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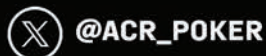
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LIVESTREAMING SCHEDULE

EVENT #81: \$10,000 MAIN EVENT

WEDNESDAY	JULY 2
THURSDAY	JULY 3
FRIDAY	JULY 4
SATURDAY	JULY 5
SUNDAY	JULY 6
MONDAY	JULY 7
TUESDAY	JULY 8
WEDNESDAY	JULY 9
THURSDAY	JULY 10
FRIDAY	JULY 11
SATURDAY	JULY 12
SUNDAY	JULY 13
TUESDAY	JULY 15
WEDNESDAY	JULY 16

DAY 1A
DAY 1B
DAY 1C
DAY 1D
DAY 2ABC
DAY 2D
DAY 3
DAY 4
DAY 5
DAY 6
DAY 7

PLAYS DOWN TO 9 PLAYERS
FINAL TABLE (DAY 1)
FINAL TABLE (DAY 2)

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NEWS FROM THE GAMBLING WORLD

Ohio's The Reserve Social Club To Host \$1 Million Card Player Poker Tour Event

By Card Player News Team

The Reserve Social Club, Ohio's largest poker club, is teaming up with the *Card Player Poker Tour* this fall to host a \$600 no-limit hold'em tournament with a \$1 million guaranteed prize pool. The event is slated for Sept. 18-28 at the venue's expansive, newly remodeled facility in Toledo.

Since its inception during the pandemic by co-owners Jim Kanderski and Marissa Rodriguez, The Reserve has quickly become a poker hotspot in the area. Kanderski believes the club's success stems from the ownership's love of poker.

"I believe we are successful because we are tournament players ourselves and offer events we would want to play," said Kanderski. "We try to provide the best price points possible for our tournaments while still offering large guarantees. The players can get that big tournament experience at a lower price."

With over 4,500 registered members, The Reserve boasts an impressive 10,000-square-foot gaming floor with 36 tables. This includes the only livestream studio in the Midwest, *Live At The Reserve*, which broadcasts three weekly cash game shows every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

The club also livestreams all of their major tournaments, including the upcoming *CPPT* event.

\$1 Million CPPT Main Event

Players in the 2025 *CPPT* \$1 million guaranteed main event will receive a 40,000-chip starting stack. They also have the option of an additional 10,000 chips for a \$20 dealer add-on. The tournament features a total of 11 starting flights between Sept. 18-27, with the first 10 kicking off at noon.

There is also a last chance turbo flight at 6 p.m. on Sept. 27, featuring the same structure as other flights, but with 15-minute levels.

For the other 10 starting flights, day 1 levels will last 30 minutes. There are unlimited re-entries and late registration available until the start of level 9.

Players who survive the starting flight will be in the money at the start of day 2 and will play 40-minute levels for the remainder of the tournament.

Those hoping to qualify for the *CPPT* main event can try their hand at the \$130 satellites running nightly from Sept. 17 to Sept. 26 at 6 p.m. The satellites have a 30,000-chip starting stack and 15-minute levels. Late registration and re-entry is available until the start of level 11.

The Reserve Social Club

While this massive *CPPT* main event is sure to be a



highlight of the coming months, The Reserve Social Club offers a vibrant poker environment throughout the year. The club hosts daily tournaments seven days per week. Cash games are offered daily for \$10 per hour, with a minimum of \$100 per hour in high hand payouts awarded every day until 11 p.m.

Kanderski noted that the club has hosted the top three largest multi-day tournaments ever held in Ohio, including one with a massive field of 3,639 entries. That event created a prize pool worth nearly \$1.8 million.

A recent \$340 tournament with a \$100,000 guarantee attracted 517 entries, which built a \$160,000 prize pool. It was the largest field for a single-day tournament in state history. The club also hosted seasonal series sporting between five and 10 events in January, March, July, and October.

Those looking to get in on the action this fall can find more information on The Reserve Poker Club's official website www.thereservepoker.com, or by calling (419)-279-8830. ♠

POKERGO ACQUIRES HEADS-UP POKER CHAMPIONSHIP FROM NBC

By Sean Chaffin

The *NBC National Heads-Up Poker Championship* was one of the most iconic poker shows of the 2000s poker boom. The series ended in 2013, but it may soon get a revival. PokerGO announced in early June that it had acquired the series from NBC.

The deal includes a broadcast partnership for the event as well. New episodes will premiere on *Peacock* following filming. The streaming platform will announce more details on the deal soon.

“The acquisition marks the return of one of poker’s most iconic and celebrated tournament properties,” PokerGO noted in announcing the deal.

The original *Heads-Up Championship* debuted in 2005 and was the first televised poker show produced by a major U.S. television network.

Poker fans enjoyed the single-elimination, bracket-style format that featured some of the biggest names in the game. Phil Hellmuth, Daniel Negreanu, Mike Matusow, Erik Seidel, and Doyle Brunson were just a few of the game’s stars involved in the first event.

The invitation-only event included a \$25,000 buy-in with the first season filmed at the Golden Nugget. Gabe Kaplan and Matt Vasgersian served as commentators, and Phil Hellmuth topped Chris Ferguson in the final match to win the \$500,000 top prize.



The following year, the action shifted to Caesars Palace, where it stayed for the remainder of the series. Ali Nejad took over for Kaplan in the commentary booth as well.

Along with bringing new seasons and episodes to Peacock and PokerGO viewers, the company also acquired the full library of past *Heads-Up Poker Championship* content. Those episodes will soon be available across PokerGO distribution channels.

“This is a monumental moment for poker fans,” said PokerGO President Mori Eskandani. “The *National Heads-Up Poker Championship* was one of the most innovative and prestigious events in the history of televised poker. We are proud to not only preserve its legacy by making classic episodes available to global fans, but also to usher in a new era for the brand under the PokerGO banner.” ♠

DOUG POLK DRAWS LAUGHS IN ‘KILL TONY’ SET

By Sean Chaffin

In a sense, poker pro Doug Polk is used to performing in front of an audience.

First, the poker world watched as he won three *World Series of Poker* bracelets. Then, many were glued to his high-stakes heads-up grudge match with Daniel Negreanu. And his YouTube channel has nearly half a million subscribers.

But the high-stakes players and cardroom owner had to perform in front of a different type of audience—one where they were expecting him to make them laugh.

Polk recently made the first of two appearances performing stand-up comedy on the *Kill Tony* podcast. *Kill Tony* is a popular variety show created in 2013 by the comedian Tony Hinchcliffe. Every show gives aspiring comics one minute with the mic to deliver their best jokes. The YouTube show has 2.3 million subscribers.

In late May, Hinchcliffe released an episode explaining how Polk got his spot on the show. The two met at the afterparty of a prior taping, and it wasn’t long before they were playing heads-up. Polk apparently risked \$20,000 to win a minute on the show. Hinchcliffe won the first match, but they played a second time for the same stakes and Polk came out on top.

In early June, Hinchcliffe released Polk’s *Kill Tony* episode. Polk also published a video documenting the experience on his own YouTube channel.

Hinchcliffe’s panel doesn’t hold back on guests, regardless of experience level.



“So I won my spot on the show, but there was one big problem – I don’t know how to perform standup comedy,” Polk said. “And this show, not exactly easy on amateurs.”

However, Polk’s short set actually drew plenty of laughs, connecting on jokes about the number of Californians moving into Texas, an Austin serial killer, and even some needles for Hinchcliffe himself.

The host and panel were quick to compliment Polk for his minute on stage.

“I’m pretty sure that’s the best set of the night from everybody,” Hinchcliffe said. “Absolutely incredible when you put your mind to it. You’ve been practicing for a month.”

The two then discussed poker, including their heads-up match.

“That is a Monday night brought to you by whiskey and tequila,” Hinchcliffe said of the wager. “I realized afterwards that I’m the sucker.” ♠

STATES CONTINUE TO MOVE TOWARD SWEEPSTAKES GAMBLING BANS

By Sean Chaffin



Legislators in several states continue to target sweepstakes-style gambling.

Sweepstakes casino operators use a dual currency system to allow gamblers to play for real money. Users buy a virtual currency with no cash value and the operator will match their purchase with the same amount of sweeps tokens. Those sweeps tokens can then be redeemed for real cash and prizes.

Nevada and Connecticut have both passed bills making sweeps casinos illegal. The bills are just a governor signature away from becoming law.

In New Jersey, the newly introduced SB4282 would ban the “sweepstakes model of wagering” and could fine offenders \$250,000.

“We will not allow bad actors to exploit legal loopholes at the expense of consumers,” said Sen. John Burzichelli told *Gambling News*. “This bill will ensure that our laws are clear, our penalties are stronger, and that we have the tools necessary to shut down illegal sweepstakes gambling operations before they can cause further harm.”

A Connecticut bill is heading to Gov. Ned Lamont after being approved in both houses of the legislature. SB1235 makes operating or promoting a sweepstakes casino a Class D felony, carrying fines of up to \$5,000 and five years in prison.

An additional part of the bill allows the governor to sign an agreement to enter the Multi-State Internet Gaming Agreement (MSIGA). Connecticut legalized online poker and could now join the country’s shared liquidity pact. Connecticut legalized online gaming in 2022, but hasn’t launched online poker rooms yet. That may change after joining the MSIGA.

In Louisiana, Gov. Jeff Landry vetoed a bill that would have banned sweepstakes operators in that state. A bill passed unanimously in both houses, but Landry argued that the state already had the authority to regulate the industry and

several state law enforcement agencies were already handling illegal gaming enforcement.

“This bill attempts to criminalize certain secondary gambling activities on the internet that are already prohibited in Louisiana,” he said. “Our current Louisiana Gaming Control Board has the regulatory authority, control, and jurisdiction over all aspects of gaming activities and operations pursuant to the Louisiana Gaming Control Law.”

Sweepstakes casinos with poker rooms are one of the few options available for gamblers in states without regulated online poker.

Efforts at restricting sweeps operators have come up short in several states, however, including Arkansas, Florida, Maryland, and Mississippi. Pennsylvania gaming regulators have also said they don’t have the legal authority to force out sweeps casinos.

Sweepstakes operators have pushed back against the efforts to ban their platforms. They argue that users can play for free and there is no stipulation that players must purchase anything. Operators say the sweeps offerings are more akin to traditional mobile gaming.

The Social and Promotional Games Association released a statement noting that the Louisiana bill not only bans sweepstakes casinos, but also promotional efforts from other companies as well.

“Legal sweepstakes platforms operate under well-established guidelines and are used by millions of adults, including Fortune 500 companies like Microsoft and Starbucks, to engage consumers through lawful, free-to-play promotions,” the trade group noted. “This bill carelessly conflates legal entertainment with illegal gambling, without evidence of harm. It also threatens Louisiana’s economy by stifling digital innovation and driving compliant companies out of the state. It’s a step backward for consumer choice, lawful innovation, and common sense.” ♠

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BEN LAMB: GAS STATION GAMES AND BLACKJACK BANKROLL BUILDERS

High-Stakes Crusher Shares Stories On The Table 1 Podcast

By Art Parmann and Justin Young



The poker world really took notice of Ben Lamb in 2011 when he finished third in the *World Series of Poker* main event for more than \$4 million. It was the perfect way to cap off a summer where he also won the \$10,000 pot-limit Omaha championship for \$814,436, and finished runner-up in a \$3,000 PLO event for another \$259,918. The huge run earned Lamb *WSOP* Player of the Year honors and a banner in the Horseshoe each summer alongside the other winners.

The Oklahoma native has built quite a career, which first started in his hometown of Tulsa back in 2006 with a win in the *Scotty Nguyen Poker Challenge* for \$53,671. That might be enough for a tournament buy-in or two these days.

The 40-year-old has taken down numerous high roller events, including a \$25,000 no-limit event at the *Aussie Millions* and a *Triton Poker* short deck title in Montenegro. He has also found continued success at the *WSOP*, particularly in the main event where he took 14th in 2009 and ninth in 2017 for a combined \$1.6 million.

Lamb picked up his second bracelet in 2023 in the \$10,000 Omaha eight-or-

better championship, and most recently finished runner up in the \$25,000 NLH/PLO event for nearly \$868,140. He now has just shy of \$18 million in career tournament earnings despite spending much of the year focusing on high-stakes cash (or his golf game).

Lamb recently joined the *Table 1 Podcast* and discussed a wide range of topics including how he got into poker, dropping out of college to play full time, building his bankroll via the blackjack table, getting drafted in the \$25,000 Fantasy draft, and more. Keep reading for some of the highlights. You can also watch or listen to the entire episode on YouTube, Spotify, Apple, or any podcast app.

Lamb described how he ventured off into a life of poker and gambling after seeing a friend win \$25 at the pool table. That eventually led to playing in a gas station game, dropping out of college, and becoming a dealer.

Ben Lamb: The guy (in the match) had no chance. It was like that's the coolest thing ever. That made me want to make money gambling too. We played a lot of pool back then, which turned into card games, which turned into poker. I went to college for a little bit in San Antonio

and I was playing a lot online, playing at gas stations or whatever around town, going broke, and then dealing the game multiple times a week usually.

Then I dropped out. I had probably \$9,000 to my name. I thought, 'Why am I going to college? I'm rich. This is plenty.' So I came back home, got to my parents' house and my dad immediately took \$2,200 for the books I sold. Down to \$7,000. I went broke almost immediately again, and dealt at the casino off and on for a few months until I finally quit right before I turned 21. Then I came out to Las Vegas.



© PokerGO



Justin Young: What was the plan, or the goal before poker?

Ben Lamb: I was going to college to go to college. I wasn't good at poker or anything when I went to college. Business, psychology, and Spanish, or some form of that is where I was headed. But in a semester and a half you don't really major in anything. The first semester I did poorly because I was playing a lot of poker, much more than schoolwork for sure.

The second semester I remember I was so far behind, I hadn't done anything in eight weeks. One of the classes I hadn't even gone to yet. I went and gave him some bullshit excuse about how I was going to the wrong class or something. He was like, 'Alright, fine, but you've just got to catch up and we'll never talk about it again.'

I went home and I opened my laptop and I had so much work to do to get caught up. I just looked at it for like 20 seconds, maybe typed one sentence and then just closed it, packed up my stuff, and told my roommate I was done. I just drove the six and a half hours back to Tulsa.

Justin Young: What was up with the gas station game?

Ben Lamb: I was the only non-Spanish speaking guy in the gas station game. I mean, I was going to Spanish class, but they were from Mexico and I'm from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Justin Young: How's your Spanish right now?

Ben Lamb: I would say it's good enough that if you drop me in Mexico

I can have a conversation. I might screw up some conjugations, but give me three or four drinks and I think I'm crushing. It's like dancing. Everyone thinks they're a better dancer after three or four drinks. But I really do think like my Spanish acumen goes up on drinks three and four, and then eventually falls off a cliff by drink six, seven, or eight.

Art Parmann: Even English is tough at that point.

Justin Young: You were playing online as well during the same time?

Ben Lamb: When I came back home I started playing a lot online, if I had the money. Luckily, I was a decent dealer. It was a brand new poker room at an Indian casino there and everyone was horrendous at dealing, so they would ask, 'How much did you make tonight?' They were making \$150 and I made \$500.

I'd always make way more than them and then I'd go straight to the casino with it. It eventually became a pattern. As soon as I made \$100 or \$200 I would EO (early off) and I would [sit down in the game]. Then eventually I was paying people to take my shifts so I could play instead. At the beginning they would do it for free because they wanted the work, then they realized, 'No you have to pay me \$50.' And I was like, 'Alright, fine.'

Justin Young: What a hard deal they drove.

That segued into discussion about how Lamb parlayed some of those dealing funds into a bankroll via a unique blackjack game.

Ben Lamb: We were young. We gam-

bled on everything. I wasn't 21, but in Miami, Oklahoma, about an hour away from Tulsa, they had a couple casinos. We would go there because that was the big game – the \$2-\$5 no-limit game instead of the \$1-\$2 no-limit game around town. They played \$5-\$10 I think on Fridays. That was scary, that was huge. I had an average of like 1.3 buy-ins every time I went (laughs) and we would run it up and then the game would break.

We'd play blackjack, too. One of them had a promotion in blackjack where you could bet one hand at \$50 or two hands at \$25, something like that. But they showed you both of their cards.

