



Pushing the boundaries

Martin De Knijff, founder and director of Metric Gaming, talks up his firm's

plans for taking on daily fantasy sports giants DraftKings and FanDuel with a new in-play format

Q *How is your daily fantasy sports platform different to those already in the space? Can you take on market leaders FanDuel and DraftKings?*

A The daily fantasy sports contests on the market today are offered almost exclusively in the salary cap draft format, even though 95% of all fantasy sports players participate in leagues that implement a snake or auction draft format instead. Metric would seek to capitalize on this widespread familiarity among the majority of fantasy sports customers by offering a first-to-market fantasy 'robot' – available 24/7 – to engage participants in live, real time snake draft fantasy contests on demand, including in-play contests.

Q *What is the legal foundation for offering in-play fantasy sports markets? Does it push the boundaries of what defines a 'game of skill'?*

A A 'game of skill' is an inherently subjective term, which is not always conducive to a straightforward legal analysis. To the extent that daily fantasy eliminates certain elements of skill, it compensates by introducing elements of skill that are brand new. For example, successful daily fantasy players must analyze one-time player match-ups and project individual daily player performances based on factors that in traditional leagues focused primarily on season long averages may be largely irrelevant. Some might argue that accurately predicting which players will over perform on any given day requires more skill

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than correctly predicting which players will over perform over the course of a season.

Metric believes true skill in predictive analysis is measured by an individual's ability to process and interpret available information. The more information available, the more skill required to differentiate oneself from the crowd. With in-play fantasy, players now need to analyze athlete performance in real time and base drafting decisions not only on how an athlete performed in previous games, but how an athlete is performing in the game that is unfolding.

Q *Is your DFS platform available on mobile and tablet? What percentage of players do you anticipate will come through this channel?*

A Hardcore fantasy players will likely continue to need multiple internet browser windows open to properly research and draft their fantasy teams – an activity for which the limited screen size of smartphones and tablets is not always well suited. But these considerations can be largely addressed via smarter and more intuitive mobile user interfaces, and the worldwide trend towards mobile gaming in general makes mobile and tablet compatibility for any fantasy platform an absolute necessity. Whether it be for purposes of drafting or simply following the action live, we believe that in the near future over 90% of all fantasy players will engage in fantasy games via their mobile devices.

Q *Momentum is building behind a federal push for legal sports betting in the US. What impact would that have on DFS?*

A It would be naive to think that of the estimated \$400bn wagered illegally on sports in the US every year, a significant portion of DFS players are not already contributing to that sum. Accordingly, those players' continued consumption of daily fantasy sports would likely be unaffected by the legalization of sports betting. More realistically, those who find DFS compelling today would continue to play, and those who are introduced to sports wagering for the first time via legalization may discover they enjoy the excitement of risking money in connection with sporting events, leading them to become DFS players as well. ■