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BRACELET ON FIRST TRY
.....

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the INSIDE STRAIGHT

News, Reviews, and Interviews From Around the Poker World



THE 2020 WORLD SERIES OF POKER ONLINE SURGES INTO ITS SECOND ACT

The US-Facing Segment Of The Series Drew 44,229 Total Entries In July

By Erik Fast

The 2020 *World Series of Poker Online* is now more than halfway finished, with 46 of the 85 gold bracelets on the schedule this year already awarded. The online-only series was born out of necessity due to the indefinite postponement of the live *WSOP* due to safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The festival is split into two segments, with the first taking place on US-facing online site *WSOP.com*. Participants could only play in the 31 events offered throughout the month of July while being located within the borders of Nevada or New Jersey. Despite that limitation, events no. 1-31 drew a total of 44,229 entries and awarded \$26,870,985 in total prize money.

The U.S. series concluded in the early hours of Aug. 1, with Nahrain '2Rivers' Tamero emerging victorious from a field of 2,126 entries in the \$1,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em championship. Tamero overcame a tough final table that included the likes of two-time *WSOP Circuit* ring winner Kevin 'SpecialK333' Calenzo (9th - \$25,650) and bracelet winner and *World Poker Tour* champion Andrew 'WATCHGUY42' Lichtenberger (3rd - \$140,167). For the win, Tamero earned a gold bracelet and the top prize of \$310,832.

Going For The Gold

Plenty of notable players took down events during the

first leg of the online festival, with some coming out on top for the first time in a bracelet event, while others merely added to their collection.

Among the accomplished players who earned their inaugural bracelets in July were *WSOP Circuit* ring winners Jonathan 'Art.Vandelay' Dokler (\$500 'Kick-Off' event winner for \$130,426) and Robert 'bustballs' Kuhn (\$400 no-limit hold'em winner for \$115,850), four-time ring winner Ian 'APokerJoker2' Steinman (\$400 no-limit hold'em freezeout winner for \$110,557), 2016 *WPT Legends of Poker* champion Pat Lyons (\$777 no-limit hold'em winner for \$173,551), and two-time *WPT* main event champion Alan 'GladiusIII' Goehring (\$500 no-limit hold'em freezeout winner for \$119,399).

Several players with a bracelet win already on their resumes added to their career total during the first leg of the 2020 *WSOP Online*, including Nathan 'surfbum' Gamble. The 2017 *WSOP* \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better champion secured his second bracelet by taking down the \$600 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better six-max event during the first week of this year's series, topping a field of 883 to earn \$89,424. 2015 *WSOP* main event champion and 2017 \$10,000 limit hold'em championship winner Joseph 'fanofdapoker' McKeehen earned his third bracelet



Ian Steinman



Joe McKeehen



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by coming out on top of a 469-entry field in the \$3,200 buy-in no-limit hold'em high roller event, earning \$311,817 for the win. 2019 \$1,500 razz winner Kevin 'TheRealKG' Gerhart earned his second bracelet as the champion of the \$500 buy-in pot-limit Omaha six-max event, overcoming a 1,137-entry field to win \$97,572. *WPT Caribbean* main event winner and 2016 *WSOP* \$1,000 no-limit hold'em event champion Tony 'Panoramic' Dunst secured his second bracelet by topping a field of 1,361 entries in the \$777 no-limit hold'em six-max event. Nick 'samadhi' Binger won the 2011 \$5,000 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better event for his first bracelet. He earned his second by winning the \$400 no-limit hold'em eight-max event, surviving a field of 2,408 to win \$133,413.

Series Storylines

The *WSOP* is usually a hotbed for unique narratives, and despite being entirely online, this year's summer series was no different. A number of the 31 winners decided on *WSOP.com* had singular stories behind their victories. Ron 'MacDaddy15' McMillen reportedly won the very first online tournament he ever played in order to secure his bracelet. The 70-year-old Iowan outlasted a field of 1,026 entries in the \$1,000 buy-in six-max event to cash for \$188,214.

Ryan 'joeyisamush' Depaulo won his first bracelet playing from inside his car, which he had driven from his native New York and parked in a grocery store parking lot in New Jersey in order to enter the 'Big 500' no-limit hold'em event. Depaulo outlasted a field of 2,427 entries from behind his steering wheel to win the hardware and the top prize of \$159,563.

22-year-old video blogger Ethan 'RampageP' Yau took down the \$500 buy-in 'Grande Finale' event while streaming his play online. The low-stakes cash game grinder had thousands watching him via YouTube as he navigated his way through a field of 2,502 entries to earn his first bracelet and the \$164,494 top prize.

The event winners weren't the only players to put together incredible runs in recent weeks. A number of players had a massive series despite not capturing a title. 2016 bracelet winner Ryan 'Potential' Laplante secured the most cashes of any player in *WSOP.com* events, making the money in 17 of the 30 events he was eligible to play and cashing nine times in a row. Three-time bracelet winner Ben 'WhyIsGamora' Yu had the second-most cashes with 16, while previously-mentioned winner Ian Steinman, and six-time bracelet winner Daniel 'DNegs' Negreanu tied for

third with 15 in-the-money finishes each.

According to the *WSOP's* leaderboards, 48 players cashed for six-figures during the series, with four players securing more than \$300,000 in total scores. Joseph McKeen's \$369,632 in cashes was the most of any player, with \$600 monster stack champion Ryan 'Im. Sorry' Torgerson's \$337,060 being good for second place. Championship event winner Nahrain Tamero's lone score for \$310,832 catapulted him into third on the earnings list, while Nick 'shadowjacker' Guagenti's \$305,433 payday as the winner of the \$2,000 buy-in deepstack event moved him into fourth place.

WSOP Goes Worldwide

While there were 31 bracelets awarded to players situated in Nevada and New Jersey, the other 54 bracelets events on the schedule are being handed out on International-facing online site GGPoker. The first event of this second segment of the series kicked off on July 19. The \$100 buy-in 'Opener' event faced some technical difficulties and was ultimately paused due to a bug resulting from the massive turnout for the event. The tournament was put on hold for a week, but was ultimately able to play down to a winner after drawing a record-setting field of 29,306 total entries. This event surpassed the 28,371-entry field from the 2019 'Big 50' event to become the largest bracelet event in *WSOP* history, in regards to field size. Marcelo Jakovljevic Pudla earned \$265,880 and a gold bracelet as the eventual champion.

A number of accomplished tournament players have been among the early winners in the second segment of the series. Finnish poker pro Juha Helppi secured his second bracelet as the champion of the \$5,000 pot-limit Omaha event, earning \$290,286 for the win. 2010 *European Poker Tour Prague* main event winner and 2011 *World Poker Tour Bratislava* main event champion Roberto Romanello took down the \$1,500 no-limit hold'em event to win his first bracelet and the top prize of \$216,213. Just days later Canadian poker pro Kristen Bicknell came out on top in the \$2,500 six-max no-limit hold'em event to become just the third female player in poker history to win three bracelets.

The International segment of the series has only run for a fortnight now and is set to continue through Sept. 6, with plenty of huge events planned for the coming weeks including the \$25,000,000 guaranteed, \$5,000 buy-in main event. With millions and millions of prize money and 39 more bracelets up for grabs, there is sure to be plenty of action and excitement throughout the rest of the *WSOP* Online series. ♠

WORLD POKER TOUR NAMES CHAMPIONS CUP AFTER POKER HALL OF FAME MIKE SEXTON

By Steve Schult



The *World Poker Tour* renamed its main tour trophy, the *WPT* Champions Cup, after long-time voice of the tour Mike Sexton.

The trophy, which has the names of every *WPT* main tour winner inscribed on the base, will now be referred to as the “Mike Sexton *WPT* Champions Cup.”

It's the latest achievement for one of poker's most successful careers. As a player, Sexton won a *World Series of Poker* bracelet in 1989, took down *WPT Montreal* in 2016, was a fixture in the high-stakes poker world, and was inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame in 2009.

The Ohio State graduate did most of this while serving as the lead commentator for *WPT* and was the voice of poker for an entire generation of poker fans. Sexton and his co-host Vince Van Patten were on the mic for nearly every *WPT* event from 2002 until his departure from the booth in May 2017. He has served as the Chairman of partypoker ever since.

“I was most proud of being inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame,” said Sexton. “I didn’t think anything could ever top that, but in my mind, this does. To me, there is no greater honor in poker than having the *WPT* rename the Champions Cup the ‘Mike Sexton *WPT* Champions Cup.’ It’s special because I created the original Tournament of Champions, was a commentator on the *WPT* the first 15 seasons, and then got my name on the cup by winning in Montreal. I love the *WPT*, how they changed poker forever, and I’ll be eternally grateful to them for this incredible honor.”

Sexton becomes just the second poker pro to have a major title named in his honor. The \$50,000 *Poker Players Championship* trophy is named after the late David ‘Chip’ Reese. Reese won the inaugural \$50,000 HORSE in 2006.

“Chip was my idol,” said Sexton. “We’re both from the Dayton area and I would always stay at Chip and Danny Robinson’s house when I came to Vegas. He was the greatest all-around player ever, always played in the highest stakes game in the room, and set the standard as to how you should behave on and off the table... Just being mentioned with Chip in any contest is an honor.”

Over the course of his more than 30-year poker career, Sexton racked up more than \$6 million in career tournament earnings. ♠

TWITCH BANS DANIEL NEGREANU’S CHANNEL AFTER LIVE STREAM THREATS

By Steve Schult

One of poker’s biggest stars was banned from a streaming platform after a July outburst directed at one of his viewers in the chat.

Daniel Negreanu was, at least temporarily, booted from Twitch, although it is likely that the six-time *WSOP* bracelet winner will be allowed back after serving his virtual time-out. The 46-year-old has been using the platform to livestream his play in the online *WSOP* events.

The move by Twitch came a couple days after Negreanu went on a profanity-laden rant during one of his *WSOP* online streams. During the July 24 \$400 no-limit hold’em eight-max event, one viewer in the chat made a comment that set off the GGPoker ambassador.

During the 40-second tirade, Negreanu told the viewer that he would “break his f***ing teeth” and “feed them to him anally.” The clip picked up steam and was shared all over social media with varying reactions.

According to his Twitter feed, the online troll made crude remarks about Negreanu’s wife, Amanda, who is a former poker reporter, presenter, and host of the now-defunct PokerStars show *The Big Game*.



The day after the ban, Negreanu issued an apology of sorts, stating that it was okay “to laugh at yourself. No one is perfect. Trying to be is exhausting.”

Just before the start of the series, Negreanu announced that he was willing to bet up to seven-figures on whether he will earn his seventh bracelet at some point this year. ♠

ALL-NEW POKER ROOM AT SAHARA LAS VEGAS ADDS TO RESORT'S MORE THAN \$150 MILLION TRANSFORMATION

By Card Player News Team

Players headed to SAHARA Las Vegas' all-new poker room will find an array of game offerings and impressive room features. The new poker room boasts seven tables, a 16-foot by nine-foot LED video wall and five additional screens throughout the room along with food options provided by Northside Café & Chinese Kitchen as well as upscale Mexican eatery Uno Más. The game chart includes no-limit hold'em, limit hold'em, pot-limit Omaha, seven-card stud and various mix games with the ability to spread what players are seeking.

The Poker Room at SAHARA Las Vegas offers seven-handed live cash games daily, with promotions held throughout the duration of those games. The room also offers a competitive rake at 10 percent with a \$4 max. Players receive \$2 in rewards points per hour played in a cash game by signing up to play through Poker Atlas. Points can be redeemed at several of the resort's restaurants, while Club 52 members are eligible to receive personalized deals and one-of-a-kind access to everything SAHARA Las Vegas has to offer.

SAHARA Las Vegas delivers The Strip's most personalized and intimate resort experience featuring two rooftop pools and a collection of esteemed restaurants, lounges and entertainment venues. Highlights include the acclaimed Bazaar Meat by José Andrés, Uno Más and Northside Café & Chinese Kitchen. Rest and relax in one of the resort's 1,615 guest rooms and suites in three distinctive towers including the AAA Four Diamond Alexandria Tower.

The Poker Room expands the recently renovated 60,000 square foot casino floor featuring 600 of the latest slot and



video poker machines, 50 classic table games and Infinity – a premium gaming lounge. Table reservations are available through the resort's "Take a Seat" program, allowing players to reserve their spot for blackjack, roulette and baccarat up to 72 hours in advance.

As the resort industry continues to adapt to a new normal, SAHARA Las Vegas' boutique size, newly enhanced SAHARA Cares health and sanitization program, and outstanding amenities, make the resort an ideal selection for poker enthusiasts seeking their next getaway or a place to play.

