

Card Player

THE POKER AUTHORITY

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A photograph of Phil Hellmuth, a professional poker player, sitting at a green poker table. He is wearing a black cap with a 'LuxonPay' logo, yellow-rimmed glasses, and a black jacket with yellow stripes on the sleeves. He has a beard and is smiling slightly. His hands are on the table, near some cards and chips. The background is blurred, showing other people and lights in a casino setting.

PHIL HELLMUTH: "I AM THE BEST ALL-AROUND TOURNAMENT PLAYER IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW"
WSOP GOAT Talks About Adding Bracelet No. 17 To His Collection

PLUS

**BAD BEAT JACKPOT
HITS IN CANADA FOR
RECORD \$2.6 MILLION**

⋮

**BRIAN RAST
INDUCTED INTO
POKER HALL OF FAME**

⋮

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OCTOBER 5-14

DATE	START TIME	EVENT	BUY-IN	FEE (ON-TIME)	FEE (LATE/REENTRY)	LEVEL LENGTH
10/5	12 PM	H.O.R.S.E.	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/6	12 PM	BIG BET MIX	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/7	12 PM	10-GAME MINI-CHAMPIONSHIP	\$5K	\$100	\$300	40 MINS
10/9	12 PM	8-GAME	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/10	12 PM	TRIPLE STUD MIX	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/11	12 PM	DEALER'S CHOICE	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/12	12 PM	TRIPLE DRAW MIX	\$10K	\$200	\$600	40 MINS
10/13	12 PM	10-GAME CHAMPIONSHIP	\$25K	\$300	\$1,000	60 MINS
10/14	12 PM	NO-LIMIT 2-7 SINGLE DRAW (1 DAY)	\$5K	\$100	\$300	30 MINS

SATELLITES

10/2	12 PM	\$750 10-GAME ➔ \$5,000 10-GAME MINI CHAMPIONSHIP
10/3	12 PM	\$1,425 H.O.R.S.E. ➔ ANY \$10,000 BUY-IN PGT MIXED GAMES EVENT
10/4	12 PM	\$1,425 8-GAME ➔ ANY \$10,000 BUY-IN PGT MIXED GAMES EVENT
10/8	12 PM	\$3,200 10-GAME ➔ \$25,000 10-GAME CHAMPIONSHIP



OCTOBER 18-28

DATE	START TIME	EVENT	BUY-IN	FEE (ON-TIME)	FEE (LATE/REENTRY)	LEVEL LENGTH
10/18	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA	\$5K	\$100	\$300	30 MINS
10/19	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA BOUNTY (\$2,500)	\$7.5K	\$100	\$300	30 MINS
10/20	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA	\$10K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/21	12 PM	PLO PROGRESSIVE BOUNTY (\$3K/\$3K)	\$15K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/23	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA	\$10K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/24	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA DEALER'S CHOICE	\$10K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/25	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA	\$10K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/26	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA HI-LO	\$10K	\$100	\$500	40 MINS
10/27	12 PM	POT-LIMIT OMAHA CHAMPIONSHIP	\$25K	\$100	\$1,000	60 MINS
10/28	2 PM	5-CARD POT-LIMIT OMAHA (1 DAY)	\$2K	\$100	\$200	30 MINS

SATELLITES

10/16	12 PM	\$560 POT-LIMIT OMAHA ➔ ANY \$5,000 BUY-IN PGT PLO SERIES EVENT
10/17	12 PM	\$1,100 POT-LIMIT OMAHA ➔ ANY \$10,000 BUY-IN PGT PLO SERIES EVENT
10/22	12 PM	\$1,100 POT-LIMIT OMAHA ➔ ANY \$10,000 BUY-IN PGT PLO SERIES EVENT
10/22	5 PM	\$2,700 POT-LIMIT OMAHA ➔ \$25,000 PLO CHAMPIONSHIP



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NEWS FROM THE GAMBLING WORLD

PLAYGROUND POKER BREAKS OWN RECORD FOR LARGEST BAD BEAT JACKPOT WITH CAD \$2.6 MILLION PAYOUT

Losing Player Banks CAD \$1 Million After Quad Tens Get Cracked By Straight Flush

By Card Player News Team



Playground Poker, a 75-table cardroom in Quebec, Canada, broke their own record in early August with a massive CAD \$2.6 million bad beat jackpot.

Although details of the hand and the players involved were not shared, the jackpot was triggered when one player's flopped quad tens (10♣ 10♠) were cracked by a turned straight flush (9♦ 6♦) on a board reading 8♦ 10♥ 10♦ 7♦ 2♦.

The hand occurred during a low-stakes \$1-\$2 no-limit hold'em cash game, and it didn't appear that there was much more than a few hundred dollars in the pot, but that was plenty enough to qualify for some life-changing payouts.

According to the Playground Poker bad beat jackpot rules on their website, the losing player was entitled to 40% of the CAD \$2,590,185 total prizepool, which in this case amounted to CAD \$1,036,074 (\$774,084 USD).

The player with the straight flush took home 20%, or CAD \$518,037 (\$387,042), and everyone else at the table split another 20%.

The final 20% was divided among all other players at the casino who were playing in a hold'em game at the time, giving the whole room something to celebrate. Even the dealers were happy, as the staff gets to split 5% of the jackpot each time it hits.

The payout breaks the previous record, also set by Playground Poker back in June of 2022, which was worth CAD \$2,228,425.

Once the latest bad beat hit, a backup jackpot was immediately activated which had already been reseeded to CAD \$700,863.

Playground Poker funds their promotions by taking \$2 from each cash game pot. A portion is allocated to the bad beat jackpot, another portion goes towards other cash game bonuses, and the remainder is saved to reseed the backup bad beat jackpot.

The 128,000 sq. ft. casino, located just outside of Montreal, is the largest cardroom in Canada. The facility opened in 2010 and also offers slots in addition to poker. ♠

DANIEL NEGREANU CRASHES LOW-STAKES HIGH SCHOOL HOME GAME IN LAS VEGAS

Poker Hall Of Famer Accepts Invitation From College-Bound Teens To Play 25¢-50¢

By Card Player News Team

While many of his high-stakes peers were in London battling it out for millions at the *Triton* high roller series (results coming next issue), Daniel Negreanu found himself playing for significantly smaller stakes one Sunday night in August.

The 49-year-old was out walking his dogs when a teenager wearing a suit got out of his car and approached him with a special request.

"My friends are coming over in an hour, playing our last poker game before going off to college. I know it's a lot to ask, but will you stop by and say hello to them?"

Negreanu polled his Twitter followers, and after more than 45,000 responses that overwhelmingly told him to go, he went. In fact, not only did he stop by, but he also brought free GGPoker merchandise and played in the game, which was 25¢-50¢ no-limit.

"Let's gamble!" Negreanu said, taking his seat in the game. At one point, he showed himself all-in with A-K against one player's 10-7, who had been goaded by his friends



into making the play.

Although the home game was played out on a simple dining room table, the college-bound teens classed up the environment in shirts and ties, commemorating the final poker gathering of their youth. The board came ace high, and Negreanu gave a fist pump as he dragged the pot.

The Poker Hall of Famer had a rough summer at the *WSOP*, booking his second straight seven-figure loss, but he did book a win in this game before deciding to give it all back to the students. We're guessing that they'll enjoy the memory more than the cash. ♠



FEDERAL BILL TARGETS CASINO-HOTEL RESORT FEES

By Joe Mattia

New legislation is in the works to crack down on hidden fees associated with hotels.

The Hotel Fees Transparency Act would aim to protect consumers from so-called resort fees, according to a report from *NBC News*. The new law, if enacted, would directly impact Las Vegas.

"The legislation would require anyone advertising a hotel room or a short-term rental to clearly show upfront the final price a customer would pay to book lodging. It would make the Federal Trade Commission responsible for pursuing violations, and it says state attorneys general could also bring civil action for violations," according to the report.

The proposal is bipartisan.

"Too often, Americans making reservations online are being met with hidden fees that make it difficult to compare prices and understand the true cost of an overnight stay," said Minnesota Democrat Sen. Amy Klobuchar, introducing the bill with Kansas Republican Sen. Jerry Moran. "This bipartisan legislation would help improve transparency so that travelers can make informed decisions."

President Joe Biden has said that his administration would attempt to crack down on "junk fees" across numerous industries, including the hospitality sector. As much as \$3 billion

annually is spent on the resort fees, according to NYU.

Critics of the act argue that eliminating resort fees will only result in higher prices anyway. The American Gaming

Association, the gambling industry's top lobbying group on Capitol Hill, has opposed changes, per the report.

Writing in a filing to the FTC, the AGA said: "Changing to all-inclusive pricing would result in removal of existing amenity disclosures and could lead to consumers making assumptions about what services and amenities would be available."

"We continue to maintain that resort fees provide value," said Alex Costello, Vice President of Government Relations for the American Gaming Association. "We try and make them as easy for the consumer to understand as possible. We're following existing FTC guidance. We believe that these should remain and that this is a problem that doesn't need to be solved." ♠



WORLD SERIES OF POKER ANNOUNCES EUROPE AND ONLINE SERIES SCHEDULES

By Erik Fast

After surprising the poker world with the announcement of a 15-bracelet series in the Bahamas this December, the *World Series of Poker* continued to share more opportunities to earn gold with the schedule releases for the *WSOP Europe* series in the Czech Republic and the *WSOP Online* series that will run from August to October.

This year's *WSOPE* festival will once again be held at King's Resort Rozvadov, is set to run from Oct. 25 – Nov. 15, and will feature 15 bracelet events.

Each and every bracelet event sports a guarantee, with more than €15 million in collective guaranteed prize money between them. That total is up from €12 million in 2022.

"We're absolutely thrilled to continue hosting the most prestigious tournament series in Europe, this year offering even higher guaranteed prize pools and new exciting events like the GGMillions, Mystery Bounty, and Closer," says King's Casino owner Leon Tsoukernik. "Our commitment remains to deliver unmatched service and hospitality to all poker players at King's."

This year's schedule features buy-ins ranging from as low as €350 in the €1,000,000 guaranteed 'Opener' event, all the way up to €50,000 for the €1 million guaranteed no-limit hold'em high roller. There are also two pot-limit Omaha events, a mystery bounty tournament, and an eight-game mix event.

The centerpiece of the whole affair will once again be the *WSOP Europe* €10,350 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event, which sports a series-high €5 million guaranteed prize pool. Players will start with 100,000 in chips for the main event.



© WSOP

In 2022, the *WSOPE* main event drew a record-setting field of 763 entries, smashing the €5 million guarantee to create a prize pool of \$7,248,500 USD. In the end, the biggest payday of all was the \$1,380,129 secured by eventual champion Omar Eljoch of Stockholm, Sweden.

But before that kicks off, the *WSOP Online* on GGPoker will award 33 gold bracelets between Aug. 20 – Oct. 2.

Buy-ins range from as low as \$100 all the way up to \$25,000, but the highlight is the \$25 million guaranteed \$5,000 buy-in main event.

"I am thrilled for GGPoker to continue our groundbreaking partnership with *WSOP* and unveil another exciting year of *WSOP Online*. This series will captivate poker players worldwide once more, as it's not only an opportunity to compete for a legendary *WSOP* gold bracelet but it also brings together players from different regions to showcase their skills," said GGPoker ambassador and six-time bracelet winner Daniel Negreanu. "This is a unique chance for the poker community to come together, take part in the most prestigious online poker series and create a truly unforgettable poker experience!" ♠

ARISTOCRAT GAMING UNVEILS FIRST NFL-THEMED SLOT MACHINE

By Joe Mattia

The National Football League's complete 180 on gambling continued in July with the unveiling of a brand-new league-themed slot machine, created by Aristocrat Gaming.

The NFL slot machines come as legal sports betting has spread to over 30 states. The NFL, previously opposed to all forms of gambling, has since warmed to betting as the industry becomes more lucrative.

The slot machines will hit casino floors across the country at the start of the 2023 NFL season. Casinos are legal in over 40 states.

The original license agreement between Aristocrat and the NFL was announced in the fall of 2021.

"We are thrilled to debut the first look of the new NFL-licensed slot machines, which will provide an innovative entertainment experience for millions of NFL fans," said Hector Fernandez, CEO of Aristocrat Gaming.

"The unveiling of the first NFL-themed slot machines represents an opportunity to

bring the League closer to our fans in a new area," said Joe Ruggiero, SVP of Consumer Products at the NFL. "We have valued collaborating with Aristocrat to bring their vision and responsible gaming resources to fans during the 2023 NFL season and beyond."

A game called NFL Super Bowl Jackpots is the first of several games that will be showcased over the coming months as part of the multi-year agreement. Other terms of the partnership were not disclosed.

Casino players of Super Bowl Jackpots have the chance to win a \$1 million progressive jackpot in states where permitted. There are additional gameplay features, including six licensed stadium anthems during key moments in the slot game.

