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PUBLISHERS

Barry Shulman | Jeff Shulman

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Julio Rodriguez

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Julio Rodriguez
TOURNAMENT CONTENT MANAGER Erik Fast
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Ryan Lucchesi, Craig Tapscott,
Sean Chaffin

ART

ART DIRECTOR Wendy McIntosh

WEBSITE AND INTERNET SERVICES

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Jaran Hardman
DATA COORDINATOR Morgan Young

SALES

ADVERTISING MANAGER Mary Hurbi
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER Barbara Rogers

CARDPLAYER MEDIA LLC

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

CORPORATE OFFICE

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS

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

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

sales@cardplayer.com

DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION

distribution@cardplayer.com

RESULTS

results@cardplayer.com

SCHEDULES

schedules@cardplayer.com

FOLLOW US



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\$2,000 Main Event

January 18 - January 29

Date	Time	Event	Buy-in	Chips
Thursday, January 18	12PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 1	\$400	25,000
	6PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 2	\$400	25,000
Friday, January 19	12PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 3	\$400	25,000
	6PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 4	\$400	25,000
Saturday, January 20	12PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 5	\$400	25,000
	6PM	Event #1 NLH Flight 6	\$400	25,000
Sunday, January 21	12PM	Event #1 Final Day - bestbetLIVE		
	1PM	Event #2 NLH w/Progressive Bounty	\$400	20,000
Monday, January 22	12PM	Event #3 NLH	\$300	20,000
Tuesday, January 23	12PM	Event #4 NLH	\$400	20,000
Wednesday, January 24	12PM	Event #5 NLH Ladies Event - bestbetLIVE	\$300	20,000
	3PM	Event #6 NLH w/\$100 Bounties	\$400	20,000
Thursday, January 25	12PM	Event #7 NLH 6 MAX	\$1,000	25,000
Friday, January 26	12PM	Main Event NLH Day 1A	\$2,000	30,000
Saturday, January 27	12PM	Main Event NLH Day 1B	\$2,000	30,000
Sunday, January 28	12PM	Main Event Day 2		
	1PM	Event #8 NLH The bestbet 500	\$500	20,000
Monday, January 29	2PM	Main Event Final Table - bestbetLIVE		

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POKERGO PODCAST

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NEWS FROM THE GAMBLING WORLD

MARK CUBAN SELLING MAJORITY STAKE IN NBA MAVERICKS TO LAS VEGAS SANDS CORP.

NBA Owner Envisions Partnering In Dallas Casino-Arena

By Card Player News Team



A major Las Vegas casino group may be getting into the basketball business. News broke in December that Mark Cuban is selling a majority ownership stake in the Dallas Mavericks to the Las Vegas Sands Corporation.

The deal would still leave Cuban running basketball operations for the NBA franchise, while adding a partner that he's long sought to partner with on a new Dallas casino resort and arena project. That's if Texas legalizes gambling, of course.

The deal is headed by Sands' late founder and CEO Sheldon Adelson's wife Miriam Adelson and is believed to value the team at more than \$3 billion.

"Adelson, listed as the fifth-richest woman in the world by *Forbes* with an estimated net worth of more than \$33 billion, revealed in a company announcement and a Securities and Exchange Commission filing that she is selling \$2 billion worth of company stock in Sands Corp. — roughly 10% of her stake in the company — to fund the purchase of a majority interest in a professional sports franchise pursuant to a binding purchase agreement, subject to customary league approvals," NBA writer Marc Stein reported.

Is Casino Gaming The Goal?

The potential ownership shakeup leaves Cuban partnering with a company that could potentially make his casino-arena dream a reality. The entrepreneur spoke of his desire for the project in early November, saying that he was working with Sands to make it happen.

"When you think of all the places you want to save up to vacation, Texas isn't one of them," Cuban told the *Dallas Morning News*. "There's no real destination that you save up for. That's a problem and I think resort gaming would have a huge impact."

"My goal, and we'd partner with Las Vegas Sands, is when we build a new arena it'll be in the middle of a resort and casino," Cuban added. "That's the mission."

Uphill Battle Ahead

Sands used to run the Venetian and Palazzo in Las Vegas before selling the land to Vici Properties and the operations to Apollo Global Management in early 2022, choosing instead to focus on projects in Macau and Singapore. But adding a Texas casino to that portfolio won't be easy, despite Cuban's desires and the late Sheldon

Adelson's lobbying efforts in the state.

Texas is one of the most anti-gambling states in the country. Despite every state it shares a border with having casinos, many of which are located near that same border, every attempt at legalizing casino gambling by lawmakers has ultimately failed.

Proposals in the legislature this year didn't produce any results. And since the Texas legislature only meets every two years, further efforts will have to wait until 2025. Any bill passed would also need voter approval to amend the state constitution.

While casino gaming hasn't taken hold, the Texas poker scene continues to grow with clubs popping up around the state. The rooms have steered clear of most legal issues by essentially functioning as social clubs, with players paying hourly fees or monthly dues instead of traditional rake.

The Lodge Card Club, located in the Austin area and co-owned by poker pros Doug Polk, Andrew Neeme, and Brad Owen, set a state record in August with a tournament that brought in 5,750 entries. Mexico's Mauro Avila took the title for \$250,000. ♠

CASINO REVENUE BOOMS ACCORDING TO LATEST AGA REPORTS

By Card Player News Team

The commercial casino industry continues to roar back from the pandemic, according to the latest quarterly report from the American Gaming Association (AGA). The report detailed \$16.3 billion in total gaming revenue, an increase of 6.7% compared to the same period in 2022.

These numbers made the period the highest-grossing third quarter ever and second-best quarter overall ever for commercial operators (the report doesn't include tribal gaming). The numbers show the massive growth that continues in the industry, and was the 11th consecutive quarter of year-over-year growth.

The industry continues to be aided by casino expansion and the growth of sports betting across the country. Kentucky sports betting went live in the third quarter and new casinos opened in Illinois and South Dakota. Sports betting also launched in Maryland (online expansion), Massachusetts, Nebraska (live betting), and Ohio.

Overall, quarterly gaming revenue grew year over year across all gaming types including slots, table games, retail sports betting, and online gaming (casino, poker, and sports betting). Those totals include single-quarter records for land-based and online gaming.

While iGaming's rate of growth slowed, the segment still remained high at 29.9% in the third quarter following 44.4% in the second quarter. Online sports betting and online gaming combined revenue reached \$3.5 billion. That was 22.2% of total commercial gaming revenue, still the lowest share since the same period in 2022.

Year-to-date numbers also proved rosy. Total revenue for the first nine months stood at \$48.8 billion, 10.1% above the third quarter of 2022.



“Even with potential softer Q4 revenue this year, 2023 is poised to become the third consecutive record-breaking year for the commercial gaming industry,” the AGA reports.

Among the country's 33 commercial gaming states, 18 saw third quarter revenue increases from 2022. Of those, five set new single-quarter records.

Nevada and New Jersey, the country's largest commercial gaming markets, particularly stood out. Nevada revenue rose 2.9% year over year to \$3.9 billion. Casinos on the Las Vegas Strip led the growth along with a record-breaking quarter of \$741.2 million.

New Jersey also saw the state's highest-ever gaming win of just under \$1.6 billion, rising 8.6% from the same quarter in 2022.

Sports betting produced huge revenue for the industry overall, with \$2.2 billion for the third quarter. That was an increase of 22.8% from the third quarter of 2022. The addition of Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Ohio supplemented the numbers. Maine also recently launched sports betting as well.

With other states also considering sports betting, such as Minnesota, Mississippi, and Oklahoma, revenue will continue to grow in the coming years. ♠

PITTSBURGH POKER PLAYERS STRIKE GOLD IN MASSIVE BAD BEAT JACKPOT

By Sean Chaffin

After already setting a record U.S. bad beat jackpot in 2022, Rivers Casino in Pittsburgh produced another major payout for eight no-limit hold'em players in November. The lucky rounders won a share of a \$905,622 jackpot.

Casinos running bad beat jackpot promotions take a dollar out of each cash game pot to add to a jackpot prize pool. The payout is triggered when a qualifying premium hand is beaten by an even bigger hand. In this case, one player held four aces, but was beaten by another player with a royal flush.

Scott Thompson, of Washington, Pennsylvania, was the big winner by actually losing the hand. His four aces were worth 40% of the jackpot for a top payout of \$362,250. Brent Enos, of Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania, held the royal flush and secured 30% of the prize pool for \$271,686.

At Rivers, the remaining players at the table split the last 30% evenly. That amounted to \$45,281 for each of the other six players at the table.

“We are unexpectedly and happily becoming a national bad beat jackpot hotspot,” said Rivers general manager Bud

Green. “Congratulations to our winning guests and to our Rivers Pittsburgh poker room team members for doing a terrific job.”

Green is referencing some other recent payouts at the Pittsburgh property. The casino set a U.S. bad beat jackpot record in August 2022 with a payout of \$1.2 million. That jackpot saw a West Virginia player take home \$490,708, a player from Pittsburgh win \$368,029, and the remaining six players at the table each win \$61,338.

This year has also seen some major jackpots at Playground Poker Club in Quebec, Canada. The most recent came in October with a CAD \$1.3 million (\$949,480 USD) payout. The property also awarded an international record jackpot of CAD \$2.6 million (\$1.9 million USD) in August. ♠



EFFORTS TO BAN CASINO SMOKING FALL SHORT IN NEW JERSEY

By Sean Chaffin

Some legislators in New Jersey and Pennsylvania had hoped to make smoky casinos a thing of the past. Their efforts failed December in the Garden State when backers couldn't secure enough votes, but Pennsylvania lawmakers continue to move forward.

Smoking has long been associated with casinos, but some casino workers and other health advocates in recent years have worked to curb the activity. Backers of butting out weren't pleased with the rejection of an anti-smoking plan in New Jersey.

"It's incredible that we're here begging again to have the same thing everyone else has," Lamont White, a dealer at the Borgata and a leader of the anti-smoking effort in Atlantic City, told the *Associated Press*.

In New Jersey, the proposal came to a stop in committee after lawmakers couldn't garner enough votes for it to advance. Legislators have now said they would be willing to work with casinos in finding a plan that could serve as a compromise.

New Jersey has a law in place that bars smoking in public businesses, but that statute exempts the state's casinos. Current law allows smoking on 25% of the casino floor. Some in the industry have recommended an 18-month smoking ban phase-in to allow properties to construct enclosed smoking rooms and add air treatment systems.

"There could be a compromise put on the table that could bring the votes ... that will ensure it passes," Sen. Fred Madden (D) said. He added that he believed that some casino workers would lose their jobs if a complete smoking ban were put in place.

The smoke-free idea was tried in 2012 with the opening of the Revel Resort in Atlantic City, which initially had a smoking ban but was met with numerous problems before declaring two bankruptcies and closing in 2014. The property was reopened as Ocean Resort Casino in 2018, with smoking permitted.

Efforts at a casino smoking ban continue in Pennsylvania, however. Legislation recently passed out of the state house health committee.

The Keystone State proposal would ban smoking, including e-cigarettes, in casinos and bars. Rep. Dan Frankel, (D) is sponsoring the bill and believes the move is the right step to protect the state's casino workers from inhaling second-hand smoke.

"We should never be forcing people, especially workers, and people in these establishments to have to choose between their health and a good-paying job with benefits," Frankel told WTAE.

