

# GI FRIDAY

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**AffiliateCon**

# WEEK 24

**FRIDAY 17 JUN 2022**

**IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE:  
M&A BULLETIN AND EXCLUSIVE Q&AS**

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# GI FRIDAY

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### THIS WEEK

- US ROUND-UP
- NEW BRAGG GAMING CEO
- GAMBLING COMMISSION CEO SPEAKS OUT
- INSIDER TRADING CHARGES FOR EX-PENN EMPLOYEE
- DRAFTKINGS PARTNERS WITH BETBLOCKER
- AUSTRALIA ROUND-UP

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#### GUEST INTERVIEW

Naomi Barton,  
Portfolio Director,  
iGB Live!

# WEEK 24

## FRIDAY 17 JUN 2022



### EXCLUSIVES: JOHN CONNELLY & PAUL NEWSON



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## ENTAIN BUYS €300M BETCITY; POINTSBET SAYS NO TO MURDOCH

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## Dutch brand BetCity has agreed to Entain's takeover bid, while Rupert Murdoch has seen his offer for PointsBet Australia rejected

Two major M&A developments on opposite sides of the world have taken place: one in the Netherlands and one in Australia.

Following its launch last October, the regulated Dutch market has quickly developed a reputation as being lucrative yet hard to access. Most operators have been forced to make do by applying for a licence; but then again, most operators don't have ready access to several hundred million euros.

Entain has agreed to acquire leading Dutch brand BetCity for an initial consideration of €300m (\$312.9m) and deferred contingent consideration of up to €550m.

The sports betting, gaming and interactive entertainment group will acquire the entire share capital of BetEnt BV, which trades under the BetCity.nl name, from Sports Entertainment Media BV.

The initial consideration of €300m is payable in cash at completion, with a balancing payment to be paid early next year based on the actual performance of BetCity in the financial year 2022.

A further contingent payment will then be paid in early 2024, based on 10 times BetCity's EBITDA for the financial year 2023, minus amounts already paid out. And, finally, a contingent payment of €50m will be paid on delivery of synergies and successful migration to the Entain Platform.

BetCity CEO Melvin Bostelaar and other key members of the leadership team will remain with the group.

"We are delighted that BetCity is joining Entain and are excited by the significant opportunities in the newly regulated Dutch market," said Entain CEO Jette Nygaard-Andersen.

"This acquisition will provide customers with an even better experience, as we combine BetCity's local expertise and brand alongside Entain's market leading, customer-focused platform."

"This transaction further underpins our growth strategy of operating in attractive regulated markets. We look forward to working with Melvin and the BetCity team."

The acquisition is expected to be completed during H2 2022, with the initial consideration to be funded from existing cash resources and drawing on the company's revolving credit facility.

Ultimately, this deal will likely benefit both parties equally. Entain grants BetCity access to some much-needed scale and greater resources. For Entain, meanwhile, acquiring an established brand circumvents the hefty cost of customer acquisition that comes with most new market entries.

Moreover, BetCity will complement the group's brands Bwin and Party, which are currently awaiting approval for a licence to operate in the Netherlands.

Due to additional documentation required by the country's Gaming Authority (KSA), Entain now expects to receive approval "during the latter part of this year."

Bostelaar added: "We look forward to a bright future together."

But while Entain is busy making offers, down under, PointsBet is busy rejecting them. The company has turned down a AU\$220m (US\$153.2m) bid for its Australian division from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation and digital wagering pioneer Matthew Tripp.

As reported by the Sydney Morning Herald, the bookmaker's board – led by former UBS banker Brett Paton – rebuffed a non-binding indicative offer from the News Corp Australia-led consortium around two weeks ago, with the offer not put to shareholders.

Along with his son Lachlan, Murdoch controls a multi-billion-dollar global media empire, which includes the Fox News Channel in the US, the Foxtel pay-TV business in Australia and a number of global and local newspapers such as The Australian.