The additional slot machines in the initial product roster that will debut later this year and into 2024 include Overtime Cash, Super Bowl Link, NFL Kickoff, Winning Drive, and Rings of Victory – each "inspired by a unique element of NFL gameplay" and featuring customizable team options, Aristocrat Gaming said. ♠





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OCT 26th - NOV 14th

Date	Time	Event Name	Buy-in	Rounds	Chips
Thu, Oct 26	12pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 1	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Thu, Oct 26	6pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 2	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Fri, Oct 27	12pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 3	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Fri, Oct 27	6pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 4	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Sat, Oct 28	12pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 5	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Sat, Oct 28	6pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee No Limit Hold'em Flight 6	\$400	30 Min	25,000
Sun, Oct 29	12pm	#1 \$200K Guarantee Final Day bestbetLIVE		30 Min	
Sun, Oct 29	1pm	#2 NLH with \$100 Bounties	\$400	30 Min	15,000
Mon, Oct 30	12pm	#3 No Limit Hold'em	\$300	30 Min	15,000
Tue, Oct 31	12pm	#4 No Limit Hold'em	\$400	30 Min	15,000
Wed, Nov 1	12pm	#5 NLH with \$100 Bounties	\$400	30 Min	15,000
Thu, Nov 2	12pm	#6 \$300K Guarantee Mystery Bounty Day 1A	\$1,700	40 Min	30,000
Fri, Nov 3	12pm	#6 \$300K Guarantee Mystery Bounty Day 1B	\$1,700	40 Min	30,000
Sat, Nov 4	12pm	#6 \$300K Guarantee Mystery Bounty Day 1C	\$1,700	40 Min	30,000
Sun, Nov 5	12pm	#6 \$300K Mystery Bounty Final Day bestbetLIVE		40 Min	
Sun, Nov 5	1pm	#7 No Limit Hold'em	\$500	30 Min	20,000
Mon, Nov 6	12pm	#8 No Limit Hold'em	\$300	30 Min	15,000
Tue, Nov 7	1pm	#9 NLH Ladies Championship bestbetLIVE	\$400	30 Min	15,000
Tue, Nov 7	3pm	#10 Big O/8 or Better	\$300	30 Min	15,000
Wed, Nov 8	12pm	#11 WPT Celebrity Bounty bestbetLIVE	\$300	30 Min	15,000
Thu, Nov 9	12pm	#12 No Limit Hold'em 6 MAX w/\$500 Bounties	\$2,100	30 Min	25,000
Fri, Nov 10	12pm	\$1,000,000 Main Event Championship Day 1A	\$5,000	60 Min	50,000
Sat, Nov 11	3pm	\$1,000,000 Main Event Championship Day 1B	\$5,000	60 Min	50,000
Sun, Nov 12	12pm	\$1,000,000 Main Event Championship Day 2		60/90 Min	
Sun, Nov 12	1pm	MEGA Satellite into WPT Championship (Wynn Las Vegas - 5 Package Guarantee)	\$580 w/\$100 Rebuys	30 Min	5,000
Mon, Nov 13	12pm	\$1,000,000 Main Event Championship Day 3		90 Min	
Tue, Nov 14	2pm	\$1,000,000 Main Event Final Day bestbetLIVE		60 Min	



LIVE STREAMING

#1 Final Day & Main Event Final Day Streaming. #6 Mystery Bounty Final Day, #9 Ladies Event and #11 WPT Celebrity Bounty with Feature & Final Table Streams. Watch Youtube @ bestbetLIVE & Facebook

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All events will allow unlimited re-entries within the registration period. All events are one day events, except for events #1, #6, and the Main Event. Event #1 is a four day event with six starting flights allowing re-entry on the same or next flight. Event #6 is a four day event with three starting days allowing re-entry on the same or next day. Main Event is a five day event with two starting days allowing re-entry on the same or next day. Event #6 Mystery Bounties will range from \$500 up to \$50,000. Main Event final table live streamed. Registration for the Main Event is open through the dinner break, the start of level 7. All event will be played 8 handed. An action clock will be used for the Main Event starting approximately one table out of the money.

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PHIL HELLMUTH: “I AM THE BEST ALL-AROUND TOURNAMENT PLAYER IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW”

WSOP GOAT Talks About Winning Bracelet No. 17

By Julio Rodriguez



If anybody was surprised by Phil Hellmuth's record-extending 17th bracelet win at this summer's 54th annual *World Series of Poker*, then they haven't been paying attention.

Hellmuth is now 59 years old and won his first bracelet in the '80s. For some reason, this fact has tricked many into believing that the Poker Brat's best years are long behind him. In reality, there's an argument to be made that not only is Phil the undisputed GOAT tournament player, but he may even be correct about being the greatest tournament player in the game right now.

Although Hellmuth is twice the age of some of the top-ranked wizards in poker today, his results speak for themselves. The Wisconsin native remains the *WSOP*'s most decorated player overall, with a seemingly uncatchable lead in bracelets (17), while sitting in third place for earnings (\$17.9 million) and third place in cashes (202). Take away online cashes, and he's in the lead.

Not only did he take down the main event (1989) in Las

Vegas, but he won the *WSOP* Europe main event (2012) as well. Hellmuth and Josh Arieh are the only competitors to win a bracelet at each of the three historical *WSOP* venues (Binion's, Rio, and the Las Vegas Strip), and Hellmuth is the only player to earn a bracelet in five different decades ('80s, '90s, '00s, '10s, and '20s).

Even if you took away his wins, he would still have one of the better records at the summer series, having finished runner-up an incredible 14 times, and third another four times. He has 61 final tables overall!

But what may shock you is just how recently Hellmuth's success at the series has come, as the latter half of his career has proven to be more decorated than the first.

This summer he cashed 13 times, and in addition to his win in the \$10,000 super turbo bounty event for \$803,818, he narrowly missed out on three additional final tables. Last year, he took second in the \$3,000 no-limit event, again with another two more near final tables. In 2021, he actually set the record for final tables in a summer with seven.

© PokerGO



Counting only the last 20 years, essentially the entire duration of the poker boom, Hellmuth has been averaging 8.5 cashes and just under two final tables per summer, with a bracelet win every other year! Nobody else in the modern era comes close.

Card Player caught up with Hellmuth after the series to talk about winning bracelet no. 17, poker's latest boom, getting the respect of his peers, and why he sees himself as a fire-breathing dragon.

CP: We had many record-breaking tournaments this year at the series, including the main event. How good do you feel about the current health of the poker ecosystem? How good do you feel about poker's future?

PH: [It's a] poker boom! It's amazing! Right now, at this very moment, poker is the biggest that it has ever been!

I believe the pandemic brought new players to our beautiful game (the 18–24-year-olds are back in droves), and 100,000 'retired' players as well. These retired players are better now than they were back then (maturity helps!) when they stopped playing, and they are enjoying the game again. Also, the retired players have more money, and better money-management skills.

CP: There were also a record number of events offered, including more online events than ever. When you started in 1988, there were 12 events. Next year, there will be well over 100 bracelets up for grabs not even including the online series and Europe/Bahamas. How do you feel about so many bracelet events on the calendar?

PH: I do wish there were less bracelets each year. 100 is too many, and there are probably 150 per year now with the other series.

One thing we definitely need is to have separate categories for online and real-world *WSOP* statistics. And I believe they

will eventually split them.

CP: Let's talk about your schedule. How many events did you end up playing this summer? It seems like you were more careful to take time off and rest. Do you feel like it paid off?

PH: I ended up playing 33 tournaments total, not including online events. That's a lot less than anyone else that was 'seriously playing' for *WSOP* bracelets! I probably had 10-12 days completely off.

[To be honest], I needed the extra rest, especially at the age of 58. (Editor's Note: Phil turned 59 on July 16).

CP: Cashing 13 times is a great summer, even if you hadn't won a bracelet. Overall, how happy are you with how you played? Are there any big spots you wish you had back?

PH: I mean, I can think of two mistakes that I made very late in a couple of events. Both probably cost me a final table! And then there were a couple times that I played perfectly, but ran into some turbulence.

CP: Even though the field is tougher when there are only a few tables left, that's when it seems like you have your greatest edge. Nobody bobs and weaves better in the end stages of a tournament. What do you attribute this success to? Patience? Experience?

PH: You know, patience is super important! But patience can be trumped by a 'good read.'

My reading ability is what I call 'white magic.' I can fold super strong hands, or call with very marginal hands if I have a great read.

Also, there is a time and a place to change gears. I am good at knowing when to play faster.

CP: Your record at the series is remarkable, and nobody has more experience when it comes to deep runs and final tables. When was the last time you were nervous at the table?

PH: I don't get nervous. Sometimes I get stressed, like



Phil Hellmuth's 17 WSOP Bracelet Wins

Year	Event	Payout
1989	\$10,000 Main Event	\$755,000
1992	\$5,000 Limit Hold'em	\$168,000
1993	\$1,500 No-Limit Hold'em	\$161,400
1993	\$2,500 No-Limit Hold'em	\$173,000
1993	\$5,000 Limit Hold'em	\$138,000
1997	\$3,000 Pot-Limit Hold'em	\$204,000
2001	\$2,000 No-Limit Hold'em	\$316,550
2003	\$2,500 Limit Hold'em	\$171,400
2003	\$3,000 No-Limit Hold'em	\$410,860
2006	\$1,000 No-Limit Hold'em Rebuy	\$631,863
2007	\$1,500 No-Limit Hold'em	\$637,254
2012	\$2,500 Razz	\$182,793
2012	€10,000 Main Event	\$1,333,841
2015	\$10,000 Razz	\$271,105
2018	\$5,000 No-Limit Hold'em	\$485,082
2021	\$1,500 No-Limit 2-7 Lowball	\$84,851
2023	\$10,000 Super Turbo Bounty	\$803,818

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“Patience is super important! But patience can be trumped by a good read. My reading ability is what I call ‘white magic.’ I can fold super strong hands, or call with very marginal hands, if I have a great read.”

“I have a great understanding of my image, and I keenly understand how to take advantage of it.”



when I am tired and losing pots.

For example, I was stressed in the \$10,000 H.O.R.S.E. event. I was very tired, and we were 11-handed for four hours straight. I was so in the zone, that it felt like I was going to finish first or second. Instead, I lost a bunch of pots that I was ‘supposed to win.’ (Editor’s Note: Hellmuth would go on to finish 11th.)

CP: I imagine that if I were to play my cards exactly the same way you would, there would be a different outcome. Some players go out of their way to play pots with you, and others are scared to play back at you. How do you figure out who is who?

PH: I have a great understanding of my image, and I keenly understand how to take advantage of it.

Everyone always thinks that I have it, and for the most part, I really do have it. But then, when they stop calling me, I have to take advantage of that and bluff a lot more.

CP: The \$10,000 turbo event you won was a real marathon, ending early the next morning after it started. How were you feeling during that run? Do you wish they would have stopped play so that the final table could be streamed, or do you think that playing it out worked to your advantage?

PH: Truthfully, I wanted to stop play. I wanted to play in front of the world LIVE on PokerGO! [Phil] Ivey objected when we were at the final table, and I told him that he

‘would not dictate policy!’

It was tense for about 30 seconds, but then Ivey explained himself to me, and we laughed about it. He was told it was a one-day tournament, and he had planned for it. [I] ended up busting Ivey in sixth place.

When we were five-handed, I asked the players if they wanted to come back at 4 p.m. However, two of them wanted to play, so we played.

One advantage for me was that there were no hecklers! My last *WSOP* final table famously brought out a few guys that were drunk and way, way out of line. Although, had the heckler thing happened in 2023, I believe the *WSOP* was prepared to kick the hecklers out!

CP: I couldn’t believe you were at the Doyle Brunson memorial ceremony just a few hours later, and had enough left in the tank to give a speech to a big crowd. You must have been running on adrenaline!

PH: I was on zero sleep heading into the Doyle tribute, having won the bracelet at 5 a.m. But I simply couldn’t miss it. I spoke about Doyle from my heart. I think folks appreciated it, and that’s the point.

CP: Throughout the series on social media you referenced the symbolism of a dragon. What is the significance of the dragon?

PH: I am a Chinese Dragon. Actually, so is my wife Kat and my best friend Chamath Palihapitiya.



(Editor's Note: Palihapitiya is a venture capitalist who helped launch Facebook, and is the owner of one of Hellmuth's bracelets. Hellmuth gives away all of his bracelets except for his 1989 main event win. Bracelet no. 17 went to Palihapitiya's podcast co-host and fellow entrepreneur David Sacks.)

I was playing so great, and I was so frustrated that I wasn't making final tables that I posted something on Twitter about breathing fire. Then, I mentioned I was a dragon and posted a picture of a dragon. This post happened at 2:30 p.m., by 5 a.m. I had the bracelet!

So, I'm leaning into the dragon concept!

