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DANIEL NEGREANU TALKS 'THE MOST DOMINANT PERFORMANCE' OF HIS CAREER

Poker Hall of Famer Earns \$3.3 Million
At Super High Roller Bowl VII

PLUS

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PUBLISHERS

Barry Shulman | Jeff Shulman

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Julio Rodriguez

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Julio Rodriguez
TOURNAMENT CONTENT MANAGER Erik Fast
ONLINE CONTENT MANAGER Joe Mattia

ART

ART DIRECTOR Wendy McIntosh

WEBSITE AND INTERNET SERVICES

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Jaran Hardman
DATA COORDINATOR Morgan Young

SALES

ADVERTISING MANAGER Mary Hurbi
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER Barbara Rogers

CARDPLAYER MEDIA LLC

CHAIRMAN AND CEO Barry Shulman
PRESIDENT AND COO Jeff Shulman
GENERAL COUNSEL Allyn Jaffrey Shulman
VP INTL. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Dominik Karelus
CONTROLLER Mary Hurbi
FACILITIES MANAGER Jody Ivener

CORPORATE OFFICE

6940 O'Bannon Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89117
(702) 871-1720
cardplayer@cardplayer.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS

1-866-LVPOKER
(1-866-587-6537)
PO Box 434
Congers, NY 10920-0434
cardplayer@cambeywest.com

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

sales@cardplayer.com
(702) 856-2206

DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION

distribution@cardplayer.com

RESULTS

results@cardplayer.com

SCHEDULES

schedules@cardplayer.com

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NEWS FROM THE GAMBLING WORLD

ALLEGED POKER CHEATER PASSES LIE DETECTOR TEST
AND PRESSES CHARGES

By Card Player News Team



Three weeks after Robbi Jade Lew set the poker world ablaze with her jack-high hero call against Garrett Adelstein on Hustler Casino Live, the community still can't come to a consensus.

Despite scooping the six-figure pot, Lew gave the money back to Adelstein, who accused her of cheating the game.

Everyone has subsequently spent nearly every moment since dissecting the hand and players in question, trying to answer the question: Did she cheat? And if so, how?

Many sided with Adelstein, who until this incident held a stellar reputation among other players. They believed that Lew giving him \$135,000 back was a sign of guilt, and couldn't believe that she could make such a call without knowing something about the cards in play.

Others say that Lew made a highly-questionable play that happened to work out in her favor, and that refunding Adelstein was only done to keep the game running and diffuse a tense situation. They believe that Lew either misread her hand, or just failed to justify an amateur decision.

The initial reactions online leaned guilty, especially when weighed with Adelstein's testimony. But the more Lew defended herself, frequently appearing

on web streams devoted to the controversy, the more she appeared to win over those who were on the fence.

Then, Hustler Casino Live announced that they had fired an employee, Bryan Sagbigsal, for stealing \$15,000 from Lew's stack after the live stream had ended.

Lew opted not to press charges, which immediately sent up red flags for some who suggested that it was a sign Sagbigsal and Lew were working together. Was Sagbigsal stealing, or was he just taking his cut as the inside man in a bigger cheating operation?

Lew stated that she didn't press charges because of Sagbigsal's previously clean record, however, internet sleuths quickly discovered that Sagbigsal had an extensive criminal history.

HCL co-owner Nick Vertucci, who claims to have formerly worked in law enforcement, admitted in a podcast that he did not perform background checks on his employees, despite the sensitive nature of working in a casino with millions of dollars in circulation.

Lew reiterated her innocence, and said that after learning of Sagbigsal's priors, she would now be pressing charges against him, turning over evidence of communication to a Gardena Police detective. She also said that she

learned Sagbigsal had stolen on previous occasions, a claim that was not corroborated by HCL.

Committed to clearing her name, Lew underwent a polygraph test while in Las Vegas. The test results indicated that she was telling the truth when she said that she was not cheating, using any devices, or conspiring with anyone else during the game. She also offered to turn her phone over to the media to prove that she had no previous ties to Sagbigsal.

Lew's transparency greatly improved the number of people in her corner, but it wasn't free from criticism. Many pointed out that polygraph tests are notoriously unreliable, and wondered why she would choose to take the test in Las Vegas instead of taking up casino owner Eric Persson's offer to be tested with his security team. The documents also reveal that Lew has enlisted the help of a public relations firm based in New York.

Those who find the report credible are calling for Adelstein to return the money to Lew, even though he has already donated the entirety of it to the Big Brother, Big Sister program of Los Angeles. Lew has stated that she is fine with the money having been donated, however she wishes she could have chosen a charity of her own for half the amount.

Both players spoke with the *L.A. Times*, with Adelstein telling them he doesn't "know when [he'll] choose to play poker again."

The scandal, real or imagined, has now extended beyond these two individuals. As the investigations continue, accusations have been thrown at other regulars in the game and even the dealers. The show's operators, the aforementioned Vertucci along with Ryan Feldman, are now facing backlash for their potential involvement and reportedly lax security measures as well. ♠



'STORAGE WARS' CAST MEMBER RENE NEZHODA WINS ACR LIVE TOURNAMENT

By Card Player News Team

Rene Nezhoda has been one of the main stars of the popular *A&E* reality television series *Storage Wars* for nearly a decade. The show follows bargain hunters who travel to storage locker auctions with the hopes of finding valuable items that have been abandoned to gather dust.

Nezhoda demonstrated that his profit-hunting skills extend beyond the world of storage auctions when he came out on top in a big poker tournament held in Punta del Este, Uruguay. He defeated a field of 340 total entries in the *Americas Cardroom Enjoy Poker Tour Punta del Este* \$1,100 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event, banking \$70,455 and his first poker tournament title.

"I'm exhausted. All eight players were very good. Actually, the last 24 players were all very good. It was hard," said Nezhoda in a video interview with ACR after coming out on top. "This goes to my Americas Cardroom family, to the Bargain Hunters family, to the *Storage Wars* family, my lovely wife, everybody that has been supporting me, and most of all my daughter back at home."

This was far and away the largest poker score yet for Nezhoda. Prior to this victory, his biggest cash was the \$12,745 he earned for a 13th-place showing in a \$1,500 super turbo bounty event at the 2019 *World Series of Poker*.

Nezhoda had made a deep run just a handful of days



earlier, placing 11th in a \$3,300 buy-in event during the same series for \$9,500. He now has \$106,000 in lifetime live earnings to his name.

According to Nezhoda, he was originally a cash game grinder in Las Vegas before starting his business in California. He most recently appeared on *Live At The Bike!*, an online streaming cash game.

This breakout win for Nezhoda was noted by some of the biggest names in the poker game. 2003 *WSOP* main event champion Chris Moneymaker took to social media to send his congratulations.

"Way to crush them down there," said Moneymaker.

All-time bracelet leader Phil Hellmuth also had words of support for Nezhoda, who responded with a message crediting the 16-time *WSOP* champion's book for bolstering his mental fortitude during his run to the title. ♠

MICHIGAN MAN CONVICTED IN MURDER OF POKER PLAYER SUSIE ZHAO

By Joe Mattia

Warning: This story contains graphic depictions of a crime.

A man has been convicted in the 2020 murder of 33-year-old poker pro Susie Zhao.

According to a report from *The Oakland Press*, a jury deliberated for less than an hour to convict Jeffery Morris, 62. Morris reportedly was homeless at the time of the murder.

Morris faces mandatory life in prison for first-degree murder, with sentencing slated for November.

Zhao was found dead in a Michigan parking lot near an outdoor recreation area in White Lake Township. Authorities were alerted to the body by a local resident.

Zhao was a longtime poker pro who made her living primarily playing live, high-stakes cash games in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, but had moved back to Michigan to be closer

to family.

Despite focusing on cash games, Zhao racked up \$224,671 in career tournament earnings, mostly from deep runs in the *World Series of Poker* main event in 2012, 2015, and 2017. Her 2012 90th-place finish netted her \$73,805, the largest payout of her career.

Prosecutors largely relied on Morris' cell phone to convict him.

"Evidence on Morris cell phone showed multiple internet searches for violent sex and thousands of saved images involving brutality against Asian women and slaves, bondage, and more, as well as sexual encounters in remote, wooded areas — similar to where Zhao's body was found," the report said. "There was evidence her wrists were bound by zip ties prior to her being doused with gasoline and set afire while alive, and she had sus-



tained serious damage to her genital area caused by blunt force that Morris inflicted on her."

"Cell phone tracking showed their phones — and presumably Morris and Zhao — were together in the hours leading up to her death. Investigators tracked the phones from Zhao's parents' home to the Sherwood Motel in Waterford where Morris had rented a room for \$50, and then to the parking lot where Zhao's body had been left."

The defense's argument alleged that Morris couldn't have assaulted and murdered Zhao in less than seven minutes, but the jury saw otherwise. ♠

Texas Poker Room Raided During Tournament, Six-Figure Prize Pool Seized

By Joe Mattia

In October, the Watauga Social Lounge Poker Club in the state of Texas was raided by police during the middle of a tournament. Several people reportedly were arrested.

PokerNews obtained a copy of the warrant, which stated that police were allowed to seize “currency, gambling proceeds, financial instruments, and or other items of value ... relating to obtaining, transferring, secreting or spending large sums of money made from engaging in specified unlawful activities.”

The warrant was reportedly signed on Oct. 7. Authorities were also searching for other gambling equipment, such as dice, roulette wheels, and video gambling machines, per the report.

Gambling is largely restricted in the Lone Star State.

Unfortunately for poker players, the raid came during the middle of a tournament. It was the second day of a \$420 buy-in tournament with a \$20 add-on, that featured a \$100,000 guaranteed prize pool.

According to PokerNews, less than 50 players out of 369 were remaining in the event when it was raided, and the prize pool was more than \$132,000. All of it was seized by police.

The venue, which had been open for less than a year, was

described as follows: “All of the windows for the poker room are ... preventing anyone from seeing inside. On either side of the door are large images of playing cards [with] black, blue, and white poker-style playing chips.”

It’s worth noting that the mayor of Watauga attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony in January.

The poker room, like others around the Lone Star State, is considered a private social club. Poker players pay daily, monthly, or yearly membership dues, as well as fees for club access. A traditional poker rake isn’t charged in order for the business model to square with existing law, but it is unclear if there was any rake violation in this case.

There have been other crackdowns on poker in the state. Another high-profile situation came in January when the Texas Card House in Northwest Dallas was notified its permit from the city had been revoked. After an appeal with the Board of Adjustments, the card room was allowed to resume operations.

The Texas Supreme Court is expected to eventually weigh in on the ultimate legality of social poker rooms. There are around 60 poker rooms in the state that are currently operating under the social club model. ♠



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KENTUCKY MAN CHECKS LOTTERY TICKET MONTHS LATER, DISCOVERS \$1 MILLION PRIZE

By Joe Mattia

A Lexington man has come forward with the winning Kentucky Lottery Powerball ticket worth \$1,000,000 that was sold in Lexington on Aug. 31st. However, it's how he discovered that he had won that is making headlines.

The winning ticket that was sold at Crossroads IGA on Abagail Way in Lexington matched the first five white ball numbers to win the game's second prize.

The winner told lottery officials he has been picking the same numbers for years, consisting of a combination of family birthdays. He only checks tickets on occasion, according to the Kentucky Lottery, and had a stack of tickets going all the way back to June when he sat down one night to go through them.

"I had gone through about 40 tickets and got to the last five to see if I had any winners. I was looking at the



numbers on my phone, when suddenly I saw the numbers I had always been playing. I kept looking at the ticket and looking at the date, making sure it was correct. I leaned back on my couch, and then started yelling for my family to come check it out. They took the ticket, checked Google to see how much you win for matching the five white ball winning numbers and not

the Powerball, and told me we had just won a million dollars. I kept asking myself – am I dreaming?"

He elected to remain anonymous, which the Kentucky Lottery allows.

The winner had to go to work the following day but admitted he had had a hard time sleeping the night before. Once he got to work, he took time to watch the Aug. 31st drawing on his phone just to make sure that he wasn't mistaken.

Later that afternoon, he drove to lottery headquarters where he received a check for \$710,000, after taxes. As for what he plans to do with the money, he said his family may consider buying a new home.

Crossroads IGA will receive a \$10,000 bonus for selling the winning Powerball ticket.

The Powerball is one of two multi-state lottery games. The other is Mega Millions. ♠

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Super High Roller Bowl VII
\$300,000 No-Limit Hold'em



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 27%
After Flop: 5%
After Turn: 20%

Andrew
Lichtenberger
1,965,000 Chips



Nick Petrangelo
2,775,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 46%
After Flop: 95%
After Turn: 80%

PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 15,000-25,000 and a big blind ante of 25,000, Andrew Lichtenberger raised to 60,000 from the button.

Nick Petrangelo called from the big blind.



Both players checked.



Petrangelo checked,
and Lichtenberger
bet 240,000.
Petrangelo called.



Petrangelo checked,
and Lichtenberger
bet 480,000.
Petrangelo folded.

COMMENTARY:

The *Super High Roller Bowl VII* was down to just three contenders, with all remaining players guaranteed at least a \$1,152,000 payday for making it that far. When this hand began, the shortest stack was Andrew Lichtenberger with roughly 79 big blinds to play with. Lichtenberger, a *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner with more than \$14 million in prior earnings, opened from the button with Q-6 suited. Two-time bracelet winner Nick Petrangelo defended his big blind with the less-than-exciting Q-7 offsuit. Petrangelo went into pot control mode after the flop thanks to hitting second pair. He checked and Lichtenberger checked back with his queen high and backdoor flush possibilities. The turn brought a second diamond, giving Lichtenberger a full-fledged flush draw. Petrangelo checked again and Lichtenberger unleashed an overbet of 240,000 into a pot of just 160,000. This sizing could have been chosen to offer worse odds for Petrangelo to call, likely resulting in more folds than a smaller sizing might have. It also has the benefit of discouraging check-raises from Petrangelo by giving him less room to take that approach. Petrangelo called to grow the pot to 640,000 and the river brought another low card. Petrangelo checked second pair yet again and Lichtenberger, who had missed his draw, began to mull over his options. With no showdown value to speak of, he decided to fire another barrel. Instead of going with another overbet, though, he switched up his sizing and bluffed 480,000 for a bet of exactly three-quarters the size of the pot. His sizing decision probably included a balancing of wanting to bet enough to maximize his chances of drawing a fold while limiting the amount he would lose if Petrangelo were to call. In this instance, the sizing worked, causing Petrangelo to fold the best hand. Lichtenberger took down the pot to move into a virtual three-way tie as short-handed action continued.

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

DANIEL NEGREANU TALKS 'THE MOST DOMINANT PERFORMANCE' OF HIS CAREER

Poker Hall of Famer Earns \$3.3 Million At Super High Roller Bowl VII

By Erik Fast



© PokerGO / Antonio Abrego

Daniel

Negreanu is one of the most accomplished poker players in the history of the game, with six *World Series of Poker* bracelets, two *World Poker Tour* titles, two *Card Player* Player of the Year awards, and many other noteworthy achievements accrued over his Hall of Fame career as a professional player.

