

Emergency Rules

Title 11—DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY Division 45—Missouri Gaming Commission Chapter 40—Fantasy Sports Contests

EMERGENCY RULE

11 CSR 45-40.060 Cash Reserve and Segregated Account Requirements

PURPOSE: This rule addresses the minimum cash reserve and segregated account requirements and the required procedures and documentation for those reserves and segregated accounts.

EMERGENCY STATEMENT: This emergency rule is necessary to address statutory sections enacted in HB 1941 (2016), specifically, sections 313.900, 313.910, 313.920, 313.930, 313.940, 313.950, 313.960, 313.970, 313.990, 313.1000, 313.1010, and 313.1020, which became law on August 28, 2016. This legislation requires the Missouri Gaming Commission (MGC) to regulate and license the management, operation, and conduct of fantasy sports contests and participants.

This bill created the Missouri Fantasy Sports Consumer Protection Act and requires the operators of websites engaged in fantasy sports contests in Missouri to apply for and receive annual licenses from the Missouri Gaming Commission (MGC) prior to operation. It includes a provision for “grandfathering in” fantasy sports contest operators already operating in Missouri prior to April 1, 2016, by allowing them to continue operating until they receive or are denied a license. We estimate this will affect seven (7) operators who will be charged an annual operation fee for net revenue received. This is estimated to generate six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) per year for the Gaming Proceeds for Education Fund. Those operators must submit an application for licensure prior to October 1, 2016. Once licensed, HB 1941 requires operators to segregate players’ funds, maintain a reserve account for the benefit and protection of those funds, establish procedures that will prevent unauthorized withdrawals or commingling of the player and operator funds, as well as provide procedures for a player to report a compromised account. The bill also requires licensed operators to contract with a Certified Public Accountant to conduct an annual financial and internet website audit to ensure compliance with the law. The licensed operators will also have to pay an annual operation fee. Licensed operators may not issue credit to players and may not allow multiple accounts for one (1) player. It requires licensed operators to comply with certain requirements relative to the contests they offer, including requiring that all winning outcomes be determined by accumulating statistical results of fully completed events, forbidding players to select athletes through an auto-draft process, forbidding the licensed operator from awarding any prize to the winner of or athletes in the underlying competition, and not allowing the contest to be based on collegiate, high school, or youth athletics or performances. Licensed operators must also verify each player’s age and state of residence as well as maintain and provide access to online self-exclusion forms and processes. The bill also sets parameters for the disclosure of information and documents.

HB 1941 grants the MGC the authority to oversee all licensed operators and provides the MGC investigatory, licensing, and rule-making powers. The submitted regulations were drafted to provide procedures for licensing fantasy sports contest operators to comply with the statute that became effective August 28, 2016. The rules also provide a consistent regulatory framework from which all of the fantasy sports contest operators can operate. We met with two (2) large operators and two small operators prior to drafting these rules and we solicited comments from three (3) of those companies. We received comments from all three (3) operators and made changes as appropriate and consistent with our statutory duties. Players will benefit

from consistent standards as well, in that they can be secure in knowing that all licensed fantasy sports contest operators accepting wagers from Missouri residents comply with and operate within the same framework; these regulations will provide a level playing field for all parties involved.

Specifically, this emergency rule establishes regulatory procedures for fantasy sports contest operators to follow regarding the minimum cash reserves requirement, as well as setting forth the required documentation.

As such, the MGC finds an immediate threat to the public welfare and a compelling governmental interest to regulate Fantasy Sports Contests which requires this emergency action. The scope of this emergency rule is limited to the circumstances creating the emergency and complies with the protections extended in the Missouri and United States Constitutions. The Missouri Gaming Commission believes this emergency rule is fair to all interested persons and parties under the circumstances. This emergency rule was filed August 29, 2016, becomes effective September 8, 2016, and expires March 6, 2017.

(1) The licensed operator shall maintain in the form of cash or cash equivalents the amount of the deposits made to the accounts of Missouri fantasy sports contest players for the benefit and protection of the funds held in such accounts. For purposes of this rule cash equivalents are investments with an original maturity of three (3) months or less.

(2) Funds held in player accounts of Missouri residents shall be protected as set forth herein. A fantasy sports operator shall maintain a reserve in the form of cash, cash equivalents, or a combination thereof to protect player funds in one (1) of the following ways:

(A) Cash Reserve.

1. The amount of the reserve shall be equal to, at a minimum, the sum of all registered players’ funds held in player accounts of Missouri residents.

