



ASA Ruling on Bonne Terre Ltd t/a Sky Bet

⚖ Upheld | Television

| 13 March 2019

Ad description

A TV ad for Sky Bet, seen on 30 August 2018, promoting their "Request a Bet" service. The football presenter Jeff Stelling said, "Forget 'anything can happen', in sport anything does happen. But could it be better? With Request a Bet it could. Spark your sports brain and roll all the possibilities into one bet. Three red cards, seven corners, five goals: lets price that up. Or browse hundreds of request a bets on our app. The possibilities are humongous. How big is your sports noggin? Sky Bet, Britain's most popular online bookmaker. When the fun stops, stop." A large screen behind the presenter featured various odds and statistics as well as a graphic of brain waves emanating from his head.

Issue

Two complainants, who believed it implied that those with a good knowledge of sports were likely to experience gambling success, challenged whether the ad was irresponsible.

Response

Sky Bet said that the ad made two references to knowledge, the first being "Spark your sports brain" and secondly "how big is your sports noggin?", which in the context of the ad referred to consumers using their knowledge to build a bet using the Sky Bet Request a Bet feature. They said that there were a number of parameters that customers could choose to build their bet and they would use knowledge of the relevant sport in order to do that. The ad made no reference to knowledge increasing someone's chances of winning and referred to the possibilities of customers building their own bet. The ad also stated "In sports anything can happen" which emphasised that the outcome of bets were in no way guaranteed and the ad made no reference to knowledge of sports increasing gambling success.

They explained that it was accepted that knowledge of a specific sport would on the whole increase a consumer's chances of success. Many customers researched, studied and followed sports to a degree which would give them an "edge" over a bookmaker. They said their own Trading Team used knowledge, research and information in order to set the odds of specific outcomes. Therefore, customers who generally would have access to the same information

would potentially be able to predict the odds of a specific outcome to a similar degree. One of the key elements of sports betting was knowledge of the relevant sport, which was why there was a market for sports tipsters and professional gamblers.

Clearcast said that they felt the ad was in line with similar sports betting treatments, where the focus was on the excitement and possibilities within sports for fans, rather than on the outcome of the bet or on the possibilities of winning. The voice-over invited the viewer to consider all the different outcomes of a game, while making the point that “anything does happen”. While there were several possibilities which could have occurred, there was no way to predict what would actually happen during a game even with good knowledge of the sport. They said they did not believe the ad was irresponsible or promised guaranteed success for those who followed the game.

Assessment

Upheld

The ad contained a number of references to the role of sports knowledge in betting, such as “spark your sports brain” and “how big is your sports noggin”. It also included a well-known sports presenter, who viewers would recognise as having a particular expertise in sports, and on-screen graphics used to depict brain waves and various odds. The ASA considered that, taking all those elements into account, the ad placed strong emphasis on the role of sports knowledge in determining betting success. We acknowledged it was the case that those with

knowledge of a particular sport may be more likely to experience success when betting. However, we considered that the ad gave an erroneous perception of the extent of a gambler's control over betting success, by placing undue emphasis on the role of sports knowledge. We considered that this gave consumers an unrealistic and exaggerated perception of the level of control they would have over the outcome of a bet and that could lead to irresponsible gambling behaviour. We therefore concluded that the ad breached the Code.

The ad breached BCAP Code rules 17.3 and [17.3.1](#) (Gambling).

Action

The ad must not be broadcast again in the form complained of. We told Bonne Terre t/a Sky Bet to ensure in future that their ads did not condone or encourage gambling behaviour that was socially irresponsible, for example by creating an unrealistic perception of the level of control consumers would have over betting success.

BCAP Code

17.3.1

More on

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