

Who's who: Martin de Knijff

This month: **Metric Gaming's Head of Business/Product Development**



Favourite...

Movie: Barry Lyndon or Citizen Kane
Music: Bobby Womack
Book: Ulysses
Pastime: Golf (very humbling)
Item of clothing: Armani shirts
Pizza topping: Garlic



How did you first get involved with the gaming industry?

First as a professional sports bettor in 1994, and then as an entrepreneur in 2004. After winning the 2004 World Poker Tour Championship I founded MartinsPoker, a lifestyle poker brand and direct-to-consumer poker site.

What attracted you to this sector?

I discovered I had a knack for critical thinking, analysis and strategy from an early age, which allowed me to excel professionally at bridge, poker and sports betting. Combined with an underlying thirst for innovation and creativity, the gaming sector felt like my best chance to influence and even disrupt an industry – a proposition that in itself I find highly compelling.

What were you doing prior to the gaming industry?

I worked as a consultant for the Swedish Bridge Federation, creating BridgeFestivalen — now the biggest bridge event in Europe. It is a 10-day festival in Örebro with thousands of bridge players competing and socializing from all over the world. BridgeFestivalen is for bridge players what the Sturgis Motor Cycle Festival is for bikers.



What are you responsible for in your current position?

From a product development standpoint, I research the global betting marketplace to identify which products are most successful and why, then develop ways to upgrade, enhance or otherwise improve on them. I will also think “outside the box” to come up with brand new, innovative wagering products – particularly for mobile channels – that I believe could be intriguing to sports bettors worldwide.

What have been the biggest industry changes you've seen in your time?

The “death” of the desktop, where practically all online gaming is now (or soon will be) consumed on mobile channels. Watching the industry scramble to adapt to this completely new landscape represents the most fundamental industry shift I've seen in my

career, and I expect new generations of gamblers will inevitably gravitate towards the companies with mobile-optimized solutions.

What are the biggest positive factors for your sector right now?

iGaming is becoming more mainstream, and the width of the perimeter is expanding. We see large media corporations and now even sports organizations starting to embrace sports betting — a clear indication of growth to come. Sports are also one of the few remaining broadcasts that are consumed live rather than on-demand or DVR – presenting an increasingly rare opportunity to grab viewers' undivided attention. Compelling, instant-gratification content, such as sports betting, fantasy sports or other in-game competitive propositions are the undeniable wave of the future.

And what are the negatives ones – the obstacles to growth?

Outdated, inconsistent legislation and conflicting, often overly-bureaucratic regulations within the U.S. and across the globe. The industry would benefit tremendously from a streamlined, pragmatic, harmonised approach to regulation that helps bridge the gap between legislators, gaming operators and suppliers.

Looking at your entire career, what do you think was your smartest move?

Moving from Stockholm, which allowed me to experience and appreciate different cultures. It most definitely helped me grow as a person, but also gave me a better understanding of the business.

And dumbest one?

Romantically, investing tons of money in an organic “whole foods”-type restaurant project. It is a cardinal sin to invest in something you have no understanding of whatsoever. I got what I deserved.

Where do you hope you'll be, professionally, in ten years' time?

I hope to still be in the business. I find it most stimulating, and it keeps my grey cells active and young.

If you'd never embarked on this career, what other line(s) of work would you have liked to pursue?

Stock broker/analyst, or chef (love food too much).