The Poker Room at SAHARA Las Vegas is open daily beginning at 6 p.m. Players can view current cash games and tournaments and even register to play online. For more information on SAHARA Las Vegas or to make a reservation, visit the casino's homepage at www.saharalasvegas.com ♠

New Jersey Appeals Court Allows Man To Sue Casino Over Canceled Poker Tournament

By Steve Schult

A New Jersey appeals court reversed the decision of a lower court and will allow a Vermont man to sue an Atlantic City casino over a canceled poker tournament in 2015.

According to an *Associated Press* report, Michael Bandler traveled from Vermont to Atlantic City to play in a poker tournament at the Golden Nugget. The casino attached a \$150,000 guaranteed prize pool to the event.

The report states that "the tournament started but was canceled by the casino due to a low number of regis-

tered players." It is unclear whether cards were officially in the air and the tournament started or if staff canceled the event before a hand was played.

Regardless, Bandler felt wronged enough to bring forth a lawsuit against the casino. He argued that consumer fraud laws were violated because of misleading advertising surrounding the tournament.

The Golden Nugget argued that state gaming regulators held jurisdiction over the issue, not the courts, and that there was fine print on all ads that

stated the tournament could be canceled. The initial ruling was in favor of the casino, but an appeals court overturned the decision Wednesday and agreed with Bandler.

"The casino omitted stating it intended to pay \$150,000 only so long as enough people signed up, and the only indirect reference to that intent was the disputed disclaimer in small print about official rules and the right to change or cancel the event," wrote the appeals court panel regarding their decision. ♠

2020 Card Player Player of the Year

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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

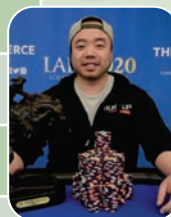
A Look At Players Making Waves On The Live Tournament Circuit

34 Michael O'Grady - 34th Place (1,162 points)



Australia's Michael O'Grady kicked off 2020 with a pair of sizable final-table finishes in major poker tournament series taking place in his home country. The Sydney resident started out by winning a \$1,150 AUD buy-in no-limit hold'em 'Accumulator' event at the *Aussie Millions* in Melbourne. He defeated a field of 867 total entries in that tournament to capture the title, the \$188,860 AUD (\$130,313 USD) top prize and 912 *Card Player* Player of the Year rankings points. Just nine days later O'Grady made it down to heads-up for another title, only to fall just short. He placed second from a field of 59 entries in a \$10,000 AUD buy-in no-limit hold'em high roller at the *Australian Poker Open* to earn another \$118,000 AUD (\$81,420 USD) and 250 points. With that score, O'Grady climbed into 34th place in the overall 2020 POY race rankings, with 1,162 total points and \$211,733 USD in year-to-date earnings.

38 Anthony Nguyen - 38th Place (1,103 points)



Azusa, California's Anthony Nguyen made five POY-qualified final tables in the early months of 2020. He started his year off with a seventh-place showing in a \$400 eight-game mix tournament during the *World Poker Tour Gardens Poker Championship* series. He then made four final tables at the *L.A. Poker Classic* festival in a one-month span. He finished fifth in a \$400 Omaha eight-or-better and seven-card stud eight-or-better mixed event, and just over a week later placed second in a \$400 deuce-to-seven triple draw, Omaha eight-or-better, and seven-card stud eight-or-better event. He made yet another deep run in a tournament involving Omaha eight-or-better in the middle of February, placing eighths in the \$400 buy-in tournament in that discipline. The four smaller final tables saw Nguyen cash for a collective \$12,247 and 143 points. The fifth score was the difference-maker for Nguyen. He outlasted a field of 1,390 total entries to win the \$1,000,000 guaranteed \$1,100 buy-in no-limit hold'em event at the *L.A.P.C.*, ultimately striking a deal among the final five players that saw him earn the title and the largest payout of \$132,210 as the chip leader. Nguyen also earned 960 points for the victory, which was enough to see him move into 38th place in the POY standings.



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POKER STORIES PODCAST

With Houston Curtis

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.



You won't find the name Houston Curtis on any poker leaderboards, but for a brief period of time during the height of the boom, he was among the biggest winners in the game. Curtis made his way to Los Angeles by way of Illinois, hoping to make it in the music business. He transitioned to TV production after doing audience warm up for *Showtime At The Apollo*, later working on shows such as *Jerry Springer* and *The Dating Game*, and as an executive at MTV. His *Best Of Backyard Wrestling* videos in the early 2000s made him a millionaire, and he went on to produce poker strategy videos for Phil Hellmuth, and the *Ultimate Blackjack Tour*.

By chance, Curtis was seated next to *SpiderMan* star Tobey Maguire one night while playing poker at the Commerce Casino. The two hit it off and became friends, moving their action from the casino to private high-stakes games filled with the Hollywood elite. The games were chronicled in the movie *Molly's Game*, as well as the book it was based on written by Molly Bloom. But according to Curtis and his book, *Billion Dollar Hollywood Heist*, it was actually he and Maguire, not Bloom, who ran the game while it was in L.A., taking upwards of \$1 million per month from players that included celebrities such as Nelly, David Schwimmer, director Todd Phillips, Don Cheadle, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Pete Sampras, Jon Landau, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, and Leonardo DiCaprio, before it all came crashing down.

Highlights from this interview include shooting music videos in the desert, being "related" to Minnesota Fats, Fortress: Stronghold Of Rock to Mind Over Matter, warming up crowds at *Showtime At The Apollo*, *Jerry Springer* and *Backyard Wrestling*, hiding his sleight-of-hand skills, car washing with Steve Perry, the ultra-competitive and eccentric Tobey Maguire, separating fact from fiction in *Molly's Game*, The Viper Room, Todd Phillips and Old Spice, \$800,000 bluffs at \$200-\$400, integrity and honesty from Rick Salomon, telling Layne Flack and his bag of cash to go home, Leonardo DiCaprio and his Armani furniture, the disappointing poker skills of Matt Damon, why David Schwimmer is such a Ross, Don Cheadle at the Playboy Mansion, losing seven figures in one night, playing on the set of *SpiderMan 3* and in a sex dungeon, a Cheech and Chong nightmare, hustling a weight loss prop bet, and the sounds of Norm Macdonald.

The Transcript Highlights

On How Much Money Was Really Won In Those Private High-Stakes Games

Houston Curtis: He just tried to not go out in public a lot. You got to remember, this was during the time of *SpiderMan*, so he was at the height of his celebrity. He couldn't go anywhere without getting noticed. So being in places like the Four Seasons and the Beverly Hills Hotel, and playing with people who are wealthy and discrete, was the perfect scenario for a guy who is basically just like any other Commerce hood rat jonesing for some cards. He loved the action just like anyone else. But that was the setting, and the setting just happened to be very profitable.

Julio Rodriguez: In the book you said that Tobey won about \$1 million a month for three years. That would put him among the biggest poker winners of all time!

HC: Yeah, definitely.

JR: So... you stand by it, huh? That's a crazy claim, \$36 million!

HC: Yeah, that's about right. I probably grossed about \$15 million myself, but I was funding my entire life and business operation, whereas Tobey just put it in a little side account, his poker account. (laughs)

Why The Pros Weren't Allowed In The Game

JR: There were a couple of poker pros that actually got into the game, but they weren't named. Would these be people we know?

HC: The first pro that tried to make it in was Layne Flack. He showed up at the Viper Room with a bag of cash, but he didn't even make it back to say hi to us... and I'm friends with Layne.

The doorman came back and said, 'Yeah, it's Layne Flack, and he has a bag of cash.' And we just said, 'Tell him to go away.'

JR: So they couldn't even come in and watch?

HC: Poker was getting big on television, and a lot of these guys we were playing with were fascinated by what they were watching. We didn't want them wanting a bunch of pros coming in all the time, we were taking care of that with the celebrities. So we kept the pros away, but there were a few guys...

Phil Ivey came to the game one night. He's so good, but it was just like an honor... it's like letting a guy play at your golf club when he's not a member, you know what I mean? And he came and played, and took the game for about \$300,000. Hell, he was to my right and all night he made the exact same raise, showing crap like 8-6 offsuit. I just waited and waited and waited, and I finally pick up two jacks. He made the same raise, I popped the hell out of him, he repopped me, we pushed, and he had aces.

Hellmuth played one night, and he crushed it too. A lot of people give Hellmuth crap about his cash game skills, but that guy can crush a game full of amateurs. He chopped it up real good.

So yeah, we didn't want to have a lot of that going on. They were basically taking money out of our pocket.

On Playing With The Wolf Of Wall Street

JR: How would you rate Leonardo DiCaprio as a player?

HC: I don't know, I never saw him play anything other than aces and kings. (laughing) How do you rate that?

JR: You had a funny story in the book about touring his house, and how all he wanted to do was brag about the stuff he got for free.

HC: It was so funny. He was really giddy, showing me all of his furniture. He said, 'Check this out, Giorgio Armani is going to reupholster all of my furniture in custom Armani leather.' I didn't even know such a thing existed, so I said, 'Really? That's cool.'

And he said, 'Yeah, and all I got to do is wear an Armani suit to three different events, and that's all I wear anyway!' ♠



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THIS WEEK'S BIG WINNER

Hand History Rewind: Joe Cada Wins 2009 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 pause on major 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 first main events held at the Rio. We first revisited Jamie Gold's dominating run in 2006, Jerry Yang's win in 2007, and then Peter Eastgate's victory in 2008. This issue, we'll look back at Joe Cada, who banked \$8,547,044 in 2009.

Eastgate was a month shy of his 23rd birthday at the time of his win in 2008, surpassing then 24-year-old Phil Hellmuth as the youngest champion in poker history. Cada, however, was just eight days shy of his 22nd birthday when he took down poker's biggest prize, a record he still holds to this day.

The Michigan native was already a successful cash game grinder when he earned the spotlight for his tournament success, and in the years since, he has proven that he was no one-hit wonder. In 2012, he won a side event at the PokerStars Caribbean Adventure, and then finished runner-up in a \$1,500 no-limit hold'em event at the *WSOP*. After another final table in 2013, Cada picked up his second bracelet and \$670,041 in the \$10,000 six-max event in 2014.

His 2018 campaign was even better, scoring two more bracelet wins, including the \$3,000 shootout for \$226,218, and another \$1,500 no-limit event for \$612,886. He also managed to make the final table of the main event yet again, this time settling for fifth place and another \$2,150,000. Last summer, he nearly picked up his fifth bracelet in the \$5,000 six-max, earning \$468,488 for second place. In total, Cada has racked up more than \$14.1 million in lifetime live tournament cashes.

Here are five key hands from the final table.

Tournament – 2009 World Series of Poker Main Event

Buy-In: \$10,000 • Prize Pool: \$61,043,600 • No. of Entries: 6,494 • First Place Prize: \$8,547,044

HAND
NO. 1

Cada Gets Lucky To Survive



Joe Cada
10,800,000

Jeff Shulman
18,325,000

Blinds – 300,000-600,000 with a 75,000 ante

The Action

Shulman raised to 1,750,000 from under-the-gun and Cada moved all-in for 10,800,000 from the blinds. Shulman called with pocket jacks, and was a big favorite to eliminate Cada with his pocket treys. The board fell 8♥ 4♥ 3♦ 7♠ Q♥, however, and Cada made a set to double up and stay in contention. Shulman was eliminated a short while later in fifth place, earning \$1,953,452.

HAND
NO. 2

Cada Spikes Another Two-Outer To Double Up



Joe Cada
38,500,000

Antoine Saout
80,000,000

Blinds – 500,000-1,000,000 with a 150,000 ante

The Action

Cada raised to 2,550,000 from the small blind and Saout responded with a three-bet to 7,300,000 from the big blind. Cada then moved all-in, and Saout snap called him with pocket queens. Cada only had pocket deuces, but the flop of 9♠ 7♠ 2♦ vaulted him into the lead. The 3♥ and 6♠ completed the board, and Cada doubled up to the chip lead three-handed, while Saout saw half of his stack shipped across the table.

HAND NO. 3

Saout Exits In Third Place

*The Action*

Cada raised to 2,500,000 on the button and Saout three-bet all-in from the small blind. Moon folded his big blind, and Cada quickly called with A♦ K♠. Saout was in a race situation with pocket eights, and he remained ahead as the dealer brought out a flop of 5♥ 5♣ 4♠. The 10♦ on the turn was also a safe card, but the K♣ on the river paired Cada and sent the Frenchman home in third place, good enough for \$3,479,669. Saout would return to the final table again in 2017, this time picking up \$2,000,000 for fifth place.

HAND NO. 4

Cada Makes A Good Call To Double Into Lead

*The Action*

After being grinded down heads-up, Cada raised to 3,000,000 on the button and Moon defended his big blind. The flop came down 10♣ 9♥ 5♦, and both players checked. The turn was the 10♦, and Cada bet 3,000,000. Moon wasted no time and announced that he was all in. Cada went into the tank for a while, and ultimately decided to call with J♥ 9♦. He was happy to see Moon show 8♠ 7♠ for an open-ended straight draw, and when the 3♥ hit the river, he had doubled into the chip lead.

