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Phil Hellmuth: How Many Bracelets Will He End Up With?

The High Stakes Duel
Champ Talks About His
Legacy, Happiness, And
Billionaire Aspirations



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NEWS FROM THE GAMBLING WORLD



Todd Terry
1973-2022

STANDOUT POKER PRO AND LAWYER TODD TERRY PASSES AWAY AT AGE 48

By Julio Rodriguez

The poker world was saddened to hear of the passing of Todd Terry, a 48-year-old former lawyer who found success on the high-stakes poker tournament trail.

Terry, who grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, graduated Magna Cum Laude with the highest honors with a bachelor's in applied mathematics from Harvard University, and earned his law degree in similar fashion from NYU. In between high-profile stints in the courtrooms of Manhattan, he would occasionally make trips to Atlantic City poker rooms.

After a few big scores, including a \$96,525 *WSOP Circuit* win at Harrah's, Terry gave up his day job and started traveling the tournament circuit. He nearly added a *WSOP* bracelet to his *Circuit* ring in 2007, finishing runner-up in a \$2,000 buy-in no-limit event for \$353,875.

Then in 2009, he took second at the *Borgata Winter Open* for a career-

best \$434,767 score, before taking third at the *World Poker Tour Legends of Poker* main event later that summer for another \$231,300. The next year he final tabled the *WPT Hollywood Poker Open*.

In total, Terry racked up \$2.3 million in live tournament earnings, along with another million won online. His last tournament cash came in 2015 before he stepped away from the game.

During his time as a poker pro, Terry was outspoken in the community and was even one of the four players who filed a lawsuit against Full Tilt Poker in the wake of Black Friday to retrieve nearly \$150 million in player funds.

"RIP to Todd Terry, an OG tournament grinder and prolific poster on 2+2," wrote *WPT* commentator and player Tony Dunst. "Todd was always curious and courteous, no matter how much flak he caught for posting crazy hands. We'll miss you on the felt,

man."

"I'll never forget those 2+2 posts, those ridiculous three-bets, those meals (always an adventure), friendship, tourney break needles, and more," said poker pro Christian Harder.

Terry passed away Tuesday, May 17 in Los Angeles, having fought with an incurable neurological disease for nearly a decade. He is survived by his wife Andrea.

"So sad to hear about Todd Terry," said five-time bracelet winner Shaun Deeb. "I knew of his issues shortly after he left the scene, but it was sad to see one of the best minds cheated out of what would have been a great career. Definitely a top-five poster on 2+2 that I learned the most from early in my career."

His family has requested that he be remembered with donations to either the Brain Support Network or the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration. ♠



Michigan Joins Online Poker Network With Nevada, New Jersey, And Delaware

By Joe Mattia

Michigan is joining a multi-state online poker liquidity sharing arrangement.

An agreement signed May 23 by Michigan Gaming Control Board Executive Director Henry Williams allows internet poker players in Michigan to compete against players in Delaware, Nevada, and New Jersey. These three states belong to the Multi-State Internet Gaming Agreement, and Michigan is now the fourth member.

"I am happy to announce Michigan has joined the multistate poker compact, and much of the increased tax revenue from multistate poker will go to support K-12 education in Michigan," Williams said. "By joining, Michigan will almost double the potential pool of participants in multistate poker games."

The Michigan Legislature in December 2020 passed a bill to allow the MGCBC to join a multijurisdictional poker compact, giving Michigan residents the ability to compete with poker players in other states," said Sen. Hertel (D-East Lansing) sponsored the bill, which was signed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Dec. 29, 2020.

Language allowing multijurisdictional play was omitted from the original internet gaming law signed in December 2019. The 2021 Michigan law limits multijurisdictional internet gaming play to poker.

"Michigan poker players will enjoy more options and will likely play for bigger money when they can compete against players from other states," said Sen. Hertel. "I am glad we were able to make this possible for Michigan poker players."

To obtain MGCBC authorization to launch multistate poker, licensed operators and associated platform providers must complete several steps. The MGCBC this April issued guidance on participation requirements for operators.

"The operators still have work to do before Michigan residents may join multistate poker games," Williams said. "The MGCBC must make sure Michigan residents are protected when they play multistate poker, and we will apply the same rigor to review of the new offering as we have other internet games."

While the agreement currently is limited to four states, it is possible more states may join.

Currently, three licensed operators and providers offer online poker in Michigan: MGM Grand Detroit with BetMGM, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians with WSOP, and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and provider PokerStars. ♠



MEGA MILLIONS HOST READS WRONG NUMBER IN \$86 MILLION JACKPOT DRAWING

By Joe Mattia

The Mega Millions lottery temporarily suspended some payments from a May 10 drawing after the wrong number was read.

"On May 10, 2022, the host of the Mega Millions drawing incorrectly called the Mega Ball a six instead of a nine," the group said in a statement. "The nine ball was drawn into the chamber and is the official result. The results of the drawing were audited by Preston CPA."

Video shows the Mega Ball was a nine, but the number six was stated. It's unclear if the host made the error or someone relaying the information to the host made the error. At any rate, it might have caused someone to incorrectly think they had won the jackpot worth an estimated \$86 million.

"We apologize for the confusion," Mega Millions said.

As it turns out, the jackpot was not hit. It's unclear if anyone had a ticket that matched all the white ball numbers and the incorrectly read gold Mega Ball.

The official results for the drawing were white balls 15, 19, 20, 61, and 70, plus the Mega Ball 9.

Mega Millions pays out smaller prizes, as low as \$2, involving a correct Mega Ball number on a player's ticket. CNN reported that New York State paid out several thousands of dollars due to the error in the drawing.

"Due to human error relating to the May 10, 2022 Mega Millions draw, the New York Lottery paid a total of \$5,538 to players who presented tickets with the incorrect winning number to retailers before approximately 10 a.m. on May 11," the organization said in a statement. "This payment was recouped automatically via a Lottery account for uncashed tickets. There is no impact on aid to education or taxpayer funds." ♠

U.S. COMMERCIAL CASINO INDUSTRY WINS \$14 BILLION FROM GAMBLERS IN FIRST QUARTER OF 2022

By Joe Mattia

A slowing U.S. economy hasn't yet been officially felt by the casino industry.

Nationwide commercial gaming revenue totaled \$14.31 billion in Q1 2022, according to the American Gaming Association's (AGA) Commercial Gaming Revenue Tracker.

The figure set a new Q1 record and nearly matched the all-time quarterly record, which was set in Q4 2021 at \$14.35 billion.

Online casino gambling, legal in just a handful of states, contributed about \$1 billion of the \$14.31 billion in the first quarter of this year.

The fast start to the year was led by March's revenue of \$5.31 billion. The month marked the highest-grossing revenue month in U.S. commercial casino industry history. Winnings from February of this year were also a record for that individual month.

Revenue numbers from tribal casino operations in the U.S. are not included in these figures. Tribal casinos win more than \$30 billion each year off of players, or about \$8 billion a quarter.

"Consumers continue to seek out gaming's entertainment options in record numbers," said AGA President and CEO Bill Miller in a statement. "Q1's strong results build on the industry's record year in 2021 despite continued headwinds from supply chain constraints, labor shortages, and the impact of soaring inflation."

Momentum for the industry has yet to cool from a



banner 2021. The commercial industry won a record \$53 billion off gamblers throughout last year.

Total commercial gaming revenue for Q1 2022 increased nearly 29 percent year-over-year. Nearly every (32 of 34) commercial gaming jurisdiction surpassed Q1 revenue from last year and three of those markets set quarterly records: Arkansas (\$147.4 million), Florida (\$182.0 million), and New York (\$996.6 million).

The state of New York kicked off sports betting in January 2022 and has quickly become the nation's top market in terms of wagering handle.

"Four years post-[the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act], legal sports betting's success is proving what we've known all along: American consumers are eager to wager within the protections of the regulated market," Miller added. ♠

NEW YORK ONLINE CASINO BILL FALLS SHORT IN 2022

By Joe Mattia

Efforts to legalize and regulate online casino gambling in New York State will have to wait until next year.

With the end of the session comes the last hopes for bill S8412 this year, a piece of legislation aiming to bring online slots and table games to the state's cyberspace.

The measure was introduced early this year by Sen. Joseph Addabbo Jr., a Democrat. Addabbo spearheaded efforts to legalize online sports betting in the Empire State. Online sportsbooks launched in January 2022.

The online casino bill didn't advance very far this year.

The bill received five aye votes and two ayes votes with reservations on April 25. Unfortunately for the bill, it didn't continue advancing through the legislature after clearing the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee. The bill's sponsor is the chair of that committee.

The rationale behind the legislation is simple. "Currently, seven states have authorized online interactive casino gaming, including the neighboring States of New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania," the bill reads. "In 2021, online casino gaming revenue exceeded \$1 billion in both



New Jersey and Pennsylvania, generating approximately \$120 million in tax revenue for each of those states."

Furthermore, the bill says, "[t]his year, in its first month of operation, New York quickly became the leading mobile sports betting market in the

nation, generating nearly \$70 million in tax revenue in a single month. Similarly, if authorized, New York would quickly become the national leader in online casino gaming, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue annually for the State as it continues to recover from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

It's estimated that New York State would receive about \$475 million annually "based upon conservative market estimates." Under the proposal, New York would also receive about \$150 million in onetime license fees from casinos, operators, and independent contractors seeking to conduct online casino gambling.

According to reports, Addabbo plans to push the bill again next year. ♠

SURVEY SAYS 60 PERCENT OF SPORTS BETTORS VIEW IT AS A SIDE JOB

By Joe Mattia



Compared to slot machines, sports betting is a skill game — but how skillful?

According to a study cited by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, these days a solid majority of sports bettors view it as a side hustle.

“60% of respondents said they bet on sports to earn extra income,” said the report.

While that’s the aim of 6-in-10 bettors, the report stated that another survey question showed that many bettors aren’t able to actually make it work. “75% of respondents reported breaking even,” the report stated.

The survey seems to square with a late 2020 survey asking a similar question.

A survey from Whistle Wise Quantitative Research of 470 people aged 21-34 found that 76% see gambling on sports as a “form of entrepreneurship.”

Younger sports bettors appear to be more likely to view sports betting as a game of skill. Gaming revenue information from the gambling capital of America backs some of this up.

Over the 12 most recent months in Nevada, casinos and their sportsbooks held 4.8% of the handle in the form of winnings. That hold percentage is the lowest among all of the house-banked casino offerings. (There’s no hold percentage for poker.)

Still, the perception of the ability to win in the long-run at sports betting is far higher than it is in reality. Legal sports betting outside of Nevada only became a thing after a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, so the long run hasn’t really arrived for most American sports bettors.

Some estimate that just 3% of sports bettors are profitable in the long run. ♠

Doug Polk Nearly Wins Major Event At His Own Card Room

By Card Player News Team

Doug Polk and fellow YouTube poker stars Brad Owen and Andrew Neeme revealed that they had become co-owners in The Lodge Poker Club & Card Room in Austin, Texas back in January. Just shy of five months after making that announcement, Polk came within a few spots of winning a major tournament at his own club.

Polk, a three-time *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner, finished fourth out of 617 entries in the \$3,000 buy-in Lodge Championship Series no-limit hold’em main event to cash for \$142,000.

The six-figure payday likely helped to take some of the sting off after the \$2 million guaranteed event was forced to pay out an overlay of \$334,100 when registration closed after the six offered starting flights.

Before Polk took to the final table, sporting a tuxedo tank top, he noted the reaction his deep run in the event was drawing and how much further he would have to make it to surpass certain financial benchmarks.

“[I’m] chip leading the main event



at The Lodge with 39 left. I’ve been told, ‘If you win, it’s rigged’ by about 20 people so far. So, I’m hoping for second place. [I need] sixth place to be unstuck at [this cardroom], second place to cover how much money we overlayed, [and] first place to have people complain about this event for the rest of time,” Polk joked.

His run came to an end when he shoved about ten big blinds from the button with J-9 and was looked up by A-J. His latest six-figure tournament payday marked the first time

he had cashed in a live event since 2017, although he did win seven figures from Daniel Negreanu in their heads-up challenge last year. The score increased his career tournament earnings to just shy of \$9.6 million.

In the end, France’s Alain Bauer emerged victorious with the title and the top payout of \$374,800 after striking a heads-up deal with three-time *World Poker Tour* main event champion Eric Afriat. You can find the results from this event and others on pg. 32. ♠

PHIL HELLMUTH: HOW MANY BRACELETS WILL HE END UP WITH?

The High Stakes Duel Champ Talks About His Legacy, Happiness, And Billionaire Aspirations

By Julio Rodriguez



It's been a tumultuous couple years for Phil Hellmuth, who found success time and time again on the felt, while also dealing with the fallout of yet another flurry of patented Poker Brat blowups.

After emerging from the lockdown that shut down the live poker world and moved the 2020 series online, Hellmuth kick started his run with three straight victories over Antonio Esfandiari for \$400,000 in PokerGO's popular heads-up challenge series *High Stakes Duel*. It was only a short while later, however, that Hellmuth went viral for making the minimum in a *High Stakes Poker* hand with YouTuber and all-around instigator Doug Polk.

Then after engaging in some back-and-forth trash talk with Daniel Negreanu, the two poker legends played their

own three-round series. Once again, Hellmuth came away with the clean sweep, and another \$400,000. He then beat sports commentator Nick Wright to begin another series, before online legend Tom 'durrrr' Dwan stepped in and halted his winning streak.

Of course, Hellmuth's run at the 2021 *World Series of Poker* was one of the best of his career. He had ten cashes overall, making seven final tables, while also earning his record-furthering 16th bracelet in the \$1,500 no-limit 2-7 lowball event. He also finished runner-up in the \$10,000 dealer's choice event for \$153,493, and second in the \$50,000 pot-limit Omaha high roller for another \$734,807.

But the series wasn't all fun for the Wisconsin native and Palo Alto resident, as he had to face the court of public

© PokerGO / Antonio Abrego



opinion following his epic final table rant in which he threatened to “burn this f***ing place down if” he didn’t “win this f***ing tournament.” That tournament ended in fourth place, and the Rio remains standing to this day. (Although, it will soon get a facelift.)

In January of this year Hellmuth was back in the PokerGO studio for his rematch with Dwan. This time he was able to walk away the winner, setting up a deciding third match between the poker odd couple, who have a history dating back to the 2008 *NBC National Heads-Up Poker Championship*. In March, he added three high roller final tables in a span of four days, pocketing a combined \$570,600 at the *U.S. Poker Open*.

Hellmuth seemed primed for a deep run at the inaugural PokerGO *Heads-Up Showdown* in April, only to run into casino owner Eric Persson, a man determined to display even worse behavior than his opponent. Persson spent the entire match insulting Hellmuth, and at one point even gave him a double middle finger salute as he sucked out in pot after pot on his way to victory. The public reaction was divided. Most felt that Persson had gone too far, but there were also others who were happy that it was Phil on the receiving end of a tirade for a change.

