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the INSIDE STRAIGHT

News, Reviews, and Interviews From Around the Poker World

FIRST FLORIDA POKER ROOM OPENS WITH PLEXIGLASS DIVIDERS

By Steve Schult



The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Tampa opened its doors May 21 and poker players encountered some big changes.

It was the first Florida cardroom to reopen since casinos closed in mid-March in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Twitter account for the property's poker room tweeted the announced opening, along with a photo of the new setup. The property installed large plexiglass dividers over the table that resembles the glass you might see between a customer and a bank teller. Dividers that extend out in between players were also installed.

It has been rumored for a while that these dividers would be used on poker tables when casinos began to reopen. However, before the Florida openings, with just a couple poker rooms having opened in California and South Dakota, none had implemented the drastic safety precautions yet. Instead, most rooms have decided to cap the number of players at a table at five or six. Other casinos have decided to reopen without poker as an option for its guests.

According to the Seminole's website, the poker room began taking several precautions when players returned, aside from the dividers.

The 46-table room will only operate at 50 percent capacity for the time being, and those 23 tables will have a six-player maximum. Cards and chips will be cleaned on a regular basis and masks will be required of both employees and players. ♠



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NEW JERSEY SETS ONLINE POKER REVENUE RECORD FOR SECOND STRAIGHT MONTH

By Steve Schult

One month after breaking a record for online poker revenue, New Jersey operators did it again.

Garden State online poker rooms generated \$5.1 million worth of revenue in April, just a month after setting an all-time high with \$3.6 million. The \$5.1 million represents a 208 percent rise year-over-year, according to figures released by the New Jersey Department of Gaming Enforcement.

Brick-and-mortar casinos were closed for the entire month in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but online casinos still raked in another \$74.8 million in addition to its poker games, representing a 114 percent increase year-over-year.

Online sports betting pulled in \$2.6 million in revenue. With most American sports on hold, the options for betting were limited to obscure sports and on leagues in other countries. With several UFC fights to return without fans in May, and other major leagues putting together plans to resume play, it's likely that this figure will begin to steadily climb to pre-COVID-19 figures in the near future.

The closing of the casinos dealt a blow to the overall

Garden State gambling market as the online-only market generated \$82.6 million, a whopping 68.9 percent decrease from last year's April numbers. In April of 2019, the state saw gambling operators win \$265.4 million from gamblers.

The state government raked in \$12.4 million in tax revenue thanks to a 15 percent tax on internet gambling revenue, compared to less than half that rate for brick-and-mortar operations.

Through the first four months of 2020, total gaming revenue is up to \$833.9 million. The first four months of 2019 yielded \$1.03 billion in revenue.

There has yet to be an announcement from Gov. Phil Murphy regarding the reopening of the nine Atlantic City casinos, but several other states with smaller gambling markets have begun the reopening process.

Since Atlantic City is the second-largest gambling market in the country, behind Las Vegas, it is likely that Murphy will open casinos in a similar time frame as Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak. ♠

LAS VEGAS SANDS BAILS ON PLAN FOR JAPAN CASINO

By Steve Schult

The Sheldon Adelson-owned Las Vegas Sands Corp. owns properties in Macau, Singapore and of course, Las Vegas. It won't, however, be building a property in Japan as the company announced that it would no longer pursue a license in the country.

According to a *Bloomberg* report, the company has been trying to expand into Japan for about 15 years as the country has been flirting with the idea of legalizing casino gambling for some time.

Until 2018, it was illegal to own and operate a casino in Japan, but legislation passed that year would allow companies to apply for a license and spend as much as \$10 billion building Japan's first casino resort.

It was part of a plan from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to increase tourism and stimulate economic growth. The plan was expected to award three licenses in three different cities.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. was reportedly willing to spend that much on its Japanese property. Ultimately, there were roadblocks in the legislation that made Adelson believe the venture was a bad idea.

The biggest obstacle was the length of time its gambling license would be good for. The company has licenses in Macau and Singapore that are applicable for 20 and 30 years, respectively. Its license in Japan would only last for a decade. The shorter time frame allows for fluctuations in government policy that would make it hard for, or even



illegal again, for Sands to turn a profit.

"We are grateful for all of the friendships we have formed and the strong relationships we have in Japan, but it is time for our company to focus our energy on other opportunities," said Adelson in a statement.

Some gambling analysts are forecasting a Japanese gambling market worth as much as \$20 billion on an annual basis, but the market's biggest companies are pulling their bids from the market.

Last August, Caesars Entertainment stopped pursuing a license, while Malaysian gaming giants Genting and Galaxy Entertainment dropped out as well. MGM is still interested in acquiring a license to build a property in Osaka, while Las Vegas Sands was planning on breaking ground in Yokohama, a city just south of Tokyo. ♠



STONES GAMBLING HALL FILES ANOTHER MOTION TO DISMISS POKER CHEATING LAWSUIT

By Card Player News Team

In mid-May, legal teams for King's Casino LLC and Justin Kuraitis each filed another motion to dismiss lawsuits against them in the Mike Postle cheating scandal.

King's Casino LLC is the company that owns Stones Gambling Hall, the Sacramento-area casino where Postle is accused of cheating low-stakes, live-streamed cash games out of roughly \$250,000. Kuraitis, the tournament director at Stones, headed *Stones Live* and is believed to be Postle's main cohort by many members of the poker community.

Gambling attorney Mac VerStandig filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit last October on behalf of dozens of poker players who were affected by the alleged cheating. The suit was filed against Postle, Kuraitis, Stones' ownership group, and a group of unnamed cohorts.

Over the last few months, the defendants have tried several times to have the case thrown out of court.

With its latest filing, lawyers for Stones have continued with its argument that they should not be held liable for anything that may have happened. The legal team argued that per California law, gambling losses cannot be considered damages, plaintiffs were unable to pinpoint facts that prove their case and that plaintiffs were unable to form a logical counterargument to Stones' first attempt at a dismissal.

"Plaintiffs have already had an opportunity to amend to address concerns raised by Stones," read the motion. "In 56

pages, Plaintiffs failed to identify additional allegations they could make that would state claims for relief. They should not be granted leave to amend."

In its first motion to dismiss, the casino argued that the plaintiffs were simply sore losers looking for an excuse.

"The lawsuit reflects the oldest complaints of gamblers – that their lack of success means they were cheated," read the March filing.

In April, Stones claimed that "Casinos do not owe a general duty to care to gamblers." VerStandig amended the complaint after each filing, which led to the multiple dismissal attempts from Stones.

This is Kuraitis' first attempt at a dismissal. His lawyers made similar arguments to Stones' as they cited California law not allowing gamblers to seek restitution over gambling losses in court.

Postle himself filed a motion to dismiss in March but is in some hot water over the filing. VerStandig is arguing that Postle, who is representing himself according to court documents, used a ghostwriter in the filing.

A ghostwriter isn't against the law, but it is an ethical grey area, causing VerStandig to seek sanctions against Postle. Along with the original lawsuit filed last year in Northern California, Marle Cordeiro filed a separate lawsuit against Postle in Nevada last month. ♠

Two-Thirds Of Tribal Community Have Lost Work In Wake Of Pandemic

By Steve Schult

All gaming companies are taking a hit to their revenues during the coronavirus-induced gaming shutdown, but Tribal nations are getting hit especially hard.

According to a *New York Times* report, tribal communities are experiencing extreme unemployment, revenue shortfalls and even a higher death rate from the virus than the rest of the country.

Bryan Newland, the tribal chairman of the Bay Mills Indian Community in Michigan, told the nationally renowned newspaper that he estimated about two-thirds of tribal employees were out of work. According to a study from Meister Economic Consulting, 700,000 tribal casino employees were out of work following the shutdown.

When the shutdowns first began, the American Gaming Association estimated that 1.8 million casino workers, from both commercial and tribal casinos, would lose their jobs. Newland doesn't believe that it is going to change this year.

"We're just going to write off 2020," Newland told the *New York Times*. "There's no sense in trying to work under the

"Of the 574 federally recognized tribes, 40 percent own and operate casinos."

delusion that we'll be able to claw back to normal life this year."

The high unemployment comes with reduced revenue for tribal communities. Those communities rely on casino revenue to provide basic services for its people. Of the 574 federally recognized tribes, 40 percent own and operate casinos.

In response, President Trump tweaked the requirements for the Paycheck Protection Program at the end of April, allowing small casinos to apply for PPP funds.

The lost gaming revenue, however, could be used to help provide better health care to its citizens as the virus has affected native tribes disproportionately. The Navajo Nation, for example, has a higher death rate from COVID-19 than any U.S. state besides New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Those budget shortfalls from tribal communities have impacts on government budgets as well. Last year, tribal gaming revenue was worth \$17.7 billion in U.S. tax revenue at the state, local and federal levels. ♠



CHRISTIAN JEPSSON WINS INAUGURAL WORLD POKER TOUR ONLINE CHAMPIONSHIP MAIN EVENT

The Swedish Player Topped A Field of 2,130 Entries To Win \$923,786

By Erik Fast

The first player to ever win an official *World Poker Tour* main event online has been decided. Christian Jeppsson defeated a field of 2,130 entries to win the \$3,200 buy-in *WPT Online Championship* no-limit hold'em main event on partypoker. The Swedish player struck a deal heads-up that saw him earn \$923,786 and a place in the history books as the first player to put his name on the *WPT* Champions Cup by winning an online event after he defeated Viktor Ustimov to secure the win.

This event featured four starting flights, which collectively drew a total of 2,130 entries to blow away the \$5 million guarantee and create a final prize pool of \$6.39 million to be paid out among the top 312 finishers. Plenty of big names made deep runs in this event, but ultimately fell short of the final table, including the *World Poker Tour's* first-ever female champion of a main tour event Ema Zajmovic (25th – \$21,151), 2014 *World Series of Poker* main event champion Martin Jacobson (23rd – \$28,755), high roller regular Matthias Eibinger (20th – \$28,755), 2014 *Aussie Millions* main event champion Ami Barer (12th – \$51,120), three-time *WSOP* bracelet winner Benny Glaser (11th – \$51,120), and *WSOP* bracelet winner Dmitry Yurasov (9th – \$51,120).

By the time the final table of eight was set, Jeppsson had taken the lead, with high-stakes regular Sam Greenwood hot on his heels. Greenwood got off to the worst possible start, though, losing a massive preflop race for one of the largest pots of the tournament just moments after play resumed. Pascal Hartmann raised to 550,000 from the button with blinds at 125,000-250,000 with a 40,000 ante. Greenwood three-bet to 2.2 million with A♦ K♠ from the small blind. Viktor Ustimov, who won preliminary events during this series, moved all-in for 9,048,972 with Q♠ Q♥. Greenwood called and the pocket queens held to earn Ustimov the double up and the chip lead. Greenwood still had nearly 6.7 million in chips leftover, but it was still a huge blow to his chances at his first *WPT* title.

Pascal Teekens was the first to hit the rail when he ran A-Q into the pocket aces of Ustimov and failed to come from behind. He earned \$66,776 as the eighth-place finisher. Greenwood was the next to be eliminated. After falling down to less than three big blinds, he got his last chips in with K♠ 6♠ in the small blind up against Ustimov's 8♥ 7♥ in the big blind. Ustimov flopped a pair of sevens against Greenwood and held from there to knock him out in 7th place (\$103,838).

Jeppsson earned his first elimination of the day by busting Pascal Hartmann, who began the day in third chip position. Hartmann got all of his chips in with J♠ J♦ up against the A♣ Q♣ of Jeppsson. A queen on the flop gave Jeppsson the lead and he held from there to narrow the field to five. Hartmann earned \$151,443 as the sixth-place finisher.

Alex Clark's run in this event came to an end when he limp-called all-in with A-Q in a battle of the blinds. Ustimov had shoved with A-5 from the big blind and was dominated, but a five on the flop gave him a lead that he never relinquished from there on out. Clark secured \$221,733 for his fifth-place showing.



Nikolay Ponomarev was left as the shortest stack after Clark's exit. Like many that had come before him at this final table, he was sent packing by Ustimov. The chip leader raised with A♦ K♦ on the button and Ponomarev shoved holding K♣ 8♣ from the big blind for around 25 big blinds. Ustimov flopped an ace and that was enough to send Ponomarev packing in fourth place (\$317,583).

Jukka Koskela fell below 13 big blinds after losing a sizable pot without showdown to Christian Jeppsson. He got the last of his stack in from the button with A♣ 6♦ and was called by Ustimov's A♥ 10♣. Ustimov made tens and sevens by the river to eliminate Koskela in third place (\$477,333).

With that the final two players struck up negotiations for a deal, with Jeppsson holding 50,389,668 to Ustimov's 34,752,558 in chips. The two agreed to lock up \$913,784 for Jeppsson and \$865,542 for Ustimov, leaving \$10,000 in additional prize money, the title, and a \$15,000 seat in the *WPT Tournament of Champions*.

The two battled it out for a while, and by the time the final hand arose, Jeppsson had built roughly a 4:1 chip lead. The hand began with Ustimov min-raising from the button with K♠ K♣. Jeppsson called from the big blind with J♦ 9♦. The flop came down Q♦ 6♦ 5♥ and Jeppsson checked. Ustimov bet 1,399,200 with his overpair and Jeppsson made the call with his flush draw. The 7♦ on the turn completed Jeppsson's draw and he checked a second time. Ustimov bet 5,000,000 and Jeppsson dipped into his time bank before shoving with his flush. Ustimov quickly called and found that he was drawing dead. Ustimov had to settle for the \$865,542 he negotiated for.

Here is a look at the payouts awarded at the final table:

Place	Name	Earnings
1	Christian Jeppsson	\$923,786*
2	Viktor Ustimov	\$865,542*
3	Jukka Koskela	\$477,333
4	Nikolay Ponomarev	\$317,583
5	Alexander Clark	\$221,733
6	Pascal Hartmann	\$151,443
7	Sam Greenwood	\$103,838
8	Pascal Teekens	\$66,776

The * denotes the payouts agreed upon by the final two players in a deal that left \$10,000 and the title to play for.