CP: The last time you were interviewed for *Card Player*, you said you had ambitions to be a billionaire. How goes it? I know you have been advising several companies and even became a cardroom owner in Texas.

PH: I have been an official 'advisor' for almost 20 companies. What does this mean? I advise a company in exchange for 2%-3% of the company, and I usually invest my own money as well.

I give the founder connections to eight powerful people (celebrities, billionaires, business leaders) that may or may not invest, social media posts, and one hour a month for a 'strategic call.' (Not during *WSOP*!) I have changed the

trajectory of a few companies! And have added more value than my 2%-3% to all of them (with one or two exceptions).

My founders tell other new founders how much I have helped them, and then the new founders come to me. I believe that I will be a billionaire when I'm 76 years old. But, I will sacrifice zero of my health to get there! My schedule is about perfect right now.

CP: The haters have been awfully quiet for a while now. Does it feel like the tide has turned and you are now getting the respect you deserve?

PH: Yes, exactly that. The tide has turned, and the greatest players, like Shaun Deeb, have given me both GOAT status and recognize that I am the best all-around tournament player in the world right

now. My results over the last 20 months are solid evidence of that. But of course, the great ones like Shaun still plan on passing me!

It's nice to have real recognition. Although, the second-tier great players (ranked 8-80 in the world), still don't give me that. This tier doesn't understand poker greatness, and they will never achieve the top spot.

Ivey knows how great I am, and I know how great he is. I always say, 'The great ones know who the great ones are.' ♠



BRIAN RAST SELECTED AS 2023 INDUCTEE INTO THE POKER HALL OF FAME

Six-Time WSOP Bracelet Winner Becomes 62nd Member Of The Hall

By Card Player News Team



Brian Rast with Jack Effel

After tallying the votes, Brian Rast joins the exclusive club of gamblers who have made it into the Poker Hall of Fame, becoming the 62nd member overall.

The announcement was made by the *World Series of Poker*, with the 41-year-old accepting the honor inside the Paris Ballroom before heading to the designated Hall of Fame Poker Room at the Horseshoe Casino for a photo opportunity that preceded the annual \$1,979 buy-in Poker Hall of Fame bounty tournament.

“With a nearly 20-year-long career riddled with record-breaking wins and historic runs, Brian Rast is one of the best poker players we’ve ever seen,” said *WSOP* Vice President Jack Effel. “With the 2023 *WSOP* breaking records left and right, it only makes sense to put a record-setter himself amongst some of the greatest of all time. We are honored to induct Brian Rast into the Poker Hall of Fame and look forward to his successes to come.”

The Stanford dropout turned poker standout certainly has a deserving résumé as a longtime high-stakes cash game winner who also has six *WSOP* bracelets, as well as numerous high roller titles, including the first-ever *Super High Roller Bowl*, which paid out a massive \$7.5 million.

This summer, Rast got everyone’s attention by winning the prestigious \$50,000 buy-in *Poker Players Championship* for a third time, joining Michael Mizrachi as the only players to do so. Rast has nearly \$25 million in career earnings overall, which is good for 30th all time.

“I am very pleased to receive this recognition for the work I have put into my craft during my entire adult life,” Rast

said at the ceremony. “I am deeply honored to be chosen.”

Rast spoke for ten minutes, thanking his family and friends for their support.

There are now 32 living members of the hall, which collectively vote each year from the list of nominees. Other Hall of Famers who were in attendance included Jack McClelland, Scotty Nguyen, Mori Eskandani, Barbara Enright, Johnny Chan, Barry Greenstein, Todd Brunson, Berry Johnston, and Eli Elezra.

In order to be considered for the Poker Hall of Fame, a player must be a minimum of 40 years old and must have played high-stakes poker “against acknowledged top competition” while “standing the test of time” by playing consistently well and earning the respect of their peers. Or, for non-players, they must have “contributed to the overall growth of the game with indelible positive and lasting results.”

While Rast is certainly deserving of induction, the *WSOP* has received criticism in recent years for not increasing the number of inductees, while also eliminating the media vote.

Rast addressed the issue early in his speech, saying that he was going to push the other living voters to acknowledge the dozens of qualified individuals who are currently on the outside looking in.

“Now that I’m in, I have votes,” he said. “I’m going to do my duty to make sure the Hall gets the incoming generation right. There are a lot of amazing players in the poker world who deserve recognition for their careers.”

Rast beat out nine other finalists for the honor, many

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of whom have been waiting years for induction. The other nominees were Josh Arieh, Jeremy Ausmus, Ted Forrest, Kathy Liebert, Mike Matusow, broadcast duo Lon McEachern and Norman Chad, Matt Savage, Isai Scheinberg, and Bill Smith.

THE POKER HALL OF FAME

Name	Inducted
Johnny Moss	1979
Nick "The Greek" Dandolos	1979
Felton "Corky" McCorquodale	1979
Red Winn	1979
Sid Wyman	1979
James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok	1979
Edmond Hoyle	1979
Blondie Forbes	1980
Bill Boyd	1981
Tom Abdo	1982
Joe Bernstein	1983
Murph Harrold	1984
Red Hodges	1985
Henry Green	1986
Walter Clyde "Puggy" Pearson	1987
Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson	1988

Jack "Treetop" Straus	1988
Fred "Sarge" Ferris	1989
Benny Binion	1990
David "Chip" Reese	1991
Thomas "Amarillo Slim" Preston	1992
Jack Keller	1993
Julius Oral Popwell	1996
Roger Moore	1997
Stu "The Kid" Ungar	2001
Lyle Berman	2002
Johnny "The Orient Express" Chan	2002
Bobby "The Owl" Baldwin	2003
Berry Johnston	2004
Jack Binion	2005
Crandell Addington	2005
T.J. Cloutier	2006
Billy Baxter	2006
Barbara Enright	2007
Phil Hellmuth	2007
Dewey Tomko	2008
Henry Orenstein	2008
Mike Sexton	2009
Dan Harrington	2010
Erik Seidel	2010
Linda Johnson	2011
Barry Greenstein	2011
Eric Drache	2012
Bryan "Sailor" Roberts	2012
Scotty Nguyen	2013
Tom McEvoy	2013
Daniel Negreanu	2014
Jack McClelland	2014
Jennifer Harman	2015
John Juanda	2015
Carlos Mortensen	2016
Todd Brunson	2016
David "Devilfish" Ulliott	2017
Phil Ivey	2017
John Hennigan	2018
Mori Eskandani	2018
Chris Moneymaker	2019
David Oppenheim	2019
Huck Seed	2020
Eli Elezra	2021
Layne Flack	2022
Brian Rast	2023

TYLER PATTERSON WINS RGPS CHECKPOINT THUNDER VALLEY

By Erik Fast

Tyler Patterson finished second in the *RunGood Poker Series Season Finale* main event last December at Thunder Valley Casino near Sacramento, California. Just 240 days removed from that runner-up finish, he managed to one-up himself, winning the *RGPS Checkpoint Thunder Valley* \$2,500 main event.

Patterson took home \$200,422, the fourth-largest score of his career. He now has more than \$3.3 million in earnings after this big win. The *WSOP* bracelet winner and *WPT* champion also secured 1,080 *Card Player* Player of the Year points as the champion.

This event drew a field of 477 entries, surpassing the \$1 million guarantee to create a final prize pool of \$1,064,187. The top 72 finishers made the money, with \$3,245 for a min-cash and five-figure paydays for the final 18.

By the time the final table was set, Patterson was firmly in the middle of the pack while Paul Sampson held the chip lead. Sampson scored a few knockouts as the final table continued, including picking up pocket queens against the A-5 suited of Kevin O'Donnell.

Patterson knocked out short stack Shijia Liu and then scored a huge double-up through Sampson with pocket tens besting pocket nines to overtake the lead. Darren Rabinowitz lost a classic preflop race to finish third for \$90,315, setting up a heads-up showdown between Patterson and Sampson.

Heads-up play lasted two hours. In the final hand, Sampson shoved with J♦ 3♦ and received a call from Patterson, who held A♦ 8♦. The board fell ace high to lock



up the title for Patterson. Sampson cashed for \$141,585 as the runner-up.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Tyler Patterson	\$200,422 (1,080)
2 Paul Sampson	\$141,585 (900)
3 Darren Rabinowitz	\$90,315 (720)
4 Shijia Liu	\$63,945 (540)
5 Kevin O'Donnell	\$49,055 (450)
6 Adam Hannula	\$41,025 (360)
7 Phatseluck Yang	\$33,905 (270)
8 Michael Zimmer	\$27,040 (180)
9 Alexander Rodriguez	\$21,505 (90)

© RGPS / Rachel Kay Miller

SHAUN DEEB CAPTURES FIFTH LIVE TITLE OF 2023

By Erik Fast



Shaun Deeb has been an elite closer so far in 2023. He's made nine final tables this year, and has walked away with the title more than half of the time. The 37-year-old poker pro secured his fifth victory at the *Seminole Hard Rock Poker Open*. Deeb outlasted a field of 22 high rollers in the \$25,500 buy-in pot-limit Omaha event, earning \$239,100 for the win.

With this latest title, Deeb climbed to 15th place in the 2023 POY standings. He has accumulated 4,286 points and more than \$1.3 million in POY earnings thus far.

Fifth-ranked POY contender Ren Lin placed fourth for \$65,200 and 126 points for his 18th final-table showing of

the year. He has 6,241 total points and nearly \$3.3 million in to-date POY earnings. Alex Foxen earned \$97,800 and 168 points as the third-place finisher. He now occupies the seventh-place spot on the leaderboard, with 5,423 points and more than \$2.3 million in POY earnings.

The first of Deeb's five titles came in the \$10,300 H.O.R.S.E. event at the *PGT Mixed Games* festival in February. In March, he bested 1,070 entries in the *WSOP Circuit Turning Stone* \$1,700 main event for \$275,916. Deeb then took down a \$5,000 side event at the *Lodge Championship Series* in Texas for another six-figure payday.

During the *WSOP*, Deeb cashed 24 times, including winning his sixth career gold bracelet as the champion of the \$1,500 eight-game mix event.

Deeb had to outlast *WPT* champion Roger Teska to grasp the trophy. Teska earned \$141,300 as the runner-up, growing his lifetime earnings to nearly \$4.3 million in the process.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Shaun Deeb	\$239,100 (252)
2 Roger Teska	\$141,300 (210)
3 Alex Foxen	\$97,800 (168)
4 Ren Lin	\$65,200 (126)

© WPT

STEVE O'DWYER RECORDS EIGHTH CAREER SEVEN-FIGURE SCORE

By Erik Fast

Steve O'Dwyer added another seven-figure score to his extensive tournament résumé, taking down the *WPT Alpha8 for One Drop* at Jeju Shinhwa World KRW 170,000,000 high roller for KRW 1,294,256,000 (\$1,009,159).

"I'm just really happy. I haven't played much poker this summer and I've got to win the ones that I do play. So it's nice to win," O'Dwyer told the *WPT* after coming out on top. "I've always loved *WPT*s. The first big tournament I ever played was the *WPT PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* in 2007. Anytime it's convenient I try to because they're always great events."

The event, which cost approximately \$132,000 to enter, drew 18 entries to create a final prize pool equivalent to more than \$2.2 million.

This marked the eighth time that O'Dwyer has cashed for more than a million dollars. The victory increased his career tournament earnings to \$38,705,943. As a result, he surpassed Cary Katz and claimed the 12th-place spot on poker's all-time money list.

The American-born poker pro, now based out of Ireland, is now officially the highest-earning tournament player on



the planet without a *World Series of Poker* bracelet. Given that he doesn't play the summer series in Las Vegas, it's a title he could hold for a while.

O'Dwyer earned 240 POY points for his ninth final-table finish of the year, with one title and more than \$4.3 million in earnings accrued along the way. He now sits just outside the top 30 in the overall standings.

This event paid the top four finishers, with the first player busting inside the money opting to remain anonymous.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Steve O'Dwyer	\$1,009,159 (240)
2 Quan Zhou	\$559,809 (200)
3 Chenxu Zhang	\$390,079 (160)

YIN TAO TAKES DOWN WPT KOREA MAIN EVENT

By Ryan Lucchesi



Yin Tao was crowned as the champion of the *WPT Korea* hosted at Jeju Shinhwa World. The Chinese poker player was awarded \$232,667 and the *WPT* trophy for his first tournament victory.

"What an incredible experience Jeju has been, from the player turnout to the celebrations and all-around atmosphere," said *WPT* CEO Adam Pliska. "Thank you to our partner Jeju Shinhwa World for the exceptional hospitality and for putting on a world-class event, and congratulations to Yin Tao for becoming our *WPT Korea* champion."

The KRW 3,400,000 (USD \$2,643) buy-in event attracted a large field of 758 entries that made an extra day of play necessary to reach a winner. The top 95 players all took home at least \$4,314 in prize money.