I probably got the start of my bankroll grinding that game. They had it for like five days and I didn't leave the table, basically. In Oklahoma at that time – I don't know if it's still true – they took an ante on blackjack and all the winnings from the actual blackjack players goes into a pool and they give away Corvettes and whatever else and they give away free things to the pool of players. They said if we do this (reveal both dealer cards), we're going to have full blackjack tables.

I 10x-ed my net worth in four days. I stayed at the Holiday Inn across the street for \$58 a night, slept for five hours and had to get back to work, back to the grind.

Justin Young: I assume you were quite sharp when it came to blackjack, but you don't even have to count (in that scenario). You can just use basic strategy and win, I imagine.

Ben Lamb: No, it's even better than

that. Say they're showing you 20 and you have 18, you can just hit and try to catch a two or three.

Lamb also discussed a new crypto online casino he co-founded called Yeet. As the WSOP got underway, he planned on using some of his own money for a possible promotion during the WSOP that would see the high-stakes poker pro making some five-figure casino bets.

Ben Lamb: I'm usually a pretty guarded, private guy, but with this new company I'll be a lot more public in the gambling world through my Twitter and Yeet's Twitter. We have plans to

film hands of blackjack or baccarat or roulette or whatever.

One hand before the tournament. So, if it's a \$25,000 tournament or a \$50,000 tournament or a \$100,000 tournament – one hand for that amount. Walking into the tournament, it could be a one-hand blackjack satellite. People have been doing it for decades. But Yeet is not sponsoring me. This is my own money on the line.

Justin Young: I like that idea. I've done it so many times.

Art Parmann: Maybe you should do it for half the amount that gets you to the

buy-in amount. That could be a little less expensive.

Ben Lamb: No, you've got to commit to it. Plus, I'm pretty damn lucky. So, I just feel like I'm just going to freeroll tournaments all summer.

Art Parmann: Which casino are you going to do it at?

Ben Lamb: Well, the problem is I allegedly have [been labeled as] a card counter. My last time playing blackjack at Caesars was my last time playing. They were done with me.

Art Parmann: You can't count roulette. ♠

Top Tournament Scores

July 2011	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event Championship	3rd	\$4,021,138
Aug. 2019	£100,000 Triton London Short Deck	2nd	\$1,640,261
July 2017	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event Championship	9th	\$1,000,000
May 2019	HKD\$500,000 Triton Montenegro Short Deck	1st	\$974,634
June 2025	\$25,000 WSOP NLH/PLO High Roller	2nd	\$868,140
June 2011	\$10,000 WSOP PLO Championship	1st	\$814,436
July 2009	\$10,000 WSOP Main Event Championship	14th	\$633,022
June 2022	\$50,000 WSOP PLO High Roller	3rd	\$622,861
Jan. 2018	AUD\$25,000 Aussie Millions High Roller	1st	\$596,194
June 2023	\$10,000 WSOP Omaha 8 Championship	1st	\$492,795

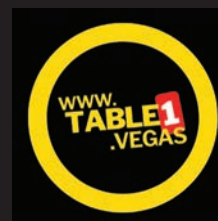
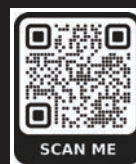



Table 1 is for people who *love* poker but can't stand rigid, boring, dusty games. We've put together the kind of community where the vibe is just as important as the cards.

Think about it—what if poker was less about squeezing every penny out of the pot and more about the laughs, the stories, and those unforgettable moments? That's what we're here for.

If you've ever thought, "Man, poker used to be fun," then welcome to Table 1.



A man with short blonde hair, wearing a light blue baseball cap with a black 'Y' logo and a dark blue zip-up jacket with 'YEET' on the sleeve, is sitting at a poker table. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. In front of him are several stacks of poker chips in blue, red, and white. He is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist.

“Then I dropped out. I had probably \$9,000 to my name. I thought, ‘Why am I going to college? I’m rich.’ I went broke almost immediately...”

Watch The Full Episode



JESSE LONIS:

MEET THE 29-YEAR-OLD THROWBACK WHO CAN'T STOP WINNING

New York High Roller Keeps Finding Ways To Level Up

By Tim Fiorvanti



Jesse Lonis is a throwback to a time before the Moneymaker Boom. The 29-year-old from Upstate New York has crafted a successful poker career out of a tireless grind, working his way up from a bankroll built on construction and odd jobs to the highest levels in the game.

But even as one of today's top tournament threats, Lonis is far from the prototypical modern-day player, instead preferring an old-school, exploitative style over a theory-based approach to the game.

And it's hard to argue with the results.

In each of the last four years, Lonis' triumphs have multiplied. He's gone from a talented but broke grinder, to being mentioned among the best players in the world in a staggeringly short amount of time. With nearly \$21 million in tournament earnings, Lonis is rapidly climbing the all-time money list with a good shot at cracking the top 50 by the end of this year.

He's won two *World Series of Poker* bracelets, two *WSOP Circuit* rings, and nearly a dozen high roller tournaments. Most recently enjoyed the best two-week stretch of his entire

career. At the *Triton Poker* series in Montenegro in May, Lonis won two titles and made four final tables to pocket over \$4.8 million in total.

So what is the ceiling for Jesse Lonis, and will he ever hit it?

The Origin Of The Grind

Lonis' origin story in poker did, in fact, start with online poker, pushing the boundaries of the terms of service by playing long before the age of 18.

"My grandma's job, she was like ahead of the curve," Lonis told the *Card Player* Poker Stories Podcast. "She would buy antiques and sell them on eBay, so she was always on the internet. Her other favorite thing to do was play on Full Tilt Poker. I was 10 or 11."

"She would play 5¢-10¢, you know, just fun games because she just loved the game. She would go to the bathroom, and older ladies, they tend to take longer bathroom breaks and everything, so she would have me play while she was in the bathroom. I used to sit behind her for hours and just watch. It was like a video game for me, it was just fun."

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Lonis' grandmother was his primary caretaker at that point in his life. She passed away when he was 12 years old, and from that point through on, Lonis had to grind for every dollar he needed. His competitive fire was stoked through football and basketball, and though Lonis was good enough and had the size to garner some Division II and Division III offers, his eyes were squarely on making money and supporting himself after graduation.

His sister's boyfriend had a brother who owned a construction company in the Bronx, and so Jesse went to work.

"I was a laborer," said Lonis. "It was six days a week, I'd sometimes work 16-hour days. Just crazy things, like working out in the middle of the winter nailing things, working on a roof in New York City, in the Bronx. I was getting frostbite on my fingers and stuff, sitting there making \$15 an hour. All my mind was thinking was, 'I know you need to be doing something different.'"

Drawn Into Poker

While he toughed it out on construction sites during the day, Lonis would spend the rest of his time on the basketball court. As it turned out, he had plenty of game and ultimately earned himself a spot on a nearby college team. Herkimer was just outside his hometown of Little Falls, about an hour's drive east of Syracuse.

His hoop dreams were short-lived, however, as a fight on campus caused Lonis to get kicked out. But during his time in school, Lonis' poker career expanded.

"I was pretty much playing every day anyway, and skipping some classes," said Lonis. "I could kind of tell that I was leaning towards poker more and like not caring about much at school. That's when I started realizing, hey, I think I have a skill in this game that I think I could do something with."

"Shout out to my friend Tyler Bowen," said Lonis. "I was probably like 19 or 20, and we were playing poker in his shed for \$5 buy-ins. We'd get like 20 chips each. We would always have a stream up of tournaments, and reruns of Hellmuth

and all these guys. I just would watch, and my cockiness/confidence would just kind of stare through their soul at that moment. I just knew that I could destroy these guys if I ever got on the same field. I always thought that I was going to try to be the best at whatever I did."

The confidence was premature. He was mostly playing \$2-\$5 no-limit hold'em cash games at that point, and had to weather plenty of setbacks to start.

"I probably went broke 15 or 20 times within like a year, easily," said Lonis. "I picked like seven different jobs where I would work for like two weeks, I'd get that first check and I'd go right to the casino. I'd run \$700 up to \$6,000, and I'd say, 'Alright, I'm quitting,' thinking I'm playing poker again, then boom, I would take a shot and be broke, again."

Bouncing from a Walmart Distribution Center to restaurant work and whatever else he could find, Lonis found himself back in another cycle of feast and famine. His determination never wavered, and as he added bankroll management and game selection to his skill set, Lonis started to hold onto his money.

It was then that the siren song of tournaments began to call his name.

The Call Of The Wild

Lonis' friend from Utica, Gilberto Taveras, started making some noise in East Coast poker tournaments, and Lonis took notice. The idea that a player could put up a couple hundred dollars and turn that into five figures or more in a single event was too intriguing to ignore. And so, by 2018, Lonis jumped in.

His life was starting to sharpen into focus. During his Turning Stone days, Lonis met and started dating Meghan, who would become his girlfriend, and then his wife.

"The East Coast didn't have enough volume to be a tournament grinder," explained Lonis, "My buddy lived in Southern Oregon and I went out and visited them and fell in love with the place. It's like heaven on earth up there, wine

country, just beautiful. I built up \$60,000 for a roll, but I knew that I didn't want to move straight to Vegas, because I was scared that I would go broke right away."

Lonis showed his earliest signs of a breakout in early 2020. In mid-January he earned his first title of note and first five-figure tournament cash, winning a *WSOP Circuit* ring in Sacramento. A week later, Lonis finished third in a \$545 tournament with 470 entrants at Wynn Las Vegas for \$28,000. A third five-figure score followed that in mid-February, in a tournament in Oregon.

There was every indication that Lonis was on the verge of a massive breakout. And then, within weeks, the world shut down. Lonis and his partner were in Oregon when COVID hit and he did what he always did when setbacks hit. He adjusted, and he moved forward.

Though his game undoubtedly improved during that time playing online, it was not kind to his bankroll. He made it down to South Florida in early 2021, down to his last \$7,000. The *World Poker Tour Lucky Hearts Poker Open* series, which brings in massive numbers of players for small buy-in, multi-flight tournaments, looked like a juicy target.

"I planned on just going and playing \$1,000s and the \$400s," said Lonis. "Then I played a \$400 satellite for the [\$3,500 *WPT*] main event. I wasn't backed, no one knew me at the time. This is all my own money, and it was the best time to not be backed. The rest was history."

Lonis fought all the way through a field of 1,573 on that one bullet and reached the *WPT* final table. He ultimately ran pocket tens into Ronnie Bardah's pocket kings to finish fifth, but he had made his mark. His payout of \$223,895 dwarfed everything that came before it, and all the work Lonis had done in his life and his poker career had officially paid off.

"I just remember after winning that, calling my parents, my family," said Lonis. "Not many of them have held like 20, 30 grand, they've never even seen it. So just to have \$250,000 to my name was unbelievable. But poker's expensive, too. I ended up taking it and buying a house. That was the first thing I did when I had my big score, was buy a house, and that was the smartest thing I did."

Lonis officially had a home base in Las Vegas, and the timing couldn't have been much better. Meghan was pregnant with their first daughter, Harley Jean, who was born that September. The motivation was clearer than ever, with Lonis determined to provide the kind of life for his family that he never had growing up.

Putting In The Work

2021 was an all-out grind year for Lonis. He averaged more than one tournament cash per week and made multiple runs at his first *WSOP* bracelet. When the delayed *WSOP* in Las Vegas played out in November, Lonis finished second to Jeremy Ausmus in a \$1,000 buy-in event and then ran deep in the main event. He finished 25th and set another new career-best cash at \$241,800 to bookend what felt like a breakout year.

And yet, he would go on to make each of the next few years feel like another breakout as he reached higher and higher. In 2022, Lonis enjoyed his first \$1 million year on tour, recorded his second career runner-up finish in a *WSOP* bracelet event, and then he won his first ever *WSOP* bracelet in an online event that September.

Towards the end of that year he started becoming more active in high rollers, dipping his toe into some events inside the PokerGO Studio, and once he got a taste of that action

he couldn't let it go.

He started 2023 on a high note, finishing third in a \$25,500 high roller back at the *Lucky Hearts Poker Open* in Florida for \$260,175. Just over a week later, Lonis raised the bar again with a \$367,400 win in a \$10,200 buy-in no-limit hold'em event at the *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* in the Bahamas.

The momentum was building up heading into that summer, and then came the singular tournament that did more to plant Lonis' flag than anything he'd done before. Perhaps the most wild thing about that \$50,000 buy-in pot-limit Omaha event is that Lonis had no intentions of playing it.

"Actually, it was supposed to be my only day off of the *WSOP*," said Lonis. "I wasn't going, I told myself. I played a few of the \$25,000 events before, three of them, and I said if I don't do anything in them I'm not going to play the \$50K. Before I knew it, the thing inflated and had more entries than any other \$50K PLO in history."

"I'm sitting down at the bar, drinking, having my day off, hanging with my girl," said Lonis. "I texted my backer who puts me in the high roller stuff and I said, 'Man I'm having FOMO missing this one, and it was probably the best text I ever sent. He called me right away. He had more confidence in me than I had in myself. He said, 'Well, get in there, what are you waiting for?' The confidence that he gave me, as soon as I sat down I'm like, if he believes in me, I can do this."

Lonis topped that 200-player field and brought home a massive \$2,303,017 payout. Anyone that hadn't seen him coming at that point quickly became aware of Lonis, and at that point he was undeniable. Once again, in the context of Lonis' life away from poker, the timing couldn't have been more fortuitous.

That August, Jesse and Meghan's second daughter, Myla Michelle, was born. Despite being in the midst of one of the best stretches of his poker career, Jesse took two months away from live poker to enjoy the spoils of his massive life spin-up. He still ended 2023 18th in the *Card Player* Player of the Year race. And there was so much more to come.

Building Upon The Foundation

By the time Lonis reached 2024, it felt like he was out there building up his highlight reel at every turn. He recorded his first *Triton* win in Monte Carlo for \$1,502,000, and a second-place finish in a \$50,000 no-limit hold'em high roller during the 2024 *WSOP* for another \$1,358,633.

On the strength of those scores and a multitude of major results worldwide, Lonis looked up at the end of the year and had over \$7.7 million in results and a third-place showing in the *Card Player* POY race. It was a far cry from where he'd been even four years prior, and yet exactly where Lonis always intended to be.

No matter how big the stakes have gotten, Lonis' aggression, confidence and intuition have served him well. Even as he raised his level of competition and faced off against the best players in the world, Lonis' game still translated to consistent success.

"When we're young, [the top players] are almost like movie characters, in a way," said Lonis. "They're like superheroes, you just look at them like they have a higher aura. But when you get to this level, you just realize we're all people. The great thing about most people that make it to that high level is that their brains kind of work the same, where they don't think they're better than anyone. They just do their job and then, you know, they reap the rewards."

"But yeah, it's a dream, obviously, to rub shoulders with



“I’m still very different than a lot of the top-level guys. I feel like I have the best chance of winning out of anybody, because in certain spots I’m just doing stuff that no one else is. I don’t know if my mind is ahead of the game, but it feels that way a little bit. **I’m just playing every player differently, being very exploitive, and not following a GTO game.**”

a lot of these guys.”

But just because he’s in their company doesn’t mean he plays like them. In considering how he’s been able to keep climbing the ranks and stay among the most successful players at each level, Lonis is clear about how his approach has worked.

“I’m still very different than a lot of the top-level guys,” said Lonis. “I still think that when I sit down, I feel like I have the best chance of winning out of anybody, because in certain spots I’m just doing stuff that no one else is. I don’t know if my mind is ahead of the game, but it feels that way a little bit. I’m just playing every player differently, being very exploitive, and not following a GTO game.”

After the unbelievable year Lonis had in 2024, it was hard to imagine more growth beyond that point. But as it had happened twice before, the birth of Lonis’ third daughter in February, Evelyn Marie, synced up with yet another seemingly impossible level-up.

In April, Lonis captured player of the series honors in the *PokerGO Tour PLO Series* cashing in five of the 11 events for a total of \$799,140. A few weeks later, he traveled to Europe and managed to put together the best three-week run of his life.

First, Lonis won a €30,000 no-limit high roller for \$508,276 at the *EPT Monte Carlo* festival, and then logged a runner-up a week later in a €10,200 event to cap off the series with another \$161,947 in his pocket. He moved on to Montenegro for the *Triton* series, and simply dominated.

Over the course of a week, Lonis made four final tables. He finished fourth twice, and won a \$40,000 mystery bounty event for a \$619,000 first-place prize and an additional \$800,000 in bounty prizes. Then, in the \$100,000 main

event, Lonis captured his third career *Triton* title and an eye-watering \$3,446,298 payday. As a result, he is now the front runner in the POY race.

