



WEEK 26

FRIDAY 26 JUN 2026

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**IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE:
META'S \$1 TRILLION GAMBLE?**



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The logo for GGI Friday, featuring the letters "GGI" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font, and the word "FRIDAY" in a smaller, bold, black sans-serif font directly below it. The entire logo is enclosed within a red rectangular border.

THIS WEEK

WEEK 26 ON THE 26TH... 2026!

AUSTRALIA & LAND-BASED ROUND-UPS

WORLD CUP LATEST

■ MOVERS & SHAKERS

THE GGI HEAT MAP

GUEST COLUMN
Stuart Hunter

WEEK 26

FRIDAY 26 JUN 2026

A collage featuring an American flag, US dollar bills, and a financial market chart with green and red numbers. The text "META'S \$1 TRILLION GAMBLE?" is overlaid in large, bold, white letters.



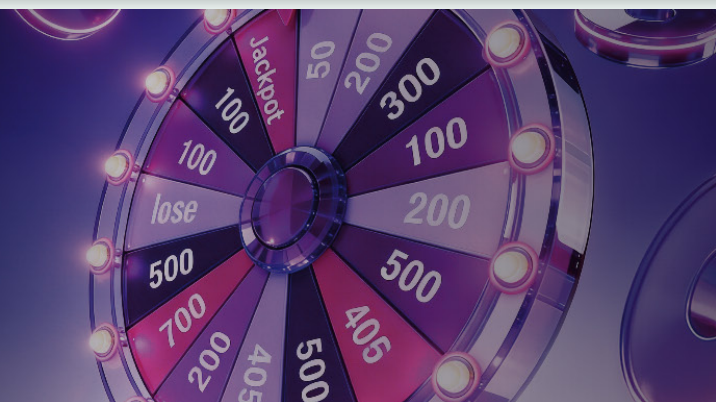
**EXECUTIVE
ROUND-UP:
SPRIBE, NORTH
CAROLINA
& MORE...**



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META'S PREDICTION MARKET PLAY: A \$1 TRILLION OPPORTUNITY, OR A CREDIBILITY GAMBLE?

Meta wants a seat at the prediction markets table – but with a credibility problem it hasn't yet solved, the bigger question is whether the industry should pull up a chair

► The prediction markets sector just got a lot more interesting. Reports emerging this week reveal that Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has quietly assembled a small internal team to develop Arena – an application modelled on Kalshi and Polymarket – positioning the social media giant as a potential entrant into one of the fastest-growing segments of the alternative wagering landscape.

No release date has been provided, and Meta has declined to comment. But in a sector moving at this pace, even a mere concept demands scrutiny.

A SOFT APPROACH... FOR NOW

Arena's reported launch model is deliberately cautious. Rather than entering prediction markets via real-money wagering from the outset, the product would initially operate on a video game-style points system – a frictionless onboarding mechanism that sidesteps the immediate regulatory complexity of handling financial bets while building user habits and platform stickiness.

Meta has not ruled out real-money wagering further down the line, and it would be naive to assume the points-based model is anything other than a staging ground. This echoes the playbook used by social and casual gaming companies that gradually monetise engagement once a user base is established.

Arena would function independently of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger – but Meta intends to use those platforms as funnels toward it. With 3.56 billion daily active users as of April 2026, that is a distribution capability neither Kalshi nor Polymarket can come close to matching.

The sector is projected to reach \$1trn in annual trading volume by 2030. That number helps explain why Zuckerberg is allocating resources here.

For existing operators, Meta's entry – if it materialises – would represent a major structural shift in the competitive landscape.

A STORMY BACKDROP

The timing of the Arena reveal is not without irony. It arrives in the

same week that Polymarket faces accusations of paying influencers to promote fabricated trades and inflate apparent winnings as part of US marketing campaigns.

The operator has committed to a comprehensive audit of its promotional content, though speculators suggest significant regulatory consequences may be unlikely given the Trump administration's ties to prediction markets and its CFTC leadership.

The sector is, in short, at an inflection point: rapidly growing, loosely policed and with its credibility still contested. Whether that makes this an attractive entry point for Meta – or a reputational minefield – is a question the industry will be sitting with for some time.

