

# trafficology

Marketing & affiliate focus by *Gambling Insider*

JANUARY 2022

## INSIDE:

**Digits: The latest industry data**

**Shahar Attias: The moderator's perspective**

**The Game Day: A new age**

**Play Hard: Will Armitage, BestOdds**

Sponsored by:

**bet365** Partners

## THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

What do casinos and affiliates need to know when joining forces



# TRAFFIC REPORT

Trafficology has partnered with data expert Casino City Press, to provide insight into website and traffic trends across affiliate industries – predominantly in gaming but including others. In this edition, we review affiliate programmes per vertical for November 2021. The below is a breakdown of the top 10 sites globally, including both desktop and mobile, sorted by: overall ranking, casino ranking, sports betting ranking, poker ranking, lottery ranking and financial ranking



## OVERALL

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
2	TrafficOn	trafficon.io
3	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
4	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/dailyfantasy/affiliates
5	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
6	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
7	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new-bovada-affiliate-program
8	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartnersafrica.com
9	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
10	DraftKings Affiliates	www.draftkings.com/affiliates

## CASINO

Rank	Name	Website
1	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgrouppartners.com
2	Stakes Affiliates	affiliates.stakes.com
3	WinBet Affiliates	winbetaffiliates.bg
4	LeoVegas Affiliate	www.leovegasaffiliates.com
5	Rajbet Affiliates	pap.raj.bet/affiliates/
6	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com
7	TrafficOn	trafficon.io
8	Platin Casino Affiliates	partners.platincasino.com
9	Betsson Group Affiliates	www.betssongroupaffiliates.com
10	PlayAmo Partners	playamopartners.com

# Roll into the **NEW YEAR** with

 **HOLLYWOOD** bets

2022 GREET'S YOU WITH 100s OF LIVE AND SPINA ZONKE GAMES!



**Become an Affiliate Now**

Email: [affiliates@hollywoodbets.net](mailto:affiliates@hollywoodbets.net) | Visit: [affiliates.hollywoodbets.net](https://affiliates.hollywoodbets.net)



HOLLYWOOD SPORTSBOOK IS A LICENSED BETTING OPERATOR. HOLLYWOODBETS SUPPORTS RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING. NO PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS ARE PERMITTED TO GAMBLE. WINNERS KNOW WHEN TO STOP. SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING FOUNDATION TOLL FREE COUNSELLING LINE 0800 006 008 OR WHATSAPP HELP TO 076 675 0710.

# SPORTS BETTING

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
2	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
3	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
4	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new-bovada-affiliate-program
5	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartner-safrica.com
6	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
7	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
8	Betfair Partnerships	partnerships.betfair.com
9	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.betano.com
10	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com

# LOTTERY

Rank	Name	Website
1	FDJ Affiliate Program	www.fdj.fr
2	Lottoland Affiliates	www.lottolandaffiliates.com
3	Michigan Lottery Affiliates	playonline.michiganlottery.com/affiliate
4	LottoStar Affiliate Programme	lottostar.co.za/affiliate
5	West Lotto Partners	www.westlotto.de/unternehmen/affiliate/partnerprogramm.html
6	The Lotter Affiliates	www.thelotter-affiliates.com
7	Affiliate Empire	www.lottogoaffiliates.com
8	LottaRewards	www.lottarewards.com
9	PA iLottery Affiliate Program	www.pailottery.com/p/partners
10	Banana Lotto Affiliates	www.bananalotto.fr/affiliation.php

# POKER

Rank	Name	Website
1	Stars Affiliate Club	www.starsaffiliateclub.com
2	WPN Affiliates	www.wpnaffiliates.com
3	Winamax Affiliates	www.winamax.fr/en/affiliates
4	U-affiliates	www.uffiliates.com
5	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
6	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
7	CommissionKings	www.commissionkings.ag
8	GGPartners	en.ggpoker.com/partners/affiliate-program/
9	CoinPoker Affiliates	agents.coinpoker.com
10	The Spartan Poker Affiliate Program	www.thespartanpoker.com/affiliate/overview.html

# FINANCIAL

Rank	Name	Website
1	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
2	TrafficOn	trafficon.io
3	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/marketing-partnership
4	Exness Partner	www.exnessaffiliates.com
5	XM Partners	partners.xm.com
6	Deriv Partners	deriv.com/partners/
7	OctaFX Affiliate Program	my.octafx.com/open-account/partner
8	Binary.com Affiliate Program	www.binary.com/en/affiliate-ib.html
9	BinPartner	binpartner.com
10	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarketspartners.com



Rankings are estimated using statistical data and should not be considered absolute ranking values. More than 50 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press.