Some business interests argue that a ban would hurt small business owners who own bars. Casinos also argue that they already offer non-smoking sections.

"Currently, Rivers Casino Pittsburgh features designated smoking and nonsmoking areas of our gaming floor," Rivers Casino Pittsburgh representative Jack Horner told WTAE. "Decisions about smoking in Pennsylvania's casinos are made by the State Legislature, and Rivers will, of course, comply with whatever the Commonwealth mandates." ♠



CASINO CONSTRUCTION GETS UNDERWAY FOR FIRST CASINO IN JAPAN

By Sean Chaffin



After several years of delays, construction on Japan's first casino has now begun in Osaka. The \$8.1 billion project is being built on the reclaimed island of Yumeshima, located in Osaka Bay.

The country awarded the project to a joint venture between MGM Resorts and Orix Corporation, a Japanese financial services firm, earlier this year. The massive resort is expected to open in 2029 and will include hotels, a conference center, shopping mall, museum and ferry terminal, a helicopter pad, and more.

The island is currently undergoing site preparation for the new resort. The casino will encompass 52 acres of the 700-acre island, which had previously been used mostly as a shipping container port.

"Full-scale construction of the resort is scheduled for the spring of next year," Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura told the *Japan Times*.

Gambling beyond the country's popular pachinko parlors has long been illegal in Japan. That changed in 2018 when the country legalized up to three "integrated resorts," with Osaka as the first to get on board. Tokyo, Yokohama, or others are also being considered.

However, regulatory wrangling, the extended bidding process, and the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the plan for years. The MGM/Orix project was ultimately chosen and is now finally seeing construction get off the ground.

"It is an honor to be selected by the government of Japan to develop a tourism project of this scale," MGM CEO and President Bill Hornbuckle said. "We couldn't be more excited to get started on the development of one of Japan's first Integrated Resorts in the great City of Osaka, and we look forward to working with our partner Orix and Osaka prefecture/city to realize this long-held goal."

Government officials believe adding the casino resorts can produce additional revenue and jobs. That includes generating \$3.9 billion in annual revenue, along with bringing in six million international tourists and 14 million domestic visitors annually. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that the casino "will become a tourism base that promotes Japan's charms to the world." ♠



ASIAN POKER TOUR CANCELS SERIES IN MIDDLE OF MAIN EVENT

By Card Player News Team

Players in the *Asian Poker Tour Hanoi Billions* were greeted with some unwelcome news when the tour announced that the remainder of the tournament stop was canceled.

The series was expected to run Dec. 1-10 and the stoppage included the series' main event, which had already reached the fourth day of action. No reasons for the announcement were offered and comments on the group's Twitter post were turned off.

"The decision to cancel the remaining days of the festival has not been made lightly," tour officials noted. "It is rooted in extenuating circumstances that have arisen, ones that, despite our utmost efforts, we are unable to overcome."

"The safety and well-being of our players and staff are of paramount importance to us, and we must prioritize these concerns above all else. We are truly sorry, and we appreciate your understanding during this challenging



situation."

The cancellation left many players perplexed by the move and also frustrated at some of the expenses involved with flying to the tournament venue, taking time off work, and more.

"I've wasted two days of leave and money to fly out here," one player revealed.

Some players speculated that the stoppage may have been forced by the government of Vietnam, but that hasn't been confirmed, and a successful *Triton* series played out in the country with no reported issues in March, as well as a *WPT Prime* series in May.

There were still two days remain-

ing in the series and the cancellation came after several side events were also shelved in the days preceding the announcement.

As part of the tour's post on Twitter, the *APT* announced that players would be refunded for unplayed events. Payouts would be made for the 47 players who were still in contention in the main event according to their chip count.

Van Sang Nguyen, of Vietnam, was declared the main event winner based on having the most chips when the tournament was paused, earning the top payout of just over \$180,000.

A double stack tournament had also been underway and John Costiniano, of the Philippines, was named the winner for about \$12,150.

Prior to shutting the series down, *APT* officials touted the main event as the largest field size and prize money in the tour's 17-year history. The tournament produced 2,350 entries for a bit over a \$3 million prize pool. ♠

BetMGM Says New Jersey And Michigan Online Poker Shared Player Pool Is 'Imminent'

By Sean Chaffin

BetMGM may soon venture into shared liquidity between the company's platforms in New Jersey and Michigan, according to an MGM Resorts business update in late November.

The move could have the company operating the country's third multi-state online poker platform, along with PokerStars (New Jersey and Michigan) and WSOP.com (Nevada, New Jersey, and Delaware).

"Finalizing approach for global jackpots, enhanced by BetMGM's scale, and poker shared liquidity launch imminent," a slide from the presentation noted.

What "imminent" actually means in real terms is unknown. The company also operates in Pennsylvania, but that state hasn't joined the country's Multi-State Internet Gaming Agreement (MSIGA).

CEO Adam Greenblatt outlined the company's continual focus on digital gaming with online poker as a part of that. BetMGM Rewards, sports betting, online gaming, and poker offer a continuous omnichannel wheel of marketing for the digital side and live casinos, he noted.

"We've established ourselves as one of the leaders in this fast-growing, highly-competitive industry," the CEO said.

The company has spotlighted online poker more over

the last couple years by partnering with MGM Resorts properties for live tournaments, such as Aria and Borgata. Combining the New Jersey and Michigan markets would see BetMGM reach larger player and prize pools.

West Virginia also recently joined the MSIGA and BetMGM is already available in that state via sports betting and online gaming. Adding that state's first online poker option would be possible.

The company also has a license in Nevada, but has yet to launch poker in that state. Connecticut legalized online gaming and poker in 2022 but no operators have launched yet. Online gaming has been left to the state's tribes and leaders recently expressed interest in joining the MSIGA. These states present possible opportunities for MGM and other operators.

In a third quarter earnings report, MGM also outlined an interesting long-term goal for BetMGM. A "strategic direction" section of the presentation noted that a goal was to own the entire platform at some point.

BetMGM is currently a 50/50 partnership between MGM Resorts and Entain. The latter is a global online gaming giant and also operates the international PartyPoker platform. No further plans of an acquisition have been announced. ♠

HOW Do I Study Poker? Top Pros Share Their Secrets

Stephen Song, Andrew Lichtenberger, and Chance Kornuth Weigh In

By Craig Tapscott



The Pros: Stephen Song, Andrew Lichtenberger, and Chance Kornuth

This trio of high-stakes poker pros are among the most decorated in history, combining for more than 50 wins on the circuit and \$40 million in live tournament earnings alone.

Chance Kornuth is now 37, and had his best year after an already-stellar run coming out of the pandemic. The Colorado native racked up the three biggest scores of his career at this summer's *WSOP*. The three-time bracelet winner started off with a runner-up finish in the \$25,000 six-max event for \$751,463 and followed that up two weeks

later with a fourth-place showing in the \$100,000 event for another \$833,854. The very next tournament, he stepped up the buy-in to \$250,000 and took fifth for a career-best \$1,202,318.

Kornuth now lives in Nashville with his wife and daughter, and spends his non-playing time sharing his strategies on the Chip Leader Coaching training platform, creating courses such as *The Closer*, *Optimize Your Mind*, and *Bracelet Hunter*.

Andrew Lichtenberger is 36, and has been playing the

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game for half of his life. The New York native was one of the original high rollers, having won a \$100,000 event at Bellagio back in 2014 for \$2,104,245. The bracelet winner got close to that score again in 2023 when he finished runner-up in the \$300,000 buy-in *Super High Roller Bowl* for \$1,680,000. Incredibly, it was just one notch better than his finish in 2022, when he took third for \$1,152,000.

Lichtenberger recently partnered with top pros and minds Nick Schulman and Victoria Livschitz to create Octopi Poker, an AI tool that allows for collaborative GTO study and has a database of hand analysis from top pros featuring numerous real-life hands from the *PokerGO Tour*.

Stephen Song is the youngest of the three at 26, but is one of the hottest players as of late, having won three *WSOP Circuit* rings in the span of just two weeks between November and December, taking down the main event in Chicago and two side events in North Carolina. That now gives him six overall, to go along with a bracelet and the inaugural *WPT Prime Championship* title, which was worth \$712,650.

The Connecticut native and former chess standout did so well last year that he was named GPI Player of the Year, despite playing a schedule that was full of mostly mid-stakes events.

Card Player caught up with these three phenoms to find out just how they got to the top of the mountain, and what they do to stay there.

Craig Tapscott: Where do you feel you're getting ahead of

other poker players? What do you think you're studying that other players may be neglecting?

Stephen Song: My advantage over other poker players is having such a great group of close friends I've come up with throughout the years. Despite being an individual's game, I believe having a solid group of motivated poker friends is necessary to succeed in poker.

One of my greatest strengths is getting into my opponents' heads and figuring out my image through their eyes. I'm not a live reads guy, but I do think I have a solid grasp of being able to read table dynamics and situations that benefit my decision-making in close spots.

For the people reading who find themselves rolling their eyes at someone talking about a hand or their thought process, even if you think they're wrong or straight-up delusional, I'd recommend still listening. You could learn something that could give you a better idea of how to improve your game.

Studying the fundamentals and running outputs of hands is essential, but people neglect to listen to other people's opinions. Even if you disagree with what is said, learning someone's approach to a particular spot or situation can be vital to one's game.

Andrew Lichtenberger: I have a pretty exceptional memory, which contributes to a helpful recall of hands played, both my own and those of others, as well as strategic recollections from study sessions and discussions with peers.

I also have strong intuition and willingness to trust



myself in game and ‘do what makes sense,’ overriding pre-existing ideas or what have you.

Chance Kornuth: My game is very well-rounded. I have seen a lot with my 16+ years of experience playing professionally, so I don’t think there is any area of my game that is seriously lacking.

I spend 20+ hours a month coaching and building content for Chip Leader Coaching. I also get to do the majority of it with [fellow high-stakes crusher] Alex Foxen. This experience has allowed me to spend time studying any past area of my game that I felt could be stronger.

You can’t be great at poker without understanding the math. Each bet or call has an expected value associated with it. Without understanding this, you are just out there gambling.

Pattern recognition is also essential. People think it’s just my physical-reading ability, and I’m not going to lie, that helps. But it also has helped me see many situations where I just know if a bluff will work and if people are likely to be strong or weak.

You also need to focus. Paying attention to your table after you fold is a poker superpower. There is no hand replayer in live poker.

Craig Tapscott: Where do you see poker strategy advancing over the next few years?

Stephen Song: It is impossible to say what will happen with future poker strategy. Every year I find myself learning something completely new despite assuming that with the technology and computer power we have at hand there’s not much else to learn.

If I had to guess, I would say that multiway spots will be more studied, and you’ll see people at the highest level trying

new things. Heads-up pots have been the focus of everyone for years since the programs for heads-up spots have been much simpler [and faster] for everyone to use.

Now with how good technology is improving for poker software and more and more people studying multiway pots, I’m sure there will be new innovations that will catch on with everyone.

Andrew Lichtenberger: That’s a great question, and certainly, one of our points of interest and focus with Octopi Poker. I would say the likely direction that poker study takes is more practical in nature.

There’s a wealth of theoretical knowledge already available, and while this will continue to become more prevalent when we look at the strategies players implement in game, there’s still a large gap between a lot of these more nuanced theoretical concepts and the actual strategies that (most) players employ. This gap is due in part to models only scratching the surface of realistic parameters and also the inability for humans to recall such nuanced strategies (or find them to have enough merit to implement in game).