THE CREDIBILITY PARADOX

Perhaps the sharpest tension in this story lies in Meta's own standing as a responsible actor in the gambling-adjacent space. The same week Arena surfaces, Dutch trade association VNLOK has announced plans to sue Meta and file a complaint with the European Commission over the proliferation of illegal gambling advertisements across its platforms (more on this later in the issue...).

Research published in May estimated that Meta earns between €7.3m (\$8.3m) and €13.6m (\$15.4m) annually from such ads – with over 95% of gambling-related promotions on its platforms in late 2025 linked to unlicensed operators.

Meta's enforcement record has also been poor, with removal rates below 6% in some months – despite the scale of the problem being extensively documented.

That record does not sit easily alongside the image of a company seeking to position itself as a credible, regulated prediction market operator.

The question the industry will need to reckon with is a pointed one: can an organisation that has demonstrably struggled to manage gambling-related harm on its own platforms step into this space with the legitimacy such a move requires?

For now, of course, Arena is just a concept, not a product. But the sector should be paying attention regardless...

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS



\$176.5m

Massachusetts' state gaming revenue for the month of May 2026, down 5.2%

224,000

Number of individuals now signed up to Kazakhstan's self-exclusion register



3

Number of nations upheld on the FATF high-risk AML list – Iran, North Korea & Myanmar

14,000

Number of illegal World Cup gambling links blocked in Thailand during the tournament



\$106,800

Overtaken gambling ad fine against Ukrainian influencer this week

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THIS WEEK'S EXECUTIVE ROUND-UP: SPRIBE, NORTH CAROLINA & MORE...

Action from the UK market this week saw the **Gambling Commission** issue a formal warning against **Spribe** for failing to adequately maintain the requirements of its licence. This latest update follows the suspension of the crash game studio's UK licence in October 2025, as the company was operating under a Gambling Software licence when it was informed it should have been operating under a hosting licence. The UK regulator acknowledged Spribe's competency and cooperation this week throughout its entire investigatory process – with its Game Host licence currently pending as per the commission's website.

In the US, **North Carolina** Senator Jim Burgin confirmed plans for the state to increase its tax rate on sports betting revenue from 18% to 23%, projected to generate an additional \$37m in tax revenue. The new taxation structure is anticipated to be finalised prior to the government's new fiscal year beginning on 1 July and will place North Carolina ahead of states such as New Jersey, Ohio and Massachusetts. Some senators in the state were calling for a rate as high as 50%, with others also calling for a 30% tax.

Another busy week for **Polymarket** saw the prediction market platform confirmed as the official US prediction market partner of German top-flight footballing league – the Bundesliga. Commencing from the beginning of the 2026/27 season, the company is set to gain exclusive intellectual property rights and the ability to trade event contracts on Bundesliga matches. Elsewhere, however, Polymarket also faced further **insider trading accusations**, specifically related to paying influences to promote fake trades and fabricate winnings as part of recent US marketing efforts. According to the spokesperson, Polymarket will begin conducting a "comprehensive

audit of active promotional content to ensure it complies with our standards, as well as applicable regulatory and legal disclosure requirements." The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) are yet to provide comment on the matter.

Bangladesh actioned new gambling legislation, with the nation's government updating gambling laws to help modernise the market in response to the rapid proliferation of digital growth. The newly approved legislation outlines new requirements for online gambling and sports betting whilst also targeting match-fixing and related activities – imposing new fines and prison sentences on offenders. It also expands potential offences beyond placing bets, covering those who organise, facilitate, promote or provide technical support to illegal gambling operations. As of the time of writing, the Gambling Prevention Bill, 2026 currently sits in front of parliament, which has been requested to review the legislation within a five-day timeframe. At present, Bangladesh's main gambling statute is the Public Gambling Act of 1867.

In Europe, **Malta's Prime Minister** Robert Abela reiterated his opposition to EU-wide taxes this week, including proposals that could affect online gambling operators within the Maltese market. Highlighting the nation's involvement in the 'Friends of Cohesion' group of member states, Abela outlined confidence in Malta's ability to positively influence negotiations, stating that any reforms linked to the EU budget should be developed through consultation and reflect the interests of individual member states. Further, he also stated that any new policies should continue to support economic development, competitiveness and growth across the bloc.