According to Negreanu, though, the past couple of years have been a couple of his worst on the professional circuit, dealing with numerous close calls and the wrong side of variance. Earlier this year, he publicly shared losses of more than \$1.1 million while playing at the *WSOP*.

In early October, Negreanu broke out of his funk by emerging victorious in the prestigious *Super High Roller Bowl VII*, featuring an elite field of 24 entries in the \$300,000 buy-in event to secure the *SHRB* ring and \$3,312,000, the second-largest payday of his career.

Negreanu now has \$48,864,902 in career tournament earnings to his name, the third-most of any player in the world.

"Obviously it feels great. The last two years have been really, really difficult mentally because I know my game is better than ever. But who cares? The public looks at it like, 'No, no, no, Daniel. You've got to look at your results. Your results are not good. You're playing bad.' I know how I'm losing. I've been doing this for 30 years. I know when it's me. I know when it's me making mistakes, and it isn't," said Negreanu in his post-win interview with *PokerGO*.

"It's not over," Negreanu told *Card Player* when asked about his stretch of bad luck in key all-ins hands that has spanned the past couple of years. "I was never all in during this event. In all-ins, I've still run under equity for two years. Now, when people tell me crazy stories about bad runs, I finally believe them, because in my three decades as a pro I've never seen anything like this."

"Do you know how f***ed I've been getting?" he continued. "Hopefully, it changes at some point, and luckily I

won that \$3.3 million because otherwise, I might lose my mind."

Just days before winning the *SHRB*, Negreanu had been knocked out on the direct money bubble of the \$50,000 buy-in finale of the *Poker Masters* thanks to a bad beat that typifies that run Negreanu has been discussing. His pocket aces were cracked by pocket jacks with all of the chips in preflop, with a nearly six-figure min-cash hanging in the balance.

"In my bustout interview after I bubbled the final event of the *Poker Masters*, I said, 'How are they gonna get my chips in this thing?' They're not! The *Super High Roller Bowl*, I'm going wire-to-wire, I'm gonna dominate this thing.' That's exactly what I did. I was the chip leader after day one, chip leader basically after day two, Nick passed me right near the end there. But, I cruised. I was never all in, never in jeopardy, never at risk, never in doubt really. I was destined to win that thing because if you give me a structure like that, with those players, I feel like I can play very good defense and it was going to be really, really difficult to get my chips."

In the end, Negreanu came away with one of the biggest titles of his career, against a field that was largely composed of the best of the best when it comes to tournament players. It is a victory that will go down as one of the crowning accomplishments of a legendary career.

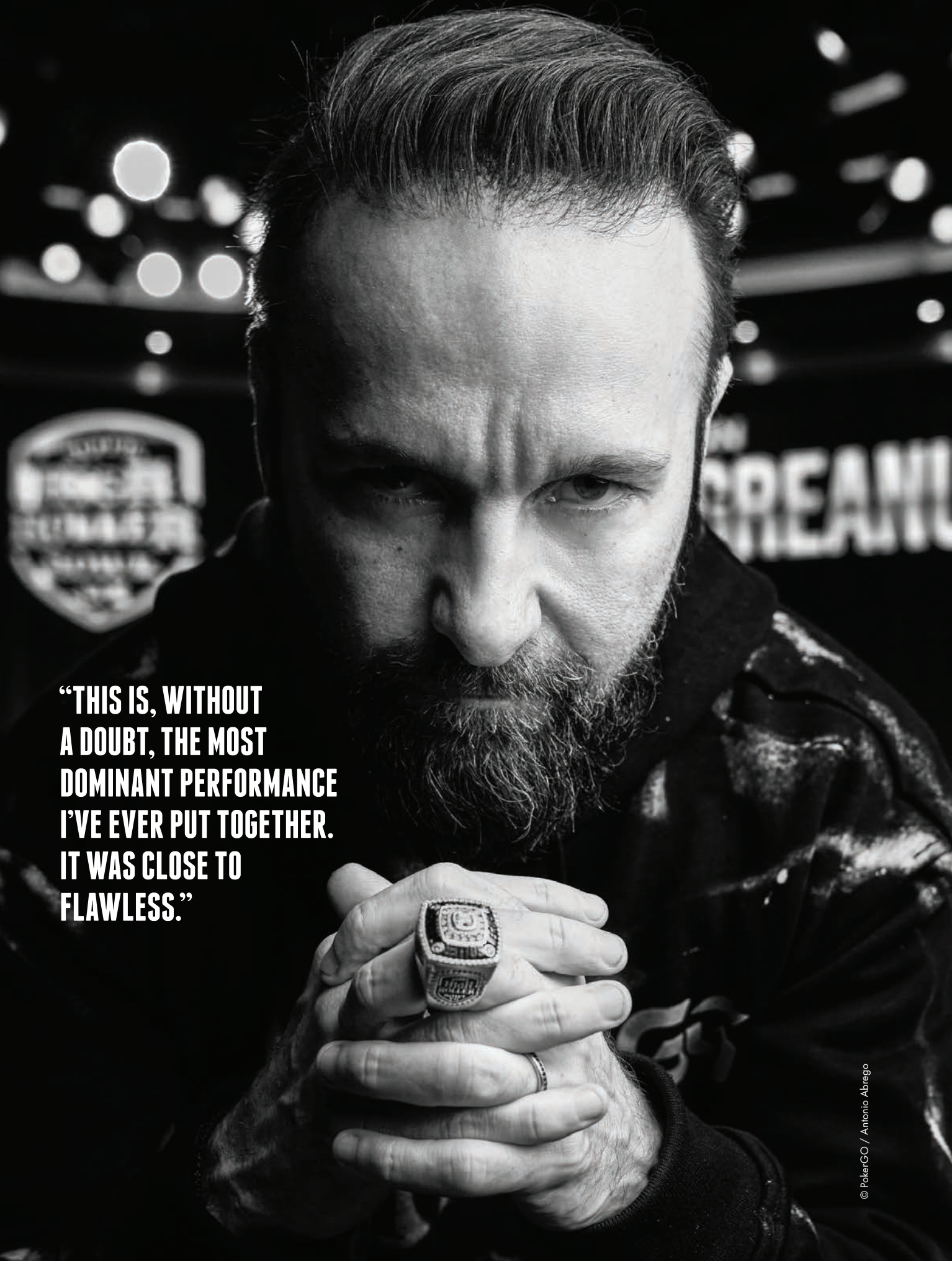
"This is, without a doubt, the most dominant performance I've ever put together over three days. It was close to flawless," offered Negreanu when asked about where this ranks among his many title runs. "I watched it back, and even these small little intricate folds that I was making in hands you're supposed to call with were correct basically every time. Very few mistakes, which you are always going to make throughout a tournament, but it's by far the most dominant and best performance of my entire career by a mile, given the field that I was up against."

Negreanu not only won, but he did so while laughing and chatting it up with his opponents in the manner that made him famous. It was a familiar table presence that wasn't always present during the recent bad run.

"I think it's incredibly important to understand theory at a high level in order to compete at the highest levels, but also understand that no single human being is performing it perfectly. Part of what made me great at poker for many years was my ability to adapt and exploit... figuring out what people are doing wrong," Negreanu explained. "Part of that is me being in my comfort zone and behaving the way that I like to behave... 'loosey-goosey'



© PokerGO / Antonio Abrego

A black and white close-up portrait of a man with a full beard and mustache. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious, intense expression. His hands are clasped in front of him, and a large, ornate ring is visible on his finger. The background is dark with some blurred lights and a partially visible logo on the left.

**“THIS IS, WITHOUT
A DOUBT, THE MOST
DOMINANT PERFORMANCE
I’VE EVER PUT TOGETHER.
IT WAS CLOSE TO
FLAWLESS.”**

Kenney's Aces Full Get Cracked By Negreanu's Quads



if you will.”

Below is a look back at how Negreanu came away with the title.

Starting Strong With Quads Over Aces Full

Negreanu got off to a fast start on day 1 of this event, which was held in the PokerGO Studio at ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, bagging up the day 1 chip lead thanks in large part to a massive pot that went down during just the third level of play.

The hand saw Negreanu square off against Bryn Kenney, one of only two players on the planet with more tournament earnings than him. With blinds of 1,000-2,000 and a big blind ante of 2,000, Kenney raised to 5,000 from under the gun with pocket aces. Kenney started the hand with 222,500, or just over 111 big blinds. Negreanu, who had Kenney covered by more than 30 big blinds, defended his big blind with 3♥ 3♦ and the two players saw a flop of A♠ 5♣ 4♠.

Negreanu checked, and Kenney made a continuation bet of 5,000 into the 13,000 pot with his top set. Negreanu made the call with a gutshot to the wheel. The turn was the 3♠, giving Negreanu a set of his own while making a flush possible and putting four cards to a straight on the board.

Negreanu led out for 10,000, or just shy of one-third pot. Kenney smooth called and the river brought the 3♣ to give Negreanu quads and Kenney aces full of threes. Negreanu bet right out with his monster, firing 25,000 into the 43,000 pot. Kenney raised to 105,000, leaving himself with just 97,000 behind.

Negreanu moved all-in, and Kenney made the reluctant call. He was shown quads and sent to the rail after just a few hours, while Negreanu jumped out to an early lead that he only expanded as the day continued.

“A lot of people might look at that hand and be like, ‘Oh, he was lucky,’ but that was a small pot, a nothing pot. We had 300k starting stacks on day 1, and it was just 5k on the flop and 10k on the turn. If I don’t make quads, it’s going to be a small pot on the river. The board was a four-straight with a flush possible. So, any card that doesn’t pair the board right is going to result in a small pot. There’s no betting and raising going on. If the board does pair, I have the lowest full house. I’m not going to lose a lot of chips on that. So, I was in a position with the bottom set where I could win a really big pot, but I was only going to lose a small one if I was behind.”

Kenney hardly seemed excited about calling off the remainder of his stack with aces full of threes, which Negreanu contends amounted to essentially a bluff catcher given the action and the board.

“It’s 100 percent a bluff catcher and it’s a bad bluff catcher to have. Frankly, he couldn’t beat 5-2 of spades, which I could have in big blind, or pocket threes. You have to ask yourself, am I really doing this with just some goofy 5♠? I’m not doing it for value with less. So really, if he thought about it a little bit longer, I think he makes the correct fold and throws it away,” thought Negreanu. “He had the third nuts, right? Imagine the board was four spades and you don’t have the ace or the king, you just have the Q♠. Would you call all-in that deep with the third nuts? No, and in this case, the ranges were so clear and so obvious that it’s similar to that. My hand is pocket threes, it’s 5-2 of spades, or it’s a bluff. It’s not A-5 or A-3, ever.”

Kenney was one of ten players eliminated during day 1 action, with eight of those ten being among the top 30 on poker’s all-time earnings leaderboard. Those who busted included *SHRB VI* champion Michael Addamo, four-



time bracelet winner Adrian Mateos, bracelet winner and 2019 POY Stephen Chidwick, recent *Poker Masters* Purple Jacket winner Sean Winter, *SHRB V* champion Isaac Haxton, four-time bracelet winner David Peters, and bracelet winner Dan Smith.

Smith took to Twitter to vent, explaining that he had prepped for weeks for the event, studying and meditating, even undergoing cryotherapy... all for about 90 minutes at the table. That's \$3,333 per minute! "Next year just gonna snort a few lines and see what happens," he joked.

Negreanu ended the day with 1,499,000, good for just shy of 250 big blinds. He was one of just two players to bag up more than a million in chips, with Mikita Badziakouski being the second.

Day 2 began with 14 players and continued until just five remained. Negreanu was the first to surpass the 2-million chip mark, adding to his stack by busting rising high roller star Chris Brewer and PokerGO founder Cary Katz along the way.

Despite coming into the day near the top of the counts, Bazziakouski was among those to hit the rail as the day wore on. He lost a massive coin flip with pocket queens facing the A-K of three-time *SHRB* ring winner Justin Bonomo to fall to the bottom of the leaderboard, and was dispatched not long after that.

Other notables to exit on day 2 included recent *Poker Masters* \$50,000 event champion Jason Koon, high-stakes pro Ben Tollerene, *WPT* champion Seth Davies, and bracelet winner Alex Foxen.

Paul Jager was knocked out in seventh place by Eric Worre, who then fell in sixth place when his kings and jacks on a K-Q-J flop ran into the bottom set held by two-time bracelet winner Nick Petrangelo. With that

hand, the day came to a close with the chip counts looking as follows:

Nick Petrangelo - 2,630,000
Daniel Negreanu - 2,225,000
Andrew Lichtenberger - 880,000
Orpen Kisacikoglu - 855,000
Justin Bonomo - 610,000

Surviving The Bubble And Closing Out The Win

The final day of this nosebleed-stakes affair began with those five players remaining and only four set to make the money. That meant that one player had to wait overnight only to be eliminated on a \$720,000 payout bubble.

Both Bonomo and Kisacikoglu lost ground to the rest of the pack as they tried to survive to the money, but it was the latter who ultimately fell first. Kisacikoglu was down to just 12 big blinds when bracelet winner Lichtenberger raised from under-the-gun with pocket queens. Negreanu called from the small blind with Q♦ J♦ and Kisacikoglu three-bet shoved with A♥ Q♣ out of the big blind.

Lichtenberger unleashed a small four-bet to isolate and Negreanu quickly got out of the way. The board came down 10♣ 9♦ 2♣ 2♦ J♥ to burst the bubble, sending Kisacikoglu home empty-handed as the fifth-place finisher.

Bonomo's final hand saw him four-bet shove for around 40 big blinds from the button, having opened and been three-bet by Lichtenberger out of the big blind. Lichtenberger called with pocket jacks, which had Bonomo's pocket eights in rough shape. Lichtenberger made top set on the turn and had Bonomo drawing dead



before the river.

Bonomo had nearly \$14.6 million in prior *SHRB* scores across six prior cashes, including wins in the 2018 *SHRB*, the 2018 *SHRB China*, and the 2020 *SHRB Online*. With the \$720,000 he secured in this event, he increased his *SHRB* earnings to more than \$15.3 million. (Check out the leaderboard on pg. 25 for more stats.)

The 37-year-old poker pro's lifetime tournament cashes now exceed \$60.5 million, making him the first player in poker history to surpass the \$60 million mark. As a result, he has his hold on the top spot on poker's all-time money list, with more than a \$3 million lead over the aforementioned Kenney.

With that, Lichtenberger moved into an effective tie for second place in the chip counts with Negreanu, while Petrangelo sat atop the leaderboard. As three-handed play continued over the course of roughly five hours, though, Negreanu managed to overtake the lead and then begin to pull away as his two opponents' stacks dwindled.

"I was ready for it," Negreanu said when asked about the long three-handed showdown. "You know, those are both great players, but in terms of the metagame, which is something I really focus on... a lot of people focus on theory, I focus heavily on the meta and what's happening of late. And, in this case, the metagame felt like it was really conducive to what I wanted to do. It was a very small-ballish affair, for the most part. I was very confident with how things were going. If you watch the whole tournament, you're not going to find me in any really dangerous, high-risk spots."

