



Bally Technologies iVIEW Display Manager™ (DM) with Elite Bonusing Suite™ Powers The World's Largest Slot Tournament at Southern California Casino

By Laura Olson-Reyes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER:

Pechanga Resort & Casino;
Temecula, California

BALLY TECHNOLOGIES SOLUTIONS:

iVIEW Display Manager™ (DM); Elite Bonusing Suite™; DM Tournaments™; CoolSign® Media-Management Solution

BUSINESS NEED:

Pechanga Resort & Casino in Temecula, California wanted to host the "World's Largest Slot Tournament" across their casino floor, converting revenue-generating slot machines into tournament games, and then back to revenue-generating mode within minutes. This required increasing the number of games with iVIEW DM from 80 to 1,200 – a 1,400 percent increase. It also posed logistical and scalability challenges.

SOLUTION:

Pechanga used Bally's iVIEW DM and Elite Bonusing Suite DM Tournament app to convert revenue-generating games into tournament games within minutes. Because the DM Tournaments application was integrated with Pechanga's Bally SDS slot-accounting and CMP player-tracking system, Pechanga was able to do automated registration, automated enrollment, automated scoring, and automated prize awards.

BENEFITS:

Pechanga Resort & Casino's hotel was sold out event weekend, and thousands lined up for a chance to participate in the gigantic tournament. Revenues across the resort increased as players came for the tournament and then stayed to enjoy the casino and resort amenities.



Big thoughts don't always translate into big results – except when you put one of the world's largest and most innovative casino systems providers together with a trailblazing and sophisticated casino operator.

On February 11, 2012, these two companies – Bally Technologies and Pechanga Casino & Resort – set out to win world records for the "World's Largest Slot Tournament" and the "Most Slot Machines Running the Same Game Simultaneously" at the same venue.

For most, this would be an insurmountable goal. To set the record for "World's Largest Slot Tournament", Pechanga would host a tournament using more than 1,100 machines simultaneously. Before iVIEW DM, Elite Bonusing Suite, and DM Tournaments, the way most casinos host slot tournaments is by:

- roping off a small section of their floor and converting the games from a single manufacturer into tournament games; or by allocating a certain number of slot machines as 'tournament' games.
- storing them, and then moving them into a conference room or banquet hall just prior to the tournament. It's a cumbersome process that requires significant labor expenditures and preparation time.
- maintain dedicated "slot-tournament games" on the casino floor that are unused except during tournaments, which takes valuable floor space that could be used for revenue-generating games.

And achieving the world record for "Most Slot Machines Running the Same Game Simultaneously at the Same Venue" was a huge feat that without the proper technology would require a casino to install the same game software on a compatible game cabinet from the same manufacturer.

The idea seems absurd, unless you have the technology infrastructure and partnership already in place to make these two goals a reality.

Building the Technology Infrastructure in Partnership

In the spring of 2008, Pechanga began replacing another company's systems products with Bally Technologies' systems solutions including the SDS™ slot-accounting system, CMP™ player-tracking, bonusing, and promotions technology; and Bally's TableView™ real-time table-management technology.

At the same time, Pechanga made another important investment. They implemented a fully networked casino floor with Cat 6 Ethernet cabling to every game, EMC SAN for high-speed data mobility over their high-speed network, and a Cisco® Unified Computing System (UCS) EMC VMax SAN to power their network and ensure the highest levels of data security and uptime.

With a high-speed, fully networked casino floor in place and the industry's most powerful and reliable slot and casino-management systems,

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Buddy Frank,
Vice President of Slot
Operations: Pechanga
Resort & Casino;
Temecula, California



Pechanga then implemented iVIEW™ player-user-interface devices in every game. They use the Bally Command Center™ application to update the iVIEW casino-marketing content across the floor from a central location.

Bally quickly became a proven strategic partner to Pechanga, with a record of successes in leveraging innovation to solve business challenges and increase the operator’s return-on-investment.

