

Ladbrokes says to start share buy-back plan

London (Reuters) – Bookmaker Ladbrokes said on Thursday it would start a share buy-back programme as it posted an expected dip in first-half pretax profit with strong revenues from telephone betting and in-shop gambling machines.

Ladbrokes, which has over 2,500 betting shops, said pretax profit for the for six months to end June fell to 156 million pounds from 158.6 million a year ago when the World Cup drew in gamblers. When non-trading items were taken into account profit was 160.6 million pounds.

The firm said its gross win increased by 19.3 percent to 624 million pounds. It said it would up its borrowings to kick off a share buy back programme.

„Over time, Ladbrokes will repurchase shares in order to move towards its stated target gearing range of 3.5 to 3.75 times historic EBITDA,“ Ladbrokes said in a statement.

„Excluding the benefit from the increased telephone betting high rollers‘ activity, the rest of the business continues to trade in line with management’s expectations,“ it added.