulated casino and sports, and we are pleased to see these efforts are paying off."

Meanwhile, two **Boyd Gaming** properties were recognised for their successful entry into the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Programme (SHARP). This accolade is offered by the Safety Consultation and Training Section (SCATS) of Nevada's Division of Industrial Relations. The properties are Main Street Station Casino Brewery Hotel, and California Hotel and Casino. It was the first time either property earned this honour. "Boyd Gaming is a committed safety leader within the casino industry," said Todd Schultz, SCATS Chief Administrative Officer.

Legendary golfer **Phil Mickelson** lost more than \$40m on gambling, according to an excerpt from an upcoming biography of the American sports icon. Over a four-year period – from 2010 to 2014 – Mickelson accrued the multimillion-dollar losses, as revealed by Alan Shipnuck in a preview of his new book published on the Firepit Collective website. The golfer's love of gambling is well documented, but as Shipnuck puts it, "the massive scale of Mickelson's gambling losses has never before been made public."

Finally, **Hard Rock International** announced a new partnership with Oracle Red Bull Racing ahead of the inaugural Miami Grand Prix on Sunday 8 May. As F1 made its return to Florida after a decades-long hiatus, Red Bull named Hard Rock an official team and viewing partner. This relationship will see Hard Rock work with the team to create new experiences centred around Grand Prix weekends across the 23-race calendar. This includes a collaboration with Red Bull Racing's esports team.

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20%

Decline in Q1 2022
revenue for Galaxy
Entertainment Group

6%

Year-on-year
revenue increase
for Playtika Holding
Corp for Q1 2022



\$13.2m

Q1 2022 revenue
for NeoGames, a
0.7% decline from
Q1 2021

THE STAR SUSPENDS ALL REBATE PLAY PROGRAMMES

The Star Entertainment Group has suspended all domestic and international rebate play programmes, and has reconfirmed a commitment to not dealing with junkets.

The announcement comes while the Australian operator addresses issues arising from the ongoing review of its Sydney casino, which is being undertaken by Adam Bell SC in accordance with the Casino Control Act 1992.

"The board has resolved to immediately suspend rebate programs for both domestic and international players across all its casinos until further notice," a statement from the operator read.

The operator also referred to its decision in October 2020 to end all junket programs, noting that "in light of the Covid-related impacts on this part of the business, the decision to suspend rebate programs is not expected to have any material impact on earnings for FY22."

The Star also referred to its announcement earlier this month that detailed the resignations of its CFO

Harry Theodore, Chief Casino Officer (NSW) Greg Hawkins, and Chief Legal & Risk Officer and Company Secretary Paula Martin. They will work with the Executive Chairman to transition their executive responsibilities in an orderly manner, with an executive search firm to seek their permanent replacements.

As part of the transition period, Christina Katsibouba has been appointed as Interim CFO, with Geoff Hogg announced as Interim Chief Casino Officer NSW & Qld.

GI Verdict: The Star and Crown Resorts are seemingly having their own competition to see who can do the most damage to their reputation, and the former's latest announcement comes in a bid to rescue that damaged reputation as much as possible. The triple resignation certainly didn't do The Star any favours, but the decision to continue to not deal with junkets is definitely a positive step. As for the resignations, The Star will want the new faces to turn things around as soon as possible.

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“Glitnor Group has always been very open about its ambitions to become the most entrepreneurial and fastest-growing business group in the iGaming industry - and our investment in Time2play.com is further proof of how serious we are about making in-roads in the hugely significant North American market.”

Glitnor Group CEO David Flynn after the company made a seven-digit investment to hold the majority of Time2play.com, as part of its recent acquisition of KaFe Rocks

“Offering our iGaming partners market-leading technologies that deliver the most seamless and engaging experience to their customers is absolutely central to our strategy at Playtech. Payments play an important role in delivering the ultimate player journey and require an experienced team with expert knowledge, which is where Paysafe comes in as the ideal partner for us.”

