5W RESEARCH

AI VISIBILITY INDEX · APRIL 2026

The US Sports Betting & Gaming AI Visibility Index 2026

Two operators own the market.
Five operators own the AI answer.

$16B+	78%	92%+
US MARKET REVENUE	FANDUEL + DRAFTKINGS SHARE	CITATIONS TO TOP 5 OPERATORS

75+	38	4
QUERIES ANALYZED	STATES + DC LEGAL	AI ENGINES TESTED

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fastest-consolidating category in American consumer services meets the fastest-moving discovery shift in a generation.

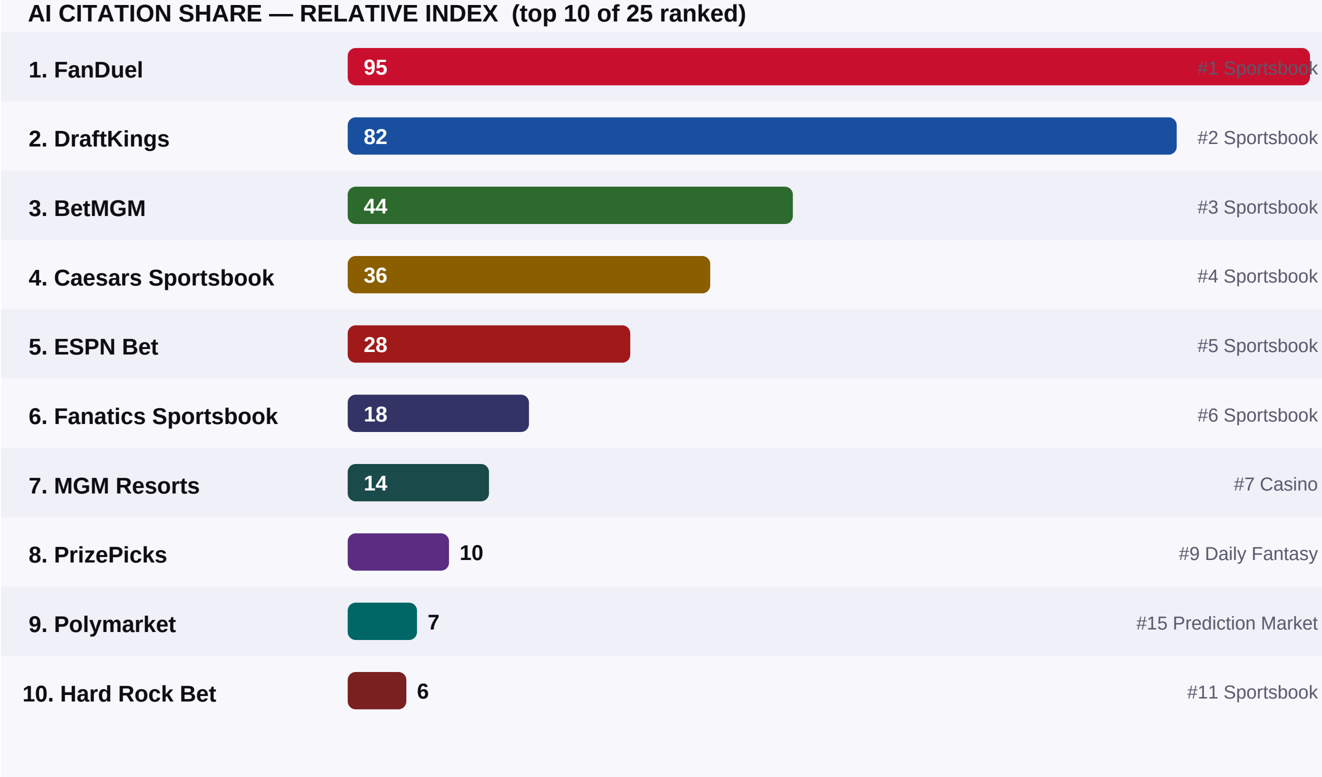
In seven years, legal US sports betting has grown from zero to **$16 billion** annually, consolidated around a duopoly with **78% combined market share**, and entered a phase where five operators capture more than **92% of AI citation share** across consumer-intent queries. No other consumer-services category has moved this fast.