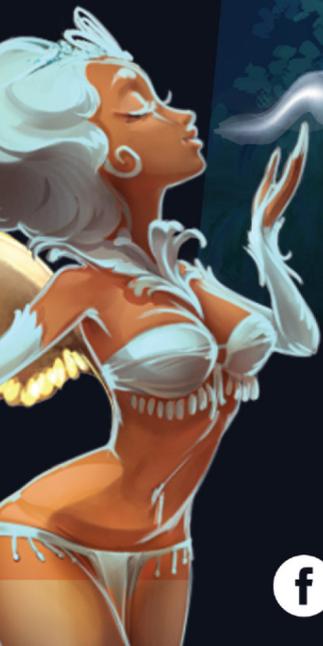
# CAMPEÓN

AFFILIATES



BE ON THE **FRONT**  
**TAKE THE**  
**LEAD**

**60%** REVENUE  
SHARE



**WINNER**

BEST CASINO AFFILIATE  
PROGRAM 2020



/CAMPEONGAMING



/COMPANY/CAMPEONGAMINGPARTNERS

[WWW.CAMPEONGAMING.COM](http://WWW.CAMPEONGAMING.COM)

# 7 PANELS IN 3 WEEKS | THE MODERATOR'S PERSPECTIVE



***Supercars are usually benchmarked according to their ability to go from 0 to 100 km/h as fast as possible. Following nearly the years without any major live event, it seems as if the right way to measure (super) iGaming consultants is by the number of panels they can moderate after such a long absence. Here's how the current record was set at from 0 to 7 in 22 days, by Shahar Attias:***

First there was Sigma in Malta, breaking the ice after ICE (2020), and let me tell you - we've all experienced some shock and anxiety of being back in society... From Zoom Calls to Shots at Hugo's, from Distanced & Masked to Busy & Tight at Paceville (Nordic!); everything we wanted, and less, way less.) Then came WGES in Barcelona - and all hell broke loose; three intense days of back-to-back sessions with C-levels worth \$M, and even more intense nights (in which other capital letters have been used).

## **SO WHAT INSIGHTS DO I BRING FROM THE BATTLEFIELD?**

**PANEL #1:** It felt so right - being back in the saddle. The lights are on, mics are connected, I am behind the podium, iGaming execs are seated and the crowd is packed with four people who got lost while looking for the booth with the draft Guinness. That said, we ended up with a packed room of about 50 listeners - who intentionally came due to the buzzword-packed title: **"Player attraction & retention: Gamification and Personalization in 2022"**.

The discussion was lively and many topics were covered (including nursing homes for retired Swedish video gamers; clearly one of the industry's priorities), when the real debate

was sparked. While the panelists have all advocated that innovation is a must and that we should focus on how we should shape the way iGaming will look 10 years from now, the practical consultant claimed that there's a need to focus on fast ROI - as none of the leading powerhouses are currently too different from the others, and these guys cash-in, big time. Tricky indeed: guaranteed money now, or elusive fortune later on?

**PANEL #2:** If the first one felt like a homecoming, this one felt as if I had stepped right into the office - as with me on stage was Andreja Svenšek; she looked quite familiar - which made a lot of sense, as she heads the Business Development in our agency. Also the topic might be familiar to our loyal readers, as it was partly covered in the May 2021 edition of *Trafficology* ("99 problems but B&M ain't one") - **Retention & Location: Is it a match made in (big data) heaven?**

Answering our questions was the VP Data of Parimatch - who transitioned to gaming from the telecommunications sector; talk about a perfect match for such a panel. He basically confirmed that everything we have discussed in the article can materialise into real life, and that it all depends on your Data Architectures; as how you store, use & handle data will influence all your future decisions and capabilities down the road. Bottom line: geolocation-based loyalty programs that work across all verticals & in omnichannel - that's actually a thing. If your data is correctly structured, you'll be limited by nothing but your own imagination. Of course, it will help having a couple of skilled consultants that ensure you frame, plan and execute it the right way - but only if you want this to work (wink, wink).

**CRAZE**  
*affiliates*

# JOIN THE CRAZE!

**BECOME OUR AFFILIATE PARTNER**

We **guarantee** absolute **transparency**  
and **no hidden terms!**



**CRAZE**  
**PLAY**  
CASINO

*Blu*  
**VEGAS**.com

**excite**win

**mbosses**

Get In Touch

[contact@crazeaffiliates.com](mailto:contact@crazeaffiliates.com)

[www.CRAZEAFFILIATES.com](http://www.CRAZEAFFILIATES.com)

**PANEL #3:** After an easy warm-up, we shifted gears and dived into the all-time favorite – **“Developing gamification: Is the loyalty program redundant?”** The newest kid in this block (well, blockchain if we are at it), is NFTs, as well as brand-powered crypto tokens to be awarded for accomplishing gamified tasks within your iGaming platform. Two major bottom lines here: (A) it may sound easy & simple, but to properly execute IT, your IT partners will need to allocate tons of resources for this project. And much like the new Spiderman – you’ll need to step into another multiverse to make it happen; (B) I have said Crypto, Tokens & NFT in the same sentence – when can I expect the VC investment landing in my back account?