There’s also a large component of intuition and ‘intangibles,’ if you will. I expect that over time, we see a more intricate blending of these ideas, and it will be exciting to observe how different players decide to approach this disposition and the depth therein, between the logical and more intuitive aspects of the game.

Chance Kornuth: I think that players will continue to become more exploitative as they already have.

A few years ago, there was a huge GTO/Solver boom, and everyone began to study that. Now, people are starting to realize they aren’t playing against players who are GTO, and that optimal strategy becomes figuring out when and how to



exploit them as much as possible.

Craig Tapscott: What would you advise the average player to study and apply to get good quickly in today's game?

Stephen Song: I personally think the best way to improve at a fast rate is a mix of constant studying and online poker.

Online poker is a great tool to put in massive amounts of volume and become used to similar situations over and over again. There are also tools to review and analyze your past hand histories online whereas live poker you have to resort to memory or writing hands in a journal.

A mix of online and study is great where you can learn something new and put it into practice more often than if you were playing live seeing a fraction of the hands per hour you would play online. This will improve your fundamentals and prepare you for the live arena, which if you want to get into live poker, you have to also devote countless hours to sitting at the tables in person.

Experience is so important when playing live poker, something I did not realize for most of my early career. So, to answer the question of how to get good fast? You can't do it "fast." Maybe you could do it in a year, but you'd have to devote countless hours and almost your whole life to the game.

Andrew Lichtenberger: I think for a beginner the best thing you can do is to get a private coach who can mentor you and be there with you every step of the way. This might not be practical for a number of reasons, but there's plenty of free resources right now in the form of streams and *YouTube* content which has the potential to inform beginners. Octopi Poker will also offer a free tier to gain exposure to beginner study materials, in addition to the content we will publish publicly.

Playing poker is naturally a pre-requisite to learning

because you need some kind of relatability between conceptual ideas and pragmatic ones. Finding a friend or two to work with, better yet a group, is even more helpful since you'll have others to bounce ideas and experiences off of. Being honest with yourself and always looking for ways to improve and avoid losing chips, whilst not pretending that losing isn't an inevitable part of the game, is also paramount to finding success in poker.

The more you can begin to identify patterns in different poker situations the more likely you are to find success. There's no one right way though, there are many ways, and taking action in the direction of the desired goal is what matters most at the start. Lastly, always remember to have fun and enjoy the process when times get tough. No growth happens without mistakes and short term fails!

Chance Kornuth: Learn the math first and understand the EV (expected value) of making and calling bets. If there is \$100 in the middle and you bet \$50 on the river with a bluff, it only has to work one-third of the time to break even. This same very simple concept applies to every street of the game, and I am always confounded by the number of people who don't understand it.

Next would be to start seeing what the solver outputs are, but don't try to memorize them. Try to understand why the solver is doing what it is doing. Once you understand that, the game becomes easy. There are a lot of spots I have never plugged into a solver, but I am able to think my way through them and quite often figure out the optimal play. ♠

Twitter/X: Stephen Song - @songstephen11

Andrew Lichtenberger - @luckychewy

Chance Kornuth - @ChancesCards

ERIK SEIDEL BECOMES FIFTH PLAYER TO 10 WSOP BRACELETS

64-Year-Old Hall Of Famer Earns Huge Score In Paradise

By Erik Fast



Age is just a number. And so is 10!

64-year-old **Erik Seidel** became just the fifth player in tournament poker history to capture 10 gold bracelets.

The Poker Hall of Famer took down the *World Series of Poker Paradise* \$50,000 high roller event in the Bahamas to enter a four-way tie for second on the all-time bracelet leaderboard with fellow legends of the game Johnny Chan, Phil Ivey, and the late Doyle Brunson. Only 17-time *WSOP* champion Phil Hellmuth has more titles.

“It really is nice to get to double digits,” Seidel told *PokerNews* live reporters after the win. “Any time you win a bracelet is just an incredibly special thing. To get to 10... I don’t know, it’s a beautiful feeling. It’s just so nice when things go well like this.”

The New York City native and longtime Las Vegas resident defeated a field of 137 entries in the high-stakes affair held at the Atlantis Paradise Island Bahamas resort, earning \$1,704,400 for the win. This was the fourth-largest score yet for the longtime poker pro, whose runner-up finish to Johnny Chan in the 1988 *WSOP* main event was immortalized in the cult classic movie *Rounders*.

Seidel now has more than \$46.7 million in lifetime tournament earnings, good for ninth place on the all-time money list. More than \$9.3 million of those scores have come in bracelet events. He also has a *World Poker Tour* main event

title, along with numerous high roller victories.

The first of Seidel’s 10 bracelets was won back in 1992 in the \$2,500 limit hold’em event at the 23rd annual *WSOP*. He won the \$2,500 Omaha eight-or-better event the following year and the \$5,000 limit hold’em event the year after that. He recorded his fourth and final bracelet win of the 90s by taking down the \$5,000 no-limit deuce-to-seven lowball event, long considered one of the toughest tournaments on the schedule.

Seidel won another four bracelets in the 2000s, starting by taking down the \$3,000 no-limit hold’em event in 2001. Just a few weeks prior to Chris MoneyMaker winning the main event, Seidel came out on top in the \$1,500 pot-limit Omaha event for his sixth career bracelet. Two years later, he emerged victorious in a \$2,000 no-limit hold’em event with what was then a career-high payday of \$611,795. His eighth bracelet came with a repeat in the \$5,000 no-limit deuce-to-seven lowball event, this time at the 2007 series.

While he had plenty of success on the live felt during the 2010s, particularly on the high roller circuit, Seidel was unable to add to his bracelet total during the decade. More than 14 years after his last victory, Seidel finally came away with bracelet no. 9 by winning a \$10,000 high roller no-limit event during the 2021 *WSOP Online* festival.

This latest win was arguably his toughest. The field of



137 entries produced a prize pool of \$6,850,000, more than tripling the guarantee, paying out the top 21 finishers. The money bubble burst late on day 1, leaving just 17 contenders heading into day 2. Seth Gottlieb held the chip lead at the start of the day, with Seidel hot on his heels, foreshadowing their eventual heads-up match.

Plenty of superstars fell on the way to the final table, including two-time bracelet winner Daniel Dvoress (17th), bracelet winner Santhosh Suvarna (14th), two-time bracelet winner Chris Brewer (13th), bracelet winner Ivan Luca (12th), two-time bracelet winner Nick Petrangelo (11th), and Michael Watson (10th), who is a *WPT* champion and two-time *EPT* main event winner.

Seidel had overtaken the lead by the time the field combined onto one table. Bracelet winner Timothy Adams (9th – \$162,800) was the next to depart, with his A-7 unable to come from behind against the A-Q of Koichi Chiba.

Gottlieb moved in front during eight-handed play, then extended his lead when his K-Q won a race against the pocket sixes of four-time bracelet winner Adrian Mateos (8th – \$205,000).

Seidel closed the gap a bit when his A♠ 5♣ beat out the K♠ Q♦ of *WPT* champion Jonathan Jaffe (7th – \$261,400). Seidel flopped the nut flush to leave Jaffe in need of running cards for a straight flush, which never came.

Bracelet winner and *WPT* champion Alex Foxen was the next to fall. He lost all but a couple of big blinds in a pre flop flip against fellow bracelet winner Orpen Kisacikoglu, but was ultimately sent to the rail by Seidel after a battle of the blinds. Neither player had much to speak of pre flop, but Seidel made jacks and tens to win the pot and eliminate Foxen in sixth place (\$337,300).

Chiba's run came to an end when his K-Q ran into the pocket kings of a surging Kisacikoglu. The Japanese new-

comer to the live high-stakes scene earned \$440,500 for his efforts.

Bracelet winner and ten-time *Triton Poker* title earner Jason Koon was the next player to square off against Kisacikoglu in a pre flop all-in. He three-bet shoved from the small blind with Q♣ 10♣ over Kisacikoglu's cutoff open. Kisacikoglu called with pocket eights and made quads by the turn to leave Koon drawing dead.

Koon earned \$582,100 as the fourth-place finisher. His \$52.8 million in recorded cashes is good for fourth place on poker's all-time earnings leaderboard.

Seidel began to pull away during three-handed play. Gottlieb was the short stack for a bit but managed a double-up through Kisacikoglu to swap spots in the chip counts. Kisacikoglu eventually got all-in with K♥ 9♥ trailing the K♠ 10♠ of Seidel.

Erik Seidel's 10 WSOP Bracelets

Year	Event	Payout
1992	\$2,500 Limit Hold'em	\$168,000
1993	\$2,500 Omaha Eight-Or-Better	\$94,000
1994	\$5,000 Limit Hold'em	\$210,000
1998	\$5,000 No-Limit 2-7 Lowball	\$132,700
2001	\$3,000 No-Limit Hold'em	\$411,300
2003	\$1,500 Pot-Limit Omaha	\$146,100
2005	\$2,000 No-Limit Hold'em	\$611,795
2007	\$5,000 No-Limit 2-7 Lowball	\$538,835
2021	\$10,000 GGPoker Online High Roller	\$977,842
2023	\$50,000 Paradise Super High Roller	\$1,704,400



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Neither player connected with an ace-high runout and Kisacikoglu was eliminated in third place (\$778,300). The Turkish player now has nearly \$17.1 million in lifetime earnings after this latest deep run.

With that, Seidel took roughly a 5:3 chip lead into heads-up play against Gottlieb. He was pulling away in the early going, and was one card away from closing out the win after his Q-10 suited had outflopped Gottlieb's A-J. A rivered wheel for Gottlieb in that hand saw him close the gap considerably, but Seidel was still ahead when the final hand of the tournament was dealt.

Seidel limped in from the button with 9♠ 7♦ and Gottlieb checked with K♥ 6♦. The flop came down K♥ Q♥ 6♥ to give Gottlieb kings up and he checked. Seidel checked

behind with his air and picked up a gutshot straight draw on the 5♦ turn. Gottlieb bet and Seidel called.

The 8♣ completed Seidel's straight and Gottlieb bet. Seidel raised and Gottlieb moved all-in with his two pair. Seidel quickly called to earn the pot and the title.

Gottlieb was awarded \$1,052,800 as the runner-up, the largest tournament score yet for the startup founder from New Jersey.

In addition to the money and the coveted hardware, Seidel was also awarded plenty of rankings points for his most recent win at the series. The 924 *Card Player* Player of the Year points he nabbed for his 11th final-table finish of the year were enough to move him into 76th place in the 2023 POY standings presented by Global Poker. He also secured 750 *PokerGO Tour* points as the champion, sufficient to place him 11th on that high-stakes-focused leaderboard.

For more results from the *WSOP Paradise* series, go to pg. 22.

