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JUNE

THE MONTHLY NEWS ROUND-UP FROM GAME ON

STAR CLUSTERS MEGACLUSTERS™



JUNE 2020 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS



BIG TIME GAMING

Big Time to launch new Megaclusters game engine.

Sydney-based developer Big Time Gaming is to launch its new Megaclusters game engine next week, via highly anticipated new release, Star Clusters.

Star Clusters launches exclusively with SG Digital on June 24, before going live later the same day with the Flutter Entertainment group of online casinos, including Paddy Power, Betfair, PokerStars, and SkyVegas.

Commenting on the new mechanic and game, which Big Win Board rated 10/10, Big Time CEO Nik Robinson said: "We believe that Megaclusters is a quite literally a game changer in the online casino space and we're delighted that it's received a great reception from reviewers. Expect to see this mechanic feature in more BTG games in the future."

The team behind Megaways has once again produced an apparently simple concept...

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1X2 NETWORK / LEOVEGAS & ROYAL PANDA

Megaways Jack by Iron Dog Studio.

Embark on a classic fairytale adventure in Iron Dog Studio's latest slot title Megaways Jack which is now live on LeoVegas and Rocket-X after launching exclusively with Royal Panda last week. Live with Red Panda, Rocket-X and LeoVegas. Release network-wide June 17.

This six-reel video slot invites players to climb the beanstalk, ascend the clouds and escape the giant's castle with as much treasure as they can collect.

The low value symbols in this game include the 9-A royals with the higher value symbols consisting of the cow, the golden goose, Jack's mum, the giant and Jack as the premium symbol which pays 25x the stake for six of a kind.

At the left side of the reel hands the harp which, in the base game, can randomly award either four extra wilds on tumbles, up to a five times multiplier, three extra positions...

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SMP Egaming has rebranded.

We are now Amber Gaming.

ambergaming.com



SIMPLE, POWERFUL SOLUTIONS FOR GAMING COMPLIANCE.

EZUGI

Trio of approvals extend Eugi's European reach.

Live dealer game supplier Ezugi has announced the latest strand of expansion after revealing that its titles have received game certification in the new jurisdictions of the Isle of Man, Estonia and Bulgaria.

Further bolstering a commitment to regulated market expansion, the entity, which forms a part of the Evolution Gaming group, asserts that certifications were awarded after testing standards set for each territory were successfully met and game certifications awarded by the respective governing bodies.

As a result, this means that licensed operators in the trio of jurisdictions now have the opportunity to partner with Ezugi and utilise a gaming suite streamed in high definition from a number of studios worldwide.

This announcement comes hot on the heels of Ezugi's partnership with BlueRibbon Software, which will see the live dealer content provider release its Jackpot Roulette...

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AMBER GAMING

Amber Gaming names Shaun Parmar as Business Development Manager.

Amber Gaming has strengthened its international team with the appointment of Shaun Parmar as Business Development Manager. Shaun will be based in Amber Gaming's Malta office and will be responsible for driving awareness and growth of the firm's licensing, regulatory compliance, corporate services, accounting and training solutions.

Shaun has a wealth of experience in corporate development, account management and client relations, having previously held the position of Senior Account Manager at Fluid Branding in Malta.

Ted Pepper, Managing Director of Amber Gaming, said: 'I am delighted to welcome Shaun to the team. He has a real enthusiasm and talent for connecting client's needs and aspirations with the solutions that can help them. Our simple but powerful range of products and services help organisations protect their players, their staff and their bottom lines by ensuring compliance. Shaun will be key to helping prospective clients find that balance at which compliance and commercial benefit perfectly align.'

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FSB

Russel Colvin joins FSB as Retail Lead.

Industry platform provider FSB has enhanced its Business Development team after naming Russell Colvin as the new Head of Retail Sales.

Colvin has joined the firm from Playtech's BGT Sports division where he held the role of Commercial Director. In his new role, Colvin will oversee the sales of FSB's retail products such as its Self Service Betting Terminal and EPOS systems.

Commenting on his appointment, Colvin said: "I am really excited to have joined FSB and look forward to working with such a talented team.

"FSB's retail products and services are game-changing, and I am looking forward to introducing them to operators in markets around the world."

Prior to joining FSB, Colvin has amassed over 20 years' of experience from the sports betting industry, having worked for companies such as Coral, Global Draw and Scientific Games.

