

# POKER*news*

UK&EUROPE

**THEY  
RUN  
HOT:**

**Elky  
Timoshenko  
Geshkenbein**

**WSOP Europe  
EPT London**

**Casino  
Royale:  
Holdem  
by Bond**



Реклама

Книги расскажут  
всё о стратегиях,

ТИПИЧНЫХ СЦЕНАРИЯХ,

ЦИФРАХ, ТЕОРИИ ВЕРОЯТНОСТЕЙ И ВЕРНЫХ ХОДАХ

КНИГИ РАССКАЖУТ,  
КАК НУЖНО ИГРАТЬ В ПОКЕР...



НО КНИГИ НЕ ИГРАЮТ В ПОКЕР

**FULL  
Tilt**  
POKER.NET

УЧИТЕСЬ, ОБЩАЙТЕСЬ И ИГРАЙТЕ С ПРОФИ  
WWW.FULLTILTPOKER.NET

Сайт обучающий, без игры на деньги

# COME CONQUER COSTA RICA

WITH

# TEAM 888



**888.com**  
— Enjoy the game —

Go to 888.com for satellite information

# WIN A \$4500 PACKAGE

TO THE



# COSTA RICA CHALLENGE

## SATELLITES START AT \$3

THE ONLY PLACE  
TO QUALIFY ONLINE

**888.com**

**November 6-15, 2009**

Date	Time	Tournament Game	Buy-in	Date	Time	Tournament Game	Buy-in
Fri, Nov 6	8:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$150+\$30	<b>Thur, Nov 12</b>	<b>3:00 pm</b>	<b>Main Event</b>	<b>\$2500+\$200</b>
Sat, Nov 7	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$300+\$40	Thur, Nov 12	8:00 pm	No Limit Bounty	\$150+\$30
Sat, Nov 7	8:00 pm	Super Satellite	\$50 Rebuy	Fri, Nov 13	2:00 pm	Main Event Day 2	-
Sun, Nov 8	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$200+\$30	Fri, Nov 13	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$300+\$40
Sun, Nov 8	8:00 pm	Super Satellite	\$100 Rebuy	Fri, Nov 13	8:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$100+\$25
Mon, Nov 9	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$300+\$40	Sat, Nov 14	2:00 pm	Main Event Day 3	-
Mon, Nov 9	8:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em Bounty	\$150+\$30	Sat, Nov 14	3:00 pm	No Limit Deep Stack	\$500+\$50
Tue, Nov 10	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em Deep Stack	\$500+\$50	Sat, Nov 14	8:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$150+\$30
Tue, Nov 10	8:00 pm	No Limit Super	\$270+\$30	Sun, Nov 15	2:00 pm	Main Event Day 4	-
Wed, Nov 11	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$300+\$40	Sun, Nov 15	3:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em	\$300+\$40
Wed, Nov 11	8:00 pm	No Limit Hold'em Super Satellite	\$270+\$30				

Jazz Casino, Hotel Amapola - Jaco Beach, Costa Rica



It was a pleasant sight for us when living poker legend Erik Seidel spent most of his Day 1 at the EPT London Main Event reading the September issue of our magazine.

Distribution of the newborn PokerNews UK & Europe started during the time of the two biggest London tournaments – the WSOP Europe and the EPT – and feedback was mainly positive. Still, we know that there is a lot of room for improvement and we believe that the October issue is already much better, though it's of course up to our readers to make that decision.

Both London big tournament series were a huge success. This year the WSOP Europe didn't give the poker world as many new names as during the two previous years, but another epic final table and heads-up for the title have made it a tournament to remember for years to come. Nightmares with an "ace on the river" will haunt the always popular Daniel Negreanu for sure. The EPT London Main Event attracted 730 players – an all-time record for Great Britain – and was taken down by young, soft-spoken Aaron Gustavson from Las-Vegas, Nevada. This time Europe was defeated on its home soil.

Aaron is one of those who runs really hot in 2009 – he had a number of big online scores before winning in London. Do the people who consistently win in the biggest tournaments know some secret? Or are they just unbelievably lucky? This is the key theme of this issue and we'll try to find the answers by analyzing such players as the unstoppable Elky, WPT & WCOOP champion Yevgeniy Timoshenko and Vladimir Geshekenbein.

In next month's issue we will name the hottest player of 2009, after the results come in from the WSOP Main Event final table to be played in Harrah's Rio. The November Nine players' portraits will also be found in the issue.

Life on the poker circuit never stops, nor do we... Stay tuned!

Best regards,  
Ilya Gorodetsky

#### **Publisher**

Irakli Kacharava

kacharava.i@googlemail.com

#### **Editor in Chief**

Ilya Gorodetsky

ilya@pokernews.com

#### **Editors**

Simon Lee

Misha Savinov

Denis Grigoriev

Allen Mitchell

#### **Senior Editor**

George Dallas

#### **Design**

Paul Goldberg

#### **Advertising**

Jurate Jankute

jurate@pokernews.com

Olga Borisenko

borisenko5@mail.ru

Aleksa Rodriguez

89262457361.m@gmail.com

#### **PR & Marketing**

Andre Gegechkory

Kevin Smith

#### **Logistics**

Gabriel Kacharava

George Dudaui

Cover photo by Neil Stoddart

# 24hCASINO.com

GET OUR **100%** FIRST DEPOSIT BONUS UP TO **€100!**

**Arabian Nights**  
Mystical Progressive Jackpot up to **€1,000,000**

**Tales of Krakow**  
Take one **magic spin** and win **€36,000**

**Devils Delight**  
Devilish **Jackpot** up to **€100,000**

Register with the code "casinonews" and start playing!

**www.24hCasino.com**



## French amateur, Christophe Benzimra wins the EPT Warsaw

A middle-aged French businessman shipped the PokerStars.com EPT Warsaw 2009, winning more than \$300,000. The final table also featured two Italians, including Luca Pagano, the EPT record holder in cashes and final tables, who was 3rd in chips, two Russians, two Ukrainians, and a Canadian. The Ukrainian, Olexander Vaserfirer was a dominant chipleader, however, he lost a three-way all-in with A-A to Benzimra's J-J and soon busted into 3rd place. Pagano took the 4th place after losing two all-ins in a row to brutal beats. In heads-up, Benzimra fairly quickly defeated Alfio "aLFioSn0b" Battisti, high stakes regular and Supernova Elite on PokerStars.

There were 203 participants, who created a prize pool of more than \$1,700,000. Among them there were Bertran Grospellier, Scotty Nguyen, Peter Eastgate, Shaun Deeb, Alex Kravchenko, Vitaly Lunkin, Carter Phillips, former chess prodigy Jeff Sarwer, and many other notable players. Read the full report about it in the next issue.



## Dwan beats Ivey for a record TV pot

During the filming of the Full Tilt Poker's Million Dollar Cash Game, Phil Ivey and Tom Dwan broke the record for the biggest pot in the history of television. Dwan called a 3-bet preflop with 6♥7♥, and called Ivey's continuation bet on the flop Q♣5♣3♦. He hit his perfect card on the turn – 4♥. Dwan had the nuts straight, while Ivey had the lower straight with A♣2♥. The players went all-in on the turn, and Dwan shipped the \$1,100,000 pot, having Ivey drawing dead.

## The Million Dollar Challenge becomes the post popular poker TV show

The recently aired Pokerstars.net Million Dollar Challenge had record breaking ratings, making it the most popular poker show in TV history. The first competitor who approached the task of winning one million dollars by beating pros and amateurs in heads-up matches was a priest from South Carolina. Father Andrew Trapp did well and secured himself \$100,000 by winning three matches, beating Daniel Negreanu in the last one. None of the second episode guests were able to repeat his performance. The Father will appear in the show's final round of play in December to try and win the coveted million.

## Brandon Hall wins Aruba Poker Classic

Brandon Hall became the champion of the Ultimate Bet Aruba Poker Classic 2009. He was shortstacked at the final table, but managed to win a couple of all-ins and advanced to the heads-up match against Robert Mizrachi. The players chopped prize money before starting the final match – each took \$414,680 in second-place money. \$30,000 was reserved for the winner and the rest was split based on the stack sizes, giving Mizrachi the edge, as he had almost twice as many chips as Hall.

Brandon Hall's biggest previous cash was \$16,818 at the PokerStars EPT Dortmund 2009. On Aruba's final table he outlasted the multiple WSOP bracelet winner, Brock Parker, and this year's Player of the Year favorite, Eric "basebaldy" Baldwin.

The tournament drew 475 players, creating a handsome \$2,303,750 prize pool.

## Guy Laliberte becomes a space tourist

Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberte became the first Canadian space-tourist on September 30. He traveled to the ISS on board the Soyuz TMA-16 spacecraft with Expedition 21 crew members: Russian cosmonaut Maksim Surayev (Commander) of the Russian Federal Space Agency (FSA) and NASA astronaut Jeffrey Williams (Flight Engineer).

Laliberte is known for his passion for poker. He allegedly lost more than \$10,000,000 playing online on major sites. His biggest tournament achievement was making the final table of the WPT Championship 2007, where he finished 4th for \$696,220. Curiously, he qualified for that \$25,000 buy-in tournament in a \$2,500 satellite. The space Odyssey cost him, according to various sources, up to \$50,000,000. "It's worth every penny and more," Laliberte said during the news conference broadcast.

The 50-year-old billionaire landed safely back on Earth on October 11.

## Simon Watt wins APPT Auckland

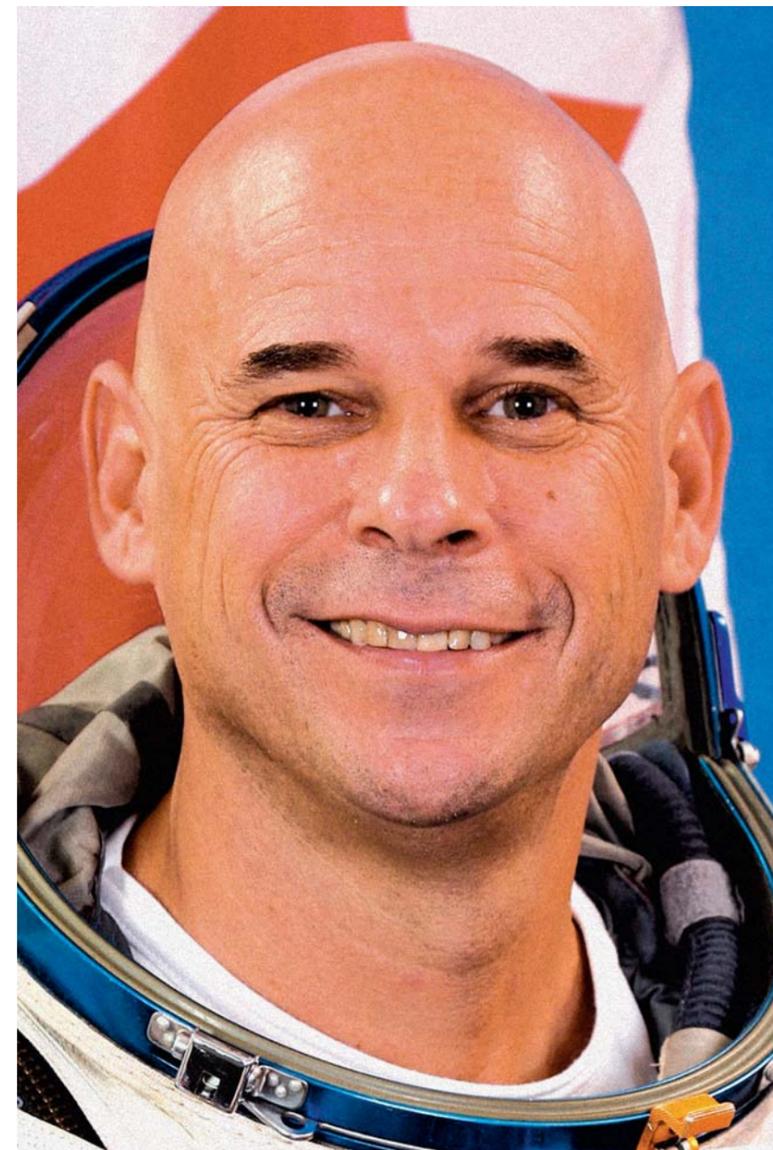
The New Zealand stage of the Asian-Pacific Poker Tour ended with local player, Simon Watt outlasting 236 players to take the title and NZD \$209,085. In heads-up he defeated the Frenchman Gerome Guitteau.

The tournament gathered 264 players, including famous professional players Grant Levy, Emad Tahtouh, Tony Hachem, Lee Nelson. What's the best way to play poker in New Zealand? We'll have the answer in the next issue of the PokerNews UK&Europe.

## Elky briefly detained in Spain

According to Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet, Bertrand "Elky" Grospellier was detained by airport customs police upon flying to Barcelona to play in an EPT event. The officials became wary about large sums of cash in Elky's possession. They suspected this eccentric young man of being a drug dealer and sent the money off to Madrid for future investigation. Elky showed them his name in the news, but to no effect.

Apparently, the Frenchman was badly in need of cash after the incident, so he proceeded to win two WCOOP bracelets within a week of the incident...



## Christophe Savary takes over the WPT Marrakech

A non-televised WPT event in Marrakech, Morocco, was won by Christophe Savary from France. The player added €379,515 to his bankroll. The €4,500 buy-in event gathered 416 players, including Bertrand Grospellier, Annette Obrestad, Antonio Esfandiari, November-niner Antoine Saout, Tony G and WPT Cyprus winner Thomas Bichon. The most well-known players at the final table were Ludovic Lacay and Benny Spindler.

WPT Marrakech was added to the tour in an effort to increase the WPT's global presence. Earlier this year the tour visited Venice, Cyprus and Barcelona.

# WSOP EUROPE

## TWO WEEKS AT THE EMPIRE

by Dana Immanuel

The lights, the traffic, the poker, the drizzly grey weather – all this could mean only one thing. The World Series of Poker caravan was making its third annual outing to the Casino at the Empire in London's buzzing Leicester Square for the 2009 World Series of Poker Europe, presented by Betfair. Now a permanent fixture on the European poker calendar, this year's festival was the biggest and best ever, featuring more runners, more money and more big name pros than ever before.

Kicking off the action with a bang, the first night featured Betfair's Free Million Dollar Game, when 18 online qualifiers battled it out for the eponymous million dollars and extreme bragging rights. The delighted victor and recipient of the \$1,000,000 cheque was young Greek Anestis Metsas, who immediately recycled some of those winnings into the following day's event, although he failed to spin it up further. Nevertheless, a free million dollars is a free million dollars, and the Greek had no complaints at all.

The festival, clearly still experimenting with its formula, got it pretty much spot on this year – the first bracelet event, the £1,000 No Limit Hold'em (the buy-in lowered from £1,500 last year) attracted a record number of runners. With 608 players over two starting days, Event #1 broke the record for the largest tournament ever held in the UK by a wide margin. However, the record was broken again just couple of weeks later when EPT London Main event attracted 730 players.

It was fitting that it should eventually be won four days later by young native British talent JP Kelly. Kelly, long regarded as one of British

poker's brightest hopes, won his first bracelet in the \$1,500 Pot Limit Hold'em event in Vegas this summer. In doing the WSOP/WSOPE double he not only did himself proud but also became the first, and indeed only, British recipient of a WSOPE bracelet. As it was, Event #1 was to be Britain's finest performance all round with five of the nine players on the final table hailing from good old Blighty.

Event #2 represented another departure from the 2008 format, the £2,500 Pot Limit Hold'em/Omaha mixed event replacing last year's £2,500 HORSE event. The change paid off nicely, the event attracting 158 runners, well up from the 2008 HORSE event's 110 entries.

With the field whittling itself down to just 22 by the end of Day 1, the three-day event threatened to become a two-day affair as they reached the final table relatively early on Day 2. Everyone was very keen to play the £5,000 Pot Limit Omaha Event #3 the following day, and so they debated whether to play on to a conclusion that evening or call it a night early and come back in the morning to finish it off. Eventually a compromise was reached which saw them play three levels into the final table that night, during which time Howard Lederer, Ian Frazer, Hoyt Corkins and Chris Bjorin all busted out in ninth to sixth places respectively.

Thus they were down to an unorthodox five-handed final when they returned on Day 3, with Mats Gavatin holding a convincing chip lead. Starting the day in second-to-last place with only Robin Keston trailing behind him, Erik Cajelais performed a remarkable turnaround. He doubled up almost immediately in PLO when he got his whole stack in with flopped trips and an open-ended straight draw against Mats Gavatin's aces; Cajelais turned the straight and doubled through to lift him out of the danger zone. By the time Richard Gryko and Men Nguyen had busted in fifth and fourth places, Cajelais was a chip leader.

After barely an hour, Robin Keston had gone in third and soon Mats Gavatin succumbed too in second place. The pumped-up, body-building Cajelais had beaten off all opposition and muscled his way to first place, picking up £104,677 and the coveted bracelet. Cajelais went on to extend his good run the following week, also finishing second in the £20,000 High Rollers Event at the EPT London for £326,000. That'll buy him an awful lot of gym equipment.





Meanwhile the £5,000 Pot Limit Omaha event that everyone had been so keen to buy into was underway. Despite an extraordinary field – including Phil Ivey, Allen Cunningham, Jeffrey Lisandro, Tom “durrrr” Dwan and Shaun Deeb – the action was dominated pretty much throughout by Finnish online pro Jani Vilmunen.

Vilmunen, who made the last two tables at this year’s Irish Open Main Event, is widely recognized as one of Finland’s finest PLO players and only a few weeks prior to the WSOPE he took down a WCOOP PLO event online. The Finn known as “KObyTAPOUT” online ended Day 1 as chip leader and only increased his lead on Day 2. It came as no surprise to anyone when he stormed to victory on Day 3, beating a very interesting final table comprised of exactly three Finns, three Brits and three Americans.

The Finns came out on top all round on the final table – with five players left, all three of their country’s representatives remained in the running. Aarno Kiveliö in fact quipped that with the majority of the five-way final table hailing from Finland, it should be Finnish only at the table for the remainder of the tournament. Sadly for everyone who would have liked to see remaining non-Finns Ross Boatman and Howard Lederer attempt to stumble by in broken Finnish, Kiveliö’s suggestion was not implemented.

Howard Lederer was playing his second final table of this year’s WSOPE and his 25th career WSOP final table overall. In interviews he was philosophical about his final-table-to-bracelet ratio – despite making

it to the limelight of the final table on 25 separate occasions, he has only picked up two bracelets – and indeed it was to be another disappointment for him as he eventually came in bridesmaid to Vilmunen’s bride.

Lederer actually started the heads-up with a 3:2 chip lead, but Vilmunen chipped away at him relentlessly until, with Vilmunen now in the lead, Lederer got his whole stack in with a flopped bottom straight. He found himself drawing slimmer than Amarillo against Vilmunen’s nut straight, and the massive cooler left him down and out in second place while Vilmunen claimed the £204,048 first place cash and the precious WSOPE wrist candy.

Elsewhere in the casino, there was one player who wasn’t terribly interested in the ongoing bracelet events. UK circuit regular and apparent basketcase Paul Zimble, in a fundraising effort for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, had decided to attempt to break the world record for continuous heads-up poker. The record stood at 74 hours, meaning that he was going to have to spend well over three straight days and nights playing heads-up with a stream of opponents including Doyle Brunson, Mike Matusow and Annette Obrestad.

“I will do this if it kills me,” Zimble worryingly declared in an interview by Barry Carter for uk.pokernews.com, and indeed after a couple days there was some concern in the casino for Zimble’s mental wellbeing. At around the 60-hour mark, odd sounds started to emanate from Zimble’s table on the balcony above the casino floor as Zimble sang to himself and made unusual noises. Fuelled by endless energy drinks, though, he finally

made it. After 74 hours, 20 minutes and 21 seconds, the last of Zimble’s astonishing 1,843 heads-up matches ended, and, dazed and very confused, he was gently led out of the casino and taken home to bed. As well as claiming the world record, Zimble raised £35,000 for his chosen charity.

Further adding to the buzz around the Casino at the Empire was the staging of the inaugural Caesars Cup. Two teams representing Europe and the Americas battled it out in heads-up matches, but in a curious departure from normal poker procedure, the players were pitted against each other in pairs, two players from each team sharing one set of hole cards. They seemed to be playing one street each, and with the novelty of the format and the stellar team members, it turned out to be a very entertaining event.

Team Americas boasted an incredible 45 bracelets between its members, who included Doyle Brunson, Phil Hellmuth and Ivey and team captain Daniel Negreanu. Team Europe had only three bracelets between them, but featured a fearsome lineup including Peter Eastgate, Patrik Antonius and team captain Annette Obrestad. The Europeans dominated, and eventually claimed continental bragging rights with a convincing 4-1 win.

With all the side events and other peripheral entertainments out of the way, it was time for the Main Event – the £10,000 No Limit Hold’em.