AI-first discovery is accelerating what market forces were already doing. When a prospective bettor asks ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, or Google AI Overviews which sportsbook to use — the same five names appear with relentless consistency: **FanDuel, DraftKings, BetMGM, Caesars,** and **ESPN Bet**. Everyone else is competing for a citation remainder most of them have not measured.

$16B+ US sports betting revenue 2025	**78%** FanDuel + DraftKings market share	**92%+** citations to top 5 operators	**$400+** CAC per new bettor
75+ consumer queries analyzed	**25** operators ranked	**38** states + DC with legal betting	**4** AI engines tested

AI CITATION SHARE OVERVIEW — TOP 10 OPERATORS

AI CITATION SHARE — RELATIVE INDEX (top 10 of 25 ranked)



Relative AI citation index. FanDuel = 100 base. Scores reflect citation frequency and prominence across 75+ consumer-intent queries on ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews during 5W's April 2026 testing window.

METHODOLOGY

5W Research queried **ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity,** and **Google AI Overviews** across **75+ US sports betting and gaming consumer queries** spanning 10 sub-categories:

- Best sportsbook (general and sport-specific)
- Best betting app (UX, features, mobile experience)
- Best odds / best parlay builder
- Best promotions / welcome offers
- Best casino operator (integrated and standalone)
- Best daily fantasy platform
- Best prediction markets
- Best responsible gaming tools
- State-by-state legal status guides
- Sport-specific verticals (NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, College, UFC, Soccer, Golf, Tennis)

Each operator's citation frequency, positioning within the answer, sentiment, and sub-category dominance were scored and weighted. **AI citation share measures how frequently and prominently an operator appears in AI-generated answers** — not market share, handle, gross gaming revenue, or stock performance. Structural rankings are stable; exact citation frequencies shift week to week with state launches, league deals, and product announcements.

THE FULL RANKING — TOP 25 US SPORTS BETTING & GAMING OPERATORS

Ranked by AI citation share across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews

The top five operators capture **92%+** of AI citation share. Operators ranked 6–25 compete for the remaining citation share — most without measuring it.