***"There is market share to be won and the current PointsBet owners look determined to be the ones competing for it, rather than selling"***

But the family also has a small betting presence through ownership of racing sites Racenet and Punters.com.

They formalised a partnership with Tripp – who grew Sportsbet into Australia's second-largest operator and established BetEasy before selling it to Flutter Entertainment – earlier this year.

News Corp is still expected to launch an online gaming business at some point in 2022, having already appointed former BetEasy boss Andrew Menz as its Chief Executive.

The PointsBet rejection is not expected to change the launch of the new company or its bookmaking licence, but it would have given the business scale, and means it will not have a large customer base upon launch.

**GI Verdict:** By acquiring BetCity, Entain will sidestep the new customer acquisition process that can prove difficult and expensive. But why PointsBet decided to turn down Murdoch and Tripp's offer, however, is a harder move to pinpoint. Most likely, the company believes Australia, its home market, is too attractive to abandon at this stage. Or perhaps PointsBet is just playing hard to get. Either way, this does not bode well for Murdoch's online betting business. When PointsBet Global CEO Sam Swanell spoke to *Gambling Insider* for the CEO Special, he sounded like a man very much enjoying the journey. There is market share to be won and the current PointsBet owners look determined to be the ones competing for it, rather than selling. In fact, Swanell spoke of his regret about having to sell the tomwaterhouse.com business to William Hill in Australia – so he may well be determined not to do the same again.

# THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

**65%**

Year-on-year increase in Q1 GGR for Allwyn International



**4**

Professional golfers featured in FanDuel Group's new TV spot, which will debut at the US Open; Abraham Ancer, Will Zalatoris, Harold Varner III and Jordan Spieth

**25**

Years of experience in IT for new Jamul Casino Chief Information Officer Ram Patrachari



**DKK 609m (\$85.4m)**



In April GGR for the Danish gambling industry, a 15% year-on-year increase

**71%**

Of online gambling merchants have reported an increase in promotion abuse over the past year, according to a study by Ravelin



## US ROUND-UP: CONNELLY EXCLUSIVE, NEW APOLLO CEO, AGA & BETMGM

► **Interblock Gaming CEO John Connelly** exclusively discussed the purchase of his company by Oaktree with *Gaming America* this week.

He said: "It was probably one of the longest deals in history due to Covid. We started the process with Wall Street in 2019 and made a selection by the end of the year, and then Covid hit.

"During the licensing process, we were able to obtain an extraordinary amount of capital from Oaktree, more of a bridge financing. That gave us the tools we needed to sustain the company and give us a growth rate that we weren't anticipating coming out of Covid.

"Our business is very capital intensive. We are able now to use that horsepower Oaktree provides you to not only build your company organically; but also to look at mergers and acquisitions, and expand it moving forward."

**Apollo Global Management** has appointed Patrick Nichols as the new CEO for Las Vegas' Palazzo and The Venetian.

His appointment comes less than four months after the private equity firm acquired both resorts from Las Vegas Sands, which has left its US operations to concentrate mainly on Asia.

**The American Gaming Association** (AGA) has said the US is now on an "equal footing" with other countries, after pre-flight Covid testing was scrapped for inbound air passengers.

US-bound travellers no longer need to test negative for Covid-19 prior to departure, a decision that came into effect Sunday 12 June. Many industries that rely on international tourism

welcomed this move, including the US gaming sector. AGA President and CEO Bill Miller said easing restrictions for inbound air travellers will help the nation's hospitality sector "fully recover".

**PokerGo**'s studio at Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas will host the final table of **BetMGM**'s inaugural poker championship.

The MGM Resorts and Entain joint venture will conclude the first-ever BetMGM Poker Championship at the content platform's Las Vegas studio later this month.

Six players will battle it out on Sunday 26 June, hosted and streamed by PokerGo.

**Rush Street Interactive**, via the BetRivers brand, has become the first operator in West Virginia to launch Evolution Gaming's live dealer offering.

The supplier's live dealer content is now available to players in the Mountain State on BetRivers' website and Android app.