ACMA, SKYCITY & MORE...

AT A GLANCE

- ACMA publishes report on actions taken during Q1 2026
- SkyCity agrees to AU\$21m settlement to resolve Adelaide legal matters
- ATC granted reprieve in Racing NSW court battle
- NSW seeks public input on updated lottery regulations

Over the course of Q1 2026, the **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** looked into 422 enquiries and complaints, of which 87% were valid to be investigated further. 25 formal investigations were launched against 60 respective gambling websites, as the ACMA found at least one breach of the

Interactive Gambling Act 2001 (IGA) in 23 cases. The ACMA issued 13 formal warnings to providers in Q1, while a total of 109 websites were referred to internet service providers to be blocked from reaching the general population.

SkyCity Entertainment Group entered into a non-binding head of agreement with the Commissioner for Liquor and Gambling to resolve outstanding regulatory matters related to the Adelaide Casino Independent Review and the Brian Martin Report. The proposed agreement demands a total fine of AU\$21m (\$14.7m), payable by SkyCity Adelaide in three installments over two years. Alongside the financial penalty, SkyCity committed to a range of governance and operational reforms.

Elsewhere in the courts, the **Australian**

Turf Club (ATC) was granted a temporary reprieve after the New South Wales Court of Appeal ordered a stay on the appointment of an administrator until 13 July. However, the court also ruled in favour of Racing NSW, upholding governance failures against ATC. The decision marked a significant victory for Racing NSW, which has been seeking to place the ATC under its administration since late 2025 amid concerns over the club's financial position and corporate governance.

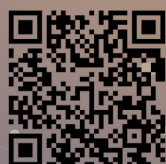
Liquor & Gaming NSW was also in the news after opening a public consultation on the proposed Public Lotteries Regulation 2026, as current regulation is scheduled to expire on 1 September. The proposed regulation would largely preserve the existing framework.



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THE WEEK IN QUOTES

WORLD CUP

ROUND-UP

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PORTUGAL, ENTAİN AND JAMAICA

AT A GLANCE

- APAJO finds 100+ cases of illegal Portuguese iGaming promotion
- Entain launches new awareness campaign for 2026 FIFA World Cup
- Jamaica saw sharp increase in wagering activity for opening matches

Microbetting will remain a vital component of the modern sports ecosystem, but its long-term viability depends on a transition toward sustainable, deliberative play

SOFT2BET LEGAL COUNSEL DAVID YATOM HAY PROVIDES GLOBAL GAMING INSIDER WITH AN EXCLUSIVE DEEP DIVE INTO THE MICROBETTING ECOSYSTEM

Our impression is that this public debate is itself being used as a lever to build pressure within the legislative process in favour of including such a cooling-off period, but our understanding is that no agreement is set yet

DRS. RAPANI AND HOHENTHANNER DISCUSS NEW AUSTRIAN REGULATIONS EXCLUSIVELY WITH GLOBAL GAMING INSIDER

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup now underway, new data related to the global tournament continues to be shared by various gaming markets. In **Portugal**, the **Online Betting and Gaming Association (APAJO)** stated that its “VAR Mundial” initiative has detected more than 100 cases of illegal online gambling promotion during the competition. The Association demanded attention from lawmakers, as Board President Ricardo Domingues believes combating illegal activities should be the “country’s top priority” for iGaming operations.

As part of its own efforts during the

2026 FIFA World Cup, **Entain** launched a new consumer awareness campaign after research found most UK adults struggle to distinguish between licensed and unlicensed online gambling promotions. The YouGov survey found that, out of more than 2,000 respondents, 74% actively struggled to identify whether betting promotions on social media came from a licensed UK operator, while only 10% said identifying licensed gambling advertising online was easy.

Elsewhere, **Jamaica’s** sports betting sector is experiencing a sharp increase in wagering activity during the opening weeks of the tournament, with the country’s two largest sportsbook operators reporting growth in customer acquisition and betting volumes. Island Bet CEO Adam Epstein shared that the operator has recorded a 200% increase in new customers since the World Cup began, while there was similar growth for Supreme Ventures Gaming.