Europe or no, this was still a World Series Main Event, and thus it was Phil Hellmuth’s prerogative to make an entrance. It was perhaps slightly

disappointing that the theme was a simple repeat of his entrance at this summer’s WSOP, but it was still very definitely a spectacle. Dressed as Caesar, complete with golden breastplate and laurels, the effect was only slightly marred by Hellmuth’s chariot failing to negotiate the bollards that keep traffic out of Leicester Square. He had to walk the rest of the way, and then enter the casino alone as the Roman-themed young lovelies flanking him couldn’t gain entry to the casino without any photo ID. Nevertheless, Hellmuth took his seat at a table with Doyle Brunson and Bruno Fitoussi, among others, and got down to business.

155 runners started on Day 1a including Dario Minieri, Phil Ivey, Roland de Wolfe and Mike Matusow, and by the end of play the field had shrunk to 79. Jason Mercier, Sami “LarsLuzak” Kelopuro and Jonathan Aguiar were all in possession of hefty stacks come the evening, but chip leader at the end of the day was Brian Powell who just pipped Mercier to the top spot in the last few hands of play. Powell would eventually go into Day 2 as overall chip leader.

178 players turned up for the second start day bringing the total number of runners up to 334, slightly down from last year’s 362 but a fine turnout nonetheless. Among the well-known faces gracing the Day 2 felt were Annette Obrestad, Daniel Negreanu, Barry Greenstein and Chris Ferguson who all shared the feature table at one point, as well as Antonio Esfandiari, David Williams, Peter Eastgate and reigning champion John Juanda.

The biggest stack to make it through from the second start day belonged

Team Americas boasted an incredible 45 bracelets between its members, who included Doyle Brunson, Phil Hellmuth and Ivey and team captain Daniel Negreanu. Team Europe had only three bracelets between them, but featured a fearsome lineup including Peter Eastgate, Patrik Antonius and team captain Annette Obrestad. The Europeans dominated, and eventually claimed continental bragging rights with a convincing 4-1 win.

to the awesomely moustachioed Steve Zolotow, who acquired most of them when his flopped bottom set held against his opponent's two pair. His 160,000 chip count at the end of the day was still a fair way behind Brian Powell's 195,000, though, and Zolotow started Day 2 in mere sixth place in the counts.

The 178 remaining WSOPE athletes, or at least those that didn't make it to synagogue, finally got a lie-in as the start of Day 2 was postponed until 5.30pm to allow for the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. When the action got going, Ian Munns quickly took the lead. A British native but unknown on the UK circuit, Munns lurched up the leader board when he raised with 4-6 and flopped a straight. Richard Grace found himself holding bottom set and all the chips went in; the straight held up and while a philosophical but disappointed Grace headed for the bar and any sympathetic ear he could find, Munns took a convincing lead that he carried with him into Day 3.

After a lengthy bubble, it was John Tabatabai who picked up the wooden spoon that signaled the end of Day 3. After famously finishing second to Annette Obrestad in the first WSOPE Main Event two years ago, Tabatabai's hopes of going deep again hit the pavement with force when his aces were cracked by Peter Gould's pocket sevens in brutal, but TV-friendly, style. His short-stacked tablemate David Docherty, who looked too young even to be in a casino and who was devotedly railed by his mother throughout, breathed a sigh of relief as he made his second cash of the week. The official short stack, he busted in 36th place within minutes of the start of Day 4.

Matt Hawrilenko snuck the lead as they hit the money, with Arnaud Mattern, Ram Vaswani, Daniel Negreanu, Yevgeniy Timoshenko, Doyle Brunson, Liz Lieu and Devilfish among those still in various degrees of contention. Dominating the day's play, however, was Jason Mercier.

On a smoking-hot run after picking up his first bracelet this summer in a \$1,500 PLO event, Mercier knocked out a clutch of opponents, including Teddy Sheringham, Peter Gould and Eric Liu – the latter succumbing when Mercier, by now massive chip leader, cruelly outdrew his pocket queens with K-J on the final table bubble. When play finished for the night, Mercier was in possession of 3.2 million in chips with his nearest rival, James Akenhead, holding just 1.4 million. It's not certain how comfortably Mercier slept that night, though – despite having almost \$4 million in tournament winnings, he spent the week staying on a friend's couch rather than get himself a hotel room.

Although Mercier was in possession of a third of the chips in play going into the final day, it was far from a forgone conclusion. In what must be one of the most fearsome and fascinating final tables of all time, Mercier

was up against a field boasting a total of ten bracelets, two November Niners (Antoine Saout and James Akenhead), two Hit Squad members (Praz Banshi and Akenhead again) and an intriguing mix of the live poker old school and the younger, more technophilic generation of pros.

The WSOPE has a history of epic final tables – it was virtually lunchtime when John Juanda claimed his crown in last year's Main Event – and this year was no exception. It was five hours into the day before the tournament saw its first casualty in the shape of James Akenhead, who smacked his A-Q into Daniel Negreanu's pocket kings to take ninth place – a disappointment he'll be hoping not to repeat in Las Vegas in a few weeks' time.

Like buses, after waiting for ages the eliminations came all at once as Matt Hawrilenko busted in eighth place followed by Antoine Saout in seventh on the very next hand. Just a few hands later and Chris Bjin was eliminated in sixth place, with Markus Ristola taking fifth not long after. Four-handed, Praz Banshi had a slight chip lead, but Daniel Negreanu leapt ahead when he knocked out Jason Mercier in fourth with pocket nines against Mercier's sevens, and soon Negreanu would claim Banshi's stack as well, sending him home with third place money to the vocal woe of the pro-Banshi rail.

Daniel Negreanu had been on a chip-munching rampage throughout the day, and by the time he and Barry Shulman went heads up, Negreanu had knocked out six of the seven eliminated players and had a 2:1 chip lead over his veteran opponent. However, the chip lead would go on to change hands several times in a marathon heads-up ordeal that continued until past dawn.

Shulman snatched the lead when his A♥5♥ flopped a flush draw and Negreanu called his all in with pocket aces. The flush came in, and Shulman moved into the lead. Over the next few hours, though, Negreanu's small ball strategy paid off, and by 5am he was holding around 6 million in chips to Shulman's 4 million.

After hours of interesting but unspectacular small pots, the poker heavens opened and the patient rail was treated to what may well be the hand of the year. The players saw a 5♦8♦J♣ flop and Shulman bet out. Negreanu raised, and Shulman proceeded to move all in. "So you all wanna go home, right?" said Negreanu to the rail. There was some vague murmuring, but Negreanu cut them off. "Ah, I shouldn't listen to the rail. I call."

Negreanu turned over Q♣J♦ and Shulman triumphantly flipped A♠A♥. The rail was calling for a queen – and then exploded when the J♥ hit the turn to put Negreanu ahead with trips. The crowd was going nuts, already celebrating Negreanu's presumed victory – when the A♦ river gave

Daniel Negreanu had been on a chip-munching rampage throughout the day, and by the time he and Barry Shulman went heads up, Negreanu had knocked out six of the seven eliminated players and had a 2:1 chip lead over his veteran opponent. However, the chip lead would go on to change hands several times in a marathon heads-up ordeal that continued until past dawn.

Shulman the nut full house to double him up and knock Negreanu back to 2 million. The crowd turned it up to 11, and we'll be seeing that on TV for years to come.

Although Negreanu had recovered from a similar chip deficit some hours earlier, this time he couldn't make it back and moved all in with pocket fours to find himself in trouble against Shulman's pocket tens. A ten on the board sealed it, and Negreanu had to settle for second place while the title, the bracelet and the £801,603 first place money went to Shulman. There was some consolation for Negreanu, though – his second place money in this event nudged him up to the very top of the all-time money list according to the Hendon Mob statistics.

As weak daylight crept over central London and some exhausted players crept out of the casino and back to their respective homes and hotel rooms, it was time to reflect on what a welcome fixture the WSOPE has become on the poker calendar. With the festival getting bigger and better every year, the UK poker community is already looking forward to Harrah's and their boys bringing us some more of their good Vegas sunshine next year. Roll on WSOPE 2010. ☺



# Spectator, Commentator, Player: My London Diary

by Ilya Gorodetsky

I was a man with many missions during the London EPT Poker Festival and I thought it would be interesting to keep a journal of my daily adventures...

## Day 1, October 1: Spectator

The biggest ballroom in the Hilton London Metropole hotel is already filled with some unusual guests: my fellow poker players. Several preliminary events are already under way where the remaining Highrollers are playing down to the final table. Most household names are already out (Phil Ivey, for example, was the first one to go less than 30 minutes into the event), that's why few railbirds are paying much attention to the European 8-game Championship. Despite the loss of big names like Ivey, the line-up here is still pretty strong, though some strong no-limit players feel visibly uncomfortable playing stud games and the mysterious 3-draw.

I can't play myself as tomorrow a place in the commentator's booth awaits me. Maybe I should try a short journey to the Empire, for the WSOP Europe final table. No, I opt for a dinner in an Indian restaurant instead...

## Day 2, October 2: Commentator

They should do something with the structures for these Highrollers events. Those who pay £20,000 for the buy-in deserve something better than an all-in competition at the later stages of the tournament. It looks like Eugene Kachalov is cruising to a victory, but no, several all-ins later and he is out in 3rd. It all comes down to a heads-up competition between amiable American Matt Glantz and tattooed Canadian Erik Cajelais, fresh from winning a bracelet at the Empire a week ago.

Key hand coming – trip aces for Cajelais and only a flush-draw for Glantz, but running hot really helps. Glantz wins the hand, the tournament and more than £500,000 in prize money.

Simultaneously Day 1A of the Main Event begins. The number of participants on usually the less crowded 1A leaves no doubts – it will be a record-breaking event. A lot of players are



photo by Neil Stoddart



photo by Neil Stoddart

reading PokerNews magazine between hands. Good choice!

In the European 8-game Championship they are down to the final table and my compatriot Nikolay Evdakov is the healthy chip leader. Later in the night the heads-up between him and 2005 World Champion Joe Hachem is moved to the Victoria Casino, and the Australian is the luckier in the new surroundings.

### Day 3, October 3: Player

I take my seat at table 35 on Day 1B hoping to improve on my 19th place finish in the EPT Kiev. The table seems OK, with a nice mixture of tight Englishmen headed by former EPT London winner John Shipley and a crazy-loose Frenchmen. One of them gets it all-in for a 600 BB pot with a 6-high flush-draw vs. a top set 30 minutes into the tournament. Obviously he becomes the table chip leader after this adventurous play.

It is a fun table to play, but I'm looking for even more fun when I'm moved to Humberto Brenes and his dreaded sharks' table after the dinner break. Unfortunately Humberto busts out immediately in a cooler hand and it's no fun anymore.

I have an average stack going to the last break of the day and decide to play pretty tight as I feel a bit tired. I fold for 30 minutes, but then everything just goes completely wrong. A short-stacked active player raises from the button, I reraise with A-Q from the small blind and happily call his all-in. A-A?! Hm... It was not expected! Is it still allowed to get this type of hand on the button?

10 minutes later I'm out after flopping top pair top kicker against a bottom set. With 25 big

I take my seat at table 35 on Day 1B hoping to improve on my 19th place finish in the EPT Kiev. The table seems OK, with a nice mixture of tight Englishmen headed by former EPT London winner John Shipley and a crazy-loose Frenchmen. One of them gets it all-in for a 600 BB pot with a 6-high flush-draw vs. a top set 30 minutes into the tournament. Obviously he becomes the table chip leader after this adventurous play.

It is a fun table to play, but I'm looking for even more fun when I'm moved to Humberto Brenes and his dreaded sharks' table after the dinner break. Unfortunately Humberto busts out immediately in a cooler hand and it's no fun anymore.

blinds left I can't escape here.

I'm disappointed. No more poker for me in London.

### Day 4, October 4: Spectator? No! Player

The next morning my gloom lifts a bit. After all, I did nothing wrong, and with no chance to play live poker in Russia the idea to skip the only side event I can play doesn't seem smart. I loaf around a bit sweating my friends who are still in the main event and soon am back to the tournament grind in a £2,500 side event.

A lot of top pros and online whiz-kids also sit down, but not at my table. I have probably the luckiest table draw ever – the above-mentioned Nikolay Evdakov, dangerous Swede Mats Gavatin, who joins the table later, and a bunch of complete newcomers. One of them, a chatty Lebanese fellow, doubles me up with A-high versus my middle set. Should I go to Beirut to the next \$10K Lebanon Poker Championship? At least I shall think about it...

With 50 players remaining (from the 147 who started) I am moved to a much tougher table where PokerStars Pro William Thorson is trying to be the bully. We play a couple of interesting hands with mixed results.

The main attraction at the table, however, is a very beautiful, nervous-looking woman and her imposing red-haired husband who is supporting his better half. They are tennis legend and one of idols from my childhood, Boris Becker, and his wife Lilly. Lilly plays quite unorthodox to say the least, but this style works for her for quite a while. Boris meanwhile even offers to buy drinks for everyone at the table – both of them are a real pleasure to be around.

After a lot of ups and downs, 23 players make it to the second day, with my stack being a little bit below the average.

### Day 5, October 5: Player

It is all about playing poker this day. I spend some time on the rail supporting a couple of friends who are overcoming the bubble obstacles in the main event and then continue playing in my own tournament.

The first couple of hours are very lucky for me as I win several key hands and make it to the money, and then to the final table as one of the big stacks! At the final table my Q-Q holds up against an opponent's Big Slick and suddenly I am the run-away chipleader...

...Fast Forward, and I have almost 70% of the chips in play, 3-handed against always dangerous Jason Mercier and British veteran Bruce Atkinson. The first place \$185,000 prize looks so close... My friends who have a piece of my action are excited. I decline a deal and then lose three huge hands against Atkinson – one bad beat, one cooler and one blunder. I finish third for £39,200, and that is the end of my poker-playing in the British capital.

### Day 6, October 6: EPT Live Commentator

And I'm back to my non-risk assignments. The fourth day of the Main Event is once again brutal for the favorites. My hopes to see a final table with Annette Obrestad, Theo Tran, Benny Spindler, etc. are dashed. From the final 24 star line-up, only 2008 World Champion Peter Eastgate make it to the final table, though he flirts with tournament death a couple of times too. It's hard to forget how he got it all-in with A-J vs. Dominic Cullen's A-10 – The Englishman turned a 10 only for Eastgate to spike a jack on the river.

In the morning, before play starts, I am lurking on the 2+2 forums and find a post from "aguskb" who is obviously still in the event and is trying to inspire



photo by Neil Stoddart

himself with an Al Pacino video from the film, "Any Given Sunday." As a big fan of the great American actor I decide to take a closer look at aguskb... 10 hours later Aaron "aguskb" Gustavson finishes the day as chipleader.

### Day 7, October 7: EPT Live Commentator

The last day is unexpectedly calm. It is a skillful but pretty drama-less final table. The short stacks bust one after another, and when everyone is expecting a lengthy 3-handed battle, 19 year old German Nikolai Senninger practically knocks himself out of the tournament.

The heads-up rivals, Aaron Gustavson and Peter Eastgate, head to the dinner break and I rush to Mothercare as it is my last chance to buy something for the kids. London rain has its own plans so I am back in the commentary booth an hour later all wet and in my slippers. On the table, Aaron first rivers trips and check-raises Peter from a huge pot, and then is lucky enough to have a real hand (A-Q) when all the circumstances are perfect for a light 3-bet. Eastgate feels the same, he 4-bet-pushes with A-9, but doesn't manage to come back from behind and that it is the end of the affair. It takes only 10 minutes.

Well, I definitely enjoyed my week in London. Why do they have this London EPT only once a year? ☺

It is all about playing poker this day. I spend some time on the rail supporting a couple of friends who are overcoming the bubble obstacles in the main event and then continue playing in my own tournament.

The first couple of hours are very lucky for me as I win several key hands and make it to the money, and then to the final table as one of the big stacks! At the final table my Q-Q holds up against an opponent's Big Slick and suddenly I am the run-away chipleader...

photo by Neil Stoddart





photo by Neil Stoddart

It all looked so easy. It was not one of those tournaments where the chip leader changed regularly and brutal bad bets influenced the table disposition every 15 minutes. Aaron Gustavson, a 23 year old PokerStars qualifier from Las Vegas, took the chip lead in the middle of Day 4 and, despite facing the world champion heads-up, cruised to the victory. In the evening following the final table Aaron was casually dining in the hotel restaurant.

No festive celebrations, no dancing on the tables, nothing... The same calm, cool & collected Aaron talked to PokerNews' Misha Savinov a week after his big win.

**Misha Savinov:** Aaron, could you please give us a short bio – where you're from, how old you are, when you started playing poker, and how quickly you became a poker professional? And also your family name sounds a bit Scandinavian, is this the reason why you're so good in poker?

**Aaron Gustavson:** Sure, I am 23 years old, 24 this December. I started playing poker like a lot of Americans my age did, around the age of 18 when the "MoneyMaker" boom hit and poker was all over ESPN. All the kids in school had regular home games.

It definitely was very casual at first but I had a lot of interest in the game. Eventually casual turned into more serious, when I started playing online, but even then it was still for play money and mostly with friends, then I made some small deposits and played some very low stake stuff. I remember one time running a small deposit up to a few thousand playing limit poker, a game I had no experience at all with at this time. I went busto a million times, but knowing I could make a few thousand dollars was always in the back of my mind. In high school a few thousand dollars was more money that I could ever have imagined having, so that just made me more interested in the game.

After years of playing out my bankroll, going busto, and starting over, I finally decided to work on my game, and about a year ago started studying forums. So although I've been playing for maybe five years, I haven't been truly "playing" until the last year or so. I dropped out of school because, well, I never knew what I wanted to do in life, and then poker started taking up a huge part of my time, and I realized that I may have been good enough to do it for a living.

"Gustavson" is Estonian, my Grandpa was from there, I don't know too much about my heritage but maybe there is a connection in my genes with poker.

**MS:** Do you solely play MTTs?

**AG:** Right now I solely play MTTs. I have tried everything from low stakes limit holdem cash to extremely high stakes limit cash, heads up sit and go's, but I always put most of my focus and work into MTTs. I feel I have more control in those and enjoy them more than anything.

I've hardly played any no limit cash games in my life. I have some interest in learning it to improve my game, especially my post flop, but MTTs are where I see myself making most of my earnings in the future. I am very competitive so tournaments give me more of that sports event feel, where things change constantly and you play for one winner, as opposed to same stacks in cash over and over again. I don't think I could ever get used to that.

**MS:** What's your favorite poker game? I notice that you play a lot of non-holdem stuff like Omaha hi-lo, HORSE, stud hi-lo...

**AG:** I enjoy holdem the most. It is the best tournament game by far. I've played everything at some point and think I'm +EV in most other games but they aren't where my heart is. I haven't put that much work into those games compared to holdem. Of course, I do love to mix it up once in a while, I think it's good to know other games and poker is fun in all forms so everyone should experience all kinds of versions if they love poker.

**MS:** In one interview you credited the 2+2 community for your recent big scores. You have started to post on the forum more actively this year. Could you elaborate on the subject a bit – how to use a poker forum to get the most out of it?

**AG:** Yeah, I can confidently say that 2+2 has played a massive role in my success. I used to be just okay at poker, better than aver-

# Aaron Gustavson

# First Time in Europe

by Misha Savinov

age because I played so much, but I never truly worked on my game like I should have and it wasn't improving. Once you began posting and commenting in threads, as opposed to just lurking, it forces you to think more.

If someone posts why he played a hand a certain way, it makes you ask questions about your own reasoning. Things eventually just clicked and the results showed. That being said, I don't think I'm remotely close to where I'd ideally like to be. I definitely need to work on a lot. My motto is: Never be satisfied because there's always room to grow.

**MS: You won the PokerStars Sunday Warm Up in July. Can you say a few words about that tournament, what were your feelings and your reaction after it? How did it change your attitude towards poker as a career?**

**AG:** It was unreal. I'm pretty sure I was on a little downswing before it, and that win really saved me. The Sunday fields are very soft and have so many players but you clearly have to run good to win one of those. I remember playing great late, just being in the zone. But even with that, you still need to win showdowns. I remember winning the hands I was supposed to win, I mean, those 60/40 hands where I was ahead kept holding. It was more than double my previous biggest score. I was ecstatic and in shock.

As far as my goals, none of my plans have changed, but it obviously was a great confidence booster, got me more respect in the poker world, and has given me more comfort with a large bankroll.

**MS: The WCOOP 2-day event could have been another breakthrough for you, but you ended up 12th, losing a coin flip. Did you like your play? Do you like two-day events online? Do you feel like ghosting can be a real problem in such tournaments?**

**AG:** This crushed my soul. I really was playing some of my best poker and had made a crazy comeback from around 10 BBs on day two. If I had won that flip I would have been top 3 in chips, and would have crippled one of the few regulars left. I forget the details but I know I button raised, I 3-bet, BB 4-bet, and after I

shoved with 88 he was committed and called with A-Qo. The board ran something like Kxx, 10, J. It just killed me when I lost that hand.

