

Dentsu teams up with marketing pioneer to form mind sports venture

Matt Cutler

Mind Sports Partners, a new venture created by Patrick Nally and Dentsu, has announced that two global International Federation of Poker (IFP) tournaments and a Mind Sports Festival will take place in London in November.

The IFP's World Championship, 'The Table', will see 130 of the world's leading players competing for a US\$500,000 prize fund in a no buy-in Texas Hold'em competition at County Hall on November 19-20. The IFP's inaugural Duplicate Poker Nations Cup will be contested by teams of top players from 12 countries with the initial phase held in capsules on the EDF Energy London Eye.

The November 17-18 tournament will be accompanied by a Festival of Mind Sports under the banner of the UK Mind Sports Association. Individual sports will include Chess, Draughts, Go, Bridge and Xiangqi (Chinese Chess). Mind Sports Partners has been set up to act as the sole commercial agency for the IFP and the International Mind Sports Association.

Nally, the managing director of Mind Sports Partners, is the British entrepreneur widely regarded as the father of modern sports marketing, who drew up the blueprint for the marketing programmes of the FIFA World Cup, UEFA Champions League, World Athletics Championships and Olympic Games. Over three decades, the marketing concepts he originated have generated billions of dollars for major sports bodies. Mind Sports Partners stated that its mission is to "create and enhance commercial and social value across the range of mind sports" represented by its clients.

"Mind sports are played by over one billion people worldwide and that number is set to rise exponentially with the spread of digital media which will enable new competitions, leagues and federations to be established," Nally said. "They are real sports which demand many of the characteristics and qualities of physical sports including self-discipline, competition, training, stamina and fair-play. Mind sports also share universal values with other sports and with the Olympic Movement. If physical activity is a fundamental necessity for human beings, the same can be said for mental activity which is an indispensable complement."

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