“Obviously, the buy-ins have gotten bigger throughout the years, so you’re going to need some bigger scores to still be profiting at a high level,” said Lonis. “And luckily, at every buy-in level, I’ve done pretty well. I’ve been plus money. The one buy-in level that I was down money in was \$100,000 buy-ins, so I really wanted to perform in that one, just to put it in my mind that I’m supposed to be playing the highest stakes. The main event proved to myself that I can execute with that pressure. At the end of the day, it’s still the same game.”

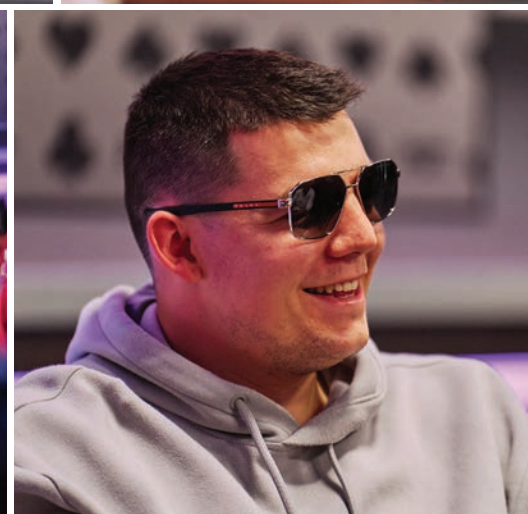
Winning big makes long stretches away from home a little bit easier, though Lonis still feels the pain of the moments he’s spent separated from his family. He knows all too well what fending for yourself feels like, and he has every intention of minimizing his time at work.

His most recent success has given Lonis the clearest picture of his priorities moving forward. Lonis has achieved the dreams that a hungry teenager knew were possible, and sharing those moments with the family he’s built makes each accomplishment that much sweeter.

“I don’t think I’d even be playing this game still if I didn’t have success when I was away, because that’s what’s kept my wife happy, knowing that I’m not just out there gambling,” said Lonis. “I’m out there earning and providing for our future. Luckily, I’m in a spot now where they can travel the world with me. Honestly, I think that’ll help my game at these high-stakes events even more. When I’m out of the tournament, I can go and lean on my family, and I think it’ll be good for my battle.” ♠

Top Tournament Scores

Date	Event	Place	Payout
May 2025	\$100,000 Triton Montenegro Main Event	1st	\$3,446,298
June 2023	\$50,000 World Series Of Poker PLO	1st	\$2,303,017
Nov. 2024	\$50,000 Triton Monte Carlo NLH	1st	\$1,502,000
May 2025	\$40,000 Triton Montenegro Mystery Bounty	1st	\$1,419,000
July 2024	\$50,000 World Series Of Poker NLH	2nd	\$1,358,633
May 2025	€30,000 European Poker Tour Monte Carlo NLH	1st	\$508,276
Aug. 2024	€100,000 European Poker Tour Barcelona NLH	4th	\$507,714
June 2024	\$50,000 World Series Of Poker NLH	5th	\$496,293
May 2025	\$50,000 Triton Montenegro NLH	4th	\$457,000
Nov. 2024	\$125,000 Triton Monte Carlo Main Event	9th	\$445,000
April 2024	\$3,500 WPT Hard Rock Showdown Main Event	3rd	\$410,000
Jan. 2024	\$3,500 Lucky Hearts Poker Open Main Event	3rd	\$404,267
Jan. 2023	\$10,000 PokerStars Caribbean Adventure NLH	1st	\$367,400
April 2025	\$15,000 PokerGO Tour PLO Series	1st	\$308,850
May 2025	\$25,000 Triton Montenegro NLH	4th	\$280,000
Dec. 2023	\$10,000 Wynn WPT Championship PLO	2nd	\$270,000
Jan. 2023	\$25,000 Lucky Hearts Poker Open NLH	3rd	\$260,175
April 2024	\$10,000 PokerGO Tour US Poker Open NLH	1st	\$252,450



BACK-TO-BACK BENNY! GLASER HEADLINES EARLY WORLD SERIES OF POKER WINNERS

Ruben, Martirosian, And Heimiller Score Wins

By Card Player News Team



The 56th Annual *World Series of Poker* officially got underway on May 27 at the Paris and Horseshoe Las Vegas. The first couple of weeks have been action-packed, with 24 bracelets awarded so far, already paying out more than \$71.8 million in prize money.

The total entries for the series currently sits at over 45,000, with an average field size of nearly 1,900. (The 64-entry \$25,000 buy-in no-limit hold'em heads-up championship is weighing down the mean a bit, while the \$1,000 *Mystery Millions* that anchored the first week drew an astounding 19,654 entries, up from 18,409 in 2024.)

Glaser Takes Two, Extends Streak

Benny Glaser entered elite company by capturing his sixth career gold bracelet in the \$1,500 Dealers Choice event for \$150,246 on June 2. Later that same day, Glaser hopped into the \$1,500 mixed Omaha eight-or-better event. Four days later, he was hoisting his second bracelet of the week and his seventh overall.

The victory puts the 35-year-old UK poker pro in rarefied air among *WSOP* champions. He breaches the top 10 all-time, joining a six-way tie for seventh place. (Three players reached the seven-win plateau at the 2024 series, as Daniel Negreanu, John Hennigan, and Scott Seiver each posted standout performances. Seiver did so by winning three times last summer on his way to locking up the *WSOP* Player of the Year award.)

Glaser's triumph also continues a long-running streak of at least one player earning multiple bracelets in a single year that has gone on for more than a quarter of a century. Chris

Ferguson took down a \$2,500 stud event and the main event in 2000 to get the ball rolling, and Glaser ensured that it will not stop in 2025 by earning two titles within the first 10 days of play.

"I generally try to be realistic and think that mostly, yes, it's just a distribution of results," Glaser told *Card Player*. "But I think in this case, there was a little bit of something where people knew I had just won, like it was quite big news. I think in a way, it helped, especially on day 2. I think people were a little bit scared of me, which was kind of nice. I used that to my advantage a bit."

This wasn't even the first time Glaser's rattled off multiple bracelet events in less than a week. In 2016, Glaser went back-to-back in winning both the \$1,500 and \$10,000 buy-in Omaha eight-or-better events.

Glaser outlasted a field of 1,239 entrants for his second victory in the mixed Omaha shortly after beating out 597 in the Dealer's Choice event. The mixed Omaha tournament featured a mix of pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better, limit Omaha eight-or-better, and Big O, the five-card variation of Omaha eight-or-better.

Glaser earned a first-place prize of \$258,193 after scooping the last pot. He now has nearly \$9.2 million in career tournament earnings, with nearly half of that coming from his success at the series.

Brad Ruben Bags Fifth Bracelet In As Many Years

Brad Ruben first broke through at the *WSOP* in August of 2020, taking down an online pot-limit Omaha event. Less than five years removed from that triumph, Ruben has

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already grown his bracelet collection to five.

Ruben's latest piece of hardware came from a win in the \$1,500 no-limit deuce-to-seven single draw lowball event. The 39-year-old Florida resident overcame a field of 532 entries on his way to securing the title and the top prize of \$138,080. He now boasts career live earnings of more than \$2.8 million, the majority of which has come from his success at the series.

Ruben is just the 44th player in poker history to have won five or more bracelets, and he captured all of his hardware in the span of just half a decade. His second and third bracelets were both won in 2021. He first took down a second online PLO bracelet in the summer, then the \$1,500 razz event at the live WSOP festival in the fall. The following summer he emerged victorious in the \$1,500 Dealer's Choice event, further proving his mixed-games chops.

"I want to compete for the most bracelets this decade," Ruben admitted. He is now tied with Jeremy Ausmus, who has won five since 2021.

Third Time Charmed For Heimiller, Martirosian, Luo, And Guagenti

Dan Heimiller was one of four players to grow their bracelet total to three during the first couple of weeks of action. The 62-year-old defeated a field of 377 entries in the \$1,500 seven card stud event to earn \$106,840.

Heimiller built himself an impressive résumé since bursting onto the scene with a pair of final-table appearances at the 1997 WSOP. After his win in this event and a seventh-place showing a week later in the \$10,000 stud championship, Heimiller now has 23 final-table appearances in WSOP bracelet events and over \$8.3 million in career tournament earnings across all tours.

"I think it's stubbornness," Heimiller answered about what sets him apart. "Wouldn't quit poker when I should have. I could have quit a long time ago, but I persisted. A lot of people have this silly, serious philosophy and their entire nature is their need to get respect. I tell people at the poker table, 'If you want respect, go buy a dog.'"

One year ago, **Artur Martirosian** played all the way into the semifinals of the \$25,000 heads-up championship. He lost that match and settled for a \$180,000 consolation prize. If there was any doubt as to Martirosian's heads-up credentials, though, they're over.

Martirosian battled through that elite 64-entry-field again at the 2025 WSOP, taking down Jeremy Ausmus,



Faraz Jaka, Kevin Rabichow, Chance Kornuth, Patrick Leonard, and Aliaksei Boika in the final round to earn \$500,000 and his third career bracelet. Two of those WSOP victories are now heads-up titles. In 2023, Martirosian won the \$10,000 no-limit hold'em WSOP Online heads-up championship. His other bracelet win came in the 2023 WSOP Paradise \$800 Flip & Go event.

The Russian high roller has been red hot recently, having made seven final tables between EPT Monte Carlo and Triton Montenegro in May. Martirosian, who also has an EPT main event and two Triton Poker titles to his name, now boasts \$31.6 million in career earnings.

Xixiang Luo also added his third career WSOP bracelet, taking down this year's \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha double board bomb pot event for \$290,400. In a way, Luo defended his title, as he took down the inaugural double board bomb pot event in 2024. That event also featured no-limit hold'em, though, and only had the double-board bomb pots when the switch was made between NLH and PLO. In 2025, it was all PLO, and all bomb pots, all the time.

The Chinese mixed-games standout actually won both of his previous bracelets last summer. In addition to his first bomb pot triumph, he also took down the \$25,000 H.O.R.S.E. high roller, while making two other final tables. He now has more than \$4.8 million in career cashes on the circuit.

Nick Guagenti earned his third bracelet just hours after Luo's victory. He weathered a lengthy heads-up battle against Chino Rheem in the \$10,000 seven card stud championship, coming away with the hardware and \$295,008 in prize money.

The win came just over a year after he took down the \$1,500 limit hold'em event. His very first bracelet came in the 2020 WSOP Online, winning a \$2,000 no-limit hold'em event to begin his bracelet collection. The 40-year-old Ohio native's career tournament earnings now sit at more than \$3.3 million, with the majority of that haul coming from his success in WSOP events.

Rheem once again fell just shy of his first bracelet, and subsequently, the Triple Crown. This was his third runner-up finish at the WSOP, and sixth top-five finish in the last four years. His cash did put him over the \$17 million mark for career earnings, however.

Seven Players Became Two-Time Champions

14 of the 24 bracelets awarded to this point have gone to

TOURNAMENTS

Artur Martirosian



Xixiang Luo



Nick Guagenti



players who already had a prior win on their record. **Antonio Galiana** was the first of the newly-minted two-time bracelet winners. He beat out a field of 693 entries in the \$5,000 no-limit hold'em event to lock up \$582,008.

This triumph came after he won the \$2,500 freezeout at last year's series for \$439,395. The Spanish player now has nearly \$1.1 million in recorded tournament earnings, with the vast majority coming from his two big scores in Las Vegas.

The \$5,000 pot-limit Omaha event made headlines when it drew a larger field (757 entries) than the overlapping no-limit hold'em event at the same price point (693 entries). The impressive turnout for the first PLO bracelet of the year resulted in a prize pool of \$3,573,040, with \$620,696 earmarked for the winner.

The hardware and that hefty sum were ultimately awarded to **Caleb Furth**, who came back from down to a single chip at one point to nab his second *WSOP* title. His first was won in last year's \$1,500 PLO eight-or-better event for \$265,361.

A giant, standing-room-only crowd gathered in the Horseshoe Grand Ballroom looking to witness Daniel Negreanu make history with another 30,000-plus watching along on the PokerGO YouTube stream. Negreanu got heads-up for the \$10,000 Omaha eight-or-better championship with a chance at his eighth *WSOP* gold bracelet, but it was not meant to be.

Instead, it was **Ryan Bambrick** putting on an impressive performance on his way to the title and his second career bracelet. Before this tournament, Bambrick's second-largest live cash, beyond his previous 2018 *WSOP* \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha win, was \$13,500. The former day-trader turned crypto investor had never so much as cashed a \$10,000 buy-in tournament, and yet this victory was worth \$470,437.

Chris Staats has live tournament results spanning back to 2009. He had accumulated over \$2 million in earnings across hundreds of in-the-money finishes over more than a decade of chasing poker glory. After the 2024 *WSOP*, the Oklahoma native decided to take a step back from the game. He took a job in a warehouse, looking to avoid the constant travel that separated him from his family.

After some time away, Staats decided to come back out for this year's series and promptly ripped off the biggest win of his career. He outlasted a field of 2,354 entries in the \$1,500 no-limit hold'em six-max event, earning his second gold bracelet and the top prize of \$414,950. His previous bracelet also came in a six-max event at the 2022 *WSOP Online* series.

When **Lou Garza** won his first bracelet back in 2023, the Texan punctuated his celebration with a marriage proposal to his then-girlfriend Carla. Nearly two years later, a now-married Garza scored a second triumph at the series. This time around, instead of an engagement, Garza had to engage a comeback to stop what seemed at the time like a runaway freight train in the form of two-time bracelet winner Ben Lamb.

Garza bounced back from more than a 3:1 chip deficit at the start of heads-up play for the top prize of \$1,302,233 as the champion of this year's \$25,000 pot-limit Omaha and no-limit hold'em mixed event. This huge payday fell just short of surpassing Garza's previous top score of \$1,309,232 that came with his bracelet in the \$10,000 PLO championship. He now has nearly \$4.7 million in recorded scores to his name.

Scott Bohlman built himself a stellar reputation as one



Antonio Galiana



Caleb Furth



Ryan Bambrick



Chris Staats



Lou Garza



Scott Bohlman

of the strongest mixed game tournament players in poker. He's made 19 final-table appearances in bracelet events since 2007, with only three of those coming in straight up no-limit hold'em events. But the 48-year-old Illinois native proved his hold'em skills with a win in the \$2,000 no-limit event for \$436,044 and his second bracelet. Bohlman outlasted 1,692 entrants, and claimed the lion's share of a \$3,011,760 prize pool.

Michael Lavin of New Jersey won his second career gold bracelet and \$267,373 in this year's \$1,500 no-limit hold'em shootout. He beat out 1,299 entrants to lock up the hardware and the six-figure top prize, but in the process secured an even larger payday.

As part of a summer promotion, sweepstakes poker platform ClubWPT Gold has been giving away 'Gold Rush' tickets in daily freerolls and a variety of other live and online promotions. Anyone who earned a ticket, and then went on to win one of 11 qualifying summer tournament majors, would bank an extra \$1 million. As it turns out, this event was on that short list, which meant that Lavin walked away with a seven-figure bonus to go with this title.

Lavin captured his first career *WSOP* bracelet in 2021, in a Pennsylvania *WSOP* Online no-limit hold'em Monster Stack. He's also among the all-time leaders in *WSOP Circuit*

rings, sitting fourth all-time with 17 such victories.

Zerjav and Wilklow Headline Early First-Timers

In addition to all the repeat winners, there were also 10 first-time bracelet winners. Chief among them was arguably **Blaz Zerjav**, who earned \$1,734,717 (the largest top prize of the first 24 events) as the champion of the \$25,000 six-max no-limit high roller.

Zerjav navigated a field of 336 through a final table that included Aram Oganyan (6th), Paulius Vaitiekunas (5th), Landon Tice (4th), and Jared Bleznick (3rd). Chris Moorman narrowly missed out on his third bracelet, settling for a runner-up payday of \$1,129,608.

This even proved to be a live breakthrough for Zerjav, a 28-year-old Slovenian online poker standout. Previously, Zerjav finished runner-up in a \$5,300 *WSOP Paradise* bracelet event in 2024.

The next seven-figure score went to Minnesota software engineer **Michael Wilklow**. He made his way through a massive field of 19,654 entries to bank \$1 million and his first bracelet as the champion of the \$1,000 *Mystery Millions*, which was the first event on the schedule.