A mix of tables are on offer, including low and high-stakes blackjack games, lightning roulette, baccarat, ultimate Texas hold'em and three card poker.

Elsewhere, **PointsBet Canada** has announced a new partnership with golf club owner and operator ClubLink.

The multi-year deal will see PointsBet become ClubLink's Official Sports Betting Partner; this comes after the bookmaker entered the Ontario sports betting market in April.

PointsBet has made efforts to solidify its position in the Canadian market, penning partnership agreements with established Canadian companies, including a deal with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment in April 2022.

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## 53rd

Edition of the World Series of Poker attended by football superstar Neymar, who tried his luck in the \$10,000 Limit Hold 'Em Championship

## 50th

Anniversary celebration for Hard Rock International, with several of the company's destinations offering discounts to celebrate the milestone



## 10%

Drop for Bitcoin to below \$25,000, down to levels not seen since late 2020



## BRAGG GAMING APPOINTS 888 VETERAN YANIV SHERMAN AS CEO

Bragg Gaming Group has named Yaniv Sherman its new CEO, replacing Paul Godfrey who had served in an interim capacity since November 2021.

Citing Sherman's 20-plus years of experience across various industries, including an over 14-year tenure with 888 Holdings, the Israeli businessman has been chosen to lead the group following a "review of strategic alternatives" by Bragg's Board of Directors.

Sherman's most recent position prior to joining Bragg was as 888's Head of US, directing the company's American business.

In this role, he spearheaded a 15-year joint venture allowing 888 to use the Sports Illustrated brand in the US, and oversaw the formation of partnerships with Caesars Entertainment and the Delaware Lottery, among other accomplishments.

Godfrey, Chairman of the group's Board of Directors and CEO, until Sherman takes over on 1 July, said: "Yaniv's extensive industry experience and strong record of success, including many years of

senior management leadership and accomplishments for a leading global iGaming operator, makes him ideally suited to lead the company's ongoing execution of our successful growth initiatives."

Sherman's appointment follows a lengthy period where the group lacked a permanent CEO. After being appointed Chief Executive in May 2021, Richard Carter stepped down roughly six months later amid what Bragg called "a strategic review of the overall company."

**GI Verdict:** Bragg has found a new CEO after half a year without one, or at least a permanent one. But after all this time, and a "strategic review," why Sherman? His US experience appealed to Bragg given the group's recent acquisition of Spin Games and broader plans for US expansion. Sherman's definitely loyal, too, but this is his first role with a new company in 15 years, so expect an adjustment phase. Former CEO Carter stepped down after six months due to Bragg's desire for accelerated growth. Will Sherman deliver in his new CEO role?

## THE WEEK IN QUOTES

*"I have had the pleasure to follow Glitnor Group grow from strength to strength, and it's truly impressive what they have accomplished in a short time. This is a company going places and on behalf of all of us at Gaming Corps we are very excited to be part of that journey. We will do our best to deliver modern content and meet the demands of the Glitnor Group casino players."*

**Gaming Corps Head of Commercial Danielle Calafato on the group's partnership with Glitnor Group**

*"SkillOnNet powers a network of online casino brands in markets across Europe and we are delighted to see our games made available to players on the entire SkillOnNet network for the first time."*

**Nolimit City CCO & MD Malcolm Mizzi on the company's partnership with SkillOnNet**

## GAMBLING COMMISSION: WHY WAIT FOR THE WHITE PAPER?

Gambling Commission CEO Andrew Rhodes spoke at the Westminster Media Forum Gambling Regulation Conference on the state of Britain's gaming regulations in anticipation of revised gambling laws.

Rhodes' first point covered entertainment: "As entertainment in gambling is becoming more seamless – across locations, channels and devices – so too gambling operators are looking to take advantage of this trend by moving towards more entertainment-focused business models, reducing the friction between gambling and non-gambling products."

"We have been warning against the risks that come from the gamblification of products that currently aren't covered by gambling legislation and regulations for some time."