I think two-day events are fine. I guess I'm pretty neutral. Never thought about ghosting on a two-day but I'm sure it's done and there's really nothing you can do about it.

**MS: The WCOOP 8-game event – another great score, you finished 4th. Can you say a few words about this tournament too?**

**AG:** This was a very cool tournament. I definitely was not experienced in some of the games but I think towards the end I got a lot more comfortable. This tournament was crazy because I came back from literally having less than the big blind and was under the gun with about 30 people left. I doubled up a few times and made a crazy comeback.

**MS: Overall, it was a pretty good year for you both online and offline. Why are you so successful? Can you describe your style? What parts of your game are the strongest in your opinion?**

**AG:** This has definitely been an awesome year, even more so because of the last six months. I think a lot of it has to do with understanding tournaments better. Being comfortable in many spots is very key. I still think there's so much I personally need to learn and hopefully my game will continue to grow.

It's hard to describe my style. I think being able to adjust to specific opponents, getting inside their head and trying to see how they are perceiving me is very important. I'm not going to try to bluff an inexperienced player off his top pair, because that's just a spew, where against a regular it may be very possible. I think staying aggressive and trying to keep my opponents guessing is a significant part of my game.

**MS: Do you share the view that some players consistently show better results on Stars vs. Full Tilt, or vice versa? Do you feel the difference between these two major rooms does exist and is so significant that it can affect players?**

**AG:** I don't think it should matter. The tournaments are played in such high volume and the structures aren't extremely different. Maybe players are more comfortable on a specific site but I think if you take a player with the same big sample size on both sites, than the results should be very similar.

Also one big score like a Sunday Million win can skew results so much since most first places aren't more than \$20K.

*I enjoy holdem the most. It is the best tournament game by far. I've played everything at some point and think I'm +EV in most other games but they aren't where my heart is. I haven't put that much work into those games compared to holdem. Of course, I do love to mix it up once in a while, I think it's good to know other games and poker is fun in all forms so every one should experience all kinds of versions if they love poker.*

**MS: How much offline poker experience do you have?**

**AG:** Not that much. I think I've played around 20 to 30 live tournaments in my life. I'm sure I'll increase that over the next year but I feel very comfortable playing live tournaments.

**MS: Why did you decide to go to London? I know you qualified online, but online qualifiers do not always play in the target events. Did you feel sufficiently rolled for it, or did you sell shares or something?**

**AG:** I was definitely not even close to being sufficiently rolled for the \$5-10K event. I have never sold a piece of myself before, and I didn't for this either. It's definitely incorrect and against proper bankroll management but I just would never be able to live with myself if I won an event and had to give away 50 to 70% of my winnings. I'm not scared to live it up a little and take chances.

**MS: You were left with 11 BBs after the first day of the EPT London ME. Do you play comfortably with a short stack? What were your feelings at that point? How did you recover the stack?**

**AG:** I had the worst 4 hours of cards I'd ever seen at the end of day one, which left me pretty crippled. Going into Day 2 I assumed I'd bust in the first 10 minutes because I'd be all in very shortly. I even partied the night before because I knew I wasn't going to have to think at all. A bad mindset but I'm certainly glad I was wrong.

I'm very comfortable playing a short stack, and I think I know how to handle a lot of situations when short. I doubled up the first hand JJ vs. 54s. The very next hand I raised with QJo, got one caller and the flop was 7 high all clubs, I had the Q♣. I check shoved and got called by 88. I rivered the club. Then a little later I got AA vs. AK and doubled again.

It was insane, I got up to 220K in like one level after I had just 13,900. So with day one getting the worst cards, Day 2 definitely made up for it.

**MS: Can you recall some critical hands during the first three days of the tournament? Any spectacular bluffs?**

**AG:** Yeah there was actually a pretty crazy hand. I don't know the exact details but I'll try to explain it the best I can remember. JC Tran had been raising a lot near the bubble.

The bubble broke and there were about ninety people left at that point. He had like 400K in chips and I had about 350K and the blinds I believe were 3-6K with antes. We were both the chip leaders or close to it at our table.

He opened from around the hijack. I made a 3-bet from the SB with 87o, he called. The flop was K53 rainbow. I bet 41K into around 80K pot, he made it 99K. I took about two minutes, counted my chips for a while, and shoved my remaining 270K chips in. He took 2 to 3 minutes and folded. That was crazy. My heart was still beating hard at the break.

**MS: The hand when you call all-in in the beginning of Day 4 with A-5 and beat 5-5 is intriguing. How big was the Hicks' stack at that point? Why did you make the call, was the guy running you over or something?**

**AG:** This was definitely a mistake, and not being results oriented, I regretted it 2 minutes after the hand ended, although I was obviously happy. I had almost no history with him, which is why I wanted to fold. All I knew was I had seen him open shove around 20BBs like 3 or 4 times before this hand. I also had a live tell that he was weakish but I didn't think he had air a lot.

He was around 20 BBs and I thought he was wide but I didn't like my call because a lot of his shoves there had me dominated. I do think he showed up there with some KQs/QJs types of hands as well as 22/44 sometimes but it's still a fold I think.

**MS: Two tables left, Josef Samanek raised to 65,000. You call, and Michael Berry calls in the big blind. The flop is T♥5♣2♠. Berry bets out 50,000. You call. The turn, K♣, goes check-check. The river is 7♦, and Berry bets 50,000. You raise to 150,000 and get paid, showing Q-Q. Wow. Nice value-raise – how did you extract value at that spot?**

**AG:** This was interesting because of how little he led out with on the flop. I remember thinking, "what's he doing?" but versus this type of player his bet almost always means 66-99, a 10, or air. I just call to extract value on future streets. The turn was a king which obviously wasn't the best card for me just because I did not have an over pair or even a top pair anymore. But it also worked to scare him.

Betting here just forced him to fold a second best hand, which I didn't want. The river was a blank and he made another weird bet, and I was positive I was good and he was not the type of player who would reraise with a bluff, so I decided to make a nice little standard 3x raise assuming he would call since when I checked that K turn he thought his 10 was good a ton and I looked like I was just trying to bluff the pot.

**MS: Who did you consider the main threats at the final table?**

**AG:** I really wasn't too worried about anyone besides Peter Eastgate. He was very aggressive and knew what he was doing and the fact that he was on my left was not ideal. So when he got some chips it definitely made my chances of winning go down, but I still felt good about everything.

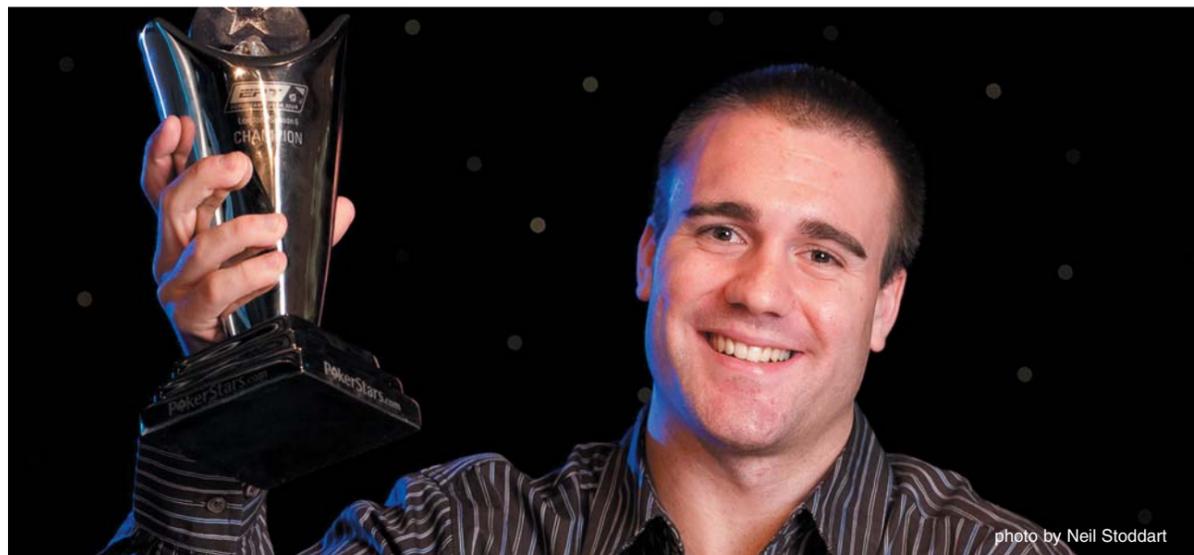


photo by Neil Stoddart

**MS:** You played with Peter for a really long time during this event. What do you think of him as a player? Were there any particular hands where you really liked/disliked what he did?

**AG:** We were actually at the same table on day one but I didn't get to play much then since I folded for four hours straight, but I did learn a lot about his game which I could use to my advantage in the later stages of the tournament. I think he is a very good player. I can't remember anything specific, but overall I really liked his style and approach.

I think in preflop spots he lacks some experience when he's short or others are short, but that's nothing major, he seemed very solid post flop and with a deep stack. As a person I enjoyed playing and talking to him. Nothing but positive things to say about him.

**MS:** How did you feel being a chip leader at the final table of a major event? Nervous? Confident? You seemed to run the table big time with lots of miniraises – did it feel the same way at the table? Do you play the same style online?

**AG:** Going in as chip leader was definitely a good feeling because these other guys, with 10-20 BBs could be busted in any given hand. I knew that even if I doubled someone up I still had a shot at winning and would be in the top 2 or 3 in chips. That's definitely a nice cushion to work with.

I wasn't nervous at all, which was very odd. I thought I'd get butterflies a little or something, but I had no sense of being nervous, only confidence. My plan was to go into the final and win and I wouldn't have been satisfied with anything less. The miniraise was very effective in the last few days. Many people probably played hands they normally wouldn't have but felt priced in and played pots against me out of position. I think I played this tournament very similar to how I play online.

**MS:** There were two really interesting hands at the final table. First, when you ran an unsuccessful bluff against Eastgate who rivered a set. And the second one when you flopped the nuts full against Gudvangen and played it quite unorthodox but it worked just perfect for you. Can you give us some insight in your thought process during these hands, preflop included.

**AG:** Yeah, both of those were definitely interesting. First, the Eastgate hand. He raised and I called in the big blind with 56s. The flop was A-7-3, I think rainbow. The flop went check-check. Then the turn put 6♥, I believe putting a flush draw out there and pairing my 6. I checked again and he bet. Here I could have had the best hand if he had something like KQ or QJ, and was just trying to take a stab since I checked it back twice. Although most of the time I was behind I also had some draws. That's why I called.

The river brought the 8♥. I checked again, hoping he would check it back and maybe give up with some paint cards but he bet again. I could easily have called with a flush draw on the turn so I thought that he checks back a lot of his made hands and would have bet the river if he had a flush himself or air. I decided to make it about two and a half times his raise and really make it look like I had the flush and also I thought he was capable of making a big laydown. He called and had 88 for a set. I still don't know if I like my play. I'll have to really look into it, I think it's close though.

The JJ vs. Gudvangen was very big for me... (PokerNews – For a detailed analysis of this hand see "Hand of the Month" column on page 71)

**MS:** The 3-handed part of the tournament was not very long, either. How comfortable were you, playing these two guys in particular, and 3-handed for tons of cash in general?

**AG:** These guys were the most experienced players at the final table. I was feeling pretty good overall at that point, though I wasn't completely comfortable

Going in as chip leader was definitely a good feeling because these other guys, with 10-20 BBs could be busted in any given hand. I knew that even if I doubled someone up I still had a shot at winning and would be in the top 2 or 3 in chips. That's definitely a nice cushion to work with.

because obviously for 5 days we had been playing 8-9 handed and this was a huge difference, but I was confident I could adjust to their styles.

**MS:** What are you going to do with the money – bankroll, investment, big spending?

**AG:** I will be getting a house in Vegas, hopefully sometime in mid December. I want to get a car for myself and for my mom. The rest, after taxes of course, will go towards investing after I speak to some advisors, and the remainder will be used for bankroll and living expenses.

**MS:** Are you planning to continue playing online after such a big score offline? Do you feel motivated playing \$50 rebuys after shipping 1 million plus?

**AG:** Right now I don't think it's possible to play a \$50 rebuy. I am very tired of poker at the moment so I will take some time off, clear my head, and when I get that drive back, I'll get back into the grind online.

**MS:** What are your current goals in poker?

**AG:** My current goal is to continue to get better. I want to make some more deep runs in live events because my ultimate goal is to be sponsored by an online site.

**MS:** Final question: is shipping money to Daniel Negreanu a +EV thing? Who did you ship 2 cents to before the EPT London ME?

**AG:** (laughing) Well - true story. I did ship him 2 cents the same morning I won the Sunday Warm-Up, so the myths may be true. I didn't ship any one 2 cents before London but I had two separate \$0.01 transfers from people, one I didn't know and the other was a friend of mine, aprilfool on PokerStars. Maybe it was good luck.

**MS:** Many thanks for your time and congratulations on an amazing win! 🍀

SPORTSBOOK – CASINO – GAMES – POKER



NOWADAYS THEY PLAY  
POKER ONLINE!

bet-at-home  
.com

LIFE IS A GAME!

Register in online poker now: [www.bet-at-home.com](http://www.bet-at-home.com)

# Red Sea Poker Cup: Second Take

As British people say, once is chance, twice is a pattern, and three times is tradition. With this in mind, the Red Sea Cup, brainchild of Poker Club Management (PCM), has just finished its second festival, and so has made it more than half way to tradition. The three basic elements of the popular festival, namely sun, sea and poker remained unchanged. Indeed, these three magic words are the first to come to mind when anyone thinks of the second leg of the Red Sea Cup.

Domina Coral Bay Hotel & Casino Resort offered the poker players an uncompromised period of relaxation and entertainment. Attendance of the second leg of the Red Sea Cup was a little lower comparing to the first one. A little overlap with the WSOP Europe and the EPT London prevented several potential participants from coming.

Based on bare figures, every event of the festival attracted from 60 to 70 players. Overall the Red Sea Cup featured seven tournaments, let alone cash games running to late hours. The latter were so popular that some of the guests ended up spending half the day on the beach while waiting for their turn. Indeed, from the 13th to the 20th of September the local Aladdin Casino was packed to capacity. Tennis and volleyball courts as

well as a football pitch were quite busy too. In addition, the guests of the festival also had a rare chance to give votes in the traditional competition, "Miss Domina," that featured the most beautiful girls from the surrounding area.

The organizers decided to hold the VIP event on the open sea rather than in the casino, which was an excellent idea. The poker table was set up on the spacious deck of a luxurious yacht. The participants of the event enjoyed both poker and spectacular scenes while the boat cruised along the Sharm El Sheikh coastline.

The €1,000 two-day main event saw Sergey Ilyin and Marcel Masalagiu reaching the heads-up with approximately equal stakes. The opponents decided not to throw themselves on the mercy of Lady Fortuna and sealed the deal. Sergey got the trophy and slightly more prize money, whereas Marcel received a trip for two to Venice.

It looks like the guests of the Red Sea Cup won't be missing the popular resort for long. The next leg of the poker festival in Sharm El Sheikh is scheduled for November. ☺



RUSSIAN-ITALIAN POKER TOURNAMENT IN PCM TOUR SERIES



21-29 NOVEMBER

EGYPT, SHARM EL SHEIKH



ORGANISERS POKER CLUB MANAGEMENT (RUSSIA) END LAS VEGAS POKER (ITALY) END ALADIN CASINO (EGYPT)

DATE	TIME	TOURNAMENT	BUY-IN €	FEE €	STACK	NOTES
21.11	21:00	RE-BUYS+ADD ON	200	20	5000	SATELLITE
22.11	21:00	RE-BUYS+ADD ON	100	10	2000	SATELLITE
23.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	500	50	10000	
24.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	1000	100	15000	MAIN EVENT (2 DAYS EVENT)
25.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	300	30	10000	
26.11	16:00	FREEZEOUT	2750	250	15000	VIP TOURNAMENT
26.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	275	25	7000	KNOCK OUT/BOUNTY
27.11	15:00	FREEZEOUT	300	30	6000	RUSSIA - ITALY (TEAM PLAY)
27.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	400	40	10000	
28.11	16:00	SPONSORS' TOURNAMENT*				WITH TICKETS ONLY **
28.11	18:00	FREEZEOUT	500	50	10000	6 MAX



TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR ARTUR VOSKANYAN

WIN A TRIP TO EGYPT AND YOUR ENTRY TO THE RED SEA POKER CUP'09 BY PLAYING FULL TILT POKER'S RED SEA POKER CUP QUALIFIER TOURNAMENTS ON FULLTILTPOKER.COM

FROM 19 OCTOBER TILL 14 NOVEMBER

\* ONLY THOSE PLAYERS WHO BOUGHT THEIR TRAVEL PACKAGES THROUGH THE COMPANY POKER CLUB MANAGEMENT TILL THE 14 OF NOVEMBER TAKE PART IN SPONSORS TOURNAMENT. THE WINNERS GET THE TRIP FOR 2 PAX TO EGYPT OR TURKEY OR ITALY AND MANY OTHER PRIZES FROM THE SPONSORS OF THE TOURNAMENT.

\*\* EACH PLAYER THAT BOUGHT THE TRAVEL PACKAGE IN POKER CLUB MANAGEMENT COMPANY TILL THE 14 OF NOVEMBER WILL RECEIVE BONUSES, PRESENTS AND THE MEMBERSHIP CARD OF POKER CLUB MANAGEMENT COMPANY



INFORMATION, REGISTRATION AND RESERVATION: + 7 (495) 507-45-95, + 7 (915) 090-90-91  
 IN EGYPT: 0020 (69) 3600837; 0020 (16) 6144490 E-MAIL: ALADIN.SEC@HOTMAIL.COM  
 WWW.REDSEAPOKERCUP.COM | WWW.POKERCM.COM





# In the Courtroom, in the Casino, and in Colors

by Martin Harris

While the World Series of Poker Europe, EPT London, and the Aruba Poker Classic grabbed much of the poker world's attention over the past few weeks, it has been a busy time for poker in the United States as well, with various legal machinations continuing on the state and federal level, some tournament news (both live and online), and poker players finding their way onto U.S. television screens with remarkable frequency. Here's a roundup of some of the latest poker happenings Stateside.

## Legislative News, the Latest

On the legal front, September began with news of the U.S. 3rd Circuit District Court having rejected the appeal of the Interactive Media Entertainment and Gaming Association (iMEGA) in its case challenging that the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006 (UIGEA) was unconstitutional. While some, including the Poker Players Alliance, saw reason for hope in the ruling insofar as it perhaps provided new impetus for individual states to craft their own legislation regarding online gambling, the UIGEA in fact already provides for state opt-outs.

In any event, the December 1, 2009 deadline for "designated payment systems" to comply with the UIGEA's finalized regulations and begin blocking Americans' transactions to online gambling sites continues to loom. While it is always possible that legislation designed to counter the UIGEA's effects -- or overturn it altogether -- could be pushed through prior to that date, such a possibility appears unlikely. Thus did House Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) and 18 other members of the House Financial Services Committee which Frank chairs send a letter to the Treasury Department on October 1 requesting a one-year delay of the UIGEA's implementation in order to give the proposed legislation time to be heard.

Meanwhile, poker -- both live and online -- was the subject of numerous other legal challenges on the state level during recent weeks. In South Carolina, five poker players convicted earlier this year for having staged a home poker game saw their convictions overturned on appeal in September, with the circuit judge notably remarking that their game of choice -- Texas hold'em -- involved skill and thus should be distinguished from chance-based gambling games. In Iowa, debates began over whether or not to pursue the regulation and taxation of online gambling. Discussions of the state budget in Pennsylvania in early October involved consideration of whether poker should be permitted in the state's already-sanctioned gambling parlors. And in Kentucky, the fight over who exactly controls the internet continues, with the case involving Governor Steve Beshear's attempt to seize control of 141 online gambling domains being scheduled to return to Kentucky's Supreme Court. Earlier this year, Beshear's domain grab was stopped by a court decision, but his administration has appealed that decision, and the matter will be revisited later in October.

## Turning to the Tourneys

While many were in London for the WSOPE and EPT events, the Commerce Hold'em Series ran in September, with 17 events spread over two-and-a-half weeks at the popular California casino. The championship sported a hefty \$500,000 guarantee, with California's own Michael Woo outlasting 269 competitors to claim the top prize of \$189,876.