STEVE O'DWYER WINS 2020 POKERSTARS SPRING CHAMPIONSHIP OF ONLINE POKER \$25,000 HIGH ROLLER

Poker Pro Defeats Field of 89 Entries, Stacked Final Table To Earn \$521,598

By Erik Fast

The 2020 *PokerStars Spring Championship of Online Poker (SCOOP)* features 240 total events and \$85 million in guaranteed prize money. The series kicked off in late April, and reached its conclusion on May 19, with a number of massive events took place over the final week of action. The first major result of the series-ending push came in the \$25,000 buy-in eight-max no-limit hold'em super high roller. The tournament attracted 89 total entries to create a final prize pool of \$2,182,725. In the end, the lion's share of that money was awarded to Steve "Mr. Tim Caum" O'Dwyer, who emerged victorious with the title and the top prize of \$521,598.

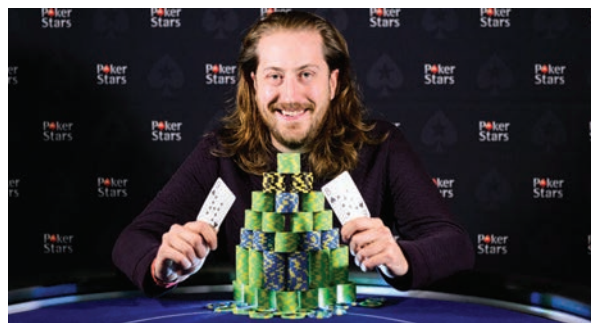
The final day began with Andras "probirs" Nemeth in the chip lead with 10 players remaining. O'Dwyer and Samuel "EuroPcan" Vousden were the two shortest stacks when play resumed, but it was ultimately Ben "Sauce123" Sulsky who was knocked out on the final table bubble. Vousden was the next to hit the rail in ninth place, and he was followed by *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner Fedor "CrownUpGuy" Holz (8th – \$85,871).

During seven-handed action a massive hand took place that dramatically altered the landscape of the final table. Ole "wizowizo" Schemion picked up K♥ K♣ under the gun and min-raised to 140,000. Nemeth looked down at A♠ A♦ on his left and three-bet to 420,000. O'Dwyer shoved all-in for 1,905,443 from the small blind with A♥ Q♦. Schemion, who had started the hand as the second-largest stack behind only Nemeth, moved all-in over the top for 3,712,176 and Nemeth snap-called with his pocket aces. The board ran out Q♠ Q♣ J♠ 3♦ 7♠ and O'Dwyer flopped trips to win the massive main pot and surge into second place at the table. Schemion hit the rail in seventh place, earning \$111,115, while Nemeth won the sizable side pot to maintain his hold on the chip lead.

With that the field was narrowed to six. Vyacheslav "VbV1990" Buldygin (6th – \$143,781) was the next to fall. Five-handed play continued for a while before a short-stacked Talal "raidlot" Shakerchi ultimately got his last 1,104,058 chips in from the cutoff. The 2016 *SCOOP* main event champion took home \$186,049 for fifth place after his K♠ 9♦ failed to outrun the pocket aces of Chun Lei "SamRostan" Zhou.

Four-handed action didn't last long, as the very next hand saw Portuguese pro and *WSOP* bracelet winner Joao "Naza114" Vieira knocked out in fourth place (\$240,744). Conversely, three-handed action continued for more than two hours. The stalemate was finally ended when chip leader Nemeth shoved from the small blind with Q♠ 2♠ for Zhou's effective stack of just over 13 big blinds. Zhou called with A♣ J♥ but was unable to hold and was eliminated in third place (\$311,517), with Nemeth making deuces full of queens by the river.

Heads-up play began with Nemeth holding roughly a 2:1 chip lead over O'Dwyer. O'Dwyer was able to fight his



way back to nearly even by the time the decisive hand of the match was dealt. With blinds of 100,000-200,000 and a 25,000 ante, O'Dwyer raised to 472,000 on the button with K♦ 6♦. Nemeth three-bet to 2,000,000 from the big blind holding 9♠ 9♥ and O'Dwyer called. The flop came down 7♥ 5♦ 4♣ and Nemeth continuation bet 1,600,000. O'Dwyer shoved all-in for 7,823,244 with his open-ended straight draw and an overcard. Nemeth quickly called to put O'Dwyer at risk. The turn was the J♠ to keep Nemeth ahead, but the K♣ on the river gave O'Dwyer the winning pair to earn the massive pot.

After that hand, O'Dwyer held more than a 7.5:1 chip lead over Nemeth. Just minutes later it was all over. In the final hand O'Dwyer limped from the button with K♠ 10♥ and Nemeth raised his big blind to 600,000 with the A♠ K♣. O'Dwyer called and the flop came down 7♣ 4♥ 2♠. Nemeth bet 412,500 and O'Dwyer called. The turn paired the board with the 7♠. Nemeth fired another bet, this time for 518,750. O'Dwyer called again with his K-10 high. The river brought the 10♦ to give O'Dwyer the best hand. Nemeth checked and O'Dwyer moved all-in. Nemeth called off his last 2,322,262 with his A-K high, but got the bad news that O'Dwyer had rivered him. Nemeth earned \$403,096 as the runner-up finisher. This was the latest in a spree of big online results for Nemeth, who finished runner-up in the *Irish Poker Open Online* main event for €325,423 just a month ago and then cashed for \$974,987 across eight scores in the *Poker Masters Online* series.

Here is a look at the payouts awarded at the final table:

Place	Name	Earnings
1	Steve "Mr. Tim Caum" O'Dwyer	\$521,598
2	Andras "probirs" Nemeth	\$403,096
3	Chun Lei "SamRostan" Zhou	\$311,517
4	Joao "Naza114" Vieira	\$240,744
5	Talal "raidlot" Shakerchi	\$186,049
6	Vyacheslav "VbV1990" Buldygin	\$143,781
7	Ole "wizowizo" Schemion	\$111,115
8	Fedor "CrownUpGuy" Holz	\$85,871
9	Samuel "EuroPcan" Vousden	\$68,778

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2020 Card Player Player of the Year Sponsored by Global Poker



Place	Players	Points	Final Tables	Winnings
1	Vincent Wan	2,280	1	\$909,420
2	Farid Jattin	2,177	6	\$1,205,493
3	Anton Suarez	2,100	1	\$1,000,000
4	Cary Katz	2,095	8	\$2,420,543
5	Kahle Burns	1,956	6	\$2,923,988
6	Ngoc Hoang	1,900	1	\$909,420
7	Aaron Van Blarcum	1,896	8	\$1,854,522
8	Sam Greenwood	1,881	6	\$1,357,807
9	Tim Adams	1,857	6	\$5,904,777
10	Brian Altman	1,848	3	\$542,866
11	Michael Addamo	1,806	5	\$2,143,310
12	Pablo Silva	1,800	1	\$1,000,000
13	Christian Rudolph	1,750	1	\$620,000
14	James Romero	1,736	2	\$745,000
15	Erik Seidel	1,686	5	\$669,649
16	Eric Afriat	1,680	1	\$394,120
17	Alex Foxen	1,597	6	\$1,603,559
18	Nino Ullmann	1,540	2	\$370,609
19	Stephen Chidwick	1,537	6	\$1,043,973
20	Gareth Pepper	1,520	1	\$690,000

A Look At Players Making Waves On The Live Tournament Circuit

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Ari Engel - 30th Place (1,250 points)



Ari Engel has been one of the most consistent live tournament players on what he himself describes as the 'mid-majors' of poker: tours like the *World Series of Poker Circuit*, the *Mid-States Poker Tour* and others which include buy-ins between the \$300 and \$1,700 price range. He has also found success

in larger events, including winning the 2016 *Aussie Millions* main event and a *WSOP* bracelet in a \$2,500 buy-in last year. Engel has finished inside the top 40 in the *Card Player* Player of the Year race in three out of the past four years, with two top-20 showings in that span. He is one of just seven players to win three or more live titles in the early months of 2020. He took down a \$2,500 AUD buy-in no-limit hold'em event at the *Aussie Millions* for \$97,825 and 684 points in January, and then a few weeks later won a \$600 seven-card stud event at the *L.A. Poker Classic* series for another \$11,135 and 72 points. Two weeks later he completed the hat trick by winning a \$1,100 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. event at the same series, adding \$20,170 and 144 points to his totals.

George Wolff - 42nd Place (1,078 points)

42



Portland, Oregon's George Wolff had a breakout year on the live circuit in 2019, making 14 final tables and cashing for more than \$1.5 million throughout the year. Prior to the start of last year he had accumulated only \$354,021 in live tournament cashes. He now sits with more than \$2.6 million in lifetime live scores. Wolff has continued his strong form from last year in the early months of 2020, making two big final tables in the

first few months of the year to secure \$646,718 in earnings and 1,078 POY points. He finished runner-up in the \$25,000 AUD buy-in high roller at the 2020 *Aussie Millions*, earning \$566,678 and 910 points for a second-place showing out of a massive field of 169 entries. A few weeks later he finished third in a \$25,000 pot-limit Omaha event at the Australian Poker Open to add another \$80,040 and 168 points. As a result, Wolff now sits in a tie with Steve O'Dwyer for 42nd place in the overall rankings.



HOW MARIA LAMPROPULOS WENT FROM THE MICRO-STAKES TO WINNING MILLIONS

Lampropulos Talks About The Seven-Figure Tournament Win She Almost Skipped

By Erik Fast

Maria Lampropulos has cashed for more than \$3.2 million dollars in live poker tournaments since first trying her hand at the game in 2014.

The U.K. resident is of Greek heritage but was born and raised in Argentina. She currently sits in third place on Argentina's all-time money list and is the eighth-highest earning female poker player in poker history. Vanessa Selbst is the only other woman to ever secure two live, seven-figure tournament scores.

Lampropulos took down the 2017 *partypoker MILLIONS UK*, defeating a field of 1,204 entries to win \$1,280,000 and her first major title. Less than a year later, she overcame 581 opponents to win the 2018 *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* main event for \$1,081,100.

Incredibly, these results have come despite the fact that Lampropulos is not a poker professional. She has a degree in business management and previously worked in human resources at IBM.

Lampropulos had a good start to 2020 before live poker's worldwide hiatus, finishing seventh in a \$1,100 buy-in preliminary event at this year's *partypoker MILLIONS UK* for \$19,000 and then placing eighth in the main event for another \$100,000.

Card Player recently caught up with the card sharp to discuss her background in the game, how she came to play in major main events around the globe, and more.

Card Player: What was the very first time you encountered poker? What about the game sparked your interest?

Maria Lampropulos: I used to love to play cards since I was a child. I knew how to play the five-card draw poker and I used to play this with my brother. Then I learned the rules of no-limit hold'em. But I was just railing at the beginning.



When I started to date my ex-boyfriend, Iván Lucá (*Author's note: Lucá is a World Series of Poker bracelet winner and Argentina's leading poker tournament earner*). I started to play some online tournaments, just at the micro-limits, once in a while. I liked to rail him when he was playing. Then we started to travel and I started to play a few live tournaments, but very low buy-ins.

Iván used to encourage me so much to play. And I feel so grateful for that. Today I really love to play, poker is a passion for me. I enjoyed the game

so much. I find it so interesting, it seems easy but it can be so complex, a lot of variables to be considered at the same time makes this game so fun.

CP: Can you tell me more about how poker came to be one of your main hobbies?

ML: To be honest, Iván had a lot to do with this. I used to enjoy so much just to rail how friends were going. And I started to travel around with Iván because he decided to play more live events. He insisted that I play and I did. And then it became a passion for me. I like to enjoy the game; that's why now I play just when I really feel like it.

It took a while. At first, it was only very low buy-ins online, micro-limits. Then once in a while, live tournaments, but still at lower buy-ins starting in around 2015 or so. I think it was after March 2016... I finished runner-up in a *PokerStars Eureka* main event in Rozvadov that Iván actually won, that happened just 10 days after I had finished runner-up in a *World Poker Tour National Brussels* main event. It was then that I started to feel more interested in the game. However, I was still not playing so often. Later I had the really big wins at the *partypoker MILLIONS UK* and the *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* which



“Lampropulos had a good start to 2020 before live poker’s worldwide hiatus, finishing seventh in a \$1,100 buy-in preliminary event at this year’s *partypoker MILLIONS UK* for \$19,000 and then placing eighth in the main event for another \$100,000.”

made me want to play even more often. But it was a gradual process.

CP: Did you have a background playing other strategy games or sports prior to getting into poker?

ML: I used to practice a lot of sports since I was a child: rhythmic gymnastics, swimming, volleyball, hockey, so I probably understood about discipline quite well. And also as I said, I used to enjoy playing any card games all my life. I also like to play some games with the Spanish playing cards.

CP: Do you have any natural talent or personality traits that have helped you to succeed in poker?

ML: I think I am quite empathetic, and this could help a lot of the time when playing live poker. I also consider myself to be quite patient.

CP: When you started to play poker and have some notable results, was this decision supported by your family and friends?

ML: In general everybody, my boyfriend, my family, and my friends, they were all supporting me to play. Just for my mother, it was a little harder to understand, but I think this is pretty normal.

CP: Your first recorded live results were in smaller events in 2014. But as you mentioned earlier, you had started to play in a few main events on tours like the *European Poker Tour* by 2016. How did that transition take place?

ML: At the end of 2014, I played one of my first live tournaments, it was in Brazil. After this, I started to travel around with Iván, because he had decided to play some live events. He insisted that I try playing some small live tournaments at the beginning, in 2015 or so, but then even higher stakes. So I think it was in 2016, that I played my first *EPT* main event, in Dublin.