Dave McDowell, CEO of FSB, added: "I am thrilled to welcome Russell to the team and for us to leverage his knowledge and experience as we continue to drive our retail product forwards."

"Our retail products are market leading and Russell will play a key role in ensuring operators are aware of what we have to offer and the value we can deliver."

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

1ACCOUNT

1account announces Marc Wood appointment.

1account, the state-of-the-art ID and age validation platform provider, has strengthened its senior team with the appointment of Marc Wood as sales and marketing director.

Wood joins 1account from Pay360 and brings more than 20 years' experience in the online gambling sector having worked for range of organisations including DataCash and Wagerworks.

He has unrivalled knowledge and expertise in using data and technology to improve performance across payments and identity verification, as well as marketing, compliance and operations.

Wood has been tasked with establishing a global sales and business development network to introduce the 1account solution to both B2B and B2C partners.

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1X2 NETWORK / 888

1X2 Network agrees 888 Holdings deployment.

Game developer and content aggregator 1X2 Network as unveiled a partnership with 888 Holdings which will see the provider supply its RNG games to the firm's players for the first time.

Coming hot on the heels of agreements with Leap Gaming and Gaming Innovation Group, players at the group's flagship 888 Casino igaming brand will now be able to access a new range of titles.

Kevin Reid, chief commercial officer of 1X2 Network, commented: "We're delighted to team up with 888 and to deploy our games onto such a well-respected and popular global gambling brand.

"We're immensely proud of our content offering, and we want more and more players to experience what we have to offer. We've got no doubt that it'll prove a hit with the 888 audience."

Under the terms of the deal 888 Casino players will now be able to access titles from the developer's 1X2gaming and Iron Dog Studio subsidiaries which include a multitude of games such as Pirate Kingdom Megaways and Battle Maidens.

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SKILLONNET

SkillOnNet relaunches SpinGenie via Prime Gaming.

SkillOnNet has added to the roster of igaming brands powered by the online casino platform provider after detailing the relaunch of SpinGenie via Prime Gaming.

Aiming to offer "a market leading choice of slots and instant win games" the igaming entity is now live on the SkillOnNet platform, whose technology powers a multitude of brands such as PlayOJO, DrückGlück, SlotsMagic, Mega, PlayMillion, QueenVegas, and LuckyNiki.

Michael Golebo, sales and marketing director at SkillOnNet, commented: "We are thrilled to relaunch SpinGenie on the SkillOnNet platform, offering players a superior experience.

"This relates to the games available and the payment methods offered, as well as our standard-setting responsible gambling and safe gaming processes and tools.

So far, the studio has developed several genre-defining skill-based slots, such as Spoils of War, Candy Wall and Hammer of Fortune, thus creating a new market and attracting different audiences.

Based on a block puzzle strategy game with an 8x8 grid, the Jade Puzzle video slot compels players to combine different skills and win real money up to 9,999x total stake.

Devotees will have to place at least three random series of shapes at a time...

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EZUGI

Ezugi expansion plans 'in full swing' with 20/20 Teen Patti launch.

Live dealer game supplier Ezugi has launched Bet on Teen Patti, strengthening the company's localised games library.

The game, which will also be known as 20/20 Teen Patti, will be available in both Hindi and Tamil and will support Ezugi in reaching a wider audience across India.

Craig Luke, B2B account director of Ezugi, said: "What better way to follow up our recent announcement regarding the release of Jackpot Roulette, than with another show-stopping release in Bet on Teen Patti.

"Our original version of Teen Patti has been a phenomenal success since its launch in November 2019, so now being able to offer the 'Bet On' also known as "20/20" version to our Indian and wider market player base is a truly exciting prospect for all concerned.

"At the start of the year we set out our plans for ambitious expansion across all..."

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INCENTIVE GAMES/FULL ENGAGEMENT SPORTS

FES and Incentive Games launch eSports prediction game.

US iGaming firm Full Engagement Sports (FES) has partnered with UK-based software developer and gamification specialist Incentive Games to launch an esports bracket-challenge game.

The prediction game will challenge players to rank CS:GO teams and predict who will win in the brackets that follow, with cash prizes available for correct predictions.

Currently, fans will be able to predict the outcome of the BLAST Premier Spring Finals, DreamHack Masters Spring Play Offs in June and ESL One Cologne 2 in August.

