

### **William Hill crowns eSports start-up as winner of industry-first accelerator programme**

- *BetGame chosen for its unique gaming innovation, bringing social betting to popular console and PC games such as FIFA*
- *Winner awarded £150,000 investment, and ongoing partnership with William Hill to roll out product*
- *Racing legend Sir AP McCoy presents prize at special showcase with guests including Jason Bradbury and Robbie Savage*

**LONDON, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016:** William Hill, the world's leading betting and gaming company, last night announced BetGame as the winner of its industry-first start-up accelerator programme at a special showcase event. Presented with £150,000 of investment, William Hill will also partner with the gaming start-up to maximise the commercial opportunities of BetGame's product.

BetGame were chosen for their unique eSports product that allows online gamers to bet on their favourite games with their friends or other gamers. BetGame's unique IP seamlessly overlays a betting app onto mainstream console and PC games and can integrate with other platforms like Twitch (the world's leading video platform and community for gamers) and Facebook to create an innovative and exciting experience for gamers. The product has received strong positive feedback in the beta testing phase and will be officially launched in Q1 2016, initially for FIFA 2016 with support for other titles to follow soon after.

The accelerator programme was run through WH Labs, William Hill's dedicated innovation division, and in partnership with innovation consultancy L Marks. The programme was created to foster pioneering technology start-ups that are creating the compelling in-store, online or omni-channel customer experiences of the future.

The five finalists participated in a twelve-week programme to develop their ideas and received extensive mentoring and support at WH Labs in London and in William Hill's Tel Aviv office. The programme culminated in a demo day event where the teams presented their products to 13 judges - formed of William Hill's senior management team – and the recipient of the £150,000 investment was selected.

All of the participants in the accelerator programme were chosen for the unique technologies they created for the betting sector, making the overall competition fierce. The finalist line-up included Asylum Labs (creators of the Wild Party Bingo app), Streetlike (IoT rewards through digital signage), Skillzzgaming (combining gambling games with skill) and Winkapp (creating URLs that bridge offline and online media). Skillzzgaming also received the 'Highly Commended' award for their work integrating skill-based mobile games with the thrill of luck and gambling.

Yesterday, Channel 5 Gadget Show presenter Jason Bradbury hosted the WH Labs accelerator showcase evening and introduced the five tech start-up finalists with live demonstrations of each product. In front of an audience of industry figures and sporting professionals, including footballing star Robbie Savage, the final £150,000 prize was awarded by legendary jockey AP McCoy.

**Winner Doug Ward of BetGame commented:** "Our product is looking to heighten gaming's competitive element but with a fun and simple way to prove yourself against your friends. It was fantastic that the William Hill team fully embraced this vision and helped develop our ideas over the course of the accelerator programme. During this time the quality of support from our mentors has been outstanding, enabling us to speed up our product development significantly so that we are now in a position for a full commercial roll out of our platform."

**Crispin Nieboer, Interim MD of William Hill Online, said:** "The programme has been very rewarding and provided a great opportunity to work with engaged, enthusiastic and innovative start-ups. With such initiatives we really wanted to actively seek out innovation and help bring those ideas to commercial fruition, rather than waiting for this technology to appear a few years down the line. BetGame is a worthy winner of our first accelerator programme, providing a unique opportunity to disrupt the booming eSports market, and we are looking forward to working together."

**Stuart Marks, CEO of LMarks, also commented:** "Every company likes to talk about innovation, but very few have taken the necessary steps to put it at the core of their business like William Hill. We can really see that this accelerator programme

has had massive benefits for William Hill and all of the finalists. It has demonstrated just how much start-ups and corporates can learn from each other when they collaborate and share knowledge in this way.”

**-ENDS-**

*To arrange an interview with Crispin Nieboer, Interim MD of William Hill Online, to discuss the accelerator programme in more detail please contact [williamhill@wildfirepr.com](mailto:williamhill@wildfirepr.com).*

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### **Notes to editors:**

#### **About William Hill**

William Hill, The Home of Betting, is one of the world's leading betting and gaming companies, employing around 16,000 people. Founded in 1934, it is the UK's largest bookmaker with around 2,360 licensed betting offices that provide betting opportunities on a wide range of sporting and non-sporting events, gaming on machines and numbers-based products including lotteries.

The Group's Online business ([www.williamhill.com](http://www.williamhill.com)) is one of the world's leading online betting and gaming businesses, providing customers with the opportunity to access William Hill's products online, through their smartphone or tablet, by telephone and by text services. William Hill US was established in June 2012 and provides land-based and mobile sports betting services in Nevada, and is the exclusive risk manager for the State of Delaware's sports lottery.

William Hill Australia is one of the largest online betting businesses in Australia after the Group acquired the Sportingbet Australia business in March 2013 and tomwaterhouse.com in August 2013, two of the leading online corporate bookmakers

in Australia, offering sports betting products online, by telephone and via mobile devices. William Hill PLC is listed on the London Stock Exchange. The Group generates revenues of c£1.6bn a year.