HAND NO. 5

Cada Wins A Coinflip For The Title

*The Action*

Cada raised to 3,000,000 on the button and Moon reraised to 8,000,000. Cada then moved all-in, and Moon instantly made the call with Q♦ J♦, surprising most of the crowd watching along. Cada could only show down pocket nines, however, making it essentially a coinflip situation. The flop of 8♣ 7♠ 2♣ kept Cada in the lead, and the K♥ on the turn was safe as well. Moon needed one of his six remaining outs to double up to the chip lead, but instead the river was the 7♣, and he was eliminated in second place. Moon took nearly \$5.2 million with him back to Maryland, while Cada became the youngest *WSOP* main event winner in history.

Final Table Results

1.	Joe Cada	\$8,547,044
2.	Darwin Moon	\$5,182,927
3.	Antoine Saout	\$3,479,669
4.	Eric Buchman	\$2,502,890
5.	Jeff Shulman	\$1,953,452
6.	Steve Begleiter	\$1,587,160
7.	Phil Ivey	\$1,404,014
8.	Kevin Schaffel	\$1,300,231
9.	James Akenhead	\$1,263,602





70-YEAR-OLD BRACELET WINNER RON MCMILLEN: “I WON’T EVER PLAY ONLINE AGAIN”

By Steve Schult

Before July, 70-year-old Iowa native Ron McMillen had never played a hand of online poker. Despite learning the game nearly 50 years ago and watching the game evolve before his very eyes, the virtual version of the game just never appealed to him.

The business owner and recreational poker player racked up more than \$150,000 in live tournament earnings, but in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of what would’ve been this year’s *World Series of Poker*, McMillen was forced to either take the summer off or play the first hand of online poker of his career.

He chose the latter. McMillen and a couple of friends from a home game near Des Moines took the flight out to Las Vegas with high hopes for the 2020 online *WSOP*. McMillen’s online career got off to the hottest start that it could... with a bracelet win.

Under the screen name ‘MacDaddy15,’ McMillen navigated his way through a field of 1,026 entries to earn \$188,214, his first tournament victory, and his first bracelet in the \$1,000 no-limit hold’em six-max event.

McMillen sat down with *Card Player* to discuss his poker history, his aversion to online poker, and representing older players on the virtual felt.

Steve Schult: First off, congratulations on the victory.

Ron McMillen: Yeah. It’s pretty special. It doesn’t matter what age you are, it’s pretty special. But I guess I’m run-



ning out of time in comparison to you all (laughs), so it may be more special. I don’t have as many games ahead of me.

SS: What is your poker backstory? It’s your first time playing online, but I had heard that you are an experienced live cash game player and have played fairly high stakes. How did you get into the game?

RM: I guess I started playing in home games. I played in home games since the early ‘70s, but I started playing in a casino a little bit when I went through a divorce in 2003.

Then I had a couple guys that traveled to places for the [*Mid-States Poker Tour*], so I started doing that and I have played in main events since ‘07. So about 13 years. That’s when I started getting more serious about it and really enjoy it. Then in the last five or six years I’ve really embraced tournament poker. I think I’ve really gotten good at

it and I really had to work a lot to [be successful].

It took me a long time. Then again, I’m not a very smart person (laughs), but I keep learning. I’ve played with a lot of young poker players. Several pros. And that made me a lot better and a lot more aware of today’s game.

SS: What were those home games like in the ‘70s? Were you playing no-limit hold’em? Were you playing high stakes?

RM: In the ‘70s, we’d bring up a couple rolls of quarters and then you could win \$10 or \$20 and it felt like a great night. I was making \$55 a week, you know, at my job. So, it was a big deal back then.

Then as I got into the ‘80s, things started to ramp up. Moneymaker of course got everybody on point, but I still play in that same home game and it’s a whole different game. You have to bring a bankroll there and there is another one in Central Iowa that a lot of pros are in. A lot of people would love to fly in and get into it, but it’s pretty exclusive.

I think I’ve been fortunate enough in life where I’ve made some money and I like the higher stakes poker because it makes you focus. If you’re playing smaller poker like \$1-\$2 or the \$2-\$5, \$5-\$10, then I would want to play every hand because I don’t care. You know, I need to play something where I have to play good poker.

I play a lot of cash, but I’ve made

a couple runs in some main events and some deep runs in June at the *WSOP*. I've made a couple final tables at *MSPTs*. But I've never made a run like this.

SS: It was well-documented on social media that this was your first time playing online poker. I guess the simple question is how? You've been around the game for so long. How did you never even dabble online?

RM: Well, I can be really addicted to things. I love to go outside and I love to hunt and fish. I have a little acreage. I think I sit on like 460 acres with a quarter acre lake and I fly fish and hunt. And I have a wife, I have grown children, and I just want to spend some time in my business. I still stay involved in it. If I started playing online poker, I'm afraid that this would get a little bit nuts.

The other thing is, to tell you the truth, I have a pretty good-sized company and one of my IT guys will come up and say "Mr. McMillen, I've got it finished." And I'll say "What was it?" "Well, you just didn't have it turned on." I'm just so pathetic with computers. Even this. I didn't want to do it, but I had a couple friends going out and talked me into doing it.

You know, I spent all of June and half of July during the main event last year in Vegas. I absolutely embrace it. If I stay at the Waldorf or Park MGM and there's a tournament at the Rio, I'd walk. 107 degrees. I'd just bring an extra shirt. Or if I'm going to play a tournament in the Sands Expo, I walk. And I just love every second of it.

And I know the town so well. I love flying in and dining at all the nice places to eat. My wife will come in three four times a year and we'll go to some really nice places to eat. I just love the town. The whole environment. I was missing it. All of a sudden, it was going by and these guys said, "Just come play a couple online." And they said they'll set my computer up and show me what to do. And that's kind of what happened.

SS: Was there any hesitation on your part since it was online or were you pretty easy to convince to make the trip and play online?

RM: I had a lot of hesitation. I wasn't going, but three of these people that played in the home were going to be there. One of the guys from the home game said I'd "want" to play on a MacBook Air. So I went and bought one of those and then when we went

out there, he set it all up.

I had a terrible time getting Caesars to recognize my account. I registered it under Ron, but my legal name on my driver's license is Ronald, so I couldn't play the first night I was there. And then they wanted my social security card. I don't know where my social security card is. I probably haven't had one for 50 years. I had to get receipts from my bank as proof of who I was. I barely got in on time the next day to play the tournament that I won.

Once I got in there, even then my friend showed me the basics [of the software] and he said, "You'll figure it out." But I never did. With wagering and everything.

I think, I hope that's kind of why I ran pretty well. I over bet the pot sometimes because instead of being able to punch in the right number, I was just like "What the hell?" I picked min bet or maybe a quarter or half size. Pot bet. Max bet. I just picked one of those because I knew that. By the time you get those numbers in, you know, time's up. And all of a sudden it was "Oooh. Well, that's a little more than I wanted to bet." So maybe I scared some people off some hands they shouldn't have been afraid of.

SS: That's pretty hilarious. Outside of not realizing how much you were betting, did you enjoy the overall experience of playing online?

RM: Yeah. And I can see why I won't ever do it again. I never played cash online here because I think I'd get wrapped up in it.

But you could learn the players you're playing against and what they're doing. There was one guy that I had well covered. I think I busted him in sixth-place or something, but he still had a lot of chips. I had seen this person play and with A-8 or above, they were just going nuts with it. I had pocket deuces and I had him about a 3:1 in chip counts, so I knew it would hurt me, but it wouldn't cripple me.

I assumed he was playing the ace, so I just said I'm basically flipping a coin. I'll flip a coin for it. I learned that player and I read it right. He actually had A-10 and I held up. That jumped me up there, but there were two other players that I played with for about two hours and I couldn't believe how tight they played. So I learned that I could steal pots from them.

When they get live tournaments again, I'll never consider playing online again. I love human beings and I love

the social interaction. It's just not the same event.

SS: Every poker player dreams of winning a bracelet. And when you think about that, you start to get a vision in your head about what it would be like. This was a bit different because there were no crowds. No Thunderdome. No Rio. What was the experience like compared to what how you envisioned it in your mind?

RM: I'd much rather win with all the friends in the stands and the audience. We had none of that. There were five of us in a big suite at Caesars. A couple of those guys were in separate bedrooms playing live action after they got knocked out. Other guys, at the other end of the room, and his son was kind of going back and forth giving a report to everything else as I got deeper. It just wasn't the same.

SS: Did you still have the same adrenaline rush as when you went deep in those other live tournaments?

RM: The adrenaline rush was still there. I mean, it's every poker player's dream to win a bracelet. And then another one of course. First you want to bag, then you want to cash, then you want to run deep, then you want to final table, then you want to win it.

When we hit the final three tables, I started to get that rush. I had been playing good, I had been running real good. I had been playing the best poker of my life and I had quite a few chips. I hit a big hand when there were four or five players left. That's when it got pretty real.

SS: Do you feel like you have to carry the torch for the older guys?

RM: I don't have to. I'd love to. It's amazing how many people have reached out to me that I didn't even know and thank me for inspiring them.

I don't believe in letting the old man in. I big game hunt. I go on hunts and it hurts me all the time. My feet hurt, my arches hurt, my back hurts, but the other option is to go out and get a La-Z-Boy and watch TV. And I'm not a La-Z-Boy or TV guy. So I'm going to go and be heard.

It's the same thing. These people all of a sudden said they weren't ready to play and now they are going to go play. When it went online, they said they didn't think they were going to play anymore, and now they are going to start. And that makes me really happy. Like I said, I love people and if I can make people feel good and maybe motivate them, that's a great thing. ♠

SETH DAVIES' JOURNEY FROM THE DUGOUT TO THE HIGHEST STAKES POKER TOURNAMENTS IN THE WORLD

How The Oregon Native Saw An Opportunity For Poker Greatness After Repeated Injuries Ended His Baseball Career

By Erik Fast



Seth Davies has been one of the rising stars of the live tournament scene in recent years. The 31-year-old from Bend, Oregon has been playing poker professionally for more than a decade now, with his early years focused almost exclusively on online play. Davies entered 2016 with less than \$200,000 in live cashes to his name, but in the four and half years that have followed he has accumulated more than \$8.5 million in scores in live events, including a main event win on the *World Poker Tour*.

Davies jump-started his live tournament career with that victory, defeating a field of 417 entries to win the \$3,500 CAD buy-in *WPT Spring Poker Classic* at the Playground Poker Club in Montreal, Canada for \$176,228 USD and his first title on a major tour. Less than a year after that victory Davies had already made

his way up to playing in \$25,000 buy-in events, and soon would become a regular in the largest high-stakes poker tournaments in the world.

In 2019, Davies made 11 final tables, winning a title and cashing for \$3,937,430 along the way for his most successful year on the circuit. He got off to a good start in backing up that career-best performance during the early months of 2020, making five final tables and cashing for \$906,133 in the first three months of the year before the coronavirus outbreak resulted in the effective shutdown of the live tournament circuit.

Card Player caught up with Davies to discuss his start in the game, how a series of injuries saw him switch his focus from collegiate baseball to poker, his meteoric rise up the stakes, the phenomenon of 'winner's tilt,' and more.

Card Player: Do you remember the first time you ever played poker?

Seth Davies: I remember playing 10-cent tournaments online back in the day when I was in high school. This was 2005 or whatever, right after the [Chris] Moneymaker win, when poker was pretty popular on TV. My brother was pretty into it and I got into it too. We'd see the game on TV and wanted to play. And it was so easily accessible to play for virtually no money at the time, so we both got hooked pretty quickly.

CP: What about the game resonated with you?

SD: As far as winning in poker, everything is dependent on yourself. At that time when there was so much money in the game during the boom, it was very realistic to make serious money on your own merit. And being a kid at the end of high school, that was awesome. I had never seen more than \$100 in front of me at a time before. And then all of a sudden, I'm watching these 18-year-old kids making tons and tons of money playing poker and it was simply just because they were smart and worked hard to get good at it. So yeah, that was the most appealing thing. It was simply, 'This is something that's there for the taking and all that it takes is hard work.'

CP: Did you have a background in sports or strategy games?

SD: I was an athlete growing up. I played three sports in high school and one in college. I think that was actually a big factor in me becoming

Davies has accumulated more than \$8.5 million in scores in live events, including a main event win on the *World Poker Tour*.



ing successful in poker. I was a competitive swimmer from when I was six years old to 13 years old. We had this really good coach who was a really hard coach who would drive us. He knew what it took to get the most out of people and he had a ton of success. And so, I learned really young, mainly with swimming and a little bit from my older brother coaching me in other sports as well, what it took to be good at something; it takes work. It takes being uncomfortable. It takes being mad, being yelled at and all that. I think my athletic background was really influential in my poker career.