John Gordon, CEO of Incentive Games, stated: "We are very excited about working with Full Engagement Sports and to develop its platform that will really harness the potential of its patent. This new esports-bracket game will give spectators a new way to enjoy the game, and the beauty of it is that we can adapt it to almost any sport or esports."

The app's additional features will allow for betting and engagement possibilities for specific tournament rounds across a variety of esports and traditional sports including tennis, golf and NASCAR.

Nigel Wheatstone, CEO of Full Engagement Sports, added: "We met John from..."

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JUNE 2020 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS



AUTHENTIC GAMING / 888

Authentic Gaming lands at 888.

Authentic Gaming, the market-leading live roulette provider, has entered a milestone agreement with 888, one of the world's leading online gaming and entertainment solutions providers, making its entire suite of games available to players in regulated markets such as the UK, Sweden, Denmark and Italy.

Under the partnership, players will gain access to live roulette titles streamed from Authentic Gaming's state-of-the-art Arena Studio, including 24/7 Roulette, Grand Roulette and the provider's unique Blaze Roulette.

Blaze is a classic roulette format delivered in a gameshow environment with a host instead of a traditional dealer. It has become Authentic Gaming's flagship product since it first went live in 2019 and is hugely popular with players in markets all over the world.

The partnership also introduces 888 players to Authentic Roulette, which streams live from real tables located on the floors of real casinos around the world, as well as Authentic Gaming's Premium Tables package, which includes streams from Foxwoods Casino Resort in the US and Royal Casino in Denmark.

In addition, players can access tables located in other prestigious venues such as Casino International in Georgia, Bad Homburg Casino in Germany and Aspers Stratford Casino in the UK.

Commenting on the news, Jonas Delin, CEO of Authentic Gaming, said: "This partnership with 888 is a breakthrough moment for Authentic Gaming and marks our arrival as a leading live roulette provider. 888 is one of the world's leading online..."

READ THE FULL STORY

LIVE 5 / WHITE HAT GAMING

Live 5 integrates slot offerings with White Hat Gaming.

Live 5 has announced a new partnership with White Hat Gaming which sees the slot developer become available to operators around the world via the latter's platform.

As part of the integration, which has been facilitated by SG Digital, Live 5 online slot titles such as Bjorn the Frost Lord and Billy Gone Wild will be made available to operators through White Hat Gaming's platform, with more titles to be added over the coming months, exclusively with SG Digital.

Mike Dearing, Head of Games at White Hat Gaming, said: "We are always looking to add quality game developers to our portfolio and Live 5 certainly meets our criteria when it comes to entertainment factor and quality.

"The studio has quickly become one of the most in-demand in the industry and we are delighted to be able to offer its titles to our operator partners for the first time."

The developer's online games have been certified for launch in the UK, Spina, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Malta and with Loto Quebec in Canada.

Lloyd Butler, CEO of Live 5, added: "White Hat Gaming is exactly what we look for in a distribution partner, in particular its network of big-name operator partners.

"Our slots have mass market appeal, making them ideal for operators targeting different regions, especially regulated markets, and both casual and regular players.

"Bjorn the Frost Lord and Billy Gone Wild have already proved to be a big hit with players and we believe they will enjoy the same success with White Hat Gaming's..."

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FIRSTLOOKGAMES



MR MOSTACHO BY REEL NRG

Join our friendly Mexican amigo in this extremely volatile slot adventure! Scoop up spicy-hot features of multipliers of up to 500x, or an epic free spins feature with extra chances to win. Mucho volatility, mucho prizes and mucho reasons to play!

Main Game

Mr Mostacho is a 5x3 video slot with 25 paylines, featuring wild multipliers of up to 500x and free spins.

Wild: Wilds replace all symbols except the scatter symbol, and also carry random multipliers. When a wild completes a payline, this multiplier will be awarded to the win.

Scatter: 2 scatters award a 1x multiplier; 3 or more scatters trigger the free spins round.

Game Features

Wild Multiplier - Each wild carries a random multiplier of up to 500x. To collect the multiplier, land a winning combination with the wild. If multiple winning paylines contain wilds, the multiplier will be awarded each time.