Rank	Operator	Category	Strongest Sub-category	Key Citation Driver
1	FanDuel	Sportsbook	Best overall / NFL	~44% GGR share; highest citation density across 'best sportsbook,' 'best NFL betting a
2	DraftKings	Sportsbook	Best DFS-to-sportsbook	~34% GGR share; wins 'best sports betting app' via DFS heritage; 26-state footprint
3	BetMGM	Sportsbook	Best casino sportsbook / Vegas	~14% GGR; MGM Resorts brand halo; 'best Vegas sportsbook' and casino-adjacent q
4	Caesars Sportsbook	Sportsbook	Best loyalty / Caesars Rewards	Caesars Palace legacy; dominates loyalty-program and casino-destination betting que
5	ESPN Bet	Sportsbook	Best media-backed sportsbook	ESPN editorial ecosystem; Penn Entertainment partnership; citation compounds via br
6	Fanatics Sportsbook	Sportsbook	Best rewards / merch integration	Surged to 14.3% share Aug 2025; jersey-rewards differentiation; building general citati
7	MGM Resorts	Casino	Best Las Vegas casino brand	Bellagio, MGM Grand, Aria drive casino-destination citation; BetMGM parent halo
8	Caesars Entertainment	Casino	Best Caesars Rewards / destina	Caesars Palace iconography; loyalty program; 'best Vegas casino' citations
9	PrizePicks	Daily Fantasy	Best pick'em / props	Dominates 'best fantasy picks app'; regulatory scrutiny generates citation volume
10	Underdog Fantasy	Daily Fantasy	Best best-ball / NFL Draft	Best-ball innovator; NFL Draft cycle dominance; pivoting toward sportsbook licensing
11	Hard Rock Bet	Sportsbook	Best Florida sportsbook	Seminole Tribe exclusivity; de facto FL sportsbook; state-specific citation dominance
12	bet365	Sportsbook	Best soccer / international	UK global operator; strong soccer, international, tennis betting query citations
13	BetRivers	Sportsbook	Best regional / Rivers Casino	Rush Street Interactive; strong PA, IL, MI citations; regional casino-brand halo
14	Wynn Resorts	Casino	Best luxury Vegas casino	Wynn/Encore brand; luxury destination citation; WynnBet retreated from broad US spo
15	Polymarket	Prediction Market	Best event prediction market	CFTC-regulated; rapidly gaining AI citation in 'prediction market' and sports event quer
16	Kalshi	Prediction Market	Best US-regulated pred. market	CFTC-registered; direct sports event contracts; cited in 'is prediction market betting leg
17	Penn Entertainment	Media & Gaming	Best media-integrated gaming	Parent of ESPN Bet; retail casino brand across Midwest/Northeast
18	Boyd Gaming	Casino	Best regional casino operator	FanDuel partnership; strong Nevada locals-market and regional property citations
19	Golden Nugget Online	Casino / Online	Best online casino NJ/MI/PA	DraftKings-owned iGaming brand; dominates 'best online casino' in legal iGaming state
20	Sleeper	Daily Fantasy	Best fantasy league platform	Season-long fantasy leader; growing pick'em citation as players migrate formats
21	Hard Rock International	Casino	Best FL / entertainment casino	Hollywood Hard Rock & Tampa; entertainment brand differentiates from Vegas compe
22	SuperBook	Sportsbook	Best Vegas sportsbook heritage	Westgate SuperBook; cited in 'legendary Vegas sportsbook'; limited mobile but durable
23	Bally's	Casino / Operator	Best emerging Vegas operator	Horseshoe LV + Tropicana redevelopment drive emerging citation; Bally Bet scaling
24	Tipico	Sportsbook	Best intl. (US expanding)	European leader with US state-by-state expansion; soccer and international sports que
25	PointsBet	Sportsbook	Best PointsBetting / spread	Australian-origin; 'PointsBetting' product citation durable despite footprint consolidation

WINNERS: WHO'S WINNING THE AI CITATION WAR

FanDuel & DraftKings — The duopoly is a citation moat

In no other consumer-services category has a two-company duopoly built this dense a citation footprint. Combined 78% GGR market share reflects in AI answers at an even steeper ratio. 'Best sportsbook,' 'best betting app,' 'best odds,' 'best parlay builder' — virtually every top-funnel query routes prospective bettors to these two operators. The content advantage is self-reinforcing: more market share generates more press, more Reddit discussion, more blog citations, and more structured content that LLMs retrieve directly.

ESPN Bet — Media-backed sportsbooks compound citations faster

ESPN Bet captures citation share exceeding what its actual market share would predict. Every ESPN article, podcast, broadcast, and video segment that mentions ESPN Bet produces retrievable citation content. The Penn Entertainment–ESPN partnership built a citation advantage in 24 months that traditional sportsbooks took a decade to accumulate.

PrizePicks & Underdog — The pick'em economy is an AI citation phenomenon

Pick'em and daily fantasy apps occupy a regulatory gray zone in several states — and that friction is, paradoxically, a citation accelerator. Every regulatory story, state-by-state legal update, and 'is PrizePicks legal in my state' query generates citation volume. PrizePicks and Underdog Fantasy have built AI citation moats in sub-categories that traditional sportsbook operators have not contested.

Hard Rock Bet — Regulatory exclusivity is a citation moat

The Seminole Tribe partnership makes Hard Rock Bet the dominant legal sportsbook in Florida. AI citations for 'best Florida sportsbook' and 'how to bet on sports in Florida' reflect that exclusivity at a level that overwhelms operators with larger national footprints. The lesson: exclusive-market positioning translates directly into citation dominance within that state regardless of national brand ranking.

Polymarket & Kalshi — Prediction markets entering the sports betting citation pool

CFTC-regulated event contracts are now cited alongside sportsbooks in 'where can I bet on [event]' queries. Polymarket's election-cycle surge and Kalshi's sports event contracts opened a new citation category that did not exist two years ago. This is the single most underappreciated structural shift in the category's AI visibility landscape.