Poker author and player Michael Acevedo was the runner-up for \$563,350, while two-time bracelet winner Daniel Strelitz finished third for \$429,950, falling just short of

TOURNAMENTS



Michael Lavin



Blaz Zerjav



Michael Wilklow



Thomas Zanot

claiming a \$1 million bonus from the same promotion that had paid dividends for Lavin.

There were over 1,000 bounty prizes in play in this event, but four towered above the rest, and those massive paydays didn't last long. The two \$1 million bounty prizes were pulled in the first few hours of day 2. Tyler Montoya was first to pull a seven-figure envelope. Upon the reveal, he proclaimed, "If you're a stripper, you should be working tonight."

Then Tom Zanot claimed the second \$1 million bounty. Zanot had previously won a \$6.4 million pai gow progressive jackpot payout in January 2023. Zanot simply told emcee Jeff Platt, "Rather be lucky than good."

Nikolay Ponomarev claimed the \$500,000 bounty, and Dan Matsuzuki drew the \$250,000 prize.

The Rest Of The Best

As has long been the case at the WSOP, the very first champion crowned this summer came from the \$500 tournament long known as the *Casino Employees* event. This year, the briskly paced no-limit hold'em affair was rebranded as the *Industry Employees* event. San Diego poker dealer **Phovieng Keokham** came out on top of a field of 914 entries to secure the hardware and \$64,369.

David Shmuel took down the first open-event bracelet

awarded at the series, winning the \$1,500 Omaha eight-or-better tournament. The Miami, Florida resident beat out 910 entries to earn \$205,333 and the hardware. A handful of days later he finished third in the \$1,500 mixed Omaha eight-or-better event that eventually saw Glaser earn his seventh bracelet. Shmuel took home \$121,736 for that podium showing.

Kenneth Kim was the champion of the \$600 no-limit hold'em deepstack event. The California resident bested a field of 6,090, earning \$318,842. Kim is no stranger to navigating large field, low buy-in events. In 2024 he topped 4,666 entries in a *Quantum Mega Millions* event at the Bicycle Casino to walk away with \$351,900.

It was like father, like son in the next event to wrap up. **Yosef Fox** had watched on as his son Jorden took down the 2019 \$1,000 double stack event. Six years later, Jorden returned the favor. He rooted from the rail as his dad surged to victory in this year's \$10,000 mystery bounty. The elder Fox earned \$729,333 from the main prize pool. As if that wasn't enough, he also drew the largest mystery bounty to add \$250,000 to his haul. All told, Fox walked away with \$1,064,333 in total prize money.

The \$600 pot-limit Omaha deepstack saw 3,110 entries made before registration came to a close, making for a prize

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TOURNAMENTS



TOURNAMENTS

pool of \$1,657,008. **Cristian Gutierrez** ultimately secured the largest chunk of that money and the gold bracelet. This was the first *WSOP* title for the Connecticut resident, originally hailing from Colombia. The \$193,780 top prize is more than double his previous top score of \$85,815 earned at this year's *Borgata Winter Poker Open*.

Ryan Hoenig came into the 2025 *WSOP* with 11 live tournament titles to his name, many in lower-stakes mixed game events around the country. Three of those triumphs came in a three-day span at the 2024 *Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown*, with Hoenig posing for back-to-back-to-back winner photos in the deuce-to-seven triple draw, Omaha eight-or-better, and badugi tournaments. The Fort Collins, Colorado resident emerged victorious in this year's \$10,000 *Dealer's Choice* event, banking \$354,444.

The \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha eight-or-better event drew 1,176 entries, resulting in a prize pool of \$1,561,140. **Zachary Zaret** scooped up the lion's share of that money in the end. The Toronto resident pocketed \$248,245 for the victory.

Rounding out this long list of early champions is **Aloisio Dourado**, who took down the record-setting \$1,500 badugi event. He had come within one spot of earning a bracelet back in 2023, but fell just short in that \$1,500 eight-game tournament. Now, he is officially a *WSOP* champion. He beat out a record field of 534 entries to take home the top prize of \$138,114.

Three quarters of the 2025 *WSOP* are still yet to play out, with many of the biggest events on the schedule yet to kick off. Make sure to check out the next few issues of *Card Player* for in-depth coverage of all the top stories from the series. ♠

World Series of Poker – Horseshoe and Paris – Las Vegas, Nevada

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,000 Mystery Millions May 27-June 2 Entries: 19,654 Prizepool: \$17,295,520	1 Michael Wilklow	\$1,000,000
	2 Michael Acevedo	\$563,350
	3 Daniel Strelitz	\$429,950
	4 Yu Hsiang Huang	\$329,940
	5 Elliott Kampen	\$254,590
	6 Wesley Fei	\$197,550
	7 Linda Ngo	\$154,140
	8 Jeffrey Hong	\$120,950
	9 Michael Marks	\$95,551

Event	Player	Payout
\$500 Casino Employees May 27-28 Entries: 914 Prizepool: \$402,617	1 Phovieng Keokham	\$64,369
	2 Christopher Zollo	\$42,886
	3 Shaun Colquhoun	\$29,850
	4 Michael Coombs	\$21,126
	5 Mark Kawamoto	\$15,207
	6 Pedro Green	\$11,138
	7 Connor Richards	\$8,301
	8 Rick Muniz	\$6,299
	9 Francois Truong	\$4,867

Event	Player	Payout
\$5,000 NLH May 28-31 Entries: 693 Prizepool: \$3,187,800	1 Antonio Galiana	\$582,008
	2 Frederic Normand	\$387,979
	3 Christian Roberts	\$270,407
	4 Renji Mao	\$191,550
	5 Gaetan Balleur	\$137,948
	6 Uri Reichenstein	\$101,028
	7 Justin Liberto	\$75,263
	8 Georgios Sotiropoulos	\$57,051
	9 Michael Moncek	\$44,018

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 Omaha 8 May 28-30 Entries: 910 Prizepool: \$1,208,025	1 David Shmuel	\$205,333
	2 Joe Ford	\$136,855
	3 Darren Taylor	\$95,253
	4 Gregory Wood	\$67,392
	5 Ilia Krupin	\$48,480
	6 Patrick Stacey	\$35,471
	7 Melvin McCraney	\$26,403
	8 Joseph Bertrand	\$20,001

Event	Player	Payout
\$5,000 PLO May 29-31 Entries: 757 Prizepool: \$3,482,200	1 Caleb Furth	\$620,696
	2 Fabian Riebau-Schmithals	\$413,762
	3 Martin Kabrhel	\$288,775
	4 Matthew Cosentino	\$204,808
	5 Mark Aridgides	\$147,647
	6 Noel Rodriguez	\$108,221
	7 Jeremy Trojand	\$80,673
	8 Lawrence Brandt	\$61,179

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 Stud May 29-31 Entries: 377 Prizepool: \$500,467	1 Dan Heimiller	\$106,840
	2 David Bach	\$70,568
	3 Tyler Phillips	\$47,660
	4 Jyri Merivirta	\$32,921
	5 Meng Qi Chen	\$23,271
	6 Kristan Lord	\$16,842
	7 Sam Jaramillo	\$12,487
	8 Greg Mueller	\$9,490



Event	Player	Payout
\$25,000 Heads Up May 30-June 1 Entries: 64 Prizepool: \$1,504,000	1 Artur Martirosian	\$500,000
	2 Aliaksei Boika	\$300,000
	3 Patrick Leonard	\$180,000
	3 David Chen	\$180,000
	5 Thomas Eychenne	\$86,000
	5 Chance Kornuth	\$86,000
	5 Harvey Castro	\$86,000
	5 Mike Shi	\$86,000

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 Dealers Choice May 30-June 1 Entries: 597 Prizepool: \$792,518	1 Benny Glaser	\$150,246
	2 Matthew Schreiber	\$100,137
	3 Andrew Park	\$66,755
	4 Scott Bohlman	\$45,511
	5 Scott Jacewiczokelly	\$31,747
	6 Stephen O'Dwyer	\$22,673

Event	Player	Payout
\$10,000 Omaha 8/OB May 31-June 3 Entries: 217 Prizepool: \$2,018,100	1 Ryan Bambrick	\$470,437
	2 Daniel Negreanu	\$313,615
	3 Ofir Mor	\$216,223
	4 Viktor Blom	\$152,315
	5 Hunter McClelland	\$109,679
	6 Maxx Coleman	\$80,772
	7 Micah Brooks	\$60,866
	8 Daniel Spear	\$46,957
	9 Ben Lamb	\$37,110

Event	Player	Payout
\$600 NLH June 1-2 Entries: 6,090 Prizepool: \$3,069,360	1 Kenneth Kim	\$318,842
	2 Alex Paredes	\$212,275
	3 Daniel Muniz	\$157,968
	4 Gary Blackwood	\$118,468
	5 Jared Anderson	\$89,541
	6 Raul Melendres Cruz	\$68,212
	7 Edgar Antezana	\$52,377
	8 Luis Diaz Moreno	\$40,541
	9 Chad Cullimore	\$31,633

Event	Player	Payout
\$10,000 NLH Bounty June 1-3 Entries: 616 Prizepool: \$5,728,800	1 Yosef Fox	\$729,333
	2 Alejandro Peinado	\$486,192
	3 James Mendoza	\$336,594
	4 Richard Green	\$237,123
	5 Patrick Kennedy	\$170,036
	6 Chao Duan	\$124,151
	7 Joe Cada	\$92,330
	8 Myles Mullaly	\$69,964
	9 Jordan Siegel	\$50,037

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 NL 2-7 Lowball June 1-3 Entries: 532 Prizepool: \$706,230	1 Brad Ruben	\$130,080
	2 Han Liu	\$90,569
	3 Yueqi Zhu	\$60,738
	4 Jun Weng	\$41,645
	5 Brian Yoon	\$29,228
	6 Tyler Phillips	\$20,994
	7 Eric Moum	\$15,446

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 NLH 6-Max June 2-4 Entries: 2,354 Prizepool: \$3,124,935	1 Christopher Staats	\$414,950
	2 David Jackson	\$276,562
	3 Shundan Xiao	\$197,869
	4 Damarjai Davenport	\$143,206
	5 Eshaan Bhalla	\$104,858
	6 Oscar Johansson	\$77,688

Event	Player	Payout
\$25,000 PLO/NLH June 2-4 Entries: 245 Prizepool: \$5,757,500	1 Lou Garza	\$1,302,233
	2 Ben Lamb	\$868,140
	3 Chongxian Yang	\$598,285
	4 Robert Cowen	\$421,524
	5 Brandon Mitchell	\$303,773
	6 John Pannucci	\$224,034
	7 Zhargal Tsydypov	\$169,183
	8 Youness Barakat	\$130,896
	9 Michael Moncek	\$103,821

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 Mixed Omaha June 2-4 Entries: 1,239 Prizepool: \$1,644,773	1 Benny Glasser	\$258,193
	2 Travis Pearson	\$172,077
	3 David Shmuel	\$121,736
	4 Sean Remz	\$87,325
	5 Shane Howeth	\$63,527
	6 Alan Sternberg	\$46,879
	7 Bashar Trad	\$35,098

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Event	Player	Payout
\$600 PLO June 3-4 Entries: 3,110 Prizepool: \$1,657,008	1 Cristian Gutierrez	\$193,780
	2 Robert Chorlian	\$129,084
	3 Nick Maimone	\$94,403
	4 Matthew Allen	\$69,675
	5 Martin Nielsen	\$51,900
	6 Noah Harthcock	\$39,022
	7 Kenneth McMillan	\$29,616
	8 Jorge Martinez	\$22,692

Event	Player	Payout
\$2,000 NLH June 3-5 Entries: 1,692 Prizepool: \$3,011,760	1 Scott Bohlman	\$436,044
	2 Dusti Smith	\$290,588
	3 Umesh Babusukumar	\$210,033
	4 Quan Zhou	\$153,576
	5 Benjamin Williams	\$113,617
	6 Ziaohu Liu	\$85,056
	7 Rafael Mota	\$64,443
	8 Henrik Juncker	\$49,421
	9 Samy Boujmala	\$38,369

Event	Player	Payout
\$10,000 Dealers Choice June 3-5 Entries: 152 Prizepool: \$1,413,600	1 Ryan Hoenig	\$354,444
	2 Dylan Smith	\$230,374
	3 Philip Sternheimer	\$154,460
	4 Dario Alioto	\$106,935
	5 Matthew Vengrin	\$76,525
	6 Brandon Cantu	\$56,671

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 NLH Shootout June 4-6 Entries: 1,299 Prizepool: \$1,791,646	1 Michael Lavin	\$267,373
	2 Michael Rossitto	\$178,240
	3 Punnat Punsri	\$130,560
	4 Linyang Song	\$96,710
	5 Luis Yopez Carmona	\$72,450
	6 Jason Wheeler	\$54,900
	7 Jordan Westmorland	\$42,080
	8 Drew Oconnell	\$32,640
	9 Joel Vazquez	\$25,610

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 PLO 8/OB June 4-6 Entries: 1,176 Prizepool: \$1,561,140	1 Zachary Zaret	\$248,245
	2 Calvin Anderson	\$165,447
	3 Christopher Vitch	\$116,672
	4 Darryll Fish	\$83,465
	5 Ronnie Tate	\$60,584
	6 Bryce Yockey	\$44,630
	7 Marco Johnson	\$33,374
	8 Andres Korn	\$25,339

Event	Player	Payout
\$25,000 NLH 6-Max June 5-7 Entries: 336 Prizepool: \$7,896,000	1 Blaz Zerjav	\$1,734,717
	2 Chris Moorman	\$1,129,608
	3 Jared Bleznik	\$752,737
	4 Landon Tice	\$513,577
	5 Paulius Vaitiekunas	\$358,973
	6 Aram Oganyan	\$257,201

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 Badugi June 5-7 Entries: 534 Prizepool: \$708,885	1 Aloisio Dourado	\$138,114
	2 Dominick Sarle	\$92,058
	3 James Newberry	\$61,061
	4 Jonathan Glendinning	\$41,462
	5 David Margolis	\$28,838
	6 Anthony Arvidson	\$20,558
	7 Matthew Schreiber	\$15,030

Event	Player	Payout
\$1,500 PLO Bomb Pot June 6-8 Entries: 1,452 Prizepool: \$1,927,530	1 Xixiang Luo	\$290,400
	2 Robert Klein	\$193,517
	3 Samuel Stranak	\$137,805
	4 Danny Wong	\$99,413
	5 Brian Smith	\$72,664
	6 Bjorn Verbakel	\$53,824
	7 Ian Matakis	\$40,410
	8 Jacob Baumgartner	\$30,756

Event	Player	Payout
\$10,000 Stud June 6-8 Entries: 127 Prizepool: \$1,181,100	1 Nick Guagenti	\$295,008
	2 Chino Rheem	\$196,662
	3 Qiang Xu	\$135,828
	4 Paul Volpe	\$96,502
	5 Mori Eskandani	\$70,587
	6 Adam Friedman	\$53,201
	7 Dan Heimiller	\$41,357
	8 Mike Matusow	\$33,190

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Trevor Scott/ Austin Currington/ Regina Cortina/ Luther Redd

Aliaksei Boika



Alan Keating



Chris Moorman



Dan Smith



Chino Rheem



Freddy Deeb



Daniel Negreanu



Jeremy Ausmus



Kirsten Foxen



Patrick Leonard



Phil Ivey



Scott Seiver



WORLD SERIES OF POKER BRACELETS



Bracelets	Players
17	Phil Hellmuth
11	Phil Ivey
10	Doyle Brunson, Johnny Chan, Erik Seidel
9	Johnny Moss
7	Billy Baxter, John Hennigan, Daniel Negreanu, Men Nguyen, Scott Seiver, Benny Glaser
6	Josh Arieh, Jeremy Ausmus, T.J. Cloutier, Shaun Deeb, Chris Ferguson, Layne Flack, Ted Forrest, Brian Hastings, Jay Heimowitz, Jeff Lisandro, Jason Mercier, Michael Mizrachi, Brian Rast, Nick Schulman
5	Daniel Alaei, Calvin Anderson, Gary "Bones" Berland, David Chiu, Allen Cunningham, Yuri Dzivielevski, Eli Elezra, Kristen Foxen, Adam Friedman, Berry Johnston, John Juanda, Robert Mizrachi, John Monnette, Scotty Nguyen, Brad Ruben, Stu Ungar, Brian Yoon, Anthony Zinno

With the 2025 *World Series of Poker* now well underway, let's take a look at where the all-time bracelet leaderboard stands. Thanks to winning two events already at this year's WSOP, Benny Glaser joined the six-way tie among those with seven bracelets. (pg. 24) Additionally, Brad Ruben won his fifth career WSOP title, joining 17 other players. (pg. 42) Daniel Negreanu had a chance at his eighth bracelet, but he fell just short. Calvin Anderson suffered a similar fate searching for his sixth.