Really, my mindset then was the same one that I have right now; to enjoy the game. To be honest, I don’t really mind about titles or rankings. I just want to do what I really love to do, play cards.

CP: As you mentioned earlier, in 2017 you had your first big ‘breakout’ win, taking down the main event for £1,000,000. Can you tell me about that win and how did you come to play that event?

ML: That was completely amazing! I was not planning to play that main event. The previous week, we had some friends in our place and also my brother came to visit us. I was a little tired, not getting much sleep, but I had just decided to play a live satellite for the main event. If I didn’t get in through the satellite, then my plan was to not play. I bubbled the satellite, losing after getting all-in preflip with pocket aces, so I was not

going to play the main event.

The next day was day one of the main event and I rested. But registration was still open through the start of day 2 and Iván was trying to convince me to play it. I went to the casino to finally decide what to do. And everybody there was talking about how great the tournament was and that I should play it. So I jumped in with around 50 big blinds.

CP: Was your path to the final table smooth or did you have to make a comeback from a short-stack? And can you describe what it was like to win such a big event for your first major title?

ML: I don’t remember being so short at any point, but I do remember a sick bad beat. I had top pair versus top pair with a better kicker and flush draw, and I rivered the best hand. When I won that tournament, I felt absolutely ecstatic and even more grateful.

CP: Less than a year later you won your second major title, taking down the *PCA* for another score of over a million? Can you tell me about what that win meant to you.

ML: This was extremely awesome. A kind of miracle. As you said, just less than one year; another huge event. Super tough final table, great players.

CP: Yeah, there were a number of very accomplished players among the final nine there, including Adrian Mateos, Koray Aldemir, and Shawn Buchanan to contend with. Did the toughness of the competition make the win even sweeter?

ML: I would really have preferred not to have to compete versus them. They are amazing players. I really admire and appreciate many of them.

CP: So you are third on Argentina’s all-time money list currently, and eighth on the female money list. Do you care about rankings like those? Is that something you keep track of or use for motivation?

ML: I think that they can work as a motivation but I don’t feel obsessed with them. I don’t really care about rankings so much. I would just like to improve my game, try to do my best every day, and always be able to enjoy what I am doing.

CP: You made two final tables already in 2020, including finishing eighth in the same *partypoker MILLIONS UK* main event that you won back in 2017. How do you feel about your game right now, and what are you doing poker-wise during the current live tournament shutdown?

ML: I am feeling so comfortable at the tables at the moment. I have been playing online some, but not much. I have been talking a lot with my family and friends, cooking and trying to relax a little bit. To be honest, I never find time to feel bored. ♠

THIS WEEK'S BIG WINNER

Hand History Rewind: Jamie Gold Wins 2006 World Series Of Poker Main Event

By Card Player News Team



The 2020 *World Series of Poker* was scheduled to take place in Las Vegas this summer, marking the 15th year that the main event has crowned a champion at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. (The 2005 main event was finished at Binion's Horseshoe.)

That streak is now in jeopardy because of the pandemic that has put a stop to live poker tournaments all over the globe, but officials hope that the *Series*, or at least a main event, can be played out in the fall.

With that in mind, we thought it would be fun to look back at the very first main event held at the Rio, and the hands that ultimately led to a massive \$12 million win for Hollywood television producer and talent agent Jamie Gold. Despite the emergence of seven-figure buy-in high roller tournaments, Gold's score remains the fifth largest in poker history.

Gold grabbed much of the television spotlight thanks to his bold table talk and went into the final table with a big chip lead and more than a quarter of the chips in play. Although he could have sat back and assured himself of a top-three finish with little risk, Gold kept his foot on the gas and as a result, was never really in danger of being eliminated from the tournament. In fact, Gold went on to eliminate seven of his eight opponents.

Here are five key hands from the final table.

Tournament: 2006 World Series of Poker Main Event

Buy-In: \$10,000 • Prize Pool: \$82,512,162 • No. of Entries: 8,773 • First Place Prize: \$12,000,000

HAND NO. 1

Gold Dark Checks, Nassif Exits Quickly In Ninth Place

Jamie Gold
27,125,000

Dan Nassif
2,280,000

Blinds - 80,000-160,000 with a 20,000 ante

The Action

On just the fifth hand of the final table, Gold limped in, and Nassif raised to 700,000 from the button. Gold called, and then opted to check dark out of position. The flop fell 5♠ 3♠ 2♣, and Nassif moved all in for about a pot-sized bet. Gold immediately made the call, tabling pocket deuces for bottom set. Nassif turned over A♣ K♦, leaving himself with just four outs to a wheel. The turn was the A♥, now

HAND NO. 2

Lee Gets Cooled In Massive Preflop Confrontation

Jamie Gold
38,350,000

Richard Lee
12,800,000

Blinds - 120,000-240,000 with a 40,000 ante

The Action

After taking a big chunk of chips from Cunningham when they both flopped trips, Gold extended his lead even further by busting Erik Friberg with pocket queens against

pocket jacks. Wasicka took out Kim to make the event six-handed, and then Gold won what was perhaps his most important hand of the tournament. He limped in from the cutoff and second-place stack Lee raised to 1,200,000 from the small blind. Gold then four-bet to 4,000,000, and Lee responded by moving his entire stack in the middle. Gold quickly called, and once again, his queens held up against jacks, sending Lee to the rail in sixth place to collect his \$2,803,851. The pot gave Gold 56 percent of the chips in play.

HAND
NO. 3

Cunningham Loses A Flip To Bust In Fourth Place



The Action

After busting Butler in fifth place, Gold went to work grinding down the virtually even stacks of his three remaining competitors. Cunningham eventually found himself down to less than 20 big blinds and decided to use them all after Binger raised to 1,100,000 in the cutoff and Gold made the call from the button. Binger folded, but Gold was willing to gamble with his K♦ J♦ against Cunningham's pocket tens. The flop brought a king, and Cunningham was forced to settle for \$3,628,513 in fourth place.

HAND
NO. 4

Binger Can't Get Top Top To Hold



The Action

Gold limped in on the button and Wasicka completed

from the small blind. Binger then raised to 1,500,000, and both opponents called. The flop came down 10♣ 6♠ 5♠, and Wasicka checked. Binger bet 3,500,000, and Gold moved all in. Wasicka folded, and Binger called with A♥ 10♥, for top pair, top kicker. Gold showed 4♠ 3♣ for an open-ended straight draw, and didn't have to wait long for it to come in with the 7♣ on the turn. Binger picked up \$4,123,310 for his third-place run.

HAND
NO. 5

Gold Outflops Wasicka For The Title



The Action

On just the seventh hand of heads-up play, Gold raised to 1,700,000 and Wasicka defended his big blind. The flop fell Q♣ 8♥ 5♥, and Wasicka bet 1,500,000. Gold just ripped it all-in, and Wasicka started to think it over. "You don't have a queen, do you?" asked Gold. "No queen," said Wasicka. "Then I got you," responded Gold. "Alright, you talked me into it," said Wasicka, putting in the last of his stack with pocket tens. Gold showed his Q♠ 9♣, and it held as the dealer finished the board with the A♦ 4♣. Wasicka earned \$6,102,499 for his runner-up finish, while Gold was awarded the \$12 million first-place prize.

Final Table Results

1.	Jamie Gold	\$12,000,000
2.	Paul Wasicka	\$6,102,499
3.	Michael Binger	\$4,123,310
4.	Allen Cunningham	\$3,628,513
5.	Rhett Butler	\$3,216,182
6.	Richard Lee	\$2,803,851
7.	Doug Kim	\$2,391,520
8.	Erik Friberg	\$1,979,189
9.	Dan Nassif	\$1,566,858

POKER STORIES PODCAST

With Tyler Patterson

Poker Stories is a long-form audio podcast series that features casual interviews with some of the game's best players and personalities. Each episode highlights a well-known member of the poker world and dives deep into their favorite tales both on and off the felt.

To listen, visit www.cardplayer.com/poker-podcasts or download it directly to your device from any number of mobile apps, such as Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Google Play, or Spotify. Catch up on past episodes featuring notables such as Doyle Brunson, Daniel Negreanu, Justin Bonomo, Nick Schulman, Barry Greenstein, Michael Mizrachi, Bryn Kenney, Mike Sexton, Brian Rast, Chris Moneymaker, Maria Ho, Joe Cada, Freddy Deeb, and many more.



Age: 36

Lives: Las Vegas, NV

Live Tournament Earnings: \$2.7 Million

Top Live Tournament Scores

Nov. 2015	WPT \$5,000 bestbet Bounty Scramble	1st Place	\$375,270
Sept. 2012	WPT \$3,500 Borgata Poker Open	3rd Place	\$298,950
June 2014	WSOP \$1,500 PLO Eight-Or-Better	1st Place	\$270,992
March 2020	\$5,000 Bay 101 Shooting Star	4th Place	\$113,860
Sept. 2009	\$2,500 Commerce Hold'em Series	2nd Place	\$104,105

Tyler Patterson found poker before the boom, and worked in the industry as a dealer for a few years before making the switch to professional player. The Washington-native has split his time between cash games and tournaments, but has still managed to rack up more than \$2.6 million in earnings on the circuit.

Patterson has a *World Poker Tour* title, having taken down the 2015 *bestbet Bounty Scramble* for \$375,270. He final tabled the event the very next year, taking fourth for another six figures, and he very nearly did it three years in a row, finishing just short in 14th place. Patterson won a *World Series of Poker* bracelet in 2014, coming out on top of the \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better event for \$270,992. He's also final tabled the *WPT Borgata Poker Open*, and has wins at the *LA Poker Classic*, and *Fall and Spring Poker Round Ups*. Most recently, he finished fourth after an *ICM* deal at the *Bay 101 Shooting Star* for \$113,840.

Highlights from this interview include having golf in his blood, playing trumpet in a ska band, diving into poker after becoming a dealer, a crazy night at Spanish 21 with a biker bandit, Too Lay Lip Casino, the adrenaline factor in tournaments, playing \$25-\$50 with half his bankroll on the table, winning his *WPT* title, the interesting timing of his *WSOP* bracelet, a love for PLO, being notoriously bad at prop bets, weigh-ins for marathons, beer-per-hole golf matches, being hospitalized after a race with Matt Savage, Hoge Bogey, losing an \$80k+ home game pot, Alabama poker, how feta cheese ruined his pizza job, Parmesan cocaine, bath tub crocodiles, and the link between Chipper Jones and Boyz II Men.

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The Transcript Highlights

On One Of His Best Nights As A Casino Dealer

Tyler Patterson: In the pit, I was dealing Spanish 21. A guy comes in, and he is high out of his mind. I don't know much about drugs at the time, and I have no idea what he is on, but he is clearly high. He has a motorcycle helmet in his hand, and he sits down at my table, and betting the table max, which was \$200.

He goes on a good winning streak, and now he's up a lot. He starts betting \$100 for the dealer, almost every hand. I ended up getting tipped \$3,000 for the night, and I was only sitting in this box for 30 minutes.

While I'm still at the table, police come running in. He ends up putting up a fight, he gets tased. The whole thing is just nuts. The story was, he had robbed a nearby house, stolen the motorcycle, parked it on the front door of our casino, and then came in to gamble. And then basically gave me all the money.

The police were asking a bunch of questions, and I obviously didn't know anything. Do I have to give this back? But it turns out [I could keep it]. So it was a nice night for me and entertaining for everyone involved.

On Some Of The Craziest Prop Bets He's Made

Julio Rodriguez: I heard about the bet you made on the golf course with a beer-per-hole.

TP: That was a really good one. It was me, Matt Affleck, Matt Jarvis, and Mike O'Malley. We played an easy course in L.A., and I had to break 90, and we had to start and finish a beer on every tee box. I was really cocky in the beginning so I was drinking like Hoegaardens and IPAs, but by the end it was all Miller Lite. By the end I could barely stand.

But I did play really well, and I did win the bet.

JR: So you are a *good* golfer. You had 18 beers and you broke 90?

TP: I shot 86, and I finished 9, 9, 8, to make the 86, so I was playing really well. Affleck made a 13 on the sixth or seventh hole and gave up, but he was still wrestling with me in the fairway because he was as hammered as I was. That was a fun prop bet.

I also had another one where I raced Matt Savage across a parking lot. He gave me a small head start, but I had to run backwards. I crashed through someone's mirror, and fell and injured myself, had to go to the hospital. It was a disaster.

JR: Did you win?

TP: No, I did not win. (laughing)

On Losing An \$80K+ Home Game Pot

TP: My biggest cash games, are games that I have played with some of my best friends. I got into a Seattle home game when it was kind of in its infancy. It had maybe been running for about a year, with all of the people who played up at the Tulalip Casino.

By the time they invited me, I was already good friends with everyone. They knew I played for a living and there was nobody else in the game who was playing for a living. That game has been the biggest game I've played. Some of the biggest beats I've taken have come in that game. It's a lot of money, but it's also my best friends, so it's easier to take it. Also, you don't want to look like an idiot stomping around in front of [them].

There was a night when I was in for \$3,000, and I had about \$40,000 plus in front of me.

Another guy, I don't want to call him out, but he had about \$50,000 plus in front of him. We were both drunk. I was trying to take advantage. We redraw seats after dinner, so I got to his immediate left. So every time he put chips in the pot, I was isolating. But I was drunk too, so it opened up some crazy things for other people.

It was an Omaha pot where he opened. I three-bet. Someone else called in the middle who was a good player, and he four-bet. I have an ace in my hand, so I can five-bet and fold if he does put it in, and I can get rid of the good player in between. So isolated with something like A-10-7-4.

JR: And for our listeners at home who don't play Omaha, that is not a top ten hand.

TP: No. (laughing) It's not terrible, but it's not good at all. The other player folded, and now I have position on the other drunk at the table and we both have heaps in front of us. Another player in the game, Noah Bronstein, he recognized the train wreck that is now happening, so he pulls out the camera. This whole thing is videotaped.