Elsewhere, Rhodes feels the frequency in which operators are still falling short of regulatory standards is concerning.

"We saw one example where a customer lost £60,000 (\$72,470) in just

two weeks and it was only then that the operator intervened. We found that no checks had been conducted before this point to assure the operator the funds were legitimate, or even that the customer could afford it."

He concluded: "No one in the gambling sector should believe that the Gambling Commission will accept waiting for the White Paper as an excuse not to tackle problems now."

"We don't accept that; we don't accept that anything should come before making sure you are trading as fair and as safe as possible."

**GI Verdict:** Although Rhodes' call-to-arms is well-intended; he fails to explain the specific changes operators should make. And how could he? The White Paper is yet to be released. This isn't to promote complacency in managing regulatory compliance, just to note that specific regulatory actions operators must take will remain vague until details of the White Paper come to light.



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## EXCLUSIVE: PAUL NEWSON ON OZ REGULATION

*"It was immediately obvious the team at ComeOn understood the power and huge benefits of controlling their own RGS games platform. We are thrilled to be working with them and look forward to seeing how OGA can differentiate and empower the ComeOn brand through exciting and innovative games."*

**Black Cow Technology CEO/Founder Max Francis on the group's partnership with ComeOn Group**

*"We are excited and optimistic about our new partnership with EveryMatrix. It's a great opportunity for Zitro Digital to expand its online business worldwide, and we look forward to integrating more game titles soon."*

**Zitro Digital COO José Javier Martí on the company's new partnership with EveryMatrix to expand its iGaming footprint**

**Advisor to Australian Gambling Regulation Law Firm Senet, Paul Newson, has shared exclusive insights on the importance of sustained regulatory enforcement, in a country where casinos have recently been hit with multiple accusations of illegality.**

The spell of ineffectual fines and limited consequences for shortcomings and wrongdoing in the Australian gambling sector is broken. The enchantment wasn't overcome with cogent public policy advice and argument; nor was it defeated by a subtle departure and incremental advance in regulatory intervention and penalties responding to aggravated breaches.

It was ruptured by biblical fire and brimstone in the form of an AU\$80m (US\$55m) Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission disciplinary action. An unambiguous reset and repudiation of conduct surfaced by the Victorian Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence, and the previous regulatory settings. How

else to describe this aggressive lurch towards Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) type penalties and watershed in gambling regulation, while recognising a history of mostly limited powers and sanctions, often timidly exercised?

Regulators' public denouncement of misconduct and serious penalties are necessary to disincentivise wrongdoing, and ensure accountability and public confidence. But governments must also grasp the significance of the sector and its associated regulatory complexities and risks, sparing everyone from incessant, often misconceived machinery of government and framework changes, robbing capability and leadership and delivering pyrrhic savings.

**GI Verdict:** As Newson puts it, highly competent strategic leaders are needed to not only turn things around, but to then help steady the ship and ensure these issues do not return. But constant changes in leadership at Crown, for example, are only going to make things worse.



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30.06 USD



12%

**Wynn Resorts**  
59.34 USD



10%

**Caesars Entertainment**  
41.39 USD



17%

**Bally's**  
21.26 USD



18%

\* This week saw a significant stock market dip across all industries in the US

## EX-PENN INTERACTIVE EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH INSIDER TRADING

Insider trading charges have been brought against David Roda, a former employee of Penn National Gaming subsidiary Penn Interactive Ventures.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has filed charges against Roda in connection with Penn's \$2bn acquisition of Canada's Score Media and Gaming.

While employed as a software engineer at Penn Interactive Ventures, the SEC said that Roda was given confidential information concerning the takeover.

He then used this information to purchase 500 out-of-the-money call options on Score Media for approximately \$20,000 in the days and weeks leading up to the acquisition's announcement.

The SEC further claims that Roda disclosed this information to his long-time friend, Andrew Larkin, who then purchased 375 Score Media shares.

After the deal was announced, Score Media's stock price rose by nearly 80%.