After high school, I came down to a junior college in Vegas, College of Southern Nevada, to play baseball. The first year I was there, I had a pretty major elbow surgery right away. The first elbow surgery took about a year to recover. I came back and then the next year had to have another elbow surgery. Then I tried to come back again, but I had to get shoulder surgery. And by the end of that, it was kind of over. I was dealing with a lot of pain at that point. I never really got back to where I was before. So I was technically a college baseball player, but unfortunately my whole college career was spent dealing with injuries, so there's not much to speak of there.

CP: There are a number of high roller tournament players who came from an athletic background, Alex Foxen was a collegiate football tight end, Nick Petrangelo was a serious hockey player, and both got into poker after sustaining major injuries. Was it a similar thing for you that poker became a bigger part of your life when you didn't have that competitive outlet

of sports at your disposal?

SD: You hit the nail on the head. When I had these injuries and I was recovering, I had this huge hole in the middle of my day where I was supposed to be training. I used that time to take up poker. I would say that I'm not one of the kind of hyper competitive guys that a lot of guys in poker are. I've kind of always just been a guy who simply likes to work hard... how would I describe it? It just feels wrong to me when I'm not working hard. I have this big urge to kind of do the work every day, but I wouldn't say I'm one of those guys that's like, 'Man, I've got to be competing, I've got to be beating people.' I think long term, that is a hurdle that would keep me from ever being legitimately the best or one of the absolute best. I'm fine with that. I'm in poker to make money, not to be the best.

CP: How did it transition from being something that was a hobby to something more serious?

SD: It started getting to the point where I actually made enough money to support myself when I was in college. This was around 2009, and I was playing sit-and-gos on Full Tilt. I remember the way it worked out was I would withdraw at least \$500 a week. It was a pretty consistent stream of income. I wasn't playing multi-table tournaments at the time, so it wasn't high variance and I could pretty consistently make anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a month. Just being able to withdraw that \$500 bucks a week kept me going at college, because I couldn't just have my parents send me money whenever I wanted. At that point, I probably had another maybe year and

a half where I was still trying to come back and play baseball.

When I reached the point that I was starting to support myself, I was like, 'Okay, this could kind of be a long-term thing.' Then that just kind of kept growing, I kept getting better. By the end of [my baseball career], I was actually making significant money. I was just like, 'Okay, I'm full-time now. Let's do it.' I haven't stopped since.

CP: How did the stakes and formats that you played evolve in the early part of your career?

SD: I was playing almost exclusively the \$26 and \$75 45-player sit-and-gos. Then I progressed to focusing on the 180-player sit-and-gos, coupled with a bunch of low-stakes multi-table tournaments, with an average buy-in of around \$20. These were things that you could just mass table. I would play 25 tables at once. That was a good way to just kind of consistently make money. You'd make a lot of rake back, and kind of curb the variance of the tournaments with the sit-and-gos. I did that for maybe two years and then kind of just gradually moved up stakes in tournaments and started to phase out the sit-and-gos.

CP: You were still very much focused on online play when poker's Black Friday happened in 2011. What kind of impact did that have on your approach?

SD: At that point I was still in the total online grind mode and I didn't really have any interest switching over to playing live. So when Black Friday happened, I just immediately decided to move out of the country. I moved to Vancouver, and bounced around a

little bit, spending a few months in Panama. And then, eventually moved to Playa Del Carmen in Mexico, where I stayed for four years. I didn't start to take live poker that seriously until 2016.

CP: Once you made the move out of the US, how did your approach to playing for a living change?

SD: In 2012 I had a pretty good year playing moderate stakes online, probably \$100 average buy-in. In 2013 and 2014, I kind of stagnated a bit. I was playing, not the highest stakes, but pretty much everything up to \$2,000 buy-ins online. Playa Del Carmen was a huge party town. I was 24 and a bunch of poker players had relocated there. We were all drinking and spending days at the beach, five days a week or whatever, so not a great couple of years for my poker career, as you can probably guess.

In 2014 I ran out of money and I was broke. I realized I had to start taking this more seriously again. I did that and had a good year then, and then never really fell back into the whole party scene. I just kept growing and getting better from 2014 on.

CP: What led to your decision to play more live events in 2016? It ended up being by far your most successful on the live circuit up until that point.

SD: Let's be honest, I ran really well that year when I played some live events early on, and that motivated me to play live more. This was a time when it was pretty apparent that online tournaments just weren't going to be that great of a way to make money in the future. Live poker in the United States has always been great and it's always going to be a thing. So I played some live events and right away I made a couple runs at big *World Poker Tour* tournaments. I remember a 13th place finish in *WPT L.A. Poker Classic* main event for \$57,180. And then a few months later, I won a small *WPT* in Montreal for \$176,228. I was like, 'I have some money under me now, so I can weather some variance. This is going to be the way to go. I'm going to do this instead of playing online.'

CP: Did it mean a lot to you to earn a title on one of the main live tours

right away? Earlier you said you cared more about money than being considered the best.

SD: No, it certainly mattered to me, for sure. I don't get anybody that says those things don't mean anything to them, they're just kind of lying. It's cool to get the attention, to have an article written about you. So yeah, it meant a lot to me, but at the same time I wouldn't say that I started planning my career to chase those kinds of accolades. I was still always thinking that money was the main goal. It was nice to kind of get that big win early on. A lot of people that are good players, travel the circuit for years and years and don't win a big title on the major tours.

CP: Later that year you finished

“I learned really young ... what it took to be good at something; it takes work. It takes being uncomfortable. It takes being mad, being yelled at and all that. So I think my athletic background was really influential in my poker career.”

runner-up in the \$5,000 buy-in *Seminole Hard Rock Poker Open* main event for an even bigger score of \$575,000. Can you tell me about that tournament and how that score impacted your career at that point?

SD: That tournament was huge, not only was that life-changing money for me, but it was also validation, in a way. When I mentioned before that live poker in the US is great and there's a bunch of money to be made there, exhibit A are these types of tournaments in Florida. They were huge, they had tons of recreational players, they had very soft play. To actually cash in for more than 100 buy-ins, it was really a validation for what I was doing. That was great for me just psychologically, career-path

wise.

CP: You ended up playing Jason Koon heads-up for the title in that event. In a post-game interview, you described him as a mentor. Can you tell me more about what it meant to have him there for that moment?

SD: Jason has definitely been a mentor of mine and continues to be. We're really close. It was pretty insane that we ended up getting heads up in that way. I remember when that tournament was going on, we both had big stacks with like 20 left. We were just joking about how ridiculous it would be if we got heads up. That was a big trip for both of us and one that definitely we'll never forget.

CP: The following year, you already started having some cashes in \$25k and \$100k buy-in events. How did you make the transition to the high roller events so quickly?

SD: Jason played a big part in that as well. He was already an established high roller player at the time. He knows what it takes to win at high stakes and he kind of saw the same attributes in me. We got closer at the time and started studying more and more together.

As we studied more and learned more about each other's poker games, he was just like, 'Man, you'd be profitable in some of these 25k's. You need to start playing them.' I was just like, 'I'm not rolled for it.' He was just like, 'Don't worry about that. I'll get your action sold when we need it.'

I just trusted him on that and I think he was right. I don't think I was ever in way over my head or anything. I never came right in and thought I was just crushing right away either, but I said to myself, 'There are recreational players in these games. I think I'm good enough to battle with the pros in these events and still make some profit.' He definitely played a big part in my transition into these high-stakes events. I just followed his advice and played stuff that he thought I was winning in.

CP: How did those first few times that you moved up in stakes to go?

SD: I did fine. I didn't crush or anything. I remember actually cashing the first \$25k that I played, which was



“Jason (Koon) has definitely been a mentor of mine and continues to be. He definitely played a big part in my transition into these high stakes events.”

cool. I remember being super excited about that. I also cashed the first \$100k buy-in that I played, and those were definitely big, big boosts for me.

I remember specifically feeling how strange it was that I wasn't as stressed out as I thought I would be. I mean there was stress playing my first \$100k final table, but I specifically remember how clear-headed I felt. When you're playing and actually in the hands, the stress kind of melts away and you're just focused on the hand you're playing. That's something I didn't expect so much. I thought I'd be sitting there and thinking, 'Oh my God, I can't bluff here. This is a \$100k buy-in, I can't just bluff all in or whatever.' I never really had those kinds of thoughts come into my head.

CP: Now that you've made it to the high roller level, have these ultra-high-stakes events become your main professional focus?

SD: Definitely. At this point it's just simply higher EV for me to focus on high rollers. Traveling for a \$3,000 buy-in main event, it's just simply not going to be as profitable as flying to Asia for a Triton event where there are multiple \$100k and \$50k events. Now I just go to the stops where I think I'm making more money.

CP: Is it difficult to evaluate where you stand in these high rollers, given that even with a big increase in their availability in recent years, there are still relatively few super high stakes tournaments run each year?

SD: One of the big challenges of tournament poker is to be objective. When things are going really bad or when things are going really good, you have to be objective about your

play. Say it's a day where you just get crushed, like bust. I remember specifically in a Triton London £100k buy-in event that I busted four bullets in it, all in the span of an hour. It was just an absolutely brutal day. It just crushed me.

Afterwards you have to be able to come back and think about the way you played, and be objective, and to convince yourself that you played okay, and continue moving on study-wise. Conversely, you also need to be doing this same process when things go well, after you win a tournament and everything goes right. You still need to be able to see, 'Okay, I made a mistake here. It happened to work out, but this was played poorly.' You must be able to self-evaluate and keep yourself in kind of a midline. You need to be able to separate yourself from the results, and get back to being focused on the process, and how you actually played the hand. That's an absolutely crucial thing. I think that's one of the big skills that separates the people that make it and those who don't make it.

There's a phenomenon called 'winners tilt' where people who win a couple of tournaments, go on a heater, and then they start playing worse and worse because they feel everything they do is going to work. There are a number of players, I can't name any names, but if you think about some of the biggest heaters in high-stakes poker history, a number of these guys have followed up those runs with just brutal downswings because they kept winning and winning, and they kept doing whatever they wanted because it was all working. Then eventually, they stopped running so well.

You can start doing stuff, because you've drifted so far away from good play because you thought you were just superhuman, and it ends up with these massive downswings. It doesn't make them bad players. We're all human, and this is psychological stuff that can happen to everybody. I think that's one of the things that I'm decent at is separating myself from the results and just focusing on the process.

CP: There were only a couple months of live tournament action this year before the coronavirus outbreak shut down the live circuit. In those few months you made five final tables and cashed for over \$900,000. How do you feel about the start to the year and what have you been doing in the months since the shutdown?

SD: It's a good time for online poker. There's been tons of high-stakes action online, so that's been cool. It's kind of been nostalgic in a way to be able to play online poker more or less every day. It reminds me of back in the early days of my career.

Obviously, the live *World Series of Poker* in Las Vegas getting postponed was brutal. Now big events from the fall are starting to get canceled. So it has been kind of sad, but on the other hand, it's nice to be home. I've been home since mid-March after the Sochi trip through the start of July, and that's the longest I've spent at home for a single period in quite a long time. But now that it's Vegas summer, it's not so appealing anymore, because there's not much to do with it being so hot out. I'm missing the live circuit right about now. But there's still online poker to play and studying to be done, so I'm staying busy. ♠

AN OPEN LETTER TO WSOP: WHY MIXED GAMES ARE GOOD FOR POKER PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

By Melissa Burr

Dear Powers That Be,

When the *World Series of Poker Online* schedule was released this year, I couldn't help but notice that there was only one, single, mixed-game event. One single, lonely, Omaha eight-or-better event that was originally, incorrectly listed as its degenerate cousin with a gambling addiction, pot-limit Omaha.

The schedule didn't even have a stud eight-or-better event, and I know you have the software capacity to run it. I live in New Jersey and have seen your "Stud" tab. There have even been rumors of the occasional stud cash game running on the site. To say I was disappointed about the lack of mixed games is an understatement.

I implore you to reconsider your sentiments towards mix games. Now, I understand that mix games may not have the allure and big prizes as no-limit hold'em. I even understand that the clientele may not be "desirable." I know the mix game community has its fair share of complainers, but I promise you they mean well. Since you already muted the chat, you won't have to hear them complain anyway.

The whole point of this open letter is to lay out why I think it is a mistake not to give poker players the opportunity to compete in other disciplines outside of big bet games.

But seriously, are you f#%ing kidding me? Only one mix game? Surely you can do better than this, and here's why you should.