The flop comes 10-6-4.

JR: So you have top and bottom.

TP: He fires out \$5,000, and we have like \$30,000 left each. There's not too much he can have that's better than mine, so I just put it in. So now we're running it twice. The first one comes 4, 5 on the river. And he says, 'fives full.'

JR: What?

TP: I was like, 'That can't be what you have.' So I thought I won that one, but we turn the cards over and he really does have fives full. He had 3-5-5-6. So he was open-ended with a pair of fives. Then he made the straight on the other one.

Most of the pots I played were between \$1,000 and \$5,000 in this house, so a \$80k pot was pretty intense.

JR: So did you reload for \$3,000?

TP: I did. Actually, I may have bought in for more. ♠



Maria Konnikova Gets Crash Course In High-Stakes Poker From Eight-Time WSOP Bracelet Winner Erik Seidel

Ivy League Author Documents Run From Total Poker Newb To Sponsored Pro In “The Biggest Bluff”

By Steve Schult



For poker players, understanding variance comes easily. It becomes second nature. On some days, aces get cracked and draws miss, while on other days, you leave with a bruise under your eye from getting hit in the face by the deck.

The upswings, and inevitable downswings, give poker players an insight into luck, and more specifically, how little control they have over it. Card players have an inherent sense of knowing that you can do everything right and you can still come out on the losing end of things.

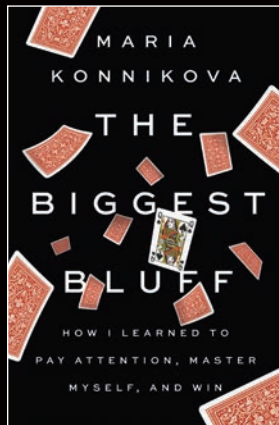
This idea is what drew Maria Konnikova to poker. While earning her doctorate in psychology at Columbia University, she became infatuated with the concept and ultimately realized that poker encapsulated the idea perfectly.

“It’s actually at the heart of what I was studying in grad school,” said Konnikova. “In grad school, I was just interested in self-control, and risky decision making, and basically how people think. And what their reactions are when you take control away from them.”

This was the basis for her dissertation at Columbia, and it yielded some enthralling results.

“I learned some fascinating things,” said Konnikova. “The fact that very smart people are often last to see when they’ve lost control when the world has changed. They are just so used to controlling everything that they can’t admit it. They can’t just accept the fact that there are elements that they can’t pre-

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Konnikova's newest book, *The Biggest Bluff* is set for release on June 23.

dict and that the world has changed around them.”

She successfully defended her dissertation and got her graduate degree in 2013. This after already earning an undergraduate degree from Harvard in both creative writing and psychology.

Fast forward a couple of years to 2015. Konnikova had already published her first book, *Mastermind: How To Think Like Sherlock Holmes*, and she was putting the finishing touches on her second book, *The Confidence Game*, while being a regular contributor for *The New Yorker*.

Amid all her success, Konnikova endured one of the worst years of her life. She developed an undiagnosed autoimmune disease, her perfectly healthy grandmother passed away in a freak accident, and her husband lost his job.

“It was just one thing after the other,” she said. “So, I was like, ‘Man, chance can be a bitch.’”

Her husband eventually got another job, Konnikova’s health returned to normal, and then she realized that this was the concept she wanted to focus on for her next project.

“It just makes you realize what a thin line there is and how much depends on luck,” said Konnikova. “At that point, I knew I really wanted to write about this. That I wanted it to be my next book. But that’s not really enough. That’s an idea. That’s not a book.”

Insert poker into the equation and now she had the perfect vehicle to convey this message. She began

reading about chance and stumbled upon John Van Neumann’s *Theory of Games*. As an avid poker player himself, Neumann used game theory to try and solve poker.

It was a method to try and make the best decisions possible based off incomplete information, just as everyone does in day-to-day life. You can’t possibly know exactly what the future holds, so it’s much tougher to make the optimal decision.

“I mean, Van Neumann actually believed that if you solved poker, you could prevent nuclear holocausts,” said Konnikova. “That you could prevent nuclear war because the insights that you could gain from that kind of framework would prevent people from going into the wrong sort of theoretical spiral.”

Now she had a topic. A focal point for her book while still maintaining its philosophical overtones. She decided to spend a year of her life playing poker for a living and document the experience.

There was only one problem. She knew nothing about the game. Less than nothing.

In her own words, Konnikova “didn’t know how many cards were in a deck.” She needed to find someone who could help her learn not only the rules of the game, but also how to thrive. After all, she was giving up all of her other sources of income for at least 12 months.

Lucky for her, one of the best poker players in the history of the game was living in her city. She reached out to Erik Seidel and set up a meeting to pitch the idea of a man

with \$37.75 million in career tournament earnings teaching a complete newcomer.

“How I heard of him I think is how a lot of newbs to poker have heard of Erik Seidel, which is originally through the movie *Rounders*,” said Konnikova. “I’d seen the movie and really enjoyed it, but didn’t get any of the poker parts of it. But I thought it was a fun movie. I remembered the guy in the visor.”

As she started digging deeper into his poker career, she realized the “guy in the visor” was the perfect fit for her. Not only had Seidel spent several decades competing at the very top levels of the game, but he was also number one on the all-time money list at the time, and he possessed a thought process that Konnikova believed would translate best to her own.

“I knew from the outset that I needed someone whose approach was going to be more psychological,” she said. “Because if you’re going to be learning a new skill, if you’re going to be immersing yourself in something new and you want to do as well as you can as quickly as you can, I think it’s very smart to capitalize on your strengths.”

Another important factor was Seidel’s demeanor. The soft-spoken *New Yorker* always has his emotions under control and has been free of any real scandal throughout 32 years playing the tournament circuit.

“I wanted someone who was nice,” said Konnikova. “I’m not going to spend a year with an asshole... He doesn’t have a schtick, he’s not loud,

Erik Seidel



“Konnikova reached out to Erik Seidel and set up a meeting to pitch the idea of a man with \$37.75 million in career tournament earnings teaching a complete newcomer.”

he basically says nothing. It's hard to find a video of him on YouTube saying a single word... He had a nice vibe, he had a nice aura.”

The two met for the first time at a restaurant, hit it off, and just like that, Seidel was on board.

Konnikova had her book idea, and she had her world-class coach. The last piece of the puzzle was getting it sold. She worked feverishly on putting together a proposal while still working for *The New Yorker* and sharpening her poker skills by traveling across the Hudson River to New Jersey to play online.

“At the very beginning, I was still juggling multiple things because I had no idea how this would work,” said Konnikova.

Penguin Press ultimately bought the proposal, and it was off to the races. She took a book leave from *The New Yorker* and officially gave up traditional income streams for a year of trying to make a living on the felt.

“I designated a part of my advance towards poker expenses. This is my income. This is it,” she said.

With Seidel as a mentor, Konnikova had a distinct advantage over other complete beginners. Instead of diving through poker books written a decade earlier, she could pick the brain of arguably the best player in the world.

But that didn't mean that she was skipping any steps. When she made her first trip to Las Vegas with Seidel to play her first live tournaments, she wasn't jumping into big fields. She was playing \$30 and \$40 nightly tournaments at the smaller poker rooms on the Las Vegas Strip.

Seidel wanted to teach her bank-

roll management and force her to work her way up the ranks from the bottom. He wouldn't even let her play the nightly tournament at Aria because he thought the competition was still too tough for her.

“He actually forced me to build my bankroll organically,” said Konnikova. “We originally put down a few thousand dollars in terms of outlays and he didn't let me spend anymore until I could earn it.”

She eventually won one of those nightly tournaments and finished second in another. Then Seidel gave her the go-ahead to play the slightly bigger nightly tournament at Aria. Her first attempt didn't go as planned, but in March of 2017, she finished runner-up in it for her first recorded career cash and \$2,215.

From there, it was seemingly off to the races for Konnikova. She traveled with Seidel to Monte Carlo the following month and cashed another three times throughout the series for a total of \$4,479, even finishing in the money in her first tournament with a four-figure buy-in.

Moving up in stakes was a blessing for Konnikova. She spent nearly a decade being educated at a pair of Ivy League schools, learning about psychology from some of the greatest minds in the world. By increasing her buy-ins, she was able to find and play with many people who had similar backgrounds.

“I think some of them didn't realize how unwelcoming they were,” said Konnikova about some of the regular players she ran into playing nightly tournaments in Las Vegas. “They'd be drinking and they're just not used to having a female at the

table, and they're there to have fun. They don't really understand how their behavior and their comments were reflecting on me and how I feel about it. I did not love that.”

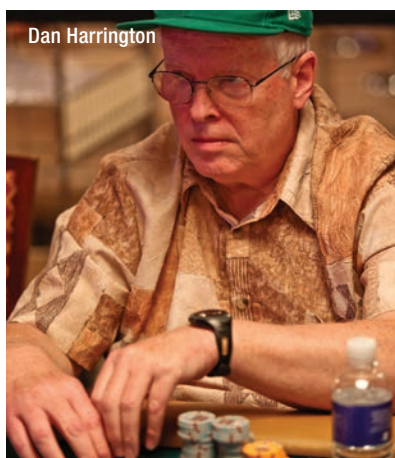
But despite the success in Monte Carlo, Seidel was worried that she still had some leaks. She had some cashes but none of them were especially deep runs. Seidel was worried that she was possibly playing to cash instead of playing to go deep and win the tournament. They went back to the drawing board and worked on playing more aggressively.

With Seidel's tutelage also came his network of poker geniuses. Konnikova had access to the minds of the likes of Dan Harrington, Jason Koon, Phil Galfond, and several others. Meeting those great poker minds allowed her to see what the game could be like after she broke through from the small-stakes to the mid- or high-stakes, getting away from some of the seedier gamblers.

“These guys are just totally brilliant and it's so inspiring,” she said after watching the high rollers play. “And the crazy thing was that as I got to know them, because I actually would spend weeks in Vegas at a time and see them every single day, they took me under their wing. They started teaching me. Jason Koon was like, ‘Okay. Today, you can sweat with me.’”

“It was just like this insane masterclass of what poker could be. How welcoming people could be. How warm and just smart and wonderful the game could actually be. And so, I saw that potential right away.”

After the European trip, it was time for Konnikova's first *World*



Dan Harrington



Jason Koon



Phil Galfond

With Seidel's tutelage also came his network of poker geniuses. Konnikova had access to the minds of the likes of Dan Harrington, Jason Koon, Phil Galfond, and several others. Meeting those great poker minds allowed her to see what the game could be like after she broke through from the small-stakes to the mid- or high-stakes, getting away from some of the seedier gamblers.

Series of Poker. It was scheduled to be the culmination of her temporary time as a poker pro with an entry into the \$10,000 buy-in main event.

She survived day 1 of the tournament, but ultimately failed to cash. Still, in the few weeks she spent in Las Vegas, she cashed in a \$1,500 no-limit hold'em six-max event, the \$365 *The Giant*, and even the *Millionaire Maker*.

Konnikova decided to continue grinding throughout the rest of 2017 and really made her mark once the calendar flipped to the new year. She flew down to the Bahamas for the *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure*, where she ended up winning the \$1,650 no-limit hold'em *PCA* National Championship for \$84,600. It was her first five-figure score and the largest of her career to date.

The win brought her story to the mainstream. An author who had been playing poker for less than a year just won a tournament at one of the biggest stops on the circuit. Shortly after her victory, PokerStars signed her to a sponsorship deal and she was made an official team pro.

Just as her poker career was taking off, it was nearing the end of the road for the timeline she laid out for this experiment. It was time to start putting words on paper.

But Konnikova didn't feel like her journey was over just yet, and after talking with her newfound poker network, she decided that perhaps she wasn't ready to stop playing. The book wasn't finished. She wanted to keep moving forward with poker, but she had a deadline.

She went back to her publisher and told her she needed more time to grind tournament poker and put together a better story.

"I picked the right editor," said Konnikova. "I went to a lot of different editors with this. There was an option for the book ultimately, and I ended up going with the person who I thought really got what I was trying to do... And this was the moment of truth where I was like 'Holy shit. He really got it.'"

Her editor didn't push back in the slightest. He let her keep going and knew that it was for the good of the final product.

"He was like, 'This is incredible, go where the story takes you,'" said Konnikova. "This isn't a time sensitive project, it's not like someone's going to scoop you on journalism for your story. He was like, 'Go for it. Take all the time you need. I'm here when you're ready.' And he just backed off."

More than three years and \$311,368 in career tournament earnings later, Konnikova's book, *The Biggest Bluff* is set for release on June 23.

The published book doesn't mean that the poker world has seen the last of Konnikova. Even after her win at the *PCA*, she still questioned her ability. She was still unsure if it was her hard work and skill, or beginner's luck that carried her to that title. And that doubt is what propels some of the greats to keep going.

"I still have it," said Konnikova about doubts in her game. "But even more importantly, Erik [Seidel] still has it. And if Erik doubts himself, then by God everyone should be doubting themselves, because if there's one person with no reason to doubt himself, it's Erik." ♠

TRUE TALES FROM A HOLLYWOOD POKER HUSTLER: THE NIGHT I LOST A MILLION DOLLARS TO RICK SALOMON

By Houston Curtis

Ever since the release of Aaron Sorkin's *Molly's Game*, I get asked one question more than any other. Did Harland Eustice really lose a million dollars in one night at the poker table?

Of course, I would be the one to ask, seeing as how Eustice, played by actor Bill Camp, is based on myself and my time in the game alongside Tobey Maguire (Michael Cera) and Molly Bloom (Jessica Chastain).

I would like to share every detail of that fateful night, peeled directly from my book *Billion Dollar Hollywood Heist* allowing you to judge for yourself.