Playtech COO Shimon Akad on the new global partnership between the group and Paysafe

BETTER COLLECTIVE DECLINES TO COMMENT ON RUMOURED SPOTLIGHT SPORTS TAKEOVER

Better Collective has labelled a Sunday Times report regarding a possible takeover of Spotlight Sports Group “highly speculative.”

The newspaper claimed that private equity firm and Spotlight’s owner, Exponent, was “closing in on a £500m sale” and tipped Better Collective as the “odds-on favourite” to acquire the sports media business.

Spotlight is best known for its Racing Post brand, as well as other betting tip sites such as MyRacing, Free Super Tips and Soccerbase, alongside a US-focused venture, Pickwise.

Rumours that Exponent is looking to sell Spotlight first emerged in November 2021, when it was reported that the firm was in talks with investment banks. It was later revealed that Exponent had selected PJT Partners to oversee Spotlight’s sale.

But in response to a query from *Gambling Insider*, Better Collective declined to comment. It stated: “The article is highly speculative and given our defined

M&A strategy and track record, we are not surprised to be mentioned when there are rumours of sales processes in the industry.

“However, we do not want to comment or join in speculations.”

Super affiliate Better Collective has made two notable US-facing acquisitions in the past year, adding Action Network and RotoGrinders to its brand portfolio. Acquiring Spotlight would only enhance its US footprint, further developing a key area for the company, but also add prominent brands in the UK.

GI Verdict: Given just how quickly information gets passed in this day and age, keeping the cards close to the chest is a smart move from Better Collective. Such a takeover would take a long time to prepare, and so it would be foolish to release any sensitive information.

But as mentioned, the move would make sense, not only due to the company’s US ambitions, but also the similar nature of the sites involved. Consolidation, consolidation, consolidation.

BOILIN' POTS

COMING SOON
26 MAY



“As one of the most prestigious and innovative clubs in European soccer, Benfica has established an incredible reputation for going above and beyond for its fans. Our agreement will give Benfica the opportunity to continue to enhance and innovate the live fan experience, bringing its passionate supporters closer to the action with interactive and data-driven broadcasts.”

Second Spectrum Executive Director Paul Hunt after Genius Sports announced it will provide S.L. Benfica with its advanced tracking technology

“We started our research in gambling 15 years ago and have published multiple academic studies in the area of player tracking and responsible gaming. We have shown that players who gamble responsibly are more loyal, and their customer lifetime is significantly longer. We are proud to assist millions of players across dozens of brands around the world and to add Bingoal to this family.”

Neccton Director and Head of Development Dr Michael Auer after its Mentor software was taken on by Bingoal in the Netherlands

DUTCH REGULATOR SCOLDS 37 OPERATORS WITHOUT VALID “PRESENCE” PERMITS

The Dutch Gaming Authority (KSA) has taken action against 37 businesses that have operated gaming machines without a valid permit.

These operators came to light, the KSA explained, following an investigation into 290 “catering locations,” which uncovered the existence of gaming machines for which “presence” permits had not been issued. These licences, also referred to as “attendance permits,” are issued by the Netherlands’ municipal authorities and allow food and drink businesses to operate gaming machines.

However, they may only be issued to businesses “that are mainly visited by adults,” hence “an open and naked gambling machine in a snack bar, for example, is not allowed.”

The regulator added: “An attendance permit is also important to prevent gaming machines from being used for criminal activities. That is why a municipality can conduct a reliability investigation before issuing an attendance

permit, or while it is in progress.”

Of the 37 operators identified in the KSA’s investigation, all have since been notified and, with the exception of one, have ceased the violations. The sole outlier “had to be prepared to impose an order subject to a penalty” and may lose its operating licence.

“The KSA and the municipalities have a joint responsibility in the supervision of gaming machines: the KSA supervises the operators, the municipalities supervise compliance with the regulations in the presence permit,” the regulator stated.