Lichtenberger had been ground down to just shy of 12 big blinds when his final hand arrived. He moved all-in from the small blind with $K\heartsuit 6\clubsuit$. Negreanu made the

call with a dominating $A\spadesuit 6\heartsuit$ and flopped an ace to send Lichtenberger home with \$1,152,000 as the third-place finisher. The score increased his lifetime earnings to more than \$15.2 million.

Heads-up play began with Negreanu holding a sizable 5:1 lead. The two went on to battle for just over half an hour, with Negreanu able to add to his advantage until he had built nearly a 13:1 lead in time for the final hand of the event.

Negreanu open-shoved from the button for roughly 10 big blinds with $Q\clubsuit 7\clubsuit$ and Petrangelo called with $K\spadesuit 5\heartsuit$. The $7\spadesuit 3\clubsuit 2\clubsuit$ flop was all Negreanu, giving him top pair and a flush draw. The $2\spadesuit$ on the turn left Petrangelo with just a five percent chance of doubling up. The $4\spadesuit$ on the end officially locked up the pot and the title for Negreanu.

Petrangelo pocketed \$2,016,000 as the runner-up finisher. This was the second-largest score of his career, and increased his lifetime earnings to more than \$27 million.

In addition to the ring and the money, Negreanu also earned 360 *Card Player* Player of the Year points as the champion of this event. This was his third title and eighth final-table finish of the year. He also locked up 600 *PokerGO Tour* points, enough to climb into 21st place on that leaderboard.

Place	Player	Payout	POY	PGT
1	Daniel Negreanu	\$3,312,000	360	600
2	Nick Petrangelo	\$2,016,000	300	500
3	Andrew Lichtenberger	\$1,152,000	240	400
4	Justin Bonomo	\$720,000	180	216

POKER STORIES PODCAST

With Eugene Katchalov

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

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Age: 41

From: Kiev, Ukraine

Twitter: @EugeneKatchalov

Live Tournament Earnings: \$9.3 Million

Top Scores

Date	Tournament	Place	Winnings
Dec. 2007	\$15,000 WPT Five Diamond World Poker Classic	1st	\$2,482,605
Jan. 2011	\$100,000 EPT PokerStars Caribbean Adventure High Roller	1st	\$1,500,000
Feb. 2014	€5,000 EPT Deauville Main Event	2nd	\$518,981
Sept. 2011	€5,000 EPT Barcelona Main Event	3rd	\$453,812
Oct. 2009	£25,000 EPT London High Roller	3rd	\$308,566
June 2010	\$10,000 WSOP H.O.R.S.E. Championship	3rd	\$248,831
Nov. 2017	€111,111 WSOP Europe One Drop High Roller	13th	\$240,158
March 2014	€2,000 EPT Vienna NLH	1st	\$206,080

Eugene Katchalov is a *World Series of Poker* winner and *World Poker Tour* champion with more than \$9.3 million in career live tournament earnings. The Ukrainian-born and New York-raised pro won the 2007 *Doyle Brunson Five Diamond World Poker Classic* for a massive \$2.5 million and also the 2011 \$1,500 stud event at the *WSOP* for his bracelet.

The 41-year-old has come close to earning the Triple Crown title on a few occasions, most notably taking third at *EPT Barcelona* and also finishing runner-up at *EPT Deauville*. He does have three *EPT* side event wins, including a \$1.5 million payday in the \$100,000 Super High Roller at the *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure*. He's also played in some of the biggest cash games in the world, including the infamous Molly's game.

Katchalov has spent the last few years focusing on Qlash, his esports company with fellow poker pro Luca Pagano, and moved back to Kiev with his wife. In February of this year, however, he was forced to flee his home following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Highlights from this interview include leaving the Soviet Union, having a professional gambler for a dad, the symbolic freedom of Coca Cola, speaking Russlish, NYU business school, day trading, watching Antonio Esfandiari get felted, running well at Bellagio, buying a place for his grandparents, a \$400k pot with a record label exec, beating Daniel Negreanu for a sponsorship, Korea trips with Elky, misreading his hand in a high roller, Robin Williams and Angelina Jolie, and onion phobias.

The Highlights

Life In The Soviet Union

Eugene Katchalov: I remember hanging out with friends. We lived by the woods in Kiev. I was playing card games like Seca. I don't even remember the rules very much now, but it was a very simplistic version of poker. I think you only use 36 cards, but we did play for money.

Julio Rodriguez: So even as a kid, you were drawn to that kind of stuff?

EK: I was, yeah. I think it came from my dad, who was always into cards. He was a professional gambler for a living. Nothing poker related, but cards and backgammon and all sorts of games that he used to play in the Soviet Union.

JR: A bit of a hustler?

EK: Yeah, exactly. So he was very proud when I went into poker. He definitely supported me there. So those were my earliest memories, but it looked like a normal lifestyle. I didn't know anything else.

I do remember the night we were leaving with my mom. We got into a taxi late at night, and had a late night flight. My mom was really nervous because as we were coming out of the city, the tanks were rolling in.

We were flying to New York through Scotland, as a layover. It was my first time leaving the Soviet Union. I remember walking around and they were selling Coca Cola, [something] I had only seen in movies. I asked my mom for a can, which was a dollar. She had sold everything we had, and only had like \$56 at the time, but it was for her son.



How He Earned His Online Poker Sponsorship

Eugene Katchalov: I was starting to get into tournaments. Daniel Negreanu said to me, "Why don't you try to get into PokerStars, to become a [sponsored] pro?" I asked him what it would take, and he spoke to them. He said, "You got to win something else big. You've been playing a lot of cash games, but try to win something big."

And that is when the PCA announced the first-ever \$100,000 buy-in. I was having a good year, so I decided to play that, and lo and behold, it was like a movie coming to life. I ended up going heads-up versus Daniel and I ended up winning.

Julio Rodriguez: That's crazy! I didn't know the backstory of that tournament.

EK: I beat Daniel, and he was genuinely happy for me. He was like, "You're going to get in now, you know." A few weeks after, I signed with PokerStars and started representing Ukraine.

I also got lucky [with the timing], since I had to withdraw everything from Full Tilt [to play on PokerStars], and it was right before Black Friday. So I got all my money out in time.



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GAGLIANO, COLEMAN, HOLTZ, AND PAOLETTI HEADLINE RECENT WSOP ONLINE WINNERS

By Erik Fast



The domestic segment of the 2022 *World Series of Poker Online* is currently going strong on WSOP.com in Nevada and New Jersey as we go to press this issue. So far, 23 of the 33 WSOP gold bracelets up for grabs have been handed out, with 10,371 total entries resulting in more than \$6.7 million in prize money already awarded.

Check out recent issues of *Card Player* magazine for the results from the first 15 events of the series. Below is a recap of events 16-23.

The \$500 no-limit hold'em deepstack event was held on Saturday, Oct. 1. The tournament drew 555 total entries, causing the prize pool to swell to \$249,750. In the end, the largest share of the nearly quarter-million dollars was awarded to **Connor Stuewe**. The Brookline, Massachusetts resident earned his first bracelet and \$45,679 for the win.

This was Stuewe's largest recorded tournament score yet, surpassing the \$33,900 he earned for a 331st-place showing in the 2021 WSOP main event in Las Vegas. He now has \$153,697 in total lifetime cashes under his belt.

A number of big names made deep runs in this event, including two-time bracelet winner and *World Poker Tour* champion Tony Dunst (63rd), *WPT* champion and 2012 WSOP main event runner-up Jesse Sylvia (61st), two-time WSOPC ring winner Jamie Kerstetter (53rd), two-time bracelet winner Eric Baldwin (36th), three-time bracelet winner Shankar Pillai (28th), Chris Brewer (18th), Nick Palma (9th), JJ Liu (8th), and Kevin Garosshen (2nd).

The \$777 buy-in no-limit hold'em *Lucky 7s* event was won by **Mike Holtz**, a tournament staple on WSOP.com who won the 2021 Player of the Year race for the online site. The Ocean City, Maryland resident defeated a field of 564 total entries in the tournament to earn \$76,157 and his first WSOP gold bracelet.

The win increased Holtz's recorded tournament earnings to more than \$682,000. This was the largest score yet on his resume. He had fallen ever so slightly short of securing his first bracelet during last year's WSOP series, placing second to Bradley Ruben in a \$600 pot-limit Omaha six-max event.

Notables who joined Holtz at the final few tables included 'Johnnie Vibes' Moreno (30th), two-time bracelet winner Michael Wang (20th), two-time bracelet winner Jeremiah Williams (19th), four-time bracelet winner Jeff Madsen (16th), and three-time bracelet winner Matt Matros (11th).

The action was fast and furious in the \$1,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em turbo deepstack event. It took roughly six hours of play to narrow a 344-entry field down to a champion in this briskly paced affair. When the dust settled, **Michael Gagliano** was the only player left with any chips. The Rockaway, New Jersey native earned \$62,756 and his second career bracelet as the champion.

Gagliano first struck gold back in 2016, when he took down a \$2,500 no-limit hold'em event at the series to earn \$448,463. He now has more than \$2.2 million in recorded tournament earnings, with roughly half of that coming in WSOP events.

The top 48 finishers made the money in this event, with notables like two-time bracelet winner Martin Zamani (40th), bracelet winner Ryan Laplante (30th), two-time bracelet winner Scott Ball (18th), recent online bracelet winner Jesse Lonis (18th), *WPT* champion Jordan Cristos (13th), bracelet winner Alex Foxen (8th), and John Riordan (2nd) all running deep.

The stakes rose to \$1,500 for the next no-limit hold'em bracelet event on offer. A total of 332 entries were made at that price point, building a prize pool of \$456,500 (the largest so far in the domestic segment of the series).

In the end, the largest chunk of that money was won by

Michael Gagliano



© WPT

Jordyn Miller



© Miller Twitter

Maxx Coleman



© WPT

Matt Paoletti



© Paoletti Twitter

Jordyn Miller, who earned his first bracelet and \$96,914 as the champion. Miller had finished second to Holtz just a couple of days earlier for \$55,114.

These two scores are officially the largest, and third-largest of his career, and grew his recorded earnings to \$717,481. Miller's second-biggest cash came earlier this year when he finished 87th in the *WSOP* main event for \$86,000.

Big names that made deep runs in this event included 2013 *WSOP* main event winner Ryan Riess (31st), Matt Affleck (28th), *WPT* champion Matthew Wantman (20th), Jeremiah Williams (15th), Jesse Lonis (13th), bracelet winner Ian Steinman (12th), and eight-time *WSOPC* ring winner Daniel Buzgon (7th).

Event 20 of the *WSOP* was yet another race to the finish. A total of 479 entries were made in the \$500 buy-in no-limit hold'em turbo, creating a \$215,550 prize pool. **Mark Dibello** earned \$41,579 and his first gold bracelet after just five hours of tournament action.

This was the most significant recorded score yet for the Las Vegas resident, blowing away the \$12,749 he earned as the runner-up finisher in a \$250 *WSOP Online Circuit* event this spring.

Among those to survive to the final few tables were two-time bracelet winner Tanner Bibat (17th), Jordan Cristos (14th), four-time *WPT* champion Darren Elias (11th), bracelet winner Eric Van Auken (10th), and once again, Mike Holtz (4th).

Next up on the agenda was a short-handed no-limit affair. The \$600 buy-in six-max event attracted 448 entries, creating a prize pool of \$241,920. The lion's share of that money was ultimately secured by **Maxx Coleman**, who came away with \$46,666 and his second career bracelet as the champion.

Coleman won his first bracelet earlier this year, taking down the \$1,500 no-limit deuce-to-seven lowball event at the series of \$127,809. Coleman now has more than \$2.8 million

in lifetime tournament earnings to his name, with his largest score being the \$775,000 he was awarded as the champion of the main event at *The River Poker Series* in 2015.

Coleman was joined at the final few tables by a number of recognizable names, including Mike Ziemba (12th), Karina Jett (11th), bracelet winner Thomas Cannuli (9th), Matthew Paoletti (7th), three-time bracelet winner Ryan Leng (6th), MSPT Venetian champion Jeff Platt (3rd), and two-time bracelet winner Bryan Piccioli (2nd).

The *Big 500* event saw 462 entries made at \$500 apiece, building a healthy prize pool of \$333,900 that was split up amongst the top 72 finishers. **Matthew Paoletti** emerged victorious in the end, taking home his first bracelet and \$61,070 after defeating recent bracelet winner Jesse Lonis (2nd – \$44,275) heads-up for the title.

The Perkasio, Pennsylvania resident now has more than \$264,000 in recorded cashes. His biggest-ever cash came when he finished 76th in this year's main event for \$101,700. He also has a *WSOP Circuit* ring to his name, having won a \$365 buy-in no-limit hold'em event at the 2017 *WSOP Circuit Harrah's Atlantic City* festival.

There were several bracelet winners who made the final table, including Jonathan Dokler (5th), Brett Apter (4th), and the aforementioned Lonis. Third-place finisher Taylor Black is the reigning *WPT Five Diamond* main event champion, also took down the 2018 *partypoker MILLIONS North America* main event for a seven-figure payday. After his deep run in this event, he now has more than \$4.2 million in lifetime earnings.

The final event covered in this recap is the \$1,500 no-limit hold'em freezeout. A total of 244 players turned out, creating a \$335,500 purse. **Michael Mercaldo** came out on top in the end, locking up his second bracelet and \$68,005 as the champion.

Mercaldo won his first piece of *WSOP* hardware as the

TOURNAMENTS

champion of the 2021 \$777 buy-in event (\$123,574). He now has more than \$457,000 in recorded tournament earnings.

Plenty of accomplished players made it down to the business end of this event, including Alex Foxen (27th), Jeff Platt

(20th), *EPT Vilamoura* champion and *Aussie Millions* main event winner Toby Lewis (9th), recent bracelet winner Jesse Yaginuma (8th), *WPT* champion Orson Young (6th), and Matthew Wantman (4th).