I pick up the story of my "bad night" several pages in. If you want to know what happened prior, (like how Tobey was stuck \$750,000 and miraculously got even) it's all in the book. Needless to say, this was just the beginning of a very painful time in my life.

The Night I Lost A Million Dollars To Rick Salomon

Rick Salomon was no sucker. He had more than just a big dick and a grade A drug habit. He was a dangerous gambler, but I also knew he was my best and only shot of getting even for the night.

Bob Safai was leaving and Andrew Sassoon was sitting tight on a long-overdue profit. I went to Molly and told her to give me another \$500k, which would put me in the game for a million dollars. Her face dropped and I could almost feel her heart sink as I asked for it. She asked me if I was sure and reminded me about Bonnie's birthday party.

I looked her right in the eye and said: "Five hundred grand or a million, what the fuck is the difference at this point?"

Reluctantly, she handed me the chips. Truth is, she didn't actually have a choice. Whatever she may have thought, Molly had no authority not to extend credit to anyone in the game. The main players assumed all of the risk -- all she did was set up the room, call the guys on our list, and then sit back and make a fortune off the back of it all. The only thing Molly ever risked was a few bags under her eyes from the late nights and the possibility of someone losing so bad they might stiff her on her tips for the night... and that never happened. Hell, even that time she refused to bark like a seal for Tobey, he still ended up giving her a thousand bucks.

Rick sat down, got a ton of chips, and then immediately asked if we could take a ten-minute break before we got started. I said sure, why not? Then he turned to Molly and asked her if Tobey had left the hotel yet, and Molly assured him he had.

Next thing I know Rick's got a big silver platter from

somewhere and has chopped out several massive lines of cocaine on it. And we're not talking sissy, little, party-girl lines either. These were fat Hollywood rails. Then, with a grin and a wink, he lowered his head and proceeded to snort every fucking one of them by himself.

Rick Salomon didn't fuck around when it came to going off the deep end. The reason he had asked if Tobey had left was that he knew better than to try and pull that shit in front of Spider Man. Rick was supposed to be sober. Tobey kicked him out of his house once just for walking in with a damn beer. Molly was similar. Even though she wouldn't do blow in front of me or Tobey, everybody knew she was matching Rick line for line from the bathroom. The game had just gotten seriously dark.

I declined the offer to join them, splashed some water on my face, stared at my reflection in the mirror, and resolved to play the best damn poker of my life. I was tired as hell, but I was determined to bust Rick for everything he had.

Rick and I had known each other for a while at this point and had played a lot of big pots together. I had even done some business with him. Nothing involving naked hotel heiresses unfortunately; instead, I went in with him on a project

to send a crew to Thailand to shoot extreme Thai prison fights. Typically, of course, when I got the footage back it was 300 hours of complete vacation footage including Rick partying with Thai girls, watching them drink wine and eat bugs. Whatever else he may have been, Rick knew how to enjoy himself, that's for sure.

How hard could Rick Salomon party? Try this. One night I got a random text from him telling me he was having a "going away"

party and that I should come over right away.

I got there and walked into the shadiest Hollywood scene I'd ever encountered. The place was crammed with all kinds of party girls and trust fund kids doing drugs and having sex all over Rick's house. As I made my way upstairs to find him, I even ran into a bunch of people who worked for me on a TV series I was producing at the time. This girl who was one of my employees was snorting blow off of some dude's abs who had his shirt up and a bunch of baby oil all over his body. It was weird as hell. When she saw me she froze for a minute and then started laughing and pointing at me, saying, "Holy fuck, that's my boss!" I just walked on by and then had someone fire her the next day.

When I got upstairs Rick was sitting on a couch at the top of his balcony wearing this shiny boxer's robe and not much else. Sitting next to him were two, beautiful, classy-looking

"A million bucks in a single night. My entire liquid bankroll wiped out, just like that."



‘Rick Salomon was no sucker... He was a dangerous gambler, but I also knew he was my best and only shot of getting even for the night.’

women. I say “classy,” but as I got closer I saw one of them was holding a crack pipe up to Rick’s lips while the other was lighting it for him. What the fuck?

Even for Salomon this was something else. I said to him, “Bro, why in the fuck are you smoking crack?” and he just laughed (his laugh always sounded like a little kid who had just stolen something and gotten away with it).

“I’m smokin’ a bunch of crack tonight,” he giggled, “cos I’m going into fuckin’ rehab tomorrow in Malibu!”

I asked the girls to leave us alone for a minute and sat next to him with the half-assed idea of talking him out of developing a crack habit, on top of everything else. We were interrupted by the most stunning brunette I had ever seen. She walked up to him and said: “Hey Rick, I’m Joy. We don’t know each other but I just wanted to say... nice cock!”

On that note I had lost Rick’s attention, if I ever had it

in the first place. I got out of there... and until this night, thought nothing the dude could do would ever surprise me again. I was wrong.

Rick was clearly back on the blow big time again, but this time he had a shitload of money sitting in front of him and I was in desperate need of a huge score to get back to even for the night. This was my chance. I wanted to bust Salomon so bad he would have to add Gambler’s Anonymous to his rehab speed-dial list.

We started playing and it seemed my luck was still fucked. Rick was catching cards left and right. It was sick. The only good thing was that he was so out of his mind he was completely incapable of sustaining a bluff and his tells were telegraphed. As well as all the cocaine, throughout the night I watched him pop an entire bottle of powerful yellow Norco pain pills, crunching them like they were M&Ms. This would

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 Spring Championship of Online Poker
\$25,000 No-Limit Hold’em High Roller



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 66.0%
After Flop: 92.0%
After Turn: 95.0%

Talal Shakerchi
2,483,504 chips



Andras Nemeth
6,706,314 chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 31.0%
After Flop: 7.0%
After Turn: 5.0%



PREFLOP

With nine players remaining and blinds of 25,000 - 50,000 and an ante of 6,000, Talal Shakerchi raised to 107,000 from under the gun. Andras Nemeth three-bet to 300,000 from the lojack and Shakerchi called.



Shakerchi checked. Nemeth bet 182,250. Shakerchi called.



Shakerchi checked. Nemeth bet 676,750. Shakerchi called.



Shakerchi checked. Nemeth moved all-in. Shakerchi folded.

ANALYSIS

When this hand began, 2016 *Spring Championship of Online Poker* main event winner Talal Shakerchi was in fifth chip position among the stacked final table of nine players in this *SCOOP* \$25,000 high roller event. The three shortest stacks, who were all below 20 big blinds, were situated in the blinds and on the button. Fedor Holz in the big blind had the least chips of any player left with just over 11 big blinds to start the hand. Shakerchi raised A-6 suited as the first to act, only to have clear chip leader Andras Nemeth three-bet with 6-5 suited. While Nemeth’s hand has plenty of post-flop playability, this move was likely motivated more by a desire to maximize pressure on the medium stacks like Shakerchi, who will be looking to avoid taking too much risk while there are several short stacks on the table. Shakerchi made the call and hit the flop hard, making middle pair and the nut flush draw. He checked to Nemeth, who continuation bet just 182,250 into a pot of 729,000. Shakerchi might check-raise all-in in this position if he himself were the shortest stack, but he opted to just call. The turn brought the K♣ and Nemeth fired a 676,750 second barrel. Shakerchi came along and the Q♦ on the river completed the board. Nemeth likely understood that Shakerchi would have a decent amount of medium strength hands that he would be desperately hoping to take to a cheap showdown in this spot given the prior action. He put maximum pressure on these types of holdings by shoving all-in. Shakerchi elected to fold, preserving his last 1,318,504 to keep 6 big blinds or so ahead of the largest of the three short stacks, while Nemeth chipped up to 160 big blinds after the hand.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-Holdem

be enough drugs to kill a mere mortal, but not Rick Salomon!

Silver linings: He may have been riding the cards, but at least his being so fucked up meant I was losing the absolute minimum every time he had a good hand. I knew it was just a matter of time. If I waited him out, he would eventually bluff into the wrong hand and I'd bust him wide open. Rick is a dangerous player, but nobody can get this fucked up and expect to come out on top.

Hours went by, and the sun was up. By then the massage girls had gone home, and Molly had changed out of her skimpy hostess outfit to her usual after-hours sweats and a tank top with no bra, crashed out on the couch. Manny could barely keep his eyes open to deal, and I was about as tired as I've ever been in my life. Rick, of course, was wide awake and loving life. I held on, kept playing, kept praying.

Finally, I picked up the best hand I'd seen in hours. A-Q suited. We had hiked the blinds up to \$1,000-\$2,000 at this point, so the game had the potential to play huge on any given hand. I popped it to forty grand preflop. Rick looked at his hand. Based on how he had been reacting to his cards all night, I could tell he had absolutely nothing. But he smiled, cackled, and called anyway to see a flop.

The flop came Q-7-2 rainbow. I knew top pair had him absolutely crushed, so I checked to see if he would bluff at it. Sure enough, he bet \$50k and I raised it to \$100k figuring that would be the end of it. Rick looked at his cards and tossed his chips into the pot. One of his \$25k chips went flying across the table and hit Molly in the face. I had him on squadoosh!

Now wide awake, Molly had left the sofa and was watching the hand go down. This could be my moment! The turn came and it was another rag! A four of clubs. There wasn't even a backdoor flush draw out there. Sure, I would rather have a set, but a winner is a winner and, in that sense, this hand was what I'd been waiting all goddamn night for. I breathed deep and bet out \$120k. Rick took the bait, raised all-in for the rest of his chips, and I snap called him.

"You got me," he said. Manny dealt a pointless five on the river, and I started to scoop the pot. And that's when Rick turned over his cards and started laughing.

Time stopped. I stared at the board for what seemed like forever. The maniac had called preflop with absolutely nothing — 6-3 offsuit. On the flop he found a two and on the turn he picked up a four, somehow setting him up for a miraculous fucking gut shot straight draw... and then the lucky bastard hit it on the river. I wanted to fucking kill him.

Finally I stammered, "Rick... what were you thinking?" and with that famous Rick Salomon laugh he said, "I was gonna bluff you on the turn, but then I picked up a gut shot and decided I wanted to see the river, so I shoved to give myself some equity if you called me!"

I was shell-shocked. I had just made one of the best reads of my life to have it all blow up in my face. I looked down at my phone and saw a whole series of texts from Bonnie asking me when I would be home. By this time, she was already at the Polo Lounge with Tobey's wife, Jen, and was looking forward to whatever plans I had made for that evening. Blood started rushing to my head.

I had just lost a million dollars.

I walked out of the Four Seasons in a daze, somehow made it into my car, and drove home on autopilot. I was so disoriented, so numbed, that it's a wonder I ever made it back at all.

On the drive home Tobey called me and said, "I heard what happened and I just wanted to make sure you haven't driven off a cliff!" I knew in some small way he shared my pain.

Just a few minutes after I got home, Bonnie arrived with the girls. Callie was asleep, but Chloe came running into my arms, screaming, "Daddy, Daddy!" I held her tight and finally, uncontrollably, broke down in tears.

I didn't know what I was going to do. I had been reinvesting most of my money into my business, with the rest barely covering the mortgage on my \$3 million house that was now worth only a million due to the market crash, the car payments, and paying off about fifty grand a month on my wife's credit card bill. My business was fucked, Las Vegas hadn't been kind to me, even the neighbors' damn tree was against me... and now this. A million bucks in a single night. My entire liquid bankroll wiped out, just like that. I was completely fucked, and there was only one person on Earth who I could turn to that would understand what had just happened to me.

I needed Spider Man!

So instead of celebrating with the love of my life like I should have been doing, I dried my eyes, steadied my breathing, put on my most positive voice, and called Tobey. He told me to head on over and we could discuss the mess I was in.

And that was just the beginning of a very difficult time in my life. It's been a long climb out of the gutter, and I'm not talking about winning the million back. That was easy.

The events that happened next seem almost too crazy to be true, but I can assure you, they are. So if you've recently suffered a few bad beats, and are feeling down on your luck, pick up a copy of *Billion Dollar Hollywood Heist*. When you are finished reading it, you'll be able to say, "Well, at least I'm not that guy!"

Check out this video <https://youtu.be/fHnrsG2xKJQ> where we'll take a look at the scene from *Molly's Game* and I'll reveal the truth behind the hand that was shown in the film! The video will not only contain a play by play but will straighten out some facts the film got wrong, and might surprise you when you find out the true details vs the big screen depiction.

Thanks for reading. Until next time, this is Houston Curtis saying, stay sharp... stay Kardsharp! ♠



Houston Curtis, founder of **KardSharp.com** and author of *Billion Dollar Hollywood Heist* has lived a successful double life as both a producer and card mechanic for nearly 30 years. His credits include executive producing gambling related TV shows such as *The Ultimate Blackjack Tour* on CBS. The

Aruba Poker Classic on GSN, and pioneering the poker instructional DVD genre with titles featuring poker champion Phil Hellmuth. Barred for life from Las Vegas Golden Nugget for "excessive winning" at blackjack, Houston is one of the world's most successful card mechanics and sleight-of-hand artists of the modern era. Curtis, who rarely plays in tournaments, won a 2004 Legends of Poker no-limit hold'em championship event besting Scotty Nguyen heads-up at the final table before going on to co-found the elite Hollywood poker ring that inspired Aaron Sorkin's Academy Award-nominated film *Molly's Game*. Curtis resides in Phoenix, Arizona where in addition to running a production company and independent record label, he is also a private gaming/casino protection consultant to clients across the globe seeking insight into master level card cheating tactics via advanced sleight-of-hand technique. To reach Houston for a speaking engagement, consulting or production services send email to stacked@Kardsharp.com

CONSERVING MY STACK IN THE WSOP MAIN EVENT

By Jonathan Little

This interesting hand took place in the 2019 \$10,000 buy-in *World Series of Poker* main event in Las Vegas. Around half of the players who started the tournament remained in contention. The blinds were 500-1,000 with a 150 ante. Everyone folded around to me in the hijack seat. I raised with A♠ J♦ to 2,250 out of my 60,000 stack.