Place	Player	Payout (POY)
1	Erik Seidel	\$1,704,400 (924)
2	Seth Gottlieb	\$1,052,800 (770)
3	Orpen Kisacikoglu	\$778,300 (616)
4	Jason Koon	\$582,100 (462)
5	Koichi Chiba	\$440,500 (385)
6	Alex Foxen	\$337,300 (308)
7	Jonathan Jaffe	\$261,400 (231)
8	Adrian Mateos	\$205,000 (154)
9	Timothy Adams	\$162,800 (77)



MOST WORLD SERIES OF POKER GOLD BRACELETS WON

Player(s)	Bracelets
Phil Hellmuth	17
Erik Seidel, Doyle Brunson, Johnny Chan, Phil Ivey	10
Johnny Moss	9
Billy Baxter, Men Nguyen	7
Daniel Negreanu, Josh Arieh, Shaun Deeb, Jeremy Ausmus, Chris Ferguson, John Hennigan, Jason Mercier, TJ Cloutier, Jeff Lisandro, Brian Hastings, Layne Flack, Ted Forrest, Jay Heimowitz	6
Michael Mizrachi, Allen Cunningham, Scotty Nguyen, John Juanda, Daniel Alaei, Brian Yoon, David Chiu, Benny Glaser, Eli Elezra, John Monnette, Adam Friedman, Berry Johnston, Stu Ungar, Gary 'Bones' Berland	5

There are just 36 players in history to have won five or more *World Series of Poker* bracelets. Of those three dozen legends of the game, just five have managed to secure double-digit wins at the *WSOP*, with the latest being **Erik Seidel**.

With his tenth bracelet win earned at the inaugural *WSOP Paradise* this month, Seidel joined all-time bracelet leader **Phil Hellmuth** as the only player with ten or more *WSOP* titles to have won one in the past nine years. **Phil Ivey's** tenth win came back in 2014, while both **Johnny Chan** and the late **Doyle Brunson's** most recent wins at the series took place back in 2005.

The most recent players on this illustrious list to add to their bracelet collections are among the six-time and five-time winners. Josh Arieh, Shaun Deeb, Brian Rast, Jeremy Ausmus,

Jason Mercier, Brian Hastings, Brian Yoon, Benny Glaser, Eli Elezra, John Monnette, and Adam Friedman have all won at least one bracelet in the past two years.

Deeb has won the most bracelets in the past decade, with all six of his victories coming in 2015 or later. Glaser, Hastings, and Ausmus have all secured five bracelets in the same span.

2023 will have seen the most bracelets ever awarded in a single year, with 234 handed out across several live and online festivals. That represents more than twice as many bracelet events as were held in 2019, and more than three times as many as in 2016. With more and more bracelets up for grabs each year, who knows how high the final bracelet counts might climb for some of the game's top players before they call it a career. ♠

INAUGURAL WSOP PARADISE SERIES KICKS OFF IN THE BAHAMAS

By Erik Fast



The first-ever *World Series of Poker Paradise* is ongoing at the Atlantis Paradise Island Bahamas (Dec. 3-15). The new winter *WSOP* festival was just shy of halfway through its 15-event schedule at the time this issue went to press, and there has already been nearly \$38.6 million in total prize money awarded.

The first seven events have attracted over 10,740 total entities, with three of those tournaments drawing multiple thousands. While Poker Hall of Famer Erik Seidel stole headlines with his 10th bracelet win (read more on pg. 18), here we will take a closer look at the other stories from the first half of the inaugural *WSOP Paradise*.

The series first kicked off on Sunday, Dec. 3 with the \$5 million guaranteed *WSOP Paradise* \$1,500 no-limit hold'em *Mystery Millions* event. It ultimately attracted 3,446 entries by the time registration closed, surpassing the sizable guarantee by \$169,000.

After five starting flights and two more full days of combined-field action, it was Korea's **Jin Hoon Lee** who ultimately walked away with the bracelet and the lion's share of the prize money. Lee earned \$420,000, plus bounties, and his first *WSOP* gold bracelet.

While Lee secured the largest share of the main prize pool, there was one larger payout awarded in this event. Jeremy Lavi Dan opened the mystery bounty that contained the \$500,000 top payout. The American pro used his 'one time' before opening the envelope, and then proceeded to run around the room in celebration after seeing what was inside. He also earned \$9,600 plus bounties for finishing 47th overall.

Several big names fell on the way down to the final table, including 17-time bracelet winner Phil Hellmuth (30th),

bracelet winner Mikita Badziakouski (18th), bracelet winner Sam Greenwood (17th), two-time bracelet winner David Peters (14th), and recent *World Poker Tour Rock 'n' Roll Poker Open* main event runner-up Rayan Chamas (12th).

Maria Ho scored several key knockouts at the final table, including busting three-time bracelet winner David Kitai (8th – \$64,000) and bracelet winner Kartik Ved (7th – \$80,000). While it looked at one point like she might run away with the title to secure her first bracelet, Ho eventually lost a few big all-ins during short-handed action to slide down the chip counts. She eventually finished third, earning \$200,000 to increase her lifetime earnings to nearly \$4.5 million.

Lee entered heads-up play with the lead and extended it thanks to a preflop cooler that saw his pocket kings best the pocket nines of Max Pinnola. That hand saw Lee take more than a 3:1 lead, which he was soon able to convert into the title. Pinnola earned a career-best payday of \$257,100 as the runner-up.

The second event also featured a \$5 million guarantee. The hybrid live and online \$1,500 buy-in no-limit hold'em *Millionaire Maker* event had drawn 3,496 entries, surpassing the guarantee by \$233,000.

This event actually ended up finishing before the first tournament on the schedule, making its champion officially the first player to earn a *WSOP Paradise* bracelet. That distinction will always belong to Brazil's **Allan Mello**, who closed out the win for the hardware and \$1,000,000.

This was by far the largest score of his tournament career. Prior to this win, his top payday was a 10th-place finish in the 2023 *PokerStars Caribbean Adventure* main event for \$112,600 back in January.



This event began on GGPoker as part of the 2023 *WSOP Online* festival. The final 100 players from the sea of thousands that turned out all made the trip to the Bahamas to face off in person for the seven-figure top prize and the bracelet.

Samuel Mullur's largest live tournament cash prior to making the trip to Atlantis was a \$20,000 payday for a 45th-place showing at the 2022 *Mediterranean Poker Party*. The Austrian blew that score out of the water when he topped a field of 533 entries in the \$25,000 buy-in *WSOP Paradise GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship*. Mullur was awarded \$2,726,300 and his first bracelet for the win.

This event ran from Dec. 5-8. The huge turnout saw the ambitious \$10 million guarantee easily surpassed, with \$13,325,000 ultimately paid out among the top 80 finishers. As one would expect, plenty of the biggest names in the game made deep runs in this tournament, including six-time bracelet winner Daniel Negreanu (26th), two-time bracelet winner Aleksejs Ponakovs (23rd), bracelet winner Jason Koon (22nd), nine-time bracelet winner Erik Seidel (19th), two-time bracelet winner Daniel Dvoress (18th), and bracelet winner Artur Martirosian (11th).

The most accomplished live players at the final table both fell before the final three was set, with Adrian Mateos placing seventh (\$349,400) while 2020 *WSOP* main event champion Damian Salas finished fourth (\$856,800).

Mateos has now made 17 final tables this year. The Spanish superstar won two titles along the way, accumulating nearly \$8.7 million in POY earnings. His 5,918 POY points were good for 11th on the overall leaderboard heading into the final weeks of the year.

Smiljkovic cashed for \$1,192,300 as the third-place finisher. This was the second-largest payday of his career

behind the \$1,450,000 he took home for another third-place in a high roller earlier this year at a *Triton Poker* festival in Vietnam. The bracelet winner from Germany now has nearly \$5.2 million in recorded cashes.

Heads-up play began with Mullur holding a nearly 2:1 advantage over American bracelet winner Frank Brannan. The final two battled for more than three hours, with plenty of swings along the way. Brannan was out in front when the penultimate all-in confrontation of the tournament took place.

The chips went in on the turn with the board showing 10♠ 5♦ 2♦ J♣. Brannan, who had check-raised the flop with J♠ 4♠, had improved from air to top pair, but was still trailing the pocket kings of Mullur. The 7♠ completed the board, giving Mullur the double up and a huge lead, which he quickly converted into the title.

Brannan earned \$1,684,500 as the runner-up finisher, which was far and away his biggest live tournament score yet.



He now has more than \$2.2 million in recorded earnings.

Nikolaos Lampropoulos was the last player standing in the \$25,000 pot-limit Omaha high roller event. The Greek player bested a field of 140 entries to earn his first bracelet and \$871,600. This score more than doubled Lampropoulos' career tournament earnings.

The event played out over two days, with only 21 set to make the money. The strong turnout for this event resulted in a \$3,500,000 prize pool. Among those who earned a share but fell short of the final table were two-time POY award winner Stephen Chidwick (20th), Sean Winter (19th), three-time bracelet winner Chad Eveslage (15th), Ren Lin (12th), Biao Ding (11th), and Matt Glantz (10th).

Second-ranked 2023 POY contender Isaac Haxton fell in ninth place (\$83,100) when he ran into the pocket aces of four-time bracelet winner Nick Schulman.

Lampropoulos scored the next knockout, riving two pair to eliminate four-time bracelet winner Yuri Dzivilevski (8th – \$104,700). *World Poker Tour* champion Matthew Wantman soon followed in seventh place (\$133,500).

A three-way all-in spelled the end of two-time bracelet winner Michael Moncek's run. His single-suited rundown was up against the single-suited pocket kings of Dan Shak and the single-suited aces of Lampropoulos. Shak spiked a king on the river to win the pot, knocking out Moncek in sixth place (\$172,300).

Schulman was not able to crack the pocket aces of 2023 *WSOP Mystery Millions* champion Tyler Brown with his A-Q-8-7 double suited and was knocked out in fifth place (\$225,000). He earned 420 POY points to climb to 34th place in the standings. He has made 16 final tables this year,

with three titles won along the way.

Heads-up play began with Lampropoulos holding nearly a 3:1 lead over Shak. The chips went in on a 9♦ 6♥ 4♣ 2♣ board with Shak holding A♦ 9♠ 6♠ 5♣ for top two pair with a gutshot straight draw. Lampropoulos held Q♥ Q♠ 9♣ 6♣ for the same two pair with a flush draw and an overpair on the side. The 7♣ completed the board, giving Lampropoulos a flush to earn the pot and the title. Shak took home \$537,900 as the runner-up, growing his career earnings to more than \$14.2 million.

Martin Raus earned \$334,380 and his first gold bracelet as the winner of the \$1,000 buy-in *Mini Main Event* at this series. He outlasted a field of 2,234 runners to earn \$334,380.

This was just the second recorded tournament win for the Canadian, who now has nearly \$1.4 million in lifetime earnings across 69 in-the-money finishes.

Previous bracelet winners that made a deep run in the event included Renji Mao (32nd), Yuequi Zhu (49th), Anthony Zinno (67th), Will Jaffe (74th), Chris Brewer (85th), and Weiran Pu (93rd). 2014 *Aussie Millions* main event champion and bracelet winner Ami Barer finished sixth, while *Modern Poker Theory* author Michael Acevedo placed third.

Boris Kolev became just the second multi-time bracelet winner from his home country of Bulgaria, taking down the \$3,000 six-max no-limit hold'em event for his second piece of hardware. The victory saw Kolev pocket \$424,550 from the prize pool while entering into a tie with fellow two-time bracelet winner Yuliyana Nikolaeva Koleva for the most *WSOP* wins by a Bulgarian player.

Kolev now has more than \$3.4 million in career tournament earnings after taking down this event, placing him seventh on Bulgaria's all-time money list.

This event drew a field of 755 entries, more than doubling the \$1 million guarantee to create a final prize pool of \$2,265,000. The top 114 finishers cashed, with six-figure paydays for the top four.