WSOP Online Results

Event	Player	Payout
\$500 NLHE Oct. 1 Entries: 555 Prizepool: \$249,750	1 Connor Stuewe	\$45,679
	2 Kevin Garosshen	\$33,117
	3 Quintin Trammell	\$24,001
	4 David Goodman	\$17,532
	5 Adrian Sacher	\$12,912
	6 Ryan Hohner	\$9,491
	7 Michael Klein	\$7,018
	8 Joanne Liu	\$5,220
	9 Nicholas Palma	\$3,896

Event	Player	Payout
\$777 NLHE Oct. 2 Entries: 564 Prizepool: \$394,800	1 Mike Holtz	\$76,157
	2 Jordyn Miller	\$55,114
	3 Mark Dube	\$40,112
	4 Vinny Pahuja	\$29,057
	5 Paul Scaturro	\$21,161
	6 Fred Li	\$15,634
	7 Matthew Schulte	\$11,489
	8 Shane McDaniels	\$8,528
	9 Chris Fuchs	\$6,317

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,000 NLHE Oct. 2 Entries: 344 Prizepool: \$309,600	1 Michael Gagliano	\$62,756
	2 John Riordan	\$45,356
	3 Kenneth Neri	\$32,972
	4 Clayton Maguire	\$23,870
	5 Angel Lopez	\$17,307
	6 Ryan Andrada	\$12,632
	7 Vimy Xuan Ha	\$9,226
	8 Alex Foxen	\$6,780
	9 Chris Staats	\$4,985

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 NLHE Oct. 4 Entries: 332 Prizepool: \$456,500	1 Jordyn Miller	\$96,915
	2 Angel Lopez	\$69,845
	3 Kevin Calenzo	\$51,037
	4 Sergey Kislinsky	\$36,977
	5 Jordan Spurlin	\$26,705
	6 Dean Curreri	\$19,493
	7 Daniel Buzgon	\$14,197
	8 Quintin Trammell	\$10,500
	9 Chris Oneil	\$7,715

Event	Player	Payout
\$500 NLHE Oct. 6 Entries: 479 Prizepool: \$215,550	1 Mark Dibello	\$41,580
	2 Matt Volosevich	\$30,091
	3 George Quintano	\$21,900
	4 Mike Holtz	\$15,864
	5 Sergey Kislinsky	\$11,553
	6 Nicholas Palma	\$8,536
	7 Michael Menzer	\$6,273
	8 Matt Paoletti	\$4,656
	9 Paul Scaturro	\$3,449

Event	Player	Payout
\$600 NLHE 6-Max Oct. 8 Entries: 448 Prizepool: \$241,920	1 Maxx Coleman	\$46,666
	2 Bryan Piccioli	\$33,772
	3 Jeff Platt	\$24,579
	4 Michael Lech	\$17,805
	5 Finian Anuforo	\$12,966
	6 Ryan Leng	\$9,580

Event	Player	Payout
\$500 NLHE Oct. 9 Entries: 462 Prizepool: \$333,900	1 Matt Paoletti	\$61,070
	2 Jesse Lonis	\$44,275
	3 Taylor Black	\$32,088
	4 Brett Apter	\$23,440
	5 Jonathan Dokler	\$17,263
	6 Will Clarke	\$12,688
	7 Bruce Yamron	\$9,383
	8 Spencer Sahl	\$6,979
	9 Donald Himpele	\$5,209

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 NLHE Oct. 9 Entries: 244 Prizepool: \$335,500	1 Michael Mercaldo	\$68,005
	2 Joseph Walters	\$49,150
	3 Evan Sandberg	\$35,730
	4 Matthew Wantman	\$25,867
	5 Will Clarke	\$18,754
	6 Orson Young	\$13,688
	7 Austin Roberts	\$9,997
	8 Jesse Yaginuma	\$7,347
	9 Toby Lewis	\$5,401



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ROBERT GROSSGLAUSER WINS WSOP CIRCUIT THUNDER VALLEY

Robert Grossglauser is the latest *World Series of Poker Circuit* main event champion to be decided in 2022. The Elk Grove, California resident defeated a field of 726 entries in the *WSOPC Thunder Valley* \$1,700 no-limit hold'em main event, securing his first gold ring and \$205,203 as the champion. The \$500,000 guarantee was more than doubled, with a prize pool settling on \$1,099,890.

Grossglauser came into this event, which was held at Thunder Valley Casino Resort near Sacramento, with just over \$27,000 in prior tournament earnings. His largest previous score was a \$15,000 cash as the 880th-place finisher in the 2015 *WSOP* main event.

Grossglauser scored his first knockout at the final table when his pocket sixes won a preflop race against the A-Q of Paul Richardson (5th - \$52,820). After Altnai Fung finished fourth for \$69,938, Grossglauser's A-6 came from behind to beat the A-Q of Jared Smith (3rd - \$93,657).

Heads-up play began with Grossglauser holding an 8:1 lead over Randall Chamberlain. The short stack managed a couple of double ups, but was ultimately unable to hold in the final all-in of the event. All of the chips went in preflop, with Chamberlain holding A♦ J♣ and Grossglauser A♠ 2♠.

The board ran out 7♣ 6♦ 2♥ 3♣ 7♠ to give Grossglauser sevens and deuces for the win. Chamberlain took home \$126,828 as the runner-up.

Final Table Results

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Robert Grossglauser	\$205,203 (912)
2 Randall Chamberlain	\$126,828 (760)
3 Jared Smith	\$93,657 (608)
4 Altnai Fung	\$69,938 (456)
5 Paul Richardson	\$52,820 (380)
6 Michael Loncar	\$40,329 (304)
7 Phaly Nou	\$31,181 (228)
8 Kristen Deardorff	\$24,380 (152)
9 Brian Battistone	\$19,289 (76)



© WSOP Circuit / Thunder Valley

MATTHEW DAVIS WINS MICHIGAN STATE POKER CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2022 *Mid-States Poker Tour Michigan State Poker Championship* \$1,100 no-limit hold'em main event attracted a record-setting field of 2,409 entries to the FireKeepers Casino Hotel in Battle Creek, Michigan. The massive turnout resulted in the \$1 million guarantee being more than doubled, with \$2,336,730 in total prize money ultimately awarded to the top 252 finishers.

In the end, the largest share was won by Michigan native Matthew Davis. The Washington Township resident secured his first *MSPT* title and \$344,446 for the win.

This was by far the largest score on Davis' poker tournament résumé, blowing away the \$98,120 he earned as the 76th-place finisher in the 2019 *WSOP* main event. He now has more than \$545,000 in lifetime earnings to his name.

Davis' run to the title had a noteworthy observer in friend and fellow Michigan native and 2009 *WSOP* main event champion Joe Cada, who finished 34th in this event.

Davis survived to the final six as one of the shorter stacks but managed to double up not long before scoring his first knockout at the final table with pocket tens holding against pocket nines for Justin Pimpedly (5th - \$94,810).

He then managed two more eliminations to head into the final showdown for the title with roughly twice as many chips as his opponent Rinaldo Teodoro. He closed out the win with pocket sevens facing A-6 all-in preflop, making a set to lock up the title.

Final Table Results

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Matthew Davis	\$344,446 (1,080)
2 Rinaldo Teodoro	\$212,511 (900)
3 Jason Zarlenga	\$158,796 (720)
4 Adam Williams	\$123,767 (540)
5 Justin Pimpedly	\$94,810 (450)
6 Christopher Moon	\$74,727 (360)
7 Alex Farcas	\$58,381 (270)
8 Ronald Puleo	\$45,537 (180)
9 Alec Magdan	\$36,196 (90)



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SUPER HIGH ROLLER BOWL EARNINGS LEADERS

Rank	Player	Earnings	Cashes	Titles
1	Justin Bonomo	\$15,316,516	7	3
2	Christoph Vogelsang	\$10,880,000	4	1
3	Brian Rast	\$7,525,000	1	1
4	Timothy Adams	\$7,053,612	4	2
5	Rainer Kempe	\$7,039,806	2	1
6	Jake Schindler	\$6,800,000	2	1
7	Daniel Negreanu	\$6,312,000	2	1
8	Stephen Chidwick	\$5,810,058	4	0
9	Scott Seiver	\$5,160,000	1	0
10	Michael Addamo	\$4,589,000	2	1

The *Super High Roller Bowl* first debuted in 2015. While that inaugural running featured a \$500,000 buy-in, the *SHRB* name has since been applied to 14 additional tournaments with buy-ins ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. All told, nearly \$162.4 million in prize money has been awarded.

This high-stakes tournament has seen 45 players accumulate seven figures or more in earnings. This leaderboard shows the top ten highest earners among them.

The undisputed *SHRB* king is none other than poker's all-time tournament earnings leader **Justin Bonomo**. The

37-year-old poker pro has made the money in seven of the 15 events held under this banner, cashing for more than \$15.3 million along the way. Bonomo is one of just two players with multiple *SHRB* wins (the other being two-time champion Timothy Adams).

Bonomo's first win came in the *SHRB China* event held in March of 2018. He picked up \$4.8 million for defeating a field of 75 entries. Just a few months later he won the *SHRB IV* in Las Vegas, besting 48 entries to add another \$5 million. He completed the hat trick by winning the *SHRB Online* event, which was held during the live poker

shutdown of 2020. He beat a field of 50 entries that time to pocket another \$1.7 million.

German poker pro **Cristoph Vogelsang** sits in second place with nearly \$10.9 million, joining Bonomo as the only other player with eight figures in earnings in *SHRB* events. He has four cashes, putting him in a four-way tie for second place in that metric. His largest score came when he took down the *SHRB III* in 2017, besting a 56-entry field to earn the second-largest payday in *SHRB* history of \$6 million.

The largest ever payout went to inaugural champion **Brian Rast**. The five-time *World Series of Poker* bracelet winner topped a field of 43 entries for \$7,525 million as the champion of the \$500,000 buy-in event. This ended up being his only *SHRB* cash, but it alone was sufficient to place him inside the top three.

The rest of this list is largely comprised of various champions, with only two players managing to make the top 10 without a win, including four-time casher Stephen Chidwick (8th - \$5,810,058), and Scott Seiver (9th - \$5,160,000), who was the runner-up to Rast in the inaugural event.

CIRCUIT RESULTS

All payouts in USD.

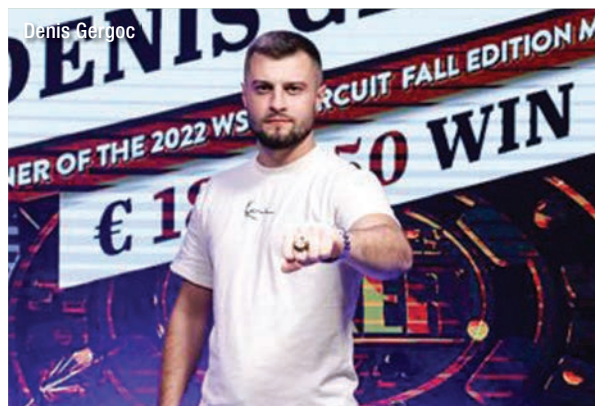
Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Poker Gras Harrah's New Orleans, LA \$600 NLHE Sept. 29-Oct. 2 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 454 Prizepool: \$236,080	1 Charles Bartlett	\$44,290 (360)
	2 Christopher Dupuy	\$38,477 (300)
	3 Alex Dmytraczenko	\$29,354 (240)
	4 Harvey Smith	\$17,902 (180)
	5 Derek Normand	\$13,280 (150)
	6 Kevin Cooper	\$9,942 (120)
	7 Ronnie Hope	\$7,701 (90)
	8 Jerry Monroe	\$5,911 (60)
	9 Jonathan Wisbey	\$4,514 (30)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
DeepStack Venetian Las Vegas, NV \$600 NLHE Sept. 29-Oct. 2 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 503 Prizepool: \$254,015	1 Christopher Haydt	\$51,200 (420)
	2 David Yonnotti	\$35,166 (350)
	3 Aaron Massey	\$24,744 (280)
	4 Bradley Wainscott	\$17,686 (210)
	5 Marc Wlodkowski	\$13,395 (175)
	6 Carlos Loving	\$10,014 (140)
	7 Andre Butler	\$7,412 (105)
	8 Connor Stuewe	\$5,722 (70)
	9 Kao Saechao	\$4,551 (35)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Kings Casino Rozvadov, Czech Republic €550 NLHE Sept. 29-Oct. 3 €500,000 GTD Entries: 1,687 Prizepool: \$801,325	1 Renat Bohdanov	\$142,850 (540)
	2 Anonymous	N/A
	3 Alessandro Laubinger	\$66,050 (360)
	4 Dorian Melchers	\$52,150 (270)
	5 Sebastian Kovaci	\$42,200 (225)
	6 Justinas Smilingis	\$33,800 (180)
	7 Burhan Topal	\$17,800 (135)
	8 Anonymous	N/A
	9 Thomas Layher	\$9,881 (45)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Kings Casino Rozvadov, Czech Republic €3,000 NLHE 8-Max Oct. 5-6 €100,000 GTD Entries: 100 Prizepool: \$266,000	1 Michael Ugucctoni	\$73,150 (360)
	2 Jakub Koleckar	\$52,003 (300)
	3 Emil Bise	\$34,048 (240)
	4 Jan Bednar	\$26,201 (180)
	5 Zhong Chen	\$20,748 (150)
	6 Volodymyr Drokin	\$16,226 (120)
	7 Nicola Angelini	\$12,768 (90)
	8 Vangelis Kaimakamis	\$9,975 (60)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Kings Casino Rozvadov, Czech Republic €1,700 NLHE Oct. 7-11 €1,000,000 GTD Entries: 748 Prizepool: \$1,101,430	1 Denis Gergoc	\$200,000 (912)
	2 Lars Kamphues	\$129,850 (760)
	3 Natale Allegra	\$94,250 (608)
	4 Alireza Keyvar	\$75,850 (456)
	5 Frans Van Staaldin	\$61,750 (380)
	6 Vojtech Ruzicka	\$50,650 (304)
	7 Dorian Melchers	\$40,450 (228)
	8 Alessandro Pagliuso	\$31,200 (152)
	9 Samir Boudeliou	\$26,815 (76)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Kings Casino Rozvadov, Czech Republic €1,100 NLHE KO Oct. 9 €100,000 GTD Entries: 155 Prizepool: \$108,500	1 Maria Lampropulos	\$35,044 (288)
	2 Yehuda Cohen	\$16,686 (240)
	3 Rotem Chen	\$10,846 (192)
	4 Ilija Savevski	\$8,981 (144)
	5 Majid Nadeem	\$7,243 (120)
	6 Zoltan Farkas	\$5,712 (96)
	7 Rudolf Bamgartner	\$4,368 (72)
	8 Timo Kamphues	\$3,288 (48)
	9 Andreas Burger	\$2,454 (24)

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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
RGPS Horseshoe Tunica Robinsonville, MS \$600 NLHE Oct. 7-9 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 597 Prizepool: \$310,440	1 J.W. Carter	\$58,110 (420)
	2 Wesley Jones	\$38,867 (350)
	3 Mike Cordell	\$28,654 (280)
	4 B.J. McBrayer	\$21,358 (210)
	5 Matthew Lawrence	\$16,112 (175)
	6 Michael Senedetka	\$12,293 (140)
	7 John Duke	\$9,468 (105)
	8 Chris Hight	\$7,388 (70)
	9 Adam Cotant	\$5,836 (35)

