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PUBLISHERS

Barry Shulman | Jeff Shulman

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Julio Rodriguez
TOURNAMENT CONTENT MANAGER Erik Fast
ONLINE CONTENT MANAGER Steve Schult

ART

ART DIRECTOR Wendy McIntosh

WEBSITE AND INTERNET SERVICES

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Jaran Hardman
DATA COORDINATOR Morgan Young

SALES

ADVERTISING MANAGER Mary Hurbi
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER Barbara Rogers
LAS VEGAS AND COLORADO SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Rich Korbin

CARDPLAYER MEDIA LLC

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

CORPORATE OFFICE

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS

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

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

sales@cardplayer.com
(702) 856-2206

DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION

distribution@cardplayer.com

RESULTS

results@cardplayer.com

SCHEDULES

schedules@cardplayer.com

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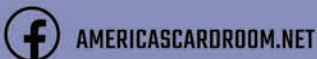
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the INSIDE STRAIGHT

News, Reviews, and Interviews From Around the Poker World



POKERSTARS AND 2003 WSOP MAIN EVENT CHAMPION CHRIS MONEYMAKER PART WAYS AFTER 17 YEARS

By Steve Schult

One of the world's largest poker sites is ending its association with the man that helped to spark the poker boom.

On the afternoon of New Year's Eve, PokerStars announced that the 2003 *World Series of Poker* main event champion Chris Moneymaker will no longer be an ambassador for the site. The move ends a 17-year relationship between the former Tennessee accountant and the online gaming giant.

Moneymaker qualified for the 2003 *WSOP* main event through an \$86 satellite on PokerStars. The amateur parlayed that into a \$2.5 million score after defeating 839 players and besting poker pro Sammy Farha heads-up.

He signed a sponsorship deal with PokerStars immediately after his victory and has been a part of the PokerStars team ever since. In 2019, Moneymaker was inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame alongside high-stakes cash game pro David Oppenheim.

Moneymaker released a statement, saying that "2020 has been a year. Sad news. Thanks for everything PokerStars." He went on to say that he was likely going to play a little less poker in the immediate future and "explore different endeavors."

The 45-year-old has racked up more than \$3.9 million in total tournament earnings. Aside from his historic bracelet, he went on to finish runner-up in the 2004 *World Poker Tour Bay 101 Shooting Star* and the 2011 *NBC National Heads-Up Championship*.

In the fall of 2018, PokerStars used Moneymaker's story as a catalyst for their "Moneymaker Tour," a series of \$86 no-limit hold'em tournaments that awarded Platinum Passes to the \$25,000 *PokerStars Players Championship* at the *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* the following January.

PokerStars' decision to cut ties with Moneymaker may seem like a surprise simply because of the length of their association and the history that ties the two entities together, but it's really just the continuation of a long-term trend.

The company has been shrinking its roster of sponsored pros for quite some time. In May 2019, the company decided to part ways with another Poker Hall of Famer, Daniel Negreanu, who went on to sign a deal with GGPoker. It was the end of a 12-year relationship between the site and the six-time *WSOP* bracelet winner. Just six months later, high-stakes pros Igor Kurganov and Liv Boeree had their contracts terminated as well.

Instead, the company has turned their attention to many prominent streamers. Lex Veldhuis, Ben Spragg, and Fintan Hand all have popular Twitch streams and are currently sponsored by the company. ♠



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POKER IRON MAN HOWARD 'TAHOE' ANDREW PASSES AWAY AT AGE 86

By Erik Fast

Longtime poker fixture Howard "Tahoe" Andrew has passed away at the age of 86. The two-time *World Series of Poker* gold bracelet winner has been a presence on the tournament scene across a remarkable six decades, with his first recorded score coming at the 1976 *WSOP*.

That year he won two events to secure a reputation as "one of the *WSOP*'s most formidable non-pros, an industrial engineer with a daredevil reputation," according to the 1978 *WSOP* media guide.

He defeated a field of 56 entries to win his first bracelet in a \$1,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em event for \$28,000, and then beat out Dewey Tomko heads-up in the \$2,500 buy-in 'non-pro' event the following day to secure back-to-back victories in the first two tournaments of the 7th Annual *WSOP*.

Andrew further etched his name in the poker history books through a feat of longevity, playing in each and every *WSOP* \$10,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event from 1974-2018 to set the record for consecutive participation at 45 years.

His best showing in the big dance was an eighth-place finish in 1984 for \$26,400.

Howard cashed 51 times in *WSOP* events, with more than 200 other tournament scores also on his résumé totaling seven figures in earnings. His biggest poker payday came in the 1987 *Grand Prix of Poker* \$10,000 main event. He finished second in the event for \$250,000 at a stacked final table that included the likes of three-time bracelet winner Jack Keller, two-time bracelet winner Thor Hansen, and Poker Hall of Famer Eric Drache.

News of Andrew's passing resulted in many prominent poker figures sharing their condolences for his family and stories and photos from his time at the tables on social media.

"You were an asset to the poker industry," said Linda Johnson. "I enjoyed competing against you over the years, and traveling the world with you on many cruises. I am proud to call you my friend, and I will miss you."

"He still called me a kid, and a young whipper snapper," said Todd Brunson. "[He was] always happy, just



a beacon of positivity."

WSOP commentator Lon McEachern added, "This makes me sad. I played with him so many times and [he] always had a wonderful demeanor, and was caretaker of a great deal of poker history while making it himself. I will miss you Tahoe." ♠



Indiana Online Poker Bill Submitted

By Steve Schult

An Indiana lawmaker has introduced legislation that would legalize online poker in the Hoosier State.

Sen. Jon Ford, a Republican from Terre Haute, introduced SB 417, a bill that would legalize all forms of online casino gambling. The proposed legislation would allow the state's 14 casinos and racinos to run an online platform with the same offerings as their brick-and-mortar properties. The operators would need to apply for a second license in order to expand their operations to the virtual realm.

The move comes as the Indiana gambling market is seeing record

highs in sports betting. In December, the state crushed the \$251 million sports betting handle record set just a month earlier with \$313 million wagered on sporting events.

Most of the market's success can be attributed to the addition of online and mobile sports betting. After Gov. Eric Holcomb signed a bill legalizing sports betting in May 2018, the state launched in August 2019. Online betting was added just a couple of months later.

In October 2019, the first month with an online option, the handle nearly tripled, ballooning from \$35.2 million in September to

\$91.7 million. Throughout 2020, online and brick-and-mortar books combined to pay \$13.2 million in taxes to the state coffers, according to local media. The majority of the revenue came from the online operators.

A similar effect is likely when casinos expand their offerings to the internet. Ford believes that online gambling could generate between \$65 and \$80 million in annual tax revenue. That would be in addition to the land-based tax revenue, which was \$593 million in 2019, according to the American Gaming Association. ♠



PAIR OF POKER PROS WIN \$785,000 IN SPORTS BETTING CONTESTS

By Steve Schult



A pair of poker pros teamed up to win huge in two separate sports betting competitions in Las Vegas.

David 'ODB' Baker and Mark Gregorich paired up in the Las Vegas SuperContest hosted by the Westgate Las Vegas and in the Circa Sports Million II. The duo won the SuperContest, one of the most coveted titles in the Las Vegas sports betting world, for \$435,623, and finished in a tie for second in Circa's contest, adding another \$200,000 to their bank accounts.

They also won the SuperContest's first quarter prize for \$100,000 and came in second in the exact same contest at Circa for an additional \$50,000, bringing the total amount of money won to \$785,623.

With the victory the two showed off their overall gambling prowess, not just their proven track record at the poker table, which is already impressive. Between the two longtime pros, there is nearly \$7.9 million in combined tournament earnings. Baker also adds two *World Series of Poker* bracelets and a *World Poker Tour* title.

Both the SuperContest and the Circa Millions are sports betting competitions where each team picks five NFL games against the spread. A win is worth 1 point and a push/tie is worth .5 points. The team with the most points at the end of the season wins.

Playing under the team name 'ODBMG2,' Baker and Gregorich put up the \$1,500 buy-in. With a record of 54-26-5 and 56.5 points, they bested the field of 1,172 entries to earn the SuperContest title and the first-place money, narrowly edging out 'Yugo77' by 1.5 points for the title.

After racing to the top of the leaderboard by the start of Week 3, Baker and Gregorich never lost the top spot. Heading into the final week, it was essentially a two-team race. Baker and Gregorich picked the Dallas Cowboys (-1.5), Pittsburgh Steelers (9), Carolina Panthers (+6.5), Baltimore Ravens (-12.5) and Washington Football Team (-2.5). 'Yugo77' went with the Green Bay Packers (-5.5), Carolina Panthers (+6.5), New York Jets (+3), Detroit Lions (+6.5) and Arizona Cardinals (-2.5). Baker and Gregorich went 3-2 with their picks, while 'Yugo77' went 2-3, securing the title.

Circa's contest was a \$1,000 buy-in with a \$1 million guaranteed first-place prize and what ended up being a field of 3,148. The pair was in the lead for a seven-figure score heading into Week 17 but fell just shy of their ultimate goal. ♠



MICHIGAN GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION THAT WILL ALLOW INTERSTATE ONLINE POKER

By Steve Schult

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation just before the new year that would allow Michigan's online poker market to pool with other regulated states.

Last June, Sen. Curtis Hertel introduced SB 991, which would allow Michigan online poker operators to share a player and liquidity pool with other states. The Senate voted in favor of the bill by a 36-1 margin at the start of October and the House passed the proposal 85-16 in mid-December. It was sent to the Governor's desk and signed on Dec. 29.

With Whitmer's signature, Michigan will be free to join interstate online poker pools with other states, but the bill will not go into effect immediately. Operators will be forced to wait 90 days from the launch of the online gambling market until they can allow their players to compete against gamblers elsewhere.

When Michigan legalized online gambling in December of 2019, shared online poker player pools was not in the bill. This most recent legislation is technically an amendment to the current law.

The easiest fit for the Wolverine State would be the already existing player pool shared by Nevada, New Jersey, and Delaware, but WSOP.com is currently the only operator doing so, and their parent company of Caesars Interactive Entertainment has not received a provisional license from regulators.

The Stars Group received a provisional license, however, making it likely that PokerStars MI will be one of the first online poker rooms available to those in Michigan. PokerStars also operates in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, so a second compact could be formed among those three states eventually, but Pennsylvania is

so far opting to stay out of interstate pools until the pending Wire Act case is adjudicated.

In early 2019, the United States Department of Justice released a memo that stated all forms of interstate online gambling was illegal. That interpretation of the 1961 federal law would ban not just shared online poker liquidity pools, but also would make many state lotteries, like Powerball, illegal. After the memo was released, the New Hampshire Lottery filed a lawsuit against the DOJ, arguing that the Wire Act only applies to sports betting, like it was originally intended.

In June, a U.S. District Judge ruled in favor of the New Hampshire Lottery, but the DOJ filed an appeal just a few months later. There has not been another development since. It will likely endure a lengthy legal battle before there is a conclusion. ♠

Macau Casinos Finish Worst Year On Record With 66 Percent Drop

By Steve Schult

The Macau casino market finished off 2020 with a 66% year-over-year drop in gambling revenue in December.

According to numbers released by the Gaming Inspection & Coordination Bureau, casinos won \$979 million from gamblers. With the release of December's results, it officially made 2020 the worst year in history for Macau casinos, winning a total of \$7.6 billion.