Phil Hellmuth remains well out in front of the pack with 17 wins, including his victory in the 1989 *WSOP* main event. 14 of Hellmuth's bracelets have come in hold'em, with only the 2012 \$2,500 razz event, the 2015 \$10,000 razz championship, and the 2021 \$1,500 deuce-to-seven single draw lowball event coming in other disciplines

His nearest competition is **Phil Ivey**, who secured his 11th bracelet last year after a decade-long drought. In contrast to Hellmuth, all of Ivey's triumphs have come in non-hold'em tour-

naments. His most recent saw him take down the \$10,000 limit deuce-to-seven triple draw championship.

Ivey had long been in a three-way tie with Johnny Chan and the late great **Doyle Brunson** at 10. The pair of two-time main event champions both last won in 2005. Doyle, who passed away in 2023, won back-to-back main events in 1976 and 1977. Chan nearly went back-to-back-to-back, taking down the 1987 and 1988 main events before finishing second to Hellmuth in 1989.

Erik Seidel, who finished runner-up to Chan in 1988, has gone on to win 10 bracelets of his own since that close call in the big dance. The 65-year-old's most recent saw him take down the \$50,000 super high roller at the *WSOP Paradise* in 2023.

Johnny Moss, who won the first *WSOP* main event ever held in 1970, sits alone with nine bracelets, although his first (the very first) came via a vote amongst those who participated in the game rather than from a tournament win. ♠



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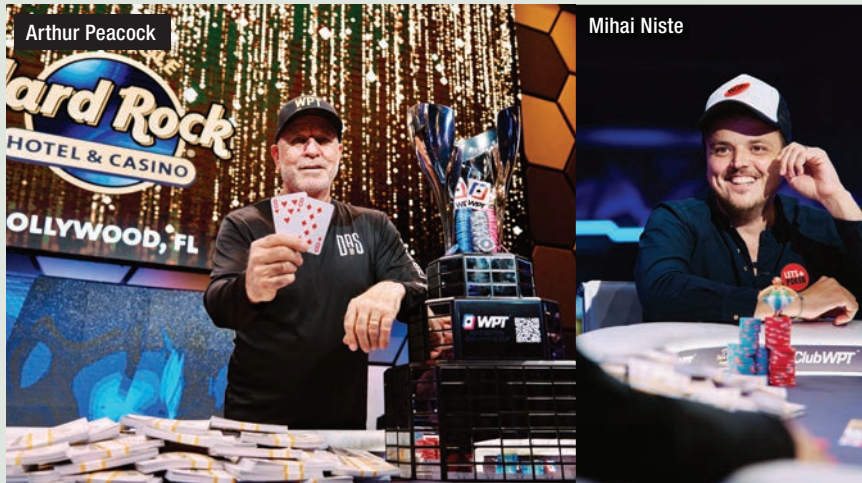
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ART PEACOCK WINS WPT HARD ROCK POKER SHOWDOWN

By Erik Fast



After nearly two months of waiting, a champion was finally decided in the *World Poker Tour Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown* \$3,500 no-limit hold'em championship. The final table was set back on April 8, but did not resume until May 29 in Las Vegas, where the action was filmed for television.

66-year-old Florida resident Art Peacock defeated the field of 1,755 entries that turned out to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood for a career-best payday of \$776,000.

This was the first *WPT* triumph for Peacock, who now has more than \$2.4 million in recorded tournament earnings to his name after capping off a remarkable run at the tables during the last 12 months. His previous top score was the \$358,700 he pocketed as the champion of the 2024 *Moneymaker Poker Tour* main event at the MGM Grand Summer Festival. Peacock also took down this year's *World Series of Poker Circuit Harrah's Pompano Beach* main event for another \$230,794.

The strong turnout resulted in a final prize pool of \$5,616,000, blowing away the \$3.5 million guarantee. The top 221 finishers made the money, with notables like Triple Crown winner Harrison Gimbel (32nd), bracelet winner David Moses (21st), *WPT* champion Asher Conniff (19th), bracelet winner and three-time *WPT* champion Brian Altman (18th), two-time bracelet winner Frank Funaro (11th), and five-time bracelet winner Brian Yoon (9th) all running deep.

Peacock was the chip leader when the action was halted with six remaining, coming into the final table with over 100 big blinds to work with.

The first big clash pitted A♠ K♦ for Daniel Marcus against the pocket queens of Romania's Mihai Niste. Neither player connected, and Niste doubled into second chip position. Marcus, a personnel evaluator for the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, still had plenty of chips to work with after losing the flip.

Jeffery Fritz was unable to get anything going during the first few hours of play. The 36-year-old Michigan native got the last of his stack in ahead with queens leading the A♦ 9♥ of Peacock, but an ace-high runoff sent Fritz to the rail

with \$164,000 for his sixth-place showing.

Niste won another key race for the next elimination, with pocket tens holding against the K♥ J♦ of Texas resident Jared Hemingway on a queen-high runoff. Hemingway earned \$215,000 as the fifth-place finisher, growing his career earnings to nearly \$1.2 million in the process.

Peacock cracked pocket queens once again when his A♦ 3♠ outran start-of-day short stack Mitchell Hynam. Peacock flopped a three and turned another to send Hynam home with \$285,000. This was the largest score yet for the 33-year-old

from Bristol, England.

The next knockout didn't take place for a couple of hours as the players traded chips back and forth. Marcus was left short thanks to running flopped trips into the turned flush of Niste. Soon after that, he called off his last couple of big blinds with 10♥ 9♥ after Niste raised the button and Peacock called from the small blind. The flop came down K♦ 7♠ 3♣ and Peacock check-folded to a bet from Niste, who revealed K♠ 8♦ for top pair. The 8♠ turn gave Marcus an open-ended straight draw, but the 4♥ on the end was a blank that sent him packing in third place. The \$380,000 he picked up with this deep run was a new high score for the 36-year-old based in Las Vegas.

Heads-up play began with Niste holding a 3:2 advantage. The two battled for 95 hands, with plenty of lead changes along the way. About midway through the match, Peacock doubled with A-4 against pocket nines to take nearly a 2:1 lead.

Niste found a couple of double-ups after getting short to keep his hopes alive, but ultimately three-bet shoved over Peacock's raise with pocket fours. Peacock called with pocket eights and the board ran out A♥ A♣ K♣ 9♥ 7♠ to see Niste eliminated as the runner-up.

The career-best payout of \$515,000 grew Niste's lifetime haul to \$2.3 million. His previous best score came at the beginning of the year when he took second in the *Merit Poker Western Series* main event for \$251,000.

Player	Payout
1 Arthur Peacock	\$776,000
2 Mihai Niste	\$515,000
3 Daniel Marcus	\$380,000
4 Mitchell Hynam	\$285,000
5 Jared Hemingway	\$215,000
6 Jeffery Fritz	\$164,000
7 Rafael Rodriguez	\$126,000
8 Alain Medesan	\$98,000
9 Brian Yoon	\$77,000

MIKE VANIER CLOSES OUT SECOND CHANCE AT WPT CHOCTAW

By Erik Fast



but Veith's hot streak continued with the A♠ on the river. Adkins placed fourth for \$122,000, the second-largest payday of his career.

Lifu Zhang was the shortest stack remaining. He hung around for a while, but eventually took a stand with K♣ J♦. He was up against A♣ 3♠ for Vanier, which held through a queen-

One day after Peacock's victory, Nebraska's Mike Vanier took the stage in Sin City and then took down the *World Poker Tour Choctaw* \$3,800 main event, earning \$338,000 after besting the 586-entry turnout.

This was the third time that Vanier made a *WPT* final table, having finished as the runner-up in the 2022 *WPT Venetian* main event and third at *WPT Choctaw* in 2023. He also took second in the 2023 *BetMGM Poker Championship* at Aria. The 45-year-old's career tournament earnings now sit at more than \$2.7 million after this latest deep run.

"I am a lot happier today," said Vanier, who had the chip lead three-handed in 2023 but lost two crucial back-to-back pots to eventual champion Jared Jaffee to bust. When asked about his final table strategy for his second attempt, he admitted to being more patient. "I wanted to keep the pots small, play post-flop. It worked out pretty good."

This event's field was narrowed to six contenders back on May 5 at the host venue of Choctaw Casino and Resort in Durant, Oklahoma. The \$2,051,000 prize pool just narrowly surpassed the guarantee and was paid out amongst the top 74 finishers. Notables that ran deep included *WPT* champions Kevin Eyster (31st) and Nick Yunis (30th), and bracelet winners Jeremy Wien (14th), Faraz Jaka (13th), and Mike Liang (9th).

Vanier's 80 big blinds gave him the largest stack and a sizable advantage when cards got back in the air.

Shreveport, Louisiana's Logan Hoover was the first to fall. He called off the last of his chips with Q♠ J♦ facing the A♣ 8♦ of Mason Veith, who had open-shoved from the small blind. Vieth turned a boat that left Hoover officially drawing dead, taking home \$70,000 for his sixth-place showing.

Vieth also scored the next knockout. This time he did so by cracking the pocket kings of Ryan Brown with pocket sixes. The flop came down 8♠ 6♥ 5♠ to give Vieth a set, which held to send Brown to the rail with \$92,000 as the fifth-place finisher.

Fellow Texan Charlie Adkins shoved his last 10 big blinds from the cutoff with pocket eights, and Vieth called with A♣ J♣ from the button. The first four cards were safe for Adkins, with the 6♠ 6♦ 3♥ 6♥ improving him to a full house,

high runout to end Zhang's tournament in third place for \$163,000. This was the largest score yet for the Texas resident.

Heads-up play began with Vanier holding just better than a 2:1 chip lead over Vieth, although Vieth won a big pot with pocket kings against A-3 suited to take the lead himself.

The advantage continued to grow until Vanier won a key all-in with K-Q against Q-8 to more or less even the playing field. Vieth stretched out another lead and had another chance at the victory, only to have another all-in go Vanier's way with pocket deuces besting Q-10.

Vanier had just edged into the lead in time for the final hand of the tournament. He min-raised on the button with A♠ Q♣ and Vieth three-bet shoved with A♣ 9♣. Vanier called and the board ran out Q♦ J♥ 4♠ 5♠ 10♣ to bring the event to an end.

The runner-up payout of \$220,000 was a new career high for Vieth, whose previous top score was the \$130,000 he earned as the winner of the 2023 *South Texas Poker Championship* main event. The Texas resident now has more than \$800,000 in career tournament earnings.

The *WPT* will stay in Las Vegas for the summer with a \$5,000 main event at The Venetian starting July 11, before heading to Cyprus in August and Australia in September.

Player	Payout
1 Mike Vanier	\$338,000
2 Mason Veith	\$220,000
3 Lifu Zhang	\$163,000
4 Charles Adkins	\$122,000
5 Ryan Brown	\$92,000
6 Logan Hoover	\$70,000
7 Trung Pham	\$54,000
8 Ty Schimmel	\$42,000
9 Michael Liang	\$33,000

JEAN-VINCENT LEHUT WINS INAUGURAL POKERSTARS OPEN NAMUR

By Erik Fast

The Circus Casino Resort Namur in Belgium played host to the first-ever *PokerStars Open Namur* festival, which ran from May 28 through June 9. The centerpiece of the more than 30 events on the schedule was the €1,000,000 guaranteed €1,100 no-limit hold'em main event, which kicked off on May 31 with the first of seven starting flights.

The tournament attracted 1,572 total entries, blowing away the guarantee to create a final prize pool worth nearly \$1.7 million. The top 223 finishers all earned a share of that sum, with the largest chunk going to eventual champion Jean-Vincent Lehut, who earned a career-best score of \$270,086.

The 36-year-old Frenchman is now based out of Luxembourg. He is a former card dealer, but has played poker professionally for roughly a decade now.

"I'm obviously very happy," Lehut told *PokerStars* staff, dedicating the trophy to his son. "I don't have all the tournament strategy knowledge, so I was completely detached from ICM, pay jumps, and all that. I just played to win, and everything went extremely well at the final table. This win won't change my playing habits, but it does help me move forward in my poker journey."

Prior to this triumph, Lehut's top score had been a 21st-place finish in the 2023 *European Poker Tour Monte Carlo* main event for \$32,314.



Like Lehut, runner-up Jozef Cibicek also made a deep run in the *EPT Monte Carlo* main event, with his being an eighth-place showing in 2024. Cibicek walked away with \$174,194 for his second-place showing in this tournament, also a career-best.

Player	Payout
1 Jean-Vincent Lehut	\$270,086
2 Jozef Cibicek	\$147,194
3 Jason Barton	\$124,399
4 Ferdinando D'Alessio	\$95,688
5 Ramdhane Maamar	\$73,570
6 Evert Rosseel	\$56,684
7 Julien Breuil	\$43,588
8 Jort Hagedoom	\$33,568
9 Alexandru Danes	\$25,874

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TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2025 World Series of Poker
\$25,000 Heads-Up Championship



Artur Martirosian
4,800,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 64%
After Flop: 29%
After Turn: 18%



Aliaksei Boika
4,800,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 36%
After Flop: 71%
After Turn: 82%

PREFLOP

With blinds at 10,000-20,000, Artur Martirosian opened to 50,000 and Aliaksei Boika defended his big blind.

FLOP



Boika checked. Martirosian bet 65,000, and Boika called.

TURN



Boika checked. Martirosian bet 300,000, and Boika called.

RIVER



Boika checked, and Martirosian bet 625,000. Boika called and won 2,080,000 with two pair, jacks and sevens.

COMMENTARY:

The very first hand of this heads-up match was a juicy one that likely would have gotten all in if they didn't start 240 big blinds deep. In heads-up play, the deeper you are, the more you raise from the button/small blind. Similarly, the deeper you are, the less you fold from the big blind and the less you raise. So, at over 200 big blinds deep, the vast majority of hands will start with raises from the button and calls from the big blind. On the flop, Artur Martirosian found an appropriate big bet sizing on a board where he should mainly bet small. When betting big, Martirosian should mix his big top pairs with bottom-of-range double backdoors, like 6♣ 4♣ and 3♦ 2♦. Aliaksei Boika had a tough decision whether to raise or just call. The bigger Martirosian bets, the less he should be raising. Since they're so deep, Boika could just sit back and let Martirosian bet into him. Having bottom two pair is not exactly a comfortable holding when it's possible to play a 480-big blind pot. On the turn, Martirosian went for the overbet. Turn overbetting is extremely common in heads-up play, especially when there are no flushes or straights and the big blind's range is capped. His hand should still get value from decent jacks and worse aces. Boika would and should rarely raise overbets. On the river, Martirosian was still very high in his range and went for a triple-barrel for value. He was likely surprised to see that he had been beaten and quickly lost a 104-big blind pot.

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

JOSH REICHARD WINS HEART POKER CHAMPIONSHIP AT VENETIAN

By Ryan Lucchesi

Mid-stakes circuit crusher Josh Reichard emerged victorious in the inaugural *Major Series of Poker Tour Heart Poker Championship* at The Venetian, earning \$212,939 for the win. The Janesville, Wisconsin native is no stranger to *MSPT* success, as he had already won his way into the tour's Hall of Fame.

This was his second tour title. He now has more than \$5 million in recorded tournament earnings, with over \$800,000 of that coming from his success on the *MSPT*. The 16-time *World Series of Poker Circuit* ring winner also has a *World Poker Tour* title to his name.

The \$1,600 event drew 1,051 entries over three starting flights. The prize pool of \$1.5 million was split between the top 118 finishers.

Action started slow under the bright lights of the *Venetian Poker Live* set before Brian Luo scored the first knockout of the final table. He then increased his chip lead by taking out recent bracelet winner Antonio Galiana.

Luo claimed another victim by sending Artem Metalidi to the rail in fifth place and Jessica Vierling notched her second knockout of the day when she eliminated Min Sung Lee in fourth place to set up three-handed play.