One event from the Commerce Hold'em Series that attracted a lot of attention was Event #15, a \$1,600 "Iron Man" tournament with a slow structure, no deal-making allowed, and, most notably, no scheduled breaks. The brainchild of Tournament Director Matt Savage, the event drew 64 entrants including Gavin Griffin, Joe Bartholdi, Matt Graham, Shane Schleger, and Andrew Cimpan. Ultimately the tournament lasted almost 19-and-a-half hours, with Brett Radin of Los Angeles taking top honors. A true test of both stamina and skill, Savage said afterwards he had hoped for the tourney to have reached the 24-hour mark, and that more "Iron Man"-style events will likely be staged in the future.

And like their counterparts from 139 other countries, Americans were also heavily involved in PokerStars' World Championship of Online Poker series that ran during the first half of September, with 25 of the WCOOP's 45 events won by U.S. players. The most decorated American to compete was undoubtedly Daniel "djk123" Kelly with 11 cashes, three final tables, and two bracelets (in Razz and HORSE events). Kelly nearly scored a third WCOOP bracelet in the climactic \$5,200 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Main Event, finishing in fourth place after getting knocked out by eventual champ Yevgeniy "Jovial Gent" Timoshenko.

## Prime Time Poker

As mentioned, poker and poker players have been frequently appearing on American televisions over recent weeks. On the last Sunday of September, the new season of the popular reality show "The Amazing Race" kicked off on CBS, with professional poker players Tiffany Michelle and Maria Ho appearing as one of the 12 two-person teams competing for the \$1 million grand prize. Filming for the show took place over the summer, meaning the women were unable to compete in this summer's WSOP Main Event and thus try to follow up their succes-

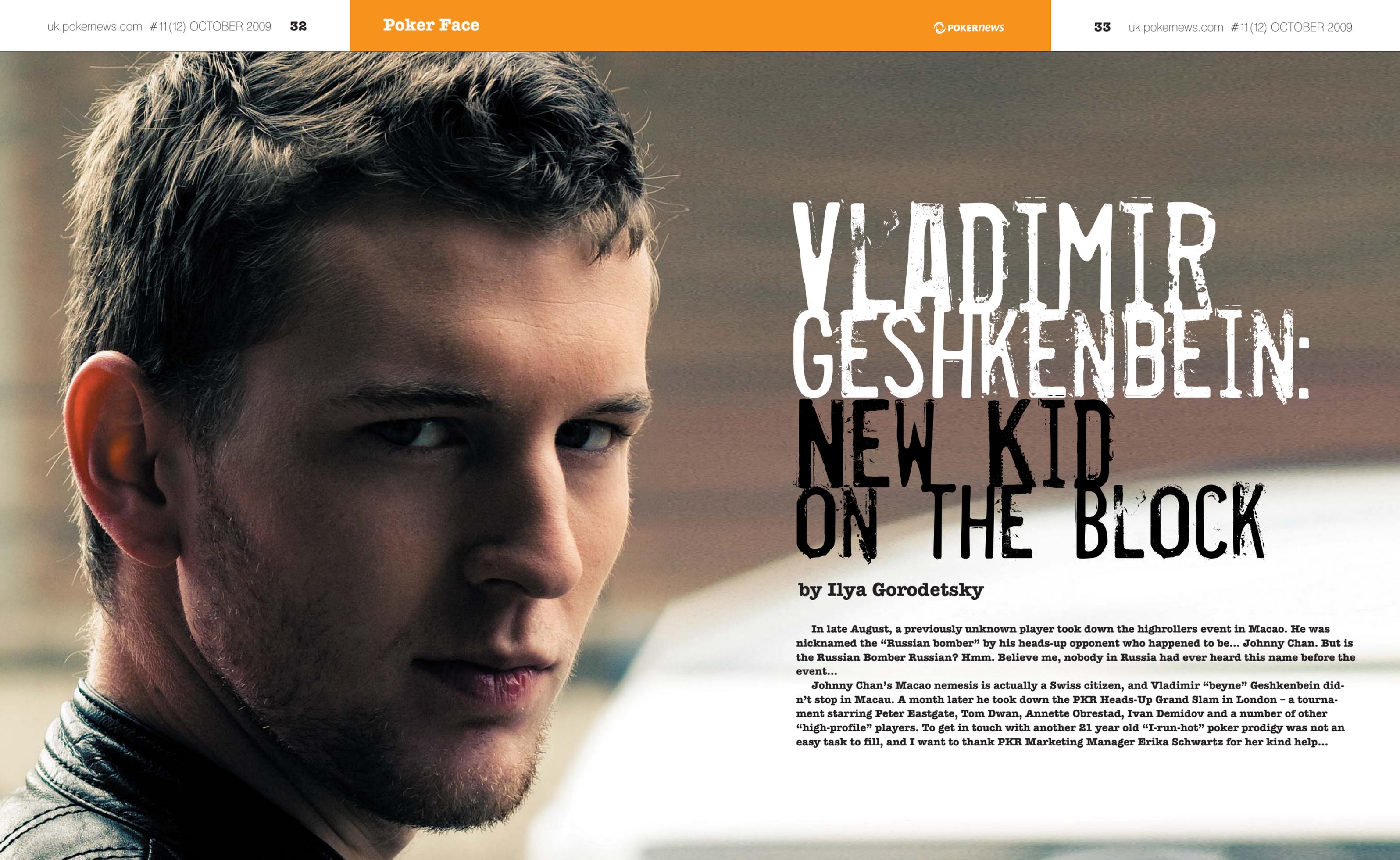


sive performances as the "last woman standing" at each of the two previous years' Main Events. (Michelle finished 17th in 2008, while Ho was 38th in 2007.) The pair join an ever-expanding club of poker pros-turned-reality show contestants, following in the footsteps of Annie Duke ("The Celebrity Apprentice") and Jean-Robert Bellande ("Survivor").

Poker itself has gotten some extra play of late on the tube as well, with no less than three different shows debuting on American networks. "Face the Ace" made its debut on NBC in prime time during the late summer, a show in which amateurs compete against professionals in heads-up no-limit hold'em freezeouts with a chance to win as much as \$1 million. Over on the G4 cable network, "2 Months 2 Million" follows the exploits of four online poker players in their attempt to earn \$2 million collectively over the course of two months. And in early October a new show called the "PokerStars.net Million Dollar Challenge" -- another show in which amateurs challenge pros in a quest for \$1 million -- debuted on the FOX network amid the usual Sunday afternoon football games.

## Next up, the November Nine

Speaking of poker on television, Americans continue to enjoy coverage of the 2009 World Series of Poker Main Event on ESPN, and all are eagerly looking forward to the final table. The November Nine -- or the "nine-alists," as some have dubbed them -- will reconvene on Saturday, November 7th at the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino to see who among them will emerge our next WSOP champion. Another exciting month of poker awaits! ♣



# VLADIMIR GESHKENBEIN: NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

by Ilya Gorodetsky

In late August, a previously unknown player took down the highrollers event in Macao. He was nicknamed the “Russian bomber” by his heads-up opponent who happened to be... Johnny Chan. But is the Russian Bomber Russian? Hmm. Believe me, nobody in Russia had ever heard this name before the event...

Johnny Chan’s Macao nemesis is actually a Swiss citizen, and Vladimir “beyne” Geshkenbein didn’t stop in Macau. A month later he took down the PKR Heads-Up Grand Slam in London - a tournament starring Peter Eastgate, Tom Dwan, Annette Obrestad, Ivan Demidov and a number of other “high-profile” players. To get in touch with another 21 year old “I-run-hot” poker prodigy was not an easy task to fill, and I want to thank PKR Marketing Manager Erika Schwartz for her kind help...

**Ilya Gorodetsky: Vladimir, tell us a bit about yourself. How old are you? Where are you from? When did you come to Switzerland? What did you do “before poker?”**

**Vladimir Geshkenbein:** I'm 21 years old, was born in Moscow but grew up in Switzerland. I was going to school when the poker boom started and right now I'm, well I guess I'm between high school and university.

**IG: How did poker appear in your life? When and where did you start playing? Was it “love at first sight” or was it just a hobby at first?**

**VG:** During school there was this big poker surge and all my friends suddenly started playing, so I joined them and we started playing \$5 SNGs instead of going to class. I quickly saw that I had an edge in the game and that's when I tried out the online-poker scene. I got 50 free dollars from some affiliate site, and that's how it all started. I never deposited my own money. Of course during the first few weeks and months it wasn't serious at all, but as the stakes grew it got more and more serious, culminating in a move to Malta in January into an apartment I shared with other poker players.

**IG: How did you learn the game? Did you read poker literature, forums, etc.? Is there anyone who you talk poker with a lot?**

**VG:** I have to admit that I have never read a book about poker, although I have read a lot of websites with strategies and have watched a few videos. In Switzerland there weren't a lot of people with whom I could talk poker and strategy, but here in Malta there are a lot of poker players, who I can talk to and discuss everything.

**IG: What is your poker specialization? I've read that you mainly play cash games, but you became well-known after your tournament wins, and one of them was even in a heads-up tournament. What do you prefer?**

**VG:** I have always played cash games. I just got into tourneys a few months ago, when a friend of mine, PKR\_Jabba, told me I should try out some tourneys.

**IG: Your name is associated with the PKR site – do you play online only there? How did you find this site? Do you play or plan to play on the bigger sites?**

**VG:** I was playing on PartyPoker, but then I discovered PKR in January this year. After I saw the software and how much fun you can have playing I started to play PKR only. The games are very good and I have fun spamming emotes to my opponents. I sometimes play tournaments on other sites, but I never have the same fun as on PKR!

**IG: I have the feeling there is “beyne” fan-club on PKR. Is it really so, and does this support help you?**

**VG:** Yeah that's true and I usually enjoy having them - the support from my fans is nice when I'm winning, but when losing I hate them. Just kidding!

**IG: You became well-known after the highrollers tournament in Macao. Did you have any offline experience before? Where did you play and did you have any important results?**

**VG:** Macao was my second big tournament trip. When I started playing tournaments I started at the top: the EPT Main Event in Monte Carlo. I even got to Day 2, but then I busted out and was quite frustrated as I lost quite a chunk of my bankroll there! That city is evil and should be burned!

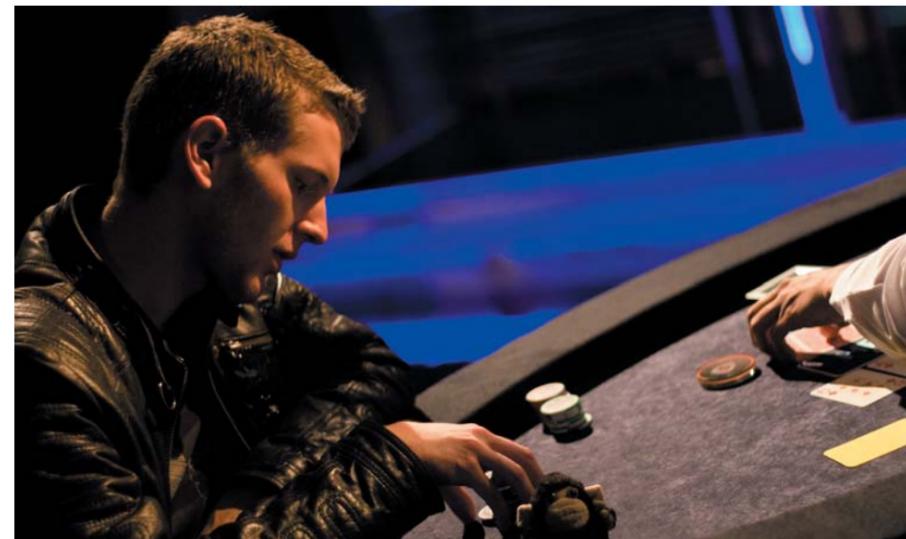
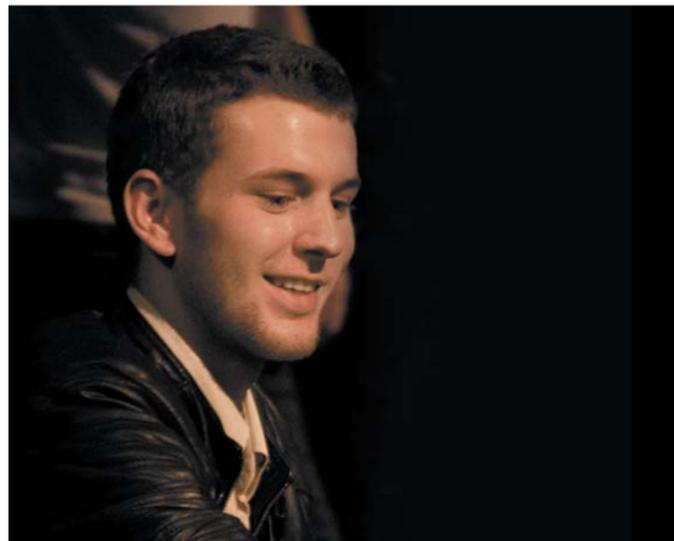
**IG: Is the difference between online and live play as big as some people think?**

**VG:** There's a huge difference for me. When I play online I try to stay concentrated 100% and use a lot of trackers, notes and stats to identify and adapt to the opponents. But when I play live, I mostly play for fun and I like to take a few more gambles and drinks

**IG: Tell us about the Macao tournament. Did you decide to play in the high-rollers event beforehand? Was the line-up as strong as the title suggests?**

**VG:** When I went to Macao I took a fixed budget with me, leaving my credit cards at home. I nearly went bust in cash games before the tourney even started and had already booked the flight home, but at the last moment decided to stay and play the event. I had

I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT I HAVE NEVER READ A BOOK ABOUT POKER, ALTHOUGH I HAVE READ A LOT OF WEBSITES WITH STRATEGIES AND HAVE WATCHED A FEW VIDEOS. IN SWITZERLAND THERE WEREN'T A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM I COULD TALK POKER AND STRATEGY, BUT HERE IN MALTA THERE ARE A LOT OF POKER PLAYERS, WHO I CAN TALK TO AND DISCUSS EVERYTHING.



only half the buy-in, though, and as I couldn't get any money from the ATM I had to try my luck spinning the buy-in up at the blackjack tables. Luckily I succeeded.

On the second day of the tournament I couldn't even afford a sandwich and had to borrow some money from KingKai, Team PKR Pro, Kai Paulsen, for food and beer!

**IG: You outplayed Johnny Chan heads-up – was that important for you? Are you interested in poker history at all?**

**VG:** I'm not really into poker history. To be honest I don't really care who won before me. I just want to be the next winner! I heard the name Johnny Chan when I went into heads-up but I didn't know that he was that famous!

**IG: You don't look like a poker pro, like a stereotypical poker pro, I mean. It seems in photos of you, that you pay close attention to your style and clothes. Is it true?**

**VG:** (Laughing) What do you mean by that? I'll take it as a compliment. I'm not really into brands and stuff, but I just like looking good, doesn't everyone?

**IG: Let's talk about the London heads-up tournament. There were a lot of top pros playing, but you didn't play any of them on your way to the final. Were you sad about that? Was there anyone you badly wanted to play?**

**VG:** Hey that's not true: P James666 (PokerNews - James Sudworth) is the most famous player on earth! Yeah, it's a pity I didn't get to face Tony G. I'd really love to play him as we both like to trash talk a lot and I think that would've been a fun match! When I started getting into poker I watched videos of him and liked his style, so it would be quite an honor to play him.

**IG: Can you tell us about some key moments of the Heads-Up Grand Slam. Which match was the most difficult for you?**

**VG:** The first match was against Alex Keating. When I got the table draw I didn't know who he was. But when I saw him

outside I was quite shocked! It was that guy who had put me on a mega-monster-tilt in a tournament in Monte Carlo when he did an absolutely ridiculous move on me. I was literally monkey-tilting straight away for 3 hours! It was funny to meet him again, and as I have settled the tilt issues it was a fun match and I think I can say we both had a lot of fun. This was definitely the hardest match and I think the only match where someone had a chip advantage over me, luckily only for a few hands, though.

The most fun match was definitely against James666. We know each other well, and it was the only match where I didn't really care if I won or not. We were both relaxed, drinking and trash talking each other.

**IG: You are a hyper-aggressive player. Is it true that you raised every button in your final match against Helppi? Was it your strategy for this match or do you play the same way in all your matches?**

**VG:** When I start a Heads-Up Match against an unknown player I always raise 100% of my buttons. I just want to see how they react. What I heard about Juha Hellpi is that he's a nit so my strategy was to steal as much as possible. I even openly told him that, but he didn't change his style and didn't adapt. That was his mistake. I just kept betting and he just kept folding and I showed him bluff after bluff.

**IG: You seem like a player who is not afraid of anyone. Are there any players you like or respect more than others?**

**VG:** That's true, when I first meet someone, in regards to poker of course, I don't have any respect for them unless they prove I should, and very few people have achieved that. I have to admit that I've always had problems with authority. As for the last part of the question, I like the name Phil, so let's go with Phil Ivey, Phil Galfond and Phil Laak.

**IG: What are your poker plans? Did you play in the World Series? What are your poker aspirations – what tournament do you want to win?**

**VG:** I haven't had a chance to play the WSOP yet, as I wasn't old enough for it. Now, that I am old enough I'm going to play the next WSOP for sure. My plan for the next year is to travel a lot and play tournaments all around the world. This way I can mix two of my loves: poker & travelling.

**IG: This issue of the magazine is about upswings. Give us some clue how to win two big events in a row.**

**VG:** You have to play good, run good, run better, and then run like God! And then, (shrugs), everything is yours. ☺

# What's your edge?

by Ivan Demidov



photo by Neil Stoddart

"What's your edge?" reads the slogan at one instructive poker site. Apparently it's an advertisement for its video-lessons. It is a very good question indeed: "What does distinguish a very good player from an average one?" Are there really good players head and shoulders above the others or are they just having prolonged upswings? An average but absolutely tilt-proof player who knows how to choose weak opponents can be more profitable in the long run than his talented but impulsive colleague.

I think it goes without saying, but I would like to discuss this "technical" aspect of the game. I discussed this topic with my friend, who is a good poker player, just a couple of weeks ago.

We were analyzing sit-n-go as the simplest form of a tournament. If we look at regulars who play middle limits and those who play high limits, then it is not that clear how they differ from each other. After all, everybody knows how to play at the beginning, what pushbotting and ICM are all about, how to play heads-up, etc. However, their results do vary. So what is the difference? There are two reasonable explanations: 1) A successful player is one having a long upswing 2) There is something that distinguishes a good player from just an average one – intuition, premonition, serendipity, you name it. When it comes to marginal situations in poker it is virtually impossible to understand whether you were just lucky or you correctly read the opponent.

Let's discuss a simple example. A player pushes from the button, you call from BB with K-8 off-suit and beat K-7 off-suit. Did you really play well and accurately estimate the opponent's range? Or maybe you just got lucky to face the bottom of his range whereas in reality the call had a negative expected value? Since a good player is constantly changing his range, in two identical situations your call can have either a minus EV or a plus EV.

Poker is a game with many unknown quantities. There are no precise answers in any complicated situation. Nobody can process all the variables and make an always correct decision. In all difficult situations good players rely on intuition. You have just a few seconds to solve a real puzzle with many unknowns, taking into consideration all factors: tells, table dynamics, your image, that of your opponent, previous hands, etc.

Sometimes a player himself can't explain why he made a decision, although back at the poker table he was absolutely sure that the course of action he took was the only one. I remember my A-Q hand vs. Dennis Phillips's A-K at the WSOP 2008 final table. I would not play the way I did 99.9% of the time but back then I suddenly felt that what I did was the best play. Thank God I listened to my inner voice and won this critical hand. When talking about the hand later I found tons of "logical" explanations, but the truth is that my intuition was the decider in the critical moment.

# Circumstances

## with Ivan Demidov

Many poker pros are absolutely sure that the most important factor in poker is luck, karma or aura (a trendy word of late in the poker community). According to them, the best players are on the very top not because they are Gods of poker but simply due to good runs of the cards at the right time. Skills are important too, but some win millions although they hardly make a higher grade than a regular of middle limits.

Aussie Millions'08 winner Alexander Kostriksyn told me an interesting story about intuition that he read in a Russian magazine. The article sends us to a U.S. army radar station at the beginning of World War II. This is when radar is in its infancy and for the first months all aircraft, both American and Japanese, are marked as dots on the screen and look absolutely identical. When a dot appears on the edge of the screen it is virtually impossible to figure out whether it is an American aircraft returning from his mission or a Japanese threat that will bomb the military base. If an operator can't identify the enemy immediately, then the American fighters will not have enough time to intercept the bomber and many people will perish. On the other hand, in the case of a false alarm the guilty person is in for an admonition or, in extreme circumstances, even a court martial.

So say Ensign Bill Smith is sitting in front of the radar screen and peering at hundreds of dots a day. Here comes another, the 101st dot which looks absolutely like all the others, but something is wrong about it. The operator's inner voice tells him that it is a Japanese bomber. Now we can imagine that back then many Japanese bombers must have got through such an imprecise system, but in this case, Ensign Smith alerts the fighters, sure somehow that he is correct about the dot, and saves hundreds of people including himself. When he made his decision to scramble the fighters the operator would not be able to express his understanding of why that particular dot looked suspicious. He just felt it. Several weeks down the road he might find some logical explanation as to how he identified it, but the fact is that it wasn't with the logical side of his brain that he was thinking.