The percentage fall for December was right in line with where analysts predicted the market would be, with most predicting a 68% decline in revenue, according to a report from the South China Morning Post. Since snapping a streak of six months with at least a 90% decline in gambling revenue in October, revenues have slowly but steadily gotten better. There was a 72.5% fall in October and a 70% dip in November before December's numbers were released.

Heading into 2021, many analysts are somewhat bullish on the market, at least compared to its 2020 results. Sanford C. Bernstein is predicting a return to 80% of what 2019 levels were when casinos won \$36.47 billion. If Bernstein's prediction is correct, Macau gaming revenue will be roughly \$29 billion in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on

Macau's casinos, as it has to every gambling market worldwide. In Macau specifically, government restrictions on who can enter the city made it much tougher for operators to regain lost revenue. For several months, the government began to relax those mandates, but that changed in December. In response to a new, more contagious strain of coronavirus emerging from the United Kingdom, the government wouldn't allow any Chinese citizen who had been outside the country in the last three weeks into the city.

According to government figures, Macau has been COVID-free for the last six months, which is one of the longest streaks in the world. However, many doubt official numbers coming from the Chinese government. ♠



2020 Card Player Player of the Year Sponsored by Global Poker



VINCENT WAN WINS 2020 CARD PLAYER PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARD IN A RACE HUGELY IMPACTED BY GLOBAL PANDEMIC

By Card Player News Team



The COVID-19 outbreak first began to impact the international live tournament circuit in the early weeks of March. That month saw 22 different tournament series canceled or postponed, with another 92 festivals to share the same fate over the next three months as the live poker scene was essentially completely shut down around the globe during the spring.

While live poker had slowly began to return in the second half of the year, the majority of the major events that normally fill the annual tournament calendar did not take place in 2020. This dramatic alteration of the schedule had a huge impact on the *Card Player* Player of the Year race, sponsored by Global Poker.

In fact, most of the largest poker tournaments in the world were subsequently moved online and therefore did not award POY points based on the predetermined rules. As a result,

the short list of live tournaments that were held in early 2020 ended up having an exaggerated impact on the final standings in the POY race.

Of course, the pandemic shouldn't detract from the accomplishments of the top POY performers who can only play what is available, and still managed to make the most of a year on the tournament circuit unlike any other. Here is a look at the final standings.

1. Vincent Wan
Total Points: 2,280
POY Earnings: \$909,420
Titles: 1
Final Tables: 1

During the course of a typical POY race, there are usually dozens of large field no-limit hold'em 'main event' tournaments held, each with hundreds of players posting large buy-ins of \$5,000 or \$10,000. In

2020 however, the *Aussie Millions* AUD\$10,600 main event was one of the only such tournaments to play to a winner. The January event attracted a massive field of 820 entries, creating a prize pool of around \$5.6 million. Local Melbourne resident Vincent Wan emerged victorious in the end, securing \$909,420 for the win.

"I'm lost for words. I'm just tripping out at the moment. I was just wanting to min-cash at one point so I'm struggling; I'm just delirious at the moment," Wan said after winning the event. "Basically, it's ten years of my life just grinding and working and trying to get here. I can't believe I did it."

Wan also earned 2,280 points as the champion of this event. The massive victory was enough to see Wan climb to the top of the leaderboard, taking a lead that he never relinquished.



Cary Katz

2. Cary Katz
Total Points: 2,195
POY Earnings: \$2,449,943
Titles: 1
Final Tables: 9

No player made more POY-qualified final tables in 2020 than Cary Katz. The 50-year-old businessman secured nine final-table finishes last year, cashing for \$2,449,943 along the way and ending the year in second place in the POY race. His lone title of the year came in a win in a \$10,000 buy-in event at the *Aria Winter High Roller Series* in February, while his largest cash came in a runner-up showing in the \$100,000 buy-in short deck event at the *MILLIONS Super High Roller Sochi* series. The student loan company founder and CEO took home \$780,000 and 300 points in that tournament, with nearly \$1.3 million in cashes earned across his four total scores during that festival.

Katz might still be thought of as an amateur player by many poker fans, but whether or not it is his primary source of income, Katz has proven to be one of the most consistent performers on the high-stakes tournament circuit in recent years. This was his fifth straight year finishing inside the top 20 in the standings, with an average showing of 10th place. He now has more than \$28.4 million in career earnings to his name, which stands at 15th place all time.

3. Tai Hoang
Total Points: 2,188
POY Earnings: \$953,675
Titles: 1
Final Tables: 2

Tai Hoang finished as the runner up in the suprisingly-important-to-2020 *Aussie Millions* main event, earning \$909,420 after the deal and

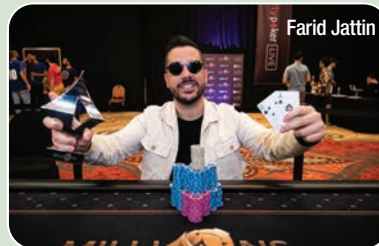


Tai Hoang

1,900 points as the second-place finisher from that field of 820 entries.

The Hanoi, Vietnam resident recorded that score in January, and his next tournament cash didn't come until late November when he emerged victorious from a field of 449 entries in the *Vietnam Series of Poker II* 11,000,000 VND (\$476 USD) buy-in championship.

Hoang earned \$44,255 USD and 288 points as the winner of that event, enough to catapult him into third place in the overall POY standings with 2,188 points and \$953,675 in year-to-date earnings.



Farid Jattin

4. Farid Jattin
Total Points: 2,177
POY Earnings: \$1,205,493
Titles: 3
Final Tables: 6

Colombian poker pro Farid Jattin won three titles in 2020, the most of any player inside the top 20 in the POY standings. He earned the second-largest score of his career by taking down the \$25,000 AUD buy-in high roller event at the *Aussie Millions* festival, defeating a field of 169 entries to earn \$678,716 USD and 1,092 points. Less than two weeks after that he took down a \$25,000 AUD pot-limit Omaha high roller at the *Australian Poker Open* for his second title of the year for another \$200,100 and 252 points. He completed the hat trick by coming out on top in a \$10,300 buy-in high roller event at the *MILLIONS*

South America in February, earning another \$200,000 and 480 points.

After a great 2019 and a hot start to 2020, perhaps no player was more disappointed than Jattin that tournaments had been canceled. "It's kind of painful that coronavirus had to stop all the live games, because I was in such a good zone," Jattin told *Card Player*, when he was on the cover back in July.

With six final-table finishes made last year, Jattin accrued 2,177 points and \$1,205,493 in cashes to finish in fourth place in the final standings. The Barranquilla native now has more than \$5.7 million in recorded tournament earnings.



Anton Suarez

5. Anton Suarez
Total Points: 2,100
POY Earnings: \$1,000,000
Titles: 1
Final Tables: 1

Västerås, Sweden native Anton Suarez won one of the few other major main event tournaments that took place in 2020. He defeated a field of 530 entries in the \$10,300 buy-in *MILLIONS United Kingdom* main event to earn \$1 million and 2,100 POY points. That score alone was enough to see him end the year in fifth place on the POY leaderboard.

Suarez has been a poker pro for over ten years, but primarily battles it out in pot-limit Omaha cash games. The Swede made his way to the Dusk Till Dawn Poker & Casino in Nottingham, England to get in on the cash game action during the busy tournament series, but decided to take a shot in a \$500 buy-in satellite for the main event and managed to win a seat. He then turned that \$500 into his first-ever seven-figure payday. His largest prior recorded tournament finish was for \$103,297, when he placed fifth in a €10,300 pot-limit Omaha event at the *European Poker Tour Barcelona* series in August of 2019.

Final 2020 POY Top 20 Standings

Place	Player	Points	Final Tables	POY Earnings
1	Vincent Wan	2,280	1	\$909,420
2	Cary Katz	2,195	9	\$2,449,943
3	Tai Hoang	2,188	2	\$953,675
4	Farid Jattin	2,177	6	\$1,205,493
5	Anton Suarez	2,100	1	\$1,000,000
6	Kahle Burns	1,956	6	\$2,923,988
7	Aaron Van Blarcum	1,920	9	\$1,856,381
8	Alex Foxen	1,897	8	\$1,733,059
9	Sam Greenwood	1,881	6	\$1,357,807
10	Tim Adams	1,857	6	\$5,904,777
11	Brian Altman	1,848	3	\$542,866
12	Trung Pham	1,813	7	\$277,746
13	Michael Addamo	1,806	5	\$2,143,310
14	Pablo Silva	1,800	1	\$1,000,000
15	Ricardo Eyzaguirre	1,785	6	\$415,575
16	Christian Rudolph	1,750	1	\$620,000
17	James Romero	1,736	2	\$745,000
18	Erik Seidel	1,686	5	\$669,649
19	Eric Afriat	1,680	1	\$394,120
20	Benjamin Winsor	1,636	4	\$295,054



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→ RITA KELDANI WINS 2021 CARD PLAYER POKER TOUR PALM BEACH KENNEL CLUB MAIN EVENT

By Card Player News Team



The 2021 *Card Player Poker Tour* Palm Beach Kennel Club series came to an exciting conclusion in early January with Rita Keldani winning the main event of the eight-tournament festival. A total of 298 entries were made in the \$350 buy-in no-limit hold'em event, blowing away the \$25,000 guarantee to create a final prize pool of \$91,050. Keldani emerged victorious with the title and the largest share of the money with \$20,750 in winnings.

In addition to the top prize, the Delray Beach resident was also awarded 182 *Card Player* Player of the Year points. As a result of her victory, she is now in 13th place in the early 2021 POY race standings, which are sponsored by Global Poker.

A total of 998 entries were made across the eight events of this *CPPT* series at The Poker Room at Palm Beach Kennel Club, with \$177,205 in total prize money paid out along the way. Every single event on the schedule featured a guarantee, with all eight being easily surpassed due to big turnouts.

The winners of the preliminary events were Rudy Vasquez, Eddie Uehara, Marquie Ware, Richard Ganesh, Tiago Aguiar, Sosa Joaquin, and Jordan Tuschak.

The series-ending main event kicked off with the first of two starting days on Jan. 8 at 12:15 p.m. local time. Day 1B

began at the same time on the following day. Each player began the tournament with 20,000 in chips and blinds starting at 100-100. By the time the two starting flights concluded, just 36 players remained with a shot at the title.

The top 30 finishers made the money in this event, with a min-cash being worth \$615. The final table players all secured themselves at least a \$2,005 payday for their deep run in this event, with the top two finishers both earning five-figure payouts.

The final heads-up battle for the title came down to Keldani and Dimitry Agrachov. Although Keldani won out in the end, Agrachov took home \$14,605 and 152 POY points as the runner-up.

Here is a look at the payouts and POY points awarded at the final table:

Place	Player	Earnings	POY Points
1	Rita Keldani	\$20,750	182
2	Dimitry Agrachov	\$14,605	152
3	William Pappas	\$9,800	122
4	Richard Shoemaker	\$7,230	91
5	Bryan Hunter	\$5,425	76
6	Tyler Carswell	\$4,130	61
7	Jeff Rolland	\$3,200	46
8	Brian Vazquez	\$2,515	30
9	Jewel Goodman	\$2,005	15

For more information about the *Card Player Poker Tour*, including upcoming series, visit cardplayerpokertour.com.