When the last day of play began Tao was securely in the

chip lead, and he quickly boosted his stack even more by taking out Hong Zhu in eighth place and Li Jiang Liu in seventh place.

When the tournament reached the final three players they decided on an ICM chop before playing things out to decide who would take home the title. Chao Ting Cheng had the chip lead at that point so he was awarded the largest prize of \$251,595, Tao locked up \$232,667, and short stack Valeriy Pak was guaranteed \$197,332.

Tao doubled through Cheng to take the chip lead back, and then Tao took out Cheng in third place to even the stacks up before the start of heads-up play. After a back-and-forth battle, Tao took control of the match and closed out Pak to earn the trophy.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Yin Tao	\$232,667 (1,368)
2 Valeriy Pak	\$197,332 (1,140)
3 Chao Ting Cheng	\$251,595 (912)
4 Jian Guo Shu	\$115,545 (684)
5 Chun Hao Zhang	\$86,994 (570)
6 Toshihide Sawada	\$64,673 (456)
7 Li Jiang Liu	\$51,210 (342)
8 Hong Zhu	\$39,672 (228)
9 Song Pengfei	\$31,319 (114)

COLLEGE SOCCER PLAYER EARNS WSOP CIRCUIT RING AT CHOCTAW

By Ryan Lucchesi



In July, Harvey Castro took home his first *WSOP Circuit* gold ring along with \$275,660 at the Choctaw main event in Durant, Oklahoma. One of the youngest players in the tournament, Castro is from nearby Flower Mound, Texas and plays collegiate soccer for Southern Methodist University.

"I tried to manage expectations. I just tried to keep a calm, collected head throughout. I tried to take it one hand at a time," said Castro.

The five-day tournament saw a turnout of 1,026 entries over three starting flights, with a total prize pool of \$1,552,338 that easily surpassed the \$1 million guarantee. The top 120 players all earned at least \$2,546.

David 'The Dragon' Pham was on top when the final

table was set, and Castro held the third-largest stack. Castro scored his first knockout punch when he took out Arthur Morris in fifth place and then busted Todd Tucker in fourth place. He then knocked out Pham to take a better than 5:1 chip advantage into heads-up play against Chris Staats.

Castro applied constant pressure from that point forward with multiple jams before Staats picked a spot to make his final stand. Castro moved all in with J♥ 5♥ on the final hand of the tournament, and Staats called for the last of his chips holding 9♦ 8♦. The board ran out K♠ 3♥ 2♦ 7♠ Q♥, and that was all she wrote.

Staats took home \$174,980 for the deep run, and the gold bracelet winner's career earnings are now above \$1.7 million.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Harvey Castro	\$275,660 (960)
2 Christopher Staats	\$174,980 (800)
3 David Pham	\$130,024 (640)
4 Todd Tucker	\$97,797 (480)
5 Arthur Morris	\$74,466 (400)
6 Gary Bauer	\$57,374 (320)
7 Andrew Watson	\$44,723 (240)
8 Eric Bunch	\$35,254 (160)
9 Srinivasa Vadlamudi	\$28,097 (80)

© WSOP

BRANDON LULOV WINS ACR VENOM FOR \$1.57 MILLION

By Julio Rodriguez

Venom, ACR Poker's flagship event, drew a huge field of 3,522 entries who were all vying for the biggest share of the \$10 million prize pool.

The \$2,650 buy-in online tournament had five starting flights and took four days of play to determine a champion. When the dust settled, it was New York poker pro Brandon Lulov who came out on top, playing under the name 'S3L3NAGOMEZZ.'

Lulov earned a career best \$1,577,970, posting on Twitter that he was "at a loss for words," following the victory. His previous best score was the \$246,125 he earned as the winner of the \$5,000 event at the *Hard Rock Poker Showdown* in April of 2022. He now has just over \$2.3 million in recorded tournament earnings.

Lulov defeated Brazilian pro Felipe Ketzer heads-up for the title. Ketzer is having a breakout year on the tournament circuit, having already finished second in the €25,000 high roller at *EPT Paris* for \$249,096 and fifth in the €25,000 high roller at *EPT Monte Carlo* for \$302,489.

Michael Miller, a *WSOP Circuit* ring winner, took eighth for \$177,920, and Michael 'YoungHoodie' Perrone, a former psychologist turned poker pro, finished seventh for \$238,250.

The final table also featured ACR pro Jon 'apestyles'



Van Fleet, who was already sitting in sixth place on the PokerStake all-time online tournament earnings leaderboard with more than \$22 million. Van Fleet added another \$326,370 with a sixth-place finish.

Another notable player was high-stakes pro Chris Hunichen, who finished third playing under the name '2Rich2Care.' The North

Carolina native banked \$838,960 for his deep run.

Player	Payout (POY)
1. Brandon 'S3L3NAGOMEZZ' Lulov	\$1,577,970
2. Felipe 'Ketzerfelipe' Ketzer	\$1,149,260
3. Chris '2rich2care' Hunichen	\$838,960
4. CHAMPAIGNE	\$612,440
5. BurnZeByeBell	\$447,080
6. Jon 'apestyles' Van Fleet	\$326,370
7. Michael 'YoungHoodie' Perrone	\$238,250
8. Michael 'mpmiller0906' Miller	\$177,920



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
DeepStack Venetian Las Vegas, NV	1 Furkan Beg	\$109,888 (912)
	2 James Agate	\$80,360 (760)
	3 Scott Hall	\$76,295 (608)
	4 John McDonald	\$59,137 (456)
\$1,100 NLHE July 17-20 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 923 Prizepool: \$886,080	5 Daniel Chan	\$58,746 (380)
	6 Renmei Liu	\$29,191 (304)
	7 Diego Emperador	\$22,458 (228)
	8 Fabrizio Gonzalez Cataldi	\$17,505 (152)
	9 Dorian Rios Pavan	\$13,825 (76)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Houston Showdown	1 Jonathan Byrne	\$45,000 (384)
	2 Romain Boursier	\$40,000 (320)
	3 Carson Wieland	\$22,500 (256)
Prime Social Club Houston, TX	4 Hector Salgado	\$16,500 (192)
	5 Alex Green	\$12,500 (160)
\$300 NLHE July 19-23 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 1,315 Prizepool: \$322,175	6 Sanjeev Vora	\$10,000 (128)
	7 Kristopher Burchfield	\$8,400 (96)
	8 Anshul Raj	\$6,600 (64)
	9 Dexter Baier	\$5,165 (32)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
GAPT Summer Deep Stack	1 Charles Campos	\$86,586 (456)
	2 Matt Berkey	\$53,502 (380)
Daytona Beach Card Club Daytona Beach, FL	3 Alexander Venovski	\$39,409 (304)
	4 Mohammad Alhalwani	\$29,411 (228)
	5 Charles Driggers	\$22,236 (190)
\$570 NLHE July 20-24 \$300,000 GTD Entries: 888 Prizepool: \$444,000	6 Patrick Murphy	\$17,027 (152)
	7 Samuel Sternfield	\$13,205 (114)
	8 Michael Lavigna	\$10,367 (76)
	9 Tyrone Wilson	\$8,241 (38)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Summer Showdown	1 Maikel Homin	\$62,590 (420)
	2 Henri Antikainen	\$42,295 (350)
Olympic Park Casino Tallinn, Estonia	3 Simon Forendal	\$25,036 (280)
	4 Dmitri Dudakov	\$18,282 (210)
€555 NLHE July 23-26 Entries: 573 Prizepool: \$296,245	5 Michailas Miserkejevas	\$14,311 (175)
	6 Kim Lindstrom	\$10,747 (140)
	7 Juho Heiska	\$7,370 (105)
	8 Janne Ojala	\$5,423 (70)
	9 Jevgeni Sapronenko	\$4,345 (35)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Summer Showdown	1 Kai Lehto	\$119,086 (840)
	2 Phil Gross	\$79,970 (700)
Olympic Park Casino Tallinn, Estonia	3 Urmo Velvelt	\$54,230 (560)
	4 Ville Keranen	\$38,390 (420)
€1,100 NLHE July 26-30 Entries: 564 Prizepool: \$583,176	5 Tarmo Tammel	\$28,160 (350)
	6 Mikael Haapaniemi	\$21,230 (280)
	7 Tomi Arponen	\$14,740 (210)
	8 Magnus Pukk	\$11,110 (140)
	9 Nils Linden	\$8,470 (70)



© APT

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
APT	1 Shixiang Khoo	\$165,282 (840)
	2 Shinya Maeda	\$102,042 (700)
Furama Resort Danang City, Vietnam	3 Daiki Shingae	\$72,937 (560)
	4 Yu-Chung Chang	\$55,872 (420)
VND 35,000,000 NLHE July 24-29 VND 12,000,000,000 GTD Entries: 675 Prizepool: \$868,503	5 Khac Nguyen	\$44,265 (350)
	6 Manh Truong Nguyen	\$34,476 (280)
	7 Koangho Lee	\$25,121 (210)
	8 The Naing	\$17,169 (140)
	9 Duc Tran	\$13,600 (70)

TOURNAMENTS

Nguyen Long



© APT

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
APT Furama Resort	1 Nguyen Long	\$109,800 (468)
	2 Ngo Anh	\$74,381 (390)
	3 Matthew Bevin	\$49,587 (312)
Danang City, Vietnam	4 Tran Hieu	\$40,614 (234)
	5 Shung Sua	\$32,586 (195)
	6 Xiaosheng Zheng	\$25,266 (156)
VND 80,000,000 NLHE July 29-30	7 Yohei Kitazato	\$18,701 (117)
VND 5,000,000,000 GTD	8 Trung Nguyen	\$13,743 (78)
Entries: 161 Prizepool: \$473,495	9 Tien Son Nguyen	\$10,957 (39)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit	1 Cameron Mixson	\$55,746 (384)
	2 Collin King	\$34,444 (320)
	3 Andrew Chubick	\$25,068 (256)
Choctaw Durant, OK	4 Samir Bhatia	\$18,540 (192)
	5 Kasey Mills	\$13,925 (160)
	6 Anonymous	NA
\$1,100 NLHE July 25-27	7 Dora Coyle	\$8,225 (96)
\$100,000 GTD	8 La Sengphet	\$6,464 (64)
Entries: 227 Prizepool: \$220,871	9 Raymond Hernandez	\$5,156 (32)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Live! Tournament	1 Keith Crowder	\$47,068 (456)
	2 Nicholas Skyllas	\$46,357 (380)
	3 Kevin Gabel	\$43,000 (304)
Live! Casino Philadelphia, PA	4 Jonathan Stoeber	\$21,205 (228)
	5 Joseph Renzi	\$16,125 (190)
	6 Michael Cologna	\$12,825 (152)
\$550 NLHE July 26-30	7 Sung Oh	\$10,615 (114)
\$200,000 GTD	8 Renata Colache	\$8,445 (76)
Entries: 845 Prizepool: \$358,280	9 Kenneth Keppol	\$6,330 (38)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
SHR Poker Open	1 Johnny Bromberg	\$219,090 (528)
	2 Sudharshan Karanam	\$180,000 (440)
	3 David Shmuel	\$174,734 (352)
Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood, FL	4 Alcides Gomez	\$149,611 (264)
	5 Ramon Gonzalez	\$90,1265 (220)
	6 Evan Pantano	\$68,155 (176)
\$400 NLHE July 26-31	7 Christina Gollins	\$47,460 (132)
\$1,000,000 GTD	8 Avery Bloom	\$34,050 (88)
Entries: 6,253 Prizepool: \$2,063,490	9 Brandon Navarrete	\$22,700 (44)

Justin Liberto



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
SHR Poker Open	1 Justin Liberto	\$257,000 (480)
	2 Dan Heimiller	\$155,600 (400)
	3 Asher Neaman	\$96,800 (320)
Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood, FL	4 Alex Foxen	\$65,500 (240)
	5 Chad Eveslage	\$49,900 (200)
	6 Justin Zaki	\$39,900 (160)
\$10,000 NLHE Aug. 1	7 Brandon Wittmeyer	\$33,100 (120)
Entries: 84 Prizepool: \$798,000	8 Daniel Rezaei	\$28,000 (80)
	9 Nadya Mangus	\$25,800 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit	1 Rafael Navas	\$101,600 (540)
	2 Victor Ilyukhin	\$60,960 (450)
	3 Gary Miller	\$40,640 (360)
JW Marriott Grosvenor House London, United Kingdom	4 Shaun Walbridge	\$27,940 (270)
	5 Alexander Clark	\$19,812 (225)
	6 Leon Campbell	\$15,240 (180)
£560 NLHE July 27-Aug. 1	7 Michael O'Brien	\$11,430 (135)
£1,000,000 GTD	8 Michael Carney	\$8,890 (90)
Entries: 1,546 Prizepool: \$618,278	9 Jun Li	\$6,350 (45)