Free Spins- The free spins round is triggered when 3, 4 or 5 scatters land:- 3 scatters award 10 free spins with a 2x multiplier, 4 scatters award 20 free spins with a 20x multiplier, 5 scatters award 30 free spins with a 30x multiplier. During free spins, the chances of landing higher wild multipliers is increased. Free spins can also be retrIGGERED by landing further scatters within the round.

DOWNLOAD THE 'MR MOSTACHO' MARKETING ASSETS OR FIND OUT MORE AT www.FIRSTLOOKGAMES.com

JUNE 2020 EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



GREEN JADE GAMES

Guest Columnist: Mark Taffler - Chief Commercial Officer.

Taffler says digital operators need to stock their game lobbies with content that takes entertainment, and value for money, to the next level.

It's never been more important for online gambling operators to deliver value to their players, both in terms of entertainment value and value for money.

There are so many entertainment options available to consumers that online casinos are now competing against video games, mobile games, streaming services and more.

Consumers still have money to spend – even in these uncertain times – but value is very much a driver when it comes to what they choose to spend their money on.

To ensure they enjoy a share of this spend, online operators must reassess their content offering and determine whether it competes with other options when it comes to value.

MASS MARKET APPEAL

For most, I believe they will come to the conclusion that, while their... (Pg 9)

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INCENTIVE GAMES

Incentive Games products are the new headline acts.

The time to invest in virtual sports has arrived.

Life at Incentive Games over the past couple of months has been interesting, to say the least. When the global live sports gambling industry is abruptly thrust into a complete rethink of how its core business operation is performed, those who offer an exciting alternative to the norm, which doesn't rely on live sports, suddenly became serious contenders.

Much has been written recently around the situation which has plunged the Sportsbetting sector into darkness due to the pause in live sports during the Covid-19 pandemic. Virtual sports quickly materialised as the product that operators embrace to fill the colossal void left by the lack of sportsbetting revenue.

Incentive Games with their Free-to-Play (FTP) and Pay-to-Play virtual sports wagering products have been at the forefront of this movement into a new and intriguing time for sports betting. Not only as a short-term bandage but as more key betting providers are finding out, this is a concept with far more potential and longer-term advantages than the quick-fix scheme they initially hoped it would be.

The overall impact of Coronavirus on Sportsbooks may never really be known, but the immediate effect on global betting is there for all see with a reported 93% average drop in the number of football bets offered by operators (Source: Online Gambling Quarterly Report).

The focus which this has put on expanding an operator's product offering has also...

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CHAMPION SPORTS / INCENTIVE GAMES

EGR: Can virtual sports effectively plug the gap left by the global sports blackout?.

Mark Robson, Co-founder of Champion Sports - The global sports shutdown has seen online sportsbook operators look to different products to ensure they offer something to fill the gap.

This has seen many turn to virtual sports as they provide something similar to live-action sports betting while teams and players sit on the sidelines for...

John Gordon, CEO of Incentive Games - Over the years, we have seen diseases disrupt our lives, liveli-hood and now even live sporting events. Starting with SARS in 2003 and now with the current Covid-19 situation.

The current pandemic is affecting the whole world. Never before have we seen a worldwide pause of all major sports. Never have sportsbook operators been stricken in this way...

[READ THE FULL INTERVIEW](#)

AMBER GAMING

Jade Zorab: Setting the tone and culture from the top is critical.

Following a rebrand of its gaming division being undertaken earlier this month SMP Partners expressed great confidence and ambition in moving forward with Amber Gaming, a stand-alone brand that will continue to work with online gambling firms around the world.

Formerly known under the SMP eGaming moniker, the move was lauded as presenting the division with "an incredible opportunity to carve out its own identity and forge ahead with its own plans for growth".

CasinoBeats has speaking to Jade Zorab, director at Amber Gaming, to delve into the finer details of the rebrand, the development of compliance requirements and challenges of new market entry.

CasinoBeats: Tell us more about the rebrand to Amber Gaming?

Jade Zorab: We are really excited about our rebrand. SMP eGaming has established a fantastic niche within the gaming industry over the last ten years, however...

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BIG TIME GAMING

Big Time Gaming CEO Nik Robinson reveals all.

Big Time Gaming released its new Star Clusters game yesterday. Chief executive officer Nik Robinson hopes its new Megaclusters will mimic the success of Megaways.

[GI] What was the motivation for creating a new mechanic? Do you feel the market is becoming saturated with Megaways games?