**PANEL #4:** If there’s one thing an iGaming veteran from the early 2000s hates it is regulation. If there’s one topic everybody just loves talking about it is... how much tapas is overrated. And regulation. Which, much like tapas, I am afraid is here to stay. More and more countries are regulating and with this, there come new challenges – not only product, marketing as well. The big question here is: do regulators tie the hands of operators to a point of no return? And moreover, coming from CRM, **“Are stricter regulations imposing more problems on consumer loyalty?”** No clue, but the experts with us on stage agreed that truly innovative ideas are rare and hard to come by, and the threat of markets actively over-regulating themselves to death is real. No need to mention Sweden twice in the same sentence. The only thing we can do is rely heavily on genius sparks of creativity and try to keep our players as happy as possible within the limit of allowed marketing activities. Basically, try to make the most out of whatever is left for us on the plate – regardless of how little it is. That’s right, exactly like tapas.

**PANEL #5:** The session I enjoyed the most. (A) I actually learned a bunch of stuff, as people weren’t just repeating the same old clichés (B) I ended up having a LIKES contest with Adekunle from BetBonanza; check out on LinkedIn who won :)

Key takeaways from the **“How to fuel Africa’s sports betting expansion?”** talk: 1. There’s no such thing as “African Market”... It’s a state-by-state approach, much like the US or Latin America; countries have markets that range from unregulated to semi-regulated, to full-fledged regulation. 2. Operators need to understand the relationship between

**“THE LIGHTS ARE ON, MICS ARE CONNECTED, I AM BEHIND THE PODIUM, IGAMING EXECS ARE SEATED AND THE CROWD IS PACKED WITH FOUR PEOPLE WHO GOT LOST WHILE LOOKING FOR THE BOOTH WITH THE DRAFT GUINNESS. THAT SAID, WE ENDED UP WITH A PACKED ROOM OF ABOUT 50 LISTENERS”**

local retail shops and online betting is here to stay. Ingrained in the culture – those local bookies are a meeting point in the neighborhoods. They provide stable internet and cable tv – more so they provide community. As Adekunle (the guy who has revolutionised iGaming in Nigeria) himself said: “If I am at home and wish to place a bet within retail working hours – of course I will head outside and spend some time at the nearest shop, where I not only trust the owner, but also love chatting with him and most likely bump into my friends.” 3. Lastly, how to make it big in Africa? Do. Your. Research! Realise you deal with a different type of market, players and overall relationship with the available technology. Enter this new adventure with your old-school methodologies and you will soon understand that not everything that has worked for you on Telegram can easily translate to real-life. Wo/Man up.

**PANEL #6:** This one was a treat. Due to a mix-up with the agenda, we had somewhat of a small audience, so I just dragged a few chairs, and we simply sat in a circle, bombarding Richard Hogg from OpenBox questions focused on **“Analyzing and understanding the Asian regulatory environment”**. Same as with Africa – the markets in Asia differ so much from one another, that simply bulking them into a single Bento Box would make even less sense than this analogy.





**betsson** group  
AFFILIATES

# JOIN OUR AWARD-WINNING AFFILIATE PROGRAM

**EARN COMMISSION FROM EACH  
NEW AFFILIATE YOU REFER**

[www.betssongroupaffiliates.com](http://www.betssongroupaffiliates.com) |    

18+

BML/MGA/CRP/108/2004  
<https://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/>  
Play Responsibly!  
Terms and Conditions Apply!

**“HOW TO MAKE IT BIG IN AFRICA? DO YOUR RESEARCH! REALISE YOU DEAL WITH A DIFFERENT TYPE OF MARKET, PLAYERS AND OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY. ENTER THIS NEW ADVENTURE WITH YOUR OLD-SCHOOL METHODOLOGIES AT YOUR PERIL”**

First things first: get yourself a lawyer. And another one. Plus, a trusted local partner and tons of “Serenity Now!” Red tape, intermediaries and a lot of business law jargon – even before hitting the SPIN button on your oh-so-innovative-online-pachinko-version; yes, you are the first who thought about it. In these markets, demands are high and the players know what they like: skill-based games, local variations of pretty much any bet that existed in the far west and never-should-you-ever forget the baccarat tables.