Learning More Games Opens Up More Opportunities

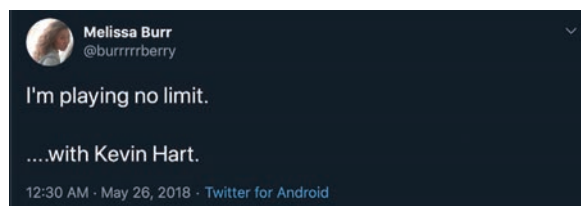
At the beginning of my career, my goal was to be able to play whatever the best game in the room was. That meant *any* game, whether it be \$50-\$100 no-limit hold'em or \$400-\$800 stud. At the time, I only knew how to play limit hold'em. That's only 20 percent of H.O.R.S.E., let alone any game in the room. I knew I had a long way to go. but I was determined.

Fast forward five years. I learned eight more games and was on my way to being able to accomplish this goal. I was always playing in the best game on the *right* side of Borgata's poker room, but that side of the room was dedicated to the limit games. I still was unable to play *any* game.

I started coming in on my days off to play \$2-\$5 no-limit hold'em. I needed experience to learn the game that would one day allow me to play with one of the biggest celebrities on the planet. Fast forward another few years and now it's 2018. I was playing on the right side of the room when I heard that Kevin Hart was on his way to play no-limit hold'em. I quit my game of \$80-\$160 OE to secure a seat at \$10-\$25.

I had to wait. And wait some more. But sure enough, in

walked Kevin Hart, along with four security guards. This was it, the moment I had been waiting for. I could without a doubt say that I was playing in the best game in the room.



The game escalated quickly. It started out with blinds of \$10-\$25, but it wasn't long before half the table had blinds out and we were playing \$10-\$25-\$50-\$100.

I wish I could tell you I crushed this session or even that I booked a win, sadly I cannot. While being able to play the best game in the room is making the most positive expected value decisions for your bankroll, it doesn't guarantee you'll come out a winner

Mix Games Are Good For Development

I could very easily make the argument that mix games prepare players for the future of poker. Every year a new game comes out that threatens the stronghold no-limit hold'em has on poker.

If there is even the slightest chance that players will like the new game, you learn it. I know it's tough to remember because the internet wasn't really around back then, but there was a time when limit hold'em was the most popular game in poker rooms. Before that, it was stud. You cannot

stop poker evolution, you can only grow with it.

Right now, the game of choice is clearly no-limit hold'em. It's been like that for nearly two decades. Thanks MoneyMaker. Maybe try winning a limit tournament next time. However, there is no reason to believe no-limit hold'em will reign supreme forever. At some point, you either learn the new game or watch the game pass you by. You'll still have solitaire though if nobody wants to play no-limit with you.

Each new game expands a player's perspective on poker. Even after 15 years of playing professionally, I still find spots I've never seen. I truly believe that learning these games has allowed me to develop my overall poker strategy into a profitable creative one.

Learning on the fly and being prepared to take on new challenges is a life skill that not many poker games offer.

Mix Games Develop Reliable Poker Instincts

Mix game players are forced to evolve with the game.

"I truly believe that learning these games has allowed me to develop my overall poker strategy into a profitable creative one."

“Promoting mix games online can provide another avenue to players who are interested in learning mix games.”

We are constantly challenged to not only learn new games but learn them faster than everyone else. Kids these days are spoiled by solvers and charts. In some of the newer, more complex games, equities are almost impossible to calculate. I can find a basic no-limit hold'em odds calculator with a simple google search. I dare you to find one for badeucy.

As games become more complex games as specialists evolve, players must trust their natural poker instincts. With no answer in the back of the book, poker becomes a battleground for heuristic math and poker intuition.

Playing one game becomes monotonous and players become complacent. No one wants to be that person who “used to be good but got passed over by the game.” If you play mixed games, fear not this fate.

Mix Games Develop Self Awareness

All players that excel in poker, will do so in at least one variant. The specialists, however, learn that one game and stick with it. They become the best player in the game and they grind out a solid win rate.

Few will ever know how it feels to be out-classed. They study all the different spots in one game and they make sure that their game is solid. They will be very hard to exploit in their game of choice.

Mixed games, on the other hand, can and will humble almost any player. No mix is created equally. If you get a seat at a table that is playing a mix of games, instead of just one, you will sometimes find yourself in a mix that is not your best but is still favorable.

Three other players will have more experience and more volume in 70 percent of the games. The two “fun” players bring the game to an acceptable level of profitability to play, but still, you will find yourself in gross spots versus the professionals. It is a feeling of humility that is arguably necessary for a player to truly reach their potential.

Mix Games Build Character

Live mix games players are forced to overcome obstacles other players will never face. There is no ladder to move up and hone your skills while building a bankroll. If you want to play bigger, you must either take shots at bigger games or build a bridge between stakes.

To build a bridge between stakes means you must bring players together and form a new limit. Building a bridge between stakes requires networking and hard work. It requires focus and determination. Mix games teach you at an early age that a good personality and some polite manners will get you into the games you want to be in.

There are no micro-stakes for mix games. To be perfectly honest there aren't even mid-stakes for mix games. It takes a certain amount of fortitude, character, and just enough gamble to get to the top with that landscape. The players that are able to get to the top had to take huge risks along the way and certainly deserve to be there.

Promoting mix games online can provide another avenue to players who are interested in learning mix games. Online poker allows players to play more hands per hour, thus allowing them to gain experience faster than in a live environment. No-limit hold'em has already shown that this path of volume leads to the breeding of new legends every

day.

WSOP, please. I fear for the future of poker players. Please consider shifting a minimum amount of focus to mix games. I promise it will be good for both your bottom line and the poker world.

Every renowned poker room has a big limit mixed game. If you are trying to become the premier online poker site that boasts *WSOP* bracelets and prestige, wouldn't you want to follow the same business model?

Lastly and certainly not least, mix game players have a vicious reputation for being degenerates. No one peels cards harder than a 2-7 triple draw player holding 2-3-4-5 and peeling a three spotter (6-7-8) on the third draw. If you run more online events, we might go off in your casino. Think about it.

Sincerely,

Melissa “Burrrrrberry” Burr ♠



Melissa Burr is a seasoned high stakes mix game professional. In her spare time she enjoys the occasional 30 minute craps roll, sports betting, and short reasonable walks on the beach. Find more adventures on her twitter @burrrrrberry

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Retro \$25,000 Buy-in Tournament Hand Revisited

By Jonathan Little

I have played no live poker since January. I am ready to get back out there, but I doubt it will be any time soon. I thought I would revisit a hand I wrote about that I played in the 2011 \$25,500 *World Poker Tour* main event at the Bellagio to see if I made any substantial blunders.

To keep things interesting, I am reading and writing as I go. Read my thoughts from then (highlighted), along with my current thoughts (bolded) on how things went down nearly a decade ago.

I busted in 20th place, while 18 people got paid. Going out almost on the bubble is never fun but always a memorable experience.

I already remember the hand without even reading it. Big bubbles are brutal that way!

Michael Mizrachi, with 500K chips, raised to 27K from middle position at 6K-12K-2K blinds. I, with 400K, picked up A-K in the small blind. Antonio Esfandiari was in the big blind with 180K. While I was looking at my cards, I glanced to my left and saw Antonio perk up a little bit, which led me to believe he may go all-in if given the opportunity.

I know it probably sounds egotistical to think I picked up a physical tell on one of the greatest live players ever, but he was losing every pot due to getting unlucky and seemed to be a bit loose with his physical actions. I can still remember to this day how he perked up when he looked at his cards.

I decided to call, hoping Antonio would go all-in with whatever he had, and I didn't really care what Michael did because I had A-K, which would crush any range he could reasonably have.

While this is true, I should have strongly considered just three-betting to about 90K or even going all-in pre-flop. I was so wrapped up in hoping to get my money in "good" that I forgot that A-K is ahead of two reasonable ranges, but not incredibly far ahead, like A-A would be. For example, against two reasonable ranges, A-K offsuit only has between 33 percent

and 38 percent equity, which is not especially how you want to get in a decently large stack on the bubble of a \$25,000 buy-in event.

I was thrilled to see Antonio instantly go all-in as soon as my chips hit the felt. I was equally happy to see Michael go all-in, which I thought was clearly an isolation play.

While I am in fine enough shape against their ranges, this is not an amazing spot to be in on the bubble due to the immense payout implications.

I, of course, called. Michael had Q♦ J♦ and Antonio had K-J. I had to fade a queen or jack to end up with a million chips, but a queen came to send me home.

I was actually in amazing shape this time, having a whopping 58 percent equity. Even on the bubble, I would happily sign up for this.

When most players bust from a tournament, they usually try to figure out how they could've avoided the situation. I try to figure out if I could've gained more equity in the hand. Notice in this hand, if I re-raised preflop to around 90K, Antonio would have almost certainly folded and Michael would have called.

How stoic of 2011 Jonathan Little! It is worth noting that Michael may have also jammed all-in, which I would have happily called.

I would then have to play a pot out-of-position against someone who tends to not fold whenever the flop is good for his perceived range or bad for my perceived range, which basically means he would almost certainly play back at me on any board that does not have an ace, king or queen. This means I often win small pots when I hit my top pair and lose small pots whenever any other flop comes. That is not a good thing.

I agree. Playing from out of position against a loose, splashy player who will put you in tough spots on the turn and river is not where you want to be, especially on the bubble for all your chips.

I could also re-raise large preflop, to around 120K, but I think that's a fishy

play because it will force Michael to fold most hands that do not have the correct equity to call. Whenever you have your opponent's range crushed, you almost always want him in the hand. The last thing you want to do is drive him out of the pot when he has a hand such as A-J because they're drawing thin. What this boils down to is I did the absolute best I could in this hand and that makes me happy.

While I agree that you want A-J offsuit in the pot, you also don't especially want to play post-flop pots on the bubble where your opponent will play well enough. I am saddened to see that I did not even consider going all-in, but it is probably what I would have done today. I have (probably) learned to play better over the last nine years. That is lucky!

I'm sure some of you are thinking, "But you risked going broke on the bubble." While I did, notice I got all-in with 58 percent equity in a large pot, which certainly would have given me a great opportunity to make a really deep run in the tournament. Unless your stack is short, where getting in the money would be a huge success, playing like a super nit to get in the money is rarely a good play. In this event, 18th place paid \$40K and first place paid \$1.1 million. I would much rather give up a "guaranteed" \$40K in exchange for a 1-in-15 shot at \$1.1 million.

How I got in this specific time does not matter. I was only in marginal shape against two reasonable ranges. Pertaining to calling off once it gets back to me, I completely agree that when you have a medium stack, your goal should not only be to sneak into the money. Many players make the mistake of essentially ensuring they collect that \$40K cash in exchange for an excellent chance to win. Had I won this hand, I would have been in great shape to make a very deep run. Instead I bubbled. That is the risk you must be willing to take once you accept the high variance line of just calling preflop.

Sadly, most people cannot or have not done the math and believe cashing

for the minimum is the way to be profitable at poker. If you look at the players who cash regularly but rarely win, you'll see they are usually breakeven, at best. To be a big winner in tournaments, you must put yourself in situations to get a lot of chips late in the tournament. This hand is a great example of how I do this on a regular basis. Sometimes, it doesn't work out.

While I agree that cashing a lot but rarely winning is terrible, given my A-K is a strong, but non-nut hand in this instance, jamming all-in on the bubble is the preferred play I would make today. Improving is nice! Too bad I could not fade a queen or jack! ♠



Jonathan Little is a two-time WPT champion with more than \$6 million in tournament winnings. Each week, he posts an education-

al 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

DID BEING A LAWYER HELP ME AS A POKER PLAYER?

By Greg Raymer

Before I had a week of run-good at just the right time in 2004, I was a full-time patent attorney for 12 years. I was also a serious part-time poker player during this same period.

After winning the *World Series of Poker* main event, reporters would often ask, what was it about being a lawyer that helped me become a better poker player?

There are definitely some things about being a lawyer that might help with poker. If you are a trial lawyer, maybe you learned a lot about reading a jury, and figuring out what they were buying about the evidence you were presenting, and the arguments you were making on behalf of your client. And maybe those skills at reading a jury could transfer to the poker table, at reading a player's tells. Or perhaps you do a lot of negotiating for your clients, and that also grew your abilities to read a player's emotions.

In my case, I wasn't a litigator, nor a negotiator. And there weren't really any other skills I picked up as a lawyer that helped with my poker game. I always said this to those reporters, but I quickly followed up with something more important.

While being a lawyer hadn't helped my poker game, being a poker player had helped dramatically at making me a better lawyer.