Thanks to his improbable friendship with 24-year-old YouTuber Jimmy ‘Mr. Beast’ Donaldson, Hellmuth has also found himself playing in cash games with a number of young social media influencers such as Twitch gamers ‘Ludwig’ Ahgren and Tyler ‘Ninja’ Blevins, as well as chess streamer Alexandra Botez. The exposure was incredible for the poker world, opening the game to a vastly underserved audience. However, once again, Hellmuth’s behavior at the table got him in hot water.

To his credit, Hellmuth has always made amends for his behavior and has always managed to bounce back strong. In fact, it’s somewhat defined his career, as he seemingly feeds off of the adversity to reach his peak performance level. He famously calls it, “white magic.”

After shrugging off yet another controversy, Hellmuth focused on his third and deciding match with Dwan. Unfortunately, Dwan was forced to back out at the last minute, and high-stakes pro Scott Seiver stepped in. The two battled for an \$800,000 winner-take-all purse in May, and once again, Hellmuth finished with all of the chips, bringing his record in the format to 9-1 overall.

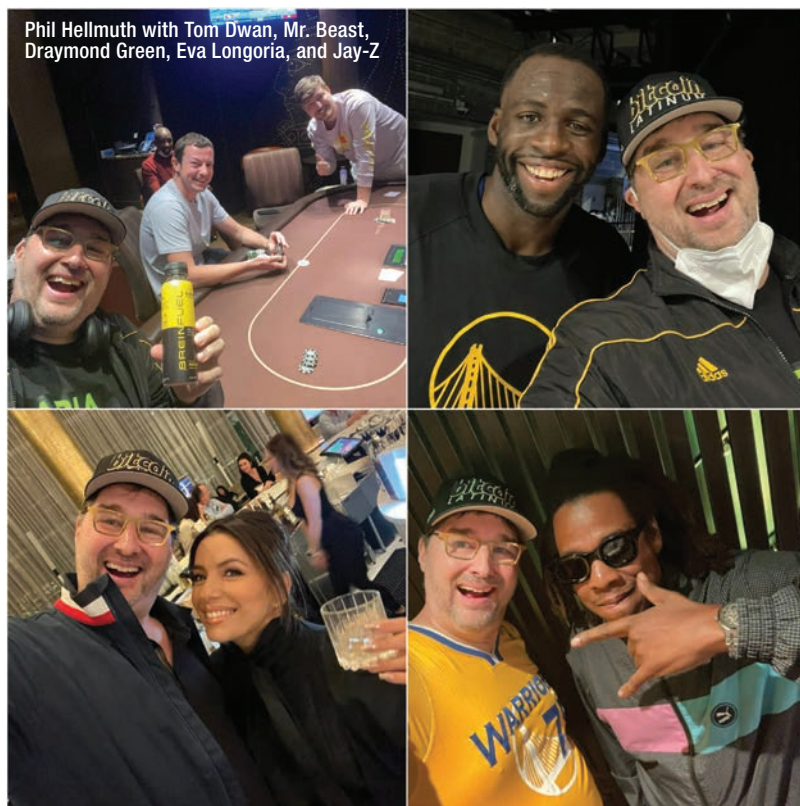
Despite entering his 35th summer series overall, Hellmuth says he has plenty left in the tank. He remains the *WSOP*’s

most decorated player by far. His nearest competitors are six behind and are made up of the mostly-retired 88-year-old Doyle Brunson and the semi-retired 65-year-old Johnny Chan. Even Phil Ivey is now 45, and although he remains a threat in any event he enters, he only plays when the stakes are at their highest. Hellmuth’s record could last a lifetime, even if he doesn’t add any more gold to his collection.

As always, the Poker Hall of Famer has managed to have plenty of fun along the way, dropping names and getting shout outs from the likes of Draymond Green, Jay-Z, Tony Robbins, Tiger Woods, Russell Westbrook, Steph Curry, Steve Aoki, Nate Silver, Bill Clinton, Ted Cruz, Jack Black, and Eva Longoria, along with half of the CEOs and VCs in Silicon Valley as well as the owners of the Golden State Warriors. He even gave poker lessons to Khloe Kardashian, and somehow had time to compete on *ESPN*’s American Cornhole Championship.

Phil Hellmuth’s 16 WSOP Bracelet Wins

Year	Event	Payout
1989	\$10,000 Main Event	\$755,000
1992	\$5,000 Limit Hold’em	\$168,000
1993	\$1,500 No-Limit Hold’em	\$161,400
1993	\$2,500 No-Limit Hold’em	\$173,000
1993	\$5,000 Limit Hold’em	\$138,000
1997	\$3,000 Pot-Limit Hold’em	\$204,000
2001	\$2,000 No-Limit Hold’em	\$316,550
2003	\$2,500 Limit Hold’em	\$171,400
2003	\$3,000 No-Limit Hold’em	\$410,860
2006	\$1,000 No-Limit Hold’em Rebuy	\$631,863
2007	\$1,500 No-Limit Hold’em	\$637,254
2012	\$2,500 Seven Card Razz	\$182,793
2012	€10,000 Main Event	\$1,333,841
2015	\$10,000 Seven Card Razz	\$271,105
2018	\$5,000 No-Limit Hold’em	\$485,082
2021	\$1,500 No-Limit 2-7 Lowball	\$84,851



Phil Hellmuth with Tom Dwan, Mr. Beast, Draymond Green, Eva Longoria, and Jay-Z

Card Player caught up with Hellmuth right as he was taking his seat for the first time at the 2022 *WSOP* at its new venue on the Las Vegas Strip.

Julio Rodriguez: You've been crushing it on the felt, but you also took a lot of heat and criticism for some blowups. Can you talk about what the last year was like for you as far as the ups and downs?

Phil Hellmuth: It was definitely weird. The 'burn the place down if I don't win' comment was taken out of context. However, even though I introduced it as a joke, I should have avoided repeating it!

[There were] huge ups and downs within just a few days. First, I got in trouble for the 'burn it down' comment. Then I won a bracelet. It was 1,000 negative tweets, followed by 1,000 positive tweets, all within days.

JR: Does it bother you to read negative comments online? I saw you tweeted at NBA star and poker enthusiast Draymond Green, to 'ignore the haters and their Hatorade.'

PH: 'Day Day' is a high, high-quality guy! I love Draymond. I've played [poker] 150 times with him online and coached him up. [I think he] is the best no-limit hold'em player in sports. He wears his heart on his sleeve and like John McEnroe, he sees the bad calls and loses it. Also like me!

JR: What about criticism from your peers in the high-stakes community? Do they ever make you doubt yourself? Do you get any satisfaction from proving them wrong over and over again?

PH: By high-stakes community, do you mean [Daniel] Negreanu? They know I'm up \$2.5 million in high roller tournaments. They know I was the big winner in 'Rob's game.' They know I won 23 out of the last 25 televised cash games. They know I'm 9-1 in *High Stakes Duel* against the world's best players. They know I'm the only player to make

three top 10s in 'One Drop' events, even though I've played less 'One Drops' than most of them!

I have the records, and the current label of the best all-around player in the world. I have earned it! I made ten final tables in seven months between the *WSOP* and high rollers, in only about 50 tournaments against the world's best players across seven or eight disciplines. No one else is even close.

Of course, Negreanu will tell you why it's NOT me. But the last ten months it IS me. Almost everyone considers me the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time).

What's amusing to me is that they don't know HOW I do it. This is great for me. It's a sure marker that I'll keep crushing it.

Without folks lying about me, and being delusional about what I have accomplished, or even attacking me, where would I get that extra 20% motivation? Let them lie about my abilities. Let them wonder about how I win. Let them underestimate me. Let them be delusional. And let me win another eight *WSOP* bracelets!

JR: How did it feel to come back after the pandemic break and put together such a great series in 2021? I imagine there were few players who missed the *WSOP* as much as you did.

PH: Just being with the group again was wonderful. (There are about 100 players who regularly play the \$10,000 buy-in events.) Many folks around the world had a similar experience, when they were finally able to get together in groups again. It was great to have that experience of community, of being together.

I crushed for two reasons. The first is that I came in with a low ego because I had just lost my match with [Tom] Dwan before the *WSOP*. Secondly, my best friend told me I was being 'unbearable' for the last few months. My wife agreed. That was like a gut punch! My ego had been too high having [done well] in business and having won millions of dollars [playing poker.] (I won over \$1.5 million playing online.)

After a few weeks of soul searching, I came into the *WSOP* with a low ego, and boom, made five final tables in six tournaments.

JR: What is your current prediction for how many bracelets you will end up with?

PH: I have predicted that I would win 24 since 1995. But I'm willing to go higher.

JR: If there was anybody in the poker world that could one day catch you, who would you say that is?

PH: I'll say Phil Ivey. Some of the younger guys will have a chance, but it's better for their chances if they can play every game at a world class level.

JR: You mentioned your stellar record in PokerGO's *High Stakes Duel* series. Did you do any prep work on your own heads-up game before the matches? What do you attribute your success in the format to?

PH: It's my reading ability.



PH: They're all so tough. All are at the top of the top players.

JR: You'll be turning 58 this summer, yet you are still performing at an elite level. Have you felt any limitations because of your age?

PH: Yes. I was forced to take 8-10 days off during the last *WSOP*. After five final tables in 19 days, I just had zero adrenaline left.

But I will compete until I'm in my 80s. That gives me at least another 25 years!

JR: You've been playing poker with a lot of younger, social media influencers, most notably YouTube king Jimmy 'Mr. Beast' Donaldson. (97 million subscribers!) Given the new exposure for poker, how do you feel about the future of the game?

PH: Jimmy is a next-level human being. He and I hit it off immediately, and I am deeply impressed. He's a great guy. I wrote a book to change the world called *#Positivity*. The book's subtitle is, *You Are Always In The Right Place At The Right Time*. (Available on Amazon)

Jimmy is changing the world, and he loves poker. We

When it comes to heads-up, I only take my own counsel. I don't like to talk about strategies with anyone else. I don't want my mind polluted with bad thoughts. I do watch my last heads-up matches to glean insights about my own play, and my opponents.

JR: Who was the toughest opponent you've had so far?

have that in common, so whenever we see each other it's an instant smile and appreciation. I'm honored.

JR: Do you see these influencers helping to grow the game in popularity among younger players?

PH: It seems like the 18- to 22-year-olds are back! Maybe the pandemic and being forced online has sparked a renewed interest. But whatever it is, it's good to have the young folks back.

JR: You are always doing interesting stuff away from the table, whether it's sitting courtside at the NBA finals and hanging out with Jay-Z or competing on an *ESPN*-televised cornhole competition. Is your life as fun as it looks from the outside?

PH: For some reason, I tend to hit it off well with the world's biggest athletes, billionaires, influencers, and other successful people. I'm just me. No bullshit. No lies. I'm completely authentic, and I think that's what attracts people [to me]. And when I'm being ridiculous, I can laugh at myself.

I have great health. I have a deep and rich relationship with my wife of the last 33 years. I have deep, intimate relationships with my two sons, as well as my parents. And I have been blessed with more money than I could have ever imagined. I walk around happy almost every minute. I'm a lucky guy!

JR: You've accomplished pretty much everything in poker. Is there anything left on your poker bucket list, other than winning more bracelets? What kind of goals have you set for yourself?

PH: I might eventually promote the eight life tips that are in my book *#Positivity*, as I believe these tips can change hundreds of millions of people's lives for the better.

It's strange that ever since I wrote that book, I've truly been in the right place at the right time constantly. [I will] probably become a billionaire by 2040. By the way, becoming a billionaire is NOT a goal. Having a perfectly-balanced life IS a goal! ♠

CAN HELLMUTH GET TO 24 BRACELETS?

Hellmuth has maintained for the last three decades that he will end up with at least 24 bracelets when all is said and done, but is it doable? He plans to play well into his 80s, giving him more than two decades to turn his prophecy into reality. Let's look at his stats.

Since his first cash at the annual summer series back in 1988, Hellmuth has averaged a bracelet win every 2.1 years or so. And despite now being eligible for the senior's event, his age hasn't slowed him down at all, averaging a bracelet every two years over the last decade alone.

Although he has no problem missing the occasional series event to rub elbows with celebrities, politicians, and athletes, Hellmuth remains a machine of endurance at the series, and has now upped his cash total to 182. In fact,

more than \$16.3 million of his career \$24.6 million in earnings has come in *WSOP* events.

Hellmuth was once considered a hold'em specialist, and for good reason. His first 11 bracelets all came in hold'em. It wasn't until 2012 that he secured the first of his two razz event wins. Last year's win in no-limit 2-7 lowball was his third non-hold'em title, and in recent years he's finished second in the *Dealer's Choice* and the *Mixed Games Championship* to go along with his second in the 2011 \$50,000 *Poker Players Championship*.

Perhaps even more impressive than his win total has been his consistency. Along with the titles, he has also finished runner-up a whopping 13 times! Hellmuth also has four third-place finishes, seven fourth places, eight fifth



places, and 12 sixth places. With nine more final tables in other events, he has a total of 69 for his career. That's a nice average of just over two final tables per year.

Will Hellmuth get to 24? It's a tall order, but doubting Phil will only help him get there faster.

2021 WSOP CHAMP KORAY ALDEMIR SHARES HIS MAIN EVENT TIPS

German Poker Pro Reflects On \$8 Million Score

By Bernard Lee



During this series of strategy columns, I have been interviewing 2021 *WSOP* bracelet winners. These champions have been providing observations, tips, and strategies for you, the readers of *Card Player*, about the specific poker game in which they captured their bracelet.

The Event: \$10,000 *WSOP* Main Event

The Winner: Koray Aldemir

The Prize: \$8 Million

Over the past decade, Germany has laid claim to a few *WSOP* main event champions. In 2019, Iranian-born German pro Hossein Ensan captured the title over Italy's Dario Sammartino for \$10 million. But back in 2011, then 22-year-old Pius Heinz shocked the world, coming back from seventh in chips to become the first German ever to win the main event, taking home over \$8.7 million.

Heinz made an impact on the

young Koray Aldemir, who went on to win last year's main event for \$8 million.

"It was kind of a dream to win the [*WSOP*] main event. I remember watching Pius Heinz winning. That is when I got into poker more seriously. I watched the whole thing in the middle of the night in Europe. I couldn't imagine winning the tournament 10 years later," recalled Aldemir.

This year, as the *WSOP* begins a new era on the Las Vegas Strip at Bally's and Paris Las Vegas, Koray Aldemir will enjoy the shortest reign as *WSOP* main event champion ever, since the 2021 main event was completed in November.

Nevertheless, Koray will be remembered for having one of the most dominating performances during a main event. The German was among the top five stacks for the last three days prior to the final table, and entering

the final table, he had almost double the next player and triple the player in third place.

Koray had previously cashed in the 2015 and 2016 *WSOP* main events, while also finishing in seventh place at the 2018 *WSOP Europe* main event, earning €130,350. The high roller also finished third in the \$111,111 buy-in *One Drop* event in 2016 for \$2,154,265 and has wins at the *Triton Manila* and *U.S. Poker Open*, giving him a total of \$20.1 million in career tournament earnings.

"It wasn't a great series heading into the main event," Aldemir admitted. "I just didn't run well in the big events. But I felt I was playing well so I was ready for the tournament."