The cutoff, a loose aggressive kid, and the bid blind, a splashy, straightforward player who seemed to over-value his marginal made hands, called.

My raise with a strong high card hand is completely standard. I would certainly raise many weaker hands as well. When my opponents called, I assumed I was in good shape heading to the flop because most players would three-bet most better high card hands.

The flop came A♣ 8♥ 8♠. The big blind appeared to be interested, then

checked. I checked behind, as did the cutoff.

While I would almost always make a continuation bet of around 35 percent of the size of the pot, or around 3,200, I decided to check because I picked up the read that the big blind liked his hand. I knew him to be the type of player who would check-raise the flop with a wide range of hands he thought to be strong. Since I am in marginal shape against his probable check-raising range of an ace or an eight, and I did not want to risk my entire stack with what would be a marginal bluff catcher if a lot of money goes into the pot, I checked behind to control the size of the pot. In exchange for missing out on winning a large pot when I am against a worse top pair, I make it nearly impossible to lose a huge pot when I am against trips.

The turn was the 2♦. The big blind bet 6,000 into the 8,600 pot. I

called and the cutoff folded.

Since I am in reasonable shape against the big blind's probable range, which I thought consisted of entirely aces and eights, combined with my excellent pot odds, folding is not a viable option. However, raising for value makes no sense because my opponent will usually only continue against a raise with trips or better, which crushes my top pair.

The river was the 7♦. The big blind bet 8,300 into the 20,600 pot.

If I knew the big blind would bet the river with this bet size with any ace or better made hand, calling would be viable because I would win about half of the time. If I thought he would only bet with strong top pairs and better made hands, then folding becomes reasonable, given I lose to stronger top pairs and all the trips.

When I do not know my opponent's strategy, and I am getting

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 Spring Championship of Online Poker
\$25,000 No-Limit Hold'em High Roller



Steve O'Dwyer
5,267,397 chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 21.0%
After Flop: 11.0%
After Turn: FOLDED



Joao Vieira
2,032,640 chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 48.0%
After Flop: 76.0%
After Turn: 91.0%



Andras Nemeth
7,639,302 chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 29.0%
After Flop: 11.0%
After Turn: 9.0%



PREFLOP

With five players remaining and blinds of 40,000 - 80,000 with an ante of 10,000, Steve O'Dwyer raised to 176,000 from the cutoff. Andras Nemeth called from the button. Joao Vieira called from the big blind.

FLOP



Vieira checked. O'Dwyer checked. Nemeth bet 203,940. Vieira called. O'Dwyer folded.

TURN



Vieira checked. Nemeth bet 512,940. Vieira called.

RIVER



Vieira checked. Nemeth moved all-in. Vieira folded.

ANALYSIS

Hungarian poker pro Andras Nemeth has been one of the most successful players in high-stakes online tournaments since the live poker circuit went on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak. Nemeth finished runner-up in the *Irish Poker Open Online* main event for €325,423 in early April and then cashed for \$974,987 across eight scores in the *Poker Masters Online* series just a few weeks later. Nemeth came into this final table as the clear chip leader, and he used that advantage to continually hammer away at the medium-stacked opponents at the table. In this hand Nemeth was facing a cutoff raise from Steve O'Dwyer, who was second in chips at the time. Nemeth called with Q-10 offsuit and *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner Joao Vieira came along from the big blind with A-8 offsuit. The A-K-K flop with two clubs drew a check from Vieira, who was likely just hoping to get to showdown without a lot of fireworks along the way after flopping an ace with a weak kicker. Vieira checked, O'Dwyer checked his gutshot draw with J-10 and Nemeth decided to try to seize control with a bet of roughly one-third the size of the pot. Vieira came along and O'Dwyer got out of the way. With 1,642,700 in his stack and 1,025,880 already in the pot, Vieira was in a dicey situation from out of position. He checked and Nemeth made a half-pot bet. Vieira called, leaving himself with 1,129,760 while the pot ballooned to 2,051,760. The 5♠ on the river prompted another check from Vieira. Nemeth had arrived at the river with a queen high that he had little reason to believe would be good at showdown given the prior action. Despite his opponent getting laid a great price on a call, Nemeth elected to follow through on the bluff and shove all-in. Vieira ultimately folded and Nemeth took down the sizable pot with yet another multi-street bluff. Vieira went on to outlast fellow short-stack Talal Shakerchi and finish fourth for \$240,744.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-HOLDEM



excellent pot odds (in this case, I only need to win more than 8,300/ (20,600 + 8,300 + 8,300) = 23 percent to break even), I tend to make the call.

I called and lost to 9♥ 8♦.

Although I lost this hand, it is important to realize that I could have easily lost many more chips if I failed to pick up on the fact that my opponent thought he had a good hand on the flop. If I made a standard continuation bet, I would have likely faced a check-raise that would have put my entire stack at risk by the river. By checking behind, I conserved my stack and remained in contention. ♠



Jonathan Little is a two-time WPT champion with more than \$6 million in tournament winnings. Each week, he posts an educational blog and podcast at JonathanLittlePoker.com, where you can get a FREE poker training video that details five things you must master if you want to win at tournament poker. You can also sign up for his FREE Excelling at No Limit Hold'em webinars at HoldemBook.com/signup

WHERE IS LIVE POKER HEADED IN 2020?

By Linda Johnson

It's actually difficult to write for a poker magazine when pretty much all the cardrooms across the country are shut down due to Covid-19 concerns. This is the longest stretch of time since 1974 that I haven't been in a brick-and-mortar cardroom, and I'd be lying if I didn't say that it will probably be many more months before I am willing to venture back into another casino. I know that many cardrooms in the United States have begun reopening this past week, but Las Vegas still has its casinos shuttered as I write this column.

I've received emails, texts, and phone calls from friends asking me what I think is going to happen regarding the status of poker in the United States through the end of the year. Obviously I don't have a crystal ball or any "insider" information, so I can only guess. Here are some of

my thoughts on this topic:

I predict that poker rooms in Nevada will not reopen any time soon. The Nevada Gaming Commission has approved guidelines recommended by the Nevada Gaming Control Board that limit the number of players at table games to three players for blackjack, six players for craps, four players for roulette, and four players for poker.

It would not be cost effective for any poker room to operate with only four players at a poker table. Many poker rooms were already operating in the red with a ratio of one poker dealer per table of nine or ten players. There's no way they can afford to have one dealer for four players (it's actually more than one dealer per table because dealers take breaks).

Also, there's no way that any significant volume of players would be willing to play four-handed. From

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 Spring Championship of Online Poker
\$25,000 No-Limit Hold'em High Roller



Steve O'Dwyer
6,045,597 chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 47.0%
After Flop: 11.0%
After Turn: 9.0%



Chun Lei Zhou
7,599,561 chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 52.0%
After Flop: 86.0%
After Turn: 91.0%

PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 40,000-80,000 with an ante of 10,000, Steve O'Dwyer raised to 192,000 from the button. Chun Lei Zhou called from the big blind.



Zhou checked. O'Dwyer bet 136,000. Zhou called.



Zhou checked. O'Dwyer checked.



Zhou bet 225,060. O'Dwyer raised to 880,000. Zhou raised to 2,321,880. O'Dwyer folded.

ANALYSIS

Steve O'Dwyer is among the top ten on poker's all-time money list, with more than \$30.5 million in lifetime live earnings. O'Dwyer started this hand on the button with A-8 offsuit, which is certainly good enough for a raise on the button while playing three-handed. Chun Lei Zhou, who has played in some of the largest cash games both live and online, defended his big blind with pocket deuces and flopped bottom set on a 4-3-2 rainbow board. Zhou checked to O'Dwyer, who was likely to continuation bet with a large portion of the hands he raised with. Zhou check-called and the turn brought the 7♣, completing a rainbow and making a flush impossible. Zhou checked a second time and O'Dwyer checked behind. The 7♥ on the river paired the board, giving Zhou a full house. Zhou elected to now lead out for a smallish bet of around 31 percent the size of the pot. O'Dwyer saw an opportunity to apply pressure to his opponent with a bluff raise. Zhou then was faced with a decision between calling and re-raising with his full house. On the river, with no more cards to come, there is no longer any need to deny your opponent equity; your bets and raises are simply either for value or a bluff. Zhou ultimately reraised, which signifies that he believed that O'Dwyer could call with worse. In this particular instance, Zhou has the lowest possible full house, so that would likely require O'Dwyer to have a straight (6-5 or A-5) or trips, as it seems unlikely that O'Dwyer would have played a one-pair hand like an overpair in the manner that he approached this hand. As it was, O'Dwyer was bluffing and made the quick lay down as soon as Zhou raised. The hand gave Zhou the lead, while O'Dwyer fell to the bottom of the leaderboard with three remaining.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-Holdem

“I predict that the games will be a lot tougher when they do start again. Many ‘social’ players won’t want to play under the restrictions or at minimum will take a while before venturing back to poker, leaving more serious players to battle it out.”

my experience, players at a full table often start to panic and get nervous when there are only one or two seats vacant. Additionally, cardrooms would not be able to take a full rake with only four players, basically making it impossible for them to justify spreading poker. Add all this up and you will see that reopening Nevada cardrooms won’t work as long as the current restrictions are in place. In other states where poker operators are able to seat six or more players at a table, cardrooms might be able to reopen profitably.

I predict that tournaments will not be offered in Nevada for as long as the Gaming Board restrictions exist. The *World Series of Poker* announced that it is postponing this year’s series until the fall. Sadly, my guess is that there won’t be a 2020 *WSOP* for all the reasons above, unless of course the restrictions for number of players are lifted in the next few months.

I predict that online poker will become much more popular over the next year. The reasons for this are obvious. Hopefully our lawmakers will legalize online poker in many more states as they realize that it is safer for people to be able to play in the safety of their homes, without physical human interaction and without the need to touch the chips and the cards.

I predict that the games will be a lot tougher when they do start again. Many “social” players won’t want to play under the restrictions or at minimum will take a while before venturing back to poker, leaving more serious players to battle it out. Also, people are creatures of habit and if they get used to not playing poker for recreation, they may adopt other pastimes and not be so quick to return to the tables where most of them have been losing players. Furthermore, serious players have had time during the isolation to

study and improve their games.

I predict there will be many new home games. Players who love poker but don’t want to play short-handed will figure out that home games are an acceptable option until poker rooms get going again.

Only time will tell how this will play out, but I certainly miss the competition of poker, the social aspects of poker, and the travel associated with poker. I’m eager to hear your thoughts on the future of poker in the short run and the long run.

Please stay safe and healthy! ♠



Linda Johnson is a WSOP bracelet winner and member of the Poker Hall of Fame, the Women in Poker Hall of Fame, and WPT Honors.

She is available to host tournaments, seminars, and charity events. Please contact her at cardplayercruise@aol.com with questions or comments.



ADJUSTING YOUR NEGOTIATING STYLE

By Alan Schoonmaker

My previous column contained a brief quiz to identify your relationship style. You probably negotiate the same way you generally relate to people. That column described each style’s strengths and weaknesses. We relate and negotiate with each other in three ways:

1. **Friendly** people move **toward** others with warmth, trust, and open communications.
2. **Analytic** people move **away** from them with impersonal facts and logic.
3. **Aggressive** people move **against** them with belligerence, suspiciousness, and deceptive communications.

If you haven’t identified your style, please take that

quiz now. You can find it in *Card Player’s* April 22 Issue #9, of this year. You can’t adjust well without knowing your style.

ADJUSTMENTS ARE UNCOMFORTABLE

You naturally think your style is best and do what feels comfortable. Poker experts ignore discomfort and vary their style. Phil Ivey, a great player, even said, “I don’t have a style. I do whatever will get the best results.”

In fact, the experts’ answer to most poker questions is: “It depends on the situation.” That principle applies to both playing our cards and negotiating deals.

We’ll discuss the adjustments that extreme people should make because their adjustment needs are easiest

to recognize.

If You're Extremely Aggressive

Lighten up. Don't convert everything into battles that make others feel like losers. Focus on the important issues, and trade small losses for major victories.

Work on the most important negotiating skill: Understanding other people. Listen intently to what they say and study their body language. Look for signs that they're becoming so upset that they just want to fight you. Try to understand how they feel and what they want besides just money.

Be more flexible. Make your offers a little more reasonable, your concessions a little larger, and your compromises less grudging. Look for deals that make everybody feel good. Continuously remind yourself to let them save face; then make a concession or do whatever else will make them feel better.

You probably don't want to make these adjustments. You may even think that only wimps care about these "touchy-feely" issues, and real players care only about winning. Those irrational feelings will cause costly mistakes.

Suppress your emotional need to look and feel tough and focus on getting the best results. ***Above all, try for a greater emphasis upon win-win.***

If You're Extremely Friendly

Toughen up. Be less generous and trusting. Accept that conflicts during negotiations are inevitable, and most of them aren't personal. They're just parts of the game.

Use your natural ability to build relationships, but don't be so soft that you're treated as a doormat.

Set a firm WAP (Walk Away Point) based on a realistic analysis of what you'll probably get if you keep playing. Then tell yourself, "If I accept less, I'm a wimp." It will help you to resist the pressures to concede too much.

Demand what's rightfully yours, and try for even more. Remember, most opponents have a WAP. They'll feel they won if they get it. Since they don't know your WAP, they won't know they could have gotten more. So there's no reason to give them any more than their WAP.

Use your natural sensitivity to decide what they really want and how much they will concede. Then try to get closer to their WAP instead of leaving so much money on the table.

Occasionally, bargain hard, even if it makes you uncomfortable. Take more ambitious opening positions. Make smaller concessions. Trade concessions instead of giving them away.