Roda and Larkin then sold their holdings, netting \$560,762 and \$5,602 in "unlawful profits," respectively.

"As we allege in our complaint, Roda was entrusted by his employer with critical, market-moving information, and he betrayed that trust by using the information to trade and also tip his friend so they could both profit," said Scott A. Thompson, Co-Acting Regional Director of the SEC's Philadelphia Regional Office.

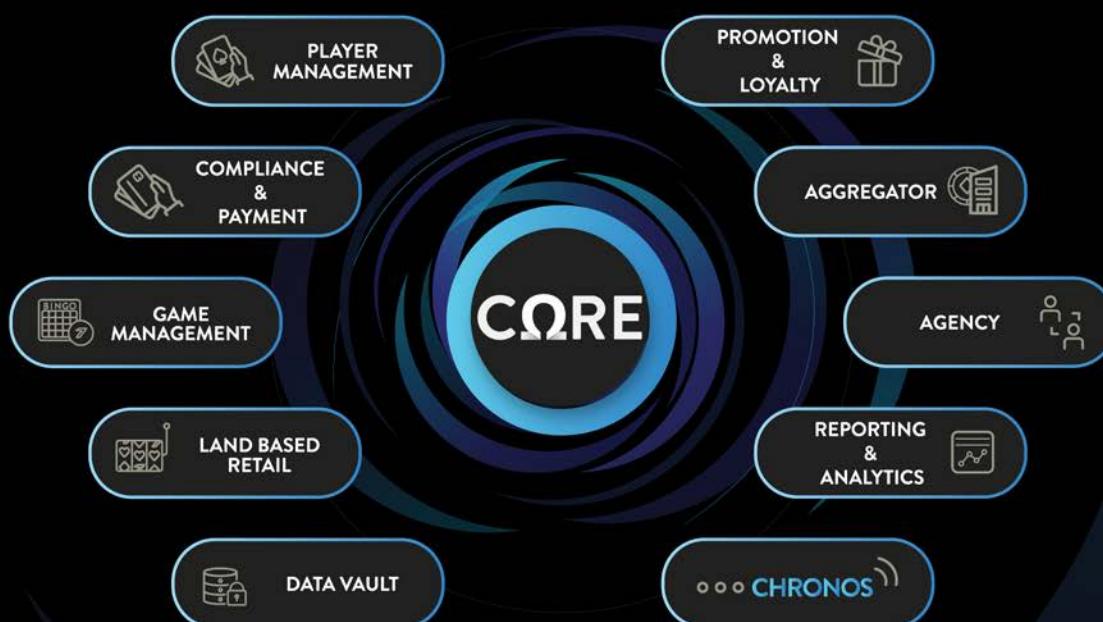
"When employees like Roda misappropriate and trade on confidential information, it erodes market confidence."

The SEC's complaint charges both men with violating the anti-fraud provisions of US securities law.

Roda has agreed to be "permanently enjoined from violating those provisions," and has agreed to pay "disgorgement, prejudgment interest and a civil penalty," to be determined at a later date.

Larkin has agreed to similar terms and will pay more than \$11,000 in disgorgement and penalties.

## THE OMNI-CHANNEL PLATFORM POWERED BY CHALLENGE



# DRAFTKINGS PARTNERS WITH BETBLOCKER FOR SAFER GAMBLING

DraftKings has announced a partnership with UK-based charity BetBlocker, which will see the operator promote and spread awareness of the charity's safer play technology.

BetBlocker provides free software that allows users to set customisable gaming restrictions across all devices. The software covers a vast network of operators, including unlicensed merchants, across a wide range of jurisdictions.

Users can set personalised parameters, such as restriction lengths ranging from days to years, as well as restricting play

on specific days of the week.

Chrissy Thurmond, Senior Director of Responsible Gaming at DraftKings, said: "BetBlocker's contributions to safer play are commendable, and DraftKings is pleased to team up with this enterprising and disruptive not-for-profit that is advancing responsible gaming in a comprehensive and consumer-friendly way."

While the software is currently available worldwide, this new partnership with DraftKings will increase the technology's influence across the US and Canada.

Pedro Romero, Chief of Safer Gambling Partnerships at BetBlocker, said: "BetBlocker is thrilled to have the support

of sports betting and gaming industry giant, DraftKings, to extend our software outside of the UK and Europe, to players

in the United States and Canada.

"We've been impressed with DraftKings' leadership in responsible gaming and we are grateful for their collaboration and financial support as we look to expand awareness of safer play technology."

DraftKings has expressed a commitment to responsible gaming and has implemented the SERVES (Service, Equity, Responsible Gaming, Vitality, Entrepreneurship and Sports) programme to incorporate a

responsible gaming ethos into the brand.

The company promotes safer play through partnerships with charities such as BetBlocker and makes use of evidence-based research to train and educate staff.

**GI Verdict:** Although helping DraftKings further its commitment to safer gambling, its partnership with BetBlocker maybe comes as somewhat of a save-face, following suggestions that operators have been shorting winning players, such as changing odds after a bet has been placed. This type of behaviour suggests operators are still looking to maximise profits. Big sign-up offers, particularly in New York, are being used to attract players too.

Therefore, *Gaming Insider* hopes DraftKings' latest partnership is undertaken with sincere intentions, and is not merely an attempt to please regulators and protect the company's image.

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# AUSTRALIA ROUND-UP: SKYCITY FINANCIALS, THE STAR INVESTIGATIONS

SkyCity Entertainment has reported earnings guidance for the financial year ending 30 June 2022.

The operator made the announcement in a Tuesday filing following "stronger than expected recent trading and increasing certainty around its full year results."

Subject to there being no material changes to the group's current operating settings before 30 June 2022, SkyCity reported that it expects normalised EBITDA of between AU\$135m-AU\$140m (US\$94m-US\$97m), and group normalised profit after tax (NPAT) of between AU\$3.5m-AU\$7m.

Meanwhile at The Star Entertainment, an independent review will investigate the company's Queensland casinos, following a series of allegations linking the operator to criminal activity in other states.

Australia's Cabinet has yet to decide who will lead the investigation, though a decision is expected next week.

Minister Shannon Fentiman did,

however, confirm that The Star's fitness to operate would be a condition of the investigation.

She said: "We need an independent expert review... and we're still finalising those terms of reference.

"We're going to accept the findings of the Bell inquiry in New South Wales, because they're dealing with the same company. We need to put that in

The Star has, however, provided an update regarding its Sydney casino in the closing submissions of the NSW inquiry, with its lawyers saying that the company accepted it wasn't fit to hold a casino licence in the past, but now circumstances have changed.

"The Star accepts that the evidence before the review permits findings of significant deficiencies and failings," said Kate Richardson SC. "The persons who engaged in the misconduct are no longer with the businesses."

**GI Verdict:** Australia is rarely out of the news when it comes to the negatives of the casino world and The Star has ensured that that trend continues. But the operator will seemingly continue to fight for its rights to run a casino, although the situation in Queensland is another huge step back.

Perhaps SkyCity's financial report is the only positive within Oceania right now, with the operator on the road to recovery after a difficult time throughout the height of the pandemic.



Queensland context about [The Star's] ongoing suitability there.

"Even if a casino is found to not be suitable, there are things we can put in place, provisionally, to make sure [The Star] meets all expectations of the regulator."

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## IOWA MAY REVENUE

Fantini Research partners with *Gambling Insider* to provide regular gaming industry data. This week, we look at the Hawkeye State.