I spoke with Koray for my radio show. You can watch the full interview on my YouTube channel (BernardLeePoker) or listen on iTunes.

Bernard: Congratulations on



winning the 2021 *WSOP* main event. What a dream come true.

Koray: Thank you so much. It is super surreal and still pretty crazy to think I won it.

Bernard: How did you get started in poker?

Koray: Poker got popular in Germany a little later than the United States, around 2005 to 2007. The first time I saw poker, I actually wondered why they were showing card games on television.

Then, I started playing in 2007 with friends. I got lucky and won my first tournament with them. I continued to play and get better. I went to study business administration in Germany and I met a professional poker player. I thought he was so good, and he helped me to get more

into the game.

Then, I moved to Vienna to continue my schooling and met other professional poker players like Rainer Kempe and Fedor Holz. After Fedor's success, we felt maybe we could be successful as well. (Kempe would go on to rack up nearly \$22 million in live earnings, while Holz has won an incredible \$35 million.)

Bernard: You currently play in high roller events. How do you feel your game has changed and progressed?

Koray: I definitely made a big jump in 2016 and 2017 when I started playing in high rollers. I absolutely feel I have gotten better playing with these players. But, I would also recommend to watch the live streams. I love to watch the live streams as I learn so much from watching them play, espe-

cially when you can see the hole cards.

Bernard: Well, let's talk about some key strategies playing in the *WSOP* main event. What would your advice be to players playing in the main event, especially during the early days?

Koray: I would say you should focus on just playing well. So many players are focused on building up a monster stack during day 1. While that would be nice, let the game come to you.

In 2021, I had a pretty bad day 1 and even almost got knocked out. I ended the day with around 35,000 (starting stack is 60,000), but I was actually happy after the day because I felt like I played well.

The *WSOP* main event is such a marathon. You will have bad days. You have to survive those days so you can hope to have a great run to build up your chip stack.

Bernard: That is kind of what happened to you, right?

Koray: Yes absolutely. The second day didn't go that well either as I ended with a little over starting stack (73,300). Then, on the third day, I didn't start out well again and I actually had less than starting stack. In fact, during the second level of the day, I even told a friend that I would probably be out soon.

But then, the run began as I doubled up a couple of times and I was suddenly a big stack heading into the money bubble. From that moment on, I didn't lose a big hand for the rest of

Top Tournament Scores

Date	Event	Finish	Payout
Nov. 2021	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	1st	\$8,000,000
July 2016	\$111,111 WSOP One Drop	3rd	\$2,154,265
Feb. 2017	HKD\$1M Triton Manila	1st	\$1,304,273
Feb. 2019	\$50,000 U.S. Poker Open	1st	\$738,000
May 2019	€25,000 Monte Carlo	2nd	\$734,541
Aug. 2017	€50,000 EPT Barcelona	3rd	\$625,054
Sept. 2018	\$50,000 Poker Masters	2nd	\$517,000
Jan. 2018	\$10,000 PCA Main Event	3rd	\$481,560
Sept. 2018	\$10,000 Poker Masters	3rd	\$400,000
June 2017	\$25,000 Aria High Roller	1st	\$320,160



the tournament. It's pretty crazy.

Bernard: What would your advice be to players playing in the main event around the bubble?

Koray: I was able to chip up on day 3 and I was the chip leader on my table so I could raise a lot of hands. It was a great position. Even though all the players knew what I was doing, they couldn't do anything back. If you are fortunate to be in this position, don't be afraid to raise with basically any two cards if there is no push back from your opponents.

But then, (top pro player) Jason Koon came to the table. He was seated two to my left and had more chips than I did. He was not afraid to battle so I had to slow down and couldn't raise so much anymore. So, if there is someone who is willing to battle in position, you may just need to slow down.

Bernard: Getting deep in the main

event means playing many days in a row. Do you have any advice for players if they are fortunate to get this deep?

Koray: Yeah, it is definitely a different experience than the high roller event because you don't play so many days in a row. So, I would tell people try to get as much rest as possible because you are exhausted playing 10 to 12 hours in a row. It is not so easy to do because it can be very hard to sleep after the adrenaline during the day. But try to get as much rest as possible.

Also, try to eat well to help you stay focused and mentally sharp which is super important, especially as you get closer and closer to the final table.

Bernard: What advice would you give if anyone would be fortunate to make the final table?

Koray: The money jump from tenth place to ninth place was massive (\$585,000 to \$1 million) compared

to the next few spots. Actually, this jump was more than the difference between ninth all the way to sixth place (\$1 million to \$1.4 million). So, on the final table bubble (10 players left), with such a big stack, I could literally open any two cards as everyone so badly wanted to make the final table.

But, once you got down to nine players, even the short stacks were never going to fold a good hand early in the final table because the money jumps were relatively smaller. So, you kind of have to play normal. But remember, it still is the main event final table, and no one wants to look foolish. I could open a little wider than normal, but nowhere near as much as I did on the money bubble.

Bernard: Thanks so much for sharing your insight on playing the main event!

The 2022 main event, of course, is starting soon, and many of you dream of playing in the most anticipated tournament of the year. If you choose to try and win your way into the main event via satellite, you might want to check out my latest book, *Poker Satellite Success: Turn Affordable Buy-Ins Into Shots At Winning Millions*. It's available now on Amazon or D&B Poker Publishing.

I hope you enjoyed this series of interviews with 2021 WSOP bracelet winners. Along the way I spoke to players such as Ari Engel, Brian Yoon, Scott Ball, Josh Arieh, Anthony Zinno, Adam Friedman, and Jeremy Ausmus. In future issues, I will be talking to winners from the 2022 series. Good luck to everyone playing, perhaps I'll get to interview you! ♠



Bernard Lee broke into the poker world after a deep run in the 2005 WSOP main event. He has two WSOP Circuit rings, and is an author,

having written for *Card Player*, the *Boston Herald*, *Metrowest Daily News*, and *ESPN*, where he was a host of the show *The Inside Deal*. His radio show and podcast, *The Bernard Lee Poker Show*, recently celebrated its 14th anniversary, and his latest book, *Poker Satellite Success: Turn Affordable Buy-Ins Into Shots At Winning Millions*, is now available on Amazon as well as D&B Publishing. Follow him on Twitter @BernardLeePoker or visit his website at BernardLeePoker.com or YouTube channel at Youtube.com/BernardLeePoker.



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EVENT #70: \$10,000 MAIN EVENT

WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
SUNDAY
MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY

JULY 6
JULY 7
JULY 8
JULY 9
JULY 10
JULY 11
JULY 12
JULY 13
JULY 15
JULY 16

DAY 1D
DAY 2AB
DAY 2CD
DAY 3
DAY 4
DAY 5
DAY 6
DAY 7
FINAL TABLE (DAY 1)
FINAL TABLE (DAY 2)

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ADDAMO, KOON, DWAN, BADZIAKOUSKI, AND CHIDWICK SHINE IN SPAIN

Triton Madrid Series Causes Dramatic Shifts In POY Rankings

By Erik Fast



Multiple top contenders in the 2022 *Card Player* Player of the Year race made major moves in the standings in recent weeks thanks to their performances at this year's *Triton Series Madrid* high-stakes tournament festival held at the Casino Gran Via.

Below is a look back at all the biggest stories from the 13-event series that ran from May 13-25 in Spain.

Big Names Impress Early

The action got underway with a €20,000 no-limit hold'em eight-max event. Michael Addamo defeated a field of 90 entries to secure the title and the top prize of €478,000 (\$501,900). This score saw the four-time bracelet winner from Australia increase his recorded earnings to more than \$22.7 million.

No player came in with more cashes in Triton events than the tour's co-founder, Paul Phua. The Malaysian businessman had secured 19 in-the-money finishes, with eight figures worth of earnings along the way. The one thing Phua had not yet achieved was coming away with a title. That changed after he defeated a field of 93 entries in the €30,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em seven-max event to secure the long-awaited trophy and the top prize of \$777,420. The win brought Phua's career earnings to just over \$25 million.

Michael Watson (7th - \$139,125) and Daniel Dvoress (6th - \$175,770) both secured their first of several deep runs in Madrid at this final table. Nine-time bracelet winner Erik Seidel placed second to Phua for \$540,540.

The first short deck event of the festival featured a €20,000 buy-in. A total of 62 entries turned out, with the title and top prize of \$390,600 going to rising American

high-stakes star Chris Brewer. The 29-year-old was at his 12th final table of the year, with another yet to come. Watson scored his second final-table finish of the series, placing second for another \$282,555.

Next up on the agenda was another short deck event, this time with a buy-in of €25,000. The event saw 68 total entries made, with Rui Cao ultimately securing the title and the top prize of \$521,850. The French high-stakes player now has more than \$9.2 million in career scores.

Jason Koon finished sixth for \$110,670, with a few more noteworthy scores yet to come.

A Record Is Set As The Action Heats Up

The €50,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em seven-max event saw Mikita Badziakouski make Triton history. The 30-year-old Belarusian high-stakes star became the first player to ever win four titles on the tour, earning his most recent victory after topping the field of 101 entries.

He secured \$1,407,000 as the champion. In fact, his three previous Triton wins were all for a million or more as well. Badziakouski earned 1,020 points for his latest win. This was his second title and fourth POY-qualified final-table finish of the year, with another big one yet to come on this trip.

Danny Tang took home \$978,600 as the runner-up. This was the first of three final-table finishes at this festival for Tang.

Addamo backed up his win in the kickoff event by taking down the €75,000 buy-in eight-max event no-limit hold'em event for another \$1,209,690. He now has more than \$23.9 million in recorded tournament earnings to his name.

Michael Addamo



Paul Phua



Chris Brewer



Rui Cao



Mikita Badziakouski



Webster Lim



Addamo had not made a final table in the early months of this year, after going on an incredible streak down the stretch in 2021 that saw him win six titles in just over a two-month span. He now has two final-table finishes, both ending in victories, on his 2022 résumé and now sits inside the top 100 in the POY race.

Behind Addamo, the five next-highest finishers in the event now find themselves all among the top 30 in the POY race, including Stephen Chidwick (2nd - \$1,355,985), Seth Davies (3rd - \$694,575), Daniel Dvoress (4th - \$525,525), Lazlo Bujtas (5th - \$406,875), and the aforementioned Koon (6th - \$317,100). More on all of them soon.

Webster Lim was the next champion crowned. The Malaysian outlasted a field of 57 total entries in the €50,000 buy-in short deck event to win his first Triton trophy and the top prize of €855,000 (\$897,750). This was the fourth-largest score of Lim's career, with his biggest payday being the \$2.4 million he earned as the champion of the 2019 *WSOP Europe* €100,000 buy-in high roller. He now has more than \$10.1 million in

lifetime tournament earnings to his name.

Sixth-place finisher Phil Ivey earned \$191,520 for his sixth final-table finish of the year. With two titles, more than \$3 million in year-to-date earnings, and 2,134 total points, Ivey now sits in 15th place in the 2022 POY standings.

The largest top prize of the series was awarded when Henrik Hecklen topped a field of 93 entries in the €100,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event to take home \$2,279,034 after striking a heads-up deal with Orpen Kisacikoglu.

This was the 31-year-old Danish poker pro's largest tournament score yet, topping the \$1,284,260 he earned as the runner-up in the 2019 *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* \$100,000 buy-in high roller. He now has more than \$7 million in lifetime earnings to his name.

Hecklen was just one of three players to secure a seven-figure score in this tournament alone. Kisacikoglu earned \$2,117,316 as the runner-up, while Kevin Pague banked \$1,190,700 for his top-three showing.

TOURNAMENTS



Dwan Doubles Down The Stretch, Koon Ties The Record

Laszlo Bujtas has made six final tables in high-stakes events so far in 2022, cashing for more than \$2.5 million along the way. The Hungarian's most recent deep run saw him race through a 37-entry field in the €50,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em eight-max turbo event, earning \$661,500 and his first title of the year.

He now has more than \$5.7 million in recorded tournament earnings to his name. Bujtas also secured 408 POY points for the win, bringing his point total to 2,111. As a result, he now sits just outside the top 20 in the overall rankings. Chidwick earned another \$291,375 for a third-place finish in this brisk affair.

Tom Dwan is one of the most popular poker players in the game, thanks in large part to his many years playing nosebleed cash games for large audiences, whether on shows like *High Stakes Poker* or online, where he was best known as 'durrrr'. Despite only dabbling in the tournament world of late, he has managed to amass more than \$5 million in earnings on the tour.

Dwan has made several deep runs in big events, including finishing runner-up for a bracelet in 2010, but had not yet won a live tournament title. That changed when he emerged victorious in the €25,000 buy-in pot-limit Omaha event in a field of 34 entries, to earn his first trophy and the top prize of €290,000 (\$304,500). This maiden live victory came 16 years, 7 months, and 3 weeks after Dwan secured his first cash in the *European Poker Tour London* main event back in 2005.

Jeremy Ausmus secured his second cash of the series with a second-place finish for \$208,950. His 14 final-table finishes so far this year are tied for the second-most of any player. He now sits in fourth place in the POY race.

Chidwick defeated a field of 60 entries in the €100,000 buy-in short deck main event, earning a massive \$1,890,000 for the win. He now has more than \$43 million in recorded earnings to his name. With three titles, 14 final tables, and more than \$4.8 million in POY earnings accrued thus far, Chidwick has climbed into second place in the 2022 points race.

Seth Davies (7th - \$320,250), Danny Tang (5th - \$514,500), and Mikita Badziakouski (3rd - \$882,000) kept up their strong form in Spain with deep runs in this event. This was Badziakouski's fifth final table of the year, with two titles won along the way. With 2,750 total points and nearly \$4 million in earnings so far in 2022, he now sits in 11th place on the POY leaderboard.

Badziakouski sat alone atop the Triton title leaderboard for only a week. Just seven days after Badziakouski won his record-setting fourth trophy on tour, Koon battled his way to a fourth Triton victory of his own.

The West Virginia native took down the €150,000 buy-in short deck event for \$1,837,500. With \$39,384,977 in tournament cashes to his name, Koon surpassed Dan Smith (\$38,502,884 in career scores) to move into seventh place on poker's all-time money list.

Koon also climbed to ninth place in the POY standings, with this title, ten final tables, and more than \$4.1 million in year-to-date POY earnings. Koon is also the short deck all-time tournament leader, with more than \$11.3 million

in earnings. Check out pg. 35 for more on that.

Dvoress secured \$1,249,500 as the runner-up. With 12 final tables and more than \$4.8 million in cashes along the way, Dvoress is now the third-ranked player in the standings. Davies also climbed thanks to this event, finishing fifth for \$483,000 to climb into 26th place in the rankings.

Just two days after winning his first career tournament trophy, Dwan managed to find his way to the winner's circle a second time. He took down the €30,000 short deck event, overcoming a field of 33 entries to earn €336,000 (\$352,800).

Brewer backed up his earlier win with a sixth-place finish for \$72,975. This was his 13th final-table finish of the year, which moved him into 12th place in the rankings. Tang earned \$119,700 for fourth place and 168 POY points for his eighth final-table showing of the year. He now sits in eighth place in the overall standings, with more than \$3.3 million in earnings accrued so far in 2022.