I think the greatest lesson you can learn at the poker table is to disassociate the effort from the result. If my opponent goes all-in preflop, and I call with aces, sometimes I will lose. And other times, if I raise all-in, and my opponent calls with 2-7 offsuit, they will win. Of course, that doesn't mean my call with aces was a mistake, or their call with 2-7 was correct. I got punished for a smart call, and they got rewarded for a not-so-smart call.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 World Series of Poker Online
\$777 No-Limit Hold'em Six-Max



James Pace
10,240,248

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 55.0%
After Flop: 54.0%
After Turn: 16.0%



Tony Dunst
10,149,752



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 44.0%
After Flop: 45.0%
After Turn: 84.0%



PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 100,000-200,000 and an ante of 25,000, James Pace limped in from the button and Tony Dunst checked from the big blind.

ANALYSIS

In this hand James Pace made a straight against a flush while playing heads-up against *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner and *World Poker Tour* main event champion Tony Dunst. While two such strong hands colliding while playing heads-up would certainly qualify as a cooler, Pace might have had an opportunity to escape from the hand with more of his stack intact. The two were playing for a *WSOP* gold bracelet and a \$64,402 difference between second and first place. In a limped pot, Dunst flopped a flush draw, two overcards, and a gutshot straight draw. He bet 200,000 into the pot of 450,000 from out of position and Pace called with his open-ended straight draw. The turn filled the primary draw of both players, giving Pace a seven-high straight and Dunst a jack-high flush. Dunst opted to check. Pace value bet his straight, with the $\heartsuit Q$ in his hand also giving him outs for a queen high flush on the river. Dunst sprung his trap by check-raising to 1.6 million and Pace made the call. The river brought an innocuous $\heartsuit Q$ and Dunst bet 3.2 million. Given the prior action, Dunst's range is likely weighted towards very strong hands such as flushes, as well as some missed ace-high and king-high flush draws that check-raised as a semi-bluff on the turn. He might also have check-raised the turn with the same straight as Pace, or even with 8-6 for the top end of the straight. With four cards to a straight on the board, Dunst is unlikely to take the betting line that he did with a hand like a set or two pair. Given all of these considerations, Pace's decision on the river likely should have been between calling or folding with his straight. Instead, he raised all-in and essentially turned his hand into a bluff. Dunst would fold all of his bluffs to Pace's shove, but he would be unlikely to lay down his strongest value hands like flushes. Dunst did make a quick call with his flush and took a dominant chip lead, which he converted into his second *WSOP* bracelet just a few hands later.



Dunst bet 200,000.
Pace called.



Dunst checked.
Pace bet 425,000.
Dunst check-raised to 1,600,000. Pace called.



Dunst bet 3,200,000.
Pace raised all-in for 8,240,248. Dunst called.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY [CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-Holdem](http://CardPlayer.com/poker-tools/odds-calculator/texas-holdem)

“WHILE BEING A LAWYER HADN’T HELPED MY POKER GAME, BEING A POKER PLAYER HAD HELPED DRAMATICALLY AT MAKING ME A BETTER LAWYER.”

In the rest of your life, just like in poker, you sometimes get punished for smart decisions, and sometimes get rewarded for poor decisions. Life has a lot of variance, just like poker. You can make smart investments, and still lose money. You can make a silly investment, and hit the jackpot. You can be smart about whom you choose as your life partner, and still end up unhappy in your relationship. You can make smart decisions in your job, in your personal life, in any arena, and not always get a fair, positive result.

However, the more you make smart decisions, the more likely you will get rewarded for them. If you make smart decisions in your job, it is less likely you will be fired, more likely you will be promoted, and more likely you will be happy in your job. The more you make smart decisions in how you treat your friends and loved ones, the more likely you will be happy in those relationships.

There is a lot of variance in all aspects of life. The only thing you can control is the decisions you make. You can’t force that perfect company with that perfect job to hire you. You can only do your best to get that dream job, by studying, practicing, and improving your skills. You can’t force the person of your dreams to fall in love with you. You can

only be the best possible version of yourself, and hope this is attractive to them.

And so it is in poker. All you can do is make the best decision every time it is your turn. If you intelligently select when to fold, raise, bet, and call, every time, you will be a winning player. Even if you don’t win today, or tomorrow, if you consistently make the smartest decisions, you will win.

Just like in business and life, you must work hard, train hard, and constantly strive to improve your skills. Keep trying, keep working, study away from the table, read, learn, and continue to do so. Through these efforts, you will make smart decisions. Winning results will eventually follow. Now, go out there, and play smart! ♠



Greg Raymer is the 2004 WSOP world champion, winner of numerous major titles, and has more than \$7 million in earnings. He recently authored “FossilMan’s Winning Tournament Strategies,” available from D&B Publishing, Amazon, and other retailers. He is sponsored by Blue Shark Optics, YouStake, and ShareMyPair. To contact Greg please tweet at him using @FossilMan or go to www.FossilManPoker.com.

WHO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN POKER?

By Gavin Griffin

As I’m wont to do during this mess of a situation we find ourselves in, I was recently mindlessly scrolling through Twitter, most likely to avoid doing some things around the house or think about literally anything else. I came across a tweet by Mike Sexton in reference to poker’s voice of the people, Joey Ingram, doing an interview with *World Poker Tour* founder Steve Lipscomb.

“Outside of the possible exception of the Binions, Steve has done more to grow poker than anyone in the history of the earth.”

I think I take exception to both parts of this statement, but I’d like to discuss some of the points on either side of this argument about Steve Lipscomb in regards to the growth of poker.

Of course, as a founder of the *WPT*, Lipscomb was fundamental in bringing poker to the masses. The idea of a series of events at multiple locations around the globe with the sole purpose being a produced, one-hour TV show seems quaint now with countless made-for-TV poker tours now in operation, an entire streaming network dedicated to poker, and dozens of people making a living or at least supplementing their income by streaming poker from the comfort of their own home.

It was the first of its kind in that regard and a bold move,

especially considering what the heck poker television shows looked like before the *WPT* came along. Look on YouTube for some of the *ESPN*-produced *WSOP* shows from the ‘70s and ‘80s and you’ll be bored out of your mind by the actual poker itself even while marveling at the fact that people actually wore some of those outfits.

The incongruity for those of us who watched the television broadcast of Carlos Mortensen’s win on *ESPN* in 2001 and heard about an entire tour dedicated to televised poker events was apparent. How could THAT be entertaining enough to produce 10+ hours of content year after year and what channel number is the *Travel Channel*?

What we didn’t understand is how much of an effect on the poker broadcast hole card cameras would have. What an incredible piece of technology! Instead of relying on showdowns or the confessions of players regarding their hole cards, we could capture them in real time so the viewers could see the drama unfold as it happened.

Will Phil Hellmuth fold the best hand this time? How did Daniel Negreanu name his opponent’s exact two cards? It allowed for the broadcast of non-showdown hands with the same amount of drama. I’m certain I gasped more than once when someone was dealt pocket kings at a final table and the graphic for someone else’s aces popped up on the screen. This is all thanks to Steve Lipscomb who conceived

“What we didn’t understand is how much of an effect on the poker broadcast hole card cameras would have. Instead of relying on showdowns or the confessions of players regarding their hole cards, we could capture them in real time so the viewers could see the drama unfold as it happened.”

of the tour itself and the use of those cameras.

There’s a problem with this narrative, however. The 2002 *World Series of Poker* main event completed on May 24 and the *WPT* was founded on May 27. Hole card cameras, invented by poker player and toy maker Henry Orenstein, were used at the final table of the main event when Robert Varkonyi won! Yes, the tour aspect of the *World Poker Tour* was novel and something the *World Series of Poker* definitely used to their advantage as well, but the *WPT* was second to market on the hole card camera. Sure, their production values were better with a purpose-built stage and lighting, integrated camera table and multiple camera and boom setup, but it’s unclear if Steve Lipscomb had the idea first or if the *WSOP* did, and if he didn’t bring the idea for hole card cameras to market, was he actually that influential?

Obviously, Lipscomb was incredibly influential and it’s important to note that even if the *WPT* was second to the camera idea, they did a better job of implementing it and

the *WSOP* didn’t really ratchet up their use of the camera until 2004 when they televised multiple events, including the one I would go on to win, the \$3,000 pot-limit hold’em event. (An event that no longer exists.)

Does all of this earn Steve Lipscomb the distinction as having “done more to grow poker than anyone in the history of the earth?” With all due respect to Steve, I think I might have some other candidates, and in the next issue I’ll go into some more regarding some of the people that furthered exponential growth of poker from well before Lipscomb’s time. ♠



Gavin Griffin was the first poker player to capture a *World Series of Poker*, *European Poker Tour* and *World Poker Tour* title and has amassed nearly \$5 million in lifetime tournament winnings. Griffin is sponsored by

HeroPoker.com. You can follow him on Twitter @NHGG

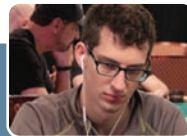
TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 World Series of Poker Online
\$500 No-Limit Hold’em Knockout



Scott Epstein
5,523,884

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 68.0%
After Flop: 54.0%
After Turn: 73.0%



Daniel Zack
6,077,880

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 32.0%
After Flop: 46.0%
After Turn: 27.0%



PREFLOP

With nine players remaining and blinds of 80,000-160,000 and an ante of 20,000, Scott Epstein raised to 400,000 from the hijack. Daniel Zack called from the button.



Epstein bet 915,000.
Zack called.



Epstein checked. Zack bet 1,300,000. Epstein called.



Epstein checked. Zack moved all-in for 3,442,880. Epstein called all-in for 2,898,884.

ANALYSIS

Scott Epstein has accumulated more than \$1.2 million in tournament scores since his first recorded cash back in 2003. The Las Vegas resident is no stranger to playing for large sums at final tables, and he displayed his experience navigating tough spots in this hand against *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner and high-stakes cash game player Daniel Zack. Action kicked off with Epstein picking up pocket queens and raising to 400,000 from late position. Zack called from the button with A-8 suited and flopped the nut flush draw on a jack-high board with two small clubs. Epstein made a continuation bet of around three-quarters the size of the pot and Zack made the call. The K♥ on the turn brought an overcard to Epstein’s big pocket pair and he decided to pump the brakes a bit with a check. Zack sprung at the opportunity to take control of the betting lead with his draw and fired out 1.3 million into the pot of 3,050,000. Epstein made the call and the 4♣ completed the board on the river. Epstein checked a second time. With 5,650,000 in the middle and just ace high for showdown value, Zack moved all-in with his missed flush draw to try to put maximum pressure on precisely the type of hand that Epstein held: a strong preflop starting hand that amounted to one pair by the river. Epstein might have been on alert for this type of move after he gave up the betting lead with a check on the turn, though. He called all-in for his tournament life quickly with his pocket queens and earned the full double up to move into the chip lead. Zack went on to finish ninth, while Epstein ultimately earned \$58,574 as the runner-up in this event.

NOTE: WINNING PERCENTAGES DO NOT INCLUDE TIES. ODDS PROVIDED BY [CARDPLAYER.COM/POKER-TOOLS/ODDS-CALCULATOR/TEXAS-Holdem](http://CardPlayer.com/poker-tools/odds-calculator/texas-holdem)



LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC:

PART 2

By Steve Zolotow

This is the second in a series of columns that focus on websites for learning about poker during the pandemic. In this series, I will try to give you an overview of the website, with emphasis on its strengths. I will pick a specific hand or idea from that site's content, and then elaborate about my thinking process when analyzing this specific hand.

I pick free content. This content is usually available if you sign-up with the site or it's even on YouTube. But if you find a source is valuable, buy some of their products. This benefits you and keeps the sites in business.

Today, I want to look at PokerCoaching.com, a training site from two-time *World Poker Tour* champion Jonathan Little. This is one of my favorite spots. Jonathan is a successful player, both in cash games and tournaments. He is also a fellow *Card Player* columnist. His site includes a variety of content from a variety of sources, including such top players as Jonathan Jaffe, Faraz Jaka, Matt Affleck, and Alex Fitzgerald. They all have different personalities, teaching styles and ideas of what is most important, so you get a variety of viewpoints. Another friend of mine, Justin Saliba, a GTO expert, provides behind the scenes analysis for Little and the group.

Before I get to a specific hand, I also want to mention some other types of content that are available there. There are Challenges, which are courses that emphasize one specific aspect of poker, like tournaments, cash games, or something specific like three-bets. There is Homework, which is an extremely valuable way to analyze, use and balance ranges.

Jonathan also has a large number of books available. As an old-school guy, I still love the convenience of a printed text. You can make notes in the margins or highlight tactics to integrate into your game. (It is interesting to return to a book I haven't looked at in years, and seeing how both my thinking and the game have changed.) There are also tools such as GTO

“As much as I hated Alec's flop bluff, I loved her river bluff. She had the A♦, which is a flush blocker, and the J♠, which is a straight blocker. Part of the cleverness of Jennifer's bluff is that it is hard to imagine a hand with which she could have arrived at the river and which wouldn't beat tens.”

opening charts for various stack sizes.