Become much less open and trusting. Accept that negotiations have different rules than most conversations. Many people withhold information, and some will happily lie. Information is power. If you give it away, it will often be used against you.

Insist on reciprocity. If they won't be open, honest, and flexible, get tougher. If they're devious and rigid, while you're frank and flexible, you **must** lose.

My recommendations about bargaining hard and communicating deceptively may seem unethical. They're not; they're just reasonable adjustments to the reality of negotiations.

Please remember that we're discussing poker, not party bridge. As David Sklansky put it, "Being devi-

ous and deceitful is precisely what one wants to be in a poker game." (*The Theory of Poker*, p. 129)

Without deception poker can't exist. If we played with the cards face up, nobody would call your bets with a winner, and you couldn't bluff with a loser. You don't feel guilty about slow-playing monsters and busting opponents on the river, nor do think it's unethical to steal pots. Why should you feel bad about applying the same mindset to negotiating tournament deals?

Suppress your emotional need for friendly relationships and focus on getting the best results. ***Above all, realize that, if you become tougher, you'll get better deals AND most people will respect you more.***

If You're Extremely Analytic

Loosen up. Accept the obvious realities that negotiations are often illogical, that there are game-playing elements, and that emotions and "irrational" factors frequently and inescapably affect many negotiations.

Accept and adjust to the fact that most people like rituals, especially the mutual concessions ritual (I give a little, you give a little, and we **slowly** reach a deal). If you avoid that ritual, many people will believe: "You're not bargaining in good faith."

More generally, try to tune in to people. Go beyond the facts and figures, and try to understand what they want and why they act this way.

Instead of making reasonable first offers and refusing to move much, start with offers that give you substantial bargaining room and then slowly **trade** concessions.

Try for deals that satisfy other people's ego and relationship motives. You may not care about those motives, but they do.

Build flexibility into your plans. "If they do A, I'll do B. But, if they do C, I'll do D."

Switch your focus from your plans to what you and your opponents really want. Then consider many possible deals. Most people are much less logical than you, and some deals can seem illogical, but still work. Negotiations always involve ambiguity. When necessary, accept a non-optimal deal that satisfies everybody's major objectives.

Since you may have ignored my recommendations to friendly people, I'll repeat them. As David Sklansky put it, "Being devious and deceitful is precisely what one wants to be in a poker game."

Without deception poker can't exist. If we played with the cards face up, nobody would call your bets with a winner, and you couldn't bluff with a loser. You don't feel guilty about slow-playing monsters and busting opponents on the river, nor do think it's unethical to steal pots. Why should you feel bad about applying the same mindset to negotiating tournament deals?

Above all, accept that negotiations are between people, not computers, and work on the personal dimension.

What's Next?

We've identified your style, strengths, and weaknesses and recommended general adjustments. Future columns will help you to identify and adjust to other people's styles. ♠



Email alannschoonmaker42@gmail.com for information about negotiating books and training.



DEUCE TO SEVEN TRIPLE DRAW LOWBALL: PLAYING AGAINST A RAISE

By Kevin Haney

As in all poker games, the decision on how to best proceed when someone opens the pot in front of you is a function of your opponent, their position at the table, your holding, and how many players are left to act.

Re-raising can allow you to possibly isolate yourself against a weaker hand and/or opponent, create dead money from blinds, and shut out skilled players who would have played for one more bet but not two. Cold-calling can prevent us from getting re-raised when our opponent is very strong and possibly entice weaker playing opponents to enter the pot with rough holdings that they probably should have folded. Folding is the best option when our hand is not strong and there are many players left to act or if we are out of position and will probably experience reverse implied odds.

While some of our decisions will ultimately be opponent-driven, we should have prepared defaults on how to proceed with any holding in any heads-up situation. There are not that many situations to consider, thus if you are serious about your game it is important to work through the various possibilities before encountering for the first time as the action is unfolding at the table. If we already know our default play down cold, we can spend a few seconds (we should play fast in limit) considering if we should deviate from it when taking into account the open-raiser and overall table dynamics.

With all of this in mind, let's walk through a sample set of responses based upon a tight solid opener. The decisions on how to best proceed are based upon the general strength of the opening ranges per position, how often they may hold a deuce if we require one, and of course the potential of our holding.

Hero Is Outside The Blinds

Facing an open from one of the first two positions at a six-handed table, we need to play relatively snug as this range is often very strong. This would especially be the case if we are in either the hijack or the cutoff and thus have at least one player left to act behind and in general many opponents still remaining that could wake up with a premium holding.

UTG/Hijack Open: Hero in Hijack/Cutoff									
2347	2356	3468	3478	3678	234	246	347	345	23
2357	2368	3457	3467	4568	237	258	348	367	24
2345	2456	3568	3578		247	268	278	468	25
2457	3458		3567		235	256	358	378	27
2367	2378				257		357	467	
2467	2478				245		457	568	
2346	2578				238		458	346	
2358	2678				236		368		
2567					267				
					248				
Re-raise									
Call									

With any pat eight or better low we should re-raise but should fold rough unbreakable nines such as 9-7-6-5-4 with so many players left to act. Premium and strong one-card draws (D1s) such as 2-3-5-7, 2-3-4-6, 2-3-6-8, and 3-5-6-8 should be re-raised as well.

It is also probably best to re-raise the 2-3-7-8 thru 2-6-7-8 holdings as the opener may be drawing two and we don't want multiway action with these marginal one-card draws. However, with these hands we also have the option to draw two depending on how many opponents we end up against and how many cards they are drawing. For example, if we end up in a three-way pot and at least one player is drawing one it is probably best to draw two and try and build a stronger hand than an 8-7 low.

If you recall a previous column, a solid early position range has a relatively high percentage of pats and D1s (around 33 percent or more) and a deuce the majority of the time (approximately 90-95 percent) thus it is probably best to fold hands such as 3-4-5-7, 3-4-6-7, and 3-5-6-7. Keep in mind there are still many players to act who will not be folding premium two card draws (D2s) on the first betting round. And in this situation, we don't want anything to do with very marginal draws such as 3-4-7-8 that do not contain a deuce.

We should just smooth call premium or very good D2 draws such as 2-3-7, 2-4-5, and 2-3-8 as there isn't really much to be gained by re-raising these hands and possibly isolating ourselves against a very strong hand. Many players also choose to flat more mediocre holdings such as 2-4-6, 2-5-8, 2-6-8, and 2-5-6 and this is probably a small mistake.

While it's true we have position on the raiser that will also most often be drawing two these hands are not that strong and there are still players left to act behind us. And it should be noted that other D2s listed as flats such as 2-3-6, 2-4-8, and even 2-6-7 are almost certainly equity underdogs against the range of most first position opens anyway. However, specifically when the opener is in the hijack and we are in the cutoff then flattening the slightly better hands such as 2-4-6 and 2-5-8 becomes more viable especially when holding a pair or two.

When Hero is on the button he can play somewhat more liberally against either an UTG or Hijack open.

UTG/ Hi-Jack Open: Hero on Button									
2347	2356	3468	3478	3678	234	246	347	345	23
2357	2368	3457	3467	4568	237	258	348	367	24
2345	2456	3568	3578		247	268	278	468	25
2457	3458		3567		235	256	358	378	27
2367	2378				257		357	467	
2467	2478				245		457	568	
2346	2578				238		458	346	
2358	2678				236		368		
2567					267				
					248				
Re-raise									
Call									

Here we have added a few more holdings to the re-raising range (3-4-5-7, 3-4-7-8, 3-4-6-7, 3-5-7-8, and 3-5-6-7) and 2-4-6 and 2-5-8 to the flats. Our situation is more advantageous in that we are guaranteed last position and with a few folds in between we have a little more indication that the other deuces we need with the 3-4-5-7 and 3-4-7-8 type hands are live.

When an opponent opens from the cutoff their range is going to be significantly wider than that of the first two positions thus our default responses will be correspondingly looser as well:

Cut-off Open: Hero on Button									
2347	2356	3468	3478	3678	234	246	347	345	23
2357	2368	3457	3467	4568	237	258	348	367	24
2345	2456	3568	3578		247	268	278	468	25
2457	3458		3567		235	256	358	378	27
2367	2378				257		357	467	
2467	2478				245		457	568	
2346	2578				238		458	346	
2358	2678				236		368		
2567					267				
Re-raise									
Re-raise or Call									
Call									

Against the cutoff we should be playing and re-raising all of our D1s and possibly other holdings not listed on the chart such as 4-6-7-8 and 4-5-6-9 often turning them into a snow.

With our two card draws we can either re-raise or flat, however, we should tend to mostly be re-raising in this situation. Re-raising is best when some or all the following factors are present:

1. We have a premium D2 (2-3-4, 2-3-7, 2-4-7, 2-3-5, 2-5-7, and 2-4-5)
2. Villain is very loose
3. We have pairs
4. Blinds play very well

Flatting is more viable with our weaker D2s, when villain is on the tighter side, we have no blockers, and weak players are residing in the blinds.

3-4-7, 3-4-8, and 3-5-7 are somewhat marginal, however, we have position and given the lack of early position action it's somewhat more likely the deuces are live which would give us a fantastic draw. The times we catch a deuce we are happy to have pulled weak players in the blinds into the pot with their potentially rough hands.

With our two-card draws we really shouldn't be concerned about splitting our range between re-raises and flats as we aren't giving our opponent any information that he will ultimately be able to use. When drawing two our final holding is far from defined as we don't know what we will catch. When we re-raise with premium D2s we can end up patting 8-7 lows or nines and some of the hands we chose to flat such as 2-5-6 and 3-4-7 can make sevens. And sometimes we are flatting 2-3-4 and 2-3-7 because we don't have any blockers and an action player is residing in the big blind.

Splitting our range is more precarious in a game such as Badugi where we are giving out a ton of useful information if we flat or re-raise three-card badugis based upon their strength. And as previously discussed we should not split our range in 27TD with one card draws as that is information our opponent can certainly use. However, with two-card draws we should just go ahead and play our holding in the manner that we feel will maximize expectation.

In the next installment on Deuce to Seven Triple Draw we will move on to the small blind which can be a very difficult position to play well. ♠



Kevin Haney is a former actuary of MetLife but left the corporate job to focus on his passions for poker and fitness. He is co-owner of Elite Fitness Club in Oceanport, NJ and is a certified personal trainer. With regards to poker he got his start way back

in 2003 and particularly enjoys taking new players interested in mixed games under his wing and quickly making them proficient in all variants. If interested in learning more, playing mixed games online, or just saying hello he can be reached at haneyk612@gmail.com.

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JULY	July 6-13	Summer Open	Bay 101 ■ San Jose, CA
	July 22-Aug. 3	Potomac Summer Poker Open	MGM National Harbor ■ Oxon Hill, MD
	July 23-26	Card Player Poker Tour	Ocean's Eleven Casino ■ Oceanside, CA
	July 26	No-Limit Hold'em Tournament	Lucky Chances ■ Colma, CA
AUGUST	Aug. 9-16	Summer Poker Round-Up	Wildhorse Resort & Casino ■ Pendleton, OR
	Aug. 22	No-Limit Hold'em Tournament	Lucky Chances ■ Colma, CA
SEPTEMBER	Sept. 4-20	Commerce Hold'em Series	Commerce Casino ■ Commerce, CA
	Sept. 10-19	Card Player Poker Tour	Card Player Cruises ■ Eastern Caribbean
	Sept. 27	No-Limit Hold'em Tournament	Lucky Chances ■ Colma, CA
	Sept. 28-Oct. 20	Card Player Poker Tour	Bicycle Casino ■ Bell Gardens, CA
NOVEMBER	Nov. 6-16	Card Player Poker Tour	Seneca Niagara Casino ■ Niagara Falls, NY
	Nov. 6-22	L.A. Poker Open	Commerce Casino ■ Commerce, CA
	Nov. 13-23	Gold Rush Poker Series	Lucky Chances ■ Colma, CA

AO-Add On **B**-Bonus **CP**-Crazy Pineapple **H.O.R.S.E.**-Hold'em, Omaha Eight-or-Better, Razz, Seven-Card Stud, Seven-Card Stud Eight-or-Better **R.O.S.E.**-Razz, Omaha Eight-or-Better, Seven-Card Stud, Seven-Card Stud Eight-or-Better **KO**-Knock Out or Bounty **LH**-Limit Hold'em **MP**-Mexican Poker **NLH**-No-Limit Hold'em **O H/L**-Omaha Eight-or-Better **PLO**-Pot-Limit Omaha **RB**-Rebuy **SH/L**-Seven-Card Stud Eight-or-Better **SLH**-Spread-Limit Hold'em

ARIZONA

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11:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$170

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11:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$200

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11:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$170

THURSDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$170

FRIDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$200

SATURDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$240

SUNDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$160

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$150

THURSDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$130

FRIDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$150

SATURDAY

9:00 a.m. NLH, \$250

SUNDAY

9:00 a.m. NLH, \$150

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MONDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$70 AO \$20 KO \$20
(\$2K Guarantee)

5:00 p.m. NLH, \$75 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$20
(\$2K Guarantee)

5:00 p.m. NLH, \$30 RB \$10 AO \$10
(\$2.5K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$20
(\$2K Guarantee)

5:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 AO \$20
(\$2.5K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$20
(\$2K Guarantee)

5:00 p.m. NLH, \$80 AO \$20 KO \$25
(\$2.5K Guarantee)

8:00 p.m. MP, \$30 RB \$10 AO \$10

(\$1.5K Guarantee)

10:00 p.m. NLH, \$60 RB \$50 AO \$40
KO \$10 (\$2K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$20
(\$2K Guarantee)

4:00 p.m. NLH, \$40 AO \$30
(\$5K Guarantee)

5:30 p.m. NLH, \$65 AO \$50
(\$5K Guarantee)

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$90 AO \$70
(\$5K Guarantee)

10:00 p.m. NLH, \$60 RB \$50 AO \$40
KO \$10 (\$2K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 AO \$50
(\$20K Guarantee)

