

# BEYOND THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Latin America presents a big opportunity for igaming operators, but **Ian Bradley**, chief product officer at SBTech, says those eyeing the region must be aware that player preferences and regulations vary widely across countries and there's significant interest in sports other than football.

**The Latin American** sports betting market represents a significant opportunity for operators with the ability – and the agility – to cater to a young, uniquely passionate and hugely diverse bettor base.

The average bet size across the region is larger than in many European markets, presenting opportunities for higher lifetime value for bookmakers that know how to create quality player journeys and marry the intelligent use of data with seamless experiences across all devices.

The key to unlocking value is to appreciate the different priorities of players in each territory, both in terms of the sports they focus on and the betting markets they favour. Of equal importance, however, is an understanding of the dynamic regulatory environment throughout the region, which will define the evolution of the industry over the next few years. With new legislation in the works in numerous countries, speed to market is of the essence, meaning that both new and existing operators need to partner with technology providers that can supply a readily adaptable platform.

## A complex region

SBTech's experience in Mexico, with Ganabet and PLE, and in Argentina with Spingol, two of the largest LatAm markets, demonstrates how vital it is to offer truly localised offerings which meet the demands of very distinct demographics.

Mexican bettors follow US sports very closely. The National Football League, Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League markets deliver the highest turnover,

with moneyline and over/under naturally dominating the action. Soccer betting, even on the biggest events like the World Cup and Copa América, tends to generate lower turnover than in Argentina, which, like most other Latin markets, is much more focused on the beautiful game, both nationally and globally.

Mexico, with its US orientation, also presents significant opportunities for new statistics-based approaches. Fantasy football is expected to be pivotal in this area, while P2P prop bets could also play a major part.

Parlay bets are also a vital part of the equation, as combos/accumulators are in all territories, appealing to casual bettors and seasoned veterans alike. A well-managed sportsbook will always factor in features that enhance the overall experience in this area, from boosted winnings on successful parlays to insurance for when one selection misses the mark.

Other key markets, especially Brazil, are known for a special focus on sports with a significant local profile, such as beach volleyball and futsal. As SBTech expands its footprint throughout Latin America, one of our priorities is to recruit the best local talent in terms of sportsbook and marketing strategies, to create carefully calibrated content that meets the demands of each territory.

## Local lessons

In-play continues to offer some of the biggest growth potential throughout the region. In Europe, as well as in Latin America, we've discovered that offering powerful in-play features is vital in terms of attracting and retaining new players.

Cash out is one of the most useful tools

for any bettor, and SBTech's flexible cash out has proven immensely popular with all segments. The ability to choose how much of an in-running bet to take off the table while leaving the rest active is crucial for providing the sense of control that all players want. Devising features that demonstrate a deep understanding of how customers think is one of the best ways of generating genuine loyalty in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

An omni-channel approach is also important to maximise opportunities in Latin America. With some of the world's fastest-growing figures for smartphone penetration, the region offers huge potential for true omni-channel service, as we've witnessed through our partnership with PLE, which operates an extensive retail network throughout Mexico. When it comes to in-play betting, a seamless experience is critical, enabling players to bet in-shop, cash out on mobile and place additional bets online.

Fast markets, meanwhile, deliver an entirely different dimension of live betting. Placing bets on exactly what will happen – from corners and goals to free kicks and yellow cards – in the next one-minute or five-minute period of a live football match creates a gamified experience allowing punters to judge the momentum of a game and bet accordingly. And with similar fast markets available for tennis and basketball, we're seeing increasing take-up from younger players who enjoy the thrill of seeing instant results and receiving immediate payouts.



**Ian Bradley** has more than 10 years' experience in the gaming industry and has worked with companies around the world including Sporting Solutions, Betfair, William Hill, Sky Bet, Betsson, Danske Spil, Tabcorp and CrownBet, to help understand the local challenges they face within the global industry.