**PANEL #7:** Keeping the best to last, this was the most heavily populated session, both on stage and in the hall. Very impressive, considering this was the LAST panel of this year's WGES. Enter “An insight into the LatAm development: What can we learn?” - Two legendary omni-channel operators from Peru, a Bingo powerhouse from Mexico, a compliance expert and an iGaming lawyer. No, this isn't the punchline of a cheesy joke!

Kicking off with payments, the panelists dropped the first bomb: shockingly enough, as pretty much everywhere, Covid-19 was a catalyst and forced people to adapt to digital currency at a way faster pace. And yes, this has boosted the

digital operators' KPIs. And while we are at it – when evaluating new regions, we'll have to accept that if the players behave differently, and the technical landscape is different, then the old set of KPIs we carry with us can't be benchmarked 1:1. Like, duh?

Next we touch on compliance, and even the legal guys agree – regulation MUST evolve, and more so than ever, take into account industry leaders and learn lessons from other markets' mistakes (Sweden & Spain, the double large S's, were the main focal point of this section).

#### **AND THAT'S A WRAP**

Here's a four-point summary, that all begins with the single most important thing to me, “I”: invest in your data, as real-time is EVERYTHING when it comes to CRM & gamification; it's a must to work with a local partner if you are far-from-home, Spiderman; in emerging markets, community & retail are crucial to business success; it's about time you learn what crypto can do for you.

Last, we love live events! Please don't cancel ICE!! What? Oh well, never mind.

#### **BIO:**

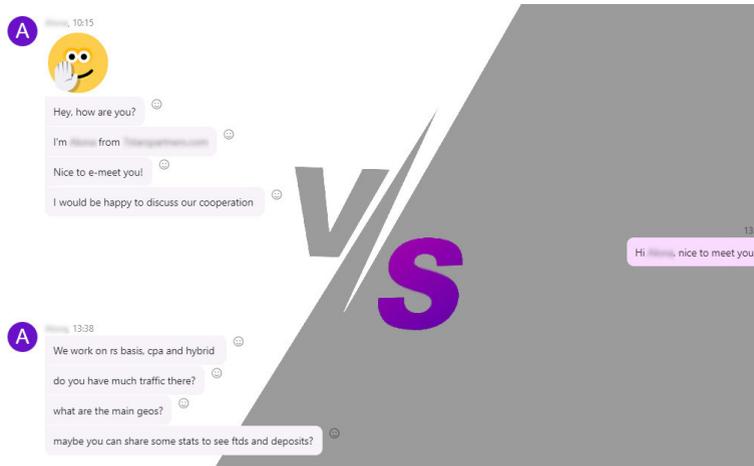
**As an iGaming CRM consultant with 20+ years of industry experience, Shahar Attias has helped startups and publicly traded operators optimize their VIP Programs & Player Retention efforts. He can help your company benchmark your internal marketing strategy, procedures, loyalty and KPIs with the competition. Following senior executive roles with 888, Playtech and Pokerstars, he founded Hybrid Interaction Ltd. This premier online gaming consulting firm has held more than 150 successful projects across all verticals and through most jurisdictions, including omni-channel projects with brick-and-mortar casinos in the Dutch, Swiss, Georgian, UK and US markets. Among his clients are Hard Rock NJ, Casino du Lac (Partouche), Holland Casino, Grand Casino Baden, Horizons Casino, Groupe Barrière, Entain / GVC / BwinParty / Sportingbet / Bet.pt, IGT, William Hill, Crocobet, BetConstruct, Pin-up.ru, EvoPlay, bgo, Win2day, Neto, DazzleTag, and Platin Casino.**



# THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Only 31 % of casinos offer players GEO data, with the number being a little better with casinos that offer sports betting as well. Once again, crypto-only casinos are an exception, says **Adam Gros**, the owner of the crypto affiliate Gambliners

A quick greeting and then information about traffic, targeted GEOs and other monthly stats. That's how relationships between affiliates and casino's affiliate managers usually start. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with that, we're all here for the business! But the question here is: do we give each other information that will actually help both parties grow over time, and do we give it willingly, or do we keep it to ourselves no matter what? Online gambling business is all about partnerships, there's almost no other way to grow. So, how good are we at it?



don't look to rank for the same keywords as affiliates, so that's not a topic of interest.

## CASINOS TO AFFILIATES

Unlike affiliate data for casinos, the data casinos get from players after they obtain them is much more relevant than the data casinos can give before starting a partnership with the affiliate. Of course, the casino's targeted GEOs, supported languages and legal restrictions

are important, but that info is usually simple enough to find.