Notable players that fell on the way to the final table included two-time bracelet winner Erick Lindgren (22nd),

two-time bracelet winner Yuval Bronshtein (14th), three-time bracelet winner Georgios Sotiropoulos (12th), bracelet winner Rafael Reis (11th), bracelet winner David Miscikowski (10th), bracelet winner Alex Keating (9th), and recent *Mystery Millions* champion Jin Hoon Lee (7th).

There are still eight events left to finish at the 2023 WSOP Paradise, including the \$15 million guaranteed \$5,000 main event. Check back in the next issue of Card Player for all the results. ♠

WSOP Paradise — Atlantis Resort — Paradise Island, Bahamas



Event	Player	Payout (POY)	Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,500 Mystery Millions Dec. 3-5 \$5,000,000 GTD Entries: 3,446 Prizepool: \$5,169,000	1 Jin Hoon Lee	\$420,000 (1,200)	\$1,000 NLH Dec. 5-7 \$1,000,000 GTD Entries: 2,234 Prizepool: \$2,234,000	1 Martin Raus	\$334,380 (1,080)
	2 Max Pinnola	\$257,100 (1,000)		2 Josef Snejberg	\$194,800 (900)
	3 Maria Ho	\$200,000 (800)		3 Michael Acevedo	\$143,200 (720)
	4 Konstantin Maslak	\$160,000 (600)		4 Jackson Santos	\$106,300 (540)
	5 Drew Scott	\$127,000 (500)		5 Seyoon Lim	\$79,700 (450)
	6 Thomas Santerne	\$101,000 (400)		6 Ami Barer	\$60,300 (360)
	7 Kartik Ved	\$80,000 (300)		7 Yuzhou Yin	\$46,100 (270)
	8 Davidi Kitai	\$64,000 (200)		8 Liviu Bartha	\$35,600 (180)
	9 Hyunsup Kim	\$51,000 (100)		9 Guoliang Wei	\$27,700 (90)
\$1,500 Millionaire Maker Dec. 4 \$5,000,000 GTD Entries: 3,496 Prizepool: \$5,233,000	1 Allan Mello	\$1,000,000	\$25,000 PLO Dec. 7-8 \$2,000,000 GTD Entries: 140 Prizepool: \$3,500,000	1 Nikolaos Lampropoulos	\$871,600 (1,008)
	2 Nazar Buhaiov	\$593,500		2 Dan Shak	\$537,900 (840)
	3 Morten Norland	\$263,500		3 Imad Derwiche	\$397,700 (672)
	4 Maksim Vaskresenski	\$158,500		4 Tyler Brown	\$297,400 (504)
	5 Maxime Parys	\$128,000		5 Nick Schulman	\$225,000 (420)
	6 Clemen Deng	\$103,500		6 Michael Moncek	\$172,300 (336)
	7 Kasparas Klezys	\$81,100		7 Matthew Wantman	\$133,500 (252)
	8 Arnaud Enselme	\$65,000		8 Yuri Dzivielevski	\$104,700 (168)
	9 Roland Israelashvili	\$50,000		9 Isaac Haxton	\$83,100 (84)
\$25,000 NLH Dec. 5-7 \$10,000,000 GTD Entries: 533 Prizepool: \$13,325,000	1 Samuel Mullur	\$2,726,300 (2,940)	\$3,000 NLH 6-Max Dec. 8-9 \$1,000,000 GTD Entries: 755 Prizepool: \$2,265,000	1 Boris Kolev	\$424,550 (1,368)
	2 Frank Brannan	\$1,684,500 (2,450)		2 Daniel Neilson	\$259,100 (1,140)
	3 Daniel Smiljkovic	\$1,192,300 (1,960)		3 Fabian Bernhauser	\$177,000 (912)
	4 Damian Salas	\$856,800 (1,470)		4 Mark Burford	\$123,200 (684)
	5 Anonymous	NA		5 Cristian Nagaki	\$87,300 (570)
	6 Klemens Roiter	\$463,700 (980)		6 Jeremy Izquierdo	\$63,100 (456)
	7 Adrian Mateos	\$349,400 (735)			
	8 Matthew Stumpf	\$267,500 (490)			
	9 Renat Bohdanov	\$208,300 (245)			

WPT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AT WYNN LAS VEGAS OFF TO HOT START

By Erik Fast



The second running of the *WPT World Championship at Wynn Las Vegas* kicked off on Nov. 29. This year the festival continues through Dec. 23, with over 30 events on offer. The focal point of the festival is the record-shattering \$40 million guaranteed \$10,400 buy-in championship event, which runs from Dec. 12-21, but there are plenty of other huge tournaments on the agenda, including several that have already wrapped up in the early days of the series.

With full results available for the first 10 events, there have already been 11,000 entries made and nearly \$9 million in prize money awarded, with all of the largest tournaments yet to play. Here is a look at the early winners.

With many of the high rollers still in the Bahamas, the \$10,500 no-limit hold'em tournament drew 77 entries, growing the prize pool to \$770,000. The top nine finishers made the money, with the largest share going to eventual champion **Ian Bradley**. The Teesside, England resident earned \$240,625 for the win.

This was Bradley's second-largest recorded tournament score behind only the \$515,000 he secured as the runner-up in a €2,200 buy-in side event at the 2022 *European Poker Tour Barcelona* stop.

Two-time bracelet winner Joao Simao finished second

for \$154,000, while *WPT's* Brad Owen (3rd – \$107,800) and *WPT Global* ambassador Ethan 'Rampage' Yau (4th – \$77,000) also ran deep.

The biggest tournament to wrap up during the first few days of the series was the \$1 million guaranteed \$600 buy-in no-limit hold'em event. A total of 4,960 entries were made across the eight starting flights, surpassing the guarantee by more than \$1.5 million dollars.

Michael Rossitto emerged victorious in the end, securing \$340,698 for the win. Like Bradley, this was the second-largest payday yet for Rossitto. His first was also earned at Wynn Las Vegas, taking down a \$3,500 tournament at this year's *Wynn Millions* for \$604,637. Rossitto now has nearly \$3.4 million in total tournament winnings to his name.

Brian Barker took home \$268,559 as the runner-up. This was his first six-figure payday on the circuit.

George Tomescu overcame a field of 3,421 entries in the \$1,600 buy-in *Mystery Bounty* event to earn the top prize of \$500,202 plus bounties, which was by far the largest live tournament payday yet for the Romanian.

The strong turnout for this event built a final prize pool of \$3,215,740, blowing away the \$2 million guarantee. The top 427 finishers made the money to earn

TOURNAMENTS



Ian Bradley



Michael Rossitto



George Tomescu



Lisa Costello



'Miami' John Cernuto



David Larson



Martin Kozlov



Wasim Assaf



Mike Leah

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TOURNAMENTS

their share of that main prize money purse, with another \$1,710,500 paid out among the bounties.

The largest bounty up for grabs was a \$250,000 payout that was ultimately secured by David Hipperson. There were also four \$100,000 bounties pulled, with one of those going to two-time bracelet winner Shannon Shorr.

The 2023 *World Poker Tour Ladies Championship* \$1,100 event drew a sizable field of 457 entries, easily surpassing the \$250,000 guarantee to build a final prize pool of \$443,290.

After three days of tournament action, the largest share of that sum was awarded to **Lisa Costello**, who overcame *WSOP Circuit* ring winner Ashley Sleeth heads-up. She took home \$85,297 for the win, the largest tournament score yet for the Las Vegas resident. This marquee victory increased her lifetime earnings to nearly \$270,000.

"I actually used to play poker for years," Costello told the *WPT*. "I played full-time for two years, five or six years ago. But in the last few years, I just haven't played much at all. I haven't had it in me to grind it out like I used to. But it's great because now I get to pick and choose all the tournaments that I want to play, just like this one. And it's a lot of fun."

Chris Read, who won a massive field Ladies event at The Lodge Poker Club earlier this year, was eliminated in fourth place (\$34,220). Sleeth was awarded a career-high payout of \$57,069 as the runner-up. She now has more than \$409,000 in total cashes to her name.

The first event of the series was a \$600 buy-in Omaha eight-or-better tournament. Of the 152 entries, it was three-

time bracelet winner '**Miami**' **John Cernuto** who scooped the final pot and the top prize of \$16,592. This was Cernuto's 75th recorded title. The all-time tournament cashes leader is now nearing 600 for his career.

Ten-time *WSOP Circuit* gold ring winner **David Larson** outlasted an 805-entry field to be crowned the \$1,100 seniors champion. He took home \$141,385 for the win, his largest score yet. This brings his career earnings to more than \$1.6 million.

Michael Beck (not pictured) defeated three-time bracelet winner and 2015 *WSOP* main event champion Joe McKeen to win the \$1,100 six-max event, taking home \$70,045 after topping the 367-entry turnout.

Australia's **Martin Kozlov** took down the \$1,100 pot-limit Omaha and no-limit hold'em mixed event, outlasting Ben Ludlow heads-up to earn the top prize of \$74,373. The bracelet winner from Melbourne now has nearly \$3.3 million in lifetime earnings after this latest score.

Wasim Assaf took down the \$500 *ClubWPT Challenge* event, taking home \$16,728.

WPT champion and bracelet winner **Mike Leah** returned from a brief circuit hiatus to finish on top in the \$2,200 eight game mix event. The \$77,841 he was awarded as the champion grew his lifetime earnings to more than \$8.5 million.

Make sure to check out the following issue of Card Player for an update on the final weeks of this massive series, including recaps of the \$40 million guaranteed WPT World Championship (Dec. 12-23), the \$5 million guaranteed WPT Prime Championship (Dec. 7-12), and the \$1 million buy-in Big One for One Drop (Dec. 18-20). ♠

WPT World Championship – Wynn – Las Vegas, NV



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$600 Omaha 8	1 John Cernuto	\$16,592 (144)
	2 Rafael Concepcion	\$15,535 (120)
Nov. 29	3 Mykolas Zvilcius	\$8,605 (96)
	4 Patrick Leonard	\$6,567 (72)
\$50,000 GTD Entries: 152 Prizepool: \$78,250	5 Craig Chait	\$4,950 (60)
	6 Lawrence Berg	\$3,689 (48)
	7 Jorge Alba	\$2,888 (36)
	8 Logan Trindade	\$2,363 (24)
	9 Joseph Weinberger	\$1,969 (12)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$600 NLH	1 Michael Rossitto	\$340,698 (660)
	2 Brian Barker	\$268,559 (550)
Nov. 29-Dec. 4	3 Lawrence Chow	\$186,493 (440)
	4 Alexander Britton	\$143,927 (330)
\$1,000,000 GTD Entries: 4,960 Prizepool: \$2,554,400	5 Paul Hizer	\$110,888 (275)
	6 David Wintersberger	\$84,477 (220)
	7 Meraf Tedla	\$63,479 (165)
	8 Florin Iacoban	\$46,640 (110)
	9 Jai Davenport	\$33,372 (55)



Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$10,500 NLH 8-Max Dec. 3 Entries: 77 Prizepool: \$770,000	1 Ian Bradley	\$240,625 (420)
	2 Joao Simao	\$154,000 (350)
	3 Brad Owen	\$107,800 (280)
	4 Ethan Yau	\$77,000 (210)
	5 Istvan Birizdo	\$57,365 (175)
	6 Pavel Plesuv	\$44,275 (140)
	7 Jim Collopy	\$35,035 (105)
	8 Andrew Lichtenberger	\$28,875 (70)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,600 NLH KO Dec. 4-7 \$2,000,000 GTD Entries: 3,421 Prizepool: \$3,215,740	1 George Tomescu	\$500,202 (1,200)
	2 Jiacong Zhang	\$324,347 (1,000)
	3 Jack Hardcastle	\$249,761 (800)
	4 Matthew Mcewan	\$192,754 (600)
	5 Todd Turoci	\$148,507 (500)
	6 Fausto Valdez	\$113,136 (400)
	7 David Levy	\$85,014 (300)
	8 Daniel Fuhs	\$62,463 (200)
	9 Ubaid Habib	\$44,396 (100)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,100 Seniors Dec. 4-6 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 805 Prizepool: \$780,850	1 David Larson	\$141,385
	2 Renyong Hu	\$92,548
	3 George Heim	\$71,182
	4 Scott Buller	\$55,784
	5 Larry Gerek	\$43,279
	6 Lawrence Greenberg	\$32,941
	7 Ryan Biggar	\$24,580
	8 Ira Friedman	\$18,241
	9 Juli Black	\$13,059

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,100 NLH 6-Max Dec. 4 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 367 Prizepool: \$355,990	1 Michael Beck	\$70,045 (600)
	2 Joe McKeehen	\$46,714 (500)
	3 Jordyn Miller	\$35,930 (400)
	4 Bradley Coultas	\$28,157 (300)
	5 Oliver Bithell	\$21,845 (250)
	6 Sundiata De Vore	\$16,627 (200)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,100 PLO/NLH Dec. 5 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 376 Prizepool: \$364,720	1 Martin Kozlov	\$74,373 (600)
	2 Benjamin Ludlow	\$50,754 (500)
	3 Paul Roy	\$37,601 (400)
	4 Ryan Christopherson	\$27,869 (300)
	5 Mark Liedtke	\$20,634 (250)
	6 Sami Shurbaji	\$15,311 (200)
	7 Tony Hoang	\$11,445 (150)
	8 Philip Shing	\$8,727 (100)
	9 Stephen Ma	\$6,796 (50)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$1,100 Ladies Dec. 6-8 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 457 Prizepool: \$443,290	1 Lisa Costello	\$85,297
	2 Ashley Sleeth	\$57,069
	3 Kathy Stahl	\$43,686
	4 Chris Read	\$34,220
	5 Aylar Lie	\$26,480
	6 Ada Lang	\$20,155
	7 Alida Veliu	\$15,128
	8 Michelle Gibson	\$11,058
	9 Jessica Richards	\$7,122

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$500 ClubWPT Dec. 7 \$50,000 GTD Entries: 239 Prizepool: \$102,770	1 Wasim Assaf	\$16,278
	2 Ryan Tosoc	\$15,940
	3 Ziyag Qasem	\$13,886
	4 Mihai Manole	\$8,589
	5 Huifang Zhang	\$6,717
	6 Ryan Brown	\$5,148
	7 Sande Slutsky	\$3,808
	8 Andrea Chait	\$2,878
	9 Alan Hamza	\$2,200

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
\$2,200 Mix Dec. 8-9 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 146 Prizepool: \$291,000	1 Mike Leah	\$77,841 (288)
	2 Luigi D'Santoro	\$48,676 (240)
	3 Caleb Shumard	\$34,018 (192)
	4 Dzmityr Urbanovich	\$25,258 (144)
	5 David Baker	\$18,688 (120)
	6 Alan Myerson	\$14,016 (96)
	7 Matthew Vengrin	\$10,950 (72)
	8 Jon Turner	\$8,833 (48)



ISTVAN BRISKI CAPTURES WPT ROCK 'N' ROLL POKER OPEN

By Erik Fast



Istvan Briski was the last player standing in the penultimate *World Poker Tour* main event of 2023. The 30-year-old Hungarian outlasted a field of 1,447 total entries in the *WPT Rock 'n' Roll Poker Open* \$3,500 main event at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood to earn his first *WPT* title and the top prize of \$647,300.

"It's amazing to be a *WPT* champion," Briski told reporters. "I ran really well in the tournament. I made it all the way and I'm very happy."

This was the second-largest recorded payday of Briski's tournament career, trailing only the \$833,404 score he made as the fifth-place finisher in the 2022 *WSOP Online* \$5,000 main event. Briski now has more than \$2.2 million in lifetime tournament earnings to his name, with four six-figure scores made along the way.

This latest deep run also saw Briski walk away with 1,440 *Card Player* Player of the Year points. When combined with the 440 points he earned as the third-place finisher in the \$777 buy-in *Lucky 7's* event at this year's *WSOP*, Briski's point total has grown to 1,880.

The strong turnout for this event saw the \$3 million guarantee easily surpassed, with \$4,630,400 ultimately paid out among the top 181 finishers. Plenty of notables ran deep in this event, including three-time *WPT* champion Brian Altman (72nd), three-time bracelet winner and *WPT* champion Chance Kornuth (69th), bracelet winner and *WPT* champion Alex Foxen (59th), four-time bracelet winner and three-time *WPT* champion Anthony Zinno (47th), bracelet winner Kyle Julius (28th), three-time bracelet winner and two-time *WPT* champion Chad Eveslage (19th), and *WPT* winner Alessio Isaia (17th).

After two starting flights and three more days of play, the field had been narrowed to just six contenders, with Briski in the lead and Sandy Sanchez in second chip position. 2018 *WPT Lucky Hearts Poker Open* main event champion Darryll Fish was the first to fall on the final day.

He open-shoved from the small blind for just shy of eight big blinds with Q-7 and ran into the pocket kings of Briski in

the big blind. Fish turned two pair, but was drawing dead to Briski's flopped set of kings. Fish earned \$157,800 as the sixth-place career tournament finisher, increasing his career tournament earnings to more than \$5.2 million in the process.

Matt Bond's run came to an end when his A-9 suited clashed with the pocket jacks of bracelet winner Fred Goldberg. Bond turned an open-ended straight draw, but a brick on the river saw him head to the rail to collect his \$206,900 in prize money.

Goldberg was contending for the chip lead early in four-handed play, but soon lost a big one to Canadian poker player and content creator Rayan Chamas, known to many as 'Beruzy.' He eventually was whittled down to fewer than six big blinds and ran his A-2 into the pocket jacks of Briski. Goldberg was awarded \$274,000 for his run, bringing his lifetime earnings to over \$3.3 million.

A preflop clash of pocket pairs led to the next knockout. Sanchez three-bet shoved from the big blind over the top of Chamas' open with pocket fives. Chamas called with pocket nines and held to eliminate Sanchez in third place. The \$366,500 he earned was the largest score yet on his tournament résumé.

Heads-up play began with Chamas holding a slight lead over Briski. The final two came to a deal to redistribute the remaining prize money, with \$600,000 for second place and \$647,300 for the eventual champion.

Briski soon doubled up with turned trips against top pair to take a 5:1 lead. Chamas managed one double-up, but was soon all-in again with 10♠ 8♣ facing the Q♦ 4♣ of Briski. The board ran out A♠ 7♦ 2♥ K♥ 5♠ and Briski's queen high played to earn him the pot and the title.

Chamas increased his recorded tournament earnings to nearly \$1.6 million thanks to his runner-up finish.

Player	Payout (POV)
1 Istvan Briski	\$647,300 (1,440)
2 Rayan Chamas	\$600,000 (1,200)
3 Sandy Sanchez	\$366,500 (960)
4 Fred Goldberg	\$274,000 (720)
5 Matt Bond	\$206,900 (600)
6 Darryll Fish	\$157,800 (480)
7 Luke Graham	\$121,500 (360)
8 Jason Sagle	\$94,500 (240)
9 Rishi Makkar	\$74,300 (120)

ALEKSEJS PONAKOV'S TRIUMPHS IN RRPO HIGH ROLLER

By Erik Fast



Aleksejs Ponakovs has won the 2023 *Rock 'n' Roll Poker Open* \$25,500 high roller event at the Seminole Hard Rock. The two-time *WSOP* bracelet winner from Latvia navigated his way through a tough field of 93 entries to secure the title and the top prize of \$682,238.

This was the eighth-largest score of Ponakovs' career. It brought his lifetime earnings to more than \$16.6 million, extending his already massive lead on Latvia's all-time money list. His nearest competition on that leaderboard is Mihails Morozovs, who has just shy of \$2.1 million in total scores to his name.

This was his second title of 2023, having also taken down a \$25,000 buy-in tournament at the *European Poker*

Tour Cyprus stop for another \$216,810. With 15 final tables, more than \$5.1 million in to-date POY earnings, and 4,579 total points, Ponakovs now sits in 23rd place in the 2023 standings.

This event featured a \$1 million guarantee which was more than doubled thanks to the 93-entry turnout. The final prize pool of \$2,297,100 was split up among the top 12 finishers, with plenty of big names running deep, including Ethan 'Rampage' Yau (12th), Justin Zaki (9th), Adam Hendrix (6th), 2015 *WSOP* main event champion Joe McKeehen (5th), *EPT* champion Anton Wigg (4th), and three-time *WPT* champion Brian Altman (3rd).

Timur Vardanian finished second for \$459,420. This was the largest live score by far for the Russian player.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Aleksejs Ponakovs	\$682,238 (756)
2 Timur Vardanian	\$459,420 (630)
3 Brian Altman	\$298,623 (504)
4 Anton Wigg	\$204,442 (378)
5 Joe McKeehen	\$135,529 (315)
6 Adam Hendrix	\$101,072 (252)
7 Ali Turkan	\$82,696 (189)
8 Ben Grise	\$71,210 (126)
9 Justin Zaki	\$68,913 (63)

SERGEI KISLINSKII TOPS MSPT VENETIAN MAIN EVENT

By Erik Fast



The second of two *Mid-States Poker Tour* main events wrapped during the final week of November at The Venetian Las Vegas. The \$1,600 buy-in tournament drew 238 players, surpassing the \$300,000 guarantee to build a final prize pool of \$339,150.

After two starting flights and a final day of combined-field action, Sergei Kislinskii emerged victorious with

the title and the top prize of \$73,019.

"It feels good to win something," Kislinski told *MSPT* reporters. "I'm a cash player, I've been playing poker since 2007, and I'd play tournaments here and there but never won any, so this is nice."

Prior to this win, Kislinskii's top tournament score had been a fourth-place finish in a \$5,300 six-max event during this year's *WSOP Online* festival for \$32,918.

Kislinskii had plenty of tough competition to contend

with down the stretch, including bracelet winner Giuseppe Pantaleo (8th), *WPT Venetian* champion Ben Palmer (5th), Francis Anderson (4th), bracelet winner Nicholas Pupillo (3rd), and 2023 *WSOP* main event third-place finisher Adam Walton (2nd).

This was the 18th final-table finish of the year for Pupillo, with two titles won along the way. The 256 POY points he earned for his latest deep run increased his total to 5,842, which is good for 12th place on the POY leaderboard.