2026
GLOBAL
GAMING
AWARDS

AMERICAS

LEAD PARTNER

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THE WEEK IN QUOTES

LAND-BASED

ROUND-UP

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RUSSIA, IRELAND, MACAU & MORE...

AT A GLANCE

- Russian operators adopt advertising guidelines
- Boyle Sports opens 400th retail shop, in Galway
- Macau tourism is boosted by Sands China
- Cosmo Casino upgrades gaming tech

This week saw **Russian** operators Pari, Liga Stavok and Winline sign voluntary industry guidelines on fair advertising practices. The nation's Association for the Development of Interactive Advertising (ADIA) developed these new guidelines in partnership with the operators, covering advertising and not gambling-related practices. More specifically, the document sets out uniform rules for industry operators to improve transparency in advertising communications and protect users from unfair practices.

In the Irish market, **Boyle Sports** opened its 400th retail location at Ballybrit as part of

its new three-year partnership with Galway Races. Indeed, the operator will also hold a title sponsorship for the Saturday event during the Galway Races festival, which is now the €110,000 (\$126,027) Boyle Sports Handicap Hurdle.

It was also reported this week that, since its foundation in 2009, **Sands China** has hosted nearly 12,800 meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions – otherwise known as MICE events – with over 15.7 million attendees. These figures highlight the properties long-standing and significant contribution to Macau's non-gaming economy, alongside its economical contributions from gaming.

Finally, in Argentina, **Cosmo Casino** in Mendoza has begun a phased modernisation of its gaming floor, marking the commencing of a broader upgrade program. The first stage will include the addition of more than 18 new slot machines.

As we look ahead to the launch of online casino gaming in Maine, we're proud to expand our partnership with the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation and the Penobscot Nation

CAESARS DIGITAL PRESIDENT ERIC HESSON COMMENTED ON THE OPERATOR'S IGAMING LAUNCH IN MAINE

We look forward to welcoming guests from across the sector throughout the week. Whether it's for a drink, dinner, networking or simply catching up with industry friends

HIPPODROME CASINO EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN SIMON THOMAS SPEAKS ON THE PROPERTY'S RENEWED PARTNERSHIP WITH IGB LIVE



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MARKET ENTRY



LOCAL COMPLIANCE



OPERATOR-READY PUBLISHING



NORTH AMERICA



EUROPE



LATIN AMERICA



ASIA



Event Name: iGB LIVE 2026

Date: 1-2 July 2026

Venue: ExCeL London, London, UK

Booth: Q32



UNITED STATES



PHILIPPINES



PERU



BRAZIL



ITALY



BARCELONA



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BIG-TECH RESPONSIBILITY

This week, the Dutch online gambling operators' trade association, VNLOK, said it would sue Meta for failing to block illegal gambling advertisements on its platform in Europe. This is not the first time Meta has got into trouble over the issue, either. Malaysia has been demanding Meta take action against illegal gambling ads since last October, with Thailand making the same demand this April. Now, the Netherlands estimates that Meta makes up to €13.6m (\$15.58m) annually from illegal gambling ads.

VNLOK has already taken Meta to court in both 2025 and 2026, resulting in the District Court and the Amsterdam Court of Appeal urging Meta to take action against the structural violations it was committing. However, Meta seemed unwilling to

engage in discussions on the matter, and the adverts have remained unchanged on the platform.

But does Meta have a responsibility for the content hosted on its platform? In one sense, it can be difficult to police what users post online. But for businesses posting advertisements, the process is a lot easier than you might think. Advertising via the tech platform requires a user to simply select the business they want to advertise for, select a payment method, then upload the campaign materials. As for more inconspicuous approaches, illegal casinos and sportsbooks have uploaded a viral, unrelated clip with a large logo or URL of the platform stamped on the video itself. This circumvents any checks required through legitimate methods, but even

those checks are minor in nature.

While Meta is headquartered in California, if the platform operates in the EU, it is beholden to the European Digital Services Act (DSA), which requires very large online platforms to implement effective measures to mitigate the risks of illegal content. And while it seems that courts, trade associations, governments and users all agree that Meta is responsible for the advertisements it hosts – Meta itself seems to still disagree. There will, of course, be a handful of those like VNLOK across the industry who continue to fight the good fight – but the black-market conundrum is one that is unsolvable without the help and attention of major technology platforms such as Meta, and the pressure on it to take action is slowly building.