The Palm Beach Kennel Club first opened in 1932, and will celebrate its 89th anniversary Feb. 17. The Poker Room opened in 1997, and since that time has grown into one of the biggest and best card rooms in Florida. The elegant, non-smoking venue includes 64 tables spread across a spacious room. To learn more, visit pbkennelclub.com. ♠

1996 WSOP MAIN EVENT CHAMPION HUCK SEED INDUCTED INTO THE POKER HALL OF FAME

By Steve Schult

Shortly before the new year, the *World Series of Poker* announced that veteran poker pro Huck Seed has become the newest member of the Poker Hall of Fame.

The 51-year-old Seed, whose first recorded tournament score came back in 1990, has racked up nearly \$7.65 million in live tournament earnings over the course of his three-decade career, including a \$1 million payday for his victory in the 1996 *WSOP* main event.

Along with the *WSOP* gold he won from his breakthrough score in 1996, Seed also won bracelets in the 1994 \$2,500 pot-limit Omaha event, the 2000 \$1,500 razz event, and the 2003 \$5,000 razz event. He also made the main event final table again, finishing sixth in 1999. Seed continued to prove his well-rounded poker abilities by cashing in the \$50,000 *Poker Players Championship* three times as well.

Outside of his success at the summer series, Seed has also won a handful of high-stakes invitational events. He took down the *NBC National Heads-Up Championship* in 2009 and the 2010 *WSOP Tournament of Champions* for \$500,000 each, and also won the *Poker After Dark Big Heat* for \$600,000 and the *Full Tilt Doubles Championship* for another \$500,000.

Before transitioning to poker, the



6'7" Montana native was a basketball standout. Seed was named to the 1987 Montana All-State basketball team before continuing his basketball career as an electrical engineering major at the California Institute of Technology. He found the poker table in 1989, took a leave of absence from school and never went back, having found his calling.

During the 90's, Seed found himself quickly ascending the cash game ranks. His prowess in live games was one of the main reasons fellow Poker

Hall of Famer Erik Seidel tweeted his support for Seed's induction just a couple weeks before he was formally announced as the sole inductee of 2020.

"Huck is my top HOF pick," wrote Seidel. "[He was the] first player to break Chip and Doyle's 30-year hegemony in cash games."

Seidel clarified that before Seed starting grinding, Doyle Brunson and Chip Reese were the proverbial end bosses in the high-stakes cash game world. But when Seed showed up, he

Huck Seed's Top Tournament Scores

Date	Event	Finish	Payout
May 1996	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	1 st	\$1,000,000
Jan. 2011	Poker After Dark \$100,000 Big Heat	1 st	\$600,000
March 2009	NBC National Heads-Up Championship	1 st	\$500,000
June 2010	WSOP Tournament Of Champions	1 st	\$500,000
Nov. 2010	Full Tilt Poker Doubles Championship	1 st	\$500,000
June 1998	\$5,000 Carnivale of Poker Championship	1 st	\$306,000
June 2008	\$50,000 WSOP HORSE	7 th	\$284,160
June 2009	\$50,000 WSOP HORSE	5 th	\$276,609
Aug. 2009	\$10,000 Late Night Poker Finals	1 st	\$200,000
May 1999	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	6 th	\$167,700



“took on all comers and crushed souls on a daily basis.”

Seidel even went as far as to call Huck the “OG Ivey,” and brought up the fact that he was the inspiration for the main character in the movie *Lucky You*. (Eric Bana starred in the lead role as Huck Cheever.)

Aside from Seed’s prowess at the poker table, he also earned a reputation as one of the best prop bettors in the game. There wasn’t much that he wasn’t willing to bet on.

He reportedly lost a five-figure sum to Phil Hellmuth and Konstantin Othmer when he claimed he could float in the ocean for 24 hours, and won \$10,000 from Howard Lederer when he learned to do a standing backflip in two days. He also wagered six-figures that he could break 100 on a desert golf course four times in one day while using just a five iron, sand wedge, and putter.

And those are just the bets that had someone willing to take the action. In 2018, poker pro Rich Alati booked a \$100,000 prop bet against Rory Young that he could live in a completely dark bathroom for 30 days.

According to a tweet from Len Ashby, Seed got wind of the bet and one-upped it, claiming he would “stay in there for 60 days, eat nothing but cockroaches, and run a six-minute mile” after he was done for \$100,000.

In previous years, there had been two inductees voted on by both a panel of poker media members and the living members of the Poker Hall of Fame. This year, however, just one person was voted in, and only the living Poker Hall of Famers were able to weigh in. In 2019, both Chris

Moneymaker and David Oppenheim were inducted. The last time just one person was inducted was in 2009, when Mike Sexton was the only player to receive enough votes.

In order to be considered for the Poker Hall of Fame, a candidate must be a minimum of 40 years old at the time of nomination. They also have to have played high-stakes poker against acknowledged top competition, playing consistently well and standing the test of time, while also gaining the respect of their peers. Non-players must have contributed to the overall growth and success of the game, with indelible positive and lasting results.

One voting member abstained, leaving the remaining 30 members with 10 votes each to dole out however they pleased. Seed received 76 votes to best a field of nominees that also featured veteran tournament director Matt Savage, PokerStars founder Isai Scheinberg, *WSOP* commentating duo Lon McEachern and Norman Chad, and poker pros Eli Elezra, Antonio Esfandiari, Ted Forrest, Mike Matusow, Patrik Antonius, and Chris Ferguson.

The honor was a long time coming for Seed, who was first nominated for the Hall of Fame back in 2011. He was subsequently nominated every year after except for 2012, 2015, and 2016.

Savage finished second with 51 votes, followed by Scheinberg with 45, and Elezra with 30. Ferguson, who has drawn ire from the poker community for his involvement in the Full Tilt scandal, yet has remained active at the *WSOP*, finished with just three votes. ♠

The Poker Hall Of Fame

Name	Year 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 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 Ungar	2001
Lyle Berman	2002
Johnny Chan	2002
Bobby 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

HEAD GAMES

The Name Of The Game Is Aggression

By Craig Tapscott



The Pros: Jeff Gross, Ari Engel, Noah Schwartz, and Matt Affleck

Craig Tapscott: Can you share how you apply pressure on other players and keep the lead in a hand with selective aggression. Additionally, what do you do to set an aggressive tone at the table?

Jeff Gross: Blind aggression every hand is not a viable tactic and is perceived as weak and easy to combat. Being in fewer pots, but having the lead in hands is what is known as TAG or tight aggressive. Applying pressure to players is something you can do in a variety of ways but playing position and being balanced with a wide variety of starting hands is key.

For instance, if you only three-bet the top of your range, that's easy to play against. But when you mix in suited connectors and some other hands, you become much more dangerous in your opponent's mind. Also dropping in some overbets in creative spots is a good way to set the tone and put the table on notice.

Ari Engel: When it comes to playing winning poker, it's true that almost all the big winners are extra aggressive. If the other players are scared of your aggression then they will tend to give up on pots easily against you. This allows you to win extra pots when neither of you have a good hand. In tournament poker, that can be huge as undeservingly winning a few extra blinds when the average stack is relatively short is quite meaningful.

Furthermore, if you can build a big stack for the final table, it can put you into a position to play even more hands, more aggressively as your opponents look to move

up the pay ladder and avoid confrontations with a player who can knock them out. Sometimes, it can make sense to take extra risks to try and put yourself in such a position, particularly when one considers that such a large proportion of the prize pool ends up in the hands of only the top few finishers.

Noah Schwartz: Aggression in no-limit hold'em plays a pivotal role in one's success. But before applying aggression, I feel it is crucial to identify a player's tendencies. Is your opponent passive and tight, or aggressive? What this does is it enables me to put together, in my head, a comprehensive plan on how to approach each hand.

I like to relate it to a boxing match. In the first round or two, the boxers are getting a feel for one another stylistically. Once I have my approach set up, I can use aggression in my favor and take advantage of situations more optimally. An example of this is a passive player who limps in the pot. Instead of limping with a mediocre holding, I am going to increase the price of admission in order to isolate that player to take advantage of this particular tendency. By doing so, I enable myself a much higher chance of winning the pot and adding to my chip count. That is one example on how to stay aggressive.

Things that I like to do to establish my presence at the table early on is to reraise early and often, because I feel it sets the tone for the session. Granted, it's vital to be able to pivot from one style to another seamlessly depending on different variables. If you're able to show a big bluff at some point and implant into an opponent's mind that you're fully capable and willing to lay it all on the line



Ari Engel



Jeff Gross

with nothing, this can be super beneficial later on when you have a real holding.

Matt Affleck: Applying pressure in no-limit hold'em all begins with the preflop game. Most players tend to fold too many hands preflop, as well as play a passive calling strategy rather than three-betting more aggressively. In all my research and database reviews, when presented the opportunity to three-bet or call with a weaker hand in their range, three-betting usually outperforms calling. Whether it is choosing to open the pot when it has folded to you or choosing to three-bet or cold call a raise in front of you, aggression is the name of the game. Of all the students I've coached, 80-90 percent of them play too tight and passively preflop, very few take the aggression too far. If you are in doubt, choose the aggressive route in a hand preflop.

Many players tend to deal with preflop aggression the wrong way as well. When an overly aggressive player is at the table, many players sit back and wait for strong hands to trap the player. This is exactly what this player wants. These players do not want to face extra resistance, they make most of their money by generating extra folds preflop. In reality, the best counter strategy to a very aggressive preflop player is to counter with even more aggression. When they raise, call and three-bet more hands preflop. If they raise you preflop, you always have the option to four-bet aggressively.

The same principles apply post-flop in many cases. In almost all instances, players fold too much at every stage of the hand post-flop. We take advantage of this by bluffing aggressively, until faced with resistance. We strategically use board textures, dynamic turns, and blockers in our hand to choose the appropriate times to bluff and present overfold opportunities for our opponents.

Most players use blind aggression to help them win more pots. We want to shift our mindset from betting just to bet, to betting with an intention and purpose. Have specific reasons for your bet. What part of the villain's range are we targeting? How does the flop or turn interact with our range or our opponent's range? In almost all cases, everyone can benefit from more strategic aggression in the correct spots.

Craig Tapscott: When encountering a very aggressive player on your left, how does that dynamic change in

regard to how aggressive you will continue to be and why?

Jeff Gross: Having a very aggressive player on your left can be a good thing. Often times this will cause the table to loosen up and play more hands than normal, which is very good. But when the table captain is on your direct left there are some considerations.

It's good to stick to a plan and have a planned four-betting attack as well as which hands you will defend three-bets with. This should be adjusted to fit your opponent's aggression and also post-flop skill assessment. Being aggressive is one thing, being a competent thinking player post-flop is another.

I would be looking to mix it up for sure, this is where you can really make a lot of chips. It's important to remember the player to your direct left should have a big advantage on you and not to let it discourage you if they are dragging more pots. The key is to drag the biggest one. Determining if they know what they are doing is something you can tell relatively quickly when you see the hands they are showing down.

Ari Engel: Given the desire to win pots uncontested and accumulate a big stack, having an extra aggressive player on your left can strongly affect the strategy you choose to play. Often times, I'll sit back and hope they make a big mistake versus me at the wrong time. Other times I'll try to abuse my opponent's likelihood not to have a strong hand by playing extra aggressively myself and forcing them to make an even more extra heroic aggressive action. It's great to have many tools in one's box, so that you don't always respond to tough players in the same way.

Generally, it's very hard to get away with playing a ton of hands. If you pay attention to showdowns, it's fairly easy to spot if a player is playing far too loose/aggressive but doesn't have a great strategy. You are determining if their aggression is calculated or if they have any rationale for making the plays they make. Perhaps they are just out of control. Putting together these logic puzzles are part of what makes the game of poker such a fun, difficult, and sometimes a frustrating game to play and master.