SIX STRUCTURAL TRUTHS

1. The duopoly's citation advantage is wider than its market-share advantage.

FanDuel and DraftKings capture ~78% of US sportsbook GGR — and a substantially higher share of AI citations across top-funnel consumer queries. Market concentration begets citation concentration, which begets further market concentration.

2. Media-backed sportsbooks compound citation advantages faster than product-led ones.

ESPN Bet's citation trajectory illustrates the pattern. Embedded editorial ecosystems generate retrievable content at a rate marketing-driven sportsbooks cannot match without proportionally larger editorial investment.

3. Regulatory exclusivity is durable AI citation infrastructure.

Hard Rock Bet in Florida, BetRivers in Illinois, and exclusive-market operators own state-specific citation moats that national operators cannot dislodge without regulatory change.

4. The pick'em sub-category is a parallel discovery market.

PrizePicks, Underdog Fantasy, and Sleeper occupy citation space that traditional sportsbooks have largely ignored. The citation runway these operators have built is a multi-year structural advantage.

5. Prediction markets are entering the sports betting citation pool.

Polymarket and Kalshi represent a new entrant class with distinct regulatory positioning. AI citations for sports event prediction increasingly include prediction market platforms alongside traditional sportsbooks.

6. Responsible-gaming content is an under-priced citation asset.

Operators that invest in credible responsible-gaming content earn citation positioning in a growing query cluster. Those that treat this as compliance-minimum rather than content strategy miss a meaningful citation category.

2026 DYNAMICS: SIX SHIFTS RESHAPING SPORTS BETTING AI CITATION

Prediction markets reshaping event-wagering citation patterns.

Polymarket and Kalshi are appearing in AI answers that traditional sportsbooks dominated for six years. The citation spillover accelerates as state regulators clarify CFTC event contract positions.

Texas and California citation anticipation distorting the market.

AI queries about 'sports betting in Texas' and 'when will California legalize sports betting' generate citation volume disproportionate to current legal status. Operators building anticipatory content infrastructure now will own citation share when legalization arrives.

NIL-era college sports betting — a new citation cluster.

Name, Image, and Likeness monetization and the expanding college sports betting landscape have created a new query category — 'best college football betting app,' 'college basketball props,' 'NIL betting' — that is still up for grabs from an AI citation standpoint.

Problem gambling narrative compressing AI citation sentiment for top operators.

Media coverage of problem gambling and advertising restrictions has introduced measurable sentiment variability into AI citations for top sportsbooks. Operators with robust responsible-gaming content strategies see less sentiment compression than those without.

Fanatics's August 2025 surge was a citation event, not just a market-share event.

Fanatics's jump to 14.3% market share generated AI citation velocity that exceeded the market-share gain alone. A single product moment can open a citation window — a reminder that AI citation responds to narrative surges, not just steady-state brand building.

Regulatory fragmentation is an operator-specific citation opportunity.

In a 38-state patchwork regulatory environment, operators that publish authoritative, frequently updated state-by-state legal guides are winning citation share in a growing 'is sports betting legal in my state' query category that drives acquisition.

THE PLAYBOOK: 8 TIPS FOR SPORTS BETTING MARKETING LEADERSHIP

1. Measure AI citation share against the duopoly weekly.

FanDuel and DraftKings are the benchmarks. Any sportsbook not measuring its citation share against theirs in 'best sportsbook,' 'best odds,' 'best promotions,' and 'best betting app' queries is operating without a compass in the most expensive discovery channel in the category.

2. Build state-by-state legal guides as citation infrastructure, not SEO bait.

LLMs cite authoritative, frequently updated state-law content. Operators with strong state-guides infrastructure win 'is sports betting legal in [state]' citations that drive acquisition. Most operators underinvest here relative to potential.

3. Invest in responsible-gaming content with the same seriousness as promotional content.

'Is sports betting addictive,' 'how to set a deposit limit,' and related queries are a growing citation category. Authoritative responsible-gaming content earns citation authority and increasingly drives regulatory goodwill with its own commercial value.

4. Own a sport or vertical rather than competing for general best-sportsbook citations.

Bet365 owns soccer. Underdog owns best-ball. Hard Rock owns Florida. Operators that accept they will not win general 'best sportsbook' citations and instead invest in sport-specific or state-specific citation moats see higher ROI.

5. Integrate editorial and product on the same domain.

Media-backed sportsbooks compound citation faster than product-only ones. Operators without editorial infrastructure should consider partnerships, acquisitions, or in-house editorial investment as a citation strategy.

6. Treat Reddit as a primary citation surface.

r/sportsbook, r/dfsports, r/gambling, and state-specific subreddits are disproportionately influential on LLM retrieval. Honest, transparent organic presence compounds citation value over time; paid community engagement is rarely effective.

7. Build Wikipedia and structured data infrastructure deliberately.

Wikipedia and schema-marked content are retrieved at higher rates. Many mid-tier operators have outdated Wikipedia footprints and no JSON-LD deployment on key product pages.

8. Anticipate Texas, California, and Georgia with content infrastructure before legalization.

The operators that publish definitive 'what we know about sports betting in Texas' content now will own the citation moat when the market legalizes. Waiting for legalization to publish is too late.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the US Sports Betting & Gaming AI Visibility Index?

The US Sports Betting & Gaming AI Visibility Index 2026 ranks the top 25 US sports betting and gaming operators by AI citation share across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google AI Overviews. 5W Research analyzed operator citations across 75+ consumer-intent queries.

What does AI citation share measure?

AI citation share measures how frequently and prominently an operator is referenced in AI-generated answers. It is not market share, handle, gross gaming revenue, or stock performance. In a category where customer acquisition cost exceeds $400 per new bettor, early-funnel consideration is the most expensive real estate the industry sells.

Who is ranked #1 in the Index?

FanDuel ranks #1 with the highest AI citation density across 'best sportsbook,' 'best NFL betting app,' and 'best parlay odds' queries. FanDuel holds approximately 44% of US sportsbook gross gaming revenue and the most concentrated AI citation footprint in top-funnel queries.

Who is included in the top 5?

FanDuel, DraftKings, BetMGM, Caesars Sportsbook, and ESPN Bet. These five operators capture more than 92% of AI citation share across the consumer-intent queries 5W tested. FanDuel and DraftKings alone represent approximately 78% combined GGR; their combined AI citation share is even higher.

Why are prediction markets like Polymarket and Kalshi included?

CFTC-regulated event contracts are now cited alongside sportsbooks in 'where can I bet on [event]' queries. Polymarket and Kalshi represent a new entrant class with distinct regulatory positioning and rapidly improving AI citation authority.

Can 5W run GEO for sports betting and gaming brands?

Yes. 5W's Casino Public Relations & Digital Marketing practice covers sportsbooks, casinos, iGaming, daily fantasy, prediction markets, gaming technology, affiliates, and land-based casinos — including GEO infrastructure, operator launch strategy, state-by-state regulatory communications, responsible-gaming content, media partnerships, and crisis communications. Contact: research@5wpr.com or media@5wpr.com.

Why now?

Because citation slots are concentrating. Operators that build defensible AI citation infrastructure during the 2026–2028 window — before Texas, California, and Georgia legalization — will own those markets when they open. Those that wait will pay premium CAC to catch up.

ABOUT 5W

5W is one of the largest independent communications, digital marketing, and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) agencies in the United States, with approximately 275 professionals headquartered in New York City. Founded in 2003 by Ronn Torossian. Led by CEO Matt Caiola. Recognized as a top U.S. PR agency by O'Dwyer's, named Agency of the Year in the American Business Awards, and honored as a Top Place to Work in Communications in 2026 by Ragan.

5W's **Casino Public Relations & Digital Marketing practice** builds brand visibility, reputation, GEO infrastructure, and earned media programs for sportsbooks, casino operators, iGaming platforms, daily fantasy operators, prediction markets, gaming technology providers, affiliate marketing sites, game developers, online lottery courier services, and land-based casinos. Client experience includes 888, Foxwoods Resort & Casino, Jackpot.com, Soft2Bet, Gambling.com, Circa Sports, and XLMedia.

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