That's why casinos use different affiliate platforms where affiliates can see how their players perform and these platforms come in all shapes and sizes. From an affiliate's perspective, I can confirm that the number of subscriptions, deposits and FTDs is a definite must-have in these platforms and all platforms serve that data.

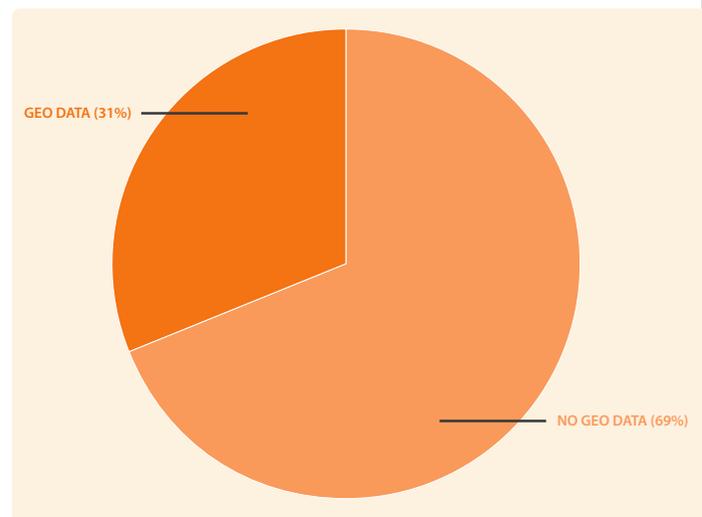
When it comes to clicks, hits, entrances (and a few other names can be found across different platforms), that data is not so useful. The problem here is that different platforms define this metric differently, some count tracking link clicks,

## AFFILIATES TO CASINOS

As the image at the beginning of this article nicely illustrates, casinos are mostly interested in the affiliate's monthly traffic, targeted GEOs and, of course, monthly FTDs or at least deposits, before they are ready to dive into the actual deal with the affiliate. This all makes sense, everybody likes to know what they're getting into and what to expect, so they're not losing time. Monthly traffic and targeted GEOs give an estimation of how big an affiliate is and where they get most of their players. This info is no secret; after all, you can find it with the help of a dozen online tools. However, monthly FTDs or deposits are a bit more delicate. Some affiliates regard this as strictly confidential and others prefer to disclose only approximate numbers.

But there is another problem with FTD numbers and that is: it depends on the casino. I know what you're going to think; of course no one can give you exact numbers, this is all hypothetical, just name a range. It's not always that simple. We've had multiple instances where most casinos in a listing performed in an expected range of FTDs and then a newly added casino either shot through the roof or got a flat 0. I don't want to tell casinos that they can expect from 0 to 100 monthly FTDs, because that doesn't say anything. This is more often the reason to hesitate about these numbers in my opinion, than simply because an affiliate wouldn't want to share their accomplishments.

Once a casino starts obtaining players from an affiliate, it usually has more information about the players than the affiliate, except for organic keywords the players searched for. But casinos mostly



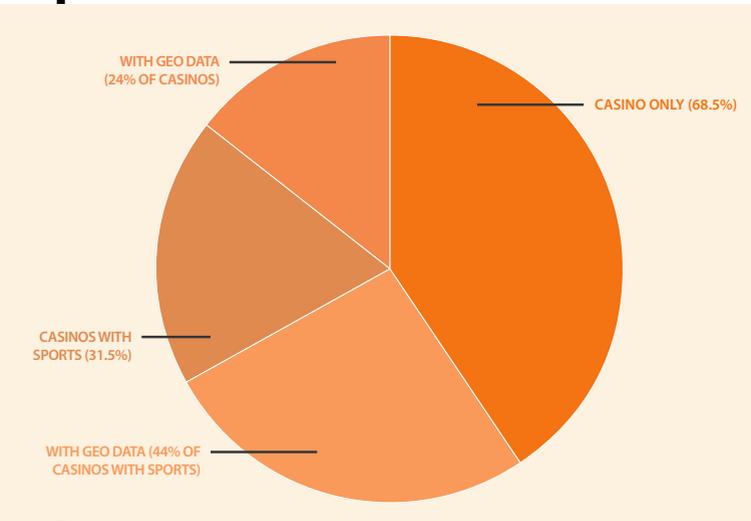
# bet365 Partners

## JOIN A BUSINESS AT THE TOP OF ITS GAME



Reach out and find out why we are the world's favourite affiliate programme today.

