

Edina man, brother running illegal remote TikTok bookie business

Written by Administrator

Friday, 20 January 2023 18:11 -

In what a state agency is calling a first, gambling enforcement investigators say they have sniffed out an illegal betting duo roaming Twin Cities-area casinos and for a fee playing slots for gamblers who watch on a TikTok livestream in hopes of striking it rich.

Edina man, brother running illegal remote TikTok bookie business

Written by Administrator

Friday, 20 January 2023 18:11 -

An agent with the Minnesota Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division disclosed in a court filing this week that two men have been running their remote bookie business while at the Mystic Lake Casino in Prior Lake and the Treasure Island Resort & Casino just outside Red Wing in violation of a law that prohibits placing bets on behalf of someone else.

Nicole Roddy, a spokeswoman for the agency, acknowledged the ongoing investigation and added that "prior to that case, we have had no other cases of that nature reported to us."

The search warrant affidavit targets a 39-year-old man from Edina who the agency says is collecting through cash apps an initial \$5.99 subscription fee and then \$25 that he keeps for every \$100 deposited for wagering, which he streams live on the video sharing app TikTok. The affidavit said the man's younger brother is sometimes involved. Neither man has been charged with a crime yet, and the Star Tribune generally does not name suspects before they are charged.

The affidavit filed Tuesday asked permission from the Hennepin County District Court for access to, among other things, the man's monetary transaction information dating to October and other financial records, cash app login history and customer service notes.

The filing and archived videos on the man's main TikTok account, which shows 165,000 followers from around the world, indicate that the betting operation has been going on in at least one of the casinos for the past three months. One session wrapped up just before dawn Thursday.

The affidavit doesn't specify how much money is being won or lost during any one livestream session. Video highlights archived on the man's TikTok page show wads of cash being displayed and slot machines rolling up occasional big jackpots, including one last month that topped \$15,000.

Edina man, brother running illegal remote TikTok bookie business

Written by Administrator

Friday, 20 January 2023 18:11 -

The American Gaming Association, which represents sports books and casinos across the country, said it has never heard of such a gambling scheme. The association's vice president for government relations, Alex Costello, said that "actions like this violate casinos' ... anti-money-laundering protocols and are a threat to our financial system."

Administrators at both casinos appear to be onto the TikTok bookie business. On Jan. 12, the man spoke over livestream about being kicked out of Mystic Lake during a previous visit, according to the affidavit. That same day, he was in his car outside Treasure Island and said he "had just been given a permanent trespass notice," the affidavit read.

Eric Pehle, a longtime spokesman for the Prairie Island Indian Community and its casino, said that "in all my work with the casino, this is a new one on me. In a lot of ways it's shocking, and in a lot of ways it's not."

Pehle said the Prairie Island Gaming Commission started getting tips about the TikTok bookie on Jan. 6, banned him from the casino Jan. 9 and kicked him out again Jan. 12.

"When we learn of potential threats that could harm the business or call into question its integrity, we act swiftly," said Clayton Tix, the commission's executive director. "That's exactly what the Gaming Commission did when we learned that an individual was using his social media platforms to place bets for others.

"While allowing social media influencers to broadcast from inside our property is allowed, placing bets for others is not."

Edina man, brother running illegal remote TikTok bookie business

Written by Administrator

Friday, 20 January 2023 18:11 -

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Gaming Enterprise, which runs Mystic Lake, said in a statement Friday that it allows livestreaming "when it is limited to the guest and their own party [and] are prohibited from engaging in any wagering activity that results in profiting from the wagers of others."

The alleged TikTok gambler declined to be interviewed Friday night, other than to say that he plays with his own money, which he said he's made clear over his livestream many times. State officials declined to comment on the specifics of the case, citing the ongoing investigation ahead of possible charges.

However, its agent's affidavit spells out in great detail how the out-of-bounds enterprise has been attracting followers:

A tipster from Las Vegas contacted the state Jan. 9 to report a man and his brother were livestreaming from casinos over various TikTok accounts and collecting money from followers to be played in slot machines. The man "takes a cut of the money paid to him by his followers, which [he] refers to as a deposit or donation, but is understood to be the followers' total bet."

Another tipster was the mother of a 16-year-old from Pennsylvania who caught wind of the TikTok bookie the night of Jan. 11 "just before her [son] sent ... money to gamble."

The state agent said she watched the livestream from Treasure Island's casino for herself that night, and, "I observed [him] conduct the same illegal gambling activity" that the Las Vegas tipster described.

"It was apparent that [he] was ... placing bets for his followers during this livestream," the state

Edina man, brother running illegal remote TikTok bookie business

Written by Administrator

Friday, 20 January 2023 18:11 -

agent wrote in her affidavit. "[He] would verbally ask players by name which slot machines they wanted [him] to play for them."

At one point, one player in the TikTok chat asked whether the minimum bet was \$100 or \$200. In an apparent attempt to avoid being outed as placing wagers for others, the man responded verbally, "What's the minimum bet? You mean deposit. It's \$125." At other times, payments from gamblers were characterized as "donations."

Roddy, whose agency has been at work in Minnesota since 1996, pointed out that when it comes to any illegal gambling, "it's not just about making sure people follow the law; it's about consumer protection."

Otherwise, she added, "If you place a wager, there's no guarantee that you'll get paid if you win. There's no way to know if the betting will be run fairly."

Read more https://news.google.com/_i/rss/rd/articles/CBMihgFodHRwczovL3d3dy5zdGFydHJpYnVuZS5jb20vY2FzaW5vcy1nYW1ibGluZy1zbG90cy1saXZlc3RyZWftLXRpa3Rvay1yZWd1bGF0aW9uLWdhdWluZy1zb2NpYWwtbWVkaWEtbWlubmVzb3RhLWJldHRpbmctZWRpbmEvNjAwMjQ1MTMwL9IBAA?oc=5