

32Red wins trademark dispute

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James Bennett



Online casino 32Red has won its trademark dispute against William Hill and will seek compensation from Britain's largest bookmaker following two years of legal proceedings, it has announced in a statement this morning.

The High Court of Justice in London today ruled in favour of 32Red stating that William Hill's use of 32Vegas and 32V had infringed 32Red's European Community (EC) registered trademarks. "The court held that William Hill's 32Vegas casino signs were sufficiently similar to 32Red's marks to cause a likelihood of confusion among consumers," a statement read. It added that William Hill's infringement "caused detriment to the distinctive character and repute of 32Red's trademarks" and dismissed William Hill's counterclaim as to the validity of 32Red's trademark rights in the UK and European Community.

The case is not over, however, as 32Red said it will now ask the court for repayment of "significant legal costs"; an inquiry to take place to assess the extent of "damages or profits" arising from the alleged infringement; as well as an injunction to prevent the use of 32Vegas marks in the EC.

Ed Ware, chief executive of 32Red (pictured) said he was "delighted" that the High Court had upheld the company's claims. "This judgment firmly establishes our intellectual property rights and should deter other operators from infringing our trademarks. As highlighted by the judge, we have an excellent reputation as an online casino operator and a strong brand – these are extremely valuable assets in any marketplace," he added.

32Red formally began proceedings against William Hill in August 2009 claiming that the use of a similar sounding name for an online casino was confusing for players, and that it has led to a loss of income with players opening accounts with 32Vegas believing they were gambling with 32Red.

In August that year 32Red said it believed that 32Vegas made around £4m earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) in 2008. 32Vegas has since been rebranded as 21Nova.

At the time, Ware told *eGaming Review*: "William Hill have been benefiting from this while we have been losing out. It is a big organisation trading on our name and reputation and we will look to recover appropriate damages and compensation."

32Vegas casino was established in 2006 as a Playtech licensee that was transferred over to William Hill as part of the deal that saw the establishment of William Hill Online in October last year.

Source: eGaming Review online magazine