Here are the full series results.

TRITON POKER SERIES MADRID -- CASINO GRAN VIA -- MADRID, SPAIN

**Note: All payouts in USD.*

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€20,000 NLHE 8MAX May 13-14 Entries: 90 Prizepool: \$1,890,000	1 Michael Addamo	\$501,900 (648)
	2 Michael Soyza	\$348,600 (540)
	3 Dong Hyun Kim	\$230,475 (432)
	4 Wayne Heung	\$180,600 (324)
	5 Paul Phua	\$145,425 (270)
	6 Robert Yong	\$113,400 (216)
	7 Danny Tang	\$89,880 (162)
	8 Ferando Garcia	\$69,930 (108)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€30,000 NLHE 7MAX May 14-15 Entries: 93 Prizepool: \$2,929,500	1 Paul Phua	\$777,420 (756)
	2 Erik Seidel	\$540,540 (630)
	3 Isaac Haxton	\$357,315 (504)
	4 Kannapong Thanaratrakul	\$279,825 (378)
	5 Ben Heath	\$225,540 (315)
	6 Daniel Dvoress	\$175,770 (252)
	7 Michael Watson	\$139,125 (189)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€20,000 NLHE SD May 15-16 Entries: 62 Prizepool: \$1,302,000	1 Chris Brewer	\$390,600 (432)
	2 Michael Watson	\$282,555 (360)
	3 Robert Yong	\$182,280 (288)
	4 Max Silver	\$138,075 (216)
	5 Webster Lim	\$106,785 (180)
	6 Devan Tang	\$83,265 (144)
	7 Tom Dwan	\$66,360 (108)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€25,000 NLHE SD May 16-17 Entries: 68 Prizepool: \$1,785,000	1 Rui Cao	\$521,850 (504)
	2 Richard Yong	\$374,850 (420)
	3 Kenneth Kee	\$243,600 (336)
	4 Tom Dwan	\$183,855 (252)
	5 Choon Siow	\$142,800 (210)
	6 Jason Koon	\$110,670 (168)
	7 Santi Jiang	\$87,675 (126)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€50,000 NLHE 7MAX May 17-18 Entries: 101 Prizepool: \$5,302,500	1 Mikita Badziakouski	\$1,407,000 (1020)
	2 Danny Tang	\$978,600 (850)
	3 Fedor Holz	\$646,800 (680)
	4 Michael Watson	\$506,415 (510)
	5 Kevin Paque	\$408,450 (425)
	6 Bruno Volkmann	\$318,150 (340)
	7 Tom Aksell Bedell	\$252,000 (255)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€25,000 NLHE SD May 16-17 Entries: 68 Prizepool: \$1,785,000	1 Rui Cao	\$521,850 (504)
	2 Richard Yong	\$374,850 (420)
	3 Kenneth Kee	\$243,600 (336)
	4 Tom Dwan	\$183,855 (252)
	5 Choon Siow	\$142,800 (210)
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TOURNAMENTS

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€50,000 NLHE 7MAX May 17-18 Entries: 101 Prizepool: \$5,302,500	1 Mikita Badziakouski	\$1,407,000 (1020)
	2 Danny Tang	\$978,600 (850)
	3 Fedor Holz	\$646,800 (680)
	4 Michael Watson	\$506,415 (510)
	5 Kevin Paque	\$408,450 (425)
	6 Bruno Volkmann	\$318,150 (340)
	7 Tom Aksell Bedell	\$252,000 (255)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€75,000 NLHE 8MAX May 18-19 Entries: 63 Prizepool: \$4,961,250	1 Michael Addamo	\$1,209,690 (612)
	2 Stephen Chidwick	\$1,355,985 (510)
	3 Seth Davies	\$694,575 (408)
	4 Daniel Dvoress	\$525,525 (306)
	5 Laszlo Bujtas	\$406,875 (255)
	6 Jason Koon	\$317,100 (204)
	7 Antanas Guoga	\$253,050 (153)
	8 Ben Heath	\$198,450 (102)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€50,000 NLHE SD May 19-20 Entries: 57 Prizepool: \$2,992,500	1 Webster Lim	\$897,750 (510)
	2 Bjorn Li	\$649,425 (425)
	3 Winfred Yu	\$418,950 (340)
	4 Elton Tsang	\$317,100 (255)
	5 Wai Kin Yon	\$245,385 (213)
	6 Phil Ivey	\$191,520 (170)
	7 Ryan Mingho Yum	\$152,670 (128)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€100,000 NLHE May 20-22 Entries: 93 Prizepool: \$9,765,000	1 Henrik Hecklen	\$2,279,034 (1080)
	2 Orpen Kisacikoglu	\$2,117,316 (900)
	3 Kevin Paque	\$1,190,700 (720)
	4 Aleksejs Ponakovs	\$932,400 (540)
	5 Sam Grafton	\$751,800 (450)
	6 Patrik Antonius	\$585,900 (360)
	7 Bruno Volkmann	\$462,525 (270)
	8 Alfred Decarolis	\$361,200 (180)
	9 Sam Greenwood	\$273,525 (90)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€50,000 NLHE 8MAX May 21 Entries: 37 Prizepool: \$1,942,500	1 Laszlo Bujtas	\$661,500 (408)
	2 Denys Homliavyi	\$455,700 (340)
	3 Stephen Chidwick	\$291,375 (272)
	4 Wiktor Malinowski	\$223,125 (204)
	5 Jeremy Ausmus	\$174,300 (170)
	6 Bali Gee	\$136,500 (136)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€25,000 PLO May 22-23 Entries: 34 Prizepool: \$892,500	1 Tom Dwan	\$304,500 (336)
	2 Jeremy Ausmus	\$208,950 (280)
	3 Tom Aksell Bedell	\$133,350 (224)
	4 Patrik Antonius	\$102,375 (168)
	5 Filip Lovric	\$80,325 (140)
	6 Elton Tsang	\$63,000 (112)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€100,000 NLHE SD May 23-24 Entries: 60 Prizepool: \$6,300,000	1 Stephen Chidwick	\$1,890,000 (720)
	2 Antanas Guoga	\$1,370,250 (600)
	3 Mikita Badziakouski	\$882,000 (480)
	4 Richard Yong	\$672,000 (360)
	5 Danny Tang	\$514,500 (300)
	6 Isaac Haxton	\$399,000 (240)
	7 Seth Davies	\$320,250 (180)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€150,000 NLHE SD May 24-25 Entries: 34 Prizepool: \$5,355,000	1 Jason Koon	\$1,837,500 (480)
	2 Daniel Dvoress	\$1,249,500 (400)
	3 Isaac Haxton	\$798,000 (320)
	4 Sam Greenwood	\$609,000 (240)
	5 Seth Davies	\$483,000 (200)
	6 Daniel Cates	\$378,000 (160)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€30,000 NLHE SD May 25 Entries: 33 Prizepool: \$1,039,500	1 Tom Dwan	\$352,800 (336)
	2 Elton Tsang	\$244,650 (280)
	3 Ivan Leow	\$155,925 (224)
	4 Danny Tang	\$119,700 (168)
	5 Richard Yong	\$93,450 (140)
	6 Chris Brewer	\$72,975 (112)

POKERGO TOUR ITALY WRAPS UP HIGH-STAKES FESTIVAL IN VENICE

The *PokerGO Tour* made its way to the historic Casino Di Venezia in Venice, Italy for its latest high-stakes tournament series. The *PGT Italy* featured a total of five high roller tournaments that ran from May 26-28.

The festival kicked off with the highest buy-in event that ran, a €25,500 buy-in pot-limit Omaha tournament. A total of 11 entries were made, building a prize pool equivalent to \$288,365 USD. The top two finishers made the money, with Finland's Lauri Varonen emerging victorious in the end.

Varonen took home €188,650 (\$201,856) for the win. He also secured 113 *PGT* rankings points as the champion. This was his largest recorded live tournament score ever, surpassing the \$148,566 he secured as the runner-up in the PLO event at *The Big Wrap* in 2019.

Antanas 'Tony G' Guoga finished second in this event for \$86,510. This was his third cash of the year, all of which came in the month of May. He now sits in 41st place in the *PGT* standings as a result, with more than \$1.7 million in year-to-date cashes.

The second event on the schedule was a €10,200 buy-in no-limit hold'em tournament. The event attracted 18 entries, building a prize pool equivalent to \$188,748. The Netherlands' Teun Mulder came out on top, taking home \$101,864 for the win.

This was his third title of the year, but it did not qualify for POY points. He remains in 24th place in the overall standings there and now sits inside the top 30 on the *PGT* leaderboard.

Danny Tang finished third for \$30,174. Before this, he had already accrued eight final-table finishes with more than \$3.3 million in cashes along the way in 2022. He sits in eighth place in the current POY rankings.

Next up on the agenda was a €10,200 short deck event. With 13 entries, the prize pool grew to \$136,318. Like event no. 2, this also did not build a sufficiently large prize pool to qualify for POY points.

Santi Jiang came away with the title and the top prize of \$95,391. This was his second career live title, with his first being a \$756,000 win at the *Super High Roller Bowl Europe* last August. Paul Phua, who is second on the short deck tournament earnings list with nearly \$10.2 million, finished as the runner-up for \$40,928.

The penultimate offering for the *PGT Italy* was the €15,300 buy-in no-limit hold'em event. Wayne Heung took it down, earning \$172,270 after topping a field of 24 entries. Jiang backed up his earlier victory with a runner-up finish for another \$107,000.

Patrik Antonius finished fourth for \$37,771. The Finnish high-stakes star now has nearly \$12.5 million in career tournament earnings.

The final event was a €15,300 buy-in PLO tournament. Aku Joentausta was the last player standing, earning



\$110,210. Runner-up Samuli Sipila took home \$47,080.

PokerGO Tour – Casino Di Venezia – Cannaregio, Italy

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€25,500 PLO May 26-27 Entries: 11 Prizepool: \$288,365	1. Lauri Varonen	\$201,856 (168)
	2. Tony G	\$86,510 (140)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€10,200 NLHE May 26-27 Entries: 18 Prizepool: \$188,748	1. Teun Mulder	\$101,864
	2. Samuli Sipila	\$56,710
	3. Danny Tang	\$30,174

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€10,200 NLHE SD May 27-28 Entries: 13 Prizepool: \$136,318	1. Santi Jiang	\$95,391
	2. Paul Phua	\$40,928

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€15,300 NLHE May 27-28 Entries: 24 Prizepool: \$377,496	1. Wayne Heung	\$172,270 (216)
	2. Santi Jiang	\$107,000 (180)
	3. Derk van Luijk	\$60,455 (144)
	4. Patrik Antonius	\$37,771 (108)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
€15,300 PLO May 28 Entries: 10 Prizepool: \$157,290	1. Aku Joentausta	\$110,210
	2. Samuli Sipila	\$47,080

MARK DAVIS DENIES DARREN ELIAS FIFTH WPT TITLE, WINS HARD ROCK POKER SHOWDOWN



Darren Elias is the *World Poker Tour's* undisputed end boss. He holds the tour's lead in titles (4), final-table finishes (12), and cashes (44). On Wednesday, May 25 he very nearly extended his *WPT* title record, making it all the way down to heads-up play from a field of 2,010 entries in the 2022 *WPT Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown* \$3,500 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event.

There was only one player remaining between Elias and his fifth title: Mark Davis. The recent *World Series of Poker Circuit* main event winner from Birmingham, Alabama clashed with Elias in a four-hour heads-up match, with almost 100 hands played between the final two competitors with the title and a seven-figure top prize on the line. In the end, Davis denied Elias, securing the \$1,000,300 payday and his first *WPT* title for the win.

"This is huge," Davis told *WPT* reporters after adding his name to the Mike Sexton *WPT* Champions Cup. This is about as big as you can get outside of a couple other tournaments [in the world]."

Davis was also awarded a massive haul of 1,620 POY points as the champion of this event. This was his second POY-qualified title and fourth final-table finish of the year. In addition to his \$334,678 win in the *WSOPC Harrah's Cherokee* main event back in March, he also finished fourth in another *WSOPC* ring event at that series and second in a \$300 buy-in event at the *Pearl River Winter Poker Open*.

With 3,020 total points and more than \$1.4 million in year-to-date earnings, Davis has surged up the leaderboard and into seventh place in the POY standings.

The final table of this event was filmed for television at the HyperX Esports Arena in Las Vegas at Luxor. After two starting flights and three more days of action at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in South Florida, the field was narrowed down to six entries back on April 12.

Elias came into the final table with nearly 40 percent of the total chips in play. However, Davis worked with Chance Kornuth for over a month in preparation for this final table. (Read more on Kornuth on the next page.)

The first knockout saw Michael Laufer shove with pocket threes out of the big blind and Davis make the call with A-9.

Davis made aces and kings to secure the pot, while Laufer earned \$215,000 as the sixth-place finisher.

Andrew Barfield was the next to fall at Davis' hands. He held pocket sevens while Davis had K-Q. Davis flopped a pair and rivered a straight to send Barfield home in fifth place (\$280,000).

Viet Vo finished third in this same event back in 2021. Vo got the last of his chips in this time around with A♠ 8♦ on an A♥ J♥ 7♦ flop. He was up against the A♦ 4♦ for Elias. The 3♦ turn and 2♦ river gave Elias a runner-runner flush and the pot. This time Vo settled for \$370,000 as the fourth-place finisher.

Three-handed play only lasted 13 hands. Elias opened from the button with a min-raise holding pocket sevens. Marcos Exterkoter three-bet shoved for 13 big blinds with A♦ 4♠. Elias called and a jack-high runout brought no help for Exterkoter (\$490,000). This was the largest score of the Brazilian's career.

With that, Elias took 63,700,000 into heads-up play with Davis, who held 36,750,000 to start. The two exchanged the lead a few times before Davis began to pull away. At one point, Davis even picked off a bluff with just K-Q high to take a 6:1 lead.

In the final hand, Davis limped in with 8♥ 5♥ from the button and Elias checked his big blind with 9♦ 7♠. The flop came down Q♣ 8♠ 5♣. Elias check-called a bet of 2,600,000 from Davis and the 10♥ hit the turn. Elias shoved for his last 9,300,000 and Davis made the call with his two pair.

The 7♥ on the river did not complete Elias' straight draw and he was knocked out in second place, earning \$660,000 for his runner-up showing. This marked the first time that he had ever lost a heads-up match on the tour, having gone 4-0 in his previous showdowns when a *WPT* title was on the line.

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WPT Poker Showdown	1. Mark Davis	\$1,000,300 (1620)
	2. Darren Elias	\$660,000 (1350)
Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood, FL	3. Marcos Exterkoter	\$490,000 (1080)
	4. Viet Vo	\$370,000 (810)
	5. Andrew Barfield	\$280,000 (675)
\$3,500 NLHE April 8-May 25 \$3,000,000 GTD Entries: 2,010 Prizepool: \$6,432,000	6. Michael Laufer	\$215,000 (540)
	7. Andrew Davidson	\$165,000 (405)
	8. James Calderaro	\$125,000 (270)
	9. David Moore	\$100,000 (135)

Read more about Davis' breakthrough win with Final Table Takedown on pg. 36.