“The KSA calls on municipalities to actively check for the presence of a permit in the case of gaming machines.”

GI Verdict: The Dutch gaming market is certainly not a well-established market yet, so perhaps these wrongdoings are understandable in these early stages.

The KSA is never slow to take action against any wrongdoing, and those who have been warned will more than likely not make the same mistake again.

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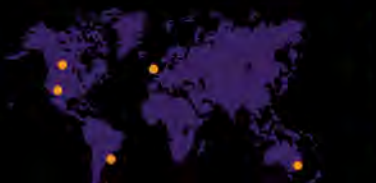
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IGT
19.79 USD  3%

Kindred Group
91.72 SEK  6%

Galaxy Entertainment
49.70 HKD  10%

Bragg Gaming
4.43 USD  18%

Wynn Resorts
58.85 USD  14%

RECORD HANDLE OF \$273.8M FOR KENTUCKY DERBY

This year's Kentucky Derby saw record handle of \$273.8m, an increase of 17% from last year.

Handle this year was also up 9% on the previous record set in 2019, highlighting the scale of pent-up demand for the US' staple horseracing event post-pandemic.

Attendance at this year's event was 147,294, up from 51,838 last year. Last year's attendance, however, was heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

The week preceding the Kentucky Derby, known as Derby week, also saw record handle of \$391.8m, up 25% from last year and up 14% on the previous record-holding Derby week in 2019.

This year's Kentucky Derby saw 80/1 outsider Rich Strike – ridden by Sonny Leon – pull off a shock upset in its charge to victory, despite having the lowest odds among all 20 horses (it was even 99/1 at one stage).

What's more, Rich Strike was only brought into the race on Friday, after another horse was forced to drop out.

Rich Strike's victory is the second-longest shot to win the Run for the Roses after 1913's event was won by Donerail, at odds of 91/1.

Bettors backing Rich Strike would've seen lucrative returns, although bookmakers would not have been as hard hit as the favourites did not come through.

The Kentucky Derby is the first of a Triple Crown series; Preakness Stakes at the Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore (21 May) and Belmont Stakes at Elmont's Belmont Park (11 June), are the second and third races in the US' flagship horseracing series.

GI Verdict: The main story from the Derby was certainly the major upset caused by Rich Strike; but for bookmakers, the main event was the record handle of over \$270m. It's always interesting to consider the small margins involved in sports wagering, however. Revenue was, naturally, far lower, just as in New York \$1.6bn in handle for April generated just \$51m in revenue after tax. It's big business, of course, but with slim margins...

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WYNN RESORTS REPORTS 29% REVENUE INCREASE FOR Q1 2022

Wynn Resorts has reported operating revenue of \$953.3m for the first quarter of 2022, a 29% increase from the first quarter of 2021.

The group noted that its Macau operations for Q1 2022 continued to be negatively impacted by travel-related restrictions amid the ongoing pandemic, including Covid-19 testing and other mitigation procedures.

Operating revenue for Wynn Palace was \$163.3m for the period, with Wynn Macau posting revenue of \$135.1m.

Wynn's Las Vegas Operations, meanwhile, posted revenue of \$441.2m for the period, with adjusted property EBITDA of \$159.4m. And Encore Boston Harbor revenue amounted to \$190.8m, with adjusted property EBITDA reaching \$55.3m.

Net loss attributable to the operator was \$183.3m for Q1 2022, compared to \$281m in the prior-year period. And adjusted EBITDA was \$177.6m for the period, compared to \$58.9m in the prior-year period.

Casino represented the majority of total revenue with \$489.9m, followed by food and beverage at \$174m. Rooms and entertainment, retail and other represented totals of \$170.4m and \$119m respectively.