[NR] The motivation to deliver something fresh to players is key; something that will surprise, entertain and generally drop jaws!

I'm always thinking about what's next and actually feel I've been a little slow on the uptake of late. Megaways is now five years old, which now you've mentioned it, makes me feel as if complacency has fully sunk in.

We got very stuck into innovating Megaways iteratively, pushing the format in many different directions from its debut with Dragon Born.

On one hand, we went out on a limb with the progressive base game feature of King Maker and on the other hand threw the brand into the deep end with the backing of big brands like Monopoly and Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?.

By the end of 2020, if all goes to plan, Big Time Gaming and its licensees will have over 200 Megawaystitles from over 50 providers.

Megaways is an incredible genre, interest keeps on growing and the brand is getting bigger in terms of recognition- a Megaways tab is now a common addition to all major casinos.

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CASINO GURU

Jan Kovac, Casino Guru: Informing instead of promoting.

Jan Kovac, head of product and co-founder of Casino Guru, assesses a booming affiliate sector, the rise and rise of live streaming and targeting fledgling markets.

CasinoBeats: The affiliate market is currently booming and the future for the sector looks bright, what makes Casino Guru different from the other protagonists in the industry?

Jan Kovac: Casino Guru was started by two software developers in a country with almost no significant igaming presence. You could say that these two factors significantly affected the project's DNA. Meanwhile, many of our competitors have their roots in marketing.

This introduces a tendency to push for as many conversions as possible, which we see in the industry so often. Our approach is different. We genuinely want to provide our...

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JUNE 2020 EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



1ACCOUNT

Ben Keirle 1account CEO on the re-verifying of players following the credit card ban.

Ben Keirle, CEO at 1account discusses how operators can re-verify players following the recent credit card ban in the UK, while ensuring they continue to meet the highest possible KYC standards.

Back in April, the UK Gambling Commission's ban on credit card payments came into force, bringing an end to the payment method's somewhat chequered history with the industry.

Since 2019, the regulator has been moving operators away from credit card payments, preventing them from using credit cards to identify and verify players and then ultimately banning them.

The credit card ban forms part of wider safe gaming efforts from the UKGC, particularly when it comes to ensuring players gamble within their affordability threshold.

While these efforts are undoubtedly welcomed by the wider industry, they are...

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BIG TIME GAMING

The Beginning of a New Grid Slot Era: Nik Robinson on His Latest Creation.

As Big Time Gaming prepares to launch its next great innovation, Bigwinboard speaks exclusively to CEO Nik Robinson about 12 eyed aliens, past adventures, future projects and, of course, Star Clusters Megaclusters.

Scheduled to go live on Betfair on the 17th of June, followed by a global launch two weeks later, Star Clusters is not just Big Time Gaming's first ever grid slot, it also features a brand new, never before seen game engine known as Megaclusters™. This simple but clever creation splits symbols into smaller symbols, literally reverberating into a clusterf*** of controlled chaos when it decides to go completely crazy.

And the hype is not just about the game per se, it's all the endless possibilities that the Megaclusters engine opens up as well. Just imagine, your favorite grid slots might very well get a second life once developers secure their very own Megaclusters license. It's the Megaways rocket ride all over again. 3-2-1, blast-off!

Q: Hi Nik! Congrats on the 9.8 score! As you know, we're usually quite restrictive when it comes to awarding such high scores, but from the second we hit that 'spin' button, we felt that Star Clusters could very well be the beginning of a new era for grid slots in the same way Megaways transformed traditional payline gaming. What was your reaction when you read the review? Did we get your vision?

Nik Robinson: [Blushing] I think you got the idea, yes! I know it's never wise to blow your own trumpet, but this game has had me transfixed in demo play for months on end. There's always something new to see, a new way of hitting the feature. Be it getting the gold multiplier up pre-feature, or just knocking out a double-digit set of free spins...

[READ THE FULL INTERVIEW](#)

CHAMPION SPORTS

Will the online poker boom last?

Mark Robson, co-founder of Champions Sports, says operators need to be smart if the current online poker boom is to continue once sport returns.

Online poker has enjoyed something of a resurgence following the global sports blackout resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic with some operators reporting a 60 per cent boom in play.

There are several reasons why players are returning to the game, but the big question operators are asking themselves is whether the higher levels of engagement can be maintained.

That will ultimately depend on the operator and its strategy for acquiring and retaining players, as well as the preferences of the players themselves.

Before discussing how operators may be able to prolong this unexpected rise...

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INCENTIVE GAMES

Incentive Games: Virtuals changing the landscape.

Emerging markets promise to be the driving force behind the future of online sports betting according to John Gordon, CEO of Incentive Games.

The well documented decline in live sports betting over recent months during the Covid-19 pandemic, has led to numerous discussions about how sportsbook and gambling operators can protect their business and retain customer interaction during this peculiar time for the industry.

With all major sporting events and traditional betting leagues across the world either cancelled for the remainder of the respective seasons, placed on indefinite suspension or announced alternative staging dates, sportsbook operators have been forced into making smart decisions about how they offer wagering markets which will keep punters engaged with their product until the current hiatus in live sports comes to an end.

The jump made into virtual sports by this industry group has been significant to say the least. Companies touting opportunities which do not rely on live sports and their...

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FSB

Dave McDowell, FSB: Hitting the bullseye during the global sports blackout.

FSB Tech CEO Dave McDowell (pictured) discusses taking the Remote Darts League (RDL) right through from concept to sourcing players and event production, how he hopes it will open the industry's eyes to the power of FSB's data automation platform, and why the RDL has quickly found a place within the darts community – with opportunities for both male and female players.

SBC: Can you just explain FSB's part in the RDL launch, FarawaySports and any other supporting parties?

DM: When it looked like we were going to lose live sports, we discussed a number of responses. One of those was to create the RDL, while other responses were to add feeds for Table Tennis and to source more esports and virtual sports content for our platform.

Creating the RDL included everything from concept to sourcing players and producing the events, as well as building the technology to collect data and trade the sports.

We felt that the optics of a sports betting supplier producing its own events could be challenging from an integrity point of view, so we created the FarawaySports production house and hired Kevin Dale to independently run the events to ensure the highest possible levels of integrity. We also informed the Gambling Commission of our involvement before the first tournament started.

Given the concerns over customer well-being at the start of the pandemic lockdown period, we ensured that the content was available to end users for free on the...

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BIG TIME GAMING

Big Time Gaming's Star Clusters: 'A genuine hybrid with mass appeal'.

Big Time Gaming precipitated something of a sea change in the slots sector when it introduced the Megaways mechanic around five short years ago.

Now, with Megaways coupled with hit titles like Bonanza and licensed for use by a wide range of third-party game developers, Nik Robinson, BTG CEO and an igaming visionary like few others, is hoping to enjoy similar levels of success with the company's new clusters format, Megaclusters.

So why clusters and why now? Robinson (pictured) sets the scene: "Back in 2003, I came up with the idea of having clusters that matched adjacently, exploded, cascaded in and created more and more reactions.

"That game was Chain Reactors. Since then, a number of different developers have created some incredible cluster games.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)





How and when did you first get into the iGaming industry?

I first got into the field at Ladbrokes (which became Ladbrokes Coral during my time there) after I left a small start-up in north London. I'd got to visit Las Vegas as part of that job but it wasn't working out and, as a huge sports fan, I was delighted to have been offered a role by 'Laddies.' My time at the Rayners Lane office was fantastic; we watched sport all day with a TV at each desk (as part of our job!) and my commute was only 30 minutes. The content and social teams were both great bunches but most of them have now moved on – as did I – as a result of the Coral merger.

It's in my current role where I really got to learn about the industry, though, and that actually came after a job as a football coach! I was running Super Soccer Stars London but the company's new owners decided to discontinue the UK branch. I have to be honest, I was heartbroken – while myself and my fiancée Emily (now wife) were told by our landlady to move flat, while I also had to have surgery, so I was hit with a triple whammy.

After my first ever three weeks of unemployment, I met with our CEO Gary Roudette; he took me in and, nearly two years later, I haven't looked back. I absolutely love it here.

What is your job title and what do your day-to-day responsibilities at Gambling Insider include?

I am Gambling Insider's Senior Staff Writer, so I write and edit for our digital and print publications, interview some of the industry's big wigs, lead the GI Friday weekly newsletter and travel to different events (when it's not lockdown, of course). Most recently, I hosted the AffiliateCon Virtually Live event, which was a real privilege, while we are also expanding our video content, so watch out for some of my upcoming video interviews on the Gambling Insider website. Right now, it's nice for my day-to-day duties to include being on the receiving end of the questions for a change!