ENTAIN



BETSSON



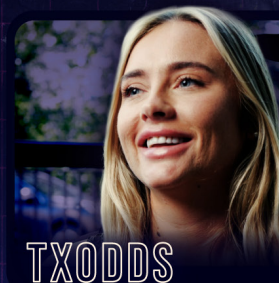
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TXODDS



BETBY



KAMBI

**MATEVŽ MAZIJ**

Outgoing CEO
Bragg Gaming
US

Mazij submitted his resignation after failing to secure majority shareholder backing, leaving the operator 90 days to find his successor. He has served as Bragg CEO for almost three years.

**DARIO JURČIĆ**

CCO
Digitain
Europe & Africa

Moving on from his post as an SVP at Sportradar, **Jurčić** will oversee Digitain's commercial strategy, partner development and regional expansion efforts throughout Europe and Africa.

**ESTHER TAYLOR**

Brand Ambassador
BetMGM
US

A professional poker player, **Taylor** has more than \$3.2m in live tournament earnings and has reached 10 final table appearances at WSOP. She will now also represent BetMGM Poker as a new social ambassador.

**VIRGINIA MCDOWELL**

Chair of Remuneration Committee
Entain
UK

Retaining her position as Non-Executive Director, **McDowell** will step down as Chair of the Remuneration Committee following a comprehensive board re-shuffle by the operator.

**LEON BRIMM**

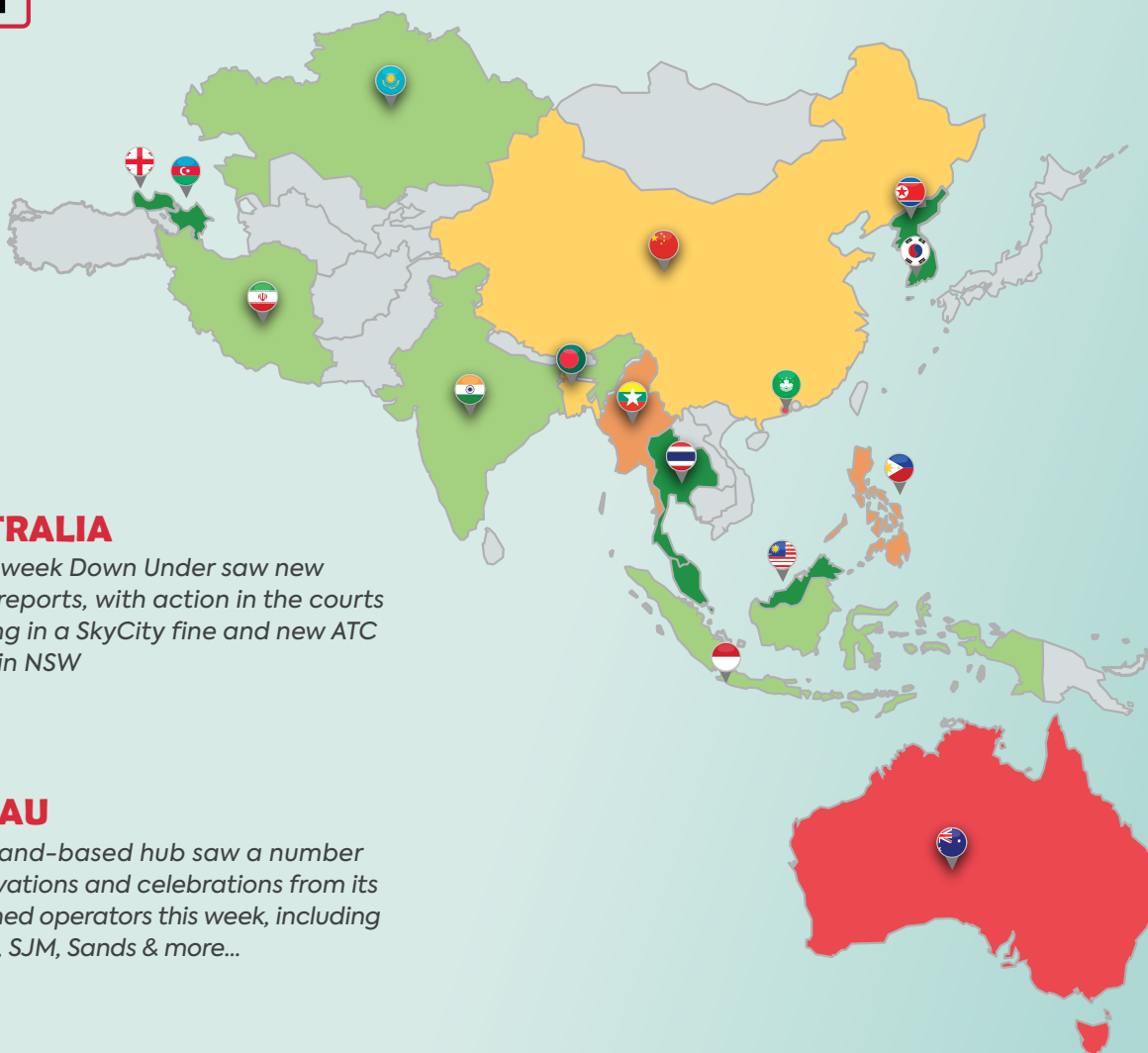
Director of Casino Operations
Rolling Hills Casino & Resort
US