"Our first quarter results reflect continued strength at both Wynn Las Vegas and Encore Boston Harbor; where our teams' unrelenting focus on five-star hospitality and world class experiences combined with very strong customer demand to deliver a new first quarter record for adjusted property EBITDA at both properties," said Wynn Resorts CEO Craig Billings.

"In Macau, we remain confident that the market will benefit from the return of visitation when travel restrictions subside."

GI Verdict: The numbers posted by Wynn Resorts can be taken as a huge positive for the casino operator, especially as its most lucrative venue typically, Wynn Macau, remains hamstrung by persistent Covid-19 measures affecting

the region. It looks, though, thanks to Las Vegas' post-pandemic bounceback, that Wynn's operating figures are back on the up after a difficult two years. Expect the numbers to continue rising, especially when Macau comes back fully to the playing field. We're still not sure whether Wynn Interactive has any real chance of succeeding in the online market; but land-based is seeing an uptick, for sure.



The **CHALLENGES** for **BOOKMAKERS** of **MARKETING ESPORTS**

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LIGHT & WONDER POSTS Q1 REVENUE OF \$572M, ACQUIRES PLAYZIDO

Supplier Light & Wonder has reported consolidated revenue for Q1 of \$572m, up 26% year-on-year.

The quarter also marked Light & Wonder's sale of its lottery business, which generated \$5.6bn in gross cash proceeds.

The sale was approved to align with the company's new vision – since rebranding to Light & Wonder from Scientific Games – to be a cross-platform global gaming company solely.

It also allowed the company to significantly reduce its outstanding debt, from \$8.9bn down to \$4bn, while paving the way for a return on investments for shareholders, totalling \$140m.

Light & Wonder's Q1 results also saw adjusted EBITDA from continuing operations of \$202m, up from \$142m in the previous quarter (Q4 2021).

The supplier's President and CEO, Barry Cottle, commented: "We kicked off 2022 with a number of significant achievements across our businesses with strong revenue growth of 26%

in the quarter. The sale of our lottery business was another significant milestone as we de-lever and maximise cash."

Alongside these results, Light & Wonder has announced the acquisition of game development platform and content provider Playzido.

Light & Wonder believes Playzido's proprietary Remote Gaming Server (RGS) is "one of the best" in the iGaming industry for rapid custom game development; and claims it will provide a faster route to market for creative studios without their own development platform.

Playzido's Stuart Banks said: "This deal is testament to the drive and dedication of our team, who have been committed to building a fantastic games platform that allows independent studios; and operators to bring their creativity and innovation to the global gaming market."

GI Verdict: Light & Wonder's latest activity in Q1 2022 highlights its commitment to its recent rebrand; dropping its lottery product as it strives to move away from its previous

brand image as a games supplier for the gambling industry, to being a gaming supplier more widely. Its acquisition of Playzido reaffirms its intent to improve its gaming offer, and strengthen the technology at its disposal, as the company shifts its business strategy. Has it done enough kickstart a return to gaming's top table, however?



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MARCH REVENUE REPORTS: IL, NY

ILLINOIS

SPORTS BETTING	MARCH REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE (YEAR-ON-YEAR)	OPERATORS
Fairmount	\$25.071	+96.66	FLTR
DraftKings at Casino Queen	\$12.844	+1.37	DKNG
Rivers des Plaines (Midwest)	\$9.062	+9.82	RSI
Hawthorne	\$6.760	+51.49	PBH
Aurora Hollywood (PENN)	\$3.192	-40.40	PENN
Par-A-Dice	\$2.074	+1011.15	BetMGM
Elgin (CZR)	\$1.118	+967.00	CZR
Alton (PENN)	\$0.413	-3.22	PENN
Joliet Hollywood (PENN)	\$0.094	-15.29	PENN
Total	\$60.629	+36.81	N/A