Walton moved to 45th place in the rankings thanks to his runner-up finish. He has now made six final tables, with nearly \$4.2 million in total POY earnings.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Sergei Kislinskii	\$73,019 (384)
2 Adam Walton	\$52,010 (320)
3 Nicholas Pupillo	\$37,695 (256)
4 Francis Anderson	\$27,807 (192)
5 Benjamin Palmer	\$20,884 (160)
6 Jose Demeyere	\$15,975 (128)
7 Sergio Fernandez	\$12,450 (96)
8 Giuseppe Pantaleo	\$9,888 (64)
9 Chad Lipton	\$8,008 (32)

JOSEPH CROWLEY TAKES DOWN WSOP CIRCUIT HARRAH'S CHEROKEE

By Erik Fast

The *WSOP Circuit Harrah's Cherokee* \$1,700 main event drew 1,470 entries, creating a prize pool worth more than \$2.2 million. In the end it was Joseph Crowley who came away with the title and the top prize of \$348,785.

Crowley overcame this year's *WSOP* main event champion Daniel Weinman heads-up to secure the win, earning his first *WSOPC* gold ring in the process. Crowley was at his 12th final table of 2023, with two titles won along the way.

Weinman, a two-time bracelet winner, fell just short of securing his second *WSOP Circuit* main event win. The two-time *WPT* champion was awarded \$215,576 as the runner-up, growing his career earnings to more than \$16 million.

This was only the second final table of the year for Weinman, but with this run and the 3,600 points and \$12.1 million he earned for taking down the largest *WSOP* main event ever held, he now sits in 27th place in the POY standings.

15-time *WSOPC* ring winner Maurice Hawkins finished in seventh place (\$57,070). He remains one behind Ari Engel for the most rings.

Crowley doubled up through Weinman twice, moving into the lead in the process. Then Crowley's pocket jacks won a preflop race against the K-Q of *WSOPC Harvey's Lake Tahoe* main event champion Jarod Minghini (3rd – \$162,276) to set up the final showdown.

Crowley won a big pot right out of the gate to take a massive lead and soon closed out the event when his 10-9 outran Weinman's A-9 suited, making trips to lock up the victory.



Player	Payout (POY)
1 Joseph Crowley	\$348,785 (960)
2 Daniel Weinman	\$215,576 (800)
3 Jarod Minghini	\$162,276 (640)
4 Tyler Phillips	\$123,261 (480)
5 Christopher Churchwell	\$94,483 (400)
6 Chad Varnas	\$73,092 (320)
7 Maurice Hawkins	\$57,070 (240)
8 Dale Roesel	\$44,980 (160)
9 Christopher Conrad	\$35,787 (80)

STEPHEN SONG WINS TWO WSOP CIRCUIT HARRAH'S CHEROKEE TITLES

By Erik Fast



Stephen Song managed to double his gold ring count over a recent three-week span. He came into mid-November with three *WSOPC* titles to his name and then took down the *WSOPC Grand Victoria* main event before making his way to *WSOPC Harrah's Cherokee* to add two more wins to his résumé, bringing his total to six.

The poker pro now has more than \$6 million in recorded live earnings thanks to the two victories which added more than \$175,000 to his tally. Song is also a bracelet winner and took down the inaugural *WPT Prime Championship* last December.

With his three *WSOPC* victories and a total of six final-table finishes on the live scene in 2023, Song has climbed into 75th place in the rankings.

Song's two latest wins saw him come out on top in a \$1,100

no-limit hold'em event and the \$2,200 no-limit hold'em high roller. The first event saw Song outlast a field of 556 entries to secure the top prize of \$102,954.

A total of 83 players made the money in that event, with other notables running deep including ring winner Cory Biddle (9th), four-time ring winner Brett Murray (8th), and ring winner James Casement (4th).

Just a few days later, Song bested 137 entries in the high roller, adding another \$72,583 in earnings.

The top 21 finishers cashed in that event, with *WPT* champion Matthew Wantman (15th) and bracelet winner Cherish Andrews (13th) among those who cashed. Ring winner Brandon Zuidema (9th), bracelet winner Seth Fischer (8th), and ring winner Justin Donatio (6th) joined Song at the final table.

Player	Payout (POY)
1 Stephen Song	\$102,954 (840)
2 David Elledge	\$63,248 (700)
3 Matthew Osorio	\$46,518 (560)
4 James Casement	\$34,575 (420)
5 Michael Mestey	\$26,135 (350)
6 Michael Lawrence	\$19,832 (280)
7 Matthew Ernst	\$15,238 (210)
8 Brett Murray	\$11,856 (140)
9 Cory Biddle	\$9,637 (70)

CIRCUIT RESULTS

All payouts in USD.

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Even Bigger One Texas Card House Dallas, TX \$300 NLH Nov. 29-Dec. 3 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 1,619 Prizepool: \$352,415	1 Charles Blanchard	\$57,900 (432)
	2 Evan Hu	\$45,000 (360)
	3 Mark Toulouse	\$45,000 (288)
	4 Clint Turner	\$21,905 (216)
	5 Harvey Kiser	\$15,875 (180)
	6 Matthew Struckle	\$11,875 (144)
	7 Lucas Raynor	\$8,775 (108)
	8 Ryan Sykes	\$6,575 (72)
	9 Brendan Dornan	\$5,200 (36)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$10,100 NLH Nov.28 Entries: 25 Prizepool: \$250,000	1 Isaac Kempton	\$115,000 (180)
	2 Maxx Coleman	\$70,000 (150)
	3 Victoria Livschitz	\$40,000 (120)
	4 Isaac Haxton	\$25,000 (90)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$10,100 NLH Nov.29 Entries: 28 Prizepool: \$280,000	1 Seth Davies	\$128,800 (180)
	2 Sam Soverel	\$78,400 (150)
	3 Erik Seidel	\$44,800 (120)
	4 Dan Smith	\$28,000 (90)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
High Rollers Aria Las Vegas, NV \$10,100 NLH Nov. 30 Entries: 29 Prizepool: \$290,000	1 Vladas Tamasauskas	\$116,000 (180)
	2 Chris Brewer	\$75,400 (150)
	3 Andrew Lichtenberger	\$46,400 (120)
	4 Sean Winter	\$31,900 (90)
	5 Joe McKeehen	\$20,300 (75)



© Seminole Hard Rock

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WPT Rock 'n' Roll Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood, FL \$5,000 NLH 8-Max Nov. 28 \$250,000 GTD Entries: 168 Prizepool: \$789,600	1 Adam Hendrix	\$192,150 (624)
	2 Joseph Serock	\$126,300 (520)
	3 Meir Meystel	\$91,500 (416)
	4 Anonymous	NA
	5 Krasimir Yankov	\$50,100 (260)
	6 Grant Wang	\$38,200 (208)
	7 Nikita Kalinin	\$29,700 (156)
	8 Sam Laskowitz	\$23,500 (104)



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Holiday Classic The Lodge Round Rock, TX \$500 NLH Nov. 26-Dec. 3 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 1,164 Prizepool: \$500,000	1 Joel Doney	\$90,005 (480)
	2 Alexis Cruz	\$60,128 (400)
	3 Lazar Hausman	\$43,877 (320)
	4 Mahesh Rathi	\$32,846 (240)
	5 Andrew Robinson	\$24,630 (200)
	6 Aaron McEvoy	\$18,510 (160)
	7 Cord Garcia	\$13,790 (120)
	8 Stephen Hesse	\$10,181 (80)
	9 Victor Reyes	\$7,867 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Gangster Series Merit Crystal Cove Kyrenia, Cyprus \$3,300 NLH Nov. 28-Dec. 3 Entries: 566 Prizepool: \$1,562,160	1 Dmitry Yurasov	\$295,500 (1,260)
	2 Dmitry Gromov	\$217,500 (1,050)
	3 Anonymous	NA
	4 Nikolay Fal	\$98,500 (630)
	5 Baurzhan Akimov	\$74,000 (525)
	6 Parahat Nurmammedov	\$59,200 (420)
	7 Bassel Moussa	\$49,300 (315)
	8 Frederic Popot	\$39,300 (210)

TOURNAMENTS



Jason Witten

© WSOP

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit	1 Jason Witten	\$131,870 (480)
	2 Jerry Ciullo	\$81,510 (400)
Harrah's Cherokee, NC	3 Amanda Peterson	\$61,375 (320)
	4 Alexandru Vasilescu	\$46,651 (240)
\$400 NLH Nov. 28-30 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 3,047 Prizepool: \$1,005,510	5 Lawrence Broome	\$35,799 (200)
	6 Kenneth Brossoit	\$27,736 (160)
	7 Randy Setliff	\$21,699 (120)
	8 Shahin Shayesteh	\$17,143 (80)
	9 David Yue	\$13,678 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit	1 Stephen Song	\$72,583 (264)
	2 Matthew Langone	\$44,860 (220)
Harrah's Cherokee, NC	3 Eric Andreacchio	\$31,575 (176)
	4 Niles Lawless	\$22,709 (132)
\$2,200 NLH Dec. 3-4 Entries: 137 Prizepool: \$274,000	5 Nikita Kutukov	\$16,697 (110)
	6 Justin Donato	\$12,556 (88)
	7 Kelly Wolfe	\$9,663 (66)
	8 Seth Fischer	\$7,614 (44)
	9 Brandon Zuidema	\$6,147 (22)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
November Tournament	1 Tan Hao	\$44,440 (360)
	2 Yaser Al-Keliddar	\$42,475 (300)
MGM National Harbor Oxon Hill, MD	3 Quinzy Pratt	\$22,170 (240)
	4 Z Stein	\$16,325 (180)
\$600 NLH Nov. 29-Dec. 3 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 494 Prizepool: \$251,940	5 James Chavanarajirit	\$12,240 (150)
	6 David Hoag	\$9,850 (120)
	7 Valentin Lita	\$8,140 (90)
	8 Batsugar Tsedendamba	\$6,500 (60)
	9 Chunyu Yang	\$4,915 (30)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Deepstacks Challenge	1 Gabriel Fuller	\$54,990 (365)
	2 Andrew Pecina	\$36,650 (304)
Seminole Hard Rock Tampa, FL	3 Ross Corless	\$27,060 (243)
	4 Elias Kiwan	\$20,190 (182)
\$400 NLH Nov. 29-Dec. 3 \$200,000 GTD Entries: 992 Prizepool: \$327,360	5 Corey Major	\$15,230 (152)
	6 Christopher Stanton	\$11,610 (122)
	7 Antuan Bunkley	\$8,950 (91)
	8 Christopher Moore	\$6,980 (61)
	9 Corey Zedo	\$5,500 (30)



Craig Rimmer

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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
WSOP Circuit Australia	1 Craig Rimmer	\$178,981 (1260)
	2 Sue Rounce	\$110,618 (1050)
Star Gold Coast Broadbeach, Australia	3 Ali Ghezelbash	\$81,127 (840)
	4 Scott Carmichael	\$60,256 (630)
A\$3,000 NLH Nov. 29-Dec. 4 Entries: 508 Prizepool: \$899,770	5 Cuong Le	\$45,331 (525)
	6 Qais Shanasa	\$34,548 (420)
	7 Noman Mirza	\$26,679 (315)
	8 Peter Apostolou	\$20,878 (210)
	9 Danielle Noja	\$16,560 (105)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Hanoi Billions	1 Shimizu Nozomu	\$222,991 (480)
	2 Ragnar Toompere	\$156,306 (400)
National Convention Center Hanoi, Vietnam	3 Xue Song	\$103,213 (320)
	4 Kannapong Thanaratrakul	\$81,126 (240)
VND 250,000,000 NLH 8-Max Dec. 4	5 William Jia	\$65,411 (200)
	6 Jason Wong	\$50,969 (160)
VND 4,000,000,000 GTD Entries: 89 Prizepool: \$849,488	7 Sang Van	\$40,351 (120)
	8 Kok Sim	\$31,431 (80)

