GC BRIEFING.

MONTHLY IGAMING INTELLEGENCE

ISSUE 01

AUGUST, 2026

THE MONTH OF JULY, BRIEFED

THE £243M RESHUFFLE

The all-share deal that redraws the UK betting map. Inside: what Bally's Intralot buying evoke means for William Hill and 888, and where the money, the regulators and the people moved in July.

DEAL TRACKER

£243.1m

REGULATORY RADAR

6

NEW VOICE

Gali Hartuv

£243.1m
Value of the Bally's Intralot all-share takeover deal for evoke

30.02%
Kenneth Dart's Evolution stake, triggering mandatory bid rules

£4.75m
Evolution Malta's AML settlement with the Gambling Commission

100m+
Total bets processed by Kambi across the FIFA World Cup 2026

5,000
Fake online casino websites identified in one GameCheck sweep

3m+
Geolocation checks logged by GeoComply at Alberta's launch

ALBERTA OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Canada's second regulated online market went live on July 13, and the supplier land-grab was instant: Playtech, Play'n GO, Pragmatic Play, Greentube, Inspired, 1X2 Network, Peter & Sons and Gaming Corps all confirmed entries within three weeks. GeoComply logged over three million checks in the launch window. Watch next: the first market-share data and which Ontario playbooks translate.

PREDICTION MARKETS GET A HOME

On July 13 Gibraltar became the first jurisdiction in the world with a bespoke prediction-market regime, a standalone framework covering market integrity, contract approvals, surveillance and stablecoin settlement. ADI PredictStreet took the inaugural licence; Wire Markets received approval in principle. Watch next: which jurisdiction copies the template first.

FANATICS BUYS ITS OWN RAILS

Fanatics agreed on July 27 to acquire Water Street Labs (a CFTC-registered exchange) and CX Clearinghouse (a registered clearinghouse) from BGC Group, letting Fanatics Markets list and clear its own federally regulated contracts across 23 states. The retail and institutional line in prediction markets just got thinner. Watch next: who else buys a DCM.

EVOLUTION'S STORMIEST MONTH

A billionaire at 30.02% with a mandatory-bid clock ticking, the Galaxy Gaming acquisition cancelled after US approval delays, and a £4.75m UKGC settlement, all in one July. Going-private speculation is no longer fringe. Watch next: Dart's four-week deadline in late August.

THE WORLD CUP CASHES OUT

The Spain and Argentina final capped a tournament that broke betting records everywhere: Kambi cleared 100 million bets, OpenBet and Norsk Tipping posted platform highs, and France's ANJ confirmed record handle. Apptopia's data showed prediction-market apps overtaking sportsbooks during the knockouts. Watch next: who retains the World Cup cohort.

UK HEAT RISES ON EVERY FRONT

The Gambling Commission confirmed it will press ahead with financial risk assessments despite BGC backlash, the CMS committee opened a probe into the regulator itself, and the Court of Appeal rejected the challenge over the 4th National Lottery licence. Entain publicly welcomed the government's unlicensed-gambling consultation. Watch next: Andy Burnham's cabinet influence on the sector.

The month's money, in one table

Every acquisition, raise and sale process tracked in July, with status and the one line that matters.

DEAL	TYPE	VALUE	STATUS	WHY IT MATTERS
BALLY'S INTRALOT & EVOKE	M&A	£243.1M	SIGNED	Every distressed operator in Europe just got repriced.
FANATICS & BGC	M&A	PRIVATE	ANNOUNCED	Fanatics now owns its own federal exchange and clearing rails.
DART & EVOLUTION	Stake	30.02%	IN DILIGENCE	Mandatory-bid rules put a going-private squarely on the table.
MERKUR & WHITE HAT	M&A	PRIVATE	ANNOUNCED	Germany's giant buys a content route into regulated US states.
VECTIQ & PLAYCANADA	Asset sale	PRIVATE	COMPLETED	Affiliate assets are being repriced around Alberta's launch.
BRAGG & DRAYTON	M&A	PRIVATE	ANNOUNCED	Mid-tier supplier consolidation shows no sign of slowing.

6
Deals tracked this month across M&A, funding and sale processes

£243.1m
Largest completed transaction of the month

4
Prediction-market infrastructure changed hands four times in July

Every deadline that matters

Consultations closing, levies landing, hearings scheduled. August through October, so compliance never gets surprised.

21 AUG

Sweden • Evolution mandatory-bid deadline

Candle Lake must launch a mandatory offer (~SEK700/share) or cut its Evolution stake below 30% within four weeks of its July 24 disclosure.

High

? AUG

UK • UKGC financial risk assessments, next phase

UKGC will enforce financial risk assessments despite BGC pushback, with the next implementation phase expected within the quarter.

High

? SEP

EU • AMLA consultation on AML risk closes

The EU's new AML authority opened public consultations in mid-July; responses shape supervisory expectations for gambling operators.

Watch

? SEP

US • Minnesota prediction-market ban

Event-contract products must meet full betting licensing and AML obligations to remain live.

Watch

? OCT

Gibraltar • Prediction Market Regulations milestones

The world-first regime is live; first-wave licensing and compliance milestones follow through autumn as operators onboard.

Watch

? OCT

Canada • Alberta transition deadline

Registered operators not live on day one must fully launch or exit by October, when AGLC's transition window closes.

Watch

HOW TO READ THE RADAR

High — Hard deadline with sanctions attached

Watch — Consultation or review that shapes future rules

6

Dated regulatory events inside the next ninety days

WATCHLIST

Undated but live: the US prediction-market jurisdiction fight (Minnesota, Arizona cease-and-desists, Kalshi's legal threat against Netflix), the UK government's consultation on banning unlicensed operators, and Kenneth Dart's next move on Evolution. Each moves to the radar the day it gets a date.

05 ON THE MOVE

JULY 2026

Appointed

Richard Harris

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Takes the top job at the Grosvenor and Mecca owner as UK reform reshapes the casino estate.

Appointed

Antoine Jouteau

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Steps in to lead the gaming arm as Banijay moves on JOA and builds a French powerhouse.

Appointed

Katarina Polach Klcovska

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Takes charge of the Czech group with a mandate spanning land-based, online and global growth.

Appointed

Virginie Christnacht

CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Joins the French giant's leadership as FDJ United sharpens its post-Kindred identity.

Appointed

Måns Svalborn

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Brings capital-markets discipline as the affiliate sector consolidates around bigger players.

New Role

Simon Cox

CHAIR

Inherits racing's levy fight and its uneasy relationship with betting reform.

New Role

Teemu Koski

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Leads the esports group's push into gaming's fastest-moving regional frontier.

New Role

Ryan Collinge

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Steps up as the platform provider accelerates its regulated-market and US expansion.

"

If an estate this size clears at 243 million pounds, every distressed operator in Europe has just been repriced.

GC newsroom, on the Bally's Intralot purchase of evoke

"

Gibraltar didn't wait for consensus on prediction markets. It wrote the rules from scratch and published them.

GC newsroom, on the world-first prediction-market regime

"

A licence in hand beats a lobbying campaign. ADI PredictStreet now owns something no other operator on earth has.

GC newsroom, on the inaugural Gibraltar prediction-market licence

"

When a sports merchandiser buys a federal exchange, the line between betting and finance stops being theoretical.

GC newsroom, on Fanatics acquiring BGC's trading infrastructure

"

A supplier nearly lost its UK licence over websites it never operated. Every B2B contract just got re-read.

GC newsroom, on Evolution Malta's £4.75m UKGC settlement

"

One hundred million bets and an AI trading desk that never blinked. The World Cup was Kambi's proof of concept.

GC newsroom, on the record-breaking tournament numbers

"

A billionaire at thirty percent is not a passive shareholder. The clock on Evolution is now regulatory, not strategic.

GC newsroom, on Kenneth Dart crossing Sweden's mandatory-bid threshold

"

Twenty-plus operators went live in Alberta on day one. Ontario took years to look this crowded.

GC newsroom, on Canada's second regulated market launch

Company	The Playa
Role	Strategic Advisor
Joined	July 2027

VIP Management

Gali Hartuv

Strategic Advisor at The Playa, with more than fifteen years building VIP programmes in iGaming. He drives VIP strategy, retention and loyalty design, from AI-powered VIP identification and hyper-personalisation to scaling operations across markets and cultures, informed by 50+ brands built or optimised. Bringing an operator's perspective, he writes for Gamblers Connect on VIP strategy, retention and player engagement.

Featured voice: Gali Hartuv

Each issue sits down with one contributor from the roster. Three questions, one argument, and where to read the rest.

FROM THE LATEST COLUMN

Every VIP team I have ever met solved this alone. Alone on tooling. Alone on how to structure the team, where to set qualification thresholds, how to decide who gets the call today and who waits.

Everyone built their own answer, inside their own company, and almost nobody compared notes. Which is strange, given the stakes.

GC: You've spent fifteen years in VIP. What problem are you closest to right now?

The absence of a shared picture. There is no average portfolio size, no sense of how much of the week disappears into pulling reports before anyone speaks to a player, no best practice anyone can actually point to.

Every VIP team I have ever met built its own answer inside its own company, and almost nobody compared notes. Given the stakes, miss one signal and a player worth defending is gone before anyone noticed the pattern, that isolation is the problem I want solved first. The survey exists to fix it.

GC: The survey asks about AI directly. What are you hoping to learn there?

The industry has been circling this question for two years, so I wanted to ask it plainly: what would you actually want an AI tool to do for you, and what worries you about letting it into your workflow?

I'm not interested in the hype answer, I'm interested in the honest one, because it shapes what we build. VIP Intelligence, which I'm co-developing with The Playa, reads behaviour instead of deposits, so a player's value is visible on day one rather than week six. But the priorities have to come from the people doing the work, not from my assumptions.

GC: What does someone get for their ten minutes?

Two things, and I take both seriously. First, participants see the findings before anyone else, plus an invite to a closed session where we go through what the data actually says, no press-release version, the real read. There's a discount on the October masterclass and one participant attends free. Second, and more importantly: the masterclass curriculum itself is being built on what comes back.

If the answers tell me the worst part of the week is something I hadn't prioritised, the curriculum changes. But the honest reason to fill it in is simpler, this becomes a benchmark only if enough of us answer it.

GC BRIEFING.

MONTHLY IGAMING INTELLEGENCE

NEXT ISSUE

SEPTEMBER, 2026

WHERE TO FIND US

29 - 01 SEP OCT	SBC Summit 2026 - Lisbon, Portugal
02 - 05 NOV	SiGMA World 2026 - Rome, Italy

PREMIUM PARTNERS