Noah Schwartz: When I take a seat at a table and encounter someone who is considered very aggressive and has a positional advantage over me, I go back to the drawing board. How am I going to have a winning ses-



Matt Affleck



Noah Schwartz

sion? How will I accumulate all the chips so I can win this event? One way I counteract a player's aggression is with my own attack. You meet fire with fire. Not to say this is always the best or most effective approach. Still, by sending a signal to them that you are not going to back down, this embeds into their mind that maybe they should go after someone else who is more likely to stand down and present less of a challenge. Not to say that this is the case all the time. It has backfired in many instances for me, but along the way, it taught me sometimes you need to check your ego at the door.

This is a two-headed monster for most. These types of players make you elevate your game. Another reason for wanting to enter pots with this person is they want to play bigger pots. They are trying to win more often with sheer aggression, which enables you to accumulate more chips, which makes them more challenging to play against, but by the same token, more mistake prone.

Selective aggression and random aggression are two very different approaches. Player A could be very calculated in the path he takes, exuding logic and applying skill throughout the course of the hand. While player B could be a ticking time bomb who doesn't understand the board or hand ranges, and is approaching hands with reckless abandonment. I'm always on the lookout for information, so I can accurately label the player to the best of my ability to develop an approach to manipulating the opponent.

Matt Affleck: When faced with an aggressive player at the table, the best strategy is to keep fighting and likely employ more aggression. In most instances, an aggressive player's goal is to win as many pots without resistance if possible. Often, when faced with returned aggression, these players play pretty honest, especially since most players do not fight back. If you simply sit back and wait for a hand, this is exactly what the player wants. A skilled aggressive player wins lots of small pots, builds an aggressive image. However, when tons of money go into the pot, many are surprised that they have a good hand. This is exactly what they want, they want you to misinterpret their image as this crazy gambler, when in fact, they are simply waiting for you to make the big mistake.

It is very important to pay attention to showdowns when facing this type of player to see if they are using controlled aggression or just blind aggression. Do they

use good blockers and combinations to bluff with? Do they display self-control and know when to shut down a bluff versus a tight trappy player? Some players cannot help themselves and simply pull the trigger every single time. The counter strategies to a very aggressive player are sometimes overthought. If you are on their left and they raise too many hands, the counter strategy is to three-bet more and call more versus them. If you are on their right and they call every hand you raise, use a larger raise sizing preflop. Post-flop, use their aggression against them, and check-raise more for both value and bluffs.

Many tournament players have the mindset that they want to sit back and wait for a better spot. They want to protect their tournament life. I am not a believer in tournament life. Sure, in certain spots you want to consider it, but most players use tournament life as a way to justify tight-passive, bad poker. The best way to protect your tournament life is to win more chips. To be a great tournament player, you need to be able to mix it up. I am having a hard time remembering the last great tournament player who was a nit. ♠

Jeff Gross grinded his way up to playing nose-bleed stakes as high as \$1,000-\$2,000 as well as \$100,000 high roller tournaments. He has over \$3.3 million in career tournament cashes. Gross is part of Team partypoker and you can often find him streaming his play on Twitch at JeffGrossPoker.

Ari Engel took down the 2016 Aussie Millions main event for over \$1.1 million, and won a coveted WSOP bracelet in the 2019 \$2,500 buy-in no-limit hold'em event. Engel has nine WSOP Circuit rings, and has cashed for more than \$7 million in live tournaments.

Noah Schwartz is a WSOP bracelet winner and WPT champion that has amassed career earnings of over \$6 million despite playing only part time. One of his main passions is philanthropy. Schwartz currently works with many foundations to raise money for multiple causes.

Matt Affleck has more 15 years of tournament poker experience. As well as being a private coach, Matt is a premium instructor for PokerCoaching.com/CardPlayer where he hosts weekly webinars explaining advanced tournament poker strategies. Affleck has over \$3.1 million in tournament career cashes.

Card Player

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CARD PLAYER POKER TOUR RETURNS TO THE VENETIAN® RESORT LAS VEGAS IN 2021

More Than \$2 Million In Guaranteed Prize Money To Be Awarded From Feb. 2-28

By Card Player News Team



The tables are heating up this February with one of the most dynamic events in poker: the *DeepStack Extravaganza Poker Series*. Offering the largest suites on the Strip, The Venetian® Resort Las Vegas has three luxurious all-suite towers, award-winning restaurants, and one-of-a-kind cocktails at the bars of The Cocktail Collective. Players have everything they need under one roof, and then some.

From Feb. 2-28, 2021, the series takes over with a four-week frenzy of spirited gaming that boasts 35 tournaments and more than \$2 million in guaranteed prize pools.

The *DeepStack Extravaganza Poker Series* plays out with several options and formats that include bounties, freeze-outs, plus multi- and single-day tournaments. No-limit Texas hold'em and pot-limit Omaha are popular events that fill up quickly. Tournament buy-ins begin at \$200 and vary all the way up to \$2,500, ensuring there are accessible and exciting options for everyone.

The *Card Player Poker Tour* also returns Feb. 19-22 with a \$2,500 buy-in and a \$500,000 guarantee.

Other highlights on the schedule include:

- \$1,100 No-Limit Hold'em *Mid-States Poker Tour* event with a \$350,000 guarantee, Feb. 4-6, 2021
- \$800 No-Limit Hold'em *UltimateStack* with a

\$300,000 guarantee, Feb. 11-14, 2021

- \$600 No-Limit Hold'em *UltimateStack* with a \$200,000 guarantee, Feb. 25-28, 2021

The Venetian Resort sets the stage with unparalleled hospitality and action-packed gameplay. Filled with high stakes, stellar prize pools, and friendly competition - this is where true poker players come to show off their skills and reap the highest rewards.

A Look Back At Previous CPPT Main Events Held At The Venetian Poker Room

This marks the ninth time that the *CPPT* has made its way to The Venetian Poker Room since first joining forces in 2013, with over \$12.3 million in prize money awarded in the previous eight *CPPT* main events held at the property.

The events are consistently some of the largest on the *CPPT* circuit, and as a result, the top four players on the tour's all-time earnings list are all champions from *CPPT Venetian* events. All-time *CPPT* career earnings leader Jon Turner has won two of the *CPPT Venetian* main events in recent years, cashing for a total of \$737,858 in those title runs.

Allyn Shulman won the first-ever *CPPT Venetian* main



event, defeating a field of 262 entries in the \$5,000 buy-in tournament to earn \$293,966. Shulman's route to the title included overcoming a stacked final table that included the likes of *Card Player* columnist Jonathan Little (5th place - \$67,367), three-time *WPT* champion Anthony Zinno (4th - \$86,964), and Dan O'Brien (3rd - \$122,485).

The tour returned in 2016. The \$5,000 buy-in event attracted 537 entries to create a final prize pool of \$2,497,050. The largest share of that money was ultimately awarded to the aforementioned Turner, who defeated Artem Metalidi heads-up to secure the title and the \$536,858 top prize. The following summer Javier Gomez won the third *CPPT Venetian* main event, outlasting a field of 688 total entries to earn the largest payday of his career (\$561,349).

The three previous events all took place in the sum-

mer months, around the conclusion of the annual *World Series of Poker*. In December of 2017 the *CPPT* and The Venetian® Resort Las Vegas teamed up for their first winter series. Mike Dentale emerged victorious in the \$3,500 buy-in main event, outlasting a field of 235 entries to secure the top prize of \$185,061. Dentale faced plenty of tough competition at his final table, including two-time *WSOP* bracelet winner Mark Radoja (2nd - \$115,035), 2010 *WSOP* main event third-place finisher Joseph Cheong (3rd - \$82,908), high-stakes tournament regular Ali Imsirovic (4th - \$61,441), *World Poker Tour* main event winner Dylan Linde (6th - \$34,792), and three-time bracelet winner Paul Volpe (9th - \$17,026).

There were once again two *CPPT Venetian* events held in 2018. 2015 *Card Player* Player of the Year winner Anthony Zinno defeated a field of 547 players to secure the \$466,670 top prize in the summer, beating out the likes of 2019 *POY* Stephen Chidwick (4th - \$177,091), 2013 *WSOP* main event runner-up Jay Farber (5th - \$134,083), and 2014 *WSOP* main event champion Martin Jacobson (9th - \$48,068). Turner then earned his second *CPPT* title at the venue in December of that year when he topped a field of 341 entries to win \$247,055.

The summer of 2019 saw Russian poker pro Andrey Patychuk overcome a field of 564 entries to secure the \$547,777 top prize. Stephen Chidwick improved on his fourth-place finish in this event in 2018 with a third-place showing for \$245,199, while *WSOP* bracelet winner Chris Klodnicki banked \$182,595 as the fourth-place finisher. The most recent *CPPT Venetian* took place in December of 2019. Ukrainian poker pro Valentyn Shabelnyk earned \$136,080 for the win, defeating two-time bracelet winner Steve Sung heads up for the title (2nd - \$85,176).

Make sure to make your way to The Venetian® Resort Las Vegas in February to see if you can become the ninth *CPPT* champion decided at this tournament poker hotspot. ♠

Here is a look at the complete schedule for the series:

Event	Start Date	Days	Buy-In
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$20K GTD	Feb 02	1	\$400
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$6K GTD	Feb 02	1	\$200
\$200 NLH Mega Satellite (2 seats GTD)	Feb 03	1	\$200
\$600 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$40K GTD	Feb 03	1	\$600
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$6K GTD	Feb 03	1	\$200
\$1,100 No-Limit Hold'em \$350K GTD*	Feb 04	3	\$1,100
\$1,100 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$75K GTD	Feb 06	1	\$1,100
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 07	1	\$200
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$80K GTD*	Feb 08	3	\$400
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 08	1	\$200
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 09	1	\$200
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$20K GTD	Feb 10	1	\$400
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$6K GTD	Feb 10	1	\$200
\$800 No-Limit Hold'em UltimateStack \$300K GTD*	Feb 11	4	\$800
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$6K GTD	Feb 11	1	\$200
\$300 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack Freeze Out \$15K GTD	Feb 14	1	\$300
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 14	1	\$200
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$20K GTD	Feb 15	1	\$400
\$300 Pot-Limit Omaha 8/B \$7K GTD	Feb 15	1	\$300
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$80K GTD*	Feb 16	3	\$400
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 16	1	\$200
\$300 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$10K GTD	Feb 17	1	\$300
\$600 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$40K GTD	Feb 18	1	\$600
\$300 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$10K GTD	Feb 18	1	\$300
\$300 NLH Mega Satellite (2 seats GTD)	Feb 19	1	\$300
\$2,500 No-Limit Hold'em CPPT Main Event \$500K GTD*	Feb 19	4	\$2,500
\$300 No-Limit Hold'em Survivor \$10K GTD	Feb 19	1	\$300
\$400 Pot-Limit Omaha MonsterStack \$40K GTD	Feb 21	3	\$400
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$20K GTD	Feb 22	1	\$400
\$400 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack \$80K GTD*	Feb 23	3	\$400
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 23	1	\$200
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 24	1	\$200
\$600 No-Limit Hold'em UltimateStack \$200K GTD*	Feb 25	4	\$600
\$300 No-Limit Hold'em MonsterStack Freeze Out \$15K GTD	Feb 28	1	\$300
\$200 No-Limit Hold'em Bounty \$6K GTD	Feb 28	1	\$200

*Indicates multiple starting days

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STEFANIE UNGAR OPENS UP ABOUT HER FATHER STU

By Nathan Gamble



Stu Ungar once said, “It’s hard work, gambling... playing poker. Don’t let anyone tell you different. Think about what it’s like sitting at a poker table with people whose only goal is to cut your throat, take your money, and leave you out back talking to yourself about what went wrong inside. That probably sounds harsh, but that’s the way it is at the poker table. If you don’t believe me, then you’re the lamb that’s going off to the slaughter.”