CHANCE KORNUTH WINS WPT CHOCTAW MAIN EVENT FOR FIRST TOUR TITLE



Chance Kornuth's poker tournament résumé is one of the most impressive in the world, with three *World Series of Poker* bracelet wins, big six-figure victories in high roller events, and more than \$10 million in recorded cashes.

The 35-year-old poker pro and founder of Chip Leader Coaching added another marquee achievement to his already expansive list by taking down the 2022 *World Poker Tour Choctaw* \$3,800 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event for \$486,600 and his first *WPT* title. It marked the end of a great two nights for Kornuth, who saw his student Mark Davis win his tournament the night before.

This was officially the sixth-largest payday of Kornuth's career, bringing his total career earnings to \$10,967,215. This was also his third *WPT* final-table appearance.

Kornuth also earned 1,368 POY points as the champion of this event. This was his third title and fifth final-table finish so far this year. He took down back-to-back events at the *PokerGO Tour Stairway To Millions* series in January for more than \$130,000 collectively. He then made a pair of podium finishes at the *Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown*, including a third-place finish in the \$25,500 high roller for \$522,571.

With 3,136 total points and more than \$1.2 million in year-to-date POY earnings, Kornuth has surged up the leaderboard and into fifth place in the 2022 POY race.

This tournament began back on May 13 at the Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma. The strong turnout of 787 entries built a prize pool of \$2,754,500, blowing away the \$2 million guarantee.

The survivors of the two starting flights combined into one field on May 15, with the televised final table of six set late the following night. The remaining contenders then had a 10-day hiatus, during which they made their way to the HyperX Esports Arena in Las Vegas.

Kornuth entered the final day in second chip position, but he was just a few big blinds behind five-time *WPT* final tablist Ray Qartomy.

James Mackey won this very event back in 2016 for his lone *WPT* title. The *WSOP* bracelet winner came into the day in fourth chip position but was ultimately the first to hit the rail. It was a classic preflop race situation that arose just four hands into the day, with Mackey holding A-K while

facing the pocket queens of James Hundt. A queen-high flop saw Mackey sent home with \$101,000 as the sixth-place finisher.

Kristen Foxen (formerly Bicknell) came into the day as the short stack. She was soon all-in for her last five or so big blinds, having shoved over Kornuth's button open with A-9 from the small blind. Kornuth called with J-10 suited to put Foxen at risk. She flopped a pair of aces, but Kornuth turned two pair and held from there to narrow the field to four.

Foxen, a three-time bracelet winner herself, earned \$135,000 for her fifth-place showing. The score increased her recorded tournament earnings to more

than \$5.9 million.

Despite having taken the lead in the first few hands of the day, Hundt was soon the shortest stack in the field. On the 45th deal of the day he lost a preflop race to Steve Buckner to fall to the bottom of the leaderboard. He ultimately finished fourth, earning a career-best \$175,000 for his deep run in this event.

Three-handed play began with Kornuth well out in front, sitting on more than three times as many chips as his nearest opponent. Buckner doubled up twice, first through Kornuth and then through Qartomy, leaving the latter with just over seven big blinds.

Qartomy got those chips in with pocket fives, only to run into the pocket jacks of Kornuth. The larger pair held up and Qartomy was eliminated in third place (\$235,000). He now has more than \$4.7 million in lifetime cashes to his name.

Heads-up play began with Kornuth holding more than a 2.5:1 chip lead over Buckner, who had 43 big blinds to start. The two went on to battle for more than a hundred hands, with the winner not decided until more than four hours after Qartomy was knocked out.

The back and forth affair ended when Buckner shoved his last 6.5 big blinds with 9♥6♦. Kornuth called with A♠10♦ and the board ran out K♣5♠5♥A♦9♦ to lock up the pot and the title for Kornuth. Buckner earned \$320,000 for his runner-up finish.

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WPT Choctaw Durant, OK \$3,800 NLHE May 13-26 \$2,000,000 GTD Entries: 787 Prizepool: \$2,754,500	1 Chance Kornuth	\$486,600 (1368)
	2 Steven Buckner	\$320,000 (1140)
	3 Ray Qartomy	\$235,000 (912)
	4 James Hundt	\$175,000 (684)
	5 Kristen Foxen	\$135,000 (570)
	6 James Mackey	\$101,000 (456)
	7 Amarander Puri	\$78,000 (342)
	8 Arthur Morris	\$61,000 (228)
	9 Bin Weng	\$48,000 (114)

DAN BEKAVAC WINS MID-STATES POKER TOUR FIREKEEPERS MAIN EVENT FOR RECORD FOURTH MSPT TITLE



Dan Bekavac entered into a three-way tie for the most *Mid-States Poker Tour* main event titles in history when he took down the *MSPT Riverside* in late March of 2022. Less than two months later, Bekavac broke that tie by emerging victorious in the *MSPT FireKeepers* main event to become the first-ever four-time champion on the tour.

Bekavac earned \$252,090 for his latest title run after defeating a record field of 2,330 total entries in the \$1,110 buy-in event. He now has \$738,067 in lifetime tournament earnings to his name. Nearly \$630,000 of those scores came from his four title runs on the *MSPT*.

"I feel great, I feel confident. Now nobody can say they got more than me," said Bekavac after the win.

In addition to the money and the title, Bekavac also scored 1,080 POY points for this victory. He has made just two final tables this year, and came away with the title both times. He now sits in 13th place in the overall standings.

Bekavac secured his first *MSPT* title back in 2013 at Ho-Chunk Gaming Wisconsin Dells. In 2019 he took down his second main event, also in Wisconsin, topping a field of 625 entries at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino.

In 2020, however, Bekavac had made headlines for a very different reason. The *Midway Poker Tour* he founded hosted an event in Illinois that ended in controversy, with players reportedly being partially paid out in silver coins instead of entirely in cash in an attempt to work around Illinois state laws.

The plan was apparently to have an on-site buyer who would quickly convert the silver into cash for those who were paid out in coins, but the Attorney General shut down the operation. In the end, a number of players who made deep runs in the event were left short on the payouts they were supposed to receive.

It took more than a year, but Bekavac eventually fulfilled his pledge to make things right, telling *PokerNews*' Chad Holloway that he had paid out the remaining players. "I am happy to report that even before this win earlier this weekend he made whole the remaining players affected by the *Midway Poker Tour* payout debacle," Holloway reported.

The final day of this event began with 311 players still in

contention. Plenty of notables made deep runs, including Jamie Kerstetter (213th – \$2,710), Chris Tryba (89th – \$3,840), and 2009 *WSOP* main event champion Joe Cada (43rd – \$6,550), a Michigan local.

Bekavac set the official final table by busting David Peterson in 10th place (\$27,103). He then scored his first knockout at the final table when his A-5 outran the A-K of Tim Mulroy (7th – \$56,456). Bekavac then eliminated Alex Oberlin (6th – \$72,275) to narrow the field to five.

Jonathan Johnson's run in this event came to an end when he shoved with J-10 and was called by the pocket kings of Zinoviy Pelekh. The pair held up and Johnson settled for \$91,699.

Pelekh was ultimately the next to fall despite winning that showdown. It was a classic race, with his A-K suited facing the pocket queens of Bekavac. A queen-high flop gave Bekavac an even larger lead, but Pelekh turned a royal flush draw to keep things interesting. A blank on the river saw Pelekh earn \$119,706 as the fourth-place finisher.

The final three agreed on a deal based on ICM that resulted in Bekavac, who held the chip lead, securing the title and a top payout of \$252,090. Marquez Davis earned \$198,975 as the third-place finisher, while CJ Peake locked up \$241,290 as the runner-up.

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
MSPT FireKeepers	1 Daniel Bekavac	\$252,090 (1080)
	2 Carlton Peake	\$241,290 (900)
Battle Creek, MI	3 Marquez Davis	\$198,975 (720)
	4 Zinoviy Pelekh	\$119,706 (540)
\$1,110 NLHE May 12-15	5 Jonathan Johnson	\$91,699 (450)
	6 Alexander Oberlin	\$72,275 (360)
\$1,000,000 GTD Entries: 2,330 Prizepool: \$2,258,600	7 Tim Mulroy	\$56,456 (270)
	8 Ruben Delgado	\$44,043 (180)
	9 Elliot Hebden	\$35,008 (90)

CIRCUIT RESULTS

All payouts in USD.



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
California State Championship	1 Sean Peckinpaugh	\$73,165 (420)
	2 Stephen Goldstein	\$25,090 (350)
	3 Tazebe Beyene	\$23,205 (280)
Commerce Casino Commerce, CA	4 Abdulla Alissa	\$24,350 (210)
	5 Leo Lee	\$14,120 (175)
\$570 NLHE KO May 10-15 Entries: 671 Prizepool: \$328,890	6 Deepinder Singh	\$38,810 (140)
	7 Chang Oh	\$6,850 (105)
	8 Armen Grigoryan	\$5,150 (70)
	9 Kenneth Hughes	\$4,680 (35)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
California State Championship	1 Marko Jakade	\$128,995 (912)
	2 William Wolf	\$112,885 (760)
	3 Austin Yoo	\$71,250 (608)
Commerce Casino Commerce, CA	4 Huy Nguyen	\$53,060 (456)
	5 Edgar Gabrielyan	\$39,980 (380)
\$1,100 NLHE May 18-22 Entries: 858 Prizepool: \$840,840	6 Jared Kawalsky	\$30,480 (304)
	7 Marc Robinson	\$23,520 (228)
	8 Jose Guzman	\$18,360 (152)
	9 Thuy Nguyen	\$14,520 (76)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WPT	1 Hoan Nguyen	\$99,532 (840)
	2 Bryan Rowland	\$61,516 (700)
	3 Jim Carroll	\$43,472 (560)
Choctaw Durant, OK	4 Charlie Watkins	\$31,328 (420)
	5 Dylan Easley	\$23,031 (350)
\$1,000 NLHE May 11-13 \$300,000 GTD Entries: 586 Prizepool: \$414,119	6 Andrew Watson	\$17,279 (280)
	7 Jerry Gilchrist	\$13,236 (210)
	8 Kenny Nguyen	\$10,356 (140)
	9 Corey Wade	\$8,280 (70)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Spring Open	1 Maurice Hawkins	\$46,597 (456)
	2 Stanislav Angelov	\$41,013 (380)
	3 Charles Johnson	\$41,013 (304)
Pearl River Resort Philadelphia, MS	4 Luther Tran	\$35,243 (228)
	5 Marshall White	\$31,487 (190)
\$600 NLHE May 13-15 \$350,000 GTD Entries: 728 Prizepool: \$362,617	6 Clay Henry	\$14,196 (152)
	7 Russell Sartin	\$10,920 (114)
	8 Gordon Hardy	\$8,736 (76)
	9 Daniel Calwayfagen	\$6,370 (38)



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Retro Series	1 Denis Golomedov	\$177,915 (720)
	2 Fahredin Mustafov	\$130,985 (600)
	3 Anonymous	NA
Merit Crystal Cove Kyrenia, Cyprus	4 Dmitrii Kuzin	\$59,300 (360)
	5 Mario Grana	\$44,520 (300)
\$2,200 NLHE May 11-15 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 481 Prizepool: \$885,040	6 Ali Al-Ani	\$35,665 (240)
	7 Ranno Sootla	\$29,735 (180)
	8 Oleg Eltsov	\$23,720 (120)
	9 Denis Matafonov	\$17,790 (60)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Retro Series	1 Selahaddin Bedir	\$176,500 (360)
	2 Hakim Zoufri	\$124,080 (300)
	3 Jelle Moene	\$79,230 (240)
Merit Crystal Cove Kyrenia, Cyprus	4 Anatoly Nikitin	\$59,800 (180)
	5 Ottomar Ladva	\$44,850 (150)
\$10,500 NLHE 8MAX May 14-17 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 65 Prizepool: \$598,000	6 Lachezar Petkov	\$36,980 (120)
	7 Dawid Smolka	\$31,100 (90)
	8 Albert Daher	\$35,420 (60)

TOURNAMENTS

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Championship Series	1 Zachary Hambrice	\$96,408 (840)
	2 Christopher Adams	\$94,999 (700)
Lodge Poker Room Round Rock, TX	3 Andrew Robinson	\$83,288 (560)
	4 Kenneth Neyerlin	\$45,975 (420)
\$1,600 NLHE May 11-15 \$1,000,000 GTD Entries: 659 Prizepool: \$1,000,000	5 Brian Lee	\$34,401 (350)
	6 Richard Chevalier	\$25,720 (280)
	7 Jason Aden	\$19,161 (210)
	8 Matthew Cosentino	\$14,275 (140)
	9 Venkat Chivukula	\$10,931 (70)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Championship Series	1 Alexis Meyer	\$113,367 (480)
	2 Eric Afriat	\$100,000 (400)
Lodge Poker Room Round Rock, TX	3 Collin Ball	\$60,518 (320)
	4 James Calderaro	\$46,221 (240)
\$800 NLHE May 15-18 \$750,000 GTD Entries: 1,116 Prizepool: \$756,480	5 Kristen Foxen	\$34,834 (200)
	6 Aden Salazar	\$26,482 (160)
	7 Nathan Hays	\$20,425 (120)
	8 Evan Burrow	\$15,886 (80)
	9 Thomas McGaffigan	\$12,860 (40)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Championship Series	1 Michael Perrone	\$120,704 (384)
	2 Farid Jattin	\$74,686 (320)
Lodge Poker Room Round Rock, TX	3 Alain Bauer	\$52,054 (256)
	4 Badr Imejane	\$38,907 (192)
\$5,000 NLHE May 18-19 \$300,000 GTD Entries: 82 Prizepool: \$300,000	5 Brandon Lulov	\$27,391 (160)
	6 Bin Weng	\$21,123 (128)
	7 Ryan Riske	\$16,597 (96)
	8 Jeremy Lyongs	\$13,956 (64)
	9 Philip Shing	\$12,070 (32)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Championship Series	1 Alain Bauer	\$374,800 (1260)
	2 Eric Afriat	\$320,000 (1050)
Lodge Poker Room Round Rock, TX	3 Steven Rivero	\$194,400 (840)
	4 Doug Polk	\$142,000 (630)
\$3,000 NLHE May 19-24 \$2,000,000 GTD Entries: 617 Prizepool: \$2,000,000	5 Nir Cohen	\$105,200 (525)
	6 Daniel Jones	\$78,600 (420)
	7 Farid Jattin	\$59,600 (315)
	8 Schuyler Thornton	\$45,400 (210)
	9 Mohammad Bagheri	\$35,000 (105)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
UKIPT	1 Niall Farrell	\$57,736 (480)
	2 Leon Campbell	\$36,035 (400)
Bonnington Dublin, Ireland	3 Greg King	\$25,747 (320)
	4 Manish Rawal	\$19,799 (240)
€1,100 NLHE May 18-22 Entries: 320 Prizepool: \$283,384	5 Remus Matache	\$15,238 (200)
	6 Richie O'Neill	\$11,717 (160)
	7 Raia Alexandru	\$9,395 (120)
	8 William Kassouf	\$7,829 (80)
	9 Barry Moore	\$6,516 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Eureka Poker Tour	1 Giorgio Montebelli	\$156,355 (960)
	2 Cristian David	\$118,418 (800)
Kings Casino Rozvadov, Czech Republic	3 Maik Dehmlow	\$82,191 (640)
	4 Randy Hofmaenner	\$109,314 (480)
€1,100 NLHE May 25-29 €1,000,000 GTD Entries: 1,096 Prizepool: \$1,122,622	5 Klas Krueger	\$48,017 (400)
	6 Benjamin Huegel	\$35,316 (320)
	7 Zaki Hamani	\$26,794 (240)
	8 Jose Neriz	\$19,128 (160)
	9 Bernd Werner	\$14,884 (80)