With their sophisticated new networked floor in place and a strong partnership with Bally, in late 2009, Pechanga moved forward with the next evolution in improving its guests’ experiences – adding the award-winning iVIEW Display Manager (DM) on games from multiple manufacturers. Pechanga became the first casino to complete a widespread implementation of iVIEW DM, a picture-in-picture-style player-user-interface that is backward compatible on gaming devices with a touch-screen display and provides a way for casino operators to present bonusing applications, self-service applications like player-account access and beverage ordering, and casino marketing messages – without interrupting play. The casino currently has 1,206 of its 3,800 gaming machines equipped with iVIEW DM.

Pechanga’s investment in the high-speed network, the centralized floor-wide download of content using Bally Command Center, and their commitment to iVIEW DM all reached the tipping point in early 2011 when the casino resort implemented Bally’s Elite Bonusing Suite™ (EBS) to provide events, promotions, and tournaments on the casino floor, to hundreds of slot players.

The casino resort conducted their first official community-gaming experience using iVIEW, iVIEW DM, and the Elite Bonusing Suite in February and March 2011 on all of their gaming machines using Bally’s Virtual Racing™ app. Their goal: to increase the percentage of rated play, increase-coin in, and promote excitement on the casino floor with minimal investment and labor usage.

The results of their promotions were immediately evident – increased coin-in, an uptick in usage of player’s club cards; and more market data about the players themselves.

“We have run the horse race about 10 times since last spring and we’ve seen excellent customer interaction,” said Buddy Frank, Pechanga’s Vice President of Slots. “That piece has been real solid. You can see people all over the casino cheering and high-fiving. Since this runs on every machine on our floor, everybody on our floor is engaged. It certainly gives us a unique advantage and keeps our floor fresh and new and gives us new and exciting ways to give features back to our guests.”

Leveraging DM Tournaments™

Now the savvy slot, marketing, and IT teams at Pechanga are ready to leverage their technology investment even more. They started using Bally’s iVIEW DM and the EBS DM Tournaments™ app to conduct slot tournaments. Frank said, “The dream always was, why couldn’t I just take a section of the floor with a mixture of machines from multiple manufacturers, have them instantly become tournament machines, and then go back to normal. iVIEW DM allows me to do that.”

Pechanga’s casino staff no longer had to allocate space for slot machines to go unused during non-tournament hours or warehouse them between tournaments. They realized huge labor savings because they no longer had to install and uninstall tournament games. With DM Tournaments, once a tournament is over, the machines are returned to revenue-generating status

in seconds. “That’s just really cool, and something I wish I had years ago,” Frank said.

Making the ‘World’s Largest Slot Tournament’ Happen

Now the team was ready to raise the bar even higher. Pechanga wanted to host the “World’s Largest Slot Tournament” using 1,200 iVIEW DM-equipped casino games from five different manufacturers – Bally, IGT, Aristocrat Technologies, Konami Gaming, and WMS Gaming. This meant they had to have the bandwidth to host 1,200 eager slot players participating in a frenzied tournament at once.

Pechanga immediately brought their technology partner Bally Technologies into the planning process. To prepare for such a wide-scale use of DM Tournaments, Bally Technologies and Pechanga began weekly test tournaments to ensure that they were prepared for the technical challenges of scalability – hundreds of players; more than 500 transactions per second; 14 zones across Pechanga’s expansive casino floor; three major sessions. They also had to increase the number of games on their floor used for DM Tournaments from 80 to 1,200.

Then there was the logistical challenge of managing 1,200 players at the same time and getting ready for the next tournament session to start shortly thereafter. Escalated testing began over the next two months, with a final test tournament using all 1,200 machines and Pechanga employees just weeks before the actual tournament day. Pechanga and Bally both were confident that they were ready.

Pechanga’s marketing team leapt into action, promoting the upcoming event through advertising, social media, and traditional media and patron outreach.

