

## Convictions for unlawful gambling

At trial on 6 February 2017, Dylan Rigby and Craig Douglas (directors of Game Gold Tradings Limited, a company which operated and advertised the website [www.FutGalaxy.com](http://www.FutGalaxy.com)) pleaded guilty to offences contrary to the Gambling Act 2005, including the provision of facilities for gambling and advertising unlawful gambling.

Mr Rigby was ordered to pay £174,000 in fines and costs; Mr Douglas was ordered to pay £91,000.

The Commission has said that it was particularly concerned about the popularity of FutGalaxy.com amongst (and its use by) children and young persons.

FutGalaxy.com (which has no official association with the FIFA series of games or EA Sports):

- offered gambling products including sports betting, a jackpot lottery style game, and a higher or lower style game, and
- allowed customers to buy virtual currency called FUT coins, which customers could then use to gamble. They could also convert the FUT coins into FIFA coins, which could in turn be sold for real money on an unauthorised secondary market in which Mr Rigby had an interest.

According to the Gambling Commission's website: *"District Judge, DJ McGarva described the offending as "very grave". He concluded that children had been gambling on the site but that it was impossible to know how many had done so and what the effect of the criminality has been; that, he said, was the "real mischief". Having been shown footage of a 12 year old boy gambling on the website, the Judge described what he had seen as "horrific", adding that the video had "hit home to me how serious this is".*

Sarah Harrison, Gambling Commission CEO, has been quoted as saying:

*"This was one of the most serious cases that has been investigated and prosecuted by the Commission. Its gravity is reflected in the significant financial penalties imposed by the Judge. The defendants knew that the site was used by children and that their conduct was illegal but they turned a blind eye in order to achieve substantial profits. The effect on children of online gambling was rightly described by the Court as 'horrific' and 'serious'. All websites offering gambling facilities in Britain must be licensed; it is the only way in which children and vulnerable people can be protected. This case demonstrates that we will use the full range of our statutory powers to investigate and prosecute individuals and companies who try to operate illegally."*

David Clifton & Suzanne Davies

Clifton Davies Consultancy Limited

[www.cliftondavies.com](http://www.cliftondavies.com)

[dc@cliftondavies.com](mailto:dc@cliftondavies.com)

[sd@cliftondavies.com](mailto:sd@cliftondavies.com)