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TOURNAMENTS

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
DeepStack Venetian Las Vegas, NV \$600 NLHE May 12-15 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 598 Prizepool: \$303,186	1 Frederic Heller	\$50,400 (420)
	2 Arash Alikhani	\$50,098 (350)
	3 Vahap Caliskan	\$28,803 (280)
	4 Conrad Simpson	\$20,617 (210)
	5 Kathleen Toogood	\$15,614 (175)
	6 Alex Outhred	\$11,673 (140)
	7 Sen Mu	\$8,641 (105)
	8 Jesse Lonis	\$6,670 (70)
	9 Sean O'Hara	\$5,306 (35)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
DeepStack Venetian Las Vegas, NV \$600 NLHE May 19-22 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 408 Prizepool: \$250,000	1 Dorian Pavon	\$43,549 (360)
	2 Joseph Lam	\$29,046 (300)
	3 Kfir Nahum	\$20,394 (240)
	4 Sebastian Park	\$14,420 (180)
	5 Michael Evans	\$10,815 (150)
	6 Josep Galindo	\$8,137 (120)
	7 Todd Wilson	\$6,180 (90)
	8 Monty Food	\$4,635 (60)
	9 Thong Tran	\$3,811 (30)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
DeepStack Venetian Las Vegas, NV \$600 NLHE May 26-29 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 532 Prizepool: \$269,724	1 Joshua Suyat	\$54,108 (420)
	2 Christopher Marcadet	\$36,790 (350)
	3 Cory Skolnik	\$26,028 (280)
	4 Joseph Lam	\$18,611 (210)
	5 Joon Kim	\$14,026 (175)
	6 Charles Phillips	\$10,519 (140)
	7 Kenny Huynh	\$7,822 (105)
	8 Cedric Darrett	\$5,934 (70)
	9 Christopher Herrin	\$4,855 (35)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Poker Open Bally's Black Hawk, CO \$1,400 NLHE May 19-22 Entries: 153 Prizepool: \$188,190	1 Christopher Tryba	\$50,808 (288)
	2 Matthew Livingston	\$31,616 (240)
	3 Stephen Decker	\$19,195 (192)
	4 Andrew Crowley	\$14,114 (144)
	5 Edo Zucker	\$10,539 (120)
	6 Vincent Moscati	\$8,657 (96)
	7 Andrew Peragallo	\$7,622 (72)
	8 Luke Macken	\$6,681 (48)
	9 Allen Kessler	\$5,646 (24)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Deep Stack Series Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood, FL \$1,700 NLHE May 26-29 \$300,000 GTD Entries: 418 Prizepool: \$627,000	1 Joe Bartholdi	\$125,025 (720)
	2 Rasam Mohammadian	\$87,500 (600)
	3 Mike Chiappetta	\$57,525 (480)
	4 Michael Borovetz	\$38,595 (360)
	5 Adam Wells	\$29,660 (300)
	6 Casey Crews	\$24,910 (240)
	7 Howard Feingold	\$20,630 (180)
	8 Uri Kadosh	\$16,690 (120)
	9 Carlos Bermudez	\$12,775 (60)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
MSPT Silverado Franklin Deadwood, SD \$1,110 NLHE May 20-22 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 506 Prizepool: \$489,320	1 Gerald Cunniff	\$94,843 (840)
	2 Michael Estes	\$75,000 (700)
	3 Ronald Kohner	\$46,583 (560)
	4 Wesley Cannon	\$35,231 (420)
	5 Joshua Kieval	\$26,423 (350)
	6 Michael Williams	\$20,062 (280)
	7 Alex Smith	\$15,658 (210)
	8 Kevin Ellis	\$12,233 (140)
	9 Sergio Mireles	\$9,297 (70)

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2022 Card Player Player of the Year Sponsored by Global Poker



Place	Player	Points	Titles	Final Tables	POY Earnings
1	Ali Imsirovic	4,383	6	19	\$3,216,198
2	Stephen Chidwick	3,786	3	14	\$4,802,518
3	Daniel Dvoress	3,583	1	12	\$4,864,477
4	Jeremy Ausmus	3,442	2	14	\$1,817,145
5	Chance Kornuth	3,136	3	5	\$1,202,996
6	Farid Jattin	3,127	3	8	\$858,220
7	Mark Davis	3,020	2	4	\$1,408,650
8	Danny Tang	2,852	1	8	\$3,318,680
9	Jason Koon	2,829	1	10	\$4,161,770
10	Tony Sinishtaj	2,800	1	2	\$1,774,861
11	Mikita Badziakouski	2,750	2	5	\$3,985,292
12	Chris Brewer	2,729	3	13	\$1,781,252
13	Isaac Kempton	2,588	0	4	\$1,351,864
14	Alex Foxen	2,516	2	12	\$1,640,002
15	Sean Winter	2,446	2	11	\$1,890,300
16	Darren Elias	2,415	0	7	\$1,049,850
17	Nick Petrangelo	2,188	3	10	\$2,871,899
18	Phil Ivey	2,134	2	6	\$3,071,620
19	Huy Nguyen	2,122	1	7	\$273,247
20	Jake Schindler	2,112	3	8	\$4,849,300
21	Laszlo Bujtas	2,111	1	6	\$2,561,879
22	Daniel Bekavac	2,080	2	2	\$453,981
23	Michael Watson	2,031	0	6	\$2,409,165
24	Teun Mulder	2,026	2	6	\$3,009,759
25	Cary Katz	2,020	1	9	\$991,490
26	Seth Davies	2,002	1	8	\$2,757,260
27	Brian Altman	1,926	2	3	\$917,411
28	Marcelo Simoes Mesqueu	1,920	1	1	\$986,832
28	Grzegorz Glowny	1,920	1	1	\$754,555
30	Andras Nemeth	1,903	3	7	\$1,864,083



SHORT DECK TOURNAMENT EARNINGS

Rank	Player	Earnings
1	Jason Koon	\$11,312,935
2	Paul Phua	\$10,140,567
3	Phil Ivey	\$8,823,567
4	Justin Bonomo	\$7,990,529
5	Gabe Patgorski	\$7,018,952
6	Xuan Tan	\$6,588,981
7	Rui Cao	\$6,510,054
8	Cary Katz	\$6,044,494
9	Timofey Kuznetsov	\$5,806,150
10	Mikita Badziakouski	\$5,279,130

Short deck has carved out a key role on the high-stakes tournament circuit in recent years, having first exploded in popularity in big Asian cash games midway through the 2010s.

The game is similar to the standard no-limit hold'em, but is played with just 36 cards instead of 52. The deuces through fives of each suit are removed from the deck, and as a result, there are a few notable rule changes, including flushes beating full houses, and aces playing as both

the highest card and as a five in order to complete a nine-high straight (A-6-7-8-9).

Short deck made its debut at the *World Series of Poker* back in 2019, with another bracelet set to be awarded in the format this summer. The game is most often spread for high stakes at *Triton Series* festivals, like the one that wrapped up in Madrid shortly before this issue went to press. Six of the 13 events offered there were short deck tournaments, with more than \$18.7 million paid out in those contests.

The winner of the largest buy-in short deck event (€150,000) at that series was **Jason Koon**, who is the all-time tournament earnings leader of the game with more than \$11.3 million across 15 cashes. Three out of Koon's top four tournament scores have come in the format, including a \$3.6 million win in the 2018 *Triton Montenegro* \$1 million HKD (~\$127,000 USD) buy-in event. He also took down the 2019 Triton Jeju event at the same price point for a whopping \$2.9 million. His most recent win in Madrid saw him take home over \$1.8 million.

Paul Phua sits in second place on this leaderboard, thanks in large part to a pair of huge runner-up showings, each for paydays of more than \$2 million. The Triton co-founder has accumulated more than \$10.1 million in earnings playing short deck, with 17 in-the-money finishes under his belt since first cashing in 2018.

Rounding out the top three on this list is 10-time *WSOP* bracelet winner and living legend of the game **Phil Ivey**. He has accumulated more than \$8.8 million in short deck scores, or roughly a quarter of his total tournament winnings of more than \$35 million. He has three seven-figure scores playing the game, including a win at the *Triton Poker Cyprus* series in April of this year for just shy of \$1.2 million. ♠

Final Table Takedown: Mark Davis Outlasts Four-Time WPT Champ Darren Elias For Million Dollar Payday

By Craig Tapscott



Mark Davis is a health club owner, originally from Nashville, Tennessee, but he has spent the last 18 years living in Birmingham, Alabama. Although he originally started playing poker back in 2003 after college, it wasn't until this year that he turned pro.

The decision has proven to be a great one, with Davis rattling off a string of big scores to kickstart his professional career. After a runner-up finish at the *Pearl River Poker Open* at Choctaw in Oklahoma this January, Davis earned his first *WSOP Circuit* ring in February by taking down the main event at Harrah's Cherokee in North Carolina for a whopping \$334,678.

In March he picked up a small win, once again at Choctaw, before heading to the Seminole Hard Rock in Florida for the \$3,500 buy-in *World Poker Tour Hard Rock Poker Showdown* main event. It was there that Davis made the final table from the field of 2,010. The tournament wouldn't conclude until several weeks later in Las Vegas at the HyperX Esports Arena at the Luxor.

In front of his poker coach, Chance Kornuth, who would go on to win his own *WPT* title the next night, Davis outlasted a tough final table, and the most prolific player in *WPT* history in Darren Elias, to earn the title and the \$1,000,300 first-place prize.

Card Player caught up with Davis shortly after his life-changing win to talk about some key hands that led to his victory. You can read more about the event on pg. 28.

Event: 2022 WPT SHR Poker Showdown

Buy-In: \$3,500 • Entrants: 2,010 • Prize Pool: \$6,432,000 • First-Place Prize: \$1,000,300

HAND NO. 1

Stacks: Mark Davis – 25,000,000 (100 BB)

Darren Elias – 26,000,000 (104 BB)

Blinds: 125,000-250,000 with a 250,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 9

Craig Tapscott: You're at the table with one of the most successful players in poker over the last few years. And of course, he's gunning for his fifth *WPT* title. Did you approach your hands versus Darren Elias any differently than the others at the table?

MD: The only reason I would play my hand differently against Darren would be because he's the only player that could bust me. He and I were far and away the chip leaders at the table. I had position in this hand, and I understood the ICM implications that were in play at this point. That's the only reason I would play the hand differently with Darren in this spot.

Elias raised from UTG to 500,000. Davis reraises to 1,700,000 holding pocket queens from middle position.

MD: My three-bet is obviously standard, and my sizing was correct, a little over 3x Darren's open. But then...

Elias reraised to 4,200,000.

CT: Had Elias been aggressive at the table so far?

MD: No, Darren hadn't been overly aggressive up to this point. I had noticed that he was letting the table play out slowly. He was also sitting on a great final table stack. I knew I had to be strong in this particular spot, so I proceeded accordingly.

CT: What were the best options for you after his four-bet?

MD: I figured I had three options. I could five-bet, which is unnecessarily putting more chips in while I still have over a 20 million stack. I could just muck, but I have a premium top three hand. And I could call and literally make up my mind on the flop. I have to flop a queen here or if Darren slows down, I could have the best hand. I elected to call and see a flop in position.

Davis called.

Flop: 8♠ 5♥ 4♣ (pot: 9,025,000)

CT: Pretty safe flop. But you were still beat by a few hands.

MD: Yes. We're now down to option three since we called and got a safe board. But no queen. We had to wait and see how Darren proceeded.

Elias bet 3,200,000.

CT: What now? He could be doing that with several hands that you beat. But he could also have had you drawing thin.

MD: Well now my three preflop options were back in play. We could call the 3.2 million bet, but I was aware that the next bet would probably have been seven to eight million. Or I could have shoved. I was really back to when I called preflop and thought I needed to flop a set. In poker you have to be disciplined enough to let a hand go if you come to the conclusion that you're beat. My gut told me I was beat, so...

Davis folded. Elias won the pot of 9,025,000.

MD: Darren told me that I was beat in this hand after the tournament was over. That fold may have won me the event.

HAND NO.2

Stacks: Mark Davis – 77,200,000 (48 BB)
Darren Elias – 23,300,000 (14.5 BB)
Blinds: 800,000-1,600,000 with a 1,600,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 2

CT: This event played down to the final six in April and completed in Las Vegas on May 25 for a televised broadcast. How did you prepare for this final table?

MD: I prepared my ass off. I worked with Chance Kornuth, who is the founder of the site Chip Leader Coaching. We spent time each day preparing for every possible spot that could come up.

I also watched every WPT final table, all 18 plus seasons. And I watched Darren's \$25,000 heads-up event that he had just played where he finished second. This was the biggest poker spot in my life, so I left no stone unturned in my preparation.

Elias completed in the small blind on the button. Davis checked his option holding K♥ Q♥.

CT: So why did you check your option with a pretty big hand in the big blind?

MD: I had all the momentum here so when Darren limped and completed the small blind, I just checked. I know K♥ Q♥ heads-up is a great hand. However, we're getting to the time in the tourney where Darren will start shoving, and I don't want to have to call 22 million more with king high if I open the raising back up. Also, by checking back it really disguises the strength of my hand. My hand plays phenomenal post-flop, so I decided to see a cheap flop.

Flop: J♠ 8♦ 2♥ (pot: 4,800,000)

MD: I have a back door straight draw, back door flush



draw, and two overs. So, I made the decision to still disguise my hand. Darren elected to bet the minimum.

Davis checked. Elias bets 1,600,000, and Davis called.

CT: What were you thinking when you made this call?

MD: I figured I'm just going to see what develops.

Turns: 8♥ (pot: 8,000,000)

Davis checked, and Elias checked behind.

CT: Were you surprised he checked back the turn?

MD: After he checked that turn, I started to deduce his possible holdings. At this point I think a jack is unlikely. An eight is also unlikely. We're looking at a deuce in his hand or some kind of missed straight draw.

River: J♦ (pot: 8,000,000)

MD: Now the river double paired the board with another jack. And Darren...

Elias bet 6,000,000.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Triton Series Madrid
€50,000 No-Limit Hold'em Seven-Max



Laszlo Bujtas
119,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 38%
After Flop: 7%
After Turn: FOLDED



Tom Vogelsang
311,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 25%
After Flop: 78%
After Turn: 95%



Linus Loeliger
678,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 37%
After Flop: 15%
After Turn: 5%



PREFLOP

With 51 players remaining, a seven-handed table, and blinds of 3,000-6,000 with a big blind ante of 6,000, Laszlo Bujtas raised to 12,000 from the cutoff. Linus Loeliger called from the button and Tom Vogelsang called from the big blind.