TOURNAMENTS

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit JW Marriott Grosvenor House London, United Kingdom	1 Dongwoo Ko	\$50,800 (336)
	2 Jamie Brown	\$30,480 (280)
	3 Alex Zeligman	\$21,941 (224)
	4 Karim Louis	\$16,510 (168)
	5 Karim Jomeen	\$12,700 (140)
£450 NLHE July 31-Aug. 2 £200,000 GTD Entries: 672 Prizepool: \$310,128	6 Darius Cibulskas	\$10,160 (112)
	7 Lorenc Boci	\$7,620 (84)
	8 Masahito Murao	\$6,350 (56)
	9 Sandeep Shah	\$5,080 (28)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Pure Poker Tour Pure Casino Edmonton, Canada	1 John Donnelly	\$51,605 (600)
	2 Aidan Tiefenbach	\$36,248 (500)
	3 Joon Park	\$23,933 (400)
	4 Saroar Parvez	\$17,033 (300)
C\$1,100 NLHE July 28-30 Entries: 392 Prizepool: \$275,659	5 Alex Liu	\$13,155 (250)
	6 Takuma Bergeron	\$10,808 (200)
	7 Haven Werner	\$9,008 (150)
	8 Kirk Nilson	\$7,350 (100)
	9 Benson Westwood	\$5,693 (50)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WPT Prime Pasino Aix en Provence Aix en Provence, France	1 Samy Boujmala	\$102,938 (720)
	2 Loic Menneteau	\$60,940 (600)
	3 Hugo Heiter	\$44,770 (480)
	4 Adrien Amorella	\$33,242 (360)
	5 Patrick Viret	\$24,992 (300)
€1,100 NLHE Aug. 2-6 Entries: 457 Prizepool: \$482,592	6 Jerome Lopez	\$18,986 (240)
	7 Emmanuel Gomez	\$14,586 (180)
	8 Leo Soma	\$11,352 (120)
	9 Nicolas Gil	\$8,932 (60)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Gulf Coast Summer Open Pearl River Resort Philadelphia, PA	1 Charles Leroi	\$80,837 (456)
	2 Edward Allen	\$48,720 (380)
	3 Rigo Vangarelli	\$36,134 (304)
	4 Jay Bishop	\$26,796 (228)
	5 William McBrayer	\$20,300 (190)
\$600 NLHE July 28-30 \$350,000 GTD Entries: 812 Prizepool: \$406,000	6 Jonathan Wisbey	\$15,428 (152)
	7 Alec Wilson	\$12,180 (114)
	8 Douglas Segers	\$9,338 (76)
	9 Charles Brady	\$7,105 (38)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
MSPT Hollywood Casino Maryland Heights, MO	1 Jeff Sauer	\$142,396 (912)
	2 Tyler Dietz	\$87,574 (760)
	3 Aaron Johnson	\$64,072 (608)
	4 George Harris	\$47,631 (456)
\$1,110 NLHE Aug. 3-6 \$300,000 GTD Entries: 734 Prizepool: \$711,980	5 Travis Burch	\$36,311 (380)
	6 Lance Brendel	\$27,767 (304)
	7 Jovan Sudar	\$21,359 (228)
	8 Paul Fehlig	\$16,376 (152)
	9 Adam Tolander	\$12,816 (76)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Harrah's Cherokee, NC	1 Christopher Catone	\$118,932 (480)
	2 Sanjay Gehi	\$73,494 (400)
	3 Amir Vasigh	\$55,016 (320)
	4 Eric Kim	\$41,601 (240)
\$400 NLHE Aug. 3-6 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 2,657 Prizepool: \$876,810	5 Blake Whittington	\$31,779 (200)
	6 Joshua Levin	\$24,527 (160)
	7 Preston McEwen	\$19,128 (120)
	8 Brandon Sunshine	\$15,075 (80)
	9 James Palsgrove	\$12,008 (40)

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Card Player

POKER STORIES PODCAST

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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2023 Card Player Player of the Year

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Place	Player	Points	Titles	Final Tables	POY Earnings
1	Bin Weng	8,238	4	9	\$4,943,859
2	Nacho Barbero	7,790	3	13	\$7,573,039
3	Isaac Haxton	6,807	6	16	\$8,043,681
4	Chris Brewer	6,697	5	17	\$10,367,481
5	Ren Lin	6,241	2	18	\$3,259,865
6	Stephen Chidwick	5,862	4	14	\$4,561,828
7	Alex Foxen	5,423	3	16	\$2,360,767
8	Aram Oganyan	5,189	1	10	\$1,988,636
9	Jeremy Ausmus	4,977	1	15	\$2,317,273
10	Jason Koon	4,930	4	10	\$6,901,633
11	Mike Watson	4,832	4	10	\$3,410,695
12	Nicholas Pupillo	4,664	1	13	\$697,379
13	Seth Davies	4,547	0	13	\$3,635,909
14	Artur Martirosian	4,431	1	11	\$6,572,151
15	Shaun Deeb	4,286	5	9	\$1,337,907
16	Jans Arends	4,100	2	6	\$4,718,036
17	Dan Smith	3,880	1	10	\$5,286,272
18	Sam Soverel	3,648	2	12	\$1,552,008
19	Aliaksandr Shylko	3,630	1	2	\$3,164,088
20	Daniel Weinman	3,600	1	1	\$12,100,000
21	Brian Kim	3,576	0	10	\$2,515,250
22	Justin Saliba	3,539	1	7	\$1,862,144
23	Adrian Mateos	3,530	0	10	\$4,518,144
24	Justin Liberto	3,490	2	4	\$935,166
25	Niko Koop	3,381	0	7	\$2,471,258
26	Josh Reichard	3,354	2	7	\$784,356
27	Roman Hrabec	3,333	0	10	\$1,754,029
28	Mikita Badziakouski	3,325	1	7	\$4,440,748
29	Punnat Punsri	3,324	2	9	\$2,275,516
30	Ding Biao	3,317	1	8	\$2,810,914

Note: These standings include results from the ongoing Triton London series, which will be recapped in full in the next issue of Card Player.



WPT PRIME EARNINGS

Rank	Player	Earnings
1	Stephen Song	\$712,650
2	Lara Eisenberg	\$481,500
3	Young Eum	\$354,000
4	Alon Messica	\$265,000
5	Sheng Ye	\$253,843
6	Albert Nguyen	\$200,000
7	Fabrice Bigot	\$194,390
8	Philip Holleederer	\$186,178
9	Duy Thuc Nguyen	\$177,764
10	Ben Richardson	\$161,788

The *World Poker Tour* rebranded its mid-major offering as *WPT Prime* in 2022, with the first events kicking off in May of that year. The first season saw six events, including the first-ever *WPT Prime Championship* which was a marquee event at last year's *WPT World Championship at Wynn Las Vegas*. There have already been 10 completed *WPT Prime* stops in 2023, with four more on the schedule including the second running of the season-ending tournament at Wynn Las Vegas.

The above leaderboard is a look at the top 10 earners through the first 439 days of *WPT Prime* competition. The top few spots are all occupied by those who ran deep in the inaugural *WPT Prime Championship*, headlined by eventual champion **Stephen Song**. The \$1,100 buy-in event attracted a massive turnout of 5,430 entries, smashing the \$2 million guarantee to create a final prize pool of \$5,267,100. Song outlasted the sea

of entries to earn a career-high payday of \$712,650, catapulting him to first on this leaderboard.

Song and fellow *WSOP* bracelet winner **Lara Eisenberg** battled for the title in that event. Eisenberg ultimately ran top two pair into the turned straight of Song to finish second for \$481,500. Third-place finisher **Young Eum** (also a bracelet winner) sits in third with \$354,000, while fourth-place finisher **Alon Messica** earned \$265,000.

Sheng Ye won the second-largest top prize awarded so far on the young tour when he took down the *WPT Prime Gold Coast* main event, topping a field of 1,224 entries in the \$2,000 AUD (\$1,409) buy-in tournament to earn \$253,843.

Fabrice Bigot took down the next-largest top prize awarded to date in a *WPT Prime* event, winning the *WPT Prime Paris* for \$194,390. ♠

Final Table Takedown: Fausto Valdez Captures Mystery Bounty At California State Championship

By Craig Tapscott



Fausto Valdez was dealing with a bout of boredom one day when he happened to catch a poker commercial featuring Chris Moneymaker. He figured that if some accountant from Tennessee could do it, anyone could.

It wasn't long before he found out that poker was a hard way to make an easy living, and that perhaps there was more to the game than he initially believed.

Of course, Valdez was no stranger to unusual professions, as he had at one point been a professional paintball player, touring and competing in events across the United States with his team.

It was clear that a traditional 9-to-5 wasn't going to work for him, so he decided that he would take poker more seriously. He began to study and play the local \$1-\$2 games, eventually working his way up to \$5-\$10 and beyond, never looking back.

In recent years the cash game grinder has devoted more time to tournament play, and the move has paid off. In 2021 he made his first *WSOP* final table, and then followed it up with big scores at the *L.A. Poker Classic*,

L.A. Poker Open, and *WPT World Championship*. Most recently, Valdez made a deep run in the record-breaking *WSOP* main event, finishing 119th for \$67,700.

The poker coach also scored a win earlier this summer at the *California State Poker Championship*, taking down the mystery bounty event for the trophy. *Card Player* caught up with Valdez to talk more about that victory and break down a couple key hands he played on his way to the title.

Event: California State Championship
Mystery Bounty
Buy-In: \$400
Entrants: 551
Prize Pool: \$190,820
First-Place Prize: \$21,950

Craig Tapscott: A lot of players start out frustrated with the game. How did you get yourself out of that mindset and become a winning player?

Fausto Valdez: That is definitely very common and happened to me a few times trying to get a handle on the game. Ultimately over the years between poker and life, you learn to be brutally honest with yourself. You must know your strengths, but also weaknesses as an individual and tirelessly work on those areas until they become much stronger.

It doesn't have to be perfect, but more than enough to be able to compete. It also doesn't have to be strategic. The mental side is extremely important as well.

A bonus for me was realizing that poker doesn't care about how you feel or what you're going through. You either take the time to work on your craft or you don't. I made sure I looked up many books, videos, and software to help me. Eventually I started working with a few coaches that were able to fast track the learning and help guide me.

CT: What was the most difficult part of moving up in stakes?

FV: The most difficult part of moving up is just mental. It's not tricking yourself into thinking that something extra special is happening. It's adjusting to the new sizes and swings monetarily speaking. It's trusting that you are able to figure it out if things go wrong. It's allowing yourself to learn, whether it goes well or not, and grow from there.

It's so easy to focus on the bad and what can go wrong, but if you're able to break out of that cycle and focus on what will ultimately help you in the long run, then you have a really good recipe to potentially win.

CT: What made you decide to give tournaments a shot?

FV: The way I got into tournaments was realizing that cash games can have a ceiling beyond stakes of \$10-\$20 and upwards. Games unfortunately become less available and more private. The truth is that it becomes more political, and you have to give up a lot as far as playing winning poker for the sake of being fun for the game.

I realized there were so many extra variables for MTTs relative to cash games that I wanted to speed up my learning. Every coach has a coach. I've worked with a lot of resources but my main one is Matt Berkey's Solve for Why Academy. I also work one-on-one with Matt Hunt, their lead MTT instructor, which has helped tremendously. With all that being said, you still have to put in a lot of self-study off the tables which is irreplaceable.

CT: What advantages do you believe you have coming into tournaments with a long history of success in cash games?

FV: In cash games you're constantly playing deep stacked and it's really important to know how your decisions compound not just preflop but all the way to the river. So when I enter the pot, I'm already planning for future potential runouts given my stack size, and how that would impact my strategy.

HAND NO. 1

Stacks: Fausto Valdez – 625,000 (25 BB)

Villain – 1,250,000 (50 BB)

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

Players Remaining: 18

CT: Set this hand up for us.

FV: We were down to the last two tables. I had been moved to what I considered the tougher of the two, which also had way more chips. I realized two younger guys had the bulk of



the chips and after a few hands I could tell they were very active players.

Villain raised from the button to 70,000. Valdez called from the big blind holding K♦ 10♠.

FV: I called knowing that this was a very active player preflop and post-flop. And also as a side note, the preflop raise was definitely on the bigger side of basically 3x the big blind, which would force me to call less hands, but my hand was way too good and his bigger size relevance was diluted by the fact he was doing this with way too many hands. In fact, I could three-bet my hand, but it was way too good to waste it in case he jammed over the top.

Flop: Q♠ 10♠ 7♦

Valdez checked, and Villain bet 110,000. Valdez called.

CT: What did you make of the Villain's big sizing on the flop?

FV: I kept in mind that by putting in this bigger sizing that he is already polarizing his range. He most likely already has nothing or something very big. Which is important because most times a marginal hand won't go this big.

That was also important for my specific hand because it can only really call, and I need him to have bluffs. Luckily for me he was an active person so I was either going to be really wrong and likely to bust or I was going to gather a lot of chips for a potential final table at this point.