### IOWA

ALL-SOURCES REVENUE	MAY REVENUE (M)	(%) CHANGE YEAR-ON-YEAR
Diamond Jo Dubuque (BYD)	\$10.005	+16.14
Wild Rose – Clinton	\$3.914	+11.54
Wild Rose – Jefferson	\$4.510	+11.25
Wild Rose – Emmetsburg	\$3.399	+5.42
Horseshoe (CZR)	\$18.940	+3.67
Ameristar (PENN)	\$16.860	+2.53
Grand Falls (Elite)	\$7.872	+0.93
Diamond Jo Worth (BYD)	\$10.354	-0.48
Prairie Meadows	\$21.241	-1.51
Rhythm City (Elite)	\$10.431	-3.63
Isle Waterloo (CZR)	\$8.725	-4.15
Isle Bettendorf (CZR)	\$6.746	-5.29
Riverside (Elite)	\$11.118	-6.43
Harrah's (CZR)	\$6.413	-7.01
Hard Rock	\$8.090	-7.72
Terrible's Lakeside (Affinity)	\$4.335	-8.42
Catfish Bend	\$3.888	-10.09
Casino Queen Marquette	\$1.821	-10.80
Q casino	\$4.560	-11.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$163.224</b>	<b>-0.92</b>
<b>Total, excluding sports betting</b>	<b>\$150.593</b>	<b>-5.05</b>

AUGUST 9-11  
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TULSA

SPORTS BETTING	MAY REVENUE (M)	(%) CHANGE YEAR-ON-YEAR	OPERATORS
Diamond Jo Dubuque (BYD)	\$3.759	+146.14	FLTR
Diamond Jo Worth (BYD)	\$1.788	+81.96	FLTR/MGM/ENT
Wild Rose – Jefferson	\$1.365	+106.88	DKNG / RSI
Wild Rose – Clinton	\$1.084	+222.08	DKNG / RSI
Prairie Meadows	\$1.024	+98.94	CZR
Wild Rose – Emmetsburg	\$0.843	+112.91	DKNG
Ameristar (PENN)	\$0.694	+71.88	SCR
Isle Waterloo (CZR)	\$0.474	+135.64	CZR
Horseshoe (CZR)	\$0.382	+323.61	CZR
Catfish Bend	\$0.291	+2.38	PBH
Isle Bettendorf (CZR)	\$0.230	+103.42	CZR
Harrah's (CZR)	\$0.219	+307.04	CZR
Rhythm City (Elite)	\$0.186	+46.70	Elite
Riverside	\$0.111	+8.90	Elite
Grand Falls (Elite)	\$0.068	-61.39	Betfred
Q casino	\$0.041	N/A	
Hard Rock	\$0.030	-61.03	
Terrible's Lakeside (Affinity)	\$0.029	-68.28	CZR
Casino Queen Marquette	\$0.013	N/A	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$12.630</b>	<b>+105.93</b>	
<b>Total Handle</b>	<b>\$147.913</b>	<b>+28.75</b>	

MULTIPLE PROPERTIES	MAY REVENUE (M)	(%) CHANGE YEAR-ON-YEAR
Wild Rose	\$11.823	+9.60
Boyd	\$20.359	+7.05
Caesars	\$40.825	-1.37
Elite	\$29.421	-3.55



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## GUEST INTERVIEW



**NAOMI BARTON,**  
*PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR,  
IGB LIVE!*

**Barton tells *Gambling Insider* about her goals for the Clarion Gaming event: 'The aim is for our stakeholders to leave the RAI fizzing with ideas, contacts, opportunities and confidence for the future'**

### **Are we pretty much set for a restriction-free iGB Live!, à la life before the pandemic, or will there still be some measures in place at the RAI?**

I'm pleased to say that the rules at the RAI are very much in line with those in place at ExCeL London. All of the regulations changed in February and it's no longer a requirement to present a Covid-19 entry pass to gain access to the RAI, masks are no longer compulsory and it is no longer mandatory to maintain social distancing.

The RAI complies with the basic recommendations set out by the Dutch Government, which include the provision of hand sanitisers, an adapted air ventilation system and the encouragement of basic hygiene regarding hand washing and sneezing. Also, no restrictive measures apply in shops, restaurants and bars, and face masks are no longer mandatory in airports. We experienced the buzz and energy in the ExCeL centre in April and I anticipate the same sense of empowerment and excitement at the RAI. The RAI's strapline is 'We are ready', which chimes perfectly with the mood among the team at iGB Live!