FLOP



Vogelsang and Bujtas checked. Loeliger bet 8,000, and Vogelsang called. Bujtas folded.

TURN



Vogelsang checked, and Loeliger bet 45,000. Vogelsang called.

RIVER



Vogelsang checked, and Loeliger bet 110,000. Vogelsang folded.

COMMENTARY:

Linus Loeliger is widely considered to be one of the best high-stakes no-limit hold'em players in the world. While he is best known for his online exploits under the screen name 'LinusLLove,' the Swiss poker professional has managed to accrue more than \$2.2 million in live tournament earnings across just eight brick-and-mortar cashes. In this hand, he demonstrated some of the moves that have helped him rise to the top of the game. He called a min-raise from shorter-stacked Laszlo Bujtas holding a low pocket pair. Tom Vogelsang came along from the big blind and flopped queens and threes on an ace-high board. He opted to check with two players behind, and Bujtas decided against continuation betting. Loeliger saw an opportunity to start telling the story of a big hand and took a stab, firing a smaller bet of less than 18 percent of the size of the pot with his pair of fives. Vogelsang called and Bujtas bowed out. The turn brought another Broadway card, making a straight possible. Vogelsang check-called again, this time to the tune of 45,000 (a bet of roughly three-quarters pot). At this point, Loeliger likely put his opponent on a strong but not monster hand that was just hoping to hang on. Loeliger likely figured that his small pair had next to no chance of winning at showdown given the prior action. Now the question was, should he give up or keep firing? A fourth Broadway card on the river made a straight possible to any hand with a ten. Loeliger decided to keep his foot on the gas and made another bet, this time for 110,000 into 151,000. Vogelsang's queens and threes must have felt like just a bluff catcher at this point. The Dutch player let go of his hand to preserve his remaining 40 big blinds, while Loeliger took down the healthy pot thanks to some well-timed aggression. He went on to finish 10th in this event for \$196,350.



CT: Big bet.

MD: Yes. Darren had tanked and bet full pot for the first time all match.

CT: That's quite the polarizing bet. A monster or nothing.

MD: I started to go over all my options. A deuce is counterfeited. All straight draws missed. I am sure he would gladly check down ace high and win the pot with that. He either has a monster like a full house, which is very unlikely how the hand played out, or he has [a bluff].

After I'd narrowed that down, I believed I was good here. But thinking that and calling six million when playing for a million-dollar first prize this late in a heads-up match are two totally different things.

CT: Clearly, you had been making the right decisions all along to have a chance at the title and a million dollars. So, what now?

MD: I went with my read and my heart and made the call.



Darren said great call and open mucked. I felt great in that moment that I had taken the time to put the pieces together and had the heart to pull the trigger.

Davis called, and Elias mucked. Davis won the pot of 22,000,000.

CT: I followed the live updates on this event online and on social media, because Chance was there posting every few minutes. He was definitely rooting hard for you during the final table.

MD: He told me from the start what he expected of me if I was going to go on this journey with him. I'm confident I gave him all I had and more. Chance is a great player but an even better person. I was lucky to have him in my corner. I must add that Darren Elias is also a phenomenal champion and an extraordinary person as well.

CT: What a great experience for you during your first year as a pro. Good luck at the WSOP. ♠

TRUSTING A READ AND FOLDING A SET

By Jonathan Little

I was recently told about a hand played by an amateur poker player in the middle levels of a \$100 buy-in live event. With blinds at 400-800 with an 800 big blind ante, an aggressive player raised to 1,600 out of her 16,000 effective stack from second position. A tight player then called on the button.

Our Hero had 7♣ 7♠ in the small blind and decided to three-bet to 5,000.

I really dislike this play with any hand in Hero's range. By three-betting small, he is almost certain to get called by both of his opponents due to their excellent pot odds, which is not what he wants when out of position with a hand that will usually flop poorly.

Instead, he should either go all-in when he expects his opponents to fold most of the time or call when he expects his opponents to have strong ranges. Both plays are significantly better than three-betting to 5,000, which may actually be worse than folding. Facing a raise and a call, three-betting small with a 20-big blind stack is almost never a viable option.

As expected, the big blind folded and the other two

players called. The flop came K♣ J♥ 7♦, giving Hero a set. That is lucky! The pot was 16,600 with 11,000 remaining stacks. Hero checked.

I like this check, although betting a tiny amount like 3,000 or going all-in are perfectly fine options depending on the opponents' tendencies. The benefit of checking is it makes it much more difficult for the opponents to get away from any Jack. Of course, if the opponents will check behind with their decent made hands like top or middle pair and never bluff with hands like A♥ Q♥ or 9♣ 8♣, Hero should probably go all-in.

The initial raiser thought for a minute before going all-in, and then the button quickly called.

Hero thought for a while and then folded.

Hero told me that he was certain the tight player on the button had exactly K-K or J-J. While anything is possible, those two holdings are extremely unlikely because almost everyone three-bets both of these premium hands before the flop when facing a raise, and if they happened to slow play them against the initial raiser, once three-bet by Hero and called by the initial raiser, most people



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would four-bet all-in due to the short stack depths remaining.

Hero was quite disappointed to see the initial raiser turn over K♠ Q♣, which beat the button's J♦ 8♦. Hero folded a hand that was almost a lock to win in a gigantic pot because he was confident in his reads.

It is vitally important to realize that your reads will

often be completely incorrect. This is one of the many reasons why you should work hard to develop a fundamentally strong strategy so you know what to do when lots of money is on the line in all the common situations you will frequently encounter. Even if Hero's reads were correct and both players had hands they thought were strong, those hands could easily be K-J, K-Q, K-10, or A-J.

I cannot conceive of a world where I would fold bottom set in this situation. It is simply too likely that both players have a king, strong jack, or the obvious Q-10 straight draw. By folding, Hero is saying that his opponents both play so poorly that he knows without a doubt that at least one of them has specifically K-K or J-J, which makes no sense when you consider the preflop action.

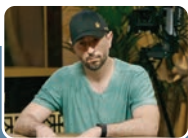
Hero lost a huge amount of value by "trusting his reads," or more likely, being afraid to commit all his chips when there is a small chance he is beaten. In this situation, letting go of a hand like K-Q would also be a substantial blunder, although again, that should have probably been pushed all-in preflop. When you have the top of your range and you play in a manner that induces bluffs (as was this case in this hand), folding is a significant mistake. ♠



Jonathan Little is a two-time WPT champion with more than \$7 million in live tournament earnings, best-selling author of 15 educational poker books, and 2019 GPI Poker Personality of the Year. If you want to increase your poker skills and learn to crush the games, check out his training site at PokerCoaching.com/cardplayer.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Triton Series Madrid
€50,000 No-Limit Hold'em Seven-Max



Brian Rast
510,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 62%
After Flop: 93%
After Turn: 80%



Phil Ivey
1,160,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 38%
After Flop: 7%
After Turn: 20%



PREFLOP

With 23 players remaining, a five-handed table, and blinds of 10,000-20,000 with a big blind ante of 20,000, Brian Rast raised to 40,000 from the hijack. Phil Ivey called from the button.



Both players checked.



Rast bet 40,000, and Ivey called.



Rast bet 65,000, and Ivey raised to 200,000. Rast folded.

COMMENTARY:

Phil Ivey and Brian Rast have two of the longest lists of accomplishments in the poker world, with more than \$57 million in combined tournament earnings and 15 *World Series of Poker* bracelets between them. Rast, a five-time winner at the series with more than \$22 million in total cashes, opened with a min-raise holding K-J suited. Ivey, with his 10 bracelets and \$35 million in earnings, came along with Q-9 suited and position. Rast flopped top pair with a jack kicker and made the decision to check from out of position. Ivey checked behind with some backdoor flush and straight possibilities. The turn paired the board with the middle card from the flop, while also giving Ivey a full-fledged flush draw. Rast opted to start betting his hand for value, putting in a bet of roughly 30 percent pot. Ivey made the call and the 7♣ on the end completed his draw. Rast now found himself in a tricky situation. With 430,000 (21.5 big blinds) remaining in his stack, he likely didn't want to check and face a large sizing from Ivey that could be either bluffs or made hands. He also likely didn't want to make a large value bet that would over-commit him if he were raised. He ultimately went for a blocker bet of 65,000 into the pot of 210,000. Rast likely made this move with the intention of bet-folding when raised unless given a strong reason to re-evaluate that plan. Ivey thought it over before raising it to just over three times the size of Rast's bet. Rast made the correct laydown, preserving a sizable chunk of his remaining stack with the disciplined fold. This hand took place with just ten knockouts remaining before the bubble burst. Both Rast (13th - \$106,050 USD) and Ivey (11th - \$114,030 USD) ultimately cashed in this event, but neither made it to the official final table.

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

Pineapple Open Face Chinese Poker: An Introduction

By Kevin Haney

Several years ago, Pineapple Open Face Chinese (POFC) Poker was immensely popular amongst the high-stakes community and with a marvelous blend of luck and skill, really fits the bill as a great gambling game. Longshot gambles are often the correct play and provide an amazing adrenaline rush when they come home.

While the action may have slowed down somewhat, it is still very popular online at all stakes and at some live venues, most notably the *World Series of Poker*.

Rules of the Game

POFC can be played with two or three players and over the course of a hand each player must place thirteen cards consisting of three cards in the front (or top), five cards in the middle, and five cards in the back (or bottom). Play commences with the player to the left of the dealer button and rotates in a clockwise order.

Each player is initially dealt five cards that must all be set face-up and after that there are four subsequent rounds (or pulls) where three cards are received of which two must be placed and one is discarded face down. In total, each player receives seventeen cards which often results in big holdings being shown down.

In order to make a qualifying hand, the back hand must be stronger than or equal to the middle and the middle hand must be stronger than or equal to the front, as determined by traditional poker hand rankings. The best possible front holding is three aces as there is no such thing as three-card straights or flushes up top.

If you fail to make a qualifying hand, your hand is considered fouled and you automatically lose six points to each non fouling player in addition to any royalties (see below) that must be paid out. In addition, when your hand is fouled you also forfeit any possible royalties that you may have accumulated as well. Fouling is possible because you are not dealt all of your cards at once and while it is undesirable to foul, sometimes we can play a hand 100% correctly and fail to qualify.

After every player has placed 13 cards, the hands are compared amongst every player holding a qualifying hand. You score one point for each line that you win and if you are lucky to scoop your opponent(s), you get an additional three bonus points. The difference between winning two out of the three lines and scooping is substantial as it's worth an extra five points.

Royalties for strong hands are also possible and play a very large role in POFC strategy. The royalties, or bonus points, can be seen in the chart.

Royalty Payouts

Front	
Pairs (Deuces thru Aces)	1-9
Trips (Deuces thru Aces)	10-22
Middle	
Three of Kind	2
Straight	4
Flush	8
Full House	12
Quads	20
Straight Flush	30
Royal Flush	50
Back	
Straight	2
Flush	4
Full House	6
Quads	10
Straight Flush	15
Royal Flush	25

Any player holding a qualifying hand can collect royalties, even if they have been scooped. For example, suppose the results of a POFC hand are as follows:

	Player A	Royalties	Player B	Royalties
Front	J-J-3	6	9-9-4	4
Middle	K-K-2-2-A	0	Q-Q-7-6-8	0
Back	Full House	6	Flush	4
Total		12		8

Player A receives 12 royalties, one point for winning each of the three lines, and three bonus points for scooping Player B, for a total point tally of 18. However, Player B gets four bonus points for his pair of nines up top and four for his flush on the bottom for a total of eight royalties, which he can use to reduce his overall loss to 10 points.

If the players were gambling for \$10 a point, Player B would pay Player A \$100, the dealer button would move, and the next hand would be dealt.

As an additional twist to the game, whenever someone makes a qualifying hand where they are able to place a pair of queens or better up top, they advance to a Fantasyland (FL) bonus round. When a player goes to FL, they have the advantage of being dealt 14 cards all at once and get to set their cards face down while everyone else is forced to play out a normal hand. The button does not move for FL as it is considered an extension of the same hand.

The value of going to FL is tremendous as a player gets to maximize the value of their hand without fear of fouling and can also observe their opponents' completed hands before setting their final hand. In order to remain in FL you require quads or better in the back, a full house or better in the middle, or trips or better in the front.

Why Play POFC?

POFC is a nice change of pace from the normal poker grind and can be incredibly addictive. Even if you are just practicing on a free app, you may find it extremely difficult to put down. By the way, the artificial intelligence on most apps is not very strong so before deciding to play for any meaningful amount of money you should be able to soundly beat your computer opponents.

It's also a less confrontational game which allows you to play heads-up without the feeling of getting run over by constant aggression or a cold run of cards. It's a fun game to play with friends because if one person loses badly it's easy to just chalk it up to bad luck.

Also, if you do not trust online poker due to possible collusion and potential "super users" that can see your cards, POFC offers a much safer environment since you can play heads-up and the majority of your cards are face up. In theory, it's possible that there are some players out there with some form of real-time assistance; however, if the stakes are relatively low and the action is moving fast this isn't a great concern.

Finally, the more variants you play equals less time on the sidelines and greater opportunities to seek out action players. Having the ability to be able to sit in any game at any time is the mark of a true seasoned gambler.

Deuce-to-Seven Pineapple Open Face

There are many variations of POFC, the most popular being deuce-to-seven Pineapple (2-7 POFC) where the object is to make the best deuce-to-seven low in the middle hand. It seems as if 2-7 POFC would be more complex due to the twist of building a low in the middle, however, it is probably the easiest variation of Pineapple to play at a competent level.

In regular High POFC, our decisions tend to be more complex as we have three high lines to consider and low bricks that are somewhat difficult to deal with in that game are much easier to navigate in the 2-7 version as we can often just simply drop them in the middle.

This is not to say that 2-7 POFC is easy, experience is still highly valuable, we must set our hands correctly, and also require a grasp of the mathematics behind late game situations in order to do very well. However, I think you will find that regardless if you are building a potentially great holding or a probable dud, many hands seem to play themselves. In the next installment, we will introduce the basic strategic considerations of 2-7 POFC.



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.

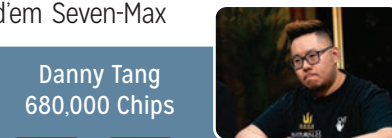
TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Triton Series Madrid
€50,000 No-Limit Hold'em Seven-Max



Fedor Holz
1,530,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 64%
After Flop: 27%
After Turn: 29%



Danny Tang
680,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 33%
After Flop: 73%
After Turn: 71%

PREFLOP

With 10 players remaining, a six-handed table, and blinds of 30,000-60,000 with a big blind ante of 60,000, Fedor Holz limped in from the small blind. Danny Tang checked his option in the big blind.

FLOP



Holz bet 60,000, and Tang called.

TURN



Both players checked.

RIVER



Holz moved all-in for 1,410,000, and Tang called all-in for 500,000.