Most people within the poker world are well versed on Stu Ungar’s legacy. The New York City gin rummy prodigy was so good that some of his opponents actually believed he was clairvoyant. His ability for total recall even won him a \$100,000 prop bet after he was able to count down a six-deck blackjack shoe. “The Kid” beat his opponents so bad that his action eventually dried up, forcing him to switch to poker.

Ungar quickly took to hold’em, and was ultimately considered by many of his peers to be among the best to ever play the game. He not only won the *Super Bowl of Poker* three times, but also won five *World Series of Poker* bracelets. In fact, he remains the only player to ever win the \$10,000 buy-in main event three times, earning back-to-back titles in 1980 and 1981, and then returning to win again in 1997. (Johnny Moss has three main event titles as well, but one was earned via player vote. Johnny Chan won the main event in 1987 and 1988, and fell just short in 1989, finishing runner-

up to Phil Hellmuth.)

Unfortunately, he was also a man who battled with personal demons. Although he would have undoubtedly been one of the early stars of the poker boom, Stu never saw the game explode in popularity. He died unceremoniously in 1998 at the age of 45 in a Las Vegas hotel room, the official cause listed as cardiac arrest. He was just one year removed from his third main event title.

“Everybody felt terrible, but it wasn’t a surprise,” Doyle Brunson was quoted as saying.

As someone who found the gambling world at a young age myself, I’ve always been fascinated by Stu’s story. On a cold day in November, I pulled up a chair to a small table, coffee on the left and my phone set to record on the right. Seated across from me was Stefanie, Stu’s daughter, now 38. Although he didn’t get to see her grow into an adult, Stu would have been proud of Stefanie, who arrived elegantly dressed, more than happy to answer the seemingly endless list of questions I had put together, and also share a side of him that perhaps people didn’t know about.

Authors note: My conversation with Stefanie Ungar-Campbell lasted several hours and the stories were unending. As much as I would like to divulge everything I learned, more than two-thirds of the interview had to be left on the cutting room floor because of space considerations. If you’d like to hear more great stories about Stu Ungar, please follow her on Instagram (StefanieUngar) as she continues to share his legacy. Stefanie is currently working towards opening a restaurant near the Las Vegas Strip named after her father, and plans to earmark a portion of sales for addiction recovery efforts.

Stuey The Kid

Although his father Ido was a bookmaker who ran a bar and social club in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, it was his mother Faye that actually sparked his interest in gin rummy.

“He had an insatiable appetite for action,” Stefanie said. “The way he got into playing cards was by watching his mom play with her friends and make mistakes. She would be made fun of by the other players and he would watch as they openly laughed at her. That’s what started it off for him - his early quest for greatness within the game coupled with his desire for respect.”

Stu’s early gin prowess got the attention of the mafia, which frequented his father’s establishment. After his father died, the mafia reportedly accepted the 13-year-old with open arms. You may write off these stories as fiction, but Stefanie confirmed those early connections.

“At Stuey’s bar mitzvah there were so many mobsters in attendance that the FBI was outside of the event writing down the license plate of every car in the parking lot,” she recalled. “They couldn’t fathom who the kid was and why there were so many Italian mafiosos at a Jewish kid’s birthday party. In reality, he was just a 13-year-old whose father had the respect of the mafia, who was able to make them a ton of money. He later joked that if the FBI was smart, they would have confiscated the guest book.”



Stu grew streetwise beyond his years, but his official education fell by the wayside. The more involved he became in gin to support his mother and sister, the less it mattered to do his homework, or even show up to school. Although he had been smart enough to skip two grades early on in his academic career, by high school, he was often playing gin through the night. The double life as a card shark and a student ultimately proved to be too much to juggle, and he dropped out in tenth grade. By this point it didn't matter, as he was too ingrained within the gambling world to consider any other avenue in life.

His wits were in cards and hustling, not in books and grades. Stuey was once playing a high-stakes gin match for the mafia, and the unlawfulness of the game became apparent the second the FBI kicked in the door and rushed the parlor. The sudden flood of law enforcement would catch most people off guard, but Stu quickly hopped up from the table and onto a barstool, grabbing a bartender's rag in the process. In a flash, Stuey transformed from a high-stakes illegal gambler into an underweight kid who was just there to shine shoes for loose change. It wasn't the last time that Stu's quick thinking got him out of trouble.

The Hardest Of Gamblers

Upon arriving in Las Vegas, Stu quickly realized that it had everything he ever wanted: booze, women, fancy cars, nice dinners, and most importantly, an unending supply of action. At first, he plied his trade as a gin aficionado and paid off some former connections to ensure his safety, but his desire to prove himself didn't stop there. It didn't matter the game, Stu sought out a bet, gambling as high and fast as anyone would let him.

"Stu's first-time playing golf, he left the course owing over \$77,000. I don't know what he was chasing, if it was an adrenaline rush or something more, but he was always pushing how far he could go," Stefanie recalled. "At one point he lost the Mercedes that he had arrived to the golf course in. He was a horrible golfer and honestly a horrible sports bettor. If he had stuck to gin and poker his life would have been easier, but that wasn't who he was."

Poker pro Mark Gregorich battled with Ungar at the tables during his waning years, and confirmed that Stu not only lost the \$77,000 playing nine holes of golf, but had managed to lose an additional \$300,000 on the practice putting greens before he even got out on the course. Stop and think about that for a moment. He'd never even picked up a set of golf clubs before in his life, but he was willing to bet a fortune on it in his quest for action.

Always brash and overconfident about his abilities, Stu got into more than his fair share of confrontations. While it is recorded in the annals of poker history that he was almost

banned from the 1981 *WSOP* main event after spitting on a dealer, Stefanie pointed out that he also had a gentle heart and would often try to make amends.

"At his funeral, my mom pointed out several dealers that were in attendance and told me how big of a deal that was, because he didn't always treat them the best. When we talked with one of them afterwards, he said not everyone understood, but Stu tried to make it a point to come over after the game and apologize while leaving a sizeable tip. He would just get so frustrated when playing for giant sums that he couldn't control himself. But when his anger subsided, he usually tried to make it right."

Dealing With Tragedy

Stu married Stefanie's mother Madeline in 1982, shortly before Stefanie was born. He wanted to 'do the right thing' and not have a child out of wedlock. Stefanie recalled the countless nights that they would spend together, cuddling on the couch, playing footsies while talking, or spending hours playing Monopoly. The marriage also came with a step child for Stu. Richie was a 12-year-old boy who idolized him as a father and a man. Stefanie stated that they would constantly be attached at the hip, always betting on silly things.

Ungar's mother suffered a stroke and had to be placed in a nursing home before her death in 1979. The burden of guilt weighed heavily on Stu, and it was too much for some of his "friends" to witness. He was offered cocaine and told it would help him feel better. Stu never drank or smoke as his appetite was always geared for action, but this time he readily accepted any remedy to help with his overwhelming sadness. In the blink of an eye, he did feel better, refreshed, and ready to go. This one-time cocaine bump quickly turned in to the realization that the wonder drug could help him play longer at the tables. What had started as a desire to blunt his own pain had instead become a tool to induce pain at the tables.

Stu's on-again, off-again drug habit caused strife within the Ungar household, and the couple divorced in 1986. Richie opted to live with Stu instead of his mother, but committed suicide shortly after his high school graduation in 1989.

"I had never seen my dad cry, but after Richie died, he was still crying himself to sleep at night ten years after his death."

The tragedy, coupled with Madeline and Stefanie leaving Las Vegas for their family network in Florida, drove Stu over the edge. The drugs were no longer there for partying or all-night sessions at the table. They were once again used as a tool to dull the anguish.

When Stu played in the 1990 *WSOP* main event he infamously made day three as a monster chip leader but overdosed and couldn't show up to play the final day. His unmanned stack still managed a final table appearance before



it busted in ninth place for \$25,050.

Remembering Her Father

Stu was an amazing gamesman, but he was so completely focused on gambling that he often lacked the basic ability to function as a human. For instance, he once ran a Mercedes dry of oil and returned it to the dealership complaining that no one had told him his car needed maintenance. He even paid a neighborhood boy \$20 to take out his trash. He didn't trust banks and paid everything in cash. But when it came to time with Stefanie, he was all in and focused.

"He had a Jaguar, that was his car, and he'd constantly trade in the older model for an updated version," she said. "Whenever I flew in from Florida to visit for the summer, he would pick me up himself at the airport. He'd come right up to the gate, you were allowed to back in those days, and then we would jump in his car and drive off. When we would go out to dinners together it was an affair. We would be out for hours, just talking at the table. He always loved Chinese food and Italian food and it became our thing. I've heard it from the players before, that he was completely different around me."

The world in which Stu inhabited on a daily basis was non-stop adrenaline, kill or be killed, and overwhelming machismo, and he wanted no part of that for his daughter.

Not only did he not want Stefanie to learn poker, but he was also overprotective.

"I couldn't go out of our cul-de-sac because he was scared that I would get kidnapped," remembered Stefanie, who now has two kids of her own. "He wouldn't let me wear makeup or nail polish, and I couldn't shave my legs because he would tell me I wasn't old enough. If I said something 'sucked,' he would chastise me and tell me it wasn't ladylike. When we would go out to a movie together and I had to go to the bathroom, he would find the sweetest old lady he could and ask her to make sure I was okay."

"He had seen another world that fortunately most people never see, and [it affected him]. I wasn't completely blind to the world he lived in, though. I knew he always had women around, but when I would come to town for three months during the summer, I never saw one. Not one lady. Imagine that, changing your life so much for your daughter. It was out of love."

It is often said that Stu Ungar died alone in a hotel room without a dime in his pocket, not leaving a single thing to his family. The reality of that is much further from the truth. He left his daughter with many joyous memories, he taught her to be loyal, to be respectful, and to act with class. He showed how to love and how to operate in a world that would chew you up and spit you out. It's the same love that Stefanie passes on to her children as she tells them of the man her father was and how proud of them he would be. ♠

Nathan Gamble is a native of Texas where he learned to play hold'em from his father. He is a two-time World Series of Poker bracelet winner, having won the 2017 WSOP \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better event, and 2020 WSOP Online \$600 PLO eight-or-better event. He is a fixture of the mix game community and can often be found playing \$80-\$160 mix games at the Wynn. Gamble is active on Twitter under the username 'Surfbum4life.' He is also lead commentator for the Galfond Challenge which he streams along with mixed-game content on his Twitch channel. You can listen to his poker origin story on Card Player's Poker Stories Podcast.

