

IN THE MATTER of the Gambling Act 2003

AND on an application by
CHRISTCHURCH CASINOS LIMITED for approval to introduce a new wagering option on Three Card Poker

BEFORE THE GAMBLING COMMISSION

Members: G L Reeves (Chief Gambling Commissioner)
P J Stanley
L M Hansen
R D Bell
A K Foote

Date of Application: 23 April 2013

Date of Decision: 10 May 2013

Date of Notification of Decision:  May 2013

**DECISION ON AN APPLICATION BY CHRISTCHURCH CASINOS LIMITED
FOR APPROVAL TO INTRODUCE A NEW WAGERING OPTION
ON THREE CARD POKER**

Introduction

1. Christchurch Casinos Limited (the "CCL") applied to the Commission, under condition 10 of CCL's operator's licence, for approval to introduce a new wagering option on its Three Card Poker game – "Six Card Bonus Wager".

Licence condition

2. The relevant licence condition is as follows:

Operator's licence

10. The approval of the Commission is required prior to the introduction into the Gambling Area of any electronic version of the game types specified in condition 9 above or electronic aids or enhancements or changes to table game rules which create new wagering opportunities.

CCL's submissions

3. CCL submitted, in summary, as follows:
 - (a) The Secretary recently amended the game rules for Three Card Poker to allow an additional wagering option called "Six Card Bonus Wager". It wants to introduce this option.



- (b) While the option has been approved in terms of the game rules, its introduction has the potential to alter the gambling opportunities for this game.
- (c) Decisions on what constitutes an increase in opportunities are for the Gambling Commission to make. The Gambling Commission has previously considered similar requests (see decision GC37/11) and determined that additional wagering opportunities are unlikely to have any significant effect, the expectation being that when used in addition to existing wagers, they would slow the pace of the game which would theoretically offset the new wagering option.
- (d) It has conducted a trial of the game on a closed table to determine the effect of the additional wager. The result of the trial was that the expected outcome proved to be true.
- (e) The accepted speed of play for Three Card Poker is 11.25 rounds in 15 minutes. The trial involved two 15 minute sessions, the first with a manual shoe and the second using an automatic shuffler. The first session resulted in approximately 6 rounds dealt and the second resulted in approximately 10 rounds dealt. The DIA's local gambling Inspectorate reviewed the trial and confirmed the results.
- (f) The Six Card Bonus Wager will not increase opportunities for casino gambling. There is no need to adjust existing game mixes.

Secretary's submissions

- 4. The Secretary submitted, in summary, as follows:
 - (a) To test the effect of the Six Card Bonus Wager, CCL conducted a trial of Three Card Poker on a closed table. The test showed that the speed of play was not increased by introducing the Six Card Bonus Wager. The rate of play using the Six Card Bonus Wager was actually lower than the accepted speed of play for Three Card Poker in the two test sessions undertaken. His Inspectorate reviewed camera footage of the test and confirmed the results are as outlined by CCL.
 - (b) He has no regulatory concerns regarding the introduction of the new wagering option.

Analysis

- 5. CCL sought Commission approval to deploy a new wagering option on Three Card Poker – Six Card Bonus Wager.



6. The application raised two issues for consideration, as follows:

- (a) whether Commission approval is required to deploy the new wagering option; and
- (b) if the new wagering option is deployed, will there be an increase in opportunities for casino gambling?

Is Commission approval required?

7. The Commission has considered this issue previously; deciding that all new wagering options must be approved by the Commission before they are deployed. The Commission's rationale for doing so is that a new wagering option has the potential to increase opportunities for casino gambling, which is prohibited by section 11 of the Act. Decisions on what constitutes an increase in opportunities for casino gambling are a function and responsibility of the Gambling Commission pursuant to section 12 of the Act, as CCL observed.

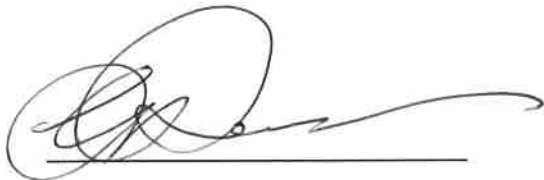
Will the new option increase opportunities for casino gambling?

8. Pursuant to section 367 of the Act, the Secretary amended game rules for Three Card Poker to provide for the Six Card Bonus Wager option. The Commission considered whether the deployment of that option would, in the round, increase opportunities for casino gambling. The Commission decided that it would not because, although an additional wagering option would be introduced, the utilisation of that option would either take the place of another opportunity or slow the game sufficiently that there would be no overall increase in opportunities for casino gambling. The test data supplied by CCL supported this assessment.
9. Finally, the Commission notes that parties made reference to "the accepted speed" of Three Card Poker. As the Commission has noted in numerous previous decisions, the arithmetical data put forward by operators, including the calculated rate of play for each table game, may offer some guidance to parties and to the Commission about relative game speed within certain parameters, but the test data are highly artificial and the resulting calculations are far from definitive and only ever form part of the Commission's commonsense, in the round, appraisal. There is no "accepted speed" for Three Card Poker, nor any other table game.



Decision

10. The Commission approved, pursuant to condition 10 of CCL's operator's licence, the introduction of the Six Card Bonus Wager on Three Card Poker at Christchurch casino.



Graeme Reeves
Chief Gambling Commissioner

for and on behalf of the
Gambling Commission

30th May 2013

