

NHL herald ICE North America as the place to develop sports sponsorship's evolution

Following the signing of the first commercial partnerships between sports bodies and gambling brands, both sectors are primed to build on the potential of sports sponsorship – a topic which is of keen interest to Keith Wachtel, Chief Business Officer and Executive Vice President, NHL.

Speaking ahead of the first edition of ICE VOX North America (May 14-15, Boston, MA, USA) where he will be appearing on a distinguished panel alongside other key names from the worlds of sport and betting, he said: “The NHL has added three major sponsors in the shape of William Hill, FanDuel and MGM Resorts since the repeal of PASPA, and continues to drive its aim of providing an innovative and sustainable betting landscape going forward.

"While it's too early to determine fan betting behavior, since the launch of the Vegas Golden Knights in 2017-18, the handle on the sport of hockey is up over 100 per cent, which is a good indication of more opportunities to come. The NHL has taken a progressive approach to sports betting, working directly with the industry and focusing on commercialization and innovative opportunities for fan engagement. We're focused on being at the forefront of innovation and developing technology – including our puck and player tracking product - which provide more data and tremendous insights to the game.”

He added: “State-by-state legislation, data requirements and opportunities for broader fan engagement will be the main talking points in Boston in my opinion. It's been almost a year since the Supreme Court overturned PASPA and we've seen the sports betting landscape change and evolve at a rapid pace. Bringing together experts from every facet of the sports gaming industry in a vibrant setting like Boston provides an ideal opportunity to network, share learnings from the past year and strategize for the future.

“With our practical approach to sports betting and being the only professional sports league of the big four with a team in Las Vegas, we welcome professional opportunities to connect directly with industry leaders and participate in thought leadership in this rapidly changing environment. In relation to US gaming industry partnerships, we will continue to see new trends emerge and, while gaming operators will try to seek building market share, I believe the focus will shift to technology and the digital experience on operators platforms.”

Wachtel will be discussing what a successful sports sponsorship partnership could look like. He will be joined on the panel by: Randall Boe, Commissioner, Arena Football League and Executive Vice President & General Counsel, Monumental Sports & Entertainment; Adam Davis, Chief Revenue Officer, Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment; Jim Frevola, SVP & Chief Sales Officer, Vegas Golden Knights; and, Laila Mintas, Chairwoman of the Strategic Advisory Board, Bet.Works.

To download the full ICE VOX North America conference agenda and register for the disruptive learning and networking opportunity featuring the region's MVPs from across Sports Betting, iGaming, Esports, iLottery and Affiliate Marketing, visit: icenorthamerica.com/learning