In my opinion, when comparing a good player to a very good player, intuition is the difference. A beginner can work on the technical aspects of his game.

It takes from 12 months to many years. Actually, many after even 25 years of playing poker make glaring technical errors, but we are talking about good players who 'know' everything. The most important thing for such a player is how his thinking process is tuned, how accurate his solution of the problem will be. The more experience you have in certain situations the fewer unknowns you deal with and the easier it is to resolve the task. The better you are as a psychologist the better you can guess the opponent's range, and so on.

Poker is a very hard job. Since no one makes blunders at the high levels and you have to make your money (or chips) in slightly positive EV situations, and your intuition becomes a critical factor. When studying elementary particles (electrons, etc.) scientists found that it was impossible to describe their movements using the tools of classical mechanics. We can't determine the exact coordinates of an elementary particle. At most we can only describe its orbit and the probability of its being in a particular point. The current situation in poker resembles the one the physicists found themselves in back at the end of the nineteenth century before the discovery of quantum mechanics. On one hand it is virtually impossible to evaluate our decisions triggered by our intuition. On the other hand, the "quantum theory" of poker is yet to be discovered.

Thus, nothing remains for good poker players but to believe in their intuition, bearing in mind that objective evaluation tests are non-existent. One can make slightly negative EV decisions and find himself on the plus side. Another may play for two years, making all the correct decisions, then go to the countryside and take a 3 month break, return and find that, although his decision making processes are still there, he has lost his intuition. All technical aspects are intact but something is wrong. For me, these constant doubts about the correctness of marginal decisions, especially in the period of a down-streak, are the most complicated and terrifying thing in the life of any poker professional. Who knows, maybe all my previous achievements can be attributed to a mere up-streak? Remember that Jerry Yang won the WSOP 2007 Main Event, after all.

So, all we have left do in such situations is just to believe in ourselves, our intuition, to arm ourselves with patience, and to constantly work on our game. 🎰

# Swings

By Paul 'Dr. Pauly' McGuire

If you cannot handle gigantic swings in poker, then you have no business playing poker and you should stick to something less stressful like checkers or Guitar Hero. Although losing streaks happen more often than upswings, players have to be able to cope with both fluctuations in order to maintain long-term success. The life of a poker pro is a daunting mission. It is impossible to consistently play your A-game over long periods of time, and outrun variance at the same time. Many of the legends of poker can tell you about dry spells that lasted for years at a time. Only the mentally toughest players can endure grinding it out for consecutive months without receiving any monetary compensation for their time and effort.

The most exhilarating feeling in poker is riding the crest on the tidal wave of a winning streak. The common element to almost every winning streak? Confidence. I know a prosperous Wall Street trader who adheres to a motto: "Have courage in your convictions." Simply put, when you're running hot at the tables, you feel invincible.

Academic types persist that "rushes" are mathematically impossible. They have a valid point, but you cannot quantify the swagger

and bravado of a winning player. During winning streaks, you cannot wait to see your cards because you know that you're going to win the next hand. You play without fear. You're willing to walk the razor's edge and push draws because you know you will eventually get there. When you're running good, you don't even think twice about getting all-in behind your opponent because you know you're going to suck out. That audacious behavior will produce results in the short-term, but overconfidence is a recipe for long-term disaster. Players blow their wads after a colossal score because they keep pressing and don't know when to stop. That's why you have to be concise and cautious with your decisions during a winning streak. With a larger bankroll, you have more assets to protect.

Players will tell you that nothing is worse than spinning out of control during a losing streak. Pros disappear from the circuit because they couldn't handle losing and quit the game altogether. Amateurs become disgusted and stop playing because of their persistent losses. Players take losing personally which often leads to their downfall. Players who quit because they hate losing are unable to comprehend one of the most brutal truths in poker – that you lose



# Poker Truths with Dr. Pauly

more often than you win. One of the key fundamentals to winning poker is to minimize your losses and to maximize your wins. Losing is a part of the game and the players who can handle the psychology of losing are generally the most successful players.

Tournament poker is demoralizing. By the fifth week of the WSOP, I can tell which players are running bad by the look of the agony on their faces and the sorrow in their eyes. As a player, it is a brutal feeling to watch inferior opponents win millions of dollars when you do everything correctly and get sucked out on time after time with zero cashes to show for it.

Extended losing streaks are like digging a hole that keeps getting deeper and deeper. All of a sudden you realize that you've dug your own grave and you're being buried alive. The worst case scenario is waiting for a miraculous recovery during a losing streak. The poker gods are not going to give you a bailout. If anything they will shovel more dirt on your grave.

Ugly implosions happen when players are unable to handle a downswing and they slide into the depths of mega-tilt. They freak out and play scared poker. Some make abrupt changes to their style. They try to chase losses by playing higher limits. They're looking for huge scores rather than

grinding out smaller wins.

Variance might facilitate losing streaks, but tilt destroys bankrolls. At the slightest hint of a losing streak, it is imperative that you step away from the tables and reassess your game before you return. If your game is fine-tuned – then you'll continue to have strong conviction in your decisions and ride out variance's hurricane. If you discover leaks in your game, then you have a chance to plug them before you lose more money.

Players tilting during losing sessions are dangerous. Instead of firing up an online poker site, they might as well drink a bottle of poison. The results are the same. Imminent death. Losing players need breaks away from poker to get themselves in a better headspace. Some of the best pros can shake off tilt in a few hours by working out, playing with their kids, or watching a movie. Other players need to withdraw for a few months and take a holiday in a remote destination. Perspective and rest are poker players' best friends.

Poker is a war and you have to be in top mental shape in order to compete with the premier players. If you lose your focus, your opponent gains a tremendous edge. If you want to be one of the Masters of the Universe, then you must be able to handle the massive swings. 🎰

# November Nine: Who Is Next?

by Alex Ferder

Only a couple of days remain until we know the name of a new World Champion. Nine lucky men will return to the WSOP Main Event final table on November 7, to blinds of 120,000 – 240,000 (ante 30,000). The average stack is 21,650,000 chips.

Here are short sketches on the November Nine members...

## Seat 1. Darvin Moon (USA, 45 years old) – 58,930,000

**Sponsor Site:** none.

The mega-chipleader. He has the nearest competitor outchipped by a whopping 25,000,000. Moon qualified for the WSOP Main Event by winning a \$130 satellite in a small casino in West Virginia. Darvin lives in Oakland, Maryland and owns a small three-man logging business. He has no credit card, no e-mail, and had never been to Las Vegas before 2009.

It's pretty hard to evaluate Moon's skill as he was running unbelievably hot during the July part of the event. Aces, kings, aces again, flush vs. lesser flush, set vs. overpair in a 3-bet pot, etc. If you're catching every card in the deck it doesn't matter how you play. But Moon still seems to play solid poker, and his opponents shouldn't expect any free chips from him. A place in the Top 3 is almost guaranteed to the mild-mannered American.

It's worth mentioning that Darvin has been realistic about his magic run in interviews. He didn't mention any well-concealed poker skills (as did Gold in '06), or extol God for His help (as did Yang in '07). Moon conceded a number of times that he was just extremely lucky. "My run in this tournament is pure luck. I haven't had to show skill at all." Moon, who admits that he was poor all his life, declined all contract offers from poker sites. He says he values his day-to-day life and personal freedom more than hundreds of thousands of dollars. "They wanted to tie me up for a year with them. So if they want me to go somewhere, I had to go...When I get done here, I'm going back to work in my little town and I'm going to get away from everybody," he said in an interview with cardplayer.com.

It's hard not to root for him.

## Seat 2. James Akenhead (England, 26 years old) – 6,800,000

**Sponsor Site:** Full Tilt

Akenhead's tournament played out a bit differently than Moon's. He has the smallest stack and even to get to that he had to outdraw

aces with K-Q. To be fair, Akenhead had been pretty unlucky in his all-in situations before that.

The former train driver is a well-respected poker pro, whose main achievement before the WSOP Main Event 2009 was making it to the final table at the biggest preliminary event of WSOP 2008. He almost won the whole thing, but his A-K was cruelly out-flopped by Grant Hinkle's 10-4. After getting into the November Nine Akenhead made it to the final table at the WSOP Europe Main Event, but got pretty unlucky there and was first to go.

It's well-known that Akenhead was formerly backed by Neil Channing, though we have no information that this is still the case. Akenhead is a competent, experienced, tight-aggressive player and his short-stack is not a death sentence. Even after the blind-up he'll have more than 20 big blinds.

Great Britain has a hope!

## Seat 3. Phil Ivey (USA, 33 years old) – 9,765,000

**Sponsor Site:** Full Tilt

If Ivey had something to prove, he has done it this year. He is the best living poker player in the world. Period.

It's the first Main Event final table for Ivey. Twice – in 2003 & 2005 – he came close. But in 2003, destiny, with Chris Moneymaker's face, stepped in, and two years later not playing his best during the penultimate day caused him to bust out in 20th place, losing a huge stack in the process.

The nightmare of 2005 almost came back to haunt Ivey this year. On the last day of summer play he lost three all-ins in a row and became short-stacked. But Ivey is Ivey after all – he has yet to be all-in and called in this tournament and has managed to make it to the final table.

And it doesn't matter that he's only seventh, stack-wise. It is simple: If he is in the finals he is the favorite, because his name is PHIL IVEY.

## Seat 4. Kevin Schaffel (USA, 51 years old) – 12,390,000

**Sponsor Site:** Poker Stars

Kevin Schaffel is a well-off businessman turned poker pro who has played the game since he was 11 years old. He is mainly a cash player and takes part only in big tournaments. He had a deep run in the WSOP Main Event in 2004, finishing 42nd (out of 2,576). He

also finished ITM in the main event in 2008.

In the summer Schaffel played quite solidly, almost not playing any big pots at all. He had planned to get some rest during these four months before the final table, but the poker Gods had other plans for him. He finished 2nd in the WPT Legends of Poker and then had a deep run in the EPT London Main Event. Schaffel proved once again that final-tabling a main event has some kind of magic impact on a player. Anyway his recent decision to sell his printing & mailing business was the right one, he says, as he has more time for poker and golf now.

Schaffel is a humble man, but he is quite confident in his abilities and with a good run of cards can be dangerous.

## Seat 5. Steven Begleiter (USA, 47 years old) – 29,885,000

**Sponsor Site:** Full Tilt

Who does the world of finance and banking root for? Begleiter! Even Bloomberg has published an article about his success. Begleiter worked for Bear Stearns for 24 years, and for the nine years before the 2008 collapse was the head of corporate strategy. Begleiter's luck at the poker table could have been a great help to his former employers...

This wealthy amateur could possibly be called the most unpredictable player at the final table. He called a 3-bet preflop with J-9, defended his big blind with 8-5 offsuit, etc. To get this far with the 3rd biggest stack he had to get very lucky a number of times.

The father of three won his place in the Main Event playing in his home league in his native Chappaqua. 20% of his winnings will be shared by other members of the league so he is sure to have a big crowd rooting for him, which he will definitely need, facing such experienced opposition...

## Seat 6. Erik Buchman (USA, 28 years old) – 34,800,000

**Sponsor Site:** Poker Stars

This experienced professional who had won almost \$1,000,000 before the Main Event and has qualified for the finals with the second biggest stack is definitely one of the top favorites. This is his third final table in a World Series tournament and the second one he's shared with Phil Ivey (Buchman took 6th in a mixed stud hi-low / Omaha hi-low event Phil won this summer).

He wasn't the most visible figure during the Main Event as he was always rather short-stacked, except for the last day of the July session, when he ran hot and even was a chip leader for quite a while. He is extremely confident in his poker abilities and insists that he is not afraid of anyone, even Ivey.

Buchman, who changed the logo on his shirt (from Full Tilt to PokerStars) in between two parts of the tournament, could go all the way to the title if Big Phil and Akenhead aren't able to overcome their short-stack problems.

## Seat 7. Joe Cada (USA, 21 years old) – 13,215,000

**Sponsor Site:** Poker Stars

The youngest member of the November Nine is a typical online-pro. He plays a lot of heads-up cash (up to NL2K) and big tournaments under the screen name jcada99. His resume boasts wins in two big online tournaments – Full Tilt \$750K Guaranteed (January '08) and Sunday Mulligan (October '08). He qualified for the Main Event by winning an online satellite on Ultimate Bet, and, like Buchman, also changed his sponsoring site several months after securing a seat in the November Nine. Obviously PokerStars are making offers that can't be refused.

Cada is a "new generation" player, opening a lot of pots and trying to seize the initiative preflop. The end of Day 8 was pretty unlucky for him as he lost almost

30% of his stack, but he still has almost 40 big blinds and a lot of online experience of playing with such a stack. We call him the "dark horse" of the WSOP final.

## Seat 8. Antoine Saout (France, 25 years old) – 9,500,000

**Sponsor Site:** Everest Poker

It was pretty hard to gather information on the Frenchman as his English is far from perfect, and so he didn't have a lot of chances to say much about himself even after his enormous score. OK, maybe he did say something, but we just didn't understand it. He was the least experienced out of a number of French players (Lacay, Balmigere, GrosPELLIER, etc.) who made an impact on the Main Event this year, but he was definitely the luckiest in the closing stages of the event.

He only started playing about a year ago and still managed to qualify for the WSOP ME on Everest Poker. He was part of a big promo held by this site and 50 guys who also qualified on Everest received an extra \$20,000 from the site thanks to Antoine's success. The power of their positive thinking could be one of the Saout's assets in early November, if he believes in that sort of thing.

Saout was pretty passive on his way to the final table, winning a key coin flip vs. Akenhead and then just folding a lot. But afterwards he proved that he can play by making the final table in the WSOP Main Event and even outlasting his "two-time neighbor," Akenhead, there. Antoine took 7th in London and will definitely try to best this result in Vegas, though his stack is the second smallest.

## Seat 9. Jeff Shulman (USA, 34 years old) – 19,580,000

**Sponsor Site:** none

Shulman is also considered to be one of the favorites. He is a semi-pro and a publisher of CardPlayer magazine. Interestingly enough he is the only finalist who has already had a decent chance to become a world champion. Even Ivey has never been as close as him. In 2000, Jeff was the chip leader with seven players remaining and was putting enormous pressure on his opponents. That's why Chris Ferguson decided to push back with 6-6. Shulman called with a dominating pair of sevens, but Ferguson spiked a six, and went all the way to the title whereas Shulman soon busted out in 7th – he even didn't make the official final table as it was played 6-handed at the moment.

To make it to the November 7th final table, Shulman played a nearly flawless game, though he said later that with the cards he got anyone would have had even more chips than he had as he did almost nothing but receive chips from opponents who pushed when he had the goods.

Jeff also joked about his bracelet plans, insisting that the jewelry would probably go in the trash can, a joke that wasn't very popular with the poker audience. Shulman explained himself later: "Some people are reporting that I'm upset because the World Series canceled a media deal with Card Player," he said. "My comments have nothing to do with that, and everything to do with my disappointment in how the World Series is run." Shulman has now publicly declared he will give the bracelet to charity instead of throwing it away, if he wins of course.

Jeff got some attention two more times in recent months. First when he officially became the only finalist to hire a coach and chose Phil Hellmuth, and second when his father gave him a lesson, winning the WSOP Europe Main Event in London. Personally I'm not sure if these two facts will increase Shulman Jr's chances of succeeding, but who knows...

The waiting is almost over. We'll get all the answers pretty soon! 🎰



# Sweden

Players from the largest Scandinavian country have always been considered dangerous opponents – skillful, aggressive and fearless. Watch some early EPT videos, and you'll be impressed by the number of Swedes sitting at nearly every featured table. Later they were somewhat outshadowed and sometimes outnumbered by their northern neighbors from Norway, but still if there is a Swede at your table, he is more likely to be a tough customer rather than a helpless fish.

Sweden is notorious for its high taxes. Poker players are required to pay a 30% tax on all poker winnings outside the EU and the EES, while all winnings within the EU are tax free. This partly explains why so few Swedes go overseas for WSOP and WPT events and prefer playing in the EPT as well as online. The first Swede we cover's experience with taxes serves as a warning to any Swede thinking of breaking this trend.

## **Martin De Knijff. \$ 3,372,383**

The WPT Championship 2004 winner, Martin De Knijff, is still atop the Swedish tournament leaderboard. He learned to play at the age of 15, and later started dividing his time between sports betting, bridge and poker. His first notable score occurred at the WSOP 2002 Main Event, where he narrowly missed the final table, finishing 13th for \$60,000. His next major tournament was a dream come true – Martin ruled the final table of the \$25,000 buy-in WPT Championship, beating TJ Cloutier, Steve Brecher, Matt Matros and Hasan Habib. The Swede outlasted 342 opponents and won \$2,728,356. Less than a month later he added a runner-up finish in one of the WSOP events for another \$210,100. A great way to start a new and promising tournament

by **Simon Lee**



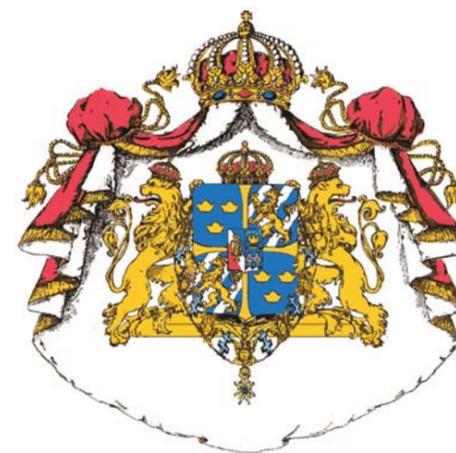
career! His sharp playing style in combination with his last name earned him the catchy nickname, "knife." However, since 2004, he hasn't recorded any other 6-digit tournament wins.

In 2006, the Swedish government's tax department claimed that Martin had outstanding taxes to be paid and as such hit him with just over 1 million in back taxes. Martin tried to appeal the decision, but was denied. Having learned the hard way what kind of a bite Swedish taxes can take from a Swede's pocket, Martin moved with his family to Las Vegas, where he still plays major tournaments and has access to high limit cash games. There were rumors that he was the man behind the mystery "Martonas," who enlivened railheaven cash games on Full Tilt Poker this autumn, but they are considered false.

## **Johan Storakers. \$ 2,830,861**

Johan Storakers is a serious offline grinder. His almost \$3 million in prizes have come without a single \$500,000+ score. Johan final tabled two WPT events and cashed 9 times in the WSOP. He is an old school player – patient, methodic, observant, and generally tight. It worked excellently for him in the early 2000s, when Johan was one of the biggest winners on the European circuit, and it still works now – last year Storakers finished second in the Aruba Classic for \$486,000, and in 2009 he showed that he still had it by final tabling the EPT Dortmund, where he earned the best non-German award for his 4th place finish (as well as \$299,685 in prize money).

Storakers learned poker in 1987, when he was 17 years old, and three years later began to play regularly at the famous poker club, "Kortoxen," in Stockholm. In 1997 he left his "civil" job to play poker full time. He used to be a member of the Ultimate Bet professional team, but left it in 2009 upon receiving an offer from Full Tilt Poker. He said he has always enjoyed strategy games, and while he played chess in his teens, he considers poker to be the most perfect game for a person who likes strategy and math.





### William Thorson \$ 2,246,422

The 25 year old Thorson is your typical loose-aggressive Scandi maniac everybody hates to meet at the table. He comes from a poker playing family – his father finished 34th in the WSOP 2003 Main Event. William learned poker from his father at a tender age. He began playing online at PokerStars in 2002 when he deposited \$50, and he has not reloaded since. His screen name, “William,” shows that he was among the very first PokerStars users. Thorson Jr. has a diploma in Economics, but his personal economy is based solely on poker – high limit cash games (pot-limit omaha) and tournaments, with great results in both.

In 2006 Thorson came close to making the final table of the WSOP Main Event. He eventually busted 13th, earning over \$900,000 for the feat. In 2007 he final tabled a \$5,000 limit holdem event, winning \$136,493. However, as a member of the Poker Stars Pro team, he is obviously more active on the European scene, regularly playing in the EPT events, where he has registered three final tables – one of the best results on the circuit. Right now he is #6 on the EPT leaderboard. This October the Swede prevailed in a side event at the EPT London, taking the £2,000 PLO by storm: Though he was down to 15,000 early in the final day, he had 215,000 going for the dinner break, and crushed the opposition in the next 35 minutes. “Yeah, that was sick!” said William after busting his last opponent.

Apart from poker, Thorson greatly enjoys horse-trotting; he is a co-owner of several horses in Sweden.