Hundreds Line Up To Play in Record-Setting Event

Adults from across southern California started lining up at 11 p.m. the night before for a chance to participate in the tournament and win their share of the \$100,000 “World’s Largest Slot Tournament” prize pool.

Anyone in line with a player’s club card by 10:30 a.m. on February 11 was given one complimentary entry into one of the three rounds of the gigantic tournament.

Before the first tournament began, Pechanga disabled the games directly from their SDS system; this took seconds to do with a mouse click. Then, the DM Tournaments game Hot Shot® Blazing 7s™ (one of three DM Tournaments games currently offered by Bally) took over the main game screen.

The prize meter on each game displayed a score starting at zero. When the tournament start warning was announced over Pechanga’s PA system, each player inserted her/his player’s club card. Then the action began, as players pounded away on the Spin button on the button panel or the touch-screen display. As they played, they were able to watch their score increasing on the screen along with a leaderboard of top scores in real-time and see which position they were in; the faster they pressed that button, the faster their score grew. The left side of the screen showed the top 20 highest scores of everyone participating in that tournament session. When the three-minute tournament ended, leader boards throughout the casino driven by Bally’s CoolSign® media-management solution displayed the cash prize winners.

Tournament administrators could closely monitor the tournament activity through real-time reports available through DM Tournaments within the Elite



Hot Shot® Blazing 7s™ is one of three games available with DM Tournaments™. Bally will be releasing additional video-poker themes in the spring of 2012.



During the “World’s Largest Slot Tournament”, 1,200 games were converted from normal-play games to tournament games and then converted back to standard play in less than 15 minutes.



Bonusing Suite. Because the DM Tournaments application is integrated with Bally slot systems and casino-management systems, Pechanga reduces labor with automated registration, automated enrollment, automated scoring, and automated prize awards.

World's Largest Slot Tournament Drives Record Revenues; Adds Tremendous Excitement

Over the three rounds, 2,885 Pechanga patrons participated in the record-setting event, enabled by Bally's DM Tournaments.

In an interview in *Slot Manager* magazine, Pechanga General Manager Rudy Prieto said the event "changed all expectations of what a slot tournament can do."

"This is a great example of how server-based technology can create contagious excitement on games from multiple manufacturers, and take one of the most popular special events for real players to a whole new level," said Bruce Rowe, Bally Technologies' Senior Vice President of Strategy and Customer Consulting.

Most important, the event generated so much excitement that players flocked to Pechanga Resort & Casino in droves, resulting in a sold-out hotel and thousands of people on property for hours enjoying Pechanga's slot machines, table games, restaurants, lounges, and spa.

"Generally, the period between Chinese New Year, the Super Bowl, and President's Day is pretty slow in the casino world," Frank said. "This year, in addition to setting two world records, Pechanga scored some of its best revenues ever."

Frank added, "I think the real difference between this event and a 'normal' slot tournament was that once it was over – with the guests still pumped up from the competition – all 1,200 of the tournament machines automatically converted back to standard play in less than 15 minutes. I've dreamed of this for years!"

Trailblazing technology, an innovative casino operator, and a gaming technology supplier with an 80-year history of innovation made what seemed impossible possible on February 11, 2012. Creating tremendous excitement across the Pechanga casino floor, delivering significant return-on-invested-capital, and most of all, giving players an exciting gaming experience – the power of iVIEW DM, Elite Bonusing Suite, and the DM Tournaments app.

Joaquin Fletcher, President of the Pechanga Development Corporation, summed it up, "Outside of opening day in 2002, I would say that this is the single most exciting thing that has ever happened at the Pechanga Resort & Casino."



Excitement across the casino floor reached a fever pitch as hundreds of players vied for the first-place \$30,000 award.



Leader boards located throughout the casino, driven by Bally's CoolSign® media-management solution, displayed the cash prize winners.