[bet365partners.com](https://bet365partners.com)  
[support@bet365partners.com](mailto:support@bet365partners.com)



some count sessions, some all entrances; and so affiliates are stuck with data that can't possibly be cross-compared.

The main question when it comes to casino data for affiliates is: what information would be useful, apart from the above-mentioned metrics, that would help affiliates perform even better? The answer is very similar to the questions casino affiliate managers pose when first discussing a deal with the affiliate: player GEOs, used currencies and some general info about played games. While currencies are often included in statistics (although not always!), GEOs and game info is mostly not.

We took the liberty of checking over 100 different casinos and looked at what kind of information we can obtain from their affiliate software. Less than a third of casinos offer players GEO data, with the number getting closer to 45% for those offering sports betting as well.

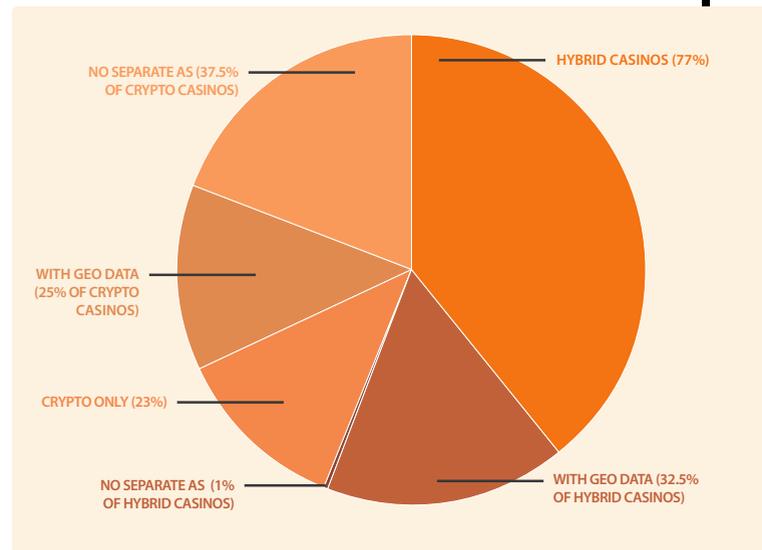
It's important to note that we were looking at casinos that offer cryptocurrencies due to the fact that Gamblinerees is a crypto affiliate. While GEO data may not be that important for fiat affiliates, crypto players tend to browse in English much more, regardless of where they come from, requiring crypto

affiliates to target a much broader range of locations. Apart from that, cryptocurrencies aren't tied to specific locations (unlike fiat currencies), so by targeting Bitcoin for example, you are by default targeting everybody that speaks the language used on your website.

### THE CRYPTO REQUIREMENTS

With the crypto market blooming and growing year after year, it's a good opportunity to start addressing the requirements that crypto affiliates have. After all, it's all in order to boost traffic to casinos offered on those affiliate websites and other sources!

Like with many other things, crypto-only casinos (where blockchain casinos take up the majority) are somewhat different when it comes to the casino-to-affiliate data too. They tend to develop their own games and software, so more often than not, the affiliate software is of their own design as well. What is surprising is that more than two-thirds of them don't have the separate affiliate software we're used to seeing with the majority of casinos, but instead only offer a couple of stats that are integrated in your player's account (which is your affiliate account as well). This usually means you only have access to the number of referred players, their wagered amounts, your commission and nothing more.



### STAYING UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST NEWS

The final thing we looked at was how many casinos regularly send updates about their newest promotions, new games, big wins and whatever else they feel like sharing. While almost all casinos offer some sort of subscription to receive news relevant for affiliates, only 38 % of them actually send something. The channel through which these updates are sent here doesn't matter; it can be an email newsletter, Skype, Telegram or some other app. We find this a huge waste of potential! Because while it's practically impossible for an affiliate to go through every single casino they work with on a monthly basis (or even weekly) to see what's worth sharing, not much effort is required for casinos to send an update now and then.

# A NEW AGE

Affiliate The Game Day believes a new dawn of sports betting influencers means easy money for leagues and teams

Before its recent boom, sports betting had traditionally been treated like a vice, often looked down upon and associated with immorality or criminal activity.

For years, the four major US sports leagues and their teams shared a similar outlook. Marred by the 1919 Black Sox Scandal, the Tim Donaghy saga of the early 2000s and numerous malfeasant activities in between, sports betting was treated as a threat to the sanctity of sport.

That all started to change in 2018 when the NBA – the same league that had a referee influence results for the monetary benefit of himself and others just a decade earlier – became the first US sports league to partner with a sportsbook operator.

The NBA's agreement with MGM Resorts was the first domino to fall in what has since been a complete transformation of the relationship between sportsbooks and the greater sporting industry.