### Michael Tureniec \$ 1,671,130

The first Full Tilt Pro from Sweden, Michael Tureniec, hasn't repeated Martin De Knijff's mistake. The 23 year old runner up of the EPT London 2008 almost exclusively plays in European tournaments and Swedish casinos, as well as online. Michael has been running very hot since signing his pro contact. In August this year he advanced to the final table of the €7,750 Main Event of the second Partouche Poker Tour, which will be concluded on November 22nd, and later finished second in a big tournament in England for another \$202,115. His best online score is 2nd place in the very prestigious Sunday major – Full Tilt Poker

### Sweden. All-time money list (live tournaments)

1st - Martin De Knijff.....	\$ 3,372,383
2nd - Johan Storakers.....	\$ 2,830,861
3rd - Erik Friberg.....	\$ 2,700,659
4th - William Thorson.....	\$ 2,246,422
5th - Christer Johansson.....	\$ 2,117,729
6th - Michael Tureniec.....	\$ 1,671,130
7th - Daniel Bergsdorf.....	\$ 1,347,422
8th - Ken Lennaard.....	\$ 1,270,572
9th - Peter Hedlund.....	\$ 1,078,512
10th - Mats Rahmn.....	\$ 1,072,305



\$750,000 Guarantee, which earned him more than \$80,000.

Tureniec is a classic example of a self made poker pro. He came to poker via blackjack and started to flirt with limit holdem, first and foremost establishing a solid mathematical foundation, then he moved to tournament poker. Playing according to strict bankroll rules is something a blackjack player knows cold, and Tureniec is not an exception. In 2006 he decided that his skills would allow him to pursue a professional poker career. Three years later, and he is №6 in lifetime winnings in one of the strongest poker countries in the world.

### Tomgus456 (name and earnings unknown)

The anonymous Stockholm resident (believed to be Finnish) playing under the screen name, “Tomgus456,” on most major poker sites is one of the world's strongest online players. His playing career began in 2007, when he deposited €50 on PokerStars and grinded barely noticeable \$0.01-\$0.02 NLH cash games to build his roll. In 9 month Tomgus amassed a \$10,000 bankroll, and started taking shots at online tournaments.

To date Tomgus has made well over a \$1,000,000 profit on multi table tournaments online. In February, 2008, he won the Sunday Million, pocketing more than \$219,000. He has numerous 5-digit cashes on many poker sites, winning and final tabling all kinds of tournaments – freezeout, rebuy, heads up, even super turbo! In July 2009 he won the Sunday 300K on Party Poker for \$63,000, and recently snatched the UB 100K Gtd for \$38,375. He is a PocketFives.com Triple Crown winner, too.

These days Tomgus mixes the tournament grind with pot limit Omaha cash games up to \$200-\$400. In an interview he complained that the online tournament schedule is made for Americans and is very inconvenient for Europeans, who cannot live normal lives going to bed at 7am every day. That's why Tomgus has limited much of his non-Sunday tournament activity in favor of cash games. ☺



FOURTH STREET DOESN'T COME FREE. TO SEE THIS CARD YOU HAVE TO PAY.  
WE PLAY TO ELIMINATE OPPORTUNITIES AND PUSH OPPONENTS OUT LONG BEFORE THEY EVER SEE THE NEXT CARD.



FULL TILT POKER NOW ACCEPTS MAESTRO AND SOLO CARDS

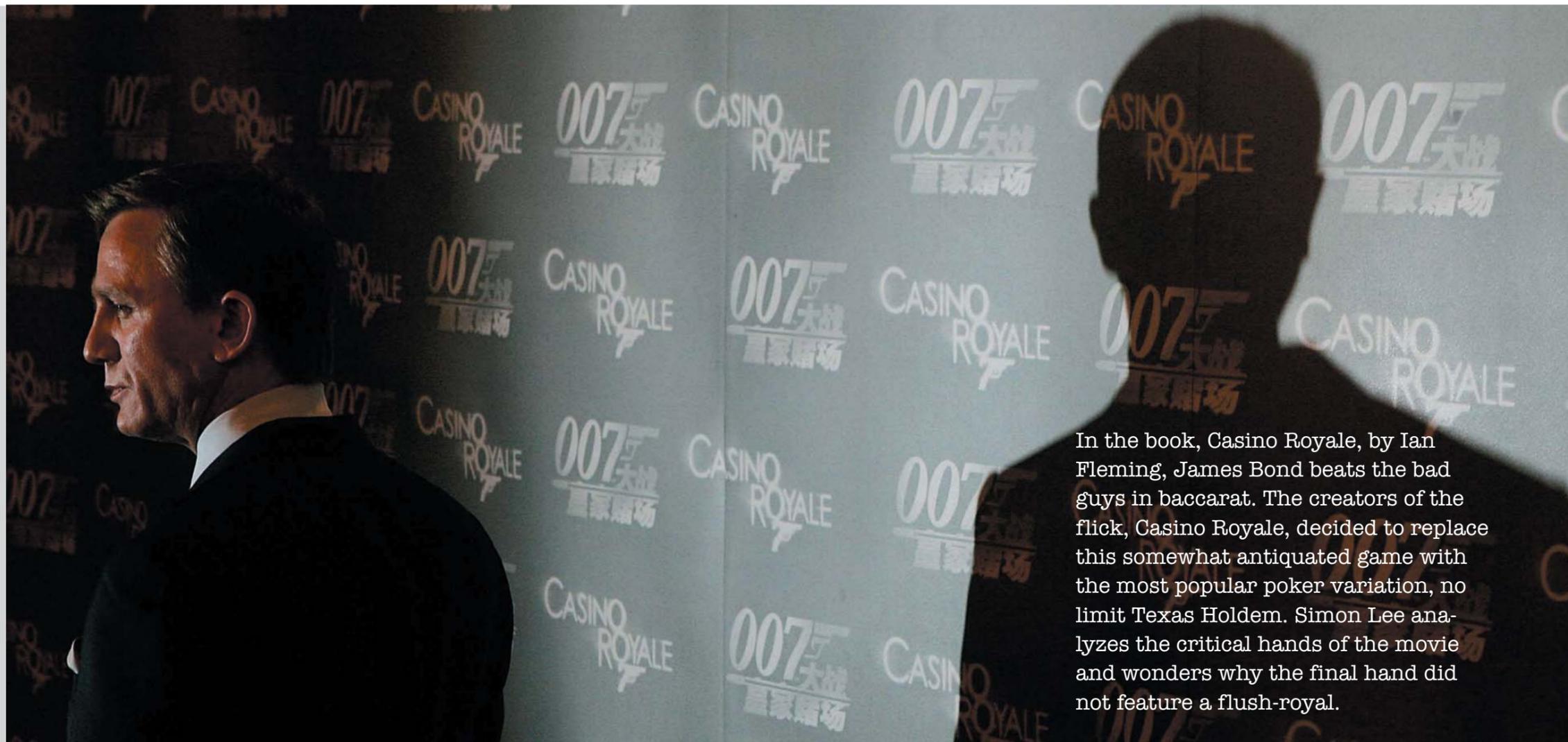


LEARN, CHAT AND PLAY WITH THE PROS.

©2009 Full Tilt Poker. All rights reserved

# Casino Royale: Holdem by Bond

by Simon Lee



In the book, *Casino Royale*, by Ian Fleming, James Bond beats the bad guys in baccarat. The creators of the flick, *Casino Royale*, decided to replace this somewhat antiquated game with the most popular poker variation, no limit Texas Holdem. Simon Lee analyzes the critical hands of the movie and wonders why the final hand did not feature a flush-royal.

This time out, James Bond is commissioned to neutralize Le Chiffre, private banker to the world's terrorists. Le Chiffre keeps bloody dictator money from all around the world and has business interests in virtually all problem regions... MI-6 becomes aware that Chiffre is teetering on the edge of financial ruin, having lost all the money entrusted to him speculating on an airline stock. But his bearish tactics were part of the plan - go short with the stock, blow up the airline's newest flagship aircraft, and laugh all the way to the bank. However, Bond dashes his plans by foiling the saboteur and defusing the bomb. To redress his financial situation (he lost \$101,206,000), Le Chiffre decides to organize a single table poker tournament with a \$10,000,000 buy-in (and one \$5,000,000 re-buy) which he plans to win.

Strange as it may sound, our villain does not even intend to cheat, counting instead on his extraordinary mathematical abilities and foxy cunning. Obviously he has a backup plan, but it goes beyond poker. Bond, being extolled by a fellow agent as the best poker player in the service, gets thrown into the battle on the green felt. British Intelligence reasons that if

Le Chiffre loses he will have no other option but to defect and give away his "clients." Having received \$10,000,000 and a charming assistant with the re-buy money, Bond sets out for Montenegro. It's a shaky plan, and would run into plenty of problems before the end of the movie.

But before the Le Chiffre face off, we see a hand played by petty criminal, and temperamental Greek, Dimitrios.

## 1. Trap

We see the flop - 9♣3♥A♣, and the turn 7♥. The betting starts here.

Bond checks, Dimitrios bets 5,000 (it looks like; at least it is a large part of his stack). James calls.

The river brings K♣.

Bond checks again. Dimitrios goes all-in plus the keys from his car. The dealer objects, but Bond is willing to give his opponent a chance. No wonder, the British agent has the best possible hand. Naturally, he calls. In the showdown, Dimitrios tables K♠K♦, Bond, as you might correctly have guessed, shows A♦A♥.

Analysis. Most likely Bond, having pocket aces, opened with a healthy raise. His opponent, having position, surely reraised preflop, whereas Bond probably flat called. Having hit the set of aces on the safe flop the double oh decides to let his opponent lead the way. The seven on the turn gives flush-draw and straight-draw, but one should not carry too much trepidation over this possibility, bearing in mind the preflop reraise. For this very reason Bond check-calls.



Dimitrios' bet on the turn looks absurdly large with an ace on the board. The river card is a terrible one for the Mafioso – he gets the third king and moves all in. Well played by Bond, who scoops the pot and takes the car. By the way, it is just the beginning of the Greek's misfortunes.

The next hand takes place in Casino Royale in Montenegro, where James Bond either commits a mistake or makes an investment, a la Daniel Negreanu.

## 2. Bad beat

There are four people in the pot when we see the flop, 9♥8♥5♥. A grey-haired Japanese and a portly African-American both tap the table. After checking his cards, Le Chiffre bets \$50,000. Bond calls, the others fold.

The turn brings 9♣. Le Chiffre bets \$100,000, Bond calls again.

The river produces 2♥. Le Chiffre bets \$200,000, Bond calls again and mucks his hand losing to a full-house – his opponent has 2♣2♠.

Analysis. It is very likely that Bond had a flush after the flop. In our opinion one should protect such a hand on the flop, especially facing three opponents. If we have two small hearts then any heart on the turn would be very bad news for us; having the nut flush we would not be happy to see the board paired. A solid reraise by Bond either on the flop (and definitely on the turn) would have made Le Chiffre fold his weak hand.

On the other hand Bond wanted his opponent to go as far as the showdown. Probably he needed to know how to interpret the nervous tick that he spotted on the face of his opponent. One of the best poker players in the world, Daniel Negreanu, sometimes is willing to pay good price, fully aware that he is behind, just to find out what hand his opponent has. Nevertheless, perhaps it is better to choose the simple decision when playing terrorists or their bankers. Who knows the reason behind a nervous tick?

## 3. Bluff or not?

Three people get involved in the pot: CIA agent, Felix Leiter, Bond and Le Chiffre. We see the board J♥K♠A♣J♦.

Leiter bets \$300,000. Bond and Le Chiffre both call.

The river brings K♦. Leiter checks. Having glanced on his A♥K♥, Bond bets \$500,000. Le Chiffre on his turn raises to \$1,000,000. Leiter folds, Bond flat reraises to \$2,000,000. Le Chiffre goes all in for \$14,500,000. Bond calls and Le Chiffre wins with J♠J♣.

Analysis. Given the very dangerous board we can understand Bond who prudently called the bet by his colleague with two high pairs. Obviously Le Chiffre, who had four of a kind was in no hurry – it is the correct play. Bond catches a full-house on the river. It is by no means the nuts. James loses to a pair of jacks or a pair of aces. However, it is virtually impossible to fold such a hand. After Leiter's

check Bond makes a small bet followed by a series of raises by the British agent and Le Chiffre. Since both players believe in the strength of their respective hands (by the way, Le Chiffre does not have the nuts too – he loses to a pair of kings), they try to make their opponent go all-in. Moreover, Bond is positive that Le Chiffre is bluffing (remember the nervous tick!). The villain wins a huge pot whereas Bond has to make the re-buy.

## 4. Triumph of British poker

There are only four people left at the table and all of them are in the pot of \$28,000,000. None of the players bet despite a very dangerous board A♥8♠6♠4♠. The river brings A♠, a card ESPN annotator, Norman Chad, considers the most beautiful in the deck. Le Chiffre, who loses the hand because of this ace, has a reason to disagree.

The grey-haired Japanese bets \$6,000,000 – all his chips. The African-American invests the rest of his stack - \$5,000,000. Le Chiffre raises \$12,000,000. Bond, who is the chip leader at this moment, goes all-in for \$40,500,000. After a one-second hesita-

tion Le Chiffre calls. The Japanese has a flush - K♠Q♠. The African-American hit a full-house on the river - 8♥8♣. However, Le Chiffre has a higher boat - A♣6♥. Only two hands beat him: A-8 and the one Bond has, namely 7♠5♠. James tables his straight-flush and scoops the pot.

Analysis. The African-American looked a prohibitive favorite after the flop. However, had he even bet, every one of his opponents would have had strong reasons for calling. Note, that this mass disinclination to bet on the turn was unfortunate for Le Chiffre. His hand did not look good at all on the turn and simply couldn't withstand aggression, but, unluckily for Le Chiffre, he caught a full-house on the river and had no way back. As for Bond, he demonstrated an exemplary slow-play of the nuts.

To sum up, the poker in Casino Royale is shown in the traditional style with confrontations of nut combinations in every hand. The main character does not have to show his skill. Every hand is so strong that it plays itself, so his only concern is to avoid childish mistakes.

Two things really surprised me. First, we saw pocket aces just once, not in every hand played. Second, Bond did not show royal-flush in the culmination moment. Let's hope that TV coverage of the largest poker tournaments has made an impact and audiences have become much more fastidious! ♣





by Ian Casing

# elky: under the mask

Everyone wears a mask – any psychologist will tell you that. But for poker players (especially the best of them), their mask becomes a professional attribute, a necessary component of their success. We will try to look under one such mask and try to see if it is needed; we will peek into the soul of a young “superman,” a former StarCraft champion, who has become a force in the biggest poker tournaments. I’m talking, of course, about Bertrand Gropellier, aka Elky. In 2008, the former gamer won the Pokerstars Caribbean Adventure and a WPT Festa Al Lago Classic. What is the secret of his stunning achievements? Let’s get to the bottom of it.

First, I would like to say a couple of words about the image that Bertrand creates and the above-mentioned mask which he puts on at the poker table. He comes across like the James Bond of the poker world. Self-confident, imperturbable and concentrated, and with a slightly ironic smile on his lips, he sends a clear message: I can’t lose. The only outcome of today’s battle is my complete victory, and your annihilation.

Always wearing stylish sunglasses, he carries himself with the demeanor of a movie hero who knows it’s in the script that he will save the world. Paradoxically, some of his gestures have a hint of the show man. For

example, when Bertrand folds he throws the cards with a wide motion, so that they make a long arc in the air.

When he plays a hand, however, Gropellier’s mask comes down and effects to conceal whatever is going on behind those glasses. Only in the situations where he can’t anymore affect the outcome, does a cold, slightly ironic smile appear. Sitting across from him, you can easily begin to feel that he is invulnerable, and that your own self-confidence and will-to-win spirit is useless. It is very noticeable in situations where Gropellier’s aggressive approach bears fruits. Just a few good bluffs in a row and his opponents are completely demoralized. There is just no point in fighting a superman – he is always better.

Obviously, although a famous and revered image in itself can help you win hands, it is not a sound foundation for continued success. Bertrand is constantly involved in processing information. As the situation at the poker table changes he is diligently analyzing his opponents’ reactions and is very quick in making decisions about his own cards and choosing the optimal line. His StarCraft experience serves him in good stead; any professional gamer has to analyze a huge amount of information within a split second and keep many varying factors under control. At the same time one should

have enough internal time to make correct decisions and make hundreds of mouse-clicks per minute.

Perhaps we can say that poker is not as different from a computer game as one may think. Any poker player should analyze the situation at the table, calculate possible combinations, keep track of all of the verbal and non-verbal communications his opponents are giving off and simultaneously develop his own line of attack. As tournament practice demonstrates Elky, mask in place, brilliantly copes with all these problems.

And yet no man can have a face set in concrete, and Gropellier can’t help the occasional lifting of his mask. Sometimes, if you are patient, you may get a chance to see the real Bertrand, sweating, fretting and then rejoicing winning a hand. Is it part of his brilliance to give us this occasional glimpse into his soul? In critical moments Bertrand parts his lips and freezes for a while,

betraying the tense moment of a decision which will affect further hand development. Sometimes surprise passes across his face, when his eyebrows raise and his lips purse.

The fact that we sometimes can get a glimpse at the real Gropellier, when he lets his real self come through, illustrates the fact that he does indeed have a mask in place most of the time, but the man you’re likely to see when you sit down across from him is that superman who will return your stare with nothing but a small, ironic smile on pursed lips, eyes practically invisible through his tinted specs.

Gropellier’s image can’t but evoke good feelings. This strong, charming and irresistible hero instantly wins your liking and admiration. I am sure that a new superman of the poker world has many more impressive victories to come. ☺

The fact that we sometimes can get a glimpse at the real Gropellier, when he lets his real self come through, illustrates the fact that he does indeed have a mask in place most of the time, but the man you’re likely to see when you sit down across from him is that superman who will return your stare with nothing but a small, ironic smile on pursed lips, eyes practically invisible through his tinted specs.





photo by Neil Stoddart

# WCOOP 2009 Summary

From September 3rd to September 20th, PokerStars held the eighth edition of its World Championship of Online Poker. It was bigger than ever, with 45 events and a total prize fund of more than \$51,000,000. And, just like WSOP, 2009, it produced a surprisingly large number of multiple bracelet winners – three players managed to run through tough and numerous online fields to snatch two WCOOP bracelets!

Some well known professionals did very well at this year's WCOOP, winning major events and topping the series' leaderboard. Let's take a closer look.

Daniel 'djk123' Kelly took the Player of the Series title thanks to winning two events and finishing 4th in the Main Event – an incredible feat! In addition to that, Kelly tied for first place in the "most cashes" nomination, making the money 11 times. He was just third in the most desirable nomination, though – total prize money; djk123 collected \$956,956.69, and was surpassed by only two players, who advanced to the heads up of the Main event. The American was dominant in limit games, winning the \$215 Razz and \$10,300 HORSE High Roller. In addition to the WCOOP Player of the Series trophy he received a PokerStars Caribbean Adventure Premium Package for 2010.

Bertrand "Elky" Grosspellier was second on the leaderboard and 7th on

the money list, but one can find an argument to call his achievement the most phenomenal of the whole series. Within two days Elky topped two big NL holdem events – \$530 with one rebuy and one add-on, and Sunday's \$215, the event that substituted the regular Sunday Warm-Up tournament during the WCOOP. An absolutely stunning performance from the Frenchman, who dominated both final tables in his brand of style.

Ryan "g0lfa" D'Angelo took two mixed tournaments – the \$320 8-Game and the \$320 Mixed Event (PL Holdem, PL Omaha). In the former event's final table he surpassed Aaron Gustavson, the future winner of the EPT London Main Event. These achievements put the young American in third place on the leaderboard.

The most money obviously went to the Main Event winner. The prize pool in this \$5,200 tournament for the second straight year surpassed the \$10 million mark. The WPT champ Yevgeniy "Jovial Gent" Timoshenko outlasted 2,143 opponents and took it down on September 22nd, netting \$1,715,200! Udon Wannit finished second, djk123 4th. Other notables who made a deep run include the online regular PeachyMer (9th place, \$96,480), Isaac "philivey2694" Haxton (31st place, \$30,016), and the CardPlayer Player of the Year leader Eric "basebaldy" Baldwin (54th

place, \$23,048). If they run hot, it lasts, you know.

The second largest prize pool was gathered in Event №11, 2-day no-limit holdem with a \$530 buy-in – 6,219 players fought for a whopping \$3,109,500. Once again Aaron "aguskb" Gustavson had a deep run, finishing 12th for \$17,413. The winner, hustla16, received \$446,533.

Jonathan "Iftarii" Jaffe won the highest buy-in event of the series – the \$25,500 NLH Match Play, and received \$900,000 for beating Danish player Sifosis heads up. Former World Champion Peter Eastgame made the money but busted in the quarterfinal, good for \$56,250. Eugene "MyRabbiFoo" Katchalov won the other heads-up tournament with a \$530 buy-in, which gathered 1,564 participants and ran for more than 21 hours straight.