COMMENTARY:

This interesting blind-versus-blind battle took place after a few post-bubble eliminations. The remaining 10 players were on the cusp of a \$34,545 pay jump, and then just one more knockout from an additional \$47,775 pay increase. Bracelet winner and high-stakes regular Danny Tang started this particular showdown with just more than 11 big blinds in his stack, and two of those committed before he was dealt in. Fedor Holz, a two-time bracelet winner with more than \$34.4 million in prior earnings, didn't begin his onslaught with a raise, though. He limped in from the small blind with just 9-6 offsuit. Tang looked down at an even less enticing 5-2 offsuit in the big blind and checked. Holz flopped no pair and no real draw to speak of, but began to amp up the pressure on his short-stacked opponent. Tang had flopped bottom pair and made the call for a single big blind, or a third of the pot at that point. The turn put a third spade on board. Holz pumped the brakes with a check, and Tang was happy to see a free card. The board paired on the river, leaving Holz with only one route to winning the pot: bluffing with nine high. He decided to move all-in, an effective bet of 500,000 into the pot of just 300,000. The overbet might have signaled to Tang that Holz was representing a polarized range consisting of very strong hands and bluffs. Tang went deep into the tank with his bare bluff catcher, likely knowing that his hand would appear quite weak to his opponent. After plenty of thought, he must have decided that Holz had enough bluffs in this spot to make calling profitable. He slid in the chips to put his tournament life on the line and was quickly shown the good news. Tang doubled up while Holz slipped to 15 big blinds. The two were not yet done clashing in this event, as they went on to both make podium appearances. Holz placed third for \$646,800 while Tang ultimately earned \$978,600 as the runner-up finisher.

Cognitive Biases: Part 5

By Greg Raymer

Continuing my series on cognitive biases, here are two more familiar biases that we are all quite aware of from playing poker, the Pessimism Bias and the Optimism Bias.

The interesting thing about these two biases is that both are very commonplace, yet they seem to be complete opposites of one another. As you would assume, the Pessimism Bias is a tendency to overestimate the likelihood of negative outcomes, while the Optimism Bias is a tendency to overestimate the likelihood of positive outcomes.

There is a lot of variance in poker. And very often, even when you play a hand correctly, you do not win the pot. Or, you lose a lot more in a pot with your correct play, whereas a different (inferior) line would have at least resulted in a smaller loss. Conversely, it is also common to badly misplay a hand, and yet win the pot. Or, again, you misplay a hand and win even more than if you had played it well.

Humans have evolved to notice patterns, especially short-term patterns, and we tend to give these patterns a lot of weight in our decision-making. Often, more weight than they deserve.

If you have played several draws aggressively, missed them all, and gotten called down, you will notice this short-term pattern. This is when the Pessimism Bias might creep in. You now start thinking that you just can't make any draws. And therefore, decide to either fold those draws, or play them passively so as to minimize your losses.

Of course, this is not always the optimal way to play a draw. Sometimes you should play them passively, but other times a more aggressive line is better. Yet now the Pessimism Bias is leading you to underplay all your draws. This means you aren't paying enough attention to all the other factors that would indicate if you should play the current draw passively, or aggressively, or even just fold it. Instead of weighing all the factors and using that information to pick the best line, your bias is making the choice for you. And often the one you pick will not be the smartest choice.

On the other hand, maybe you have played a series of draws aggressively, made all of them, and as a result won the maximum each time. Maybe one of those times, you missed the draw, but bet again on the river, and got the opponent to fold. Now you have not only won some bigger pots, but even managed to win a pot you otherwise would have lost.

This is when the Optimism Bias will get you. You now start to feel like you can't miss, and continue to play all your draws aggressively. And this might lead you to ignore the warning signs that an opponent just isn't going to fold. And by continuing to barrel into this opponent, you are doing nothing more than spewing chips into the pot, hoping to catch a lucky card.

Essentially, these two biases are opposite sides of the same coin. These biases are the result of us overemphasizing recent past results, and assuming the next result will follow the recent pattern. The truth is recent results have almost no meaning at all. Just because you have made your last four flush draws has zero impact on the odds of you making the next one. You are neither more, nor less, likely to make number five.

Of course, these biases don't just apply to draws. They apply to our entire game. Whenever you have been running bad, it gets easy to overestimate the chances that something bad will happen in the next hand you play. If this becomes your mindset, you will play the hand less than optimally, since you are overly concerned about the "bad thing" you believe is likely to happen.

And when you are running great, winning lots of pots, and hitting every board, you can easily go on Happy Tilt. You expect to keep getting these great results, and you start playing hands you should have folded. And trying

to bluff the calling station, and other poor decisions caused by your overly optimistic mindset. You become emotionally convinced you are destined to win every pot, and fail to put on the brakes even when it is clearly the smart move.

The main cause of these two biases, and most of the other biases we have discussed in this series, is emotion. Because recent results are so fresh in our memory, they have an over-weighted emotional impact on our mood, and therefore on our mindset. The more you can learn to become emotionally detached from the results when you play, the less likely you will fall prey to the Pessimism Bias and the Optimism Bias.

Instead of focusing on how many chips you won or lost, focus on the quality of each decision. If the smartest choice was made, but didn't work out, don't be pessimistic. Instead, be optimistic, because you are making the smartest choices. And if you make a decision that works out well, but you realize it actually wasn't the smartest choice, use that knowledge to guide you to make the smartest choice next time.

Don't go on happy tilt, and then continue to make poor decisions. Minimize emotions, and maximize quality analysis! Have fun, and play smart! ♠

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Greg Raymer is the 2004 WSOP world champion, winner of numerous major titles, and has more than \$7 million in earnings. He is the author of "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.



CONTRACTS AND POKER: GAMBLING LAW IN MONTANA

By Scott J. Burnham

In recent columns, we have been looking at laws for home games in various states, since gambling laws are up to each state and differ dramatically. In this column we will look at my home state of Montana.

Curiously, Montana has no laws addressing home games. This might be bad news, for most states start their gambling laws by prohibiting all gambling, and then creating exceptions. So, if there is not an exception for a home game, it is likely prohibited.

Montana, however, does not start by prohibiting all gambling. Instead, it prohibits “all forms of *public* gambling.” The implication is that private gambling is not prohibited. (To find out if this should be implied you might ask the state Attorney General. But if I were offering a home game, I would not ask and, if challenged, would assert that I had read the law and it appeared to be clear.)

The Montana rules on legal card games are interesting. The permitted card games are “bridge, cribbage, hearts, panguingue, pinochle, pitch, poker, rummy, solo, and whist.” Interestingly, the definition of gambling excludes “social card games of bridge, cribbage, hearts, pinochle, pitch, rummy, solo, and whist.” Note that poker and pan are on the list of permitted games, but not on the list of permitted social games, so they can only be offered in licensed card rooms.

It used to be that you could find a card game in most bars in Montana, such as the Stockman’s Bar in Missoula, which famously had a sign stating, “Liquor Up Front; Poker In The Rear.” The conjunction of drinking establishments and card rooms is no coincidence. Montana law requires that an establishment have a liquor license in order to offer card games. This is probably less to make sure that players have their drinking needs met than for the administrative convenience of vetting applicants for licenses.

Montana allows anyone over 18 to play, so you can get an early start. In order to protect players from themselves, however, Montana has always had a pot limit. When I started playing, this was \$100. That was generally not a problem for the \$3-\$6 limit games that were spread before the poker boom, but once no-limit became the norm, the limit was absurd. If a player went all-in, and got two callers, then each player put \$33 in the pot. The limit was first raised to \$300, and now stands at \$800.

Montana loves to enact detailed laws, and the poker laws and regulations are no exception. Just to make sure there is no argument, the rank of cards and hands is codified in the statute. And for rules of play, the late *Card Player* columnist Bob Ciaffone’s *Robert’s Rules of Poker* serves as the official Montana rule book, supplemented by The Tournament Directors Association (TDA) Rules for tournaments.

But Montana was not content to leave it at that, and adopted a number of other rules, many of which differ from what is customary. For example, under “Decks – Shuffle and Cut of the Cards,” the rules provide that, “Any player may request that the dealer change decks. If

such a request is made, the dealer must switch the use of decks at the end of that hand.” This is contrary to TDA Rule 26, which bluntly states, “Players may not ask for deck changes.”

Another rule provides that, “A player may not remove any of his or her chips from the table until the player quits the game. However, a player may use chips to pay for other goods or services in the premises.” This is contrary to Nevada law, which prohibits the use of chips other than for play and tokens at the table.

Finally, a rule states that, “A player who has a protected hand taken in by the dealer or fouled by discards through no fault of the player is entitled to be refunded from the pot all the chips the player put in the pot on that game.” This is also contrary to TDA Rule 65, which states that, “If the dealer kills a hand by mistake ... the player has no redress and is not entitled to a refund of called bets.”

If you ever play in Montana, you shouldn’t have much trouble adjusting to the state’s rules. There is a rule requiring that many of the rules be posted conspicuously in the card room. This rule states:

POSTING OF RULES

(1) At least the following rules must be posted in a clear, legible manner at each card table or in such a conspicuous location that the player at a card table can readily read such rules.

- (a) Games to be played.
- (b) Betting limits of the games.
- (c) Ante or blind bets (if any).
- (d) Number of raises.
- (e) Minimum and/or maximum buy-in limits (if any).
- (f) \$800 pot limit.
- (g) Rake percentage or set fee.
- (h) Check and raise (yes or no).
- (i) Designated wild card(s).
- (j) No side pots (except in cases of all-in bets).
- (k) No credit.
- (l) No passing chips.
- (m) No checks.
- (n) Maximum number of players in each type of game.
- (o) Players must be 18 years old.
- (p) House players identified upon request.

I’m not sure what they intended by stating “No side pots (except in cases of all-in bets.)” If anyone can explain to me how there can be a side pot other than in an all-in situation, I would be glad to hear it.

Meanwhile, enjoy your play in Montana or wherever your poker travels take you. Perhaps you’re even reading this at the *WSOP!* ♠



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SCHEDULES

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MAY	May 2-July 31	DeepStack Championship	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 15-July 17	Grand Summer Series	MGM Grand ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 30-July 21	Summer Poker Round-Up	South Point Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 31-July 3	Grand Poker Series	Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 31-July 10	Summer Open	Orleans Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 31-July 20	World Series of Poker	Bally's & Paris Casinos ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 31-July 20	Summer Classic	Wynn ■ Las Vegas, NV
JUNE	June 1-July 17	Poker Classic	Aria Resort & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	June 3-July 19	Summer High Roller Series	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	June 5-July 17	World Series of Poker Online	WSOP.com ■ Las Vegas, NV
JULY	July 25-31	San Diego Summer Classic	Ocean's Eleven Casino ■ Oceanside, CA
	July 27-Aug. 9	Hard Rock Poker Open	Seminole Hard Rock ■ Hollywood, FL
AUGUST	Aug. 17-28	WSOP Circuit	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino ■ Catoosa, OK
	Aug. 25-Sept. 7	World Poker Tour	Seminole Hard Rock ■ Tampa, FL

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

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THURSDAY

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SATURDAY

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OCEAN'S ELEVEN - OCEANSIDE

MONDAY-THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$5

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$5

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$75 AO \$5

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$230 AO \$10

WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

FRIDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

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WEDNESDAY

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

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

THURSDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$140

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

FRIDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$220

FLORIDA

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

MONDAY

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

7:15 p.m. NLH, \$320 KO \$75
SUNDAY
 6:15 p.m. NLH, \$130

NORTH CAROLINA

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TUESDAY

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 6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
 10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$5K Guarantee)
 6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
 10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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 6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
 10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$2.5K Guarantee)

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10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$5K Guarantee)
 6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$25K Guarantee)
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MONDAY-THURSDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$140
 10:00 p.m. NLH, \$80

FRIDAY

8:00 p.m. NLH, \$250

SUNDAY

2:00 p.m. NLH, \$250

OREGON

WILDHORSE - PENDLETON

TUESDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$35 AO \$5

THURSDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$5

FRIDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$80 AO \$5

SATURDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$115 AO \$5

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$35 AO \$5

TEXAS

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Playing The Nut Low On The River



You are six-handed and very deep in a \$1,000 buy-in tournament with 20 players remaining out of 1,000 players total. You have 29,400,000 chips with the blinds at 600,000-1,200,000 when it folds around to you in the small blind. You look down at 8♦ 4♦. The player in the big blind has roughly the same amount of chips as you.

Question 1: Should you fold, call, raise to 3,600,000, or go all-in?

Answer: The only time folding is reasonable is when you know the player yet to act is a maniac who will raise or reraise most of the time. If your opponent plays reasonably, your hand is too good to fold.

While you may get nervous playing hands like 8♦ 4♦ late in tournaments, you must ask yourself if this hand is profitable enough to play. When the answer is yes, you must put your nerves out of your mind and make the proper play. With 8♦ 4♦ you can either call or raise, but

considering your relatively short stack, calling is optimal.

You call and the big blind checks their option. The flop comes 9♥ 7♠ 3♦.

Question 2: Should you check, bet 1,200,000, bet 2,000,000, or bet 3,700,000?

Answer: A 3,700,000 bet is a terrible play because when you get called, you will be in terrible shape. While a 2,000,000 bet forces your opponent to play somewhat straightforwardly, a smaller bet encourages them to stay in the pot with many unpaired hands.

Since many players over-fold when they do not have a pair, you will find that your cheap bluffs pick up the pot far more often than they need to in order to be profitable. If your opponent does call your small flop bet with a wide range, you will often be able to make them fold by the river with additional aggression.

While a bet for 1,200,000 would have been preferred, you elect to bet 2,000,000 and your opponent calls. The turn is the A♥.

Question 3: Should you check, bet 2,000,000, bet 4,500,000, or bet 7,000,000?

Answer: The A♥ provides you with a good bluffing opportunity because your opponent would have likely reraised with most of their best aces before the flop, and they may even fold some of them to a flop bet.

That said, betting 7,000,000 is too big because it loses more than is necessary when you happen to be up against an ace. Betting for 2,000,000 is also not ideal because it is cheap enough that your opponent will call with all sorts of made hands that crush you.

Betting 4,500,000 grows the pot such that it sets up the river for a potential all-in, putting the opponent in a tough spot with all hands worse than an ace, which should be most of their range. Checking and giving up is only the best play if you somehow have a live read that makes it clear that your opponent really likes their hand.

Despite betting 4,500,000 being preferred, you check and your opponent checks behind. The river is the 5♦.

Question 4: Should you check, bet 2,000,000, bet 4,500,000, or bet 7,000,000?

Answer: With the nut low, you almost always want to make a big bet when your opponent is unlikely to have a premium hand. That said since you checked the turn, your opponent may opt to call any bet with any pair. Making a medium bet of 4,500,000 could induce a fold from hands like king-high and 10-8, but will still get called by all pairs.

A large bet is the only size that has any chance of getting your opponent to fold a pair, making that bet size ideal.

You bet 7,000,000. Your opponent thinks for a while before folding 10♦ 9♦ face up. Nice result. However, if you bet the turn and then went all-in on the river, you would have won more! ♠

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