Event	Player	Payout
Fall Classic Canterbury Park Shakopee, MN \$2,500 NLHE Oct. 3-4 Entries: 60 Prizepool: \$138,000	1 Victor Peppe	\$46,920 (216)
	2 Aaron Johnson	\$28,980 (180)
	3 Derek Stay	\$19,044 (144)
	4 Dennis Stevermer	\$13,386 (108)
	5 Thai Dinh	\$10,212 (90)
	6 Chris Orvis	\$7,728 (72)
	7 Daniel Buckley	\$6,348 (54)
	8 Mark Sandness	\$5,382 (36)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall Classic Canterbury Park Shakopee, MN \$1,110 NLHE Oct. 7-9 Entries: 655 Prizepool: \$635,350	1 Alex Wheeler	\$109,651 (840)
	2 Dustin Nelson	\$100,000 (700)
	3 Yi Klassen	\$59,088 (560)
	4 Terence Reid	\$43,839 (420)
	5 Colden Carlson	\$33,038 (350)
	6 Matthew Hamilton	\$24,779 (280)
	7 Mark Sandness	\$19,061 (210)
	8 Asa Snyder	\$15,248 (140)
	9 Erick Wright	\$11,436 (70)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
France Poker Series Casino de Divonne Divonne les Bains, France €2,200 NLHE Oct. 4-5 Entries: 100 Prizepool: \$192,000	1 David Docherty	\$51,200 (240)
	2 Nolan Curatolo	\$33,040 (200)
	3 Rafael Navas	\$23,600 (160)
	4 Youcef Benzerfa	\$18,150 (120)
	5 Rizra Adria Comas	\$14,520 (100)
	6 Rui Bouquet	\$11,620 (80)
	7 Jerome Ruefenacht	\$9,290 (60)
	8 David Lomba	\$7,430 (40)
	9 Kevin Abecassis	\$5,950 (20)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
France Poker Series Casino de Divonne Divonne les Bains, France €1,100 NLHE Oct. 5-9 Entries: 628 Prizepool: \$603,020	1 Nicolas Hamouni	\$113,670 (840)
	2 Adil Said	\$70,960 (700)
	3 Ludovic Marguerat	\$50,690 (560)
	4 Joffrey Baillieu	\$38,990 (420)
	5 Herve Gouzil	\$29,990 (350)
	6 Mourad Shaimi	\$23,070 (280)
	7 Hermes Prencipe	\$17,750 (210)
	8 Patricia Almeras	\$13,650 (140)
	9 Patrik Ciklamini	\$10,950 (70)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall 500 Series MotorCity Casino Detroit, MI \$1,200 NLHE Oct. 6-10 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 613 Prizepool: \$637,520	1 Philip Wiszowaty	\$143,444 (840)
	2 Francisco Perez	\$88,615 (700)
	3 Daniel Wagner	\$58,078 (560)
	4 Matthew Ploof	\$40,355 (420)
	5 Alec Magdan	\$29,326 (350)
	6 Patrick Steele	\$22,759 (280)
	7 George Janssen	\$19,126 (210)
	8 Kirk Osler	\$15,938 (140)
	9 Rostyslav Huriak	\$12,750 (70)

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TOURNAMENTS

Ryan Hogan



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Pinktober Seminole Hard Rock Tampa, FL \$400 NLHE Oct. 5-9 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 985 Prizepool: \$329,975	1 Ryan Hogan	\$48,073 (365)
	2 Julio Novo	\$48,072 (304)
	3 David Meagher	\$28,330 (243)
	4 Michael Laake	\$21,110 (182)
	5 Alain Medesan	\$15,910 (152)
	6 Ramon Gonzalez	\$12,120 (122)
	7 William Korn	\$9,340 (91)
	8 Stuart Phillips	\$7,280 (61)
	9 David Bennett	\$5,740 (30)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Pinktober Seminole Hard Rock Tampa, FL \$2,200 NLHE Oct. 13 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 52 Prizepool: \$104,000	1 James Calderaro	\$35,350 (120)
	2 Kenneth Fishman	\$23,560 (100)
	3 Anthony March	\$15,710 (80)
	4 Asif Mohammed	\$10,898 (60)
	5 Matias Chervin	\$7,870 (50)
	6 Michael Jagroo	\$5,940 (40)
	7 Ryan Hogan	\$4,680 (30)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall Classic Wynn Las Vegas, NV \$600 NLHE Oct. 6-9 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 836 Prizepool: \$434,720	1 Stephen Foutty	\$70,000 (456)
	2 Sejo Kasic	\$57,113 (380)
	3 Aaron Van Blarcum	\$34,214 (304)
	4 Brian Green	\$24,388 (228)
	5 David Vu	\$17,954 (190)
	6 Qing Liu	\$13,998 (152)
	7 Jordyn Miller	\$11,259 (114)
	8 Nicholas Palma	\$9,346 (76)
	9 Jon Turner	\$7,880 (38)

Vincenti Cham



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Hilton Aruba Noord, Aruba \$1,700 NLHE Sept. 30-Oct. 2 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 300 Prizepool: \$409,797	1 Vincenti Cham	\$101,051 (480)
	2 Justin Pechie	\$62,453 (400)
	3 Zachary Eichenbaum	\$43,904 (320)
	4 Elias Asi	\$31,507 (240)
	5 Gaetan Balleur	\$23,090 (200)
	6 Craig Trost	\$17,289 (160)
	7 Vanja Ovuka	\$13,233 (120)
	8 Ivan Saldana	\$10,358 (80)
	9 Tahsinul Hasan	\$8,296 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Thunder Valley Lincoln, CA \$1,125 NLHE Oct. 9-10 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 173 Prizepool: \$173,000	1 Nicholas Loxley	\$44,359 (312)
	2 James Colson	\$27,416 (260)
	3 Victor Paredes	\$19,095 (208)
	4 Bryant Miller	\$13,603 (156)
	5 Martin Abraham	\$9,917 (130)
	6 Alejandro Madrigal	\$4,703 (104)
	7 Theron Eichenberger	\$5,661 (78)
	8 Romeo Velasquez	\$4,438 (52)
	9 Tom Masinter	\$3,569 (26)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Isle Casino Pompano Beach, FL \$600 NLHE Oct. 13-15 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 805 Prizepool: \$332,937	1 Roberto Schmeda	\$71,776 (456)
	2 Arlene Wensier	\$44,364 (380)
	3 Robert Cohen	\$31,888 (304)
	4 Igor Phinheiro	\$23,300 (228)
	5 Trent Smith	\$17,311 (190)
	6 Alan Katsnelson	\$13,082 (152)
	7 Eric Beringer	\$10,058 (114)
	8 Yuval Bronshtein	\$7,870 (76)
	9 Anatoly Zharnitsky	\$6,269 (38)

TOURNAMENTS

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$25,000 NLHE Oct. 3 Entries: 25 Prizepool: \$625,000	1 Daniel Colpoys	\$287,500 (252)
	2 Benjamin Tollerene	\$175,000 (210)
	3 Dan Smith	\$100,000 (168)
	4 Talal Shakerchi	\$62,500 (126)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$25,000 NLHE Oct. 4 Entries: 23 Prizepool: \$575,000	1 Talal Shakerchi	\$264,500 (252)
	2 Stephen Chidwick	\$161,000 (210)
	3 Cary Katz	\$92,000 (168)
	4 Bill Klein	\$57,500 (126)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Fall High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$15,000 NLHE Oct. 7 Entries: 6 Prizepool: \$90,000	1 Isaac Haxton	\$50,400
	2 Adrian Mateos	\$39,600

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$25,000 NLHE Oct. 8 Entries: 9 Prizepool: \$225,000	1 Steve Zolotow	\$135,000
	2 Mikita Badziakowski	\$90,000

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 NLHE Oct. 10 Prizepool: \$225,000	1 Nick Schulman	\$68,256
	2 Sean Winter	\$57,744
	3 Justin Bonomo	\$24,000

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 8 Game Mix Oct. 11 Entries: 12 Prizepool: \$120,000	1 Eli Elezra	\$57,000
	2 Mori Eskandani	\$53,000
	3 Brian Rast	\$10,000

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 NLHE Oct. 12 Entries: 16 Prizepool: \$160,000	1 Justin Bonomo	\$75,792
	2 Stephen Chidwick	\$58,608
	3 Yasuhiro Waki	\$25,600

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 PLO Oct. 13 Entries: 23 Prizepool: \$230,000	1 Michael Duek	\$105,800
	2 Dylan Weisman	\$64,400
	3 Jeremy Ausmus	\$36,800
	4 Sean Winter	\$23,000

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 NLHE Oct. 14 Entries: 18 Prizepool: \$180,000	1 Pete Chen	\$97,200
	2 Stephen Chidwick	\$54,000
	3 Steve Zolotow	\$28,800

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Five Diamond Bellagio Las Vegas, NV \$10,000 PLO Oct. 15 Entries: 20 Prizepool: \$200,000	1 Ronald Keijzer	\$108,000
	2 Sean Winter	\$60,000
	3 Alexander Livingston	\$32,000

2022 Card Player Player of the Year

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Place	Player	Points	Titles	Final Tables	POY Earnings
1	Stephen Chidwick	6,387	5	24	\$6,139,739
2	Sean Winter	5,198	3	16	\$3,417,569
3	Jeremy Ausmus	4,966	5	19	\$2,298,067
4	Chris Brewer	4,723	3	15	\$2,635,840
5	Erik Seidel	4,692	1	15	\$3,493,296
6	Ali Imsirovic	4,683	6	20	\$3,566,356
7	Stephen Song	4,622	0	14	\$1,264,116
8	Farid Jattin	4,567	3	9	\$1,221,467
9	Alex Foxen	4,549	4	18	\$6,593,722
10	Adam Hendrix	4,469	3	10	\$1,264,863
11	Mikita Badziakouski	4,394	3	11	\$6,844,034
12	Jake Schindler	4,322	4	10	\$7,052,283
13	Yuri Dzivielevski	4,220	1	10	\$3,334,014
14	Chance Kornuth	4,170	4	8	\$2,107,513
15	Jason Koon	4,104	2	15	\$5,985,705
16	Michael Watson	4,101	1	11	\$4,120,638
17	Joao Simao	4,014	1	4	\$1,442,743
18	Michael Duek	3,992	0	4	\$4,846,832
19	Phil Ivey	3,934	3	12	\$5,651,804
20	Steve O'Dwyer	3,831	3	8	\$1,681,567
21	Daniel Dvoress	3,695	1	13	\$4,944,477
22	Alexander Livingston	3,641	1	9	\$1,499,176
23	Brock Wilson	3,608	0	12	\$1,651,462
24	Tony Sinishtaj	3,470	1	3	\$1,927,123
25	Marius Gierse	3,468	2	6	\$2,531,092
26	Danny Tang	3,450	1	10	\$3,728,680
27	Sergio Aido	3,443	1	8	\$1,463,418
28	Seth Davies	3,420	1	13	\$4,255,617
29	Darren Elias	3,340	0	10	\$1,319,096
30	Espen Jorstad	3,300	1	1	\$10,000,000
30	Cary Katz	3,300	1	14	\$1,553,852

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POKER STRATEGY WITH KEVIN RABICHOW: RECOGNIZING YOUR STRENGTHS AND IMPROVING YOUR WEAKNESSES

Where To Look For The Latest Poker Tools And Training

By Craig Tapscott



Kevin Rabichow was introduced to online poker in college while at the University of Chicago, and by 2008 was playing fulltime while completing his degree in economics. He left for Toronto in 2011 after Black Friday to pursue poker, already holding his own in mid- to high-stakes heads-up no-limit games.

To date, Rabichow has played over two million hands online, and has earned more than \$1 million in cash game profits and cashed for more than \$5 million in live and online tournaments. His biggest score came in 2021 at the *World Series of Poker*, when he finished runner-up in the \$100,000 buy-in super high roller for \$1,210,487.

In 2014, he joined Run It Once training as an elite coach to produce instructional content. From 2015 to 2017, he coached a small group of

heads-up cash players starting from the \$50 and \$100 buy-in level to more than \$500,000 in collective earnings. Rabichow's current students range from online six-max professionals, live cash enthusiasts, and dedicated MTT grinders.

After hundreds of hours working with students of all skill levels, he's developed the tools to help players address their biggest leaks confidently and efficiently. You can check out his new course, *The Game Plan*, on RunItOnce.com.

Card Player caught up with Rabichow to talk about what it takes to get to the highest levels of professional poker today.

Craig Tapscott: How does a player build an educational game plan to consistently improve their play at the tables, online and live?

Kevin Rabichow: The first thing to

recognize is that there's too much to learn at once. Poker is a beautifully complex game, and to keep improving, you're going to have to break it down into smaller pieces. Most coaches will do this by separating preflop from post-flop play, and within each category we can sort by different branches of the game tree.

Preflop might need to be broken down by stack size, position, ante structure, etc. Post-flop could be single-raised pots, with or without the lead, facing different action sequences or bet sizes. Once you have the game tree separated into smaller pieces, you can begin an evaluation.

What are you good at in this game? It might seem like a strange question to a professional poker player, but many haven't taken the time to identify where their edge comes from. Are you identifying good spots to bluff



“Any struggles with variance stem from our emotional connection to results. If we’re not satisfied with a losing day, or frustrated by a longer stretch of bad luck, we’re likely feeling some doubt about our skill, or becoming afraid that this will go on forever. We should recognize this for what it is and acknowledge that it’s a totally normal feeling to experience. The best players in the world are routinely doubting their abilities, and that’s the nature of a game where the results don’t directly reward your progress.”

and winning without showdown? Are you more patient than your opponents and getting paid off on good hands? These are broad questions, but the stronger you are as a player, the more specific you can get. How confident are you when out-of-position on the turn? What’s your general approach in three-bet pots when checked to? By going through a complete evaluation of your game, you start to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

This is where my course - The Game Plan - provides the most value. Evaluate honestly where your strengths and weaknesses lie. Take your weaknesses and turn them into a study plan. Take your strengths and turn them into a game plan. I give my students a system for prioritizing their study, so that they can work on just a few things at a time and know that those few things will have the largest immediate impact on their results. Anything that is more advanced, or complex can be addressed after the fundamentals are in order.

If this process sounds overwhelming to you, it would be wise to reach out to other poker players for help or get a consultation with a coach. It’s important that your self-assessment is comprehensive and honest, or else

you might be held back by your blind spots. You don’t know what you don’t know, and I’ve seen many players go years without recognizing that they’ve neglected an entire part of the game tree. If you feel that it’s unclear how to make progress, it is the time to reach out to others for help.

Craig Tapscott: Some players are overwhelmed with all the poker tools available to them to assist the growth in their game. Where do they begin and what are the most advantageous tools to begin to master?

Kevin Robichow: Most importantly, don’t feel the obligation to use tools that you don’t understand. There is enough variety in the marketplace that I’ve always been able to find the right fit for my student’s needs.

Tracking software is an obvious place to start. If you are a live player or a recreational online player, you may not have felt the need to get Poker Tracker or Hold’em Manager, but I would strongly recommend it. I often evaluate my students’ skill based on the stats in their online database, as it’s the fastest way to see the full picture of how they’re playing. Even for small data sets, it’s important to have a complete record of the hands you’re playing and your results. You won’t

have any tangible material to review without hand histories.