Well-known Swedish online pro Sumpas won the NL Holdem Highroller event with a \$10,300 buy-in, outlasting 298 opponents. Mike Sowers was the runner-up, followed by Kevin "BeLOWaB0Ve" Saul, Scott "SCTrojans" Freeman, Peter "Belabacsi" Traply, and Kevin "KevBoyStar" Stani. EPT founder John Duthie also made the final table, finishing 8th.

Another large buy-in tournament, the \$2,100 8-Game saw David "RugDoctor" Williams and Alexander "joiso" Kostritsyn going heads-up. The WSOP 2004 vice-champion emerged a winner in this event, and Kostritsyn's second place became the 5th runner-up finish for Russian players in this year's WCOOP.

The last week of the WCOOP saw yet another outstanding performance by Terrence "Unassigned" Chan. During the SCOOP series earlier this year he won two fixed limit holdem tournaments in the same day – a truly astonishing feat! In September he added another big victory – a \$1,050 buy-in fixed limit holdem 6-max event, good for \$83,030. "Okay, now I believe that online poker is indeed rigged," a top fixed limit cash game specialist jokingly said, commenting on Chan's streak.

See you next year at the tables! ♣

## WCOOP 2009 Summary

Number of unique players.....43,973  
Total Prize Money.....\$51,652,800.00  
Countries represented.....140

### Money winners

Jovial Gent.....United States – \$1,728,088.51  
Udon Wannit.....United States – \$1,288,191.70  
djk123.....United States – \$956,956.69  
reddevil.....Norway – \$933,712.00  
Sumpas.....Sweden – \$623,841.09  
Unsatisfied.....United States – \$513,692.64  
ElkY.....United Kingdom – \$504,705.84  
Xaston.....United States – \$490,606.08  
Sowers.....United States – \$449,255.35  
hustla16 .....United States – \$448,720.00  
GAKingChaser.....United States – \$393,165.72  
Chong94.....United States – \$384,359.29  
colonelkosta.....United Kingdom – \$355,000.00  
BeLOWaB0Ve.....United States – \$341,004.51

### Final tables by countries

United States.....148  
Germany.....28  
Canada.....27  
United Kingdom.....21  
Netherlands.....16  
Norway.....11  
Russian Federation.....11  
Spain.....9

### Money won by countries (1 million plus)

United States.....\$24,160,621.68  
United Kingdom.....\$3,389,093.56  
Germany.....\$3,349,815.65  
Canada.....\$3,308,051.27  
Norway.....\$2,180,258.78  
Netherlands.....\$2,012,403.44  
Sweden.....\$1,896,796.49  
France.....\$1,278,869.84  
Russian Federation...\$1,276,297.98  
Brazil.....\$1,009,489.73

**Eugeniy Atarov: Despite your numerous victories poker fans don't have much information about you. All we know was that you were born in Kiev and moved to the US with your parents at the age of 10.**

**Yevgeniy Timoshenko:** For a start, I was born in Kharkov, in 1988, not Kiev. It looks like I may have said different dates about our move to the US on several occasions and things got confused. The bottom line is that it happened in 1996, so I was 8 years old. My family settled in a little town called Mukilteo near Seattle and we have been living there ever since. What else? I picked up poker at the age of 16, after Chris MoneyMaker won the main event of the WSOP in 2003.

**EA: So, you are also a "child" of the Chris MoneyMaker effect?**

**YT:** It looks that way. His victory boosted poker popularity in the USA. I was in High school back then and all my friends started playing. They gradually got me involved. We played for very small money or even without money. Actually we really enjoyed the process. Little by little I switched to the internet, using play money and participating in free-rolls. A little later I found a site where one could accumulate points to get a chance to enroll in tournaments and win real money. I gained my first real bankroll in such tournaments.

**EA: In other words, you never invested a cent of your own money?**

**YT:** In point of fact that is right. I surely made deposits but these were transactions from one site to another. I progressed very quickly. In the very

The year 2009 has brought up many new faces in the poker universe. Young 21 year old American of Ukrainian descent, Yevgeniy Timoshenko has become the brightest star in this constellation. Although his first WSOP campaign was not very successful, Yevgeniy has a couple of great achievements under his belt this year, including victories at the WPT Championship and the WCOOP main event.

Unfortunately, our attempts to get in touch with Timoshenko after his WCOOP triumph failed. Apparently, Yevgeniy decided to have a good rest after the tough poker battles. We offer you a big interview that he gave to our magazine in the beginning of the summer. And as a tidbit check out a fragment from Yevgeniy's latest interview with PokerStars.tv after his WCOOP 2009 main event win.

beginning I got a slot in a \$5 tournament and won the event and \$300. With this sum on my account I started playing low-limit cash games and participating in tournaments, gradually building up my bankroll. When I turned 18, my winnings got bigger. About this time I enrolled in college, but after studying just one semester I noticed that I was missing poker. I had a serious talk with my parents and explained my situation to them. They reasoned that I should not be forbidden something I really liked and we decided to put off my studies. By the way, I am not sure that poker will be my only occupation so I am leaving the door open so to say.

**EA: It is really nice to have such understanding parents. Who are they by the way, and why did they decide to leave Ukraine?**

**YT:** My father, Yuri Timoshenko, is an engineer. When we moved to the US, my mother, Alla Timoshenko, worked as a secretary. Since the birth of her second child, my brother, who is 7 years old now, my mom has been a housewife. Why did they leave Ukraine? We have relatives here and my parents thought that there were more opportunities in the US. Living standards are higher so it would be better for all of us.

**EA: By the way, what did you study during your only semester in college?**

**YT:** As a freshman I did not have time to choose a major. If I go back I'll probably take many different classes: psychology, business, maybe something else. I haven't arranged my priorities yet, but I hardly can do

one thing my whole life. I think I am in a very comfortable position right now. If wisely invest the money that I win, I probably won't have to work for the rest of my life. I will be able to enjoy poker and not worry about earning a living. Thus, if I had to pick a major right now, I would probably choose something related to finance.

**EA: Do you keep the money you win or does it go to a family account?**

**YT:** My parents gave me a chance for a good life. I will do my best to pay them back in full. It is not only about money, I want them to be proud of me!

**EA: Do perceive yourself as an American or a Ukrainian?**

**YT:** It is hard to say. Although I spent a bigger part of my life in the US, I remember that I was born in Ukraine. I speak Russian and I don't want to lose this language. To sum up, I would say I feel myself both as an American and a Ukrainian.

**EA: What language do you speak with your family?**

**YT:** I always speak Russian with my parents.

**EA: What language do you think in?**

**YT:** I think rather in English

**EA: Do you feel some sort of nostalgia? Do you want to visit Ukraine sometime?**

**YT:** I have only vague child recollections of my home country. I have

spent most of my life in the US after all. If I had the opportunity I would be glad to visit Ukraine.

**EA: Are you faithful to the hobbies of your childhood? What would you choose, soccer or baseball?**

**YT:** I would not describe myself as an active sports fan. I am much more interested in the games I play myself. My parents did not change their interests, so I would probably go with soccer.

**EA: Do you think that if you had not moved to America, you would not have taken up an interest in poker?**

**YT:** There is that danger. On the other hand I could have picked up the game in any country.

**EA: In your opinion, did you have some bent for poker; say a mathematical mindset or a predisposition to combinatorial analysis?**

**YT:** I have never thought about it. I took a fancy to poker from the very beginning. I thought about poker related problems a lot and worked on my game very hard. On one hand poker is a game, but on the other hand it is almost a science. There is no reaching perfection. I really want to understand how high I can climb. I played a lot and analyzed a lot trying to figure out at what point I could have played better. I think I am quick-witted enough and can tell a good play from a bad one, plus I guess I am good at seeing through people.

**EA: How good are you at controlling yourself at the poker table?**



# Yevgeniy Timoshenko:

## “Luck has always been on my side”

by Eugeny Atarov



**YT:** I think I am pretty good at that. Actually I am a very calm person.

**EA:** Have you ever been on tilt?

**YT:** I can't remember such a thing in my poker career. I can just stop my playing session if I feel that something is going awry – I simply turn off the computer and switch to something else.

**EA:** Can you recall a tipping point in your career, the moment when you realized: "From now on, only poker!" or has your career developed like an ascending wave?

**YT:** Of course not. I had my ups and downs. I think the tipping point came in 2006, right after my first and only semester in college. I won a big tournament on the internet and received \$250,000 for the victory. It was not even about this hefty sum. After the win something clicked – and the next month I kept winning. Analyzing this situation afterward, I came to the conclusion that it was not an up-streak. I had really improved my poker and brought my understanding of the game to the next level.

**EA:** What do you think if things did not go that smoothly at the start of your career, was there a chance that you would have give up on poker?

**YT:** I don't know, but I can't rule that scenario out. If things did not go my way, I might have been just an ordinary guy who goes to college and then to work every day. I don't know... Probably I was really lucky. When I started playing poker for money, I did not understand the game very well and surely made mistakes. Fortunately, luck was on my side all the way through. I was winning a lot and never lost a big part of my bankroll.

the big European events.

**EA:** Do you have the feeling that you may have more chances in live events compared with the internet?

**YT:** Yes. I realized that most players were weaker than the opponents on the internet. Big live events are akin to roulette: in order to win one needs a lot of luck. On the other hand there is much more money in live events.

**EA:** When checking your results in databases I found that the first time you got into money was in Ireland...

**YT:** Yes, it was the event in Dublin. After that I played in Paris a lot. Actually, I visited many places back then. I was under the legal age in the US and had to find my way around.

**EA:** For example going to a big poker tournament in Macao and winning it?

**YT:** Indeed! I won my first main event under the aegis of the APT. Previously I had scored victories only in side tournaments. I was unlucky on many occasions before that but this time everything went my way. I had a good run of cards and played very well. When I made it to the final table I was almost sure of my ultimate victory! And I won!

**EA:** Did this victory change your self-evaluation?

**YT:** It was very important in every sense of the word, although I understand that the field was much weaker than say the competition at the final

**EA:** At what point did you decide to try yourself in live events?

**YT:** I think I played my first live tournament back in 2007. It was the EPT event in the Bahamas. I really enjoyed it and after that I started playing in all

When I play poker I fear nobody! Certainly there are good players I would rather not buckle with but anyway I'm not afraid. In other words, I know that I can play against them as well as they can against me. Maybe I don't have enough experience playing Ivey and other top players but it will come with time won't it?

table of the WPT Championship. But back then it did not matter – I won and enjoyed the moment.

**EA:** Does big money on stake have an effect on your game?

**YT:** It has no negative impact on my play. I think it is just the opposite! I have never been afraid of losing money. The only reason I sit at the poker table is because I like it! I think in both Macao and at the EPT Championship the fact that money has never been a decisive factor for me helped me a lot. I had no fear of tumbling out by chance and losing big money. I could afford to take more risks.

**EA:** What was your parents' reaction when you showed them your half-million prize check after Macao and then the one for two million for your WPT Championship triumph?

**YT:** They were shocked. My parents were rooting for me during the WPT Championship, following my progress at the final table. They were really proud of me. For that reason this victory is very precious to me. I proved that I had made the right choice.

**EA:** What was your train of thought when you enrolled in your first WPT Championship? Did you really believe that you could beat all the poker stars?

**YT:** Sure. I would not have played in this tournament if I hadn't felt that I could win. Of course it was not like that at the very start. However, on the fourth and fifth day I had a good stack and had seen my opponents in action so I felt that I had a good chance. I just tried to do my best.

**EA:** Did you lose your confidence a little facing Phil Ivey and the other top guys?

**YT:** When I play poker I fear nobody! Certainly there are good players I would rather not buckle with but anyway I'm not afraid. In other words, I know that I can play against them as well as they can against me. Maybe I don't have enough experience playing Ivey and other top players but it will come with time won't it?

**EA:** Did you feel that after your WPT Championship triumph the poker community treated you differently?

**YT:** Yes, I felt that other players looked at me a little bit differently, although I did not change even a jot. I am the same "old sixpence," even after my victories in Macao and Bellagio. I don't think that such triumphs should change a player a bit. One should not make a big deal of his achievements but simply work on his game and operate the best he can.

\* \* \*

**PokerStars.tv:** Congratulations! What can you say about the

**WCOOP Main Event?**

**Yevgeniy Timoshenko:** I feel ecstatic. I won in a tough fight and it makes it even nicer. After all, virtually all the best players in the world participated. Besides, the tournament was very long by internet standards, which increased the tension.

**PokerStars.tv:** What sticks in your memory about the final table? I mean the opponents and important hand, etc.

**YT:** I came to the final table having the second biggest stake but not quite happy with my seat. Daniel Kelly (djk123), a very good and aggressive player had position on me. As we were the two big chip leaders, my strategic plan was to stay away from him unless necessary. As for short stacks, I was fully prepared to fight with them very hard and played more hands with these players. When the field withered down to just five players I was ready to grapple with Daniel. I was dealt pocket kings at the perfect time, when djk123 had pocket tens. After knocking him out I found myself just a step away from victory.

As for the important hands, two of them are worth discussing: one against Chong94 on the full table and the second one vs. reddevil when there were only three players left. Against Chong I went all-in on the river having just air but this move was logical given the way the hand developed. My opponent did not have such a big stake relative to the size of the pot so he could not call my all-in. There were a couple of short stakes at the tables and he did not want to put his tournament life on the line at this point. Besides, after he did not play check-raise on the turn I realized that he had a pair at best (PokerNews - Chong94 had - A-J and the board was J-5-7-8-K) which made it a good bluff opportunity.

With reddevil we put our stacks in the middle on the turn. My opponent played very aggressively, raising three out of four hands. He raised and I defended with K-8. The flop came K-5-2 with two hearts. He c-bet and I called. The turn brought an 8 and gave me two pair. My opponent checked. I bet about 60% of the pot and he moved all-in. I obviously called. He had 9♥6♥ - a flush-draw and a gutshot straight draw. The river produced an 8♥. I said something like "oh no!" but actually the card gave me a full-house! That put me heads up with a very nice chip lead. Later on I managed to finish off my opponent.

**PokerStars.tv:** You scored many big victories throughout your short but impressive career. How important is this WCOOP triumph for you?

**YT:** As I have already mentioned, for me the victory itself and the field I bettered are equally important. The event featured the best of the best and that is why I am so happy. ☺



photo by Neil Stoddart

Benny Binion, eccentric owner of The Horseshoe, created the Poker Hall of Fame in 1979 to honor poker's elite. This savvy businessman also used the Hall of Fame to lure tourists into his downtown casino. Leave it Binion to come up with a way to commemorate history and make a buck off it.

Binion took note of a group of exceptional gamblers who consistently demonstrated talent above and beyond their peers. They were gods among mere mortals. Moss. Brunson. Ungar. They deserved a pedestal where we could all worship them. Since its inception, 37 men and one woman have been elected into the Poker Hall of Fame. Non-professional players have been recognized for their contributions to poker beyond the felt. That group of Hall of Famers includes Benny Binion, Jack Binion, James "Wild Bill" Hickok, Edmond Hoyle, and Henry Orenstein (the inventor of the hole-card cameras).

Mike Sexton was elected into the Poker Hall of Fame as the only member of the class of 2009. The ceremony will take place in Las Vegas during the November Nine. A total of nine players were nominated: Barry Greenstein, Mike Sexton, Erik Seidel, Phil Ivey, Daniel Negreanu, Scotty Nguyen, Dan Harrington, Men "The Master" Nguyen, and Tom McEvoy. A 30-member panel consisting of 15 Hall of Famers and 15 members of the media determined their fate. Panelists were allowed to vote for no more than three players, and nominees needed 75% of votes to gain entry.

Here's a rundown of the nine nominees...

#### Mike Sexton

**Former Life:** Professional ballroom dancer

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$3.8 million

**Major Wins:** 1 WSOP bracelet and the 2006 WSOP Tournament of Champions

**Catch Phrase:** "The price of poker is going up!"

**Claim to Fame:** As one of the announcers, Mike Sexton is almost as powerful as the World Poker Tour brand itself. I don't know about you, but sometimes I hear Sexton's running commentary in my head when I'm playing poker.

**Dark Side:** Stu Ungar was one of Mike Sexton's best friends, so you know that Sexton has been around the block a couple of times. He lived the gritty side of poker before the poker boom facilitated a face-lift and washed away all the filth.

**Best Asset:** Sexton is the true ambassador of poker as the voice of the



photo by Neil Stoddart

WPT and a pitchman for Party Poker. He was an integral part of the development of Party Poker's software. The ensuing results spurred the explosion in popularity of online poker. Sexton also has a philanthropic side. He donated his TOC winnings to several charities.

#### Erik Seidel

**Former Life:** Wall Street

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$9.8 million

**Major Wins:** 8 WSOP bracelets and 1 WPT title

**Catch Phrase:** Doesn't have one, but you should follow him on Twitter. His daily musings are hysterical.

**Claim to Fame:** His cameo in Rounders when he bluffs into Johnny Chan nut straight.

**Dark Side:** Seidel displays the serenity of a Tibetan monk. If there's a dark side, no one has yet to see it.

**Best Asset:** Have you seen that Full Tilt commercial with Howard Lederer? Seidel has eight bracelets in his collection and he's on pace for ten. He has shown excellence in all forms of poker, not just no-limit hold'em. He's also cleaned up Down Under winning 13% of his career earnings in Melbourne, Australia.

#### Barry Greenstein

**Former Life:** Computer programmer

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$7 million

**Major Wins:** 3 WSOP Bracelets and 3 WPT titles

**Catch Phrase:** "Lol Donkaments!"

**Claim to Fame:** He's Joe Sebok's dad.

**Dark Side:** Weakness for Asian women.

**Best Asset:** Greenstein regularly plays in the highest limit cash games inside Bobby's Room at the Bellagio. He's also known as the "Robin Hood of Poker" because of his philanthropic obligations around the globe.

#### Tom McEvoy

**Former Life:** Accountant

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$2.9 million

**Major Wins:** 1983 WSOP Main Event, 4 WSOP bracelets, and the 2009 Champions Invitational

**Catch Phrase:** "I get no respect."

**Claim to Fame:** McEvoy was the first player to win an actual satellite to the Main Event. He's also been a strong proponent of anti-smoking laws inside casinos. If you hate second-hand smoke, you can thank McEvoy for having smoke-free tournaments and poker rooms.

**Dark Side:** McEvoy sold the Corvette that he won in the Champions Invitational.

**Best Asset:** McEvoy is well respected by veteran poker players for his putting in his time at the tables.

#### Phil Ivey

**Former Life:** "No Home Jerome"

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$12 million

**Major Wins:** 7 WSOP bracelets, 2009 November Niner, and 1 WPT title

**Catch Phrase:** Nothing. He rarely speaks.

**Claim to Fame:** He's the Phil Ivey of poker.

**Dark Side:** If Ivey has one flaw, it's degenerate gambling away from the poker tables. He lost \$2 million betting on the NBA Finals in 2008. He once donked off \$1.1 million at the craps tables during a dinner break of the WSOP.

**Best Asset:** At 33 years old, Ivey is the best poker player in the world. Very few people seem to argue against that. Plus he might add a WSOP Main Event title to his impressive resume.

#### Dan Harrington

**Former Life:** Bankruptcy lawyer

# Mike Sexton and the 2009 Poker Hall of Fame

By Paul 'Dr. Pauly' McGuire



photo by Neil Stoddart

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$6.6 million

**Major Wins:** 1995 WSOP Main Event, 2 WSOP bracelets, and 1 WPT title

**Catch Phrase:** He doesn't have a catch phrase, but mostly everyone knows him as "Action Dan."

**Claim to Fame:** The former world champion made back-to-back final tables in the Main Event in 2003 and 2004.

**Dark Side:** He's not a regular on the circuit and doesn't play as many events and side cash games as the other nominees.

**Best Asset:** Harrington's collection of books helped turn a generation of newbies into winning poker players. As a poker educator, Harrington is one of the best at explaining high-end concepts to everyday people.

*Daniel Negreanu*

**Former Life:** High school dropout and pool hustler in Toronto

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$12.4 million

**Major Wins:** 4 bracelets and 2 WPT titles

**Catch Phrase:** Anything he says while impersonating Scotty Nguyen.

**Claim to Fame:** No one has won more money playing live tournaments than Negreanu, and he did it without the

benefit of winning a WSOP Main Event.

**Dark Side:** Negreanu is a degenerate prop bettor and was rumored to have lost almost \$1 million on the golf course.

**Best Asset:** Negreanu is a heavy fan favorite and they adore him.

*Scotty Nguyen*

**Former Life:** Poker dealer

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$10.7 million

**Major Wins:** 1998 WSOP Main Event, \$50,000 H.O.R.S.E., 5 bracelets, and 1 WPT title

**Catch Phrase:** "You call now and it's all over, baby!"

**Claim to Fame:** During the final hand of the 1998 Main Event with the board reading 9h-9d-8h-8c-8s, Nguyen yelled "You call now and it's all over, baby!" He induced Kevin McBride to call his all-in bet and play the board when Nguyen was way ahead with J-9 for a bigger full house.