Having served in an interim capacity since April, **Brimm** now formally steps into this role – which will see him oversee all casino operation strategy, and execution alongside assisting with property optimisation.

**AMANDA BROWN**

Outgoing Board Member
Entain
UK

Stepping down as of 30 June 2026, **Brown** had previously served as both a Chair of the Remuneration Committee and as a member of the People & Governance Committee.



AUSTRALIA

A busy week Down Under saw new ACMA reports, with action in the courts resulting in a SkyCity fine and new ATC Ruling in NSW



MACAU

Asia's land-based hub saw a number of activations and celebrations from its esteemed operators this week, including Galaxy, SJM, Sands & more...



MYANMAR

Despite being added to the FATF high-risk list, Myanmar also pledged stronger international cooperation against the black market, alongside China



CHINA

Alongside mirroring Myanmar's pledge, China's Xiaohongshu social media platform also banned 40,000 accounts



PHILIPPINES

City of Dreams Manila funded parkland rehabilitation, with PAGCOR also mandating the rollout of a new problem gambling helpline campaign



BANGLADESH

New gambling legislation was tabled and then approved this week among modernisation efforts. It's about time, as the old laws stem from 1867!

PENNSYLVANIA MAY 2026 GAMING REVENUE

- A big month in Pennsylvania saw the state set a new gaming revenue record, rising 3.93% year-on-year to \$625.27m for May 2026
- Casino and iGaming accounted for the bulk of the revenue figure, rising 2.79% and 9.44%, respectively
- Sports betting revenue decreased 11.4% to \$52.64m
- Bally’s interactive saw the most revenue growth overall, with Hollywood (PENN) recording the highest figure of \$115.48m

OPERATOR	REVENUE (\$M)	% CHANGE YEAR-ON-YEAR
Bally’s Interactive	5.55	+80.64
Caesars Interactive	14.90	+33.47
Mohegan Lehigh Valley	0.17	+18.34
Presque Island	16.97	+18.02
Hollywood (PENN)	115.48	+7.81
Parx Shippensburg	4.03	+6.87
Hollywood Morgantown	9.30	+5.06
Lady Luck Nemaquin	2.89	+4.61
Wind Creek Bethlehem	47.43	+4.49
Hollywood York	12.56	+4.15
Rivers Philadelphia	60.48	+3.74
Fantasy Sports	1.13	+3.30
Golden Nugget	7.57	+2.69
Parx (Greenwood)	60.16	+1.68
Mohegan Sun	21.29	+1.59
Live! Pittsburgh	10.75	+1.55
+The Meadows	33.85	+1.07
Live! Philadelphia	26.85	−0.04
Rivers (Rush St)	31.70	−0.75
Valley Forge	104.56	−1.17
Slot Routes	3.57	−3.14
Harrah’s Philadelphia	12.50	−3.28
Mount Airy	18.18	−13.29
Happy Valley	3.61	N/a
Total (casino)	313.31	+2.79
Total (iGaming)	254.83	+9.44
Total (sports betting)	52.64	−11.4
TOTAL	625.47	+3.93

