

As Offshore Sports Betting Biz Reels Newly Aggressive Book Seeks Players

Any port in a storm might be okay for troubled seafaring folk, but it is not an acceptable policy for fussy, battle-scarred sports bettors seeking reliable, well managed offshore bookmakers.

Since the U.S. government last year stepped up its addlepatated, dysfunctional campaign to disenfranchise online gambling, bettors no longer have a wide variety of player-friendly sportsbooks from which to choose. With many established shops currently eschewing business from Americans, and others imposing arbitrary, anti-player rules, while cutting back on perks and offering convoluted excuses for delaying payments, it is no longer a buyer's market.

In this fearful new world, the environment in which the books operate mitigates against players easily finding all the benefits that they became accustomed to during the Golden Age of offshore sports betting -- 1995-2006.

However, to suggest that doom and gloom reign would be misleading. Never discount the ingenuity and resolve of serious bookmakers to satisfy their clients, or the desire of sports bettors to scratch their itch. Today's online landscape may not be as abundant in opportunities for bettors as it once was, but there are still outs that are dedicated to serving discerning punters.

One book which heretofore had maintained a low profile -- www.bigworldcasino.com -- intends to fill the need for a book that is run by professionals who know how to take care of their customers while operating in the black. We became aware of the shop when an old acquaintance we know from his days at Betmaker contacted us.

Robert Foster is now sales director and customer acct. manager at the Costa Rican owned and operated company. He noted that the book has a history with a positive track record, but now is getting more aggressive in going after business.

It is a fact of life that bettors today are frustrated with the way many offshore sportsbooks operate. Customer service has declined, the cost of transferring funds is often passed on to the player, arbitrary rules that favor the books are enforced, and slow payment is more frequent.

“With all the turmoil and volatility that has impacted this industry and its players,” said Foster, “we feel that there is room for, indeed the need for, a sportsbook that has deep pockets, a strict policy of prompt payments and a commitment to give bettors a full service company that respects and appreciates their business.”

He acknowledged that some competitors are also filling this need. “But we offer a little extra in enthusiasm and dedication to satisfy our players. There are many bettors still looking for their first online relationship, and we hope to give them lots of incentives to choose us. Let me emphasize that this is not a startup company. Our website has been online since 2002.”

He cited a 35 percent initial bonus to new signups, as well as 1.05 juice throughout the week. Unlike some shops which spring unpleasant surprises on players, BigWorld's rules are clearly displayed and easily accessed, Foster noted.

And for experienced bettors who have another book, he said, “We realize that it makes sense for them to have an additional out for reasons such as line shopping, money management, and bonuses. We are giving them many rationales to bet with BigWorld.

“Check our numbers, we are not a 'clone' book. Moreover, on all of our lines is a nice added value for bettors. Just click on any game and it reveals if there has been a line change in the last five minutes.

“Since we have sharp, savvy bookmakers managing our odds, we can give bettors a little more than those shops that run scared. Our teaser payoffs do not penalize those who wish to bet into the tighter NFL numbers. For instance, our odds on a two-team, 6-point teaser are even money, for both NFL and college games.

“We allow customers to buy on or off of all numbers, including 3, at competitive prices.”

Foster pointed to his long experience in working with offshore players. “I have earned a pretty good reputation, and now that I'm again in a responsible position with a classy company like BigWorld, I intend to help this book grow into one of the industry leaders.”

If there is one area of conflict that irritates the hell out of players, it is the policy of some books to indulge in overkill when dealing with those suspected of being wiseguys, beards, syndicate players, etc.

Foster assured us that BigWorld is not run by paranoid bookmakers. “We respect, but do not fear sharp players,” he insisted. “Their action is quickly recognized, and we are happy to offer them limits with which they can live. Some books are quick to kick out professional bettors. But we feel they can help us sharpen our lines, as well as offset public money at times.

“Having said that, let me assure anyone who is considering playing with us that we are not cowboys. BigWorld would not jeopardize its liquidity by going *mano-a-mano* with syndicates. But neither do we confuse bettors who are simply frequent winners with professionals.”

With the online sports betting world still a little punchy after the U.S. government has tried to impose its antediluvian morality on those of us who enjoy backing our opinions with more than hot air, we need all the help that is available. Ideally, BigWorldCasino will fulfill its promise and make life a little bit brighter for those who do not wish to let a bunch hypocritical politicians choose what they may and may not do.

There is one BigWorld operating rule which we would suggest merits changing or modifying -- the rule that if an account is inactive for six or more months, the user forfeits the balance. Of course, getting around that rule is elementary: do not use the book like a bank. For instance, if you are not going to make any bets after the Super Bowl, till next football season, withdraw all your funds.

Additionally, Foster noted that BigWorld shares the same platform for wagering and customer service as Cascade, a book with a troubled history. “However, the companies have entirely different ownership,” he explained. “There is absolutely no connection between BigWorld and Cascade. I want to make that distinction clear in the interests of full disclosure.”

This story is not intended as a full scale review of BigWorld, and we don't make recommendations, since different players have different priorities. And there would be a conflict of interest. However, assuming Foster's assertions are accurate, BigWorld could be a breath of fresh air in an industry suffering from halitosis. And we feel that given what we have heard from Robert, seen at its website, and having played in its book, that this shop is definitely worth checking out.