**Dark Side:** Scotty's drunken behavior at the \$50,000 H.O.R.S.E. Championship was vilified in the press and on Internet forums. A lot of fans, players, and members of the media lost respect due to the Prince of Poker for his crude antics that evening.

**Best Asset:** A collection of gold jewelry dangling around his neck.

*Men "The Master" Nguyen*

**Former Life:** Bus driver

**Career Tournament Earnings:** \$9.2 million

**Major Wins:** 6 WSOP bracelets

**Catch Phrase:** "All you can eat!"

**Dark Side:** Rumors have been swirling around for decades that Men the Master spearheaded a cheating ring. There has never been proof but only rumors, hearsay, and speculation. Nguyen vehemently denied the cheating allegations and threatened lawsuits against any reporters who said otherwise. Although Nguyen has had a few brushes with the law, none of them ever involved cheating.

**Best Asset:** Men the Master is called the Godfather of Vietnamese Poker because he's mentored and backed many of today's top Vietnamese players. ☺

# www.cgm.ru



## Forum for Poker players

# Las Vegas Legend Bob Stupak Passed Away

The future entrepreneur was born in 1942 in Pittsburgh, the son of Chester and Florence Stupak, Polish emigrants. From an early age Bob was crazy about Vegas. It was the only place he wanted to live and work. He made his first attempt to settle in the city of his dreams in the 60's, immediately after reaching legal age. He came prepared with an idea, to sell coupon books full of two-for-ones and other items. Unfortunately, this first venture into the business world didn't succeed, and Stupak decided to depart, for the moment, the city of lights, and moved to Australia.

After some time he was asked to leave the country because of questionable business practices. One way or another Bob had enough time in Australia to get married twice and earn some money. He came back to the US, second wife and son in tow. Bob's infatuation with Las Vegas can be illustrated by his son's name: Nevada, christened after the state in which the "sin city" is located.

Having returned to Las Vegas in 1971 with enough money to buy a small parcel at Las Vegas Boulevard South, it took him just three years to open the "Bob Stupak's World Famous Historic Gambling Museum & Casino." Ups and downs would characterize his life. After two months, an air conditioning unit malfunctioned, caught fire, and burned the museum down.

Then came an up. In 1979, Stupak launched the hotel and casino, Vegas World. In the beginning the odds were against him, the casino being located in a dingy neighborhood outside of the Strip. Bob found an elegant solution by declaring the Strip a quarter-mile longer and then proceeded to kick off some incredible promotions to support his cre-

by Alex Ferder



Bob Stupak conceived and built, in 1996, the legendary Stratosphere hotel, the highest building in Las Vegas. Back in 1989 he attained the WSOP bracelet and won a widely publicized \$1,000,000 wager on the Super Bowl.

ation: the world's first million-dollar jackpot, no-limit betting, and vacation packages peddled through direct mail, to name a few.

His strategy worked perfectly. At its peak in the mid 80's, Vegas World grossed about \$100 million a year. In 1989, probably his most successful year, Stupak - as many Las Vegas residents, a true gambler - wagered \$1 million on Super Bowl XXIII and won. Later that year, he won the Deuce to Seven Lowball championship bracelet at the World Series of Poker. Many years later Bob once again made it to the final table in a WPT event and took part in the first season of High Stakes Poker.

All these achievements however, were mere steps on the road to his most cherished dream. The Stratosphere. A super-tall tower, from the top of which one could look over the great city. The Stratosphere would dominate the Las Vegas skyline and offer gambling, various boutiques, restaurants, and even a wedding chapel. Many people were skeptical about the project. "They thought I was a complete, oh, for lack of a better word, fruitcake - and maybe they were right," Stupak said in 2006, recalling initial reactions the idea.

In 1995, when the building of the tower was in full swing, Bob suffered a terrible motorcycle accident, breaking every bone in his face and slipping into a coma. Physicians were not optimistic about his chances but Bob proved to be a real fighter - he just could not die before his life's work was completed. Making a full recovery, he opened the Stratosphere in 1996.

The \$550 million project was one of the downs of his life. People came to see it, but didn't gamble or dine there. It was a financial disaster. Stupak and his partners went bankrupt and had to sell the business. The Stratosphere became one of most popular attractions in Las Vegas much later. Carl Ichan, the buyer, who brought success to it, called the tower Mr. Stupak's "lifetime achievement."

"You never see a skyline picture of Las Vegas where you don't see the Stratosphere," said Jan Jones, the former Las Vegas mayor who is now a Harrah's Entertainment executive. "It rises above everything."

In 2006, after a several year vacancy from the public eye, Stupak emerged on the political scene and ran for Nevada Lieutenant Governor. Stupak, explaining his decision: "I've been out of the public eye for a few years. I figured I had nothing else to do. The last thing I've ever been all my life is normal. I've accomplished what I have by being nothing close to normal."

Bob was an inveterate smoker who was constantly involved with different women and according to his friends "was pretty good on the whiskey, too." Unsurprisingly, when Stupak was diagnosed with leukemia he preferred not to advertise this fact. "He kept it to himself, and didn't want people to know he was sick," said his former wife, Sandy Blumen.

Bob Stupak passed away with his family at his side on September 25, 2009.

"Bob was an impresario, a ringmaster in the mold of the promoters who made Las Vegas the great town that it is," said Las Vegas Mayor, Oscar Goodman. "I'll miss his impishness."

"Few personified the town like Bob did. He was a genuine Las Vegas character." Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid, and long-time friend, said.

As per Stupak's will, his body was cremated. At his request no funeral was held. ☹



# Poker Book Review:

## Cowboys Full: The Story of Poker

by Martin Harris

“My goal is to show how the story of poker helps to explain who we are.” So writes James McManus in the opening chapter of his long-awaited history of poker, *Cowboys Full: The Story of Poker*, which at last arrives in bookstores at the end of October.

An ambitious goal, to be sure, but one the author goes a long way toward accomplishing over the course of his wide-ranging, 500-plus page narrative. In what should prove a valuable reference for subsequent poker chroniclers, McManus’ book not only provides a comprehensive overview of the origin and development of our favorite game, but marshals a great deal of evidence in support of his thesis that poker indeed provides unique insight into the human condition.

McManus is best known in poker circles for his much-acclaimed *Positively Fifth Street*, a book which artfully intertwined the stories of the death and murder trial of Ted Binion with that of the 2000 World

Series of Poker in which the author himself finished fifth in the Main Event. Since that book’s first appearance in 2003, McManus has continued to write about poker, for a time maintaining a regular poker column for *The New York Times*. He has also continued to play in tournaments, amassing a heady three-quarters of a million dollars in tourney winnings.

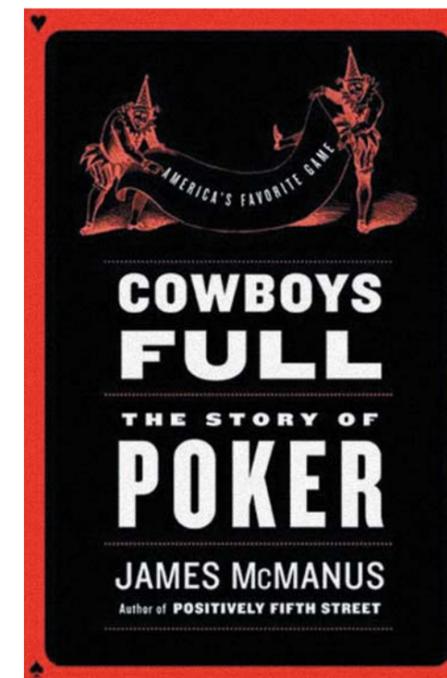
Some of what appears in *Cowboys Full* originally surfaced in those NYT columns. Then later much of the book was serialized in *Card Player* magazine over the course of two-plus years (beginning in late 2006). Those writings, plus added material, have here been arranged into a sequence of 52 chapters -- one for each card in the deck -- through which McManus provides a comprehensive overview of poker’s story, placing particular emphasis on its significant place in American popular culture as the country’s “national card game.”

After an initial chapter on “pokerticians” -- that is, the many poker-playing politicians one finds populating American history -- the book mostly follows a chronological sequence, although with numerous side trips taken along the way. McManus begins well before the beginning, looking way back to the first dice games of the ancient world and the invention of playing cards in the early medieval period before discussing poker’s more immediate, modern forerunners such as mus (Spain), poch (Germany), primiera (Italy), and poque (France).

As the story reaches the 1800s, the book begins to consider the rapid spread of poker -- primarily five-card draw -- as it occurred in the United States on Mississippi steamboats, in gaming dens, and in Old West saloons. Much attention is given the preponderance of cheaters and “sharps” during this period, with McManus providing fascinating portraits of some of the more infamous perpetrators. As one would expect, McManus also touches on the more notable anecdotes and characters during this time, sharing stories of familiar figures like Wild Bill Hickok, George Devol, and “Poker Alice” Ivers among many others. There are also several lesser known anecdotes included, too, such as those illustrating the “poker mind-set” demonstrated by various Civil War figures. Indeed, many of the more fascinating episodes in *Cowboys Full* concern the poker playing of soldiers in history’s wars, with numerous connections drawn between actual warfare and battles on the baize.

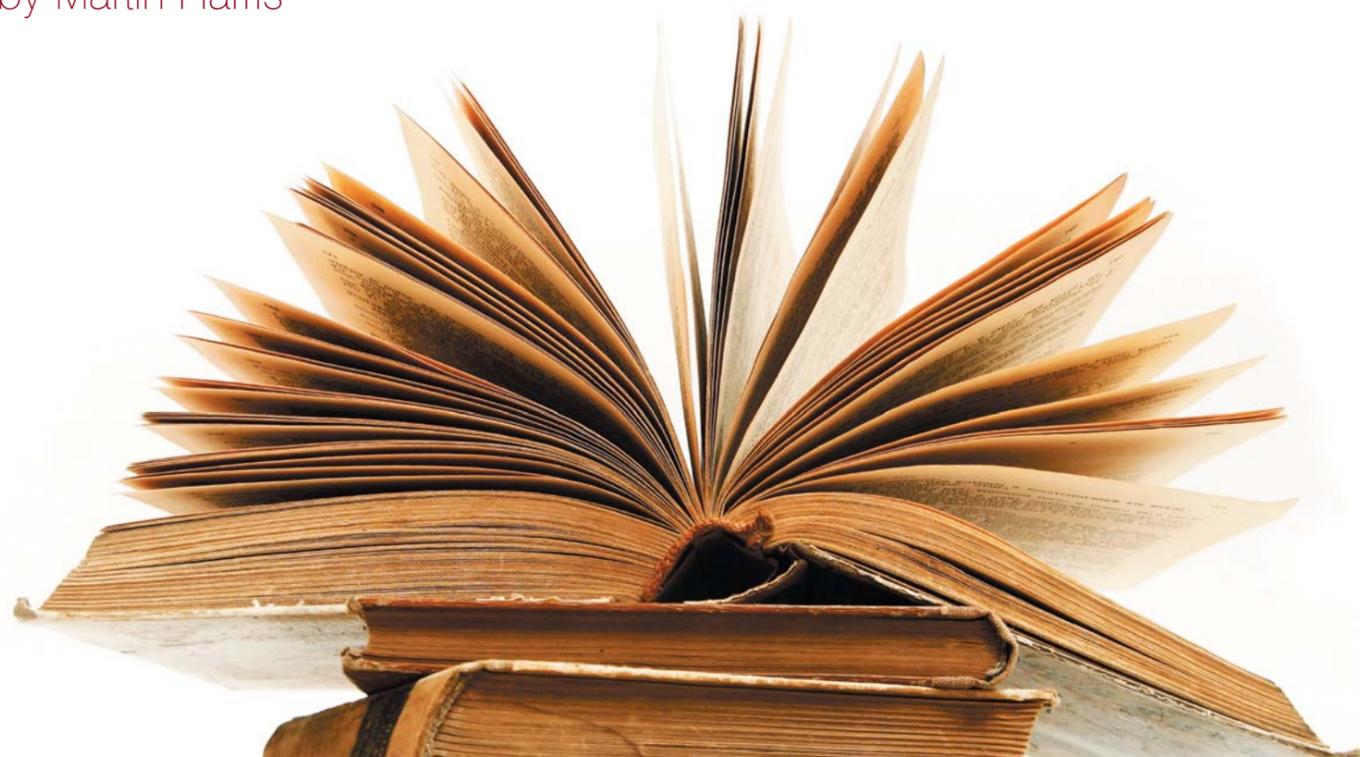
Carrying the story forward into the 20th century, McManus recounts the rise of stud poker as well as the introduction of poker strategy books. The latter topic allows the author to explore the rich, varied story of Herbert O. Yardley, the famed code-breaker and author of *The Education of a Poker Player*. Studies of those “Dogs Playing Poker” paintings, poker-playing presidents, and the famous Johnny Moss-Nick “the Greek” Dandalos match at Binion’s follow, as does an outline of the origins and eventual rise into poker prominence of Texas hold’em.

Latter chapters include the story of the World Series of Poker, the Andy



Beal-vs.-“The Corporation” matches, and more theoretical discussions of luck-vs.-skill and differences between women and men at the poker table. The book concludes with considerations of artificial intelligence and “poker bots,” the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006, recent online cheating scandals, and poker’s status in the early 21st century as a kind of international meeting place, both live and online.

Perhaps thanks to the serial method by which it was composed, *Cowboys Full* has a decidedly episodic, variable rhythm not unlike that of a lengthy cash game, alternating between McManus’ carefully researched accounts of various stages in poker’s development and more lively anecdotes of intense drama. And like a good poker game, the book remains compelling throughout, difficult to abandon once begun. ☺



# Betting Lessons-

## How to find a good handicapper

by Nick Wasman

In other words, handicappers do the thinking so you don't have to for a small portion of your money. The ups and downs of this profession are shown in a brilliant movie (the one and only – alas, even blackjack players have more luck in this respect), *Two for the Money*, starring Al Pacino and Matthew McConaughey.

Suppose you decide that on one hand search for the right teams to bet on is too much work for you, but on the other hand you still want to bet. It means that you are facing a real conundrum: "How to get something for doing nothing?" One of the solutions may be to find a good handicapper. So how can you find a good betting advisor and what should you take into consideration while looking? Here are some of your options:

1. To take just anyone

You will be unpleasantly surprised to know that this option is even worse than choosing your bets randomly (which, in turn is worse than playing roulette, because the bookmaker's margin is 1/10 whereas that of casino is just 1/37). Since this market is teeming with crooks your chance to accidentally hit on an honest handicapper (by the way, remember that an honest one just might be a bad forecaster) is equal to the probability of renting an apartment in Manhattan for \$100 a month (i.e. zero).

2. To choose a handicapper through a tracking system (i.e. special sites that keep statistics on handicappers)

The idea itself looks very promising, but there is a serious problem here with trust. Since these tracker businesses are not swimming in money to put it mildly, the temptation to "correct" the statistics for a bribe is way too big. With this in mind, I would not recommend this approach.

3. To choose a handicapper in a special forum

This looks like a good option. When a person writes something you can always evaluate his ability to reason logically, to express his ideas, his level of self-confidence, etc. In other words you can find something concrete and tangible. Anyway, you will usually be able to spot a school-boy aspiring to be a handicapper or some swindler who just wants to get as many subscribers as

possible. The reason is simple. Bad handicappers can't camouflage themselves. Excuses such as "the stars did not align the right way" or "bookmakers grafted my guy so that he lost" (which is sometimes true, but a hundred times more rare than all these bad cappers allege) should put you on guard long before you make your first deposit.

I would recommend this last option. One thing to look for in the forums is for a betting advisor who publishes his recommendations (many do so right after the match starts – you can't bet, but at least you are able to see how good the handicapper is) so you can keep your own record of his performance, making sure that he does not cheat his statistics. Remember that last year's statistics are no more valuable than the snow of yesteryear – there are dozens of ways to counterfeit them. Having amassed a data array of say 1000 bets you can make your own conclusion about a particular handicapper. Pay special attention to his bets during down-streaks. If he increases his bets to make a good statistical picture by the end of the month it's a very bad sign.

If a handicapper does not publish his recommendations in open access you should trust your intuition, but control his performance by keeping your own record of his results. In the end, I will add a spoonful of tar to this jar of honey: Even after finding a good handicapper you have to keep your eye on him. Unfortunately gambling advisors and athletes alike have their periods of bad and good runs, the beginning and the end of their professional careers, etc.

Abandoning a former good handicapper at some point, as an option you need to keep open, is as important for you as it is for a betting advisor to give up on recommending an excellent athlete who is having a bad run. Who knows, maybe after reading this article you will relinquish this idea of trying to find a handicapper? After all, people look for handicappers in order not to work themselves, but in reality, to protect their money, they have to work anyway. Alas, there is no other way, because "I guessed right that you would predict right" is a bet you have to research (but on a handicapper instead of an athlete) and it is up to you to do the research and to pay for your mistakes. ☺

(Handicapper - one who predicts the winner in a sports event, especially one who publishes such predictions as a guide for a bettor)



# A Good Reason to Break the Rules

The following hand occurred at the EPT London Main Event between the eventual winner, Aaron Gustavson, and Martin Gudvangen from Norway late on day 4.

Blinds 25,000/50,000, ante 5,000. 11 players left.

Stack sizes:

Gudvangen (early position) – 4,700,000

Gustavson (big blind) – 4,200,000

### Preflop

Gudvangen – ?? – raises to 130,000.

Gustavson – J♥J♦ – calls.

Pot size: 315,000.

**Aaron Gustavson:** I called out of the blinds with jacks. I don't think I would have been comfortable calling a four bet shove from Martin, that's why just the call. I had been picking on his blinds a little, and I made a 3-barrel bluff earlier when he rivered a flush, so he definitely viewed me as aggressive and capable of making plays.

### Flop: 3♣3♠J♣

Gustavson bets 180,000.

Gudvangen calls.

Pot size: 675,000.

**Aaron Gustavson:** I flopped amazing when it came J-3-3 with two clubs. I bet out more than half the pot and he called. Basically I led out because he liked to play small pots post flop and I wanted to build the pot. He would check back that flop a lot and I thought a check raise would look strong here. Then if he called the flop, he most likely had a pair or a flush draw, and I thought I could get value.

**PokerNews:** This is actually the most interesting part of the hand. Rarely does a player flop the effective nuts and not slowplay them on a dry flop. Even rarer in such situations does one decide to lead into the preflop aggressor (while leading with air as a bluff, or with a mediocre hand to test the waters in a more common scenario). This hand shows why poker is often called a situational game. The history between these players made it possible for Gustavson to play his jacks full in such a straightforward way. He likes to bombard flops that don't likely hit his opponents, so in this situation Gudvangen could call very wide or try a bluff raise, and Gustavson was obviously fine with both options.



### Turn: 8♦

Gustavson bets 380,000.

Gudvangen calls.

Pot size: 1,435,000.

**Aaron Gustavson:** The turn was a blank and I bet again, and he called.

**PokerNews:** Since the turn card doesn't change anything, Gustavson keeps his opponent guessing while keeping to value bet his hand. The fact that Gudvangen called on the flop doesn't necessarily mean he has a hand, but his turn call had to be pretty strong, with high pairs, strong jacks and flush draws in the Norwegian's range.

### River: K♣

Gustavson bets 1,000,000.

Gudvangen calls and mucks.

Gustavson wins a 3,435,000 pot, and becomes the new chipleader.

**Aaron Gustavson:** The river was a king, and I actually didn't love this card because I thought K-K was in his range. The club was good in case he had a flush draw and hit. Also he could have had Q-Q/A-A and would still call that river. I thought I had to fire the third bet on the river, although I thought about it for a while because I was thinking about what I'd do if he snap shoved the river. I told myself I'd puke call but I'm actually not sure he shoves there with worse often, maybe the nut flush I guess.

I am still very curious what he had. 10-10 or Q-Q if I had to guess.

**Resume:** Gus Hansen considers checking back to the raiser to be one of the worst sins in poker. Aaron Gustavson is clearly quite aware of that. Breaking stereotypical play at the right moments is difficult to learn, but it will bring you value in the long run. ☺

WE PLAY TO CREATE DISTRACTION.

WE PLAY TO CREATE DISTRACTION.



FULL TILT POKER NOW ACCEPTS MAESTRO AND SOLO CARDS  

LEARN, CHAT AND PLAY WITH THE PROS.

©2009 Full Tilt Poker. All rights reserved. www.gambleaware.co.uk

# AUSSIE MILLIONS 2010

QUALIFY WITH BETFAIR POINTS



 betfairpoker  
POKER **AS IT SHOULD BE**