Preflop solutions are mandatory for serious players, but finding the right ones can be tricky. Are you playing the same format day in and day out? How often do stack depths vary? The most reliable solutions to purchase from a website are for 100-big blind online cash games, which I’d recommend if there’s not much variability to your game structure. If you’re more advanced, you might seek out some 150-big blind or 200-big blind options as well, or a three-blind solution with antes for high-stakes live games. I’ve purchased from Range Converter in the past and there are people you can contact for custom solutions as well.

If you’re not playing the same game every day, buying a set of charts might not be the answer. I also believe memorizing charts is only half the battle when it comes to being a good preflop player. For a more complete package, you should look at a subscription to a browser tool like Preflop Academy or Floptimal. These are web programs that have a wider variety of preflop solutions, hosted on cloud servers for a monthly cost. I most often recommend these to live MTT players, so that you have a resource with any



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preflop spot you might need to review, accessible on your phone while you're at the casino. These also happen to be fantastic study tools for training your intuition in less-frequent preflop scenarios.

GTO Training has been one of the greatest advancements in poker tools of the last few years, and if you aren't doing any type of training yet, I can't recommend it enough. The outputs from these tools can be confusing to the untrained eye but playing repetitions against the bot will still have a positive impact.

If you're just getting started with trainers, focus only on one thing: EV. Make the plays that feel right to you, that you'd truly make at the table, rather than guessing at what the robot wants you to do. When your actions lose you EV, take note, and over time you'll accumulate information on where your most costly mistakes are happening. This is tangible data for your self-evaluation!

The most advanced tools are custom solvers, such as Piosolver for cash games, or HRC for tournament players, which I encourage for anyone who feels confident with the inputs or feels limited by the aforementioned programs. Using these tools will give you the highest understanding of how game theory works but the process can be quite time intensive. I dedicated several videos in The Game Plan to my approach when using these programs for players looking to make the jump.

(You can find The Game Plan at RunItOnce.com, a training site founded by legendary high-stakes pro Phil Galfond. Enter the code 'CARDPLAYER' at checkout to save 25% on your first month of an elite membership.)

Craig Tapscott: How do you recommend players best deal with downswings and variance on a day-to-day basis?

Kevin Rabichow: Any struggles with variance stem from our emotional connection to results. If we're not satisfied with a losing day, or frustrated by a longer stretch of bad luck, we're likely feeling some doubt about our skill, or becoming afraid that this will go on forever. We should recognize this for what it is and acknowledge that it's a totally normal feeling to experience. The best players in the world are routinely doubting their abilities, and that's the nature of a game where the results don't directly reward your progress.



The most impactful mindset shift for me was to emphasize quality of decision making when evaluating my day. By introducing a new way to measure success, especially one that was completely under my control, I had less value wrapped up in short term results. You don't need to hide your results or pretend that you aren't hurt by the loss, but you can't let those results hold all of your self-worth. Taking pride in the quality of your decision making keeps you grounded to something that you can control and can work to improve over time.

Think also about how you discuss poker with friends. "How did your session go?" or "How's the series been treating you?" are the types of questions you might be asked that aim straight at your results. Take these interactions as an opportunity to reinforce your mindset shift. Don't stop at the profit and loss – take stock of the difficult decisions you faced and talk through any doubts running through your mind. Tell a story of the most interesting hand you played or witnessed. By engaging our friends with strategy and decision making, we're reinforcing an emotional connection with progress.

Craig Tapscott: If I'm aiming not to

be results oriented, how will I know if I'm making progress or not?

Kevin Rabichow: It's an interesting question, because it implies that results were a good indication of progress in the first place. I'd argue they're often misleading, and we simply feel more confident about our game when we're winning than when we're losing. Over very large sample sizes, we could measure improvement by changes in your win rate, but on a weekly or monthly basis I look for other metrics.

Those of you who I've convinced to use some kind of GTO trainer have one great method for tracking progress, as there's no variance to your results against the bot. I encourage my students to categorize their training, putting in as much volume as possible in the scenarios they struggle with at the table. For example, someone who knows they are folding too much in the big blind can design a drill to repeatedly play single-raised pots out-of-position. As their EV scores improve, and their confidence goes up, there is no doubt they've made progress.

If you've built up a database in your tracker, you could track changes in your database stats and seek feedback from peers or hire a coach. Having

specific targets for increasing your flop check-raise frequency or decreasing your river fold percentage are great ways to set progress goals. This is one of my favorite coaching tools, but it's difficult to accomplish this one without guidance. At a minimum, download or screenshot your stats every few months, and take note of any changing values. If the changes in your data align with your strategic goals, then you've made progress.

Lastly, at the risk of sounding silly, I believe almost all players can feel when they are making progress. I don't mean to say that good fortune can't give you a false sense of progress, because it absolutely can and will. It's been my experience, however, that you mitigate this effect by setting intentional goals for improvement. I've found by simply creating a document for my students to keep track of what they're working on, they enter our next session with a confident understanding of whether or not they've made progress. Define the weakness you need to address and design a study plan that gets you there. You'll know when you're ready to move on to the next task.

Sign up for Run It Once training today and use the code 'CARDPLAYER' for big savings. ♠

Final Table Takedown: Arthur Morris Captures WSOP Circuit Title In Tulsa

By Craig Tapscott

Event: WSOP Circuit Tulsa

Buy-In: \$1,700 • Entrants: 646 • Prize Pool: \$978,690 • First-Place Prize: \$182,379



Arthur Morris has been a professional poker player for the last 17 years, primarily focusing on cash games. Although he doesn't play many tournaments, he has managed to make several deep runs over the years and racked up nearly \$1 million on the live circuit.

He made three final tables at the *World Series of Poker*, including the 2021 \$10,000 pot-limit Omaha championship event. Morris also has two *World Poker Tour* final tables, his first coming back in the 2012 WPT Five Diamond World Poker Classic and the other earlier this year at WPT Choctaw.

Still, a major live tournament title eluded him. That all changed in late August when the Dallas resident traveled north to Tulsa for the *World Series of Poker Circuit* main event and topped a field of 646 for his first ring and the \$182,379 first-place prize.

"It's been a long time coming," Morris admitted to reporters. "I've been playing for 17 years so it feels really good."

Card Player caught up with Morris to talk about a few key hands that he played en route to victory.

Craig Tapscott: What inspired you to travel over to Tulsa to play in this event?

Arthur Morris: My wife and son had just been invited to go down to Sea World, and a regular player in my local game had invited me up to play a semi-private PLO game in Tulsa during the main event. I decided to go mostly for the cash games, but figured I'd flick in a few bullets in the main as well.

My first three bullets I likely only played a combined five levels. I never had any traction. However, the fourth bullet was smooth sailing. Day one I had almost zero variance, just slowly chipping up and applying a ton of pressure on the bubble which led me to finish the day with 306,000 chips. Day two and three are where I'd like to discuss some of the truly pivotal hands that I felt swung the tournament in my direction.

CT: Patience is such a huge part of the game, and few players seem to possess this important poker trait.

AM: I agree. I felt like my fortitude at the start of day two was challenged. I really struggled. I had aces cracked by pocket sevens all-in preflop and had lost another race with A-K suited, dwindling down to only 10 big blinds.

I tried to reinforce to myself that if I stayed patient, I would eventually find good spots to steal/resteal and work my stack back up. I eventually found a spot with A-Q and doubled through K-Q. I finally had a little breathing room when this hand occurred.

HAND
NO. 1

Stacks: Arthur Morris – 740,000 (30 BB)
Maziar Monfared – 2,000,000 (80 BB)

Villain no. 2 – 250,000 (10 BB)

Blinds: 10,000-25,000 with an 25,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 45

Monfared raised to 50,000 from the hijack.

AM: He was one of, if not the biggest stack in the room, and had played solid. I looked down on his immediate left in the cutoff and saw pocket queens. I started this hand with nearly 30 big blinds.

Several key things happened here to help me decide on how I should act. I hadn't seen Maziar defend a single out-of-position three-bet yet, and also both the small and big blind had excellent squeeze stacks, sitting around 10 big blinds each. Because my hand was so strong, the blinds having potential to re-steal, and Maziar's lack of prepotency to put in big chips out-of-position for three-bets, I decided to flat call.

I wanted to play a single-raised pot in position with stronger holdings.

Morris called from the cutoff with Q♦ Q♠. Villain no. 2 shoved from the small blind, and Monfared called. Morris moved all-in, and Monfared folded. Villain no. 2 revealed 5♦ 5♠.

CT: You set this up to perfection with the flat call.

Board: 10♠ 7♣ 2♦ 2♥ 3♠ (pot: 850,000)

Morris won the pot with queens up.

AM: I feel confident that if I had three-bet Maziar's open, the small blind would have folded, and Maziar likely would have as well. I would've picked up four big blinds in the hand, as opposed to 21. This hand shot me up to nearly 1,400,000 in chips and gave me the room to maneuver as we headed towards the final two tables.

HAND
NO. 2

Stacks: Arthur Morris – 2,600,000 (32 BB)
Danny Griffith – 2,300,000 (29 BB)
Blinds: 40,000-80,000 with an 80,000 big blind ante
Players Remaining: 6

AM: This was a particularly interesting hand because of all the ICM implications at play at the final table. Mike Cordell had a commanding chip lead with nearly 8,000,000 chips, Jessica Vierling had 1,400,000, Blair Hinkle had 2,500,000, and Cedric Trevino had 3,800,000. I was sitting with 2,600,000, and my opponent in the hand, Danny Griffith, had 2,300,000.

CT: Quite the traffic jam. It was anybody's ballgame at that point. And you have to tread carefully depending on who is on your right and left at the table.

AM: Yes. When stack sizes are this close one misstep could mean the difference between getting sixth or having a real chance at winning. Also, getting complacent could mean watching your stack dwindle to the shortest and being forced into playing a potential all-in.

Mike was applying a ton of pressure to everyone by frequently opening in front of me on my immediate right, and Blair was an active three-bettor on my left leaving me somewhat handcuffed. I hadn't had an opportunity to open a pot for a while as Mike often took that initiative.

Morris raised to 175,000 holding Q♠ 8♠ from the hijack. Griffith called from the big blind.

Flop: J♣ 9♣ 3♦ (pot: 470,000)

Griffith checked.

CT: What was your read on Griffith?

AM: I had a read that he would aggressively check-raise



flops, but not act anywhere near as aggressively to delayed turn continuation bets. I decided to check the flop.

Morris checked.

AM: My hand can turn a lot of equity with spades, a Queen, or the gut shot straight, and being check-raised off this hand would be truly tragic. I had planned to delay a continuation bet if I bricked.

Turn: 10♦ (pot: 470,000)

Griffith checked.

AM: I fired out a very small bet, because I thought Danny would infrequently continue here. I actually down-bet the turn to lay him a really nice price, given I was so far at the top of the range and wanted value.

Morris bet 150,000, and Griffith called.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Super High Roller Bowl VII
 \$300,000 No-Limit Hold'em



Nick Petrangelo
 2,530,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
 Before Flop: 64%
 After Flop: 17%
 After Turn: 7%



Andrew Lichtenberger
 1,925,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
 Before Flop: 36%
 After Flop: 83%
 After Turn: 93%



PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 15,000-30,000 and a big blind ante of 30,000, Nick Petrangelo limped in from the small blind. Andrew Lichtenberger raised to 120,000, and Petrangelo called.

FLOP



Both players checked.

TURN



Petrangelo checked, and Lichtenberger bet 65,000. Petrangelo called.

RIVER



Petrangelo checked, and Lichtenberger bet 285,000. Petrangelo check-raised to 725,000. Lichtenberger folded.

COMMENTARY:

A previous hand (see pg. 11) saw Andrew Lichtenberger pull off a nice bluff to win a crucial pot against Nick Petrangelo. Nearly an hour later, Petrangelo managed to return the favor via a gutsy river check-raise with just ace high. The hand got off to an interesting start when Petrangelo limped in from the small blind with ace-rag. Lichtenberger looked down at an unsavory holding of 9-3 offsuit and decided to try to use his positional advantage right away to hopefully end the hand as soon as possible. His raise to four big blinds was called by Petrangelo, though, and the two players saw a king-high flop with two hearts. Petrangelo checked with the A♥ in his hand. Lichtenberger checked behind with middle pair, likely hoping to simplify the path to a showdown by limiting the size of the pot on the early streets. The turn paired the top card from the flop and Petrangelo checked again. At this point, Lichtenberger felt comfortable putting out a small value bet of 65,000 into the pot of 270,000. With a non-heart turn, Petrangelo was no longer hoping to back into the ace-high flush. He did make the call, though, and the river brought the 8♥. Petrangelo checked a third time and Lichtenberger bet 285,000 into 400,000 (a bet of just over 71 percent the size of the pot). Lichtenberger's bet is likely hoping to draw hero calls from 5-X and 8-X holdings, and perhaps even some ace-highs. Petrangelo seemed to have sussed out where Lichtenberger was at in the hand through this sizing choice and opted to check-raise in order to try to draw folds from Lichtenberger's 9-X and maybe even unimproved pocket pairs. The well-timed move worked, and Lichtenberger released his winning hand, sending the healthy pot to Petrangelo to give him the lead as three-handed play continued.

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



River: 10♠ (pot: 770,000)

AM: Danny quickly grabbed a fist full of yellow 25,000 denomination chips and plopped them into the pot. I asked Danny if he knew what he had bet? Danny said no, as the dealer counted it out. Every single chip is so important at this stage of the event because of how tightly packed second- through sixth-place chips are.

Griffith bet 375,000.

CT: Could he really have a full house in this spot?

AM: I weighed my options of call versus raising. Given Danny started the hand about fifth or sixth in chips, I fully expected him to reraise preflop with hands like J-J, 10-10, 9-9, and maybe even K-Q suited combinations. I also thought Danny presumed I had none of these hands because I had checked back the flop. I also believe Danny would've raised turn if he had a hand like J-10, J-9, 3-3, 10-9, because of the very small bet sizing I had chosen and to just seize the initiative and get value versus the many draws. Ranges seemed relatively defined to me, and I felt Danny was capped at A-10.

I thought about just calling because the risk of losing chips almost outweighed the value of gaining them, however, I was very confident my hand was best and decided to go for thin value.

Morris raised to 900,000.

AM: Danny was stunned. He took nearly five minutes, but ultimately folded 10-X correctly to propel me to third in chips.

Griffith folded, and Morris won the pot of 1,145,000.

**HAND
NO. 3**

Stacks: Arthur Morris – 3,400,000 (42.5 BB)

Blair Hinkle – 2,750,000 (34 BB)

Blinds: 40,000–80,000 with an 80,000 big blind ante.

Players Remaining: 4

Morris raised to 175,000 from the small blind holding K♠ Q♠. Hinkle reraised to 550,000 from the big blind.

AM: This was a difficult spot. I don't believe Blair would call off with K-J or Q-J here and didn't think I would have any dominating scenarios to rationalize a jam. I also think he wouldn't fold any pair he chose to three-bet here, given he was already the shortest stack. My hand has reasonable playability post-flop, but I knew Blair could potentially apply a ton of pressure post-flop. That said, with Blair's three-bet frequency, I just felt K♠ Q♠ was too strong. So, I...