2. The reserve agreements must reasonably protect the reserve against claims of the operator’s creditors other than the authorized players for whose benefit and protection the reserve is established, and must provide the following:

A. The reserve shall be established and held in trust for the benefit and protection of authorized players to the extent the licensed operator holds money in player accounts for players;

B. The reserve must not be released, in whole or in part, except upon written instruction or approval of the commission. The reserve must be available within ninety (90) days of written demand or written instruction. If the reserve is released to the commission, the commission may interplead the funds in the circuit court of Cole County for distribution to the authorized players for whose protection and benefit the account was established and to the other such persons as the court determines are entitled thereto, or shall take such other steps as necessary to effect the proper distribution of the funds, or may do both;

C. The licensed operator may receive income accruing on the reserve, without obtaining permission from the commission; and

D. The licensed operator has no interest or title to the reserve.

3. The reserve must be held or issued by a federally insured financial institution and must be established pursuant to a written agreement between the licensed operator and the financial institution.

4. The proposed reserve arrangement is not effective for purposes of complying with section 313.930.3(4), RSMo until the commission’s written approval has been obtained.

5. The reserve arrangement agreements may be amended only with the prior written approval of the commission; and

(B) Special purpose segregated account with a separate corporate entity.

Emergency Rules

1. A fantasy sports contest operator may establish a special purpose segregated account that is maintained and controlled by a properly constituted corporate entity that is not the fantasy sports contest operator and whose governing board includes one (1) or more corporate directors who are independent of the fantasy sports contest operator and of any corporation related to, or controlled by, the fantasy sports contest operator.

2. The special purpose segregated account with a separate corporate entity must hold, at a minimum, the sum of all authorized player funds held in player accounts of Missouri residents for use in fantasy sports contests.

3. The special purpose segregated account must reasonably protect the funds against claims of the operator's creditors other than the authorized players for whose benefit and protection the special purpose segregated fund is established, and must provide that—

A. The segregated account is established and held in trust for the benefit and protection of authorized players;

B. The fantasy sports contest operator may receive income accruing on the segregated account. However, the fantasy sports contest operator has no interest in or title to the segregated account; and

C. The funds in the segregated account held for the benefit of Missouri residents may only be distributed for the following:

(I) For payment to players upon completion of fantasy sports contests or otherwise for the reconciliation of player accounts;

(II) For income earned on the account, to the fantasy sports contest operator;

(III) To the Missouri Gaming Commission in the event that the fantasy sports operator's license expires, is surrendered, or is otherwise revoked. The Missouri Gaming Commission may interplead the funds in the Cole County Circuit Court for distribution to the authorized players for whose protection and benefit the account was established and to other such persons as the court determines are entitled thereto, or shall take such other steps as necessary to effect the proper distribution of the funds, or may do both; or

(IV) As authorized in writing in advance by any agreement approved by the Missouri Gaming Commission.

4. The corporate entity must require a unanimous vote of all corporate directors to file bankruptcy.

5. The corporate entity must obtain permission from the Missouri Gaming Commission prior to filing bankruptcy or entering into receivership.

6. The corporate entity must have articles of incorporation that prohibit commingling of funds with that of the fantasy sports contest operator except as necessary to reconcile the accounts of players with sums owed by those players to the fantasy sports contest operator.

7. The corporate entity must be restricted from incurring debt other than to fantasy sports players pursuant to the rules that govern their accounts for contests.

8. The corporate entity must be restricted from taking on obligations of the fantasy sports contest operator other than obligations to players pursuant to the rules that govern their accounts for contests.

9. The corporate entity must be prohibited from dissolving, merging, or consolidating with another company without the written approval of the Missouri Gaming Commission while there are unsatisfied obligations to fantasy sports contest players.

(3) If, at any time, the licensed operator's total available cash and cash equivalent reserve is less than the amount required by section 313.930, RSMo, the licensee shall notify the commission of this deficiency within forty-eight (48) hours.

(4) Each licensed operator shall continuously monitor and maintain a record of all player deposits and its cash reserves to ensure compliance with the cash reserves requirement.

(5) The licensed operator shall provide the commission with documentation of both the amount of deposits in players' accounts and the amount in cash reserves as of the last day of each month by the fifteenth day of the following month.

AUTHORITY: sections 313.930, 313.1010, and 313.1020, HB 1941, Second Regular Session, Ninety-eighth General Assembly, 2016. Emergency rule filed Aug. 29, 2016, effective Sept. 8, 2016, expires March 6, 2017. An emergency rule and a proposed rule covering this same material will be published in the October 3, 2016, issue of the Missouri Register.