### **Will we see similar attendees to ICE London, given that event was mainly iGaming firms and, of course, the iGB Affiliate show?**

The pandemic was an awful time for so many people both on a professional and a personal level, but one consequence of this brutal shock to the system was how it changed the profile of our stakeholders. At iGB Affiliate London, we had delegates from 87 countries; 47% of attendees were making their first visit to the event, 12% were new to gaming and 16% were representing enterprises that were less than two years old. The iGB brand is connecting with a new and dynamic community of stakeholders and I think that energy

**GLOBAL GAMING AWARDS LAS VEGAS**  
**THE**  
**MOST PRESTIGIOUS**  
**AWARDS**  
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and anticipation will be manifest in Amsterdam.

One of our exhibitors, Online IPS, put it perfectly when they said one of the key reasons they attend iGB Live! is to connect with the 'game changers,' the people who are 'doing things differently.' I think it's that sense of constructive disruption that makes iGB Live! a special event on the calendar. As an organising team, our aim is to capture the unique credentials and build on the positive metrics. After that, we want to continue the process of ensuring the brand unlocks business opportunities for attendees, helps to raise professional standards and delivers enhanced ROI for our exhibitors.

#### **What are the main themes and discussion topics on the conference agenda?**

Alongside the networking opportunities at iGB Live!, we know from the research we have undertaken that delegates want strong, topical and fresh content delivered by experts in their respective fields. The iGB Live! conference team has done a fantastic job in bringing together some 46 expert contributors covering a feast of topics and debates across a mix of formats including panel discussions, key notes and fireside chats. The Conference opens with an update for the iGaming industry delivered by Chris Harrison, Google's Industry Head – Financial Trading and EGaming.

We then have an examination of the US market, a session on North American gaming tribes featuring Ernie Stevens, Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association; we will also discuss the prospect of stake limits on online slots and the dangers of pushing customers into the unregulated black market. Linked to this, there's an overview of the pending publication of the UK Government's gambling White Paper and sessions on Gamification, AI, Metaverse, NFTs, Crypto, Blockchain and how iGaming can make the most out of social media. It's a compelling and immersive agenda.

#### **What speakers do you have from the Netherlands, given the show is in Amsterdam and Dutch iGaming is such a hot topic?**

The Conference agenda features three Dutch speakers: Frank Op de Woerd, Editor in Chief, CasinoNieuws.nl,

Peter-Paul de Goeij, Managing Director, NOGA and Eric Olders, CEO and Chairman of the Board, Jvh Gaming & Entertainment. Our first panel on the 6th of July is: Netherlands latest advertising restrictions – What next and how can we stop the trend?

**"As an organising team, our aim is to capture the unique credentials and build on the positive metrics... The key metrics for me are customer success and delivering ROI!"**

#### **Finally, what would constitute a successful show for Clarion, come the close of play on the Friday of the show?**

Like any organisation, there are a range of metrics and targets that we aspire to and are clearly of great importance if the brand is to continue on its current and successful flight path. The key metrics for me are customer success and delivering ROI: alongside building the brand, these can only be achieved if we are able to deliver a positive experience for all of our stakeholders. The 2021 edition of iGB Live! surpassed expectations, so much so that in the post-show independent research that we commissioned it rated amongst the elite top 2% of B2B events.

Similarly, April's iGB Affiliate London achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 89%, a figure that eclipsed the exhibition industry benchmark for returning trade events, which was 59%. Furthermore, 90% of attendees confirmed they were likely to return compared to the industry standard of 67%. When we reflect on July's event, there will be areas that went to plan and those in which we could have performed better. However, if we have delivered a positive experience on par with 2021 and our stakeholders leave the RAI fizzing with ideas, contacts, opportunities and confidence for the future, it will constitute a job well done.

*For more information and to register for iGB Live (5–8 July, Amsterdam RAI), visit: <https://www.igblive.com>*

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