After a timely double, Reichard took out Luo in third, giving him a more than 6:1 lead at the start of heads-up play. It only took one all-in from there to bring the event to a close,



with Reichard's K-9 outracing the Q-J of Vierling.

Vierling earned \$159,480, her second largest score to date after winning the *WSOP Circuit* main event last summer at Commerce for \$328,273.

Player	Payout
1 Josh Reichard	\$212,939
2 Jessica Vierling	\$159,480
3 Brian Luo	\$120,597
4 Min Sung Lee	\$92,049
5 Artem Metalidi	\$70,924
6 Hugues Girard	\$55,170
7 Antonio Galiana	\$43,329
8 Daniel Smiljkovic	\$34,360
9 Timohty Pai	\$27,518

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TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2025 World Series of Poker
\$25,000 Heads-Up Championship



Artur Martirosian
2,900,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 30%
After Flop: 73%
After Turn: 89%



Aliaksei Boika
6,700,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 69%
After Flop: 26%
After Turn: 11%

PREFLOP

With the blinds at 10,000-20,000, Artur Martirosian raised to 50,000, Aliaksei Boika three-bet to 200,000. Martirosian called.



Boika bet 400,000, and Martirosian called.



Both players checked.



Boika checked, and Martirosian bet 600,000. Boika called, and Martirosian won 2,400,000 with two pair, queens and jacks.

COMMENTARY:

Artur Martirosian was trending downwards in the first level but clawed his way back into the match, taking down a 120-big blind pot. After some standard three-bet preflop action, Aliaksei Boika bet 100% pot on the flop with his two overs. With A-K, betting large, betting small, and checking are all perfectly reasonable. The percentage of big bets are much larger in deep-stacked play, so it was a very good sizing. Martirosian had a very obvious call, as he would with any pair, open-ended straight draw, gutshot with an over, and hands like 10-8 suited with a backdoor flush draw. On the turn, Boika had to check with no spade in his hand. Martirosian could have decided to bet small, but opted to gain more information and assess on the river. When the queen paired on the river, Boika capped himself by checking. Martirosian now had a comfortable bet, which only lost to an unusual trapped queen or A-J. Boika made the +EV call with his A-K, and Martirosian enjoyed chipping back closer to starting stack.

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

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Final Table Takedown: Brad Ruben Wins Fifth Bracelet In Five Years

By Craig Tapscott



Brad Ruben graduated from the University of Florida with an MBA, then moved to South Florida for a job in financial sales. He wasn't passionate at all about the work and was having far more fun playing poker on the side. In 2012 Ruben decided to play full-time and he hasn't looked back since. He decided early on to focus on pot-limit Omaha, as he enjoyed the game and felt that there were too many good players already specializing in hold'em.

Ruben's life changed forever in 2018, however, when he caused a tragic car accident. He was left feeling guilty, ashamed, and struggling with self-worth. If it wasn't for the support of his family and close friends, he says he wouldn't have made it through the ordeal and is very thankful for the coaches and medical professionals who helped him heal and return to his chosen profession stronger than before. The accident crystallized Ruben's passion for mental health and PTSD recovery.

In 2020, Ruben won his first *WSOP* bracelet online in a \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha event. Another PLO online bracelet followed in 2021, as well as his first live title in the \$1,500 razz event. In 2022, he took down the \$1,500 dealer's choice event. Most recently, he won the \$1,500 no-limit 2-7 lowball tournament for his fifth bracelet in as many years. The *WSOP Circuit* ring winner has more than \$2.2 million in tournament earnings overall.

Event: WSOP No-Limit 2-7 Single Draw Lowball
Buy-In: \$1,500
Entrants: 532
Prize Pool: \$706,230
First-Place Prize: \$130,080

Brad Ruben: I wanted to share a couple hands that could help laymen understand this wonderful game more.

Craig Tapscott: That's me. Layman. I play most of the mixed games, but I don't know this one. Can you share a few basic strategy premises to the game?

BR: In no-limit deuce, everyone gets dealt five cards. The objective is to get the worst possible hand (7-5-4-3-2 offsuit is the nuts). There's a small blind, a big blind, and a big blind ante that's slightly larger than the big blind. Players can bet any amount at any time, and the players who stick around after the initial betting round get an additional draw.

So, for example, a hand like 8-8-5-3-2 is a very strong draw and wants to continue, discard one of the eights and hopefully catch a 4,6,7 or 9 to improve to a strong hand.

CT: Okay the beginners are satisfied but let's go deeper with some tips.

BR: You want to three-bet convertible hands like J-9-5-3-2 or J-7-4-3-2 in position. This hand is a favorite if they draw one. And if they stand pat, you have an easy decision



to draw one.

You want to be balanced with bet sizings. Bet big after the draw with big made hands or big pairs (for example, bet 8-8-5-3-2 the same large amount as you'd bet 8-7-5-3-2). This makes you difficult to play against.

Always be observant of the action and take notes on opponents, like you would do with every form of poker. Are they too loose? Three-bet them wider. Too tight? Don't call their bets after the draw unless you draw to a good hand like a 10-7 or better.

CT: Players really seem to get excited for this one on the summer schedule every year.

BR: There's a lot of skill to the game, and a lot of action. Players often have very little information. There are no community cards, just betting patterns and the number of cards drawn.

So, the game becomes a psychological one. Are they pat because they have it? Or because they are snowing? (Bluffing with a hand like 7-7-5-5-3, which blocks good cards that an opponent might need.)

Many players say this is the purest form of poker, where reading your opponent is a vital skill.

**HAND
NO. 1**

Stacks: Brad Ruben – 3,000,000 (120 BB)

Han Liu – 3,000,000 (120 BB) Tyler Phillips – 1,500,000 (60 BB)

Blinds: 10,000-25,000 with a 35,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 6

BR: We were all deep. Han, who was to my right, and I had around 120 big blinds. The small blind had 60 big blinds and was the second shortest stack. The shortest stack still had a whopping 55 big blinds!

Liu raised to 80,000 from under-the-gun.

This raise from Han was a bigger raise than the rest of the players have been utilizing, but also made sense with how deep everyone was.

Ruben called from UTG+1 holding Q-7-6-4-2.

CT: What's your take on your hand at this point?

BR: This is a draw 1 hand that can make monsters. (7-6-4-3-2 is the second nuts and 7-6-5-4-2 is the fourth nuts.)

Tyler Phillips made it 300,000 to go from the small blind, and Liu folded.

BR: I had an easy call with a very strong draw.

Ruben called. Phillips stood pat, and Ruben took one card.

As expected, Tyler stands pat, and I draw. Before I checked my card, I observed what he did, and he decided to bet 600,000 into 740,000.

Phillips bet 600,000.

CT: That's almost a pot-sized bet?

BR: Yes. That's a large bet. Tyler is saying he has a big hand, like a strong nine (9-7-6-3-2 or 9-6-5-4-2) or an eight-low or better.

I checked my card and caught a king. But something felt off. I knew Tyler as a good, balanced player and capable of having snows (which are hands like 7-7-7-5-2, 9-8-8-6-6, which block strong made pat hands).

So, I thought about it for a bit, looked at Tyler, and wasn't picking up on any tells. But my instincts told me that Tyler wanted a fold, not a call, so I went with my gut and called.

Ruben won the hand of 1,940,000.

He tapped the table, and my hero call was luckily correct. This was a big pot, as it propelled me to the chip lead and crippled a strong opponent.

**HAND
NO. 2**

Stacks: Brad Ruben – 3,250,000 (130 BB)

Han Liu – 4,000,000 (160 BB)

Blinds: 10,000-25,000 with a 35,000 big blind ante

Players Remaining: 5

BR: This is another hero call in a small pot, but it explains some no-limit deuce concepts well.

Liu raised to 100,000 from the small blind.

BR: We were at the same blind level and I had 4-3-3-2-2. This was an easy call despite being a D2, (drawing two



cards because I have two pair) because I am in position and we are deep (he has 160 big blinds, and I have 130 big blinds) so there are implied odds if I draw well. Plus, Han is a loose aggressive player with a wider range than most, so we must call.

Ruben called. Liu drew one card and Ruben drew two.

Liu bet 200,000.

He bet 200,000 into 245,000, or 80 percent of pot. I drew a 4 and a K, so I could only beat higher pairs (fives thru tens).

Since I've seen 2-2, 3-3 and 4-4, that makes it more likely that Han has some fives through nines in his hand and he could have paired one of them.

CT: What does that bet sizing signal to you?

BR: His large wager is saying he has a hand like a strong ten, or a nine or even an eight. Or, he's bluffing with a high pair that balances those hands. Han is a good, thinking player who will balance his range and have both strong hands and high pairs.

CT: What now?

BR: I have to be right 45 percent of the time, and my hand is one of the best bluff catchers I could have, having seen so many deuces, threes and fours, and not seen any sixes thru tens, so...

Ruben called.

BR: I made the arguably mandatory call, and he fortunately showed a pair of nines.

Ruben won the pot of 645,000.

CT: Great call and congratulations on your latest bracelet! ♠

Ruben's dream is to continue to raise awareness for non-profits such as the PTSD Foundation of America and Shields and Stripes. He hopes to be an example that with the right support, hard work, and a good mindset, things can turn around. Follow Ruben on Twitter/X @Brad_Ruben and on IG @bradrubenspoker.

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TOURNAMENT

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DON'T BE A HERO

By Jonathan Little

I was recently told about a hand from a \$1-\$2 no-limit cash game that illustrates a few mistakes many over-curious players make.

Everyone folded to our Hero in the hijack who raised to \$12 out of his \$200 stack with K♦ 4♦.

K♦ 4♦ is a bit too loose to raise from the hijack seat in a cash game. To justify raising it from the hijack or earlier, the players yet to act must all be too tight and passive (which was not the case at this table).

Also, Hero raised much too large. By making it \$12, he ensures that he will be in terrible shape when he gets action because competent players understand they do not need to defend against six-big blind raises too often. Of course, the opponents may not be competent, but even if they call with hands like A♣ 6♦ or 8♥ 7♥, it is not a huge success for Hero because those hands have plenty of equity.

The button and the big blind (an aggressive kid) called. The flop came J♠ 2♦ 2♥ and everyone checked.

Since the flop is incredibly dry, Hero should have considered making a small continuation bet with much of his range, especially hands that lack showdown value but have some equity, like K♦ 4♦. This will allow him to cheaply bluff with his air while extracting value with his best hands.

The turn was the 9♥. The big blind bet \$22 into the \$37 pot and Hero called.

The turn is quite bad for Hero, given he now loses to almost everything. While the aggressive big blind may be semi-bluffing with all possible flush and straight draws, he could also easily be value betting a jack, nine, or deuce. He may even be overvaluing a marginal underpair or ace high. Not to mention that the player on the button behind may have a hand that he can continue.

Hero simply must make this incredibly easy turn fold. If you call in this spot, you will have a difficult time winning at poker.

The button folded and the river was the 3♦. The big blind bet \$60 into the \$81 pot.

As on the turn, Hero has an easy fold. That said, given all draws failed to improve on the river, if Hero was somehow convinced that his opponent was mostly bluffing on the turn, he should consider calling the river. The real problem is that he loses to a decent amount of hands his opponent may be turning into a bluff.

Hero called and lost to Q-J, explaining to me that he decided to call because he thought the big blind was an aggressive player.

It is important to understand that just because some-



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one is aggressive does not mean that they are inclined to bluff the turn and river into multiple opponents when the flop checks through. You must figure out the specific spots where your opponent is aggressive and adjust accordingly.

For example, if he was tight and aggressive, his aggression likely means he has a strong hand that he thinks is worth a value bet. If instead, he bets the turn 100% of the time when the flop checks through, Hero's call becomes much closer to reasonable.

When making an incredibly exploitative call, be sure it is for a reason that is more precise than "my opponent is aggressive."

If you want to avoid making the most common mistakes I see my students make, I put together a course called *The 25 Biggest Leaks and How to Fix Them*. This course is completely free inside *Card Player* Poker School!

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Jonathan Little is a two-time WPT winner and the 2024 PokerGO Cup champion with nearly \$9 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.

PUNT OF THE DAY: A MONOTONE FLOP IN MONTE CARLO

By Sam Greenwood



Greenwood with David Yan

Even the best players in the world make mistakes. Join Sam Greenwood as he breaks down and analyzes hands played from the high roller circuit on his Punt Of The Day Substack.

For as long as I can remember, I've had an excellent memory. It's helped me remember reads on opponents, solver strategies, and secret bathrooms at different tournament stops.

But it's also been a crutch, something I rely on when I can't think straight. As I wrote this entry, I was confident the hand took place in 2024, but when I looked at the hand history in the *Triton Poker* app, I realized that there was no seven-handed \$30,000 no-limit event in 2024. So this hand must have taken place in 2023.

Is my memory slipping as I age? Have I experienced too many situations and played too many hands to possibly keep track of all of them? Will anyone remember me? While these questions continue to haunt me, I'll try my best to impart some wisdom about playing monotone boards.

Event: 2023 Triton Monte Carlo \$30,000 NLH High Roller The Hand

The blinds are 3,000-6,000 with a 6,000 big blind ante and I have 360,000 up from my original 200,000 starting stack.

The action is on me in the hijack and I raise to 13,000 with Q♦ 10♣. Everyone folds to David Yan in the big blind who has 222,000, and he calls.

Flop: 9♣ 6♣ 2♣ (Pot: 35,000)

David checks, and I bet 9,000. David calls.

Turn: 5♦ (Pot: 51,000)

David checks, and I bet 30,000. David calls.

River: 10♥ (Pot: 111,000)

David checks once again, and I check behind, winning at showdown against his 9♥ 8♠.

What Was I Thinking?

You should be opening any two Broadway cards from the hijack, so I raised.

Monotone flops rarely get big bets unless you're shallow enough to comfortably stack off with bare top pair, so I played one small bet size with my range. Monotone boards are also often scary against a big blind range, which will have a lot of janky suited hands, but 9-6-2 is disconnected enough that I thought I'd have a pure bet or close to it, so I did.

I thought the turn was a pretty good card for David's range because a lot of his pairs or one-club hands pick up additional outs. But I thought I still had an okay candidate to two-barrel as I had two overs and a club. I can get him to fold pairs immediately, and getting him to fold anything that peels the flop is a win for me.

On the river, I thought I had a hand with a lot of pot-share, but one that was too thin to value bet. If I could have shoved for pot, I would have, but with 1.5x pot left to play I wasn't sure if I ever played a size smaller than all-in, or if my hand was strong enough to shove all-in. So I checked.

What Did I Get Wrong?

My preflop and flop thoughts were correct. I don't get flop checks on monotone boards in this spot until the flops are a little more connected and he can have one-card straight draws. Or if my range contains many hands that have a lot of equity, but want to pot control - hands like K♦ 10♦ on A♣ K♣ 8♣.

On the turn my thought process was... fine. This a spot where 2008 poker and 2025 solver poker basically come to the same conclusion: Betting unpaired hands with a club is always an acceptable play. The highest frequency turn bet is A♣ 10x and the lowest frequency is Ax K♣, but betting them will always be a fine play.

The river is where I slipped up. Q-10 has 80% equity and we only have 150% pot to play. Also, Q-10 probably has a lot more equity vs. humans than vs. the computer. Humans, including experienced, tricky poker players like David Yan, like fast-playing good hands out of position. I think David is capable of slow-playing here, but my point is that he probably has 4♣ 3♣ on the river a lot less often than the solver does.

I probably have more than 80% equity vs most human ranges, which means my check back loses more money in real life than in solver land.

I also thought that my river value-betting range would be very polar and I wouldn't be allowed to make thin value bets, but if I did a better job of constructing David's range in-game, I would have realized he has a lot of pair-plus-draw hands, like his actual hand - 9-8 offsuit. All the pair-plus-draw hands are credible bluff catchers, so it's not as if I'm worried about the big blind not having enough worse hands to bluff catch.

Finally, a small, but significant blocker effect: Having the 10♣ is better than having the Q♣, because I block potential rivered two pair he might have with 10♣ 6x or 10♣ 9x, but don't block potential bluff catchers like Q♣ 9x.

Types Of Errors I Made

Misunderstanding range strategy
Misunderstanding blocker effects
Playing scared poker

Grade

The first big error here was misunderstanding range strategy. I didn't consider that I'd frequently be betting less than all-in with my range on the river.