Lastly, I want to mention that he often streams himself playing multiple tournaments. I have never found watching good players stream multi-tabling a particularly good learning method, although it can be entertaining. There are too many random situations that occur too quickly to pick up things that you can carry over to your own play.

His stream did, however, give me a wonderful idea that I'm embarrassed to say I didn't think of before. When you are playing multiple online tournaments, those with high buy-ins and those that are deep in the money are more important than the others. Depending on the site(s) you are playing, you can re-size or re-color those important tables. For example, make your key tables large and red, while keeping the less crucial ones smaller and green. Simple, but effective.

Please watch Weekly Poker Hand 312 before reading on if you can. You can find it on YouTube by searching \$25/\$50 Live Cash Game - Jennifer Tilly Bluffs on the River, or by visiting www.cardplayer.com/link/ZolotowLearns.

I don't have enough space to analyze the whole hand, but I will try to highlight two bluffs. This hand is interesting for several reasons. The four players involved in the pot are Alec Torelli, Jennifer Tilly, Dan Zack, and Jonathan Little, three pros and one strong amateur.

Since both Jonathan and Alec are content providers, playing in a televised episode of *Poker Night In America*, the success or accuracy of their play may

also be seen by potential customers, who will be more inclined to get content from providers who do the right thing in their own play. This gives them an extra incentive to play well. On the other hand, televised games are like great home games, super-tight nits don't get invited back. Players tend to be a bit splashier than usual.

Little raised preflop, and was called by Torelli on the button, Jennifer in the small blind, and Dan in the big blind. The flop was Q♣ 6♦ 3♦, and Jonathan checked. Alec, who was holding 10♠ 7♠, bet from the button, and both blinds called.

I probably wouldn't have made it to the flop with Alec's hand, nor, would I have tried to bluff the flop into three people. He has no hand, and not even a backdoor draw. The only upside to this bluff, is that if you are raised, you can fold without losing much equity. Unfortunately, lack of any kind of draw leaves you in terrible shape when you are called, quite likely in this type of game. Jonathan folded, but Jennifer and Dan stuck around.

The turn was the 9♣, everyone checked. The river was the 10♦, making both a straight and flush possible. It also gave Alec a pair of tens, which was actually the best hand. Jennifer's hand was A♦ J♠, and I have to admit that I wouldn't have made it past the flop with her hand either. But I want to compliment Jennifer on an excellent river bluff. As much as I hated Alec's flop bluff, I loved her river bluff. She had the A♦, which is a flush blocker, and the J♠, which is a straight blocker. The players had all shown weakness by checking the turn.

Assuming you decide to bluff into the \$1,500 pot, how much should you bet? The math is simple. A half-pot bet has to work one-third of the time to break even. A full-pot bet has to work half the time, and a bet of 1.5 the pot has to work 60 percent of the time.

The psychology is difficult. A small bet might be made to induce a call from a very mediocre hand. This was her choice, betting \$700, slightly less than half-pot. When it got to Alec, to his credit, he thought a long time with his lowly pair of tens. Part of the cleverness of Jennifer's bluff is that it is hard to imagine a hand with which she could have arrived at the river and which wouldn't beat tens. Note that even a hand like J-10, which Jonathan had folded earlier, or a hand including the 10♣ like K♣ 10♣ also beat him. These are

hands that might have attempted a very thin value bet.

My quick take away, **make your river bluffs into weakness and do so with blockers.** ♠



Steve 'Zee' Zolotow, aka The Bald Eagle, is a successful gamesplayer. He has been a full-time gambler for over 35 years. With two WSOP bracelets and few million in tournament cashes, he is easing into retirement. He currently devotes most of his time to poker.

He can be found at some major tournaments and playing in cash games in Vegas. When escaping from poker, he hangs out in his bars on Avenue A in New York City -The Library near Houston and Doc Holliday's on 9th St. are his favorites.

BADUGI: OPENING STANDARDS

By Kevin Haney

On the surface, Badugi appears to be very simplistic, yet there is much debate amongst players regarding the most effective outlook on the game and the hands and situations we should look to get involved with on the first betting round. Thus far in our discussions, we have gone into great detail the play of initial pat badugis, tri hands, and two-card draws. We outlined what situations are advantageous to us and those that we should look to avoid, and in this issue we will put it all together with a default opening strategy.

Suggested Default Openings

UTG (Six Handed)	
Badugis:	Ten High or Better
	Any Badugi with other three cards eight or lower
Tris:	Seven Tri or Better
	A-2-8 to 3-4-8
Two Cards:	None

So from first position we should fold a pat-jack badugi? Unless the badugi has a good three-card badugi underneath such as Q♥ 6♣ 3♦ 2♠ that indeed seems best. Several issues ago we looked at the perils of playing a weak unbreakable badugi such as Q♥ 10♣ 8♦ 2♠ from early position. The following chart estimates the probabilities of running into various badugis based upon your position at the table:

	7+	8+	9+	10+	J+	Q+	K+
UTG	1.5%	3.1%	5.4%	8.9%	13.7%	20.0%	27.8%
HJ	1.2%	2.5%	4.4%	7.2%	11.1%	16.3%	22.9%
CO	0.9%	1.8%	3.3%	5.4%	8.5%	12.5%	17.7%
BU	0.6%	1.2%	2.2%	3.7%	5.7%	8.5%	12.2%
SB	0.3%	0.6%	1.1%	1.9%	2.9%	4.4%	6.3%

When we open with a queen badugi we will run into a jack or better around 13.7 percent of the time and with

a jack or better we will run into a ten or better approximately 8.9 percent of the time. These probabilities are somewhat high considering the fact that we will often be four-betting the action with zero percent equity and very little to no chance in making a better hand fold.

In addition, multi-way pots are also bad for jack and queen badugis; while we may have a decent amount of "hot/cold" equity in a three-way confrontation we also have a great deal of reverse implied odds with these holdings.

We are only dealt a ten or better badugi around 1.9 percent of the time, thus we are going to fill the void with many tri holdings. Any seven or better tri is worth an open as well as the smoother three-card eights that have the ability to effectively reduce. It is important for the three-card eights to be smooth underneath in the event that better tris call or re-raise you. For example, against 4♣ 5♥ 6♣ the 2♦ 3♥ 8♣ has approximately 42 percent equity while 2♦ 7♥ 8♣ only has around 37 percent.

From first position some players have advocated opening queen high or better badugis and only opening seven high tris when they are very smooth underneath. This range would be too heavy in badugis with reverse implied odds and we would only be playing around 10 percent of our hands which is not quite enough for a one winner limit game.

With the suggested openings described above we are playing around 13-14 percent of our hands and in general this mix of holdings will perform better against pat badugis and in multi-way pots.

Hi-Jack	
Badugis:	Jack High or Better
	Any Badugi with other three cards eight or lower
Tris:	Seven Tri or Better
	A-2-8 to 4-5-8
Two Cards:	Premium A-2, A-3 with blockers

From the hijack we can open up a few more holdings as the odds of running into a strong pat badugi or ending up in a multi-way pot are slightly reduced. When we open with a jack badugi the odds of running into a ten or better pat are approximately 7.2 percent. This is still relatively high so if you are a beginner or are playing in a very loose and aggressive game it probably isn't too tight to still only play tens or better.

We can open up a few more three-card eights, however, it is important to be able to reduce to at least five-high tri to improve your winning chances against slightly better three-card badugis.

In addition, we can also begin to open up the very best of our two card draws such as A♠ 3♥ 4♠ 5♠. The low blocking spades give us greater equity against three-card badugis that will often need a low spade and these cards also reduce the amount of times a pot is contested multi-way. This hand also fares better against pat badugis as we completely unblock any cards we may need to overtake a weak pat holding.

Cutoff	
Badugis:	Queen High or Better
	Any Badugi with other three cards eight or lower
Tris:	Eight Tri or Better
Two Cards:	A-2, A-3 unless blocking self twice
	Premium or Good 2-3, A-4, 2-4 draws

In the cutoff, a queen high or better badugi is recommended although it may be somewhat closer than people think. A jack or better will be lurking around 8.5 percent of the time, however we will often have position and the pot will not often be contested multi-way. When we get called by a one card draw from the blinds position is important as when out of position most opponents will play straightforwardly and we can check the river.

Any eight tri badugi is generally worth opening even though with three players left to act it will run into a better tri or a badugi around 44-55 percent of the time. In the event we get called when we have a rough holding such as 5♦ 7♥ 8♣ turning our hand into a snow at some point is something to consider.

For the most part any A-2 or A-3 is worth opening unless our blockers are bad (e.g. A♠ 2♥ 10♦ J♦) and the table is loose and aggressive.

Other two-card draws such as 2-3, A-4, and 2-4 are judgment calls where the deciding factors are the other two cards in your hand and the players left to act. Premium two-card draws are those with a few low blockers, two pair, or trips. Those that are considered good may have one low blocker and perhaps a card that is relatively neutral to your holding such as the 2♠ 3♥ 4♠ K♠.

Button	
Badugis:	All
Tris:	Nine Tri or Better
Two Cards:	A-2, A-3
	2-3, A-4, 2-4 unless blocking self twice
	Premium or Good 3-4, A-5, 2-5

Any badugi is playable from the button as there are

only two players left in the hand and we hold position.

Many Badugi players do not consider three-card nines to be legitimate starting hands and will instead open up more two-card draws. While 2♦ 3♥ 9♣ K♥ is almost certainly best played as a two-card draw a hand such as 4♦ 5♥ 9♣ K♥ may have more value drawing one as opposed to two regardless of the situation you face.

When up against a pat hand we probably fare better drawing to the nine as it will very likely be good if we make it. Versus a one-card draw we have options when we do not improve on the first draw; we can consider snowing or just simply taking a free card. And when our opponent is drawing two our "hot/cold" equity is usually better as a one card draw and we do have some turn fold equity.

Very rough nines such as 6♦ 8♥ 9♣ are definitely on the edge but that's always the case as you move towards the bottom of a button open range. Similar to opening 9♥ 8♣ from the button in limit hold'em most of our profit component with these borderline holdings comes from stealing the blinds outright.

It's also tough for the blinds to wake up with a hand that has us in really bad shape. For example, 6♦ 8♥ 9♣ has greater than 30 percent equity versus either a ten badugi or a premium three-card badugi. Against mediocre tri hands and two card draws we are also an equity underdog, however, all things considered we are probably a money favorite if we play well and work in some well-timed snows.

Regarding the two card draws any A-2 or A-3 is worth an open as are the vast majority of our 2-3, A-4, and 2-4 hands. And we can also open with slightly weaker holdings such as 3-4 and A-5 when they are accompanied with good blockers.

Final Thoughts

When compared with the general Badugi population these guidelines are probably much tighter in regards to opening pat badugis, slightly looser with the three-card badugis, and overall probably a little more restrained (but arguably more effective) in the play of two-card draws. Hopefully I adequately explained my reasoning for the areas where the guidance above may differ from what may generally be considered "standard."

However, what I think all experienced draw players would tend to agree on is that when compared with Deuce to Seven Triple Lowball (27TD) we should play a lower percentage of hands from every position. In Badugi, the best drawing hand is also the best made hand and the best hand has a very large equity advantage on the turn. This greatly impacts strategy and the hands that we choose to play. Since the turn equities in 27TD run closer we can get away with opening a larger percentage of hands. ♠



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.

Contracts and Poker: Confidentiality

By Scott J. Burnham

In previous columns, I have been analyzing the Participant Release and Confidentiality Form that players are required to sign when entering a *World Series of Poker* event, including *Circuit* events and other events not played during the *WSOP* at the Rio. Let's continue the discussion, noting again that none of the following constitutes legal advice and if you have a question about an agreement you have made, you should consult a lawyer.

Paragraph 5 is a Confidentiality Agreement. You have probably heard a lot about the nondisclosure agreements that businesspeople such as Donald Trump used to keep people from disclosing what they learned while associating with him. This provision serves the same purpose, but don't expect that you will encounter such hot stuff at a *WSOP* event. In fact, it is hard to imagine exactly what Caesars expects you to find out that they would not want disclosed, but as in much of this agreement, the lawyers want to be sure to cover all the bases just in case something comes up.

The first part of the provision tells you what constitutes confidential information. It includes:

All information and material received or acquired during participation in the *WSOP* Events, including without limitation, *WSOP* Event outcomes; player identities; player winnings; operational methods; production locations (other than *WSOP* tournament rooms); Program, and Promotions content and release dates; and other information or materials designated by CIE as confidential. It then tells you to keep all this stuff confidential and not disclose it for three years. Now you are thinking, "Wait a minute, this doesn't make sense! One item that is designated as confidential information is 'WSOP Event outcomes.' Does this mean that if I win the event, I can't tell anyone for three years?" Yes, that is exactly what it means. But next, of course, comes the exceptions.

The provision lists three exceptions to your duty to keep things confidential. To summarize these exceptions, you can disclose the information if 1) it is disclosed by Caesars, 2) you knew it before it was disclosed by Caesars or you learned it independently of your access to information of Caesars, or 3) it became public other than through an

unauthorized disclosure. So it is probably safe to say that the fact you won the tournament will fall under one of these exceptions and you are free to talk about it.

The final sentence prohibits you from disclosing trade secrets:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Player shall keep all trade secret information of CIE confidential unless and until authorized to disclose the trade secrets by CIE in a writing signed by an authorized officer of CIE.

There is a great deal of overlap here, for anything that might be a trade secret of Caesars may also be confidential information as defined earlier. In any event, getting you to agree not to disclose trade secrets is probably not necessary since Nevada, like most jurisdictions, has a Trade Secrets Act that prohibits the theft of trade secrets. See NRS 600A.010. Again, the lawyers are just doing their job of being thorough – and burying you under legalese in the process. ♠



Scott J. Burnham is Professor Emeritus at Gonzaga University School of Law in Spokane, Washington. He can be reached at profburnham@yahoo.com.

"One item that is designated as confidential information is 'WSOP Event outcomes.' Does this mean that if I win the event, I can't tell anyone for three years?" Yes, that is exactly what it means. But next, of course, comes the exceptions."



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SEPTEMBER	Sept. 27	No-Limit Hold'em Tournament	Lucky Chances ■ Colma, CA
	Sept. 28-Oct. 20	Card Player Poker Tour	Bicycle Casino ■ Bell Gardens, CA
OCTOBER	Oct. 8-11	MSPT Michigan	FireKeepers Casino ■ Battle Creek, MI
	Oct. 23-25	South Dakota State Poker Championship	Silverado Franklin ■ Deadwood, SD
	Oct. 29-Nov. 1	MSPT Wisconsin	Potawatomi Hotel & Casino ■ Milwaukee, WI
NOVEMBER	Nov. 6-16	Card Player Poker Tour	Seneca Niagara Casino ■ Niagara Falls, NY
	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

TALKING STICK RESORT - SCOTTSDALE

MONDAY-FRIDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$125

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$200

CALIFORNIA

BAY 101 - SAN JOSE

MONDAY

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

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

BICYCLE CASINO - BELL GARDENS

MONDAY

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

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

TUESDAY

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

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 (\$10K Guarantee)

CHUMASH CASINO - SANTA YNEZ

MONDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$40

7:00 p.m. PLO, \$0 AO \$20

TUESDAY

10:15 a.m. NLH, \$40

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

1:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 (\$5K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

1:15 p.m. NLH, \$100 KO \$25 (\$3K Guarantee)

COMMERCE CASINO - COMMERCE

MONDAY-THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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)

GARDENS CASINO - HAWAIIAN GARDENS

MONDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$30 RB \$10 AO \$10 (\$8K Guarantee)

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
(\$5K Guarantee)

3:00 p.m. 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**DAILY**

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5

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

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****FRIDAY**

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$160

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$160

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 RGC Poker.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

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$140

TUESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$140

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25

WEDNESDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$130

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$130

THURSDAY

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

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$160 KO \$50

FRIDAY

12:15 p.m. NLH, \$220

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$320 KO \$75

SATURDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$300

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$150

SUNDAY

SCHEDULES - DAILY TOURNAMENTS

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

SAHARA - LAS VEGAS

SATURDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$120 RB \$100

VENETIAN HOTEL & CASINO - LAS VEGAS

MONDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25
(\$2K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$50
(\$4K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$2K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25
(\$3K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$340 (\$12K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$2K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

12:10 p.m. NLH, \$250 (\$7K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$2K 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)

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 World Series of Poker Online
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em Eight-Max



Ryan Leng
15,410,287

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 58.0%
After Flop: 27.0%
After Turn: 32.0%



Philip Beesley
13,247,811



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 41.0%
After Flop: 73.0%
After Turn: 68.0%



PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 160,000-320,000 and an ante of 40,000, Ryan Leng limped in from the small blind. Philip Beesley checked from the big blind.

FLOP



Leng bet 333,333.
Beesley called.

TURN



Leng bet 666,666.
Beesley called.

RIVER



Leng bet 3,669,669.
Beesley moved all-in for 11,887,809. Leng called.

ANALYSIS

Philip Beesley pulled the trigger on a huge bluff in this hand that took place with three players remaining in the 2020 *World Series of Poker Online* \$400 no-limit hold'em eight-max event. Unfortunately for Beesley, his opponent had made the stone nuts on the river. The hand began with *WSOP* bracelet winner Ryan Leng limping in from the small blind with Q-8 suited. Beesley checked his option from the big blind with 10-9 offsuit. Leng picked up a gutshot and a possible backdoor flush draw on the flop and bet 333,333 into the pot of 760,000. Beesley called with his middle pair of nines and the turn brought the Ah. This gave Leng a full-blown flush draw to go along with his gutshot straight draw. He doubled his flop bet to 666,666 and Beesley called with what had become third pair. The K♥ on the river gave Leng the nut flush and he opted to fire an overbet of 3,669,669 into the 2,760,004 pot. Beesley now sat with fourth pair, having played his flopped middle pair for pot control by calling in position on the previous two streets. He held a straight and flush blocker in the 10♥, which perhaps factored into his decision to turn his hand from a bluff catcher into a bluff. He moved all-in for 11,887,809, and Leng instantly called with his unbeatable nut flush. Beesley was eliminated in third place after the hand, earning \$60,161 for his strong showing in this event. Leng took nearly a 4:1 lead into heads-up play after securing the knockout, but ultimately lost heads-up to Nick Binger. Leng cashed for \$82,440 as the runner-up, falling just short of his second gold bracelet.

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

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

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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 World Series of Poker Online
\$500 No-Limit Hold'em 'Summer Saver'



Guo Liang Chen
7,801,084

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 85.0%
After Flop: 98.0%
After Turn: 100.0%



Matt Berkey
10,658,149

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 15.0%
After Flop: 0.2%
After Turn: 0%

**PREFLOP**

With five players remaining and blinds of 140,000-280,000 and an ante of 35,000, Guo Liang Chen raised to 688,994 from the small blind. Matt Berkey called from the big blind.

FLOP

Chen checked. Berkey bet 1,166,248. Chen called.

TURN

Chen checked. Berkey moved all-in for 8,766,902. Chen called for his last 5,909,837.

RIVER

ANALYSIS

This battle of the blinds turned out disastrous for Matt Berkey, who was sitting in second chip position with five remaining. Guo Liang Chen was the third-largest stack at the table. Chen was dealt pocket aces in the small blind. He raised to 688,994, or just shy of 2.5 big blinds, and Berkey called from the big blind with the 4-3 offsuit. Unfortunately for him, the flop came down A-4-3 rainbow, giving him bottom two pair while Chen hit top set. Having flopped such a big hand, Chen opted to check and allow his opponent to take some stabs at the pot in the many instances where Berkey would have missed this flop entirely. In this particular situation, though, Berkey had flopped a strong hand also and opted to bet his two pair for value, firing a large bet of 1,166,248 into the pot of 1,554,998. Chen just called, likely with the intention of allowing Berkey to continue to bet with the bluffs in his range. The J♦ on the turn made a backdoor flush draw possible and Chen checked a second time. With 3,887,494 in the pot and 5,909,837 in Chen's stack, Berkey decided to move all-in as an overbet on the turn, perhaps going for homerun value against Chen's top pair, good kicker holdings like A-K or A-Q. Instead he ran into top set and was drawing dead with his two pair heading into the river. Berkey was left as the short stack after this hand, and went on to finish fifth for \$36,851. This was Berkey's second *WSOP* final-table finish in as many days, having placed seventh in the \$400 no-limit hold'em eight-max event held the previous night. Chen made it down to heads-up action, but fell just short of winning his first bracelet earning \$92,223 as the runner-up finisher.

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

ALL-TIME LARGEST WSOP TOURNAMENTS (BY FIELD SIZE)

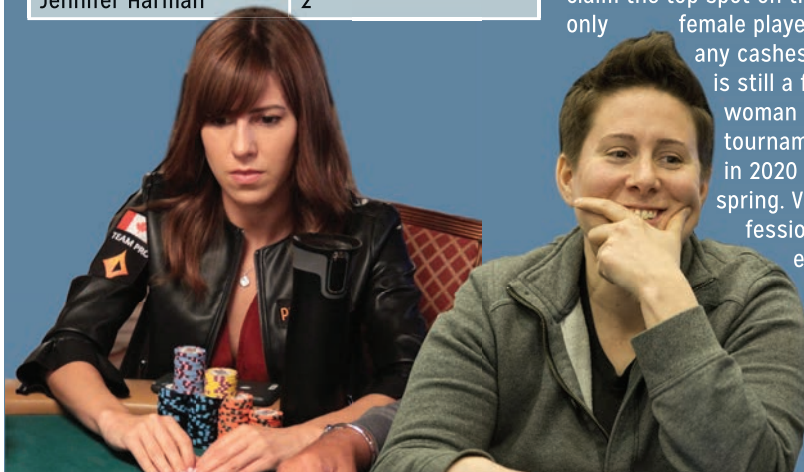
Rank	Event	Entries
1st	2020 'The Opener' \$100 NLH (Online)	29,306
2nd	2019 'Big 50' \$500 NLH	28,371
3rd	2015 'Colossus' \$565 NLH	22,374
4th	2016 'Colossus' \$565 NLH	21,613
5th	2017 'Colossus' \$565 NLH	18,054
6th	2019 'Colossus' \$400 NLH	13,109
7th	2018 'Colossus' \$565 NLH	13,070
8th	2020 Online 'Colossus' \$400 NLH	12,757
9th	2019 'Crazy Eights' \$888 NLH	10,185
10th	2017 'Giant' \$365 NLH	10,015

The past half-decade has played host to all of the top ten largest fields in *World Series of Poker* history. A new record was set during the 2020 *WSOP Online* festival, as the \$100 buy-in event known as **'The Opener'** drew an unprecedented 29,306 entries to surpass the 2019 'Big 50' \$500 buy-in event as the largest field in the history of the series. The huge turnout built a prize pool of \$2,571,216 that was paid out among the top 3,039 finishers. This event was the first of the international-facing segment of the inaugural *WSOP Online*. The turnout for this event was so massive that the spike in traffic contributed to a bug that disrupted the online poker site and ultimately resulted in the tournament being paused. The technical issues were eventually resolved and the tournament was able to play down to a winner. Brazil's Marcelo Jakovljevic Pudla took home the bracelet and \$265,880 as the champion. This year's online version of the 'Colossus' event also made it inside the top ten, drawing a total of 12,757 entries at \$400 a pop to create a total prize pool of \$4,796,632. Estonia's Ranno Sootla came out on top in the end to earn his first bracelet and \$595,930.

FEMALE WINNERS OF MULTIPLE WSOP BRACELETS

Player(s)	WSOP Bracelets Won
Kristen Bicknell	3
Vanessa Selbst	3
Barbara Enright	3
Nani Dollison	3
Susie Isaacs	2
Starla Brodie	2
Loni Harwood	2
Jennifer Harman	2

Canadian poker pro **Kristen Bicknell** became just the fourth female player to win three *WSOP* gold bracelets, joining the likes of Barbara Enright, Vanessa Selbst, and Nani Dollison. Bicknell earned her third piece of hardware by outlasting a field of 892 entries to win the 2020 *WSOP Online* \$2,500 six-max no-limit hold'em event, earning the hardware and the top prize of \$356,412. Bicknell had won her first bracelet back in 2013 by taking down the \$1,000 Ladies no-limit hold'em championship for \$173,922. Three years later she won her first open-field bracelet by defeating a field of 2,158 entries in a \$1,500 bounty no-limit hold'em event to earn \$290,768. Bicknell has an opportunity to claim the top spot on this leaderboard this year, as she is the only female player with three bracelets that has recorded any cashes during the *WSOP Online*. Barbara Enright is still a frequent tournament participant. The first woman to ever win an open event recorded 12 live tournament scores in 2019, and had four cashes in 2020 before the live poker shut down in the spring. Vanessa Selbst officially retired from professional poker in 2018, but has played a few events and recorded a pair of cashes since then. Nani Dollison has not recorded a live tournament cash since 2009.





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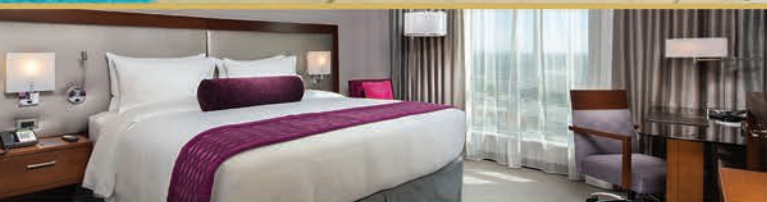
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