**GGI
FRIDAY****GUEST****COLUMN**

STUART HUNTER,
MANAGING DIRECTOR (GAMING),
WORLDGAMING

Hunter previews this year's iGB Live London, overviewing new changes, learnings from previous years and what the future holds for the show

As much as moving ICE and iGB Affiliate from London to Barcelona was a significant undertaking, relocating iGB Live from Amsterdam to London also brought its own challenges. When you're working within an event cycle, you're constantly learning, especially when managing major transitions. We spend a lot of time listening to our customers, because that's the only way to continue evolving and ensure iGB Live meets the industry's needs.

We learned a great deal from last year's event in London. On a practical level, we discovered that we needed more build time. One of the biggest surprises was the scale of

investment exhibitors made in their stands and booth designs. The quality and sophistication were phenomenal and are now reaching the same standards seen at ICE. Because of that increased complexity, combined with the heatwave we experienced, getting everything ready in time was challenging. This year we've allocated additional setup time, which will help exhibitors deliver the experience they want to create at iGB Live.

Beyond the operational aspects, we also saw that despite its growth, iGB Live retains the intimacy that attendees value. Whether the event is held in Amsterdam or London, that characteristic remains central to the experience. Compared with Barcelona, which has become a huge event with enormous value, iGB Live occupies a different space. ►

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Feedback consistently highlighted how the London venue supports meaningful conversations and relationship-building in a way that can sometimes be harder to achieve at larger, faster-paced events.

Another important area is the event's unique position in bringing together the affiliate side of the industry with suppliers and B2B operators across casino and sports betting. This year we've worked to create clearer distinctions between those sectors, ensuring that each audience feels fully catered to and can easily access the content, networking and opportunities most relevant to them.

We're also placing greater emphasis on sports betting. Historically, iGB Live hasn't strongly promoted its role in that sector, but when we looked at the event more closely, it became clear that sports betting products, services and innovation already play a major role. Given the growth of sports betting and its increasing regulatory importance, that focus will be even more visible this year.

Overall, we're building on last year's success, refining operational elements, creating more opportunities to connect with the city of London through networking experiences and continuing to bring the industry together in a highly effective environment.

At its core, iGB Live exists to connect the iGaming ecosystem. The event is focused on accelerating business growth, shaping the future of the industry, and creating high-value partnerships. That emphasis on meaningful commercial relationships is