The other big mistake was playing scared poker. I was too concerned about the low-frequency play of him check raising all-in. I missed out on value with a hand that has a lot of equity. If I'm so concerned about getting check-raised bluffed too much, I should just bet-call instead of checking back. My hand is a strong bluff-catcher because the 10♣ should only be in his value bets and not in his bluffs.

Let's call it a C-. ♠



Sam Greenwood is one of the winningest tournament poker players ever and is third on Canada's all-time money list, having cashed for \$42 million and counting in high roller events all over the world. The former stock trader-turned-champion has played millions of poker hands

and is breaking them down street by street on his Punt Of The Day Substack. You can reach out to the Run It Once coach on Twitter/X for private coaching @SamGreenwoodRIO.

SPICE UP YOUR HOME GAME: ARCHIE AND ITS VARIANTS

By Kevin Haney

One of the more lively but perhaps polarizing games to add to your home mix is **Archie**, a five-card Triple Draw high-low split game with qualifiers of an eight-or-better for low and either a pair of nines or better for high. (In some games, the high qualifier is a pair of sixes or better.)

While the rules are relatively simple, it's a difficult game to play well and probably has the most variation in terms of what starting hands people choose to play and their overall strategic outlook.

By all accounts the game originated in the Phoenix area and took the name of Archie to honor a gentleman who had quite a bad run in it when first introduced. Originally, I had assumed Archie was a fun player throwing a party, but have since softened on that stance after years of riding this rollercoaster.

Pots frequently get enormous so once you enter with a reasonable holding it can be hard to find an off ramp, especially since it's often not clear what direction others are going. Add in brutal coolers and an extended period of run bad is possible for just about anyone, but at least Archie received a cool consolation prize out of it.

Conceptually, high hands hold an advantage over lows since it's hard for the latter to scoop. For example, in a

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heads-up pot someone drawing to 2♣ 4♥ 6♥ 7♠ can only hope to get their money back against a measly pair of nines. However, it's tough to play mediocre single pairs in this game even when they improve since it's all too easy to be shown a better high at the end, and someone usually ends up making a low.

We can target either the high or the low, but it's important to have strong potential in that direction or else risk getting stuck in the middle which can be quite costly. The first order of business in Archie is to qualify, and as far as high hands go, we get dealt a pair of nines or better around 27% of the time:

	Probability	Cumulative Prob
Full House or Better	0.17%	0.17%
Flush	0.20%	0.37%
Straight	0.39%	0.76%
Three of a Kind	2.11%	2.87%
Two Pair	4.75%	7.62%
AA	3.25%	10.87%
99-KK	<u>16.25%</u>	27.12%
	27.12%	

Trips are a strong holding as they often don't need to be improved upon to drag the high side, and a small

three-of-a-kind such as three fives can effectively interfere with the ability of the low hands to complete. Note that in many cases it's beneficial to draw one to trips to mask your strength.

Two pairs are decent in the right spots and over the course of three draws will fill up around one time in four. However, middling versions such as J-J-9-9 are often pay-off hands as they don't block low straights and can easily lose to a pair of aces or other high pair that improved.

Another good starting high hand is a pair of aces, but we would prefer to play them heads-up. When facing a raise in Archie there's a strong argument to three-betting any holding you choose to play as it's generally never to your benefit to allow weak hands going in the opposite direction to come in cheaply. But with aces it's more important as they don't perform well multi-way, and we'll happily take our chances against a single opponent since they only fear the top 3% of hands (trips or better) and are essentially flipping against two pair.

Other big pairs should mostly be reserved for blind steal situations. However, in multi-way pots there can be value when getting good pot odds to drawing three and attempting to hit high trips or better.

Big flush draws such as A♣ K♣ 8♣ 7♣ are highly profitable as we'll find another club around half of the time and will usually be on the winning side in a flush versus flush situation. Pairing the ace or king also has value, especially on the end versus an opponent going low.

Qualifying lows are the easiest draws to complete; with A-3-4-6 (or any other one card draw) you will

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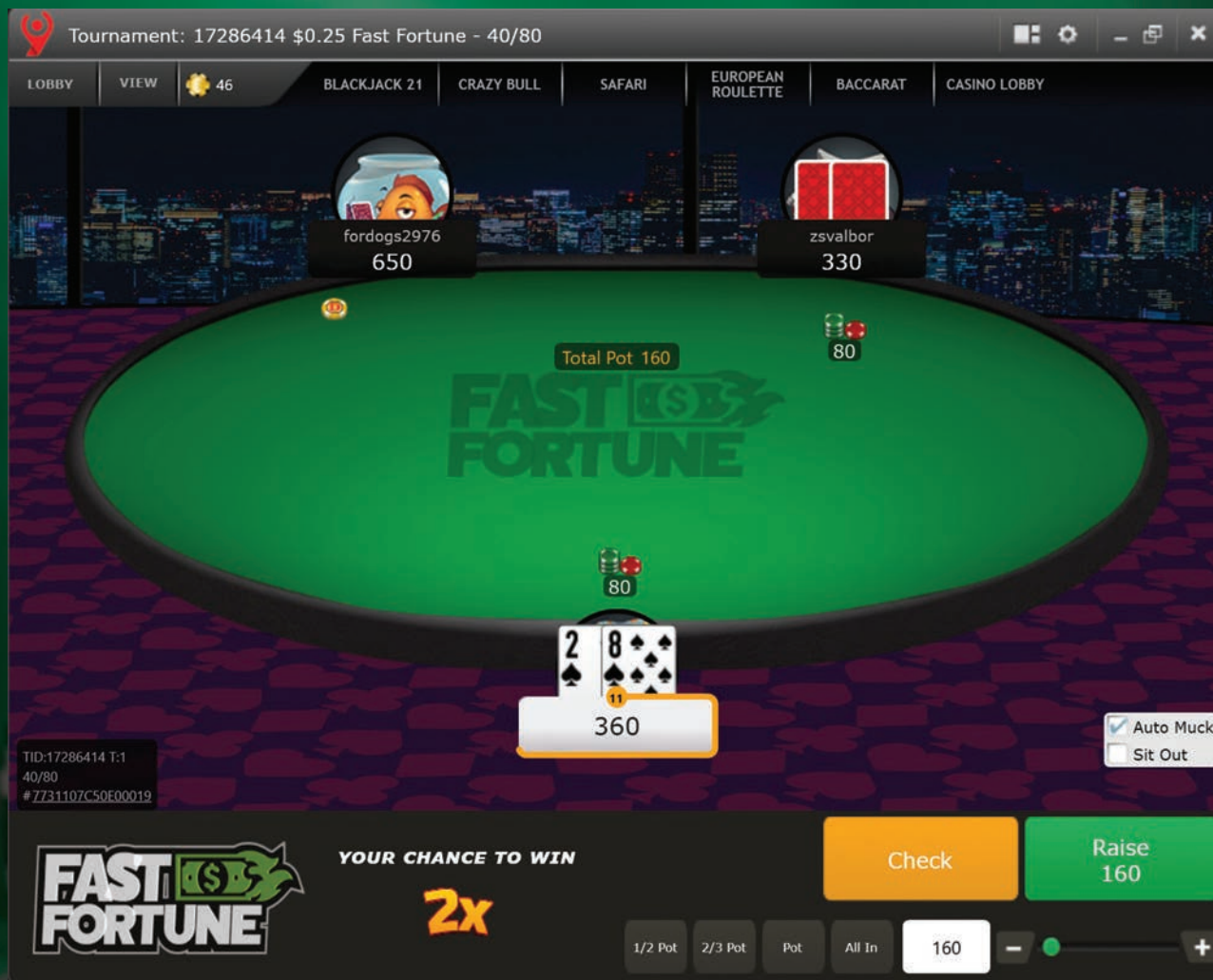
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make an eight-or better low a little over 70% of the time. However, given this high likelihood of success applies to all, it's important in multi-way pots to have some high potential and/or be drawing to at least a six-low otherwise you'll often be taking the worst of it.

A slightly annoying and tough decision needs to be made when you start with a premium drawing hand such as 2-3-4-5 and receive an eight on the first draw. Do you keep the qualifying low, or should you continue drawing and take two shots at improving to a better hand that has a better chance of scooping?

It depends on the situation but it's usually correct to break the eight as the odds of either improving or at least making an eight-low again with two draws to go are relatively good, preserving your implied odds. In Stud eight-or-better we could just keep the made low and free-roll a high pair, but we don't have that luxury in Archie.

When no one qualifies the pot is either chopped or goes to the superior (but non-qualifying) high hand, but a fun alternative is to keep the money in the middle setting up a spicy splash pot on the next deal. A community card can also be deployed for use only on the high side; however, it can also greatly benefit the low draws.

For example, a two card draw such as 3-4-5 is more playable since there are 16 community cards (aces, twos, sixes, and sevens) that will give you a straight draw providing a greater ability to scoop.

Overall, I'd give Archie an 8 out of 10 rating as far as mixed games go.

777 is a variant of Archie where the pot can potentially

be split three ways between the best high hand, the best low, and the superior badugi. A major drawback is that the qualifying requirements (trip sevens, seven low, and seven badugi) are quite stringent, so this game only gets a 4 out of 10 rating from me.

Since it's relatively difficult to qualify for the high side in 777 we are mostly hoping to get dealt holdings like 2♣ 5♥ 6♠ that can make some combination of lows, badugis, and straights. In any player pool there are usually a few individuals that prefer one winner games, tolerate split-pot variants, but may balk at the prospect of possibly chopping the pot three-ways.

Most players in your lineup are likely to prefer regular Archie and embrace the action it creates as it tends to spill over into the entire rotation when the ne'er-do-wells chase their losses. It is a polarizing variant in that many claim to dislike it, but very few respond by locking it down and waiting for the next game. Most will still end up contesting pot after pot, which is somewhat amusing, but not all that uncommon in a good game. ♠



Kevin Haney is a former actuary but left the corporate job to focus on his passions for poker and fitness. The certified personal trainer owned a gym in New Jersey, but has since moved to Las Vegas. He started playing the game back in 2003, and particularly enjoys

taking new players interested in mixed games under his wing and quickly making them proficient in all variants. Learn more or just say hello with an email to haneyk612@gmail.com.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2025 World Series of Poker
\$25,000 Heads-Up Championship



Artur Martirosian
6,615,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 39%
After Flop: 22%
After Turn: 11%



Aliaksei Boika
2,985,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 61%
After Flop: 76%
After Turn: 80%



PREFLOP

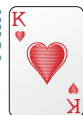
With the blinds at 30,000-60,000, Aliaksei Boika raised to 125,000, and Artur Martirosian defended his big blind.

FLOP



Martirosian checked. Boika bet 80,000, and Martirosian called.

TURN



Both players checked.

RIVER



Martirosian bet 420,000, and Boika called and won 1,250,000 with a pair of aces.

COMMENTARY:

Aliaksei Boika had fallen more than 2:1 behind Artur Martirosian and came up with a massive hero call to close the gap. After standard preflop and flop action, Boika slowed down with a four-liner on the board. According to a GTO-based strategy, he should have put out a bet of 25-to-50% pot to target calls from queens, kings, and put pressure on other aces. This is also done to both balance straights and as a block bet, in order not to face a huge bet from your opponent on the river. When Boika checked, regardless of the river, Martirosian must have realized that his pair of tens had no showdown value whatsoever. Martirosian would be capable of holding a number of jacks for a winning straight with plenty of hands that called the flop. Therefore, on a blank river, Martirosian went for a bet of almost pot, which put Boika to the test. While it's a thin +EV call, it's a much more difficult decision on the felt. He eventually found the correct call to chip back up.

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ONE WEEK AT THE WSOP: SNIFFING A BRACELET

By Blaise Bourgeois

This summer was all about redemption after the absolute nightmare that was my 2024 *World Series of Poker*. I went 0 for 21 in live bullets playing my biggest *WSOP* schedule to date.

While it was a dream come true to play my first *WSOP* main event and reach day 3, it was otherwise a miserable stretch of time at the poker table. I was getting bad beat left and right, playing way too aggressively from the start, and hardly ever sniffed a dinner break. *It sucked.*

The series served as a much-needed wake-up call and humbled me. I had come in hot after a series of victories to start my 2024 campaign, including winning a *WSOP Circuit* ring in Brazil. But I never adjusted to the *WSOP* field and paid for it.

Over the past year, I've gained a great deal of strategic insight and have had several close calls in large-field main events with \$300,000 or more up top. I came in full of exploitative insight and was ready to play.

I expected to put up somewhere between \$50,000-\$100,000 worth of buy-ins. That's pretty incredible considering that I was earning \$150 a day to cover poker tournaments as a live reporter in 2022. Hell, I had to take two buses to and from the Horseshoe to South Point every day and put in a 12-hour shift five-to-six days a week back then. I've really come a long way.

In addition to taking much more time off to relax this summer, my strategy (for sub-\$1,500 events) on day 1 is straightforward: fast play great hands, trap out of position, and underbluff and overfold against recreational players. In my first week of play, it worked out quite well.

I started my 2025 campaign, like many others, by firing the \$1,000 *Mystery Millions*. While I'm not the biggest fan of the mystery bounty format, the fields are incredibly soft and it's undoubtedly the easiest way to win a million dollars in Las Vegas. Fortunately, I only fired the event twice. Unfortunately, I busted close to the money both times and then took a day off to go shopping, get my house in order, and get a much-needed haircut.

I was planning to take Friday off but I had a bunch of friends playing the \$1,100 *Wynn Summer Classic* turbo. While the field was incredibly reg-heavy, we were able to build up a quite formidable stack before losing a couple of flips at the penultimate table, finishing 13th for about \$4,000. I say 'flips' lightly, as this guy in the big blind snapped my A-6 off from the small blind with Q-2 for nine blinds (66% of his stack) with a 20-big blind chip average. I left flabbergasted and, quite frankly, pissed.

After getting home from the Wynn at 5 am, I slept in and took it easy by the pool. Again, I didn't plan on playing, but then I heard about a potential six-figure overlay in the \$300 mystery bounty (\$250,000 GTD) at the Golden Nugget. I also had friends there, so I played the final flight and ended up bagging a big stack.

I hardly had any time to sleep, as the restart was about seven hours after we bagged. When I arrived, the prospects weren't great. About 131 of us remained, with 106 minimum bounties (\$300) and a \$25,000 top bounty. Worst of all, it



did not overlay!

With the majority of players unfamiliar with proper mystery bounty strategy, I was able to claim a \$500 bounty with minimal risk. Later on, a guy open-jammed 25 big blinds from the cutoff with pocket deuces. I had 22 bigs and A-Q in the small blind. With about 80 players left, this was an incredible spot to chip up, cover the table, and make a run at the top prize and the bounties. However, the deuces held up, and I cashed out for a total of \$1,175. I got out of there as fast as I could, which wasn't very fast at all.

After nearly an hour, thanks to an unnecessarily long payout line, I went to the Horseshoe to fire the single-flight \$600 Deepstack event and was able to sit down with 25 big blinds. I really wanted to start a bit deeper, but I didn't have a choice given my late arrival.

However, I quickly took my 30,000-chip stack to nearly 100,000 in the first level, and we were off and rolling. I moved over to a table next to my friend Anson Tsang, and after about an hour, I got extremely fortunate in a set-over-set spot and chipped up to about 270,000. After dinner, I was able to get my entire stack in overbetting both turn and river for piles with K-10 suited on a 10-8-2-5-10 board, and became one of the tournament chip leaders. After bullying the bubble and winning some small flips against short stacks, I went on to bag a cool 1,205,000 - 18th in chips with 301 players left from the 6,090-player field.

I got home and could barely sleep. I had twice the chip average with a super-soft field and drew a phenomenal table with a ton of chips to be won. This was the dream spot, I was absolutely buzzing with excitement and couldn't wait. Everything was lining up and I was ready to dominate. Only 300 players stood between me and a bracelet.

But then, I folded the entire first hour. Nothing was hap-

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“I got home and could barely sleep. I had twice the chip average with a super-soft field and drew a phenomenal table with a ton of chips to be won. This was the dream spot. Everything was lining up and I was ready to dominate. But then, I folded the entire first hour.”

pening, and I couldn't reasonably open or three-bet a hand. Players were falling left and right, but my chip stack began to dwindle. After about two hours, my 40-big blind stack was only worth 15 big blinds, and I was left wondering... how did I get here?

I chopped a pair of all ins, both of which I was ahead preflop, and then the blinds went up once again and suddenly I had 10 bigs. I then risked 2.6 bigs to win 7.7 with K-J against A-2 and couldn't get there, leaving me with 6.5 big blinds. I moved to another table and was dealt the big blind immediately!

Everything was going wrong. I was left with 3.6 big blinds and had five chances to open, before looking down at J-3, J-3, 7-2, 7-3, 8-3. No good. I had to hope the big blind would give me something.

Lojack opened, the button three-bet jammed for 18 big blinds, and I look down at my hand. Two black queens. With

76 players left, if I could win this pot, I could be back in the thick of things with fold equity. I put in my remaining stack. The lojack snapped it off. He had aces, the button had A-J. Ace on the flop.

The dream was dead. So much hope and potential, only to basically blind out. I know I'll be back and have better opportunities but it sucks knowing that I never really had a chance to play for it.

I collected \$4,184 for my efforts, but I had too much energy to go home, and, after a fair bit of moping, regged the \$200 daily deepstack and min-cashed for \$405. Four cashes in five tournaments – quite the feat for someone who went 0 for 21 last year! ♠



Blaise Bourgeois is a WSOP Circuit ring winner, poker journalist, and lead strategy editor for Card Player. Find him on Twitter/X @BlaiseBourgeois.

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2025 World Series of Poker
\$25,000 Heads-Up Championship



Artur Martirosian
5,710,000 Chips

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 42%
After Flop: 22%
After Turn: 14%



Aliaksei Boika
3,890,000 Chips



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 57%
After Flop: 78%
After Turn: 86%

PREFLOP

With the blinds at 30,000-60,000, Artur Martirosian raised to 140,000 and Aliaksei Boika called.

FLOP



Both players checked.

TURN



Both players checked.

RIVER



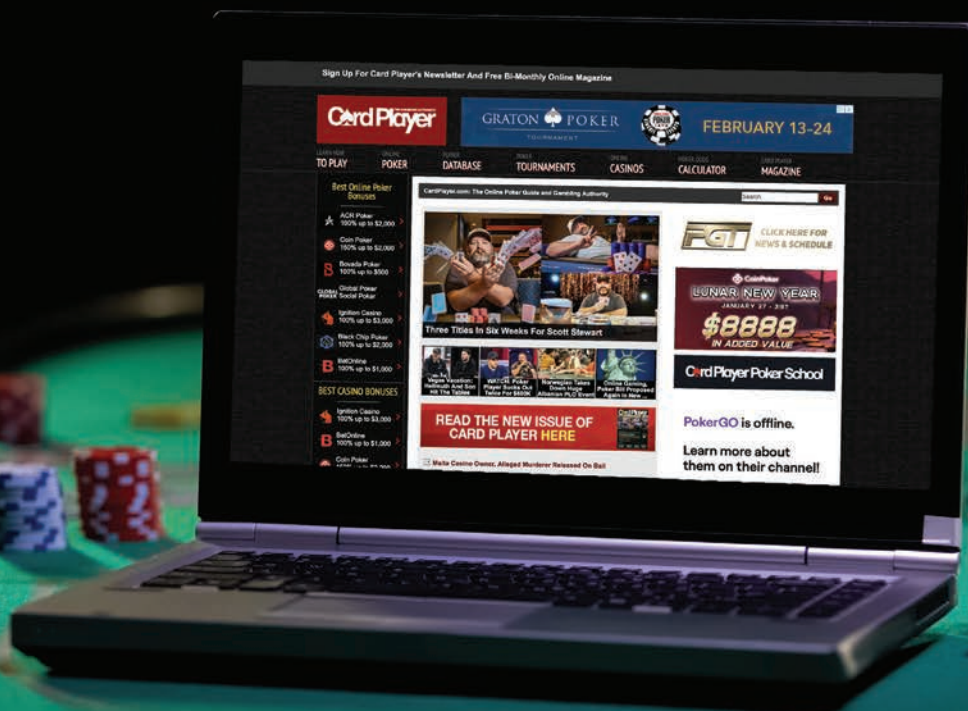
Boika bet 200,000, and Martirosian raised to 700,000. Boika folded.

COMMENTARY:

Martirosian often used his elite ability to steal pots throughout the heads-up championship, and this hand was a pure representation of his superbly timed aggression. Neither player was incentivized to bet the flop or the turn, as their high cards would often be good enough to win at showdown. On the river, Boika's range would have mostly small bets and very large bets, which made his 40% bet sizing quite unusual. His huge bets should often be full houses and airball bluffs without showdown, such as 9-6 suited. His smaller bets should mostly be ace-highs, small pocket pairs, and some weak 7-x hands. To balance full houses in this spot, players should generally mix their full houses that have weak kickers. However, the population will often be unbalanced in this spot, and Martirosian would have been highly aware of this fact. The Russian simply took this hand to the streets, likely targeting exactly ace-highs in this spot. His raise worked to perfection and was just another example of why he's one of the best players in the world. He is a deserving champion and a heads-up master, having earned his second career bracelet in this format and his third overall.

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

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	May 21-July 14	Summer Classic	Wynn ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 23-July 13	Summer Open Series	Orleans Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 27-July 16	World Series of Poker	Horseshoe Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	May 28-July 13	Poker Classic	Aria Resort & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
JUNE	June 5-July 14	Summer Series	Resorts World ■ Las Vegas, NV
JULY	July 16-28	WSOP Circuit - Choctaw	Choctaw Casino & Resort ■ Durant, OK
	July 29-Aug. 12	Seminole Hard Rock Poker Open	Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino ■ Hollywood, FL
AUGUST	Aug. 7-18	WSOP Circuit - North Carolina	Harrah's Casino & Resort ■ Cherokee, NC
	Aug. 14-25	WSOP Circuit - Bay Area	Graton Resort & Casino ■ Rohnert Park, CA
	Aug. 14-25	WSOP Circuit - Atlantic City	Harrah's Casino & Resort ■ Atlantic City, NJ
	Aug. 20-24	Summer Poker Round Up	Wildhorse Resort Casino ■ Pendleton, OR
	Aug. 21-Sept. 1	WSOP Circuit - New Orleans	Caesars Hotel & Casino ■ New Orleans, LA
SEPTEMBER	Sept. 17-Oct. 8	World Series of Poker Europe	Kings Casino ■ Rozvadov, Czech Republic
	Sept. 18-28	Card Player Poker Tour	The Reserve Poker Club ■ Toledo, OH
	Sept. 25-Oct. 14	Trailblazer Poker Tour	Texas Card House ■ Dallas & Las Colinas, TX

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$135

WEDNESDAY

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$65

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TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$155 KO \$25

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$130

THURSDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$155 KO \$25

FRIDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$130

SATURDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$190

SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. NLH, \$140

FLORIDA

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

MONDAY

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

OHIO

WEDNESDAY

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

FRIDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

BESTBET - ORANGE PARK

TUESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

SATURDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

BESTBET - ST. AUGUSTINE

MONDAY

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

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

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

FRIDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$160

SATURDAY

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

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$200

SUNDAY

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

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$85 AO \$20

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$55 AO \$20

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$65 AO \$30 (\$5K Guarantee)

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6:00 p.m. NLH, \$0 AO \$20 (\$4K Guarantee)

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3:00 p.m. NLH, \$130 RB \$100 AO \$40 (\$10K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$100 AO \$20

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TUESDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70

THURSDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$70

FRIDAY

6:30 p.m. NLH, \$125

SATURDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$125

SUNDAY

1:00 p.m. NLH, \$70

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Action Card - A card that causes an increase in betting.

Air - A bad hand with little to no value.

Angle (Shooting) - An unethical play used to gain information or an advantage.

Backdoor - A draw needing two streets to complete.

Balance - Playing different hands in the same way so opponents can't read you.

Bankroll - The amount of money you have to play poker with.

Barrel - A continuation bet followed by a bet on the turn and/or river.

Blocker - Holding one of your opponent's outs.

Bluff Catcher - A weak hand that can only beat a bluff.

Bounty - A prize earned for a knockout in a tournament.

Brick - A blank card that is unlikely to have helped.

Broadway - A straight to the ace.

Bubble - The time period right before a tournament reaches the money.

Burn - A card that is removed by the dealer to prevent cheating.

Calling Station - A loose, passive player who rarely folds.

Chip Race - Coloring up the smallest chips in circulation during a tournament.

Chop - A split of the pot.

Coin Flip - A situation where the odds for each player are roughly 50/50.

Collusion - Working with another player to cheat.

Continuation Bet - When the preflop aggressor makes another bet on the flop.

Crying Call - A call from a player who does not believe his hand is best.

Dead Money - A player with no chance of winning. Also, extra money in the pot.

Donk Bet - An early position bet by a player who was not the aggressor in the previous betting round.

Drawing Dead - When your hand can no longer win.

Drawing Live - When your hand is behind but can still draw out.

Effective Stack - The smallest stack among two players in a heads-up pot.

Eight-Or-Better - A qualifier common in high-low split games.

Equity - The mathematical expected value of your hand.

Expected Value - The weighted average of what you should profit in the long run.

Family Pot - When every player at the table sees the flop or fourth street.

Felted - To lose all your chips, such that there are none left on the felt.

Float - To call with a weak hand with the intention of bluffing later.

Freeroll - A tournament with no buy-in, or a tournament stake with no makeup.

GTO - Game Theory Optimal play aiming for an unexploitable strategy.

Gutshot - An inside straight draw.

Hero Call - Calling with a relatively weak hand when you suspect a bluff.

Hollywood - Exaggerating and overacting to sell strength or weakness.

Horse - A player financially backed by someone else.

ICM - The Independent Chip Model assigns monetary value to tournament chips.

Implied Odds - The additional chips you expect to win if your draw improves.

Juice - Rake, or the fee collected by the house or casino.

Kill - A button that temporarily increases the stakes of the game.

LAG - A loose, aggressive player.

Limp - To enter a pot by calling the minimum bet rather than raise.

Muck - To fold.

Nit - A rock, who rarely takes risks or gives action, and only plays premium cards.

Nuts - The best possible hand on a given board.

Open - To bet first.

Orbit - A full rotation of the blinds at the table.

Overbet - To make a bet that is more than the current size of the pot.

Overcall - To call a bet after others have already called.

Paint - A face card jack, queen, or king.

Pat - A hand that no longer needs any more draws.

Polarized - When a player's range is split between either very strong hands or air.

Quarter - To win 1/4 or 3/4 of a pot by tying a hand in a high-low split game.

Rabbit Hunt - To look at future cards after folding and the hand is complete.

Railbird - Someone who hangs out on the sidelines of a poker room.

Rainbow - Three or four cards of different suits.

Range - The possible starting hands a player might have given their action.

Ratholing - Going south or sneaking your chips off the table during the game.

Scoop - To win both halves of the pot in a high-low split game.

Semi-Bluff - To bluff with a drawing hand that could improve to the best hand.

Slowroll - To delay or avoid showing when you have the best hand.

Snow - Holding on to bad cards in draw poker in order to bluff.

Straddle - A voluntary bet placed before the deal to increase pot size and incentivize action.

TAG - A tight, aggressive player.

Tell - A detectable change in a player's behavior that gives away the strength of their hand.

Tilt - Frustration or anger that leads to poor play.

Variance - The statistical measure of how results differ from expectation.

VPIP - The percentage of hands voluntarily played preflop.

Wet Board - A dynamic board with many several possible draws.

Wheel - A five-high straight.



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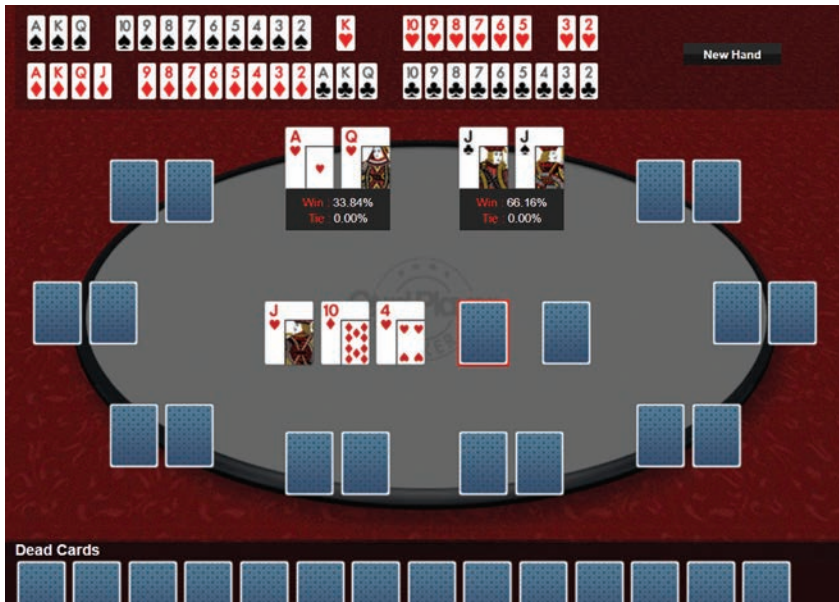


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CALCULATING OUTS

Outs	Situation	After The Flop	After The Turn
21	Straight And Flush Draw, With Two Overcards	70%	45%
20		68%	43%
19		65%	41%
18	Straight And Flush Draw, With One Overcard	62%	39%
17		60%	37%
16		57%	35%
15	Straight And Flush Draw	54%	33%
14		51%	30%
13	Flush Draw With Gutshot	48%	28%
12	Flush Draw With One Overcard	45%	26%
11	Straight Draw With One Overcard	42%	24%
10		38%	22%
9	Flush Draw	35%	20%
8	Straight Draw	32%	17%
7		28%	15%
6	Two Live Overcards	24%	13%
5		20%	11%
4	Gutshot Straight Draw	17%	9%
3	Need To Pair Kicker	13%	7%
2	Pocket Pair Needs To Make A Set	8%	4%
1	Set Needs To Make Quads	4%	2%

HAND MATCHUPS

Situation	Example	Odds	Percent
Higher Pair vs. Lower Pair	J♠ J♣ vs. 7♥ 7♦	4.09-1	80.3% vs. 19.7%
Pair vs. Two Over Cards	7♠ 7♣ vs. A♥ J♦	1.23-1	55.1% vs. 44.9%
Pair vs. Two Under Cards	Q♠ Q♣ vs. 9♥ 7♦	4.77-1	82.7% vs. 17.3%
Pair vs. One Overcard	J♠ J♣ vs. A♥ 7♦	2.50-1	71.4% vs. 28.6%
Two Higher Cards vs. Two Lower Cards	Q♠ J♣ vs. 6♥ 5♦	1.70-1	62.9% vs. 37.1%

*Approximate Percentages

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Early in a \$1,000 tournament, you have 90,000 at 150-300. The under-the-gun player limps and the action folds to you in the hijack with 3♠ 3♦.

Question 1: Should you fold, call, raise to 1,000, or raise to 2,000?

Answer: You should call. Small pocket pairs play extremely well in multi-way pots, especially when the initial limper may be getting tricky with a premium hand like A-A. You can limp behind with your implied odds hands such as small pairs, suited aces, and suited connectors.

You call, the button and small blind call, and big blind checks their option. The flop comes 6♠ 4♦ 2♥ and everyone checks to you.

Question 2: Should you check, bet 600, bet 1,200, or bet 1,800?

Answer: You do not want to bet because the six and the four line up well with the button and blinds' limping ranges. This forces you to check, looking to check-call a reasonable bet.

You check and the button checks behind. The turn is the 5♥. The big blind bets 1,500 and UTG folds.

Question 3: Should you fold, call, raise to 4,500, or raise to 7,500?

Answer: While a straight is normally quite strong, it is important to realize that your opponents can have many combinations of the remaining 3-x and more importantly, all combinations of 8-7. Calling also allows the button behind you to put money into the pot with almost no equity while also minimizing your losses when you happen to be against the devastating 8-7.

You call and everyone else folds. The river is the 9♠. The big blind bets 3,000.

Question 4: Should you fold, call, raise to 9,000, or raise to 15,000?

Answer: Folding is not an option because the big blind can value bet with some worse hands like two pairs and sets, and they can also bluff with various busted draws. But can you raise for value?

Since it was a limped pot, if you raise, your opponent can easily put you on a straight, resulting in them folding many of their worse value hands anyway. So, you might as well just call and expect to collect the pot most of the time.

You called and lost to 8-7. By realizing how wide ranges are in multi-way limped pots, you sidestepped a disaster. ♠



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