Leagues and teams more strongly than ever have embraced sports betting culture – thanks to a new age of gambling influencers who have helped market this union into the mainstream.

### PARLAYING SPORTS BETS WITH SPORTS

As operators opened their wallets to increase their foothold in the growing US market, partnerships with teams and leagues quickly became a trendy way to increase brand exposure.

These deals originally looked like many traditional sports sponsorships, with benefits like in-stadium signage and exposure through digital mediums; but over the last year, these agreements have evolved even further.

In May 2021, William Hill signed a 10-year lease with Monumental Sports to open a sportsbook inside Capital One Arena, home to the

NBA's Washington Wizards, WNBA's Washington Mystics and NHL's Washington Capitals.

While sportsbooks and betting kiosks are a staple inside soccer stadiums across Europe to promote pre-match and live in-game wagering, this was the first time an American arena had truly opened its doors to sports betting.

"The reality is you've got to adapt to the way your customer wants to consume your product, and sports betting really fits where the world is today," said Tom Reeg, CEO of Caesars Entertainment, in a May interview with CNBC. "We want constant activity, constant action and sports betting feeds right into that."

In addition to partnering with teams to place their product physically closer to the action, sportsbooks are also trying to gain awareness, consideration and eventually conversion, by pulling at the heartstrings of sports fans across the country.

Their method: recruit former athletes and other high-profile personalities to become gambling influencers, and strengthen the bond between fan and brand.

### INTRODUCING GAMBLING INFLUENCERS

These new-age gambling influencers come in all shapes and sizes, and work to promote their partner brand in a variety of ways.

Some are former professional athletes. Some are podcast hosts. Some, like former Indianapolis Colts punter Pat McAfee, are both.

*The Pat McAfee Show*, which streams daily on YouTube to over 1.5 million subscribers, recently signed a four-year contract extension with FanDuel Sportsbook worth \$30m per year, ensuring FanDuel's future as the show's exclusive sports betting partner.

The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz Podcast, formerly an ESPN Radio staple, has a similar deal with FanDuel's chief rival, DraftKings. In both cases, the operators are investing heavily in the hope that the audience's already-established brand loyalty will expand into the sports betting realm.

While funding popular programming is one way to assimilate into the mind of the sports-inclined public, most sports betting influencers are working directly with brands to promote them through TV advertising, social media campaigns and in-person events.

One example of such a partnership emerged when PointsBet brought on former Chicago Bears kick returner Devin Hester in September 2020, to help the company assimilate into Illinois after the state had legalised sports betting that March.

Getting a brand ambassador that Bears fans adored during his playing days, and later that month partnering with the team itself, helped PointsBet stake a claim in the Illinois market at the start of the 2020 football season.

According to PlayIllinois.com, PointsBet's handle for its first full month of operation (October 2020) was just over \$60m, which was 10 times more than fellow new entrant William Hill, and only ranked behind BetRivers, DraftKings and FanDuel, all of which had already been operational in Illinois for at least two months.

Of course, Hester isn't the only former athlete getting into the game. PointsBet's ensemble also includes former Saints quarterback and NBC broadcaster Drew Brees, who signed a multi-year deal that includes an equity stake in the company.

Fox Bet has also enlisted many of the TV personalities from its parent company to promote its sportsbook app, including NFL Hall of Famers Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Charles Woodson, and Shannon Sharpe.

## THE FIRST FAMILY OF FOOTBALL

However, of all the former athletes to become sports betting influencers in the last few years, the most notable of all is the Manning family.

Super Bowl-winning quarterbacks Eli and Peyton, who together host a Monday Night Football simulcast on ESPN 2 and their own digital shows on ESPN+, partnered with Caesars in November alongside their brother Cooper and father Archie.

"This isn't the typical partnership between a sports betting company and major talent," said Chris Holdren, Co-President of Caesars Digital, in the deal's press release. "We're welcoming the most acclaimed family in football history to be integrated holistically into the Caesars family. Archie, Peyton, Eli and Cooper are extraordinary people who are champions of their communities; and we're honoured to partner with such a prestigious group of individuals."

While the Manning family will certainly be a boost to Caesars' growing empire, especially when it comes to attracting football fans from across America, the atypicality of this partnership starts and ends with the fact that these high-class personalities have agreed to work with a sports betting company.

Caesars likely had a leg up on its competition in recruiting the Manning family since it already worked with Archie to operate Manning's Sports Bar & Grill at Harrah's New Orleans. However, there is a massive step from owning a restaurant at a casino to promoting sports betting in TV advertisements as football's most-recognisable family.