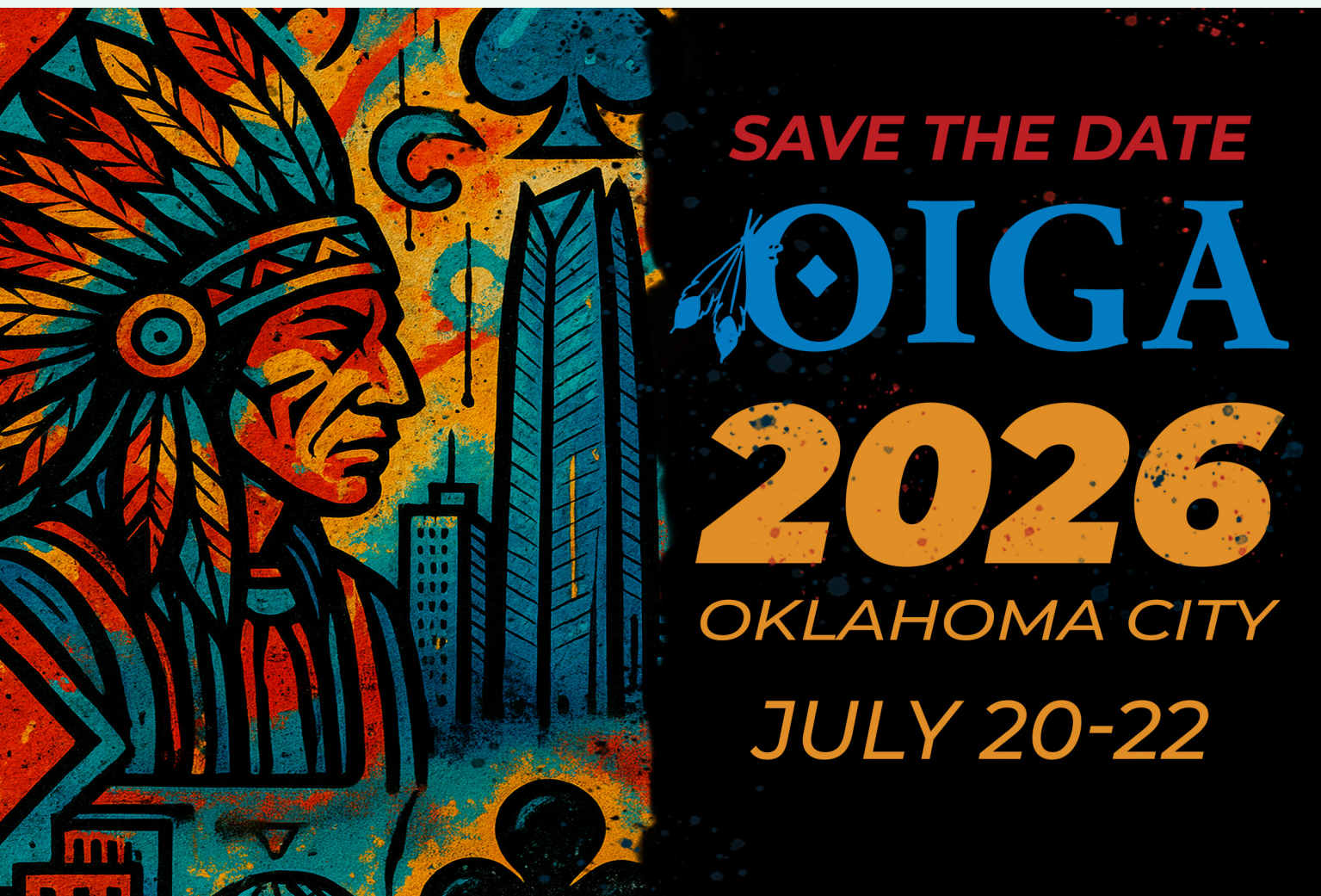
deeply embedded in the DNA of the show.

What makes the event particularly interesting is its position in the annual calendar. Taking place in July, it sits almost exactly halfway between the major Barcelona events – iGB Affiliate and ICE. That timing is important because it gives businesses a natural point to reconnect, build on conversations that began earlier in the year, and develop new opportunities for the second half of the year. It serves as a catalyst for business activity in the third and fourth quarters, and we're hearing from the industry that this role is becoming increasingly valuable.

At the same time, iGB Live attracts audiences that don't necessarily attend other major industry events. Only around 35–40% of attendees also attend Barcelona, which means the event introduces people to new contacts, fresh ideas, and conversations they might not otherwise encounter. That diversity is one of the event's biggest strengths.

Its location also contributes significantly to its character. The UK remains one of the most influential gaming markets in the world, and London offers a unique mix of investment, technology, media and sport. As a result, the event attracts brands, decision-makers and adjacent industries that are often less visible at other iGaming shows. This creates a broader and more diverse ecosystem that attendees genuinely value.

Ultimately, our ambition is straightforward: to create an exceptionally effective environment where the industry can connect, do business and identify the next opportunities for growth.



COMPANY	NEW PARTNER	VERTICAL	REGION
MGM Resorts	Major League Baseball	Sports betting	US
Boyle Sports	NIFL	Sports betting	Northern Ireland
Brightstar Lottery	Oregon Lottery	Lottery	Oregon
SkyCity Acoma	QCI Resorts	Land-based	New Mexico
BetConstruct	ADI Predictstreet	Prediction markets	US
Kambi	BetWarrior	Sports betting	South America
Games Valley	Spribe	iGaming	Global
ELA Games	Fonbet	iGaming	Greece
SCCG Management	BTA Sports	Sports betting	US
Reevo	Penguin King	iGaming	Global



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