Turn: 4♠

Valdez checked, and Villain checked behind.

CT: After he checked, were you able to further pin down the Villain's hand range?

FV: A lot of times when players bet this big on the flop, followed up by a check, it's very indicative that they have a capped range. Meaning he was unlikely to be trapping and leaning more on the side of having something showdown worthy, or has complete air. When we consider he had been very active with a lot of big sizing, it's more likely that he is leaning on air. So I was keeping this in mind going forward.

CT: What rivers did you not want to see?

FV: I mostly didn't want to see an ace, or a straight or flush completing card. However more on the straight side because a lot of his showdown hands will revolve around these cards



making it more likely that I will fall behind. The flush was not too big of a concern since a lot of these holdings will be the turn.

River: 2♠

CT: The flush did come in, but otherwise it was pretty much a blank. What was the plan?

FV: I could've definitely gone for value, but knowing that the Villain was very aggressive, I would have put myself in a very tough spot if I led out and then he raised me. More importantly, he was polarized having bet the flop and checked the turn. That was a big indication he was very likely capped and only had garbage.

Valdez checked, and Villain bet 330,000.

FV: I wanted to allow him to bluff. He could have backed into a flush, but I was holding the 10♠ in my hand, which made it a little less likely. If he was slow playing a big hand, it is what it is.

Valdez called and Villain showed Ax 6x. Valdez won the pot of 1,045,000.

FV: I felt I had to call even though it was for basically my entire stack. I would have been left with around eight big blinds if I was wrong. This pot sealed the deal for me and got me to the final table where I would have a good stack to battle.

HAND NO. 2

Stacks: Fausto Valdez – 2,500,000 (50 BB)

Villain – 2,750,000 (55 BB)

Blinds: 25,000-50,000 with a 50,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 15

FV: Now at this point I was second in chips with about 50 big blinds.

Valdez raised to 100,000 from the button holding A♥ 3♥. Villain called from the big blind.

FV: The caller was the other younger player that I'd seen being very aggressive. In fact, he was the chip leader.

Flop: 5♠ 3♠ 2♠

Both players checked.

FV: It wasn't a particularly amazing flop for my hand. I didn't want to open the window for him to check-raise me and let things get murky down the road. Especially when I was second in chips. I didn't want to go overboard against the only guy that covered me.

Also, my hand had the potential to simply showdown and win versus random high cards, or more excitingly depending on the runout, it could turn into a bluff. This is where having the experience in cash games helped me because a lot of these spots are almost automatic.

Turn: 10♦

Villain bet 85,000, and Valdez called.

FV: He bet about 33 percent of the pot. I called since I still had very reasonable equity with my particular hand. But most importantly, I could turn my hand into a bluff pending the river card and his action. I'm basically calling vs a lot of his air in his range that has to bluff like queen or jack high along with gutty or straight draws that have a 7, 6, or 4 in his hand which is very reasonable from the big blind's perspective.

River: Q♣

Villain bet 140,000.

FV: He bet 33 percent of the pot once again.

CT: What were your thoughts on being able to take this pot away after this river?

FV: Now in theory when you bet small and small again, you're supposed to do this with marginal or thin value hands, but it also has to be protected with some nutted hands. However, basically no one, other than really conscious good players do this. So, this spot becomes an easy exploit in understanding that he only has something marginal.

CT: You certainly can't win at showdown.

FV: No. My hand is very likely to lose to all of the Villain's marginal hands since I have the second-lowest pair. I didn't think that he was at the top of his range, but I had to think it through just in case I was wrong. I was blocking sets, two pairs, straights, and the strongest pairs like A-Q or A-10 if he had that.

CT: So, what sizing do you go with to get him off his possible marginal holdings?

FV: I 4x raised his size, which was one-third of my stack. He thought about it for a while and eventually...

Villain folded. Valdez won the pot of 560,000.

FV: Once I was able to strip a bunch of chips away from him, I went into the final table as the chip leader and never let it go until I eventually won the event.

To learn from Valdez visit BluePrintPokerCoaching.com or follow him on IG @fausto_valdez. ♠

TURNING QUADS AND GETTING PAID

By Jonathan Little



In the middle of the third day of a five-day \$3,500 buy-in tournament, the blinds were 4,000-8,000 with an 8,000 big blind ante. I had 450,000 and all my opponents had me covered.

I raised to 19,000 with J♥ J♦ from middle position and the hijack, a loose, splashy player, called. Everyone else folded.

The flop came J♠ 7♣ 6♦.

The best hand to slowplay is top set because when you have two of the top card on the board, it is highly unlikely your opponent has a strong hand that can put a lot of money in the pot.

However, due to the coordinated nature of this board, it is somewhat likely that my opponent has a marginal made hand or a draw. If I bet, my loose, splashy opponent may even decide to bluff, making this an excellent spot to bet.

I bet 26,000 into the 59,000 pot and my opponent called.

The turn was the J♣. That is lucky!

While slow playing quads certainly has merit, I thought the best way to get a large portion of my stack in the pot was to continue betting. If my opponent has a marginal hand like 8-8 or middle pair, he will probably check behind if I check, which would be a disaster because those hands will certainly call a turn bet.

Even if my opponent decided to bet a marginal made hand, he will almost certainly not bet again on the river. And if I check-raise the turn, he will likely fold. Unless I think my opponent's range is full of unpaired hands, betting is the only play that makes sense.

I bet 40,000 into the 111,000 pot and my opponent called. The river was the 8♠.

Since I thought my opponent's range going to the river was almost entirely marginal made hands and draws (which would now be middle pair or a straight), it doesn't make sense to bet huge. Most opponents will only call a small bet with their worst made hands. If for some reason I thought my opponent was a calling station, a larger bet would have been ideal.

I bet 57,000 into the 191,000 pot. To my surprise, my opponent instantly raised 157,000, making it 100,000 more.

At this point, I assumed my opponent's range was very polarized to premium value hands and bluffs. If he is bluffing, he will fold no matter what I do, so I do not need to be concerned about that portion of his range.

Most players are not capable of getting away from a premium hand on the river to any re-raise size, meaning I should now go for maximum value.

After matching my opponent's raise, I had 207,000 left in my stack, which I pushed all-in. My opponent instantly called with A♠ 6♣, a flopped bottom pair that backdoored into a flush, awarding me a gigantic pot.

I want to make it perfectly clear that I think my opponent should have folded to my river all-in. Unless he thinks I am blatantly crazy, my river bet/re-raising range is almost entirely full houses and a few bluffs.

After the hand, my opponent was beating himself up for raising my initial river bet of 57,000. I think his river raise is certainly fine because I should have trips a large amount of the time and will at least consider calling a raise. If he thinks I will call a river raise with trips, raising the river with the flush is a great play, but if he thinks I will fold trips to a river raise, he should just call.

If he decides to raise, as he did, he must be disciplined enough to get away from his hand once it becomes clear that I think I have the nuts. Even when you have an extremely strong hand, when your opponent is playing as if he has the actual nuts, you must be disciplined enough to get out of the way because almost no one bluffs often enough on the river.

If you want more resources to help you improve your game, I put together a course called *The 25 Biggest Leaks and How to Fix Them*. This course is completely free inside *Card Player* Poker School!

When you join *Card Player* Poker School (it's free to join), you'll also get:

- Free downloadable preflop charts
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- Interactive Hand Quizzes
- Free Course: Master the Fundamentals
- Free Course: 5-Day Preflop Challenge
- Free training every week



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.

What I Learned Cashing In The WSOP Main Event

By Alex Fitzgerald

I recently got back from playing the largest *WSOP* main event in history. I was lucky enough to cash, although not much went right after I made the money.

During the event, I learned a great deal about tournament poker in 2023. These were my discoveries.

1. Solid Poker Can Still Get You Far

I was amazed at how tight I sometimes had to play in this event.

My first table featured a number of tough players. Four-bets and five-bets were flying around. Yuck.

Once I found out our table would be breaking, I decided to try nothing fancy.

There were multiple spots like this in the main event. My table draw wouldn't be the best. I'd stick to solid poker. I'd then be surprised by how well it was working.

Napoleon's definition of a military genius was, "a man who can do the average thing when everyone else around him is losing their mind." That quote rang true throughout the main event.

I watched many talented players self-destruct for no good reason. They ran bluffs that were unnecessary and ill advised. They even lamented to me later that they punted.

If you were playing solid poker and paying attention, you had the time in this tournament to wait for one of these punts. The grueling part was staying patient.

2. Value Bet Thinner

The most common donation I saw was an unnecessary river call.

Many players in the main event are not capable of a triple barrel bluff, but that didn't stop people from calling down three streets without much of anything.

When you're a tough, experienced player, you are capable of running huge bluffs. The downside of this is you start projecting how you play onto other people. You start seeing bluffs everywhere because if you were in another player's shoes, you'd be capable of bluffing.

Unfortunately, most weekend warriors who won their seat into the main event are not able to bluff their chips off. Versus them, if they suddenly wake up and start firing chips into the pot, the proper play is to fold.

I was worried when I first started playing this tournament that I would get no action on my thin value bets. I was playing like such a nit! Who the hell was going to pay me off?

It didn't matter though. Most people still wouldn't fold their mediocre hands to triple barrels. I built my chip stack up thinly value betting top pairs for three streets. I got called down constantly in spots where I didn't believe I earned a river call.

I was able to make the money with less variance than I expected by simply value betting thin once every few levels.

The hardest part of this system was how much patience it required. I started to understand why so many players wanted to force hands. It becomes extremely difficult to stay patient for multiple ten-hour days.



3. Hydrate More Than Normal

A friend of mine told me to try those electrolyte drink mix powders while I was out in Vegas. I didn't like the sugar content in some of the more popular brands, but I was willing to try anything. I always struggle with staying hydrated out in Vegas. It seems like I can down water all day and it won't make a difference.

To my surprise, the electrolyte drink powders did help me when I was in the desert. I would have moments during the main event where I felt exhausted and downtrodden. When I made myself drink some of these electrolyte solutions, my focus and optimism would immediately return.

It could be a placebo impact. I won't ignore that possibility. However, I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't bring up this tip. I felt my performance and patience were improved dramatically by how much better I felt throughout the trip.

There was one specific moment during the main event where I was tilted. I easily could have justified a reckless bluff that was offered to me. However, I felt calmer compared to years prior due to being well hydrated and sleeping well. I felt like I had more time to work because my health was right. I was able to avoid punting in that hand. Later, I picked up some chips in a much better spot.

4. You Can Move Up In Position

I was amazed by how often I could move up in position. My cards would get dealt to me in the hijack. The players ahead of me would fold. I'd then look at my cards, but out of

“Napoleon’s definition of a military genius was ‘a man who can do the average thing when everyone else around him is losing their mind.’ That quote rang true throughout the main event.”

the corner of my eye I would watch what the cutoff or button player were doing.

To my amazement, many times they’d be holding their cards ready to fold them! They would hold their hand differently when they were planning to play the hand.

I only got to use these reads a few times, but they were immensely powerful. Getting multiple buttons per orbit is a massive edge.

Take your time in these large field events before you act. It only takes a couple of seconds.

You can even grip your cards before you do anything. The few times I did that a player behind me would start getting their cards ready to fold because they expected me to pitch my cards into the muck.

5. Make Yourself Pay Attention

My attention span is as bad as anyone’s, but during the main event I tried to work around it.

What I made myself do in every hand was watch the action. I’d physically move my head so at the very least I was watching the players play.

Did I catch every detail? Absolutely not. I missed things constantly. But I gave myself the opportunity to catch details.

That process of attempting to pay attention to every hand paid off later in the tournament. There were multiple situations where a player would open and it would hit me like a rock, “he hasn’t opened from early position all day!”

I would look down at a solid hand I’d normally three-bet, but versus this specific tight player I would decide to flat. We’d play a smaller pot. Sure enough, at the end of the hand I’d see their opening range was wildly strong. Taking a flop helped me realize my equity. If I had three-bet there would have been a good chance I’d have been four-bet off the hand. ♠



Alexander Fitzgerald is a professional poker player and bestselling author who currently lives in Denver, Colorado. He is a WPT and EPT final tablist. He has WCOOP and SCOOP wins online. His most recent win was the \$250,000 Guaranteed on America’s Cardroom.

He currently enjoys blasting bums away in Ignition tournaments while he listens to death metal. Free training packages of his are provided to new newsletter subscribers who sign up for free at www.pokerheadrush.com

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 Wynn Summer Classic
WPT EveryOne for One Drop \$10,500 Buy-In



Freddy Heller
10,000,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 7%



PREFLOP

With six players remaining and blinds of 125,000-250,000 and a big blind ante of 250,000, Freddy Heller raised to 500,000 from the hijack. Niko Koop three-bet to 1,500,000 from the cutoff, and Heller four-bet to 4,000,000. Koop folded.