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STU UNGARS TOP TOURNAMENT SCORES

Date	Event	Finish	Payout
May 1997	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	1 st Place	\$1,000,000
May 1981	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	1 st Place	\$375,000
May 1980	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event	1 st Place	\$365,000
Feb. 1984	\$10,000 Super Bowl Of Poker	1 st Place	\$275,000
Feb. 1988	\$10,000 Super Bowl Of Poker	1 st Place	\$210,000
Feb. 1989	\$10,000 Super Bowl Of Poker	1 st Place	\$205,000
March 1991	\$5,000 Queen's Poker Classic	1 st Place	\$190,000
Sept. 1984	\$10,000 Americas Cup Of Poker	1 st Place	\$150,000
Jan. 1987	\$10,000 Americas Cup Of Poker	1 st Place	\$150,000
May 1983	\$5,000 WSOP 7 Card Stud	1 st Place	\$110,000
May 1981	\$10,000 WSOP NL 2-7	1 st Place	\$95,000
Dec. 1983	\$10,000 World Match Play Championships NL 2-7	1 st Place	\$80,000
Dec. 1983	\$3,000 World Match Play Championships NLHE	1 st Place	\$64,500
Jan. 1987	\$5,000 Americas Cup Of Poker NL 2-7	1 st Place	\$55,000
Jan. 1987	\$10,000 Americas Cup Of Poker NLHE	1 st Place	\$55,000



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RUN THEM OVER (IF THEY WILL LET YOU)

By Jonathan Little

It is often wise to play a tight, aggressive poker strategy, but when you happen to find yourself in a game consisting of mostly tight, passive players, you will find that you can make a profitable adjustment. By frequently raising and making continuation bets, you will be surprised how often you can win pots that don't belong to you.

But how do you know if the table you are playing at is ideal for a more aggressive approach? The way to figure out if you are at one of these lucrative tables is to pay attention to how many hands make it to the turn and river.

If most of the pots are won with either a preflop raise or a preflop raise plus a continuation bet, then you should strongly consider opening up your game, even getting out of line yourself to see if your opponents will let you run them over. If you never get out of line, you will never know if you are at a table that will let you steal a ton of chips.

Doing this is also an easy way to see if your opponents are making a mistake by folding too often. If everyone folds to you in late position, raise to about three big blinds with a wide range and then make a continuation bet of about four big blinds on most flops.

For example, if everyone folds to you on the button, feel free to raise to three big blinds with a hand like 6♥ 3♥. If the big blind calls, throw out a four-big blind continuation bet on essentially any flop, even A♠ K♠ Q♣. If your opponent folds, that is great, and if they call or play back at you, you should give up. You must accept that not all your bluffs will succeed.

Another way to see if your opponents will fold too often is to re-raise them before the flop. If a player in middle position raises, re-raise them to about three times their initial raise with a wide range of hands with post-flop playability, such as 9-7 suited. You can also re-raise with hands containing an ace or king blocker, such as A-6 offsuit or K-5 suited. If they call, you can then

“UNLIKE MOST GAMES WHERE YOUR HOLE CARDS ARE AT LEAST SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, IF YOU KNOW YOU WILL WIN MOST POTS WITHOUT SHOWING YOUR CARDS, YOUR OWN CARDS BECOME MUCH LESS RELEVANT. IF YOU DO FIND YOURSELF AT A TABLE THAT WILL LET YOU RUN THEM OVER, YOU SHOULD MAKE A POINT TO STEAL AS MANY POTS AS YOU REASONABLY CAN WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE A TOTAL MANIAC. MUCH OF YOUR PROFIT WILL COME FROM MAXIMIZING FOLD EQUITY, MEANING YOU WILL MAKE MOST OF YOUR MONEY BECAUSE YOUR OPPONENTS CHOOSE TO FOLD TOO OFTEN.”

make a continuation bet of about half of the size of the pot on most flops, whether you connect with the board or not.

Unlike most games where your hole cards are at least somewhat important, if you know you will win most pots without showing your cards, your own cards become much less relevant. If you do find yourself at a table that will let you run them over, you should make a point to steal as many pots as you reasonably can without looking like a total maniac. Much of your profit will come from maximizing fold equity, meaning you will make most of your money because your opponents choose to fold too often.

Sometimes it really is as easy as betting and winning when your opponents do not have a strong hand.

When you're at a table full of passive players who are just slowly bleeding money by waiting around for only premium hands, do not be afraid to get out of line and steal more than your fair share. Opportunities like that don't come around as often as they used to, and when they do, you have to be ready and willing to capitalize on them. ♠



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.

BADEUCEY: REALIZATION OF EQUITY WITH PREMIUM THREE-CARD BADUGIS

By Kevin Haney

In this issue we switch back to Badeucey. For those readers that are unfamiliar with this variant, it is a split-pot game where the object is to make the best deuce-to-seven (27TD) low along with the best badugi. Aces are high, and straights count against you, so the best possible deuce to seven low is 2-3-4-5-7 that is not a flush. On the badugi side, aces are also considered high, thus the best possible badugi is 2-3-4-5 with all different suits such as 2♣ 3♥ 4♦ 5♠.

In a previous issue, we discussed the type of hands we should play when we are the first to enter the pot. When someone else opens before us, we must tighten up, and with our really good hands we have a decision between re-raising for value and attempting to isolate, or smooth-calling to try and pull other players into the pot.

With premium three-card badugis such as 2-3-4, 2-4-5, and 2-3-6 we are highly incentivized to three-bet an opener as our hand is likely best and it increases the odds that we end up scooping. However, hands such as these can make very strong holdings on both sides, and this is an argument for smooth-calling and inviting in others in the hopes of winning a massive pot.

This decision is relatively close, so we should consider the ability to effectively realize our equity relative to our

opponent when we do choose to re-raise and are successful in getting the pot heads-up. When we escalate the betting early on in a hand, it's important to know that we can often get to a showdown profitably even if we don't improve dramatically.

Consider a hand where the hijack open-raises, and we three-bet from the button with 2♦ 3♠ 4♣ X X, everyone else folds, and both players draw two. After the first draw, the hijack leads out and we just call after failing to improve. On the second draw, the hijack now draws one. While you may be up against a badugi, it could still just be a tri hand that picked up a low draw. Against a very loose player we may even be up against a holding such as 2♦ 3♦ 5♦ 8♠ X, which would give you a freeroll.

Unfortunately, we fail to improve on the second draw, in any fashion, meaning we have not made a badugi or a low draw to at least a nine or a ten. After the villain bets the turn, we are getting pot odds of 5.75:1 and need around 15% equity to continue.

So how much equity on average do we have in this situation? This is not easy to nail down precisely, however, the low side is a little easier to estimate so we will start with that.

On the second draw your opponent will have completed his one-card draw to a hand he will pat around 40% of the

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

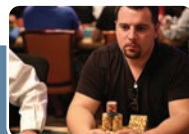
2020 WPT Online Poker Open
\$3,500 No-Limit Hold'em Main Event



Balakrishna Patur
27,387,500 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 34.0%
After Flop: 26.0%
After Turn: 18.0%



Matthew Iles
80,400,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 65.0%
After Flop: 74.0%
After Turn: 82.0%

PREFLOP

With eight players remaining and blinds of 350,000-700,000 with an ante of 87,500, Balakrishna Patur raised to 1,500,000 from the lojack. Matthew Iles called from the big blind.



Iles checked, and Patur bet 1,800,000. Iles called.



Iles checked, and Patur checked.



Iles bet 5,700,000. Patur raised all-in for 24,000,000, and Iles folded.

ANALYSIS

The 2020 WPT Online Poker Open \$3,500 buy-in no-limit hold'em main event drew a total of 395 entries, creating a prize pool of \$1,264,000 in the first-ever WPT Main Tour online event held exclusively in New Jersey. Early action at the final table saw a pair of accomplished American tournament grinders sitting atop the leaderboard in Soheb Porbandarwala and Matthew Iles. In this hand Iles demonstrated the discipline and situational awareness that has helped him cash for millions in online tournaments. The hand began with one of the shorter-stacked players, Balakrishna Patur, raising from the lojack. Iles defended his big blind with a pocket pair and flopped middle set. Iles checked and Patur continuation bet with a flopped nut flush draw. Iles check-called and the turn gave Patur top pair to go along with his draw. Iles checked again and Patur decided to check behind. The river completed the flush and Iles bet out for 5,700,000 into the pot of 7,600,000, perhaps looking to target calls from top-pair type hands that Patur checked back with on the turn. Patur raised all-in for 24 million in position, putting Iles to a decision for a sizable chunk of his remaining chips. Iles went into the tank. While fourth set was a strong hand in a vacuum, Iles could have nearly regarded it as a bluff-catcher given the runoff and betting action in this hand. Would Patur have checked behind with the lower set of threes on the turn, or with other value hands that are behind a set of sevens like two pair? If he did, would he now raise all-in after a scare card that completed both the flush draw and a guts-hot for the Broadway straight? Iles ultimately decided to fold, correctly laying down his hand after losing the lead on fifth street. As a result, he preserved his stack to remain in second place on the leaderboard. Patur chipped up, but remained in sixth position as eight-handed action continued.

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

time and against this pat range you have approximately 10% equity. Since we were drawing two on the second draw, the villain should tend to pat anything up to a 10 low, and depending on his holdings, sometimes jacks as well.

When our opponent is still drawing one, we have around a 35% chance of ending up with the best low. Therefore, a simplified average equity calculation for the low side is as follows: $(40\%)(10\%) \times (60\%)(35\%) = 25\%$. Since it is a split-pot game, the chance of making the best low gives us approximately 12.5% $(25\%/2)$ equity towards the 15% that we require.

Estimating our equity on the badugi side is much more complicated, but as you can see, we don't need that much of a contribution from it to make our call profitable. When our opponent does not have a badugi we are the favorite, and when he does, we still have a chance with our premium draw. It appears as if we have a clear continue, but the hand does not end on the turn and we must also consider the river betting round.

If our opponent was drawing one on the second draw, we are going to be calling the river a large amount of the time. On the river, we will be getting 7.75:1 to call and getting these odds only require 11% equity. Even when we end up with ace high, we are going to have the best low against a one-card draw around 20% of the time, and that fact alone is almost enough to call the river bet.

There is still a chance that our three-card badugi is best and on our good days we will even scoop the pot when villain was betting a worse three-card tri with a low draw on the turn and paired up on the last draw.

On the turn, we should clearly continue on with 2-3-4 and also with other good three card hands such as 2-4-5, 2-3-6,

and 2-3-7. With these hands we will have the best current badugi hand with some frequency and when we don't there is the opportunity to improve.

Given that we have such a high chance of realizing our equity with premium three-card badugis, this makes an aggressive three-betting strategy before the first draw with them fundamentally sound. Even when we fail to improve on the first two draws, we can usually continue on profitably and thus not often abandon the chips we have invested in the pot.

It's important to note that had the draws gone differently and we were fortunate enough to improve while our opponent did not, he won't be able to profitably realize his equity as often as we do. Our re-raise before the first draw represents a premium three-card badugi, he is out-of-position, and his overall range is wider since he was the first to enter the pot.

When we expect to win the realization of equity battle, isolating an opponent becomes more enticing. In the next issue we will use some of what we discussed here as we formulate our strategies on how to play against a raise before the first draw. ♠



Kevin Haney is a former actuary of MetLife but left the corporate job to focus on his passions for poker and fitness. He is co-owner of Elite Fitness Club in Oceanport, NJ and is a certified personal trainer. With regards to poker he got his start way back in 2003 and particularly enjoys taking new players interested in mixed games under his wing and quickly making them proficient in all variants. If interested in learning more, playing mixed games online, or just saying hello he can be reached at haneyk612@gmail.com.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

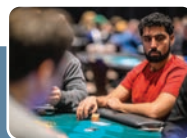
2020 WPT Online Poker Open
\$3,500 No-Limit Hold'em Main Event



Daniel Buzgon
23,100,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 64.0%
After Flop: 9.0%
After Turn: 5.0%



Soheb Porbandarwala
86,600,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 35.0%
After Flop: 91.0%
After Turn: 95.0%

PREFLOP

With eight players remaining and blinds of 350,000-700,000 with an ante of 87,500, Daniel Buzgon raised to 1,800,000 from the lojack. Soheb Porbandarwala called from the big blind.