# "THE NBA'S AGREEMENT WITH MGM RESORTS WAS THE FIRST DOMINO TO FALL IN WHAT HAS SINCE BEEN A COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORTSBOOKS AND THE GREATER SPORTING INDUSTRY"

## BALANCING INTEGRITY WITH PROFITABILITY

Although sports betting operators have made significant strides to shed their taboo image by partnering with leagues, teams and high-profile personalities, there are still plenty of restrictions in place to protect the integrity of the game.

For instance, WynnBet spokesperson Shaquille O'Neal had to sell his minority ownership stake in the Sacramento Kings because NBA owners are not allowed to have a personal connection with gambling-related enterprises.

Each major US sports league also has its own sports betting rules for current players, coaches and staff members. Generally, each is similar in banning any involved parties from betting on their own sport in an attempt to prevent match-fixing.

While these leagues have set up rules and regulations for their own players and staff, some are starting to balance their business interests with those of their consumers.

In December, the NFL aired a sports betting PSA during Thursday Night Football for the first time, which featured former coach Steve Mariucci urging the audience to set limits, stick to them and only bet what you can afford.

This 30-second TV advertisement is a result of the NFL's recent partnership with the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), which is working to reduce the risk of gambling problems associated with sports betting.

Over 5.1 million people nationwide experience some sort of gambling problem each year, according to NCPG data, and that number could well rise as sports betting is legalised in more states across the country.

To prevent that issue from becoming a reality as it has in countries like Australia – which has seen 41% of regular sports bettors have gambling-related problems, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies – it's important for leagues, partners and influencers to educate new American bettors about how to gamble responsibly.

"We feel it is critical that the NFL uses the power of our voice to educate and encourage fans who choose to bet to do so in a safe and responsible way," said Christopher Halpin, NFL Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy and Growth Officer, in the press release announcing the deal with the NCPG. "Collectively, all of us in the sports and betting industries need to learn from international examples; and make sure the development of education and support programs matches the state-by-state growth in legalised sports betting."

# PLAY HARD



**Will Armitage**, Co-Founder of BestOdds, speaks to **Tim Poole** about his best and worst bets, brand names... and a tough choice between bringing Bury Football Club back and Tottenham winning the league!

initials of those are the ones to stymie my flow, which is irritating – particularly when they're best odds on something.

**YOU WERE A BURY FAN BEFORE THE CLUB SADLY CEASED TO EXIST DUE TO LIQUIDATION, NOW YOU'RE AN ARSENAL FAN – WHICH I THINK YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR GIVEN THE FACT YOUR PREVIOUS CLUB IS NO LONGER AROUND! IF YOU COULD BRING BURY BACK, BUT IT MEANT TOTTENHAM WINNING THE PREMIER LEAGUE... WOULD YOU DO IT?**

I know a plethora of Spurs fans so I've got to be really careful how I phrase this. No, I just can't do that. I couldn't bring myself to do that! Sacrilegious. Poor Bury, it's a very tragic story. It was a great club, I supported them passionately since I was four.

## WHAT'S THE BEST BET YOU'VE EVER PLACED?

A horse called Cape Velvet, in France, May 2010.

## WHAT WERE THE ODDS?

24/1 on the PMU. That was the most successful I've had in terms of quantum return. I then had a Heinz 57 that came in at Cheltenham that paid pretty well, and I've been restricted by the bookmaker ever since to a fiver a go and no parlays.

## WHAT'S THE WORST BET YOU'VE EVER PLACED?

I have my wife in the room, so I've got to be careful what I say here! I had a horse that I bought in America that was flying. We ran at Doncaster and we were uber-confident: I backed it in from 18s to 8s. 12-runner maiden at Doncaster, none of the big trainers were there and we were very confident... it came last. That was a disaster!

## ARE THERE ANY BRAND NAMES YOU LOVE WITHIN THE BETTING INDUSTRY?

Yeah, I think you have to look at the UK's number one of Oddschecker. It does what it says on the tin, and I think if you can have a brand like that in this day and age which makes it very plain and obvious what you are, you're in a great place; I've been a client for 18-19 years. I have them on the pedestal at the moment – we're hoping to chisel away at them but I have great respect for them, and they're very impressive.

## ANY BRANDS YOU DON'T LIKE AT THE MOMENT!?

Just when you get restricted on your bet size. There's a big one in Ireland with a P in the name and P in the second word of the name, on which I seem to have been very blocked. And there's a famous British news agency that ends in Smith – the first two



## FINAL QUESTION, BACK TO BETTING – WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SPORTSBOOK TO BET WITH AT THE MOMENT?

I'll give it to bet365. I can get on in size and no rejections. So, for the time being, I'll go with them!