Niko Koop
13,600,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 7%



COMMENTARY:

Freddy Heller came into the final table of the inaugural WPT EveryOne for One Drop \$10,500 buy-in event with just shy of \$265,000 in prior tournament earnings. That meant that the young player from New York was guaranteed to more than triple his current earnings no matter how the final day played out. Heller had already locked up \$524,500 by surviving to the final six from the massive field of 1,676 entries in the event. Despite being on the biggest stage of his tournament career, Heller was more than willing to mix it up from the get-go. On the 10th hand of the day, he opened for a min-raise with A♠ 2♠. Niko Koop, a seasoned professional from Germany with nearly \$1.8 million in prior recorded scores, three-bet to six big blinds out of the cutoff with the same hand in diamonds. The two contenders would chop 86 percent of the time if they made it to showdown, but Heller had other ideas. He cut out a four-bet to 16 big blinds and slid his chips into the pot. Koop and Heller had begun the hand as two of the three middle stacks at the table, with them and Bin Weng all having over 40 big blinds. Scott Baumstein was out in front with over 90 big blinds, while four-time bracelet winner Dominik Nitsche and bracelet winner Thomas Cannuli were both sitting on fewer than 18 big blinds when the hand began. Perhaps with ICM considerations in mind, Koop decided against getting too deeply involved in a raising war with another medium stack. He folded to send the healthy pot to Heller, who moved into a virtual tie for second chip position with Koop after the hand. Cannuli and Nitsche did go on to finish sixth and fifth, respectively. Heller was the next to fall, earning a career-high score of \$956,000 for his fourth-place showing.

ACE-TO-FIVE TRIPLE DRAW: PLAYING BEFORE THE FIRST DRAW

By Kevin Haney



As discussed last issue, Ace-to-Five Triple Draw Lowball (A-5) is a seemingly simple form of poker where the best hand is A-2-3-4-5 and neither straights nor flushes count against you. Essentially it is the same game as Deuce-to-Seven Triple Draw Lowball (Deuce or 2-7), but with different hand rankings:

	2-7	A-5
1	7-5-4-3-2	5-4-3-2-A
2	7-6-4-3-2	6-4-3-2-A
3	7-6-5-3-2	6-5-3-2-A
4	7-6-5-4-2	6-5-4-2-A
5	8-5-4-3-2	6-5-4-3-A
6	8-6-4-3-2	6-5-4-3-2
7	8-6-5-3-2	7-4-3-2-A
8	8-6-5-4-2	7-5-3-2-A
9	8-6-5-4-3	7-5-4-2-A
10	8-7-4-3-2	7-5-4-3-A
11	8-7-5-3-2	7-5-4-3-2
12	8-7-5-4-2	7-6-3-2-A
13	8-7-5-4-3	7-6-4-2-A
14	8-7-6-3-2	7-6-4-3-A
15	8-7-6-4-2	7-6-4-3-2
16	8-7-6-4-3	7-6-5-2-A
17	8-7-6-5-2	7-6-5-3-A
18	8-7-6-5-3	7-6-5-3-2

Sevens probably don't get as much respect as they deserve. As you can see from the chart, making a seven low in A-5 is almost equivalent to making a pat eight in 2-7.

Yet, some players never keep a seven heading into the first draw as they want to preserve their ability to make a six low

or better. While there is merit in drawing to stronger hands in multi-way pots, we are almost always better off keeping the seven in heads-up affairs.

Suppose the action folds to us on the button and we open for a raise with A-2-7-X-X. If the big blind defends, I'm taking two on the first draw regardless of my blockers and how many cards my opponent desires. Some players don't consider an A-2-7 to be a legitimate hand and are always playing it as an A-2, but that might be suboptimal.

In A-5, an A-2-7 can build a holding that is relatively as strong as 8-6-5-3-2 in 2-7, more than enough hand to drag

a heads-up pot.

Starting with an A-2-7 is somewhat comparable to a 2-6-8 in 2-7. In Deuce, the 2-6-8 can make the sixth (8-6-4-3-2), seventh (8-6-5-3-2), eighth (8-6-5-4-2), and 14th (8-7-6-3-2) strongest hands in the game. Meanwhile in A-5, an A-2-7 has the potential to build the seventh (7-4-3-2-A), eighth (7-5-3-2-A), ninth (7-5-4-2-A), 12th (7-6-3-2-A), and 13th (7-6-4-2-A) best hands.

It's not easy to make a six or better low, and the fewer cards we draw has the effect of reducing our opponent's realization of equity, while simultaneously increasing our own.

For example, if on the first draw we improve to A-2-5-7-X, our opponent will often fold the turn, unless he has picked up at least a one-card draw to an eight low or better.

Some players require better than this in order to continue, and may even fold a one-card draw to a rough seven. After all, it is a relatively small pot and they might be wary of drawing dead. The times we both improve to a one-card draw we might get a free turn street as opposed to facing a bet with an unimproved two-card draw, and possibly having to fold.

Given the nature of the game, we can open slightly more hands per position in A-5 than we can in Deuce. While the ace is the most important card to be dealt in A-5, it's not nearly as important as the deuce is in 2-7. Also, since straights ruin your hand, the equities in A-5 run closer.

We shouldn't take it too far as there is still a price to be paid for playing inferior rough hands (e.g. 2-5-6 and 3-4-6) from out-of-position and in multi-way pots. Under the gun in a six-handed game, my weakest two-card draw opens are probably 3-4-5 and A-4-6, and in some lineups may only play them with a blocker or two. From the hijack, this can expand slightly to include 2-3-6 and A-5-6.

From the cutoff we can play substantially more hands and from that position 3-5-6 and A-4-7 (or better) are my typical requirements. Once we reach the button, hands such as 4-5-6, A-5-7, and 3-5-7 would be close to the bottom of the range, along with three-card draws such as A-2, A-3, 2-3, and A-4.

"Sevens probably don't get as much respect as they deserve. Making a seven low in A-5 is almost equivalent to making a pat eight in 2-7, yet some players never keep a seven heading into the first draw as they want to preserve their ability to make a six low or better."

Hands that are on the border always have the ability to graduate to an earlier open when accompanied with blockers.

For example, we can probably open-raise A-A-5-5-6 from first position in a seven-handed game. Or it may mean playing A-A-3 from the cutoff. Many players would play A-3 from the cutoff without blockers, and they might be correct to do so, especially with tight players left to act.

None of this is an exact science, and as with all unsolved mixed-game opens, these guidelines are simply an educated guess. A higher percentage of holdings are playable in a one-winner game, and slightly more hands should be playable in A-5 than in Deuce. The openings discussed above were crafted to reflect those considerations.

As in all forms of poker, we have to tighten up our requirements when the pot has been raised. For example, if there's an early position open we should often fold mediocre hands such as 3-4-5, particularly with many players left to act behind us.

Any one-card draw that we choose to play should be three-bet, as not to divulge any information regarding our

holding.

For example, suppose the button opens and we are in the small blind holding 3-5-6-7. In this particular situation, re-raising, initially drawing one, and then potentially turning our hand into a snow is probably superior to any other option.

Ace-to-Five Triple Draw Lowball is one of my favorite games. Consistently running good in it sure helps, but it's also my belief that many players haven't thought that much about it specifically and thus often fail to make the proper adjustments. ♠



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.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 Wynn Summer Classic
WPT EveryOne for One Drop \$10,500 Buy-In



Bin Weng
20,550,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 32%
After Flop: 46%
After Turn: 27%



Scott Baumstein
37,800,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 67%
After Flop: 52%
After Turn: 73%

PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 150,000-300,000 and a big blind ante of 300,000, Bin Weng limped in from the small blind. Scott Baumstein raised to 900,000, and Weng called.



Both players checked.



Weng bet
700,000, and
Baumstein called.



Weng bet
3,300,000, and
Baumstein folded.

COMMENTARY:

Scott Baumstein's pocket kings were outrun by the A-Q suited of Bin Weng in this hand, but Baumstein somehow managed to lose just 6.33 big blinds in the process (including his big blind ante) despite raising preflop. The action began with Weng limping in from the small blind. Baumstein raised to 3x from the big blind and Weng came along. The flop brought two diamonds to give Weng the nut flush draw to go along with his overcard. He opted to check and Baumstein elected to check behind with his overpair to the board. The turn brought the 10♥. Weng bet one-third pot with his draw and Baumstein just called. The river brought the 8♦, completing Weng's flush draw while also putting four to a straight on the board. Weng unleashed a sizable bet of 3.3 million into the pot of 3.5 million. Baumstein might have been a bit worried about folding the best hand given how under-represented his holding was, but he ultimately decided to fold. "Scott would have to get quite heroic to call this with pocket kings, this board is just so ugly for his hand," noted *WPT* live stream commentator Jamie Kerstetter, before also saying that Weng was capable of making a move in this position. Baumstein correctly got away from the overpair, which helped keep a bit of distance between him and Weng. Just a few hands after this clash, short-stack Niko Koop scored the first of two doubles through Baumstein in quick succession to swap places on the leaderboard as three-handed play continued.

THE POKER HALL OF FAME IS BROKEN – HERE’S HOW IT CAN BE FIXED

By Julio Rodriguez



There’s no doubting Brian Rast’s worthiness for the Poker Hall of Fame. The 41-year-old has a stellar poker résumé that boasts six *WSOP* bracelets, millions in high rollers wins, and extended time in some of the biggest cash games in the world. By all accounts, Rast was a slam dunk choice for nomination, and given his recent third victory in the prestigious \$50,000 *Poker Players Championship*, his induction was all but guaranteed.

Still, it’s hard not to feel for the deserving players left on the outside looking in, and that’s a list that is far longer than just the nine other nominees who came up just short this year.

Rast beat out Josh Arieh, Jeremy Ausmus, Ted Forrest, Kathy Liebert, Mike Matusow, broadcast duo Lon McEachern and Norman Chad, Matt Savage, Isai Scheinberg, and Bill Smith for induction this year. All of them have Hall-worthy achievements, but yet their chances at getting in grow slimmer each year as the logjam of eligible players ages into consideration and bottlenecks with a one-player-per-year restriction.

Rast even mentioned the issue in his acceptance speech, saying, “I’m going to do my duty to make sure the Hall gets the incoming generation right. There are a lot of amazing players in the poker world who deserve recognition for their careers.”

But for all the good that Rast intends, his vote alone won’t be enough to fix the issues facing the Hall, chief among them being the Hall’s exclusivity.

1. One Player Per Year Is Not Enough

I doubt I’ll get many who disagree with me here. There

are now 62 members of the Poker Hall of Fame (full list on pg. 19), but arguably just as many players who meet, or will soon meet the criteria for induction. In fact, in the next five years there will be a large number of high-stakes crushers who will turn 40, putting my personal current count of Hall-worthy players at more than 80. (Yes, I made a list. No, I won’t publish it.)

It wasn’t always this way, of course. The Poker Hall of Fame began with an inaugural class of seven members, and although there was only one inductee per year for quite some time after that, the poker world was also quite small back then. In 2002, two players were inducted at the same time, and double inductees continued in the boom years from 2005 to 2019. But instead of doubling the number to four, as many wanted, the Hall instead went back to one per year.

The solution is obvious and simple... more inductees. How many? I believe three to four players per year would be a good number, with an additional inductee every year for those who fall into the category of industry contributors and influencers. (Perhaps even writers!)

The actual number can be debated, but it just HAS to be more than one. The poker world has grown exponentially since the Hall was started back in 1979.

2. The Hall Needs A Physical Home

The *World Series of Poker* operates the Poker Hall of Fame and has been run by Caesars Entertainment since their purchase of the series back in 2004. They’ve since launched a special Hall of Fame event at the *WSOP* that features a \$1,979 buy-in and bounties on all Hall members who play,



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and last year rebranded the Horseshoe card room as the Hall of Fame Poker Room, complete with player photos.

Las Vegas is home to many interesting places and has museums honoring the history of everything from punk rock to pinball, even the mob, but poker's Hall doesn't really have its own physical space to call its own. And that's surprising given the amount of actual space that Caesars has at its disposal at the Paris and Horseshoe on the Strip.

Each summer, the *WSOP* should dedicate a small section of the convention area to the Poker Hall of Fame and its members. Existing Hall members could loan out memorabilia such as photos and bracelets that could rotate on display for visitors. Hell, Caesars could even tie it into their gift shop and sell t-shirts if they need to justify the square footage. Put Doyle on a hoodie and give his estate half the profit.

3. Most Voters Are Clueless

With all due respect to the public (and to the readers of this magazine), the public should have little to no say in who gets into the Poker Hall of Fame. The *WSOP* found this out the hard way in 2009 when they asked fans to vote on nominees and a then 22-year-old Tom Dwan was the overwhelming choice.

Today, the public gets some input with an online nomination period, but it's minimal. According to the *WSOP* website, the Poker Hall of Fame Governing Council gets the final say on who makes the list.