Porbandarwala checked, and Buzgon checked.



Porbandarwala bet 2,600,000, and Buzgon called.



Porbandarwala bet 1,400,000, and Buzgon called.

ANALYSIS

In this hand, five-time *WSOP Circuit* gold ring winner Soheb Porbandarwala clashed with fellow tournament pro Daniel Buzgon, who has more than \$2.4 million in prior cashes to his name. Buzgon was essentially tied for the shortest stack at the table, with 33 big blinds. He raised with A-10 suited from the lojack and Porbandarwala defended his big blind with 9-8 offsuit. Porbandarwala flopped trip nines and checked to Buzgon, who decided to check back with his aces and nines. On this flop texture, Buzgon's check-back is likely guided by the idea that he figures to be either way ahead or way behind his opponent's range. If Buzgon instead decided to bet here, he might scare off Porbandarwala's weaker holdings that have little chance to improve into the best hand, but might bluff on later streets. He would also bloat the size of the pot in the instances, like this one, where Porbandarwala has flopped a big hand. The turn brought the J♣ to make a flush possible as well. Porbandarwala made a bet for value and Buzgon decided to call with his under-represented aces up. The J♥ on the river put two pairs on the board. Porbandarwala now had nines full of jacks. Given the prior action of a prelop raise, a flop check-back, and a turn call in position from Buzgon, Porbandarwala might have decided that it was fairly likely that his opponent was playing a hand like A-X for pot control. He opted to size down, betting just 1,400,000 into a pot of 9,800,000 on the river to target calls from precisely this type of holding. Buzgon made the call and Porbandarwala squeezed two additional big blinds out of the hand. Buzgon went on to finish eighth in this event, earning \$28,727 for his latest deep run.

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

PLAYER BEHAVIOR: SOME CRITICS ARE ALSO IDIOTS

By Greg Raymer

Now that we have vaccines being distributed, it seems the end to this pandemic nightmare is at least finally in sight. Please, continue to be safe. In a war, you don't get yourself killed the day before they sign a peace treaty. While live poker is being played in many places now, we are going to see a huge resurgence in the cardrooms once case counts start to go down, and many of us who have been avoiding live poker return to the tables. I am especially excited to get back out there on the tournament trail, and win some more big-field MTTs!

But since so many of us have avoided live games, either by playing online or not at all, this seems like a good time to once again talk about table etiquette and behavior. Let's face it, there are many of us who could do better in this regard.

For now, I want to talk about criticism. While I was occasionally guilty of this early in my poker career, I have been able to almost entirely avoid giving a player criticism of their play for many years now. There will be times when a player asks for feedback on how they played a hand. Obviously, in such a case, it is perfectly acceptable to answer their question. However, even if you are going

to tell them they made a huge mistake, it's important to try to say it nicely.

There is no need, even when asked, to belittle a player by saying something like, "That was the stupidest call I've ever seen." Instead, maybe something more like, "Well, the pot odds weren't really there, and it seemed very unlikely the other player was bluffing."

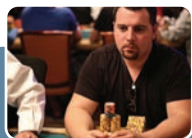
The real crime, and we all see this fairly often, is when the guy who just lost the pot tells their opponent how badly they played the hand. We've all heard statements such as, "How could you make that call?" or, "Only a moron would play those cards." These comments add nothing beneficial to the game. All they do is possibly teach a weak player how to play better, or even worse, motivate them to quit!

Less-skilled players are usually there to have fun. Being criticized is not fun. If they truly made a bad decision, isn't this exactly the kind of player you want in your game? Why chase them away?

I have taught a lot of live seminars over the last 16 years, probably 100 or more. I've often told my students that when you criticize your opponent, you are being an

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 WPT Online Poker Open
\$3,500 No-Limit Hold'em Main Event

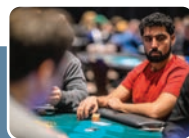


Matthew Iles
70,300,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 33.0%
After Flop: 31.0%
After Turn: 16.0%



Soheb Porbandarwala
165,000,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 65.0%
After Flop: 68.0%
After Turn: 84.0%

PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 1,200,000-2,400,000 with an ante of 300,000, Matthew Iles limped in from the small blind. Soheb Porbandarwala checked from the big blind.



Iles bet 2,400,000, and Porbandarwala called.



Iles checked, and Porbandarwala checked.



Iles bet 10,100,000, and Porbandarwala folded.

ANALYSIS

In this hand Matthew Iles pulled off a bluff against chipleader Soheb Porbandarwala in a battle of the blinds. Iles limped in from the small blind with 6-4 suited and Porbandarwala checked his option with A-4 offsuit. The flop gave Iles a gutshot straight draw with a backdoor flush draw. Iles bet out 2,400,000 into the pot of 5,700,000 and Porbandarwala called with ace high in position. The turn put a second jack on the board and Iles slowed down, checking to his opponent. Porbandarwala checked behind, likely hoping to just take his ace high to a cheap showdown. The A♦ on the river prompted Iles to fire a near pot-sized bet. Iles had arrived at fifth street with no showdown value to speak of, leaving bluffing as his only hope to win the pot. Fortunately for him, his line of betting the flop and checking the turn when the top card paired the board would make sense with him having three of a kind. Iles seized on the opportunity to represent trip jacks and fired a big bet, likely hoping to draw folds from Porbandarwala's weaker bluff catching hands like 7-X. As the shortest stack among the final three players, Iles was largely freed of Independent Chip Model (ICM) concerns, and could focus more on trying to accumulate than worrying about laddering to the next payjump. He probably didn't think that his bluff would draw a fold from a hand as strong as Porbandarwala's aces and jacks, but the bluff did ultimately get through and Iles took down the pot to close the gap on his two opponents. He ultimately was eliminated in third place when his A-3 suited failed to outrun the K-Q suited of Balakrishna Patur. Iles earned \$127,398 for his strong showing in this event.

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

“I’ve often told my students that when you criticize your opponent, you are being an ahole, but it’s possible that you’re showing everyone how much of an idiot you are as well. Of the thousands of times I’ve heard a player criticize their opponent, I would estimate about half the time the criticism ends up clearly displaying their lack of understanding, or even ignorance about the game.”**

a**hole, but it’s possible that you’re showing everyone how much of an idiot you are as well. Of the thousands of times I’ve heard a player criticize their opponent, I would estimate about half the time the criticism ends up clearly displaying their lack of understanding, or even ignorance about the game.

If someone asks for feedback, and is politely shown where they could improve, no problem. But anytime someone offers unsolicited criticism at the table, they are crossing the line. Even if that criticism is accurate, and their opponent clearly made a mistake, whenever someone behaves this way they are only hurting themselves and the game they are in. There are no exceptions.

I know it hurts when an opponent gets lucky, and wins a huge pot that “should” have gone to you. It hurts when it happens to me as well. During this pandemic, there have been many times it has happened as I’ve played online. And when it happens, I’ve said out loud what a f***ing

idiot the other player was, and how stupidly they played the hand. That’s fine, in my home, where they can’t hear me. But we all need to remember we can’t do this anymore once we return to playing live games.

It’s time we all learned to keep our mouths shut. Or, if we can do so with a semi-believable honest voice, just say, “Nice hand,” and try to focus on the next deal.

Have fun, and play smart! ♠



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

He recently authored “FossilMan’s Winning Tournament Strategies,” available from D&B Publishing, Amazon, and other retailers. He is

sponsored by Blue Shark Optics, YouStake, and ShareMyPair. To contact Greg please tweet at him using @FossilMan or go to www.FossilManPoker.com.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2020 WPT Online Poker Open
\$3,500 No-Limit Hold’em Main Event



Balakrishna Patur
78,525,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 70.0%
After Flop: 78.0%
After Turn: 71.0%



Soheb Porbandarwala
316,525,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 28.0%
After Flop: 22.0%
After Turn: 29.0%



PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 2,500,000-5,000,000 with an ante of 625,000, Balakrishna Patur limped in from the button. Soheb Porbandarwala checked from the big blind.



Porbandarwala checked, and Patur bet 5,500,000. Porbandarwala called.



Porbandarwala checked, and Patur checked behind.



Porbandarwala checked, and Patur bet 11,000,000. Porbandarwala check-raised all-in for 305,400,000. Patur folded.

ANALYSIS

This hand took place just a couple shuffles before the tournament came to a close. Chip leader Soheb Porbandarwala turned fourth pair into a bluff on the river in order to apply maximum pressure on his opponent, Balakrishna Patur. Action started with Patur limping in from the button off of a 16-big blind stack holding 10-8 suited. Porbandarwala had been dealt an undesirable 7-2 offsuit, but was able to check and see the flop without having to commit any more chips from the big blind. Both players flopped a pair on the 8-7-3 board that featured a flush draw. Porbandarwala checked and Patur bet his top pair for value, firing just under half of the size of the pot. Porbandarwala called with his second pair and the A♥ on the turn was an overcard that brought in a third heart. Porbandarwala checked a second time with what had become the third highest pair on board. He also had the 2♥ for the lowest possible flush draw. Patur opted to check behind and the 9♣ on the river locked up the best hand for him. Porbandarwala checked with fourth pair and Patur bet 11,000,000 into the pot of 22,300,000. The bet represented just over 16% of his remaining stack at the time, and left him with 56.4 million (11 big blinds) behind. Perhaps sensing that his opponent might be looking to get thin value in this situation, Porbandarwala elected to abandon his weak showdown value and instead turned his hand into a bluff by raising all-in. Patur folded his hand and Porbandarwala increased his chip lead to a roughly 7:1 advantage. He went on to secure the victory, earning \$239,820 for the win. Patur cashed for \$164,868 as the runner-up, and will have another chance to earn a WPT title of his own soon, as he is the chip leader among the final six in the delayed 2020 WPT L.A. Poker Classic final table that has been on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

PREPARING TO GET BACK TO WORK... EVENTUALLY

By Gavin Griffin

I was scrolling through Twitter, as I'm wont to do when trying to distract myself from the outside world, and came across a post by Phil Galfond.

"Any poker-related New Year's resolutions out there? Let's see them."

My first thought was that I'd like to actually play poker at some point this year. Since I haven't really felt comfortable being in a casino over the last ten months and my local casino has even been shut down for large chunks of that time, I have only played a handful of poker sessions. Additionally, I enjoy having my home be a poker-free zone. I feel like it has been healthy for me to not have the pull of the computer around, making me feel like I'm wasting my time when I'm not grinding online poker.

I realize that plenty of people have started going back to their local card-rooms, but I also know that I'm not the only person who avoided casinos as much as possible during the last year, so hopefully the things I've been thinking about can be helpful for my readers.

In a perfect world, I would have spent some of the downtime I've had studying my most played games. That would be a perfect world, but with a virtual school at my house and kids, I did not do that. So, if you're more disciplined than me, or have less to distract you, spend some time studying your game of choice.

That sounds like a simple idea, but some people don't know what that process looks like. They read or hear people telling them to study, but how helpful is that if you don't know what studying poker is? There are all sorts of good tools for that in our current day and age from the poker books, training sites, range tools and solvers, hand history aggregators, and I'm sure things I haven't yet heard about.