2:00 p.m. NLH, \$90 AO \$70
(\$20K Guarantee)

4:00 p.m. NLH, \$115 AO \$90
(\$20K Guarantee)

10:00 p.m. NLH, \$60 RB \$50 AO \$40
KO \$10 (\$2K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$40 AO \$30
(\$10K Guarantee)

1:30 p.m. NLH, \$65 AO \$50
(\$10K Guarantee)

3:00 p.m. NLH, \$90 AO \$70
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9:30 a.m. NLH, \$130

TUESDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$130

WEDNESDAY

CHUMASH CASINO - SANTA YNEZ**MONDAY**

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7:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

WEDNESDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$40
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

THURSDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$50 KO \$10
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$40

FRIDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$40
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$150

SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 (\$3.5K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$150 KO \$50
(\$5K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 RB \$50
(\$10K Guarantee)

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6:45 p.m. NLH, \$10 RB \$10 AO \$10
(\$3K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40
(\$5K Guarantee)
6:45 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$5K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$5K Guarantee)
6:45 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40
(\$5K Guarantee)
9:30 p.m. NLH, \$70 AO \$20
(\$1K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$40
(\$4K Guarantee)
6:45 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$6K Guarantee)
9:30 p.m. NLH, \$70 AO \$20
(\$1K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$90 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:45 p.m. NLH, \$115 RB \$50
(\$30K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$50 RB \$20

3:00 p.m. (\$5K Guarantee)
NLH, \$100 RB \$50
(\$5K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$5K Guarantee)
3:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 AO \$40
(\$3K Guarantee)

HUSTLER CASINO - GARDENA**MONDAY**

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$2K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80 RB \$40
(\$2K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 AO \$40 KO \$25
(\$2K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80 RB \$40
(\$2K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80 RB \$40
(\$2K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

3:00 p.m. NLH, \$80 RB \$40
(\$2K Guarantee)

LUCKY CHANCES - COLMA**MONDAY**

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$120 AO \$10
(\$3K 1st Place Guarantee)

TUESDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$200 AO \$10
(\$4K 1st Place Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$120 AO \$10
(\$3K 1st Place Guarantee)

THURSDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$120 AO \$10
(\$3K 1st Place Guarantee)

FRIDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$120 AO \$10
(\$3K 1st Place Guarantee)

SATURDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$120 AO \$10
(\$3K 1st Place Guarantee)

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. NLH, \$250 AO \$10
(\$8K 1st Place Guarantee)

OAKS CARD CLUB - EMERYVILLE**MONDAY**

6:15 p.m. NLH, \$150

WEDNESDAY

6:15 p.m. NLH, \$185

SATURDAY

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$185

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$235

OCEAN'S ELEVEN - OCEANSIDE**MONDAY-THURSDAY**

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5
(\$3K Guarantee)

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5
(\$3K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5
(\$3K Guarantee)
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$5
(\$5K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$230 AO \$10
(\$20K Guarantee)
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5
KO \$20 (\$3K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$90 AO \$50
(\$10K Guarantee)

CONNECTICUT**FOXWOODS - MASHANTUCKET****MONDAY**

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$100
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$120
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$10K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$100
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$50
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$15K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$100
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 (\$8K Guarantee)
8:30 p.m. NLH, \$100

SATURDAY

9:00 a.m. NLH, \$60
11:00 a.m. NLH, \$180 (\$8K Guarantee)
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$140 (\$5K Guarantee)
8:30 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$50

SUNDAY

9:00 a.m. NLH, \$60
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$140
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$230

MOHEGAN SUN - UNCASVILLE**MONDAY**

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$85 KO \$25
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$75
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$75
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$85 KO \$25
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$10K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$75
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$85 KO \$25
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$75
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$85 KO \$25
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

SCHEDULES - DAILY TOURNAMENTS

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$75
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$120

SATURDAY

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$150
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$120

SUNDAY

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$50
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$120

FLORIDA

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

MONDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50
7:00 p.m. PLO H/L, \$125 KO \$25

TUESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$150
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25

WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$150
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$240 KO \$100

SATURDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$155
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$155

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$150
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

PALM BEACH KENNEL CLUB - W. PALM BEACH

MONDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$70 (\$2.5K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70 (\$2K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$70
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70

WEDNESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$3K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$2K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$2K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$10K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40 AO \$20
(\$8K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40 AO \$20
(\$5K Guarantee)

ILLINOIS

RGC POKER (for locations see RGCPoker.com)

DAILY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$40
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$80
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40

SATURDAY

2:00 p.m. NLH, \$180

LOUISIANA

COUSHATTA CASINO & RESORT - KINDER

TUESDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

THURSDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

FRIDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$120

SATURDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$200

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

MARYLAND

LIVE! CASINO & HOTEL - HANOVER

MONDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
(\$3K Guarantee)

7:15 p.m.

NLH, \$140 (\$4K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$140 (\$3K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
(\$5K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$3K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$130 (\$15K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$160 KO \$50
(\$3K Guarantee)

7:15 p.m.

NLH, \$150 (\$5K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$200 (\$5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$140 (\$5K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$100 (\$10K Guarantee)

7:15 p.m.

SUNDAY

3:15 p.m. NLH, \$130 (\$15K Guarantee)

6:15 p.m.

NLH, \$130

MGM NATIONAL HARBOR - OXON HILL

MONDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$235 (\$10K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$240 (\$10K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$50

THURSDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$150 KO \$25
(\$5K Guarantee)

7:15 p.m.

NLH, \$125 (\$5K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$350 KO \$100

(\$20K Guarantee)

MICHIGAN

FIREKEEPERS CASINO - BATTLE CREEK

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$40

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$40
6:30 p.m. PLO/NLH, \$60

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$40
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$60 AO \$20 AO \$20

SATURDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$140/\$240/\$500
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40

NEVADA

VENETIAN HOTEL & CASINO - LAS VEGAS

MONDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$8K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25
(\$4K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$8K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$50
(\$9K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$8K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$8K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25
(\$6K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$200 AO \$100
(\$20K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$340 (\$25K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$250 (\$15K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)

NEW YORK

SENECA NIAGARA - NIAGARA FALLS

MONDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$2K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$45
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$45

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$80
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$2K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$60
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$80

SATURDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
11:00 a.m. NLH, \$150

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$60
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

TURNING STONE - VERONA

MONDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$65

TUESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$15 (\$1K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 KO \$10
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$65

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 KO \$10
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$15 (\$1K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

SATURDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65
4:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$30

EASTERN POKER TOUR

PUB POKER EVENTS, NEWS, RANKINGS
AND UPDATES CAN BE VIEWED AT EASTERNPOKERTOUR.COM

NORTH CAROLINA**HARRAH'S - CHEROKEE****MONDAY**

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80
10:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

TUESDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80
10:00 p.m. NLH, \$50

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25

THURSDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80
10:00 p.m. NLH, \$45

FRIDAY

5:00 p.m. NLH, \$135

SATURDAY

11:00 a.m. NLH, \$250

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$80
2:00 p.m. NLH, \$250

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$80

10:00 p.m. NLH, \$45

OREGON**WILDHORSE - PENDLETON****TUESDAY**

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$35

THURSDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$55

SATURDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$75

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$35

SOUTH DAKOTA**SILVERADO FRANKLIN - DEADWOOD****THURSDAY**

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$88

SATURDAY

2:00 p.m. NLH, \$44

SUNDAY

3:00 p.m. NLH, \$33

TEXAS**CELEBRITY CARD CLUB - ODESSA****TUESDAY**

7:00 p.m. PLO, \$50

THURSDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

WISCONSIN**POTAWATOMI - MILWAUKEE****TUESDAY**

6:15 p.m. NLH, \$80

THURSDAY

6:15 p.m. NLH, \$125

SUNDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$150

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 Spring Championship of Online Poker
\$25,000 No-Limit Hold'em High Roller



Chun Lei Zhou
8,941,461 chips

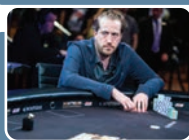
Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 52.0%
After Flop: FOLDED
After Turn: FOLDED



Andras Nemeth
9,192,742 chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 22.0%
After Flop: 22.0%
After Turn: 11.0%



Steve O'Dwyer
4,115,797 chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 22.0%
After Flop: 75.0%
After Turn: 89.0%

**PREFLOP**

With three players remaining and blinds of 40,000 - 80,000 with an ante of 10,000, Chun Lei Zhou raised to 166,400 from the button. Steve O'Dwyer three-bet to 595,200 from the small blind. Andras Nemeth four-bet to 1,600,000 from the big blind. Zhou folded. O'Dwyer called.

FLOP

O'Dwyer checked. Nemeth checked.

TURN

O'Dwyer checked. Nemeth checked.

RIVER

O'Dwyer bet 849,100. Nemeth moved all-in. O'Dwyer called for 1,656,697.

ANALYSIS

Andras Nemeth had wielded his big stack as a weapon throughout this final table, and this hand was no different. The fireworks began with Chun Lei Zhou raising A-K offsuit from the button. Steve O'Dwyer picked up A-9 suited in the small blind and decided to three-bet Zhou, who should have a very wide range from the button, especially during three-handed play. Nemeth looked down at A-J offsuit in the big blind and elected to cold four-bet, likely figuring that O'Dwyer could three-bet without a monster due to how wide Zhou's opening range should be. Zhou had a very strong hand in A-K and was in the best position, but facing a three-bet and a four-bet, he elected to bow out and let Nemeth square off against O'Dwyer, who was the shortest stack to start the hand. O'Dwyer was in a tough position but elected to make the call against the ever aggressive Nemeth, who had had his foot on the gas throughout this final table. O'Dwyer was dominated preflop, but the Q-Q-9 flop catapulted him into the lead. Both players checked the flop and the turn. After having his opponent check back on two streets, O'Dwyer bet 849,100 into the pot of 3,396,400. O'Dwyer was likely trying to target the best non-pair hands like A-K and A-J for calls with his smallish river sizing. Nemeth decided to move all-in as a bluff, putting O'Dwyer to the test for all of his chips. The approach had won Nemeth several pots already at this final table, but with 6,751,297 in the middle and just 1,656,697 left in his stack, O'Dwyer made the call and doubled up. O'Dwyer went on to win this event for \$521,598, while Nemeth took home \$403,096 as the runner-up finisher.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-HOLDEM

THE LARGEST TOURNAMENTS IN POKER HISTORY (BY PRIZE POOL)

Event	Prize Pool	Entrants	Champion (Top Prize)
2006 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$82,512,162	8,773	Jamie Gold (\$12,000,000)
2019 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$80,548,600	8,569	Hossein Ensan (\$10,000,000)
2018 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$74,015,600	7,874	John Cynn (\$8,800,000)
2010 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$68,798,600	7,319	Jonathan Duhamel (\$8,944,310)
2017 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$67,877,400	7,221	Scott Blumstein (\$8,150,000)
Triton Millions Charity Invitational (\$1,321,950)	\$65,880,000	54	Aaron Zang (\$16,810,979)
2011 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$64,531,000	6,865	Pius Heinz (\$8,711,956)
2008 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$64,333,600	6,844	Peter Eastgate (\$9,152,416)
2016 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$63,327,800	6,737	Qui Nguyen (\$8,005,310)
2014 WSOP \$10,000 Main Event	\$62,820,200	6,683	Martin Jacobson (\$10,000,000)

The *World Series of Poker* main event dominates the leaderboard for the largest poker tournaments in history, with nine of the top ten largest prize pool events in history belonging to the 'World Championship' of poker. The single largest poker tournament in history was the 2006 *WSOP* main event, which drew 8,773 participants to create a prize pool of \$82,512,162. The top 12 finishers in that event all earned seven-figure paydays, with Jamie Gold securing the massive \$12 million top prize as the champion.

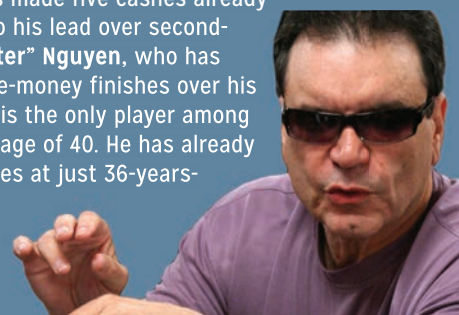
The 2019 *Triton Millions Charity Invitational* is the only tournament among the top ten that wasn't a *WSOP* main event. This event featured the largest buy-in in poker history: £1,050,000 (\$1,321,950 USD). The 54 entries made in this event raised £2.7 million for charity while also creating a \$65,880,000 prize pool, making it the sixth-largest prize pool in the game's history. Aaron Zang was the eventual champion, but runner-up Bryn Kenney was actually the player who earned the largest payday. The final two struck a deal while Kenney held the chip lead that saw the poker pro lock up \$20.6 million. Zhang was able to overcome a roughly 4.5:1 chip disadvantage to ultimately secure the title and \$16.8 million.



MOST CAREER TOURNAMENT CASHES

Rank	Player	Career Cashes
1st	"Miami" John Cernuto	507
2nd	Men "The Master" Nguyen	501
3rd	Randy Holland	445
4th	Dan Heimiller	410
5th	Ari Engel	403
6th	Allen Kessler	367
6th	TJ Cloutier	362
8th	Roland Israelashvili	362
9th	David Levi	356
10th	Kathy Leibert	355

"Miami" John Cernuto currently holds the lead for career tournament cashes with 507. The 76-year-old Las Vegas resident has achieved a lot in his nearly four decades as a poker professional, including winning three *World Series of Poker* gold bracelets. Cernuto has made five cashes already in 2020, helping add to his lead over second-ranked Men "The Master" Nguyen, who has accumulated 501 in-the-money finishes over his long career. Ari Engel is the only player among the top ten under the age of 40. He has already put together 403 cashes at just 36-years-old.





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