I'll also take this chance to thank some of the colleagues who help me on a daily basis. Mariya Savova in operations is brilliant to work with, the rest of the editorial team is fantastic – and sorry to any previous GI journos but this is our best team ever. The design team are wonderful and the sales guys are fantastic, including William Aderelle, who is a pleasure to work with when we meet clients, despite being a Manchester United fan... I can't forget to mention the gaffers – and Tom Powling, our IT maestro!

What are the biggest challenges you face in your role?

For me, the biggest challenge personally is also one mirrored for the industry. As a gambling reporter, I'm a huge advocate of the freedom to gamble. Any prejudices against gambling as a whole are, in my opinion, based on agenda-driven, archaic views and a misunderstanding of the ability to gamble in moderation. But I am aware of opposition to gambling due to malpractice within the industry. Whatever sector or job I'm in, I have to believe in that industry and the good it can do.

Gambling can provide immeasurable entertainment and genuinely offers a thrilling product, alongside sectors like video games, TV and movies. The nature of the industry is such that someone has to lose for the house to win. Yet, if that someone has had an exciting time while losing a bet, it isn't a loss for them – they've received their value. However, problem gambling is another issue entirely. And, as a journalist and analyst within the industry, my biggest challenges are trying to make a difference in the way the industry acts and is perceived, as well as holding to account anyone who has been proven to have done wrong.

Put it this way: any executive who believes it is okay to exploit a problem gambler for everything they have does not have my respect, friendship or collaboration. There are, on the other hand, so many genuinely good people and organisations within this industry and, despite the negative press gambling gets, this is easily the best job I've ever had.

What makes the publication so special?

This is technically a trick question – as one of our key tenets at Gambling Insider is not to accept self-promotional copy! But therein lies one of the reasons to actually answer the question... We strive only to provide the highest-quality content. I won't speak for other publications but, if someone reads one of our articles, we want them to enjoy it, gain insight from it and be satisfied they've read a valuable and articulately written piece.

Without sounding like I'm bragging, we don't accept low quality nor do we produce it. This is best summed up, really, by our LinkedIn page. We don't produce whacky social media posts with 100 different hashtags, we just post the content we have – and our follower count growing from 1,500 to nearly 16,000 in 18 months suggests our audience likes that.



Whilst we've been on lockdown what have been your three favourite Netflix shows to watch and why?

In terms of movies I had a bit of a crime film spree earlier in lockdown. But my top three shows have been: Friends – which I'll probably just re-watch for the 1,000th time on DVD and Comedy Central if it comes off Netflix – Impractical Jokers and Steve Carell's new show Space Force.

It's been panned by critics but I loved it – and it has both the actress who played Phoebe in Friends, and the actor who played Phoebe's biggest fan!

Do you have a favourite book or podcast that you'd recommend anyone to read/listen to?

Funnily enough, as someone who writes and reads a huge amount on the job, I am a little bit 'read-out' when my spare time comes round so I am not the most avid book reader. At school, it was The Great Gatsby but, more recently, I'm a huge fan of sports autobiographies.

As a Liverpool fan, I'd recommend John Arne Riise's book – which he signed for me so it takes pride of place on my bookshelf – and Peter Crouch's is hilarious. As much as I love Emile Heskey, unfortunately his autobiography (a Christmas present) wasn't the most riveting read...

If he ever releases another, I'd happily offer to ghost write a more enthralling one for him! Especially as one of my WhatsApp chats is named "Heskey Appreciation Group."

Podcast-wise, I have truly enjoyed the Match of the Day Top 10 podcasts during lockdown. Gary Lineker, Alan Shearer and Ian Wright are fantastic storytellers when they're just being themselves and not trying to imitate the in-depth analysis of a Jamie Carragher or Gary Neville. I'm still waiting for their reply to my praise on Twitter, however...

What's your favourite quote or motto?

For a guy who loves to talk, I am surprisingly stumped by this one.

But the quote I use the most day-to-day is a silly one: it's Peter Griffin from Family Guy saying "woah, woah, woah!" – usually with the accompanying GIF.

There are also tons of Friends quotes I mention on a daily basis; though my 'motto' in life is there are only two things that really matter: success and happiness.