Training sites are a great place to start for all of this. They should have videos and articles for all skill levels and give you great introductions to all of the other types of studying tools I mentioned above. Even if you think you're past the beginner stage of your poker career, it's not a bad idea to watch some basic videos so you can refresh yourself on fundamentals if you haven't been playing for a while.

Some of the start-up costs for these courses and sites could feel like they are high. You might think \$100 for a training course or \$1,500 for a yearly site membership looks like quite a bit of money, but when you consider that it may turn you from a losing player to a winning player, increase your win rate in your current game, or give you the skills to move up in stakes and win, the prices are actually relatively low.

So, after re-acclimating your brain to the fundamentals of poker and actually improving your game through study, what else can we do to make sure we're ready for the next

"You might think \$100 for a training course or \$1,500 for a yearly site membership looks like quite a bit of money, but when you consider that it may turn you from a losing player to a winning player, increase your win rate in your current game, or give you the skills to move up in stakes and win, the prices are actually relatively low."

time we step foot in a casino to play poker?

The first few months of quarantine were not kind to my waistline, and led to me adding about 15 percent to my body weight. By the end of May, I was the heaviest I've been in my whole life. I've spent the time since working to fix the problems that led to that weight gain, and while this may not sound like poker advice, it is.

When I'm in good shape physically, I'm a better poker player. I have more energy to focus on the game for longer periods of time and I find that I handle the emotional swings better as well. I started paying more attention to what I eat and riding my bike a few times a week. Getting into better physical shape is not always an easy fix, and might not be helpful for everyone, but I know it helps me.

I also want to regulate my emotions while playing poker. One thing I've realized about myself over this time in my house since last March is that my days go much better when I've gotten enough sleep. The nights that I stay up late playing video games or wasting time on the internet lead to days where I have much less patience with my family. I know that will translate to similar feelings at the table if I'm not getting enough sleep the night before a session of poker.

I'm not sure when live poker will be available again here in Southern California where I live. And I'm also not sure when it will be available where you live, if it's not already. When it does become available, I hope to be mentally and physically prepared to return to playing while following my local health and safety guidelines, and I hope you do too. ♠



Gavin Griffin was the first poker player to capture a World Series of Poker, European Poker Tour and World Poker Tour title and has amassed nearly \$5 million in lifetime tournament winnings. Griffin is sponsored by HeroPoker.com. You can follow him on Twitter @NHGG

CONTRACTS AND POKER: ONLINE PLAY

By Scott J. Burnham

When I play online on WSOP.com, I am advised to: PLEASE READ THESE TERMS OF SERVICE (the “Terms of Service”) CAREFULLY BEFORE USING THIS SERVICE. I must say that even though I am a person who actually enjoys reading legal documents, it is not easily done in this case.

For one thing, there is not just one document to read. The Terms of Service tell me that I also have to consult the “Privacy Policy,” the “Bonus Policy,” the “Withdrawal Policy,” the “Responsible Gaming Policy,” the “Location Verification Terms & Conditions,” and the “House Rules.” And when I sign up to play in Nevada, I am additionally hit with “Tournament Terms and Conditions,” “General Promotion Terms and Conditions,” and “General Bonus Terms & Conditions.”

It is not easy to find a path through all of these documents. For example, a short way into the Tournament Terms and Conditions I find this dire warning:

14. *Casino may impose penalties upon any person who gives, makes, issues, authorizes or endorses any statement or action having, or designed to have, an effect prejudicial or detrimental to the best interest of the Promotion as determined by Casino, acting in its sole and absolute discretion. This may include, but shall not be limited to, expulsion from the event and/or loss of the right to participate in this or any other promotion/tournament conducted by Casino.*

This sounds like a pretty serious restriction on my freedom of speech. But we need to remember that freedom of speech means that the government can't restrict our speech – private parties like casinos are generally free to do so through contract. Poker players are quick to complain when they feel wronged by a casino, and have plenty of online outlets to vent on. So, I had better think twice before I say anything “detrimental to the best interest of the Promotion.”

In trying to comply with this rule, I can probably think of some things

that the casino might find to be detrimental, but I am less sure about what they mean by a “Promotion.” If I can't say anything detrimental to the best interest of a “Promotion,” it might be nice to know what a promotion is. The word is capitalized, which suggests that it is a defined term, but I can't find the definition anywhere. Back on the web page that has the Terms of Service, under Promotions there are references to things like the Player Appreciation Tournament and the Welcome Offer, which suggest that a Promotion is a narrow category of events.

Searching for other uses of the word *promotion*, later on in that rule I see that the casino's remedy for violation of the rule applies to “this or any other promotion/tournament,” which may be saying either that promotions and tournaments are the same or that they are different. Later on, paragraph 23 of the Tournament Terms and Conditions refers to “these Official Promotion Rules.” I can't find anything called “Official Promotion Rules,” so perhaps the Tournament Terms and Conditions are the same as the Official Promotion Rules, which suggests that maybe a promotion is not a narrow category but may embrace all tournaments. But if so, why use two different names for the same thing? This confusion might be good news for me, because when interpreting ambiguities in a contract, courts often employ a rule that goes by the Latin name of *contra proferentem* – construe it against the one who drafted it.

In the next provision, paragraph 15, I get more bad news:

15. *Casino is not liable for injuries or losses arising or resulting from participation in the Tournament and is not liable for any acts or omissions by employees, whether negligent or willful, in the conduct of the Tournament and is not liable in the event of any equipment or software malfunction.*

Note that this one refers to the conduct of the “Tournament,” rather than the “Promotion,” exacerbating my confusion about whether these are the same thing. Let's look at the last part first:

“Casino ... is not liable in the event of any equipment or software malfunction.” Since it created and promulgated the software, Caesars would presumably be liable for its operative fitness, but contracting is all about shifting risks, so it is probably acceptable for Caesars to shift that risk to me.

The other part is more troubling, when Caesars tries to shift the risk of its employees' actions to me. One of the basic rules of employment law is that employers are responsible for the actions of their employees. This rule is so important that it also has a Latin name – *respondeat superior*. This is such an important policy that I don't think an employer can contract around it.

However, there is an exception to the rule. If the employee is not acting within the scope of their employment, then the employer is not responsible for those actions. Assume, for example, that an employee colluded with a player to help that player win the tournament. Those actions would be beyond the scope of employment, and the employer would not be liable under *respondeat superior*, so it doesn't matter what the contract said.

However, there is probably an exception to the exception. Gaming activities are highly regulated, and the regulations are also a part of the player's agreement with the casino – and a part that casinos generally can't contract around. One of the primary purposes of the regulatory scheme is to assure the public that the games are fair. If a game is rigged against players, it seems to me the players would have a claim against the casino even if the rigging was done by an outlier employee.

In future columns we will examine other parts of the contracts governing online play. ♠



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

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FEBRUARY	Feb. 2-28	Card Player Poker Tour	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
MARCH	March 1-28	WPT DeepStack Showdown	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV

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

ARIZONA

TALKING STICK RESORT - SCOTTSDALE

MONDAY-THURSDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$125
FRIDAY-SATURDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$200

FLORIDA

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

WEDNESDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$60
FRIDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$160
SUNDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$160
7:00 p.m. PLO H/L, \$140

PALM BEACH KENNEL CLUB - W. PALM BEACH

WEDNESDAY
12:15 p.m. NLH, \$70 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
THURSDAY
12:15 p.m. NLH, \$100 (\$2K Guarantee)
FRIDAY
12:15 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$5K Guarantee)
6:30 p.m. NLH, \$40 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
SATURDAY
12:15 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$5K Guarantee)
6:30p.m. NLH, \$40 (\$1.5K Guarantee)

ILLINOIS

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LIVE! CASINO & HOTEL - HANOVER

MONDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$130
6:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
TUESDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
6:15 p.m. NLH, \$130
WEDNESDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$130
6:15 p.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
SUNDAY
10:15 a.m. NLH, \$120 KO \$25
6:15 p.m. NLH, \$130

MGM NATIONAL HARBOR - OXON HILL

MONDAY
11:15 a.m. NLH, \$140 (\$3.5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$240 (\$6K Guarantee)
TUESDAY
11:15 a.m. NLH, \$140 NLH (\$3.5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$140 NLH (\$3.5K Guarantee)
WEDNESDAY
11:15 a.m. NLH, \$240 NLH (\$6K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$140 (\$3.5K Guarantee)
THURSDAY
11:15 a.m. NLH, \$140 NLH (\$3.5K Guarantee)
7:15 p.m. NLH, \$240 NLH (\$6K Guarantee)

NEVADA

SAHARA - LAS VEGAS

FRIDAY
1:00 p.m. H.O.R.S.E., \$105 (\$1K Guarantee)
SATURDAY
1:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 RB \$50 AO \$50 (\$3K Guarantee)

VENETIAN HOTEL & CASINO - LAS VEGAS

MONDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 KO \$25 (\$2K Guarantee)
TUESDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$50 (\$6K Guarantee)
WEDNESDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$2K Guarantee)
THURSDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$150 (\$4K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)
FRIDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$200 AO \$100 (\$20K Guarantee)
SATURDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$340 (\$20K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)
SUNDAY
11:10 a.m. NLH, \$250 (\$12K Guarantee)
6:10 p.m. NLH, \$125 (\$4K Guarantee)

NEW YORK

EASTERN POKER TOUR

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ARGENTINA'S ALL-TIME MONEY LIST

Rank	Player	Earnings
1	Ivan Luca	\$6,547,933
2	Damian Salas	\$5,707,758
3	Jose Barbero	\$3,840,523
4	Maria Lampropulos	\$3,253,306
5	Leo Fernandez	\$2,083,997
6	Mario Javier Lopez	\$1,934,485
7	Andres Korn	\$1,873,296
8	Richard Dubini	\$1,681,941
9	Fabian Ortiz	\$1,311,271
10	Matias Ruzzi	\$1,127,066

Damian Salas surged into second place on Argentina's all-time tournament earnings leaderboard as a result of the \$2,550,969 score he earned as the 2020 *World Series of Poker* \$10,000 buy-in main event champion. Salas cashed for more than \$3.5 million in 2020, including a third-place finish in the \$10,300 buy-in *World Poker Tour World Online Championships* main event for \$814,663. After his standout year on both the

real and virtual felt, the 46-year-old increased his career earnings to more than \$5.7 million.

Ivan Luca remains the all-time money leader from Argentina, with more than \$6.5 million in cashes to his name. Luca became the first-ever Argentinian to win a *WSOP* gold bracelet, topping a field of 2,150 entries to win a \$1,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em event at the 2015 series for \$353,391. The 29-year-old poker pro has accumulated 22 six-figure paydays so far in his tournament career, with the largest score being the \$494,080 he earned as the third-place finisher in a \$50,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em high roller event at the 2016 *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure*. He also banked \$434,607 for his runner-up finish at *EPT Malta*, and another \$402,700 for taking fifth in the *PCA* \$100,000 high roller.

Luca's former girlfriend **Maria Lampropulos** is the only female player among the top ten earners from Argentina. She has two massive main event titles to her name, each adding more than a million dollars to her career total. Lampropulos took down the 2017 *partypoker MILLIONS UK*, outlasting a field of 1,204 entries to win \$1,280,000 and her first major title. Less than a year later she beat out a 582-entry field to take down the 2018 *PCA* main event for \$1,081,100. With more than \$3.2 million in total cashes, she now sits in fourth place on this leaderboard. She also finished runner-up in the 2016 *Eureka Poker Tour Rozvadov* main event, and in 2019 she took fifth in the *World Poker Tour UK* main event.



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