The final vote goes to the living members of the Hall, of which there are now only 32. While all of them are legends in the poker world, not all of them are as plugged into the game as they once were, and as a result, many of the post-boom players have been ignored.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 Wynn Summer Classic
WPT EveryOne for One Drop \$10,500 Buy-In



Niko Koop
30,600,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 63%
After Flop: 72%
After Turn: 91%



Scott Baumstein
14,600,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 36%
After Flop: 27%
After Turn: 9%



PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 150,000-300,000 and a big blind ante of 300,000, Niko Koop raised to 650,000 from the button. Scott Baumstein called from the big blind.



Baumstein checked, and Koop bet 400,000. Baumstein called.



Baumstein bet 900,000, and Koop called.



Baumstein bet 2,550,000. Koop raised to 23,000,000, and Baumstein folded.

COMMENTARY:

Niko Koop had overtaken the chip lead by the time this next key hand arose. He raised the button with J-6 and Scott Baumstein defended his big blind with 9-5 of the same suit. The flop brought something for both players. Baumstein checked with his double-gutshot straight draw and Koop, who had hit top pair with backdoor flush possibilities, bet 400,000 into 1,750,000. Baumstein called and the turn brought a second jack and a second spade. Baumstein broke with the flow, leading out for just over one-third pot. Koop, who had improved to trip jacks, made the call. The river brought the action card in the 6♠, which gave Baumstein a nine-high straight while also improving Koop to jacks full of sixes. Baumstein, who was likely wary of being up against trips when his turn bet was called, was probably now hoping that his opponent had indeed made three jacks. He bet 2,550,000 into the pot of 4,350,000 (59 percent pot). After about 50 seconds in the tank, Koop dropped in a tower of big chips representing more than enough to put Baumstein all-in. It was a gross spot for Baumstein, as his straight was likely no good against anything Koop would raise for value. After some thought, Baumstein found the correct fold and preserved his remaining 33 big blinds. He later managed two double-ups through Koop to move back into second on the chip counts. He then had A-K hold against Koop's A-4 to pull within a few blinds of Bin Weng heading into heads-up play for the title. Koop secured a career-best payday of \$1,872,438 as the third-place finisher.

© WPT / Drew Amato

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

There used to be an additional voting block of media members, *Card Player* included, but it was eliminated once the Hall went back to one inductee per year. In my biased opinion, this was a mistake. Almost every other sports hall of fame asks their industry journalists for help in the nomination and voting process, most notably the Baseball Writers Association of America, which votes annually on the Baseball Hall of Fame.

As far as I'm concerned, the more knowledgeable voters, the better. With only 32 voters, some of whom are more influential than others, there is a natural tendency for lobbying, if not outright collusion. (I won't get into names here, but there have been rumors of players pushed in by friendly votes over the years.)

When a small group of friends determines who gets into the Hall every year, the Hall ends up lacking in diversity. Even if you forget the fact that the Hall only has three female members, there's also a glaring lack of international players even though the game has grown by leaps and bounds all over the world.

4. Timing Plays Too Big A Role On Who Gets In

An age requirement was a good idea on paper, and it solved the Tom Dwan problem from 2009, but it also creates an unfortunate bias of timing when it comes to who gets selected. Since a player must be 40, naturally, all eyes go to those who are in their early 40's. There are dozens of candidates in their 50s, 60s, and 70s to choose from, but they have largely been forgotten to history.

Keep in mind that a player who is 40 has been playing poker for only two decades, give or take when they started. While that is a long career in sports, it's nowhere near the

finish line in poker. Do we not give credit to those who have built an entire lifetime for themselves in the game? Conversely, do we punish those who started out strong as crushers, but who ultimately aged out of the high-stakes games before they could get recognized for their accomplishments?

What about those who just take their foot off the gas pedal? We've had a number of high rollers over the last decade become so successful that they decided to retire early or only play part time. Will they be penalized for winning too much, too soon?

Rast showed incredible timing this summer, winning his third *PPC* title just days after the voting opened, but timing also factors in other ways. Layne Flack and David 'Devilfish' Ulliott are obviously worthy of the Hall, but had they not passed away, they'd likely still be waiting for their turn.

The rules already state that a player must "stand the test of time" to be inducted, so there's really no reason for an age requirement. What constitutes "standing the test of time?" That's up to the individual voter. If someone has put together a Hall of Fame career by the age of 35, (Fedor Holz is only 30!) then they should be considered. On the other hand, if someone qualifies at age 70 because of sheer longevity, then they shouldn't be disregarded, either. ♠



Julio Rodriguez is the Editorial Director for *Card Player Media*, having started with the company as a live tournament reporter at the 2006 *WSOP*. Originally from Miami, Florida, he now lives in Las Vegas with his wife and daughter.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 Wynn Summer Classic
WPT EveryOne for One Drop \$10,500 Buy-In



Bin Weng
53,050,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 70%
After Flop: 75%
After Turn: 77%



Scott Baumstein
14,000,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 29%
After Flop: 25%
After Turn: 23%

PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 250,000-500,000 and a big blind ante of 500,000, Bin Weng limped in from the button. Scott Baumstein checked his option from the big blind.



Baumstein bet 500,000, and Weng raised to 1,500,000. Baumstein called.



Baumstein checked, and Weng bet 3,000,000. Baumstein raised all-in, and Weng called.



COMMENTARY:

What a wild way to wrap up a massive tournament! This roller coaster final hand began with Bin Weng disguising the strength of his hand via a limp on the button with pocket sevens. Scott Baumstein was plenty happy checking his option with 8-6 offsuit. He picked up an open-ended straight draw on the nine-high flop and opted to lead right out for a single big blind. Baumstein was likely hoping to fold out the weaker part of Weng's limping range, denying equity to hands with bad playability that still could improve to the winner if given a free shot. Weng decided to fast-play his middle set, raising to three big blinds. Baumstein called and the turn brought the 5♥, giving Baumstein the nut straight while also putting a second flush draw on the board. Baumstein now checked, likely hoping to get in a check-raise shove. Weng bet two-thirds pot and Baumstein raised all-in. Weng quickly called with his three sevens, only to find himself just worse than a 3:1 underdog with one card to come. The 4♠ rolled off the deck on the end, pairing the board to give Weng a winning full house. He locked up \$2,227,054 and his second *WPT* title of the year. This was his third time making a *WPT* main event final table as the chip leader in 2023. While he won this event and the *WPT Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown*, he went on to finish fourth in the *WPT Choctaw* event. Weng now has more than \$7 million in career earnings, with over \$5 million coming this year alone. Baumstein took home \$1,504,988 as the runner-up. This payout was lower than what Koop earned as the third-place finisher due to a deal that was cut while Baumstein was the short stack. Baumstein increased his lifetime earnings to more than \$6 million after this latest deep run.

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SCHEDULES

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AUGUST	Aug. 28-Oct. 1	DeepStack Extravaganza	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Aug. 31-Sept. 10	Kickoff Classic	Bellagio Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
SEPTEMBER	Sept. 6-18	WSOP Circuit Omaha	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel ■ Council Bluffs, IA
	Sept. 14-26	Poker Masters	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Sept. 28-30	Super High Roller Bowl VIII	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Sept. 28-Oct. 9	WSOP Circuit Northern California	Thunder Valley Casino & Resort ■ Lincoln, CA
OCTOBER	Oct. 2-31	DeepStack Showdown	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Oct. 5-14	PGT Mixed Games II	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Oct. 5-16	WSOP Circuit Chicago	Horseshoe Casino ■ Hammond, IN
	Oct. 12-23	WSOP Circuit Pompano Beach	Harrah's ■ Pompano Beach, FL
	Oct. 18-28	PGT PLO Series II	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Oct. 19-29	RGPS Road Trip	Graton Resort & Casino ■ Rohnert Park, CA
	Oct. 25-Nov. 6	WSOP Circuit Choctaw	Choctaw Casino Resort ■ Durant, OK
	Oct. 25-Nov. 15	World Series of Poker Europe	Kings Casino ■ Rozvadov, Czech Republic
	Oct. 26-Nov. 14	WPT bestbet Scramble	bestbet Jacksonville ■ Jacksonville, FL
	Oct. 30-Nov. 1	Super High Roller Bowl Pot-Limit Omaha	Aria PokerGO Studio ■ Las Vegas, NV
NOVEMBER	Nov. 2-13	WSOP Circuit Lake Tahoe	Harveys Lake Tahoe ■ Lake Tahoe, NV
	Nov. 9-20	WSOP Circuit Chicago	Grand Victoria Casino ■ Elgin, IL
	Nov. 15-29	WPT Rock 'n' Roll Poker Open	Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino ■ Hollywood, FL

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

CALIFORNIA

GRATON - ROHNERT PARK

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

OCEAN'S ELEVEN - OCEANSIDE

MONDAY-THURSDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
FRIDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
SATURDAY-SUNDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$290 AO \$10

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

MONDAY
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, \$100
THURSDAY
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
FRIDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60
SATURDAY
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
SUNDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60

BESTBET - ST. AUGUSTINE

MONDAY
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$60
TUESDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60
WEDNESDAY
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
THURSDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60
FRIDAY

FLORIDA

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$160
SATURDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
 7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
SUNDAY
 12:00 p.m. PLO H/L, \$120
 7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100

SATURDAY
 1:00 p.m. NLH, \$125
SUNDAY
 1:00 p.m. NLH, \$70

TEXAS

LOUISIANA

COUSHATTA - KINDER
FRIDAY
 6:00 p.m. NLH, \$200

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

WILDHORSE - PENDLETON
TUESDAY
 6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70
THURSDAY
 6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70
FRIDAY
 6:30 p.m. NLH, \$125

ROUNDERS CARD CLUB - SAN ANTONIO

MONDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 \$20 RB \$20 AO (\$1K Guarantee)
 6:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 RB \$125 (\$10K Guarantee)
 9:00 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
TUESDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
 7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$5K Guarantee)
 9:25 p.m. NLH/PLO, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
WEDNESDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
 6:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 RB \$125 (\$10K Guarantee)
 9:00 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
THURSDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
 6:30 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)
 8:30 p.m. PLO, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)
FRIDAY
 12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25, RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
 7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$5K Guarantee)
 9:30 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
SATURDAY
 3:00 p.m. NLH, \$130 AO \$100 (\$10K Guarantee)
 7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 \$20 RB \$20 AO (\$3K Guarantee)
SUNDAY
 4:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$5K Guarantee)
 7:00 p.m. PLO, \$45 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)



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You are seven-handed in a \$2,200 buy-in tournament with a 22,000 stack with the blinds at 75-150. A splashy player UTG limps, and the loose, aggressive kid in the hijack raises 600. It folds to you on the button and you look down at 9♥ 7♥.

Question 1: Should you fold, call, re-raise to 1,800, or re-raise to 2,700?

Answer: With a decent, but non-premium suited connector like 9♥ 7♥, almost every option is viable. You do not want to raise larger than 1,800 because when you get action, you are usually in rough shape. Some players get nervous and tighten up when they see the four big blind raise, but this is a standard size when raising over a limper. Calling is usually the best play when you do not expect the initial limper to re-raise too often, given you excellent implied odds and position.

You and the UTG limper both call, and the flop comes 7♠ 6♥ 3♠. UTG checks and the hijack bets 1,200.

Question 2: Should you fold, call, raise to 3,400, or raise to 5,400?

Answer: You can consider raising to 3,400 to protect your vulnerable top pair if you think you are extremely unlikely to get re-raised. However, given you have one of your weakest top pairs and you could easily be crushed by the UTG limp/caller, calling to see what develops is the preferred play.

You call and UTG calls as well. The turn is the 8♥ and both opponents check.

Question 3: Should you check, bet 4,000, bet 6,000, or bet 10,000?

Answer: Gigantic bets for 6,000 and 10,000 are too large because those bets will only get called by better made hands. Additionally, your pair has some showdown value, meaning you want to avoid getting blown off of it, which may happen if you bet too large and face an all-in.

With an open-ended straight draw and flush draw, you can decide to check or bet 4,000, but if both opponents call a bet, you must assume you are always behind. If you think that any bet will be called, checking is the better play as it keeps you from putting money in from behind, but with so many outs, getting called isn't too terrible.

You bet 4,000 and both opponents call. The river is the 5♥ and both players check.

Question 4: Should you check, bet 4,000, bet 8,000, or go all-in?

Answer: When the backdoor flush comes in, a bet has a much higher likelihood of getting paid off due to how deceptive backdoor flushes are. Players that hit a straight flush often bet small to ensure they get value, but that is rarely the correct play. With a stack smaller than the pot, you can shove and potentially get called by flushes, straights, sets, and even two pairs, making an all-in the best play by far.

Incredibly, you move all in and get called by both players! After tripling up with your straight flush, you now have the stack and momentum to make a deep run. ♠

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