HANDLE	MARCH REVENUE (M)	% CHANGE (YEAR-ON-YEAR)	OPERATORS
Fairmount	\$312.504	+60.10	FLTR
DraftKings at Casino Queen	\$289.235	+39.31	DKNG
Rivers des Plaines (Midwest)	\$127.547	+19.36	RSI
Hawthorne	\$79.605	+44.83	PBH
Joliet Hollywood (PENN)	\$70.256	+43.75	PENN
Par-A-Dice	\$46.411	+7286.91	BetMGM
Elgin (CZR)	\$40.684	+187.19	CZR
Alton (PENN)	\$3.666	-9.94	PENN
Aurora Hollywood (PENN)	\$1.372	+10.68	PENN
Total	\$971.278	+53.29	N/A

NEW YORK

SPORTS BETTING	MARCH REVENUE (M)	MARKET SHARE %		% CHANGE
		APRIL	MARCH	
FanDuel (FLTR)	\$63.589	61.06	51.03	+9.03
DraftKings (DKNG)	\$19.637	18.86	20.03	-14.23
Caesars (CZR)	\$11.803	11.33	18.89	-45.31
BetMGM (ENT, MGM)	\$4.981	4.78	4.44	-1.77
BetRivers (RSI)	\$1.809	1.74	1.50	+5.61
PointsBet (PBH)	\$1.469	1.41	2.62	-50.94
WynnBet (WYNN)	\$0.519	0.50	1.04	-56.32
Resorts World Bet	\$0.336	0.32	0.45	-35.19
Total	\$104.142	N/A	N/A	-8.87

HANDLE	MARCH REVENUE (M)	MARKET SHARE %		% CHANGE
		APRIL	MARCH	
FanDuel (FLTR)	\$599.486	43.10	41.08	-10.93
DraftKings (DKNG)	\$327.052	23.52	25.30	-21.10
Caesars (CZR)	\$215.747	15.51	16.69	-21.08
BetMGM (ENT, MGM)	\$142.156	10.22	10.54	-17.66
PointsBet (PBH)	\$53.193	3.82	2.95	+9.96
BetRivers (RSI)	\$37.987	2.73	2.54	-8.62
WynnBet (WYNN)	\$9.374	0.67	0.60	-3.88
Resorts World Bet	\$5.782	0.42	0.30	+16.91
Total	\$1.391bn	N/A	N/A	-15.11

GUEST INTERVIEW



ALEXANDER YERIN,
*HEAD OF SALES,
SOFTGAMINGS*

Yerin speaks to Gambling Insider about emerging technologies and new markets in the iGaming sphere

Hi Alexander. How was it being back at ICE London this year?

ICE was good, especially after two years of closure, but the absence of exhibitors from CIS was noticeable – 60% less traffic compared to the previous event.

We were delighted to return to London after a year's break from ICE. It was great to be among other industry professionals and have the opportunity to meet potential customers face-to-face, as well as attend the conferences to learn about latest news and trends in the online casino industry, payment solutions and other related topics.

Our team managed to establish new contacts with visitors who want to enter the world of online casinos with their own new brand; as well as with existing major operators who want to integrate new gaming content into their platforms or expand their business to new territories. In short, our high expectations were met by the many new contacts we made at the event; and the new insights we gained from the speakers at the conference.

What emerging technologies are most exciting/will have the biggest impact on iGaming development in the future?

We believe that crypto solutions will have the biggest impact on the casino sector within the next three years. Casino operators have a great interest in including crypto payments in their platforms to keep up with

the latest trends in the market. We have also noticed that there is a huge demand for gaming integration that supports crypto solutions, which operators want to incorporate into their NFT projects and metaverses. Therefore, we are changing our business solutions to address this particular gap in the market.

Another important technical aspect is the maintenance and speed of game integration, as casino website content is becoming more technical and requires 24/7 support and high operational speed to improve the gaming experience of website users. We, as a software provider, spend a lot of time testing our solutions and integrations to ensure a smooth gaming experience, high website loading speed, and high deposit readiness.