TOURNAMENTS

Paul Nunes



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Event	Player	Payout (POY)
GUKPT Final	1 Paul Nunes	\$176,400 (480)
The Poker Room London, United Kingdom	2 Alex Montgomery	\$126,000 (400)
	3 Adam Bonham	\$78,385 (320)
£2,000 NLH Nov. 30-Dec. 3 Entries: 325 Prizepool: \$700,054	4 Tom Hall	\$49,694 (240)
	5 Anonymous	NA
	6 Iulian Petrache	\$25,200 (160)
	7 Hamza Nasir	\$18,270 (120)
	8 Mathew Frankland	\$15,120 (80)
	9 Angel Plazasaez	\$13,230 (40)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Enjoy Poker Tour	1 Brian Kaufman	\$117,025 (600)
Enjoy Punta del Este Casino Punta del Este, Uruguay	2 Ceferino Villalobos	\$81,955 (500)
	3 Ramiro Rodriguez	\$52,690 (400)
	4 Jan Kirst	\$34,830 (300)
\$1,650 NLH Dec. 2-6 Entries: 388 Prizepool: \$564,540	5 Diego Justo	\$26,815 (250)
	6 Nicolas Zeballos	\$22,215 (200)
	7 Jean Oddone	\$18,660 (150)
	8 Mariano Molino	\$15,140 (100)
	9 Heber Aragones	\$11,705 (50)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Enjoy Poker Tour	1 Gustavo Morales	\$92,295 (360)
Enjoy Punta del Este Casino Punta del Este, Uruguay	2 Andres Korn	\$56,745 (300)
	3 Juan Repetto	\$34,805 (240)
	4 Sebastian Gomez	\$22,700 (180)
\$3,300 NLH Dec. 4-5 Entries: 104 Prizepool: \$302,640	5 Carlos Peuvrie	\$17,705 (150)
	6 Facundo Trigueiro	\$14,150 (120)
	7 Roberto Finkelberg	\$12,030 (90)
	8 Pablo Joaquin	\$10,440 (60)
	9 Christian Sare	\$9,230 (30)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Winter Classic	1 Dennis Stevermer	\$40,553 (384)
	2 Erick Wright	\$24,878 (320)
Running Aces Columbus, MN	3 Takahiro Mizutani	\$18,466 (256)
	4 Ryan Weeks	\$14,021 (192)
\$360 NLH KO Nov. 30-Dec. 3 \$100,000 GTD Entries: 1,130 Prizepool: \$224,500	5 Kevin McMahon	\$10,444 (160)
	6 Levi Gomes	\$8,000 (128)
	7 Dusty Caspers	\$6,222 (96)
	8 Dylan Gmyrek	\$4,889 (64)
	9 Carson Mair	\$4,000 (32)

Allan Secord



© MSPT

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Winter Classic	1 Allan Secord	\$163,511 (912)
	2 Chou Chang	\$100,627 (760)
Running Aces Columbus, MN	3 Michael Crawford	\$74,125 (608)
	4 Loki Abboud	\$55,342 (456)
\$1,100 NLH Dec. 7-10 \$500,000 GTD Entries: 866 Prizepool: \$838,520	5 Jon Hanner	\$41,926 (380)
	6 Pejman Niyati	\$31,864 (304)
	7 Steve Houle	\$24,317 (228)
	8 Robert Schoonover	\$19,286 (152)
	9 Han Wang	\$15,093 (76)

Event	Player	Payout (POY)
Pure Poker Tour	1 Matt Jarvis	\$51,800 (432)
Casino Yellowhead Edmonton, Canada	2 Dylan Deschaneaux	\$40,964 (360)
	3 Colton Yamagishi	\$25,589 (288)
	4 Eric Wasylenko	\$18,426 (216)
Dec. 1-4 C\$1,650 NLH Entries: 274 Prizepool: \$287,012	5 Tina Nguyen	\$14,408 (180)
	6 Kris Steinbach	\$11,966 (144)
	7 Daniel Lefebvre	\$10,101 (108)
	8 Ambrose Ng	\$8,377 (72)
	9 Michael Baldwin	\$6,660 (36)

2023 Card Player Player of the Year

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Place	Player	Points	Titles	Final Tables	POY Earnings
1	Bin Weng	11,080	5	15	\$5,451,838
2	Isaac Haxton	9,641	7	24	\$14,556,581
3	Nacho Barbero	9,492	3	16	\$10,287,359
4	Chris Brewer	9,455	5	26	\$13,489,681
5	Stephen Chidwick	8,779	5	24	\$8,722,628
6	Ren Lin	8,685	2	25	\$4,640,895
7	Danny Tang	8,108	7	20	\$9,142,869
8	Alex Foxen	7,281	3	24	\$3,560,567
9	Jason Koon	7,082	6	16	\$9,908,733
10	Jeremy Ausmus	6,112	1	21	\$2,691,373
11	Adrian Mateos	6,072	2	17	\$8,697,329
12	Nicholas Pupillo	5,842	2	18	\$824,588
13	Daniel Dvoress	5,614	3	16	\$4,921,139
14	Quan Zhou	5,483	3	12	\$3,497,708
15	Aram Oganyan	5,189	1	10	\$1,988,636
16	Michael Watson	5,112	4	11	\$3,605,695
17	Artur Martirosian	5,026	1	14	\$7,002,851
18	Ding Biao	5,007	1	17	\$3,639,031
19	Jesse Lonis	4,831	4	12	\$3,702,476
20	Seth Davies	4,727	1	14	\$3,764,709
21	Brian Kim	4,656	0	13	\$3,249,750
22	Justin Saliba	4,632	2	11	\$2,188,702
23	Aleksejs Ponakovs	4,579	2	15	\$5,140,950
24	Orpen Kisacikoglu	4,576	4	13	\$5,336,563
25	Sam Soverel	4,553	2	17	\$2,011,503
26	Steve O'Dwyer	4,447	2	13	\$5,465,716
27	Daniel Weinman	4,400	1	2	\$12,315,576
28	Ka Kwan Lau	4,320	2	2	\$3,277,988
29	Shaun Deeb	4,286	5	9	\$1,337,907
30	Kiat Lee	4,275	1	14	\$3,227,768



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SLOW PLAYING IS DANGEROUS

By Jonathan Little

Let's discuss a hand from a \$200 buy-in tournament that one of my students recently played that illustrates the dangers of slow playing. So far, everyone at the table had been fairly tight and passive. No one was too crazy.

Everyone folded to our Hero in third position at a nine-handed table and he raised to 375 out of his 9,000 effective stack at 75-150 with $K\heartsuit Q\spadesuit$. The cutoff and button both called, and the blinds folded.

When you raise and do not get three-bet (re-raised), it is usually safe to assume that you are not against premium preflop hands, like Q-Q and A-K. Instead, you are likely against marginal pairs, non-premium big cards, suited aces, and suited connectors.

The flop came $Q\clubsuit 5\heartsuit 4\clubsuit$, giving Hero top pair with a backdoor flush draw. He bet 600 into the 1,350 pot.

When you bet for value, make a point to choose a size that can realistically get called by worse made hands.

On this board, if Hero bets large, perhaps 1,200 or more, his opponents will usually only call with top pairs and strong draws. Since his top pair is only in marginal shape against that strong range, a large bet is not ideal. If he bet smaller, as he did, many made hands that he crushes can call, such as 7-7 and 6-5, allowing him to extract value.

Both the cutoff and button called. The turn was the $10\spadesuit$, giving Hero a flush draw in addition to his top pair. He bet 1,000 into the 3,150 pot.

Again, Hero's bet is purely for value. If he happens to be behind, he may river the flush.

Surprisingly, the cutoff raised to 3,000, and the button folded.

At this point, the cutoff probably has a premium hand, perhaps two pair and better, plus a few premium draws such as $K\clubsuit J\clubsuit$. Although Hero is likely beat at the moment, calling with a flush draw makes sense due to the pot odds plus the implied odds.

Hero has to put in 2,000 more to win the 7,150 pot, plus the 2,000 he would be putting in, meaning he needs to win at least $2,000/9,150 = 21\%$ of the time to justify calling.

Notice that in the worst-case scenario, when his opponent has a set, Hero will only win 18% of the time, making this call slightly unprofitable. But if his opponent does not have a set, his call is immediately profitable.

Also notice that even if his opponent happens to have a set, Hero will likely be able to win a sizable bet on the river when he improves to a flush, meaning he is risking 2,000 to win the 7,150 pot plus an additional 5,925 (the remaining stacks) on the river.

Hero called 2,000 more. The river was the $A\spadesuit$, completing his flush. He decided to lead all-in because he feared that his opponent would check behind with two pair or a set on this "obviously" scary river, while he would still call a bet because the obvious flopped flush draw missed.



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Hero was pleased to see his opponent instantly call with three fours.

So, where did the cutoff go wrong? He should have simply raised Hero's flop bet. When you flop a set on a draw-heavy board, you should be happy to build a pot. Instead, the cutoff elected to make a small raise on the turn, forcing Hero to continue with all his draws. This time, his error cost him his tournament life.

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

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

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- Video Classes
- Interactive Hand Quizzes
- Free Course: The 25 Biggest Leaks and How to Fix Them
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Jonathan Little is a two-time WPT champion with more than \$7 million in live tournament earnings, best-selling author of 15 educational poker books, and 2019 GPI Poker Personality of the Year. If you want to increase your poker skills and learn to crush the games, check out his training site at PokerCoaching.com/cardplayer.

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Card Player Poker School

Poker Experiments To Expand Your Game

By Alex Fitzgerald

You're not going to grow as a poker player if you do the same things every single day. You need to experiment to expand your game.

What experiments should you try on the felt? Try one of these five challenges and see what it does for you. My students have reported great success from trying these methods.

1. Go Two Weeks Without Bluffing

One of my students recently accomplished this challenge, and they were surprised that they were still getting paid on their bets by the end.

No one is paying attention at the table. You don't need to run bluffs to get paid off. Most people hate folding any decent hand they flopped. They'll find a way to justify how "this time is different."

I've gone five hours while barely playing a hand in \$10,000 events. Then, I triple barrel top pair for three streets versus someone.

Do you think how tight I've played

all day gets people to fold? Nope. They still call off their stacks with their second pairs. It's wild. If there is a missed flush draw out there, that's immediately what they want to put you on.

You can take advantage of how people don't want to fold anymore by bluffing less. To realize how little you need to bluff, go for two weeks without running a single bluff. I bet you'll be stunned at how much action you still get.

2. Try Three Triple Barrel Bluffs

Once you realize how tight you can play, switch things up with three triple barrel bluffs.

Most people are afraid to run triple barrel bluffs. This means there's a huge tool in their game they don't have.

Start with a basic situation. Raise and get the big blind to call you. When the big blind calls you out of position you can rule out A-Q+ and 10-10+, because they most likely would have three-bet those hands preflop.

Let the board come with some high cards. Say A-Q-X. On this board, you can fire multiple streets if you believe they're disciplined enough to fold one pair.

On a similar note, you can also focus on boards with flush draws and straight draws. Say the board comes 9♦ 6♦ 4♠. