As one of the first approved mini casinos in the state, Live! Casino Pittsburgh at Westmoreland Mall will jump on another growing trend once it opens: sports betting.

The Hempfield casino, which is expected to open next year, will be home to the FanDuel Sportsbook. The sports area will be one of the first to open under that name since FanDuel Group, a fantasy and sports betting operation, struck a partnership this week with The Cordish Companies, a Maryland-based firm that operates the Live! Casino umbrella.

“We are excited to partner with FanDuel to bring our customers the premier sports betting experience in the country, including unique promotions and sports engagement oppor-tunities that will only be available at Live! properties,” Joseph Weinberg, principal of The Cordish Companies, said in a news release.

The partnership, which will extend to all Cordish properties across the country, will start at the Westmoreland location and at Live! Hotel & Casino Philadelphia.

“This partnership allows us to capitalize on the incredible success of sports betting to date and bring FanDuel’s top sports betting operations to Cordish destinations across the United States,” Matt King, FanDuel CEO, said in the release.

Sports betting is a growing niche that is now legal in 13 states: Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia. New Jersey became the first state to open sportsbooks in June 2018, a month after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a federal law that banned commercial sports betting in most states.

Some of the first legal bets in the state were placed in February during Super Bowl LIII at Rivers Casino on Pittsburgh’s North Shore, and that number continued to increase by September with the beginning of the NFL season. The casino, which takes bets on football, baseball, hockey, boxing and basketball, brought in more than $58 million from in-person and online sports betting between December and June, the second highest among the state’s eight legal sportsbooks, according to the

Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board
.

The Hempfield casino will feature a sports bar on the second floor — Sports & Social Steel City — a two-level sports dining area with 450 seats, a bowling alley and golf space. The upper floor also will have a banquet hall, restaurant and nightlife area with VIP tables, a saloon bar, a mechanical bull and a dance floor.

The first floor will be home to 750 slot machines and 30 table games. Pieces of the casino have been slowly coming together since state gaming officials in August granted Stadium Casino LLC — owned by The Cordish Companies — a Category 4 satellite casino license for which they paid more than $40 million in July 2018.

A November groundbreaking ceremony kicked off construction after Cordish's license was approved by the state gaming board in August. Pittsburgh-based
Mascaro Construction Co.
was hired as the general contractor for the project.

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