How has technology developed over the last few years to get where it is today? If I asked you how iGaming would develop say, 10 years ago, does where it is now meet your past expectations?

Expectations have increased tenfold. Internet coverage is growing around the world, new markets are constantly emerging with new regulations and nuances that bring exciting challenges. We did not expect such perfect results and growth 10 years ago, but we clearly realised that we were on the right track and developed our platform according to the needs of our customers. In the near future, the metaverse and blockchain will have a huge impact on many industries, including iGaming, so we will integrate all these features into our iGaming platform.

What are SoftGamings' goals for the rest of the year and beyond? How do you see yourself developing as technology continues to evolve?

We plan to expand our platform solutions with new features, new game content and payment providers/banks as we grow our operating markets. We believe that a huge portfolio of gaming and payment providers will make our business attractive to both new entrants in the online casino space, and existing operators interested in our aggregation services.

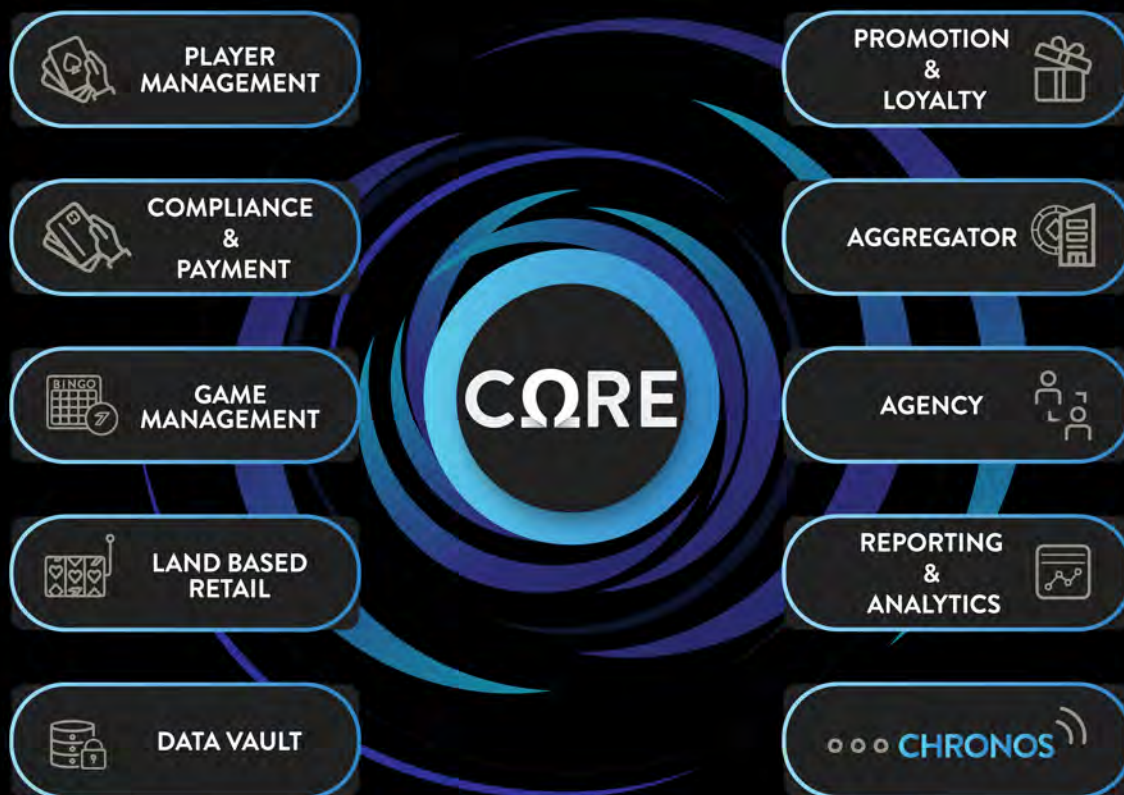
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