Morris called.

Flop: Q♦ 3♣ 3♥ (pot: 1,180,000)

Morris checked, and Hinkle bet 300,000. Morris called.

Turn: 9♦ (pot: 1,780,000)

Both players checked.

AM: I had planned to check-jam the turn. The turn brought a flush draw, and backdoor straight draw. I had a very strong hand and was near the top of my own range here, so had I faced a bet I believe my only options were... A) to bluff catch - which would allow all the backdoor equities to realize their full equity, and Blair utilize his positional advantage against me. B) check-raise all-in on turn to deny equity while pushing a small amount of value.

All said, I believe Blair was very much aware of the strength of my hand and opted to check back. In my opinion, this was sharp, as he was able to realize his equity and play the river in position.

River: 5♦ (pot: 1,780,000)

AM: I had planned to play my hand as a bluff catcher.

Morris checked, and Hinkle bet 1,750,000.

CT: That's a big bet!

AM: I wasn't expecting a bet anywhere near this size. I presumed if Blair had value, he would go for the higher likelihood that I'd pay off something to the tune of 500,000. Going for a bet this large felt bluff heavy. He also nearly committed himself completely all in.

CT: What range did you put him on?

AM: He had checked back the diamond turn. I didn't think he'd have any A-A, K-K, 9-9, A-Q, K-Q, or 3-3. When you unblock Q-X here, and have a value hand that can beat Q-X in this three-bet pot, you often want to start setting up for geometric shoving on the river by value betting the turn. Essentially, this gets clear value from the most likely hands I could continue with.

Now that I had discounted all of these value hands and didn't believe he would floor his variance by three-betting a hand like 5-5 preflop, (the river 5♦), his value raise was made up almost exclusively of backdoor flushes.

CT: So, you were teetering back and forth with call or fold?

AM: Exactly. It's hard to give someone credit for a backdoor flush in a three-bet pot when you're at the top of your own range. I started to examine how many chips I'd have if I called and won versus lost the pot. If I had lost, I'd be on life support. Not good.

CT: What else were you thinking about?

AM: I felt the need to look at the hand through the scope of Blair's point of view. I defended his three-bet while out of position, and now believed Blair would think I had strong holdings exclusively. Once Blair continued on flop and I opted to continue, I think Blair likely realized I don't have many hands worse than Q-X. Because my range was so strong, and because I believe Blair correctly had read me for strong holdings, I didn't think Blair was bluffing with the goal of getting me to fold a queen. Once I made this conclusion, I felt like I had to...

Morris folded, and Hinkle won the pot of 1,780,000.

AM: Blair had gone for very large value, that seemed likely I would pay off. Again, I was at the top of my own range. I was tortured, but ultimately gave Blair credit for a monster.

A few hours later Blair would bust. He told me I had made an exceptional fold. He was value betting K♦ J♦ for the back door flush. Preserving significant blinds (20 big blind plus) and giving myself more opportunities in future pots had allowed me to survive and ultimately prevail. ♠



Playing A Calling Station: Knowing When To Give Up

By Jonathan Little



I was recently told about a hand that illustrates a key concept that you must master if you want to succeed at no-limit hold'em.

With blinds at 50-100 with 20,000 effective stacks early in a \$500 buy-in tournament, a loose, splashy calling station raised to 300 and our Hero called on the button with 7♠ 6♠. The blinds

folded.

This is a perfectly fine and standard call. You should look to call with a wide range of suited connectors, suited aces, and big pairs before the flop when deep stacked, especially against someone who will be unable to fold any sort of marginal made hand after the flop.

While you will usually lose your 300 chips when you miss, when you flop a premium hand, you stand to win a lot of money. Three-betting is also a reasonable option, but if you know your opponent likes to call down, it is usually best to make a decent hand before loading money into the pot.

The flop came A♦ 10♠ 9♦. The initial raiser checked.

When the initial raiser checks, it is unlikely that he has a premium hand because most players (including calling stations) bet with their best hands. This likely "caps" the initial raiser's range at top pair with a bad kicker.

Knowing this, should Hero make a bet, hoping to make the calling station fold an unpaired hand like K-Q or a weak pair like 5-5? I don't think so. It is too likely that the calling station will call with any hand that he deems to have the least bit of potential. If you think your opponent will call your flop bet with hands like 5-5, you must be prepared to continue

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2022 Super High Roller Bowl VII
\$300,000 No-Limit Hold'em



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 80%
After Flop: 89%
After Turn: 95%

Andrew
Lichtenberger
2,125,000 Chips



Nick Petrangelo
2,400,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 19%
After Flop: 11%
After Turn: 5%



PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 20,000-40,000 and a big blind ante of 40,000, Andrew Lichtenberger raised to 90,000 from the button.

Nick Petrangelo called from the big blind.

FLOP



Both players checked.

TURN



Both players checked.

RIVER



Petrangelo bet 120,000. Lichtenberger raised to 360,000, and Petrangelo called.

COMMENTARY:

While big successful bluffs and soul-read hero calls rightly attract much of the attention during poker broadcasts, these thrilling situations are often few and far between. The reality is that, outside of those spectacular hands, saving a few big blinds here and extracting a little bit of value there is what separates winning players from the rest. In this hand, Andrew Lichtenberger managed to milk an extra six big blinds from his opponent, Nick Petrangelo, despite the often action-cooling impact of a double paired board. The hand began with Lichtenberger raising pocket jacks from the button. Petrangelo called from the big blind with pocket fives and a queen-high flop with two spades rolled off the deck. Petrangelo checked and Lichtenberger checked behind. The turn brought a second queen and Petrangelo checked again. Lichtenberger once again checked back, and the river paired the bottom card from the flop. Petrangelo decided to bet half pot, firing 120,000 into 240,000 with the intention of extracting value from Lichtenberger's ace-high holdings. While Petrangelo could have some full houses as the big blind defender, Lichtenberger seemingly believed that Petrangelo could have been betting a worse hand like 6-X, a pocket pair below his jacks, or even ace-high for value. He raised to three times Petrangelo's initial bet, targeting calls from those holdings. "Some very advanced tactics going on out there," commented three-time bracelet winner and *World Poker Tour* champion Nick Schulman, who was doing live analysis of the final table for PokerGO. Petrangelo ultimately made the call and was shown the bad news. He slipped to third place after the hand, while Lichtenberger moved into a virtual tie for the lead.

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betting on the turn and the river to make him fold those hands, but that is also not a great idea, given they could easily have a hand like A-2 that will never fold to any amount of aggression. If the initial raiser was a more standard opponent, betting the flop with a junky draw would be perfectly acceptable because many players can be made to fold their hands as strong as top pair, weak kicker by the river if you apply enough aggression.

Hero checked behind. The turn was the J♣. The initial raiser checked again.

Especially when a jack (or king or queen) comes on the turn, Hero should be content to concede the pot. It is way too likely that the calling station now has some sort of marginal made hand that he will not fold to a turn and river bet.

Hero checked behind. The river was the 2♣. The calling station checked.

Sticking with the plan, giving up is the only play that makes sense when against a calling station. When you have a hand with no showdown value on the river, you should only bet when you expect to make your opponent fold a decent portion of his range.

In this spot, the only hands that a calling station will fold are unpaired hands such as K-3 (which may not even get played before the flop) and 5-4 (which 7-6 beats). Against more competent players, betting the river is likely ideal, but against a calling station, giving up is the right play, even though it seems incredibly weak.

Hero checked behind. The calling station turned his K♦J♠ up and won a tiny pot.

This time the calling station had a hand he never planned to fold to any reasonable bet on any betting round. By simply giving up, Hero lost only three big blinds, which is a tiny portion of his 20,000 stack.

While it is far from exciting to simply check down and give up when you have nothing, that is usually the best play against someone who will rarely fold to your bets on boards where all reasonable hands have some showdown value.



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 Super High Roller Bowl VII
\$300,000 No-Limit Hold'em



Nick Petrangelo
2,195,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 71%
After Flop: 69%
After Turn: 0%



Daniel Negreanu
3,305,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 23%
After Flop: 27%
After Turn: 93%

PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 25,000-50,000 and a big blind ante of 50,000, Nick Petrangelo raised to 110,000 from the button. Daniel Negreanu called from the big blind.



Both players checked.



Negreanu bet 175,000, and Petrangelo called.



Negreanu checked, and Petrangelo bet 180,000. Negreanu check-raised to 580,000, and Petrangelo called.

COMMENTARY:

Three-handed play in the SHRB lasted several hours, with plenty of interesting hands along the way as the trio of top players battled it out with relatively deep stacks. By the time this hand was dealt, Daniel Negreanu had managed to give himself more than a 22 big-blind lead over Nick Petrangelo, who sat in second with just shy of 44 big blinds. This clash began with Petrangelo raising K-Q from the button. Negreanu defended his big blind with K-10 and managed to flop a double gutshot, with either a queen or an eight set to improve him to a straight. He opted to check from out of position and Petrangelo decided to forgo a continuation bet. The turn brought a queen, giving Negreanu the nut straight while Petrangelo improved to top pair with a king kicker and outs to a chop. Negreanu led right out with his turned monster, betting just shy of 60 percent pot. Petrangelo called and the river brought another queen, improving Petrangelo to trips. Negreanu now had to weigh the merits of leading out versus checking. He opted for the latter, likely thinking that Petrangelo would value bet plenty of worse hands in position and might also take some stabs with bluffs. Negreanu no longer had the nuts thanks to the board pairing on the river, but his straight remained very strong given the action. Petrangelo sized down, betting 180,000 into 645,000 (roughly 28 percent pot). Negreanu check-raised, making it another 400,000 for Petrangelo to continue. Petrangelo announced a call relatively quickly with his trip queens and a king kicker, only to be shown the bad news. Negreanu extended his lead even further as a result, taking a big advantage over the next-largest stack. Petrangelo was able to right the ship and survive to heads-up play but was ultimately knocked out in second place (\$2,016,000) while Negreanu went on to win the title and the top prize of more than \$3.3 million.

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OMAHA EIGHT-OR-BETTER: PLAYING THE HIGH HANDS

By Kevin Haney

One-way high hands can be quite profitable in Omaha Eight-or-Better (O8), assuming of course that we play them well, both before and after the flop. Usually when thinking about the high hands in O8, we are mostly considering holdings where we have four cards nine or greater.

A holding such as 10♠ 9♠ 8♥ 7♥ is quite good in pot-limit Omaha high, but decidedly subpar in O8 since many of our nut straights will make a low possible and we can easily lose to higher straights and flushes. A♠ J♠ 10♦ 7♦ also doesn't have four cards nine or greater, but the 7♦ is far from a useless dangler as it provides some flush and straight potential in addition to a possible emergency low.

Suppose we are playing in a tight aggressive six-max game and are dealt A♥ K♥ Q♣ 10♣ under the gun. This is certainly a hand worth playing, but is it best to just limp in or should we come in for a raise?

Many players would advocate for a limp since we are an underdog to hit a high flop, but when we do we will usually crush it and therefore want to pull in others as well as limit our investment for the times we miss. There's definitely some merit in this line of thinking as the flop will only contain two or more high cards (where an ace is considered low) around a third of the time.

However, there are some strong counter arguments that can be made. If we consider the ace to be high, which will also frequently be of benefit to the high hands, the board will contain two or more high cards approximately 44% of the time. And on a flop containing an ace and another high card, a high hand will often have a low holding in bad shape.

Suppose instead of open-limping the A♥ K♥ Q♣ 10♣, we opted to raise and got the pot heads-up against an A-2-4-J. If the board ended up as A♣ K♦ 2♣ 6♦ 9♠ the A-2-4-J may pay off the entire way and it's hard to fault them given the way the board ran out. Limping may have allowed a raggedy hand containing a '3-4' to come along and split the pot with us, and if the turn was instead a five, we would have been scooped.

This may seem like a cherry-picked example, but it's not that infrequent in heads-up that an ace pairs both players, and in this occurrence the high hand will typically have the higher kickers and thus the advantage. Also, when the board makes a low possible it's not a guarantee that the low-oriented hand will make one, but against a few players the odds go up dramatically that someone will make a low and take it to showdown.

Around 41% of the time the flop will come down with one high card and two low which isn't a great situation, but a high hand that flopped top pair still has value. If the pot is heads-up we can check-call the flop and then lead out on most, if not all, high turns. But against two or more opponents we might get jammed out of the hand on the flop.

Therefore, with a good high hand we won't be left completely out in the cold too often. However, when two high cards flop, most low hands have very little

value, and if they call the flop it's mostly due to backdoor equity.

Lastly, if we limp in we are often giving the big blind a free look at the flop and if he's a reasonably good player he won't usually return the gift of infinite odds that often by putting too much action post-flop with the worst of it. All things considered, in a six-max game my preference is to open-raise any hand deemed worthy of playing. Live full-ring games are a completely different animal, one where limping in has a lot more merit, especially from the first couple of positions.

So what high hands are worth playing? From under-the-gun or the hijack in a six-max game our holding needs to be relatively strong. It's hard to come up with precise guidelines, but generally these holdings need to contain all four cards ten or greater and need to be suited at least once.

Hands such as A♠ Q♠ J♦ 10♥, K♦ K♥ Q♦ J♣, K♦ Q♥ J♦ 10♥, and A♥ Q♦ Q♠ J♥ are certainly good enough to play. According to ProPokerTools (PPT), the Q♦ J♦ Q♠ J♠ sneaks into the top 15% of hands, however, due to playability considerations it may be slightly too loose from early position.

While we will flop a set around 23% of the time, we aren't going to be able to continue on many flops where the high pair is actually the best hand and are in some danger of making second-best flushes. The PPT rankings assume that all hands involved go to showdown and thus probably overrates Q♦ J♦ Q♠ J♠. We can, however, open the Q♦ J♦ Q♠ J♠ from the cutoff along with Q♠ J♠ 10♦ 9♦ and those suited ace holdings with an emergency type low card such as the aforementioned A♠ J♠ 10♦ 7♦ holding.

And while we should certainly loosen up in the later positions, it's still important to be suited at least once and to only play hands that can make many strong holdings without putting a low on a board. K♦ Q♥ J♠ 10♣ may look too good to fold, but lacking a suit it's at best a marginal button open. And 9♦ 8♦ 7♠ 6♠ should virtually never be played, save for a unique situation where the blinds are playing really tight. It's close to a bottom 10% hand as most of its straights can lose to higher straights or make a low possible.

In the next O8 article we will discuss the play of high hands when someone has already opened for a raise before the flop, and also introduce some important concepts in how to best proceed post-flop. ♠



Kevin Haney is a former actuary but left the corporate job to focus on his passions for poker and fitness. The certified personal trainer owned a gym in New Jersey, but has since moved to Las Vegas. He started playing the game back in 2003, and particularly enjoys taking new players interested in mixed games under his wing and quickly making them proficient in all variants. Learn more or just say hello with an email to haneyk612@gmail.com.



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WSOP REWIND: POKER DEALER KATIE KOPP TALKS ABOUT WINNING A BRACELET

By Bernard Lee



During this series of columns, I will be interviewing 2022 World Series of Poker winners. These champions will provide observations, tips, and strategies for you, the readers of Card Player, about the specific poker game in which they captured their bracelet.

The Event: \$500 Casino Employees Event
The Winner: Katie Kopp
The Prize: \$65,168

After 17 years at the Rio All Suite Hotel and Casino, the WSOP found a new home in 2022, right in the middle of the Las Vegas Strip. Bally's (soon to be Horseshoe) and Paris Las Vegas are now the new summer destination for poker players from around the world.

The \$500 buy-in casino employees tournament drew a field of 832 players, one of which would make history by becoming the first to win a bracelet in the new venue. Unfortunately, somebody would also have to make history by being the first person to be eliminated from an event in the new venue.

Incredibly, these two feats would ultimately belong to the same person!

Katie Kopp, a 36-year-old traveling poker dealer, had looked forward to the opening event. Unfortunately for her, she didn't last long, and was in fact the first person to bust from the tournament. Undeterred, Kopp decided to re-enter, and made the most of her opportunity. Despite her early exit, she had good reason to be optimistic about her second bullet, given she had finished third in this very

same event back in 2018.

Supported by her friends and family, Kopp once again made the final table and was showered with chants of, "Can't stop Kopp!" In the end, she took down the tournament for her first bracelet and the \$65,168 first-place prize.

"I'm very proud of her!" exclaimed her mother Patty, who was leading the chants from the rail. "Her brother and sister both have (WSOP Circuit) rings, and now Katie has a bracelet! It was awesome. I started crying right away."

Kopp's run continued a few days later when she took third from a field of 1,482 at the Golden Nugget for another \$17,885.

Kopp originally started as a baccarat dealer about 10 years ago at the Horseshoe Cleveland. Eventually, she switched over to dealing poker and moved to Tampa to grind \$2-\$5 no-limit hold'em. In addition to dealing the WSOP during the summer, Kopp also works at World Poker Tour and Mid-States Poker Tour events.

I spoke with Katie for my radio show. (You can watch the full interview on YouTube (Bernard Lee Poker) or iTunes. Highlights from the interview appear below.

Bernard: Congratulations on winning the Casino Employee event. What a great way to kick off the summer!

Katie: Thanks so much! The whole thing was surreal. I was so happy to have my family there with me. I even asked my mom to pinch me to make sure that it was real life.

Bernard: Your family is very supportive, and also heavily involved in poker, right?

Katie: Yes. I have a brother and sister, who are twins, that are 32-years old. They both have won WSOP Circuit

© WSOP/ Rachel Kay Miller



© WPT

rings. In fact, my brother has won two. My mother also deals poker.

When we were younger, my grandpa taught us how to play poker. When Chris MoneyMaker won, we started playing Texas hold'em. We would invite our friends over to play all the time when we were younger.

Bernard: Is there anything specific that your grandpa taught you that has stuck with you over the years?

Katie: Actually, my grandma used to tell me and my siblings something to think about in life, but we think about it a lot while playing cards.

She would tell us, 'STAR.' This stood for Stop, Think, Analyze, and React. So, for the employee's event, I wrote a little star on my hand so I could see it to remember her saying. I wanted to stop myself from just bluffing off all my chips.

And now that I won, I'm going to get a little tattoo of the star on my hand. I think this is a good thing to think about for beginning players.

Bernard: I like that. Great advice from grandma and a cool mnemonic. Any other advice that you have for beginning players, especially who work for a casino and may have no or little experience playing in poker tournaments?

Katie: Well first, if you do work in a casino, even if you don't work in the poker room, but really want to play in a WSOP event, the Casino Employee Event is definitely the great one to play. There are a lot of dealers who play in the event and are willing to help you out. Also, everyone is much friendlier and not as serious, especially at the beginning of the tournament.

Bernard: What about casino employees who have previous experience playing in poker tournaments?

Katie: Since there are lots of beginners playing in this event, you don't have to force anything. Just play your best game and let the game come to you, especially in the early levels. Many beginners will often give away chips because they cannot fold hands.

Bernard: We have heard lots of stories of dealers that end up playing in tournaments and doing well. You have said that dealing helped you prepare for playing in tournaments.

Katie: I think dealing can be real helpful. When I deal, I'm always thinking, 'What do these players have?' I try to pay real close attention because it is always easier when you are just watching and not playing. Then when they show down their cards, I can see if I'm right or not. It is a great way to practice reading people with no financial risk. Then, I can make a similar read during a tournament when I'm playing.

Bernard: You made the final table in the Casino Employee

event in 2018, taking third. What advice would you give a person if they were fortunate to make the final table?

Katie: I will say that I was definitely nervous my first time. But this time, I was more comfortable and I could tell some of the other players at the final table this year were nervous instead.

I would just tell people to try not to think about it even though that's easier said than done. Take some nice deep breaths and don't worry about the cameras and reporters. Just play the game that got you there and don't worry about making mistakes. Fortunately, they didn't show the hole cards in this event, so no one will know if you made a real bad play.

Bernard: Do you have any other advice for the players?

Katie: I would seek out other players who you feel are better than you. You have to put aside your ego and try to improve your game.

When I first started playing poker, I thought I was so good. But the more I played, I realized that I wasn't nearly as good as I thought. Leading up to this summer, I spoke a lot with my brother, and he really helped me understand certain situations and plays. These discussions really helped improve my game.

Also, this may be a small thing, but I would definitely register early for the tournament so you don't have to stress about waiting in line.

Bernard: Your victory was certainly great for women in poker. Do you feel that there is an advantage to being a woman when you play?

Katie: I think being a woman is a super advantage for two reasons. First, they always think that I have it and I get way more folds than I should. Second, they try to get me off hands, so I induce more bluffs from my opponents. I feel that I often have a good read on my opponents and can pick off these bluffs. These two things really help me build a chip stack. ♠



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 15th 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.

Table Talking About The Worst Rule In Poker

By Steve Zolotow



Noted Table Talker Daniel Negreanu

It's time we *talk* about the worst rule in poker.

But first, let's talk about rules in general. Rules are obviously necessary for all games, but a good or sensible rule for a poker game should have certain attributes.

1. It should be clearly stated.
2. It should have a purpose.
3. Its purpose should be something that the players want, and that is good for the game.
4. It should be universally accepted, preferably in both cash games and tournaments.
5. There should be some clear punishment for its violation.
6. The punishment should be uniformly enforced.

Now with those criteria out of the way, I'd like to tell you what the worst rule in poker is. Of course, you'll see that since it's in violation of rule no. 1 above, it won't be easy.

The Rule: No talking during a hand, even when the pot is heads-up. Sometimes, it is phrased as no talking about your hand, or the hand, while it is in progress. Sometimes, players are told that they can't tell the truth about their hand. Other times, they are told they can't lie about it. The TDA says in rule no. 67 that players cannot discuss the contents of live or mucked hands.

Excuse me, what?

Not only is this rule never clearly stated, but it also has no purpose. Players want to do what is most beneficial for them, so they are not going to collude by talking. (If they did want to collude, they would use signals instead of talking, and in any case collusion should be severely punished.)

In general, players involved in a pot like to talk, ask questions, etc. If they don't want to talk, they can always remain still and silent. Players not in the hand are bored

when one player is taking a lot of time thinking, and the game is silent. They are at least entertained when the two contestants are yapping away.

Talking makes the game more social, and attracts 'pleasure' players, who aren't there just for the money, but want to enjoy themselves. This is not a rule the players want.

When an event is televised, it is not only the players who don't want this rule, but also the broadcasters and spectators. Talking at the table makes for good theater.

The rule is also not universally accepted. In some games, talking is part of the game and no one has any problem with it. In other games, some talking is okay.

And, of course, the vagueness of the rule causes problems with what is allowed to be said. Is it fine to tell your opponent that he should only call if he hates money, but wrong to say he should only call if he can beat a flush?

Not only is there no clear punishment, but there is also seldom any punishment. Perhaps there is a light warning from the dealer. But a little later, when the same player does the same thing there is a new dealer, and no punishment. In fact, this dealer may not even understand what is being said or that there is a rule prohibiting someone from saying it.

Even though there is virtually never a punishment, even the warnings are unevenly given. Poker stars, like Phil Hellmuth and Daniel Negreanu, Hollywood Stars, like Kevin Hart, as well as big losers and big tippers are given a lot more freedom to talk without a warning.

The 'no talking while in a hand' rule meets none of the requirements for a good rule. Yet, most casinos and most tournaments claim to have some variation of it in effect.

A much better rule would be... when a pot is heads-up, the two players in the hand are allowed to talk!

Are there any restrictions? Of course, nothing sexist, racist, or derogatory should be allowed. It should not be so excessively long that it delays the game.

That's it! Let 'em talk! ♠



Steve 'Zee' Zolotow aka The Bald Eagle or Zebra is a very successful gamesplayer. He has been a full-time gambler for over 40 years. With two WSOP bracelets, over 60 cashes, and a few million in tournament cashes, he is easing into retirement. He currently devotes most of his Vegas gaming time to poker, and can be found in cash games at Aria and Bellagio and at tournaments during the WSOP. When escaping from poker, he spends the spring and the fall in New York City where he hangs out at his bars: Doc Holliday's, The Library, and DBA.

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	Nov. 7-21	South Texas Poker Championship	Rounders Card Club ■ San Antonio, TX
	Nov. 10-21	WSOP Circuit Chicago	Grand Victoria Casino ■ Elgin, IL
	Nov. 16-30	WPT Rock 'N' Roll Poker Open	Seminole Hard Rock ■ Hollywood, FL
	Nov. 24	Turkey Bowl	bestbet Jacksonville ■ Jacksonville, FL
	Nov. 24-Dec. 5	WSOP Circuit North Carolina	Harrah's Casino ■ Cherokee, NC
DECEMBER	Dec. 1-20	WPT World Championship	Wynn ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Dec. 1-Jan. 8	Card Player Poker Tour	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Dec. 3	PGT NFT Championship	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Dec. 3-14	WSOP Circuit Los Angeles	Parkwest Bicycle Casino ■ Bell Gardens, CA
	Dec. 21	PGT Championship	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
JANUARY	Jan. 4-15	WSOP Circuit Choctaw	Choctaw Casino & Resort ■ Durant, OK
	Jan. 12-23	WSOP Circuit California	Thunder Valley Casino Resort ■ Lincoln, CA
	Jan. 12-25	Lucky Hearts Poker Open	Seminole Hard Rock ■ Hollywood, FL
	Jan. 13-21	PokerGO Cup	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 13-March 5	Los Angeles Poker Classic	Commerce Casino ■ Commerce, CA
	Jan. 19-30	WSOP Circuit Mississippi	Horseshoe Casino ■ Robinsonville, MS
FEBRUARY	Feb. 2-13	WSOP Circuit Florida	Isle Casino ■ Pompano Beach, FL
	Feb. 16-27	WSOP Circuit North Carolina	Harrah's Casino ■ Cherokee, NC

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THURSDAY

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12:15 p.m. NLH, \$120

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

6:00 p.m. NLH, \$165

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$135

THURSDAY

6:00 p.m. NLH, \$165

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$135

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$250

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

FLORIDA

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

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

WEDNESDAY

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

FRIDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

BESTBET - ORANGE PARK

TUESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

BESTBET - ST. AUGUSTINE

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

2:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

SATURDAY

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

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WEDNESDAY

11:15 a.m. NLH, \$150
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
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$320 KO \$75

SUNDAY

6:15 p.m. NLH, \$130

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6:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
2:05 p.m. O H/L, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
2:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
2:05 p.m. O H/L, \$150 (\$5K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
2:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 KO \$50 (\$5K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
2:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

10:05 a.m. NLH, \$60 (\$3K Guarantee)
6:05 p.m. NLH, \$150 (\$15K Guarantee)
10:05 p.m. NLH, \$60 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

NORTH CAROLINA

HARRAH'S - CHEROKEE

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

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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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SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$250 (\$5K Guarantee)

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MONDAY

6:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 RB \$125 (\$10K Guarantee)

TUESDAY

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6:30 p.m. NLH, \$180 (\$10K Guarantee)
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THURSDAY

6:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
8:15 p.m. PLO, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$5K Guarantee)
9:00 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

3:00 p.m. NLH, \$130 KO \$50 (\$4K Guarantee)
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Flopping A Set In The Main Event

Join more than 120,000 players worldwide who have taken their game to the next level. To develop your poker skills and learn how to crush games, check out PokerCoaching.com/CardPlayer.



You are playing in the *World Series of Poker* main event with a stack of 61,700 and the blinds at 150-300. A tight player sitting under the gun raises to 700 and it folds around to you in the big blind holding 3♠ 3♦.

Question 1: Should you fold, call, re-raise to 2,300 or re-raise to 4,000?

Answer: With small pairs in the big blind closing the action, your only viable option is to call and see the flop. You do not want to three-bet and then have to fold to a four-bet, and just folding to the initial raise would be way too weak.

You call, and the flop comes Q♠ 3♥ 2♠. You check, and your opponent bets 600.

Question 2: Should you fold, call, raise to 2,000, or raise to 3,000?

Answer: If you decide to call, very often the turn is just going to check through. Even if your opponent does bet the turn, they will likely fold to a check-raise, both of which are terrible results for you.

When the tight player bets 600, they are likely doing so either with their entire range, which includes a decent amount of junk, or only with their best hands. Playing deep stacked, you want to get as much money in the pot as possible when you have a premium hand, and the best way to do that is by raising (and hoping they have a hand themselves). When considering a raise size, it is usually best to make it three times your opponent's bet, or a little more when they use a small bet size.

You raise to 2,000 and your opponent calls. The turn is the 7♣.

Question 3: Should you check, bet 1,400, bet 3,400, or bet 5,400?

Answer: Even though you are behind better sets, you must keep betting. If your opponent has an overpair, top pair, or a flush draw, they are not folding. The goal when having a premium hand is to get as many chips into the pot as possible, meaning you should continue to bet large. An added benefit to betting large is when your opponent has a draw, you charge them a decent amount to see the river.

You bet 5,400 and get called. The river is the K♥.

Question 4: Should you check, bet 7,500, bet 15,000, or go all-in?

Answer: If your opponent has a busted flush draw, they are going to fold to any bet, unless they paired their king. Additionally, they may even call a big bet with just a queen given a lot of draws missed. It is unlikely they have an underpair because they called your large turn bet. You have to figure out how to get maximum value if you happen to be facing a hand like A-K or K-Q.

Much like previous streets, betting large with your polarized range is ideal, but should you go all-in? Considering your remaining stack as well as the remaining stack of your opponent (21,900), betting 15,000 is preferred because it is more likely to get called than an all-in, especially in the *WSOP* main event where players really do not want to go broke.

Opting to try and go for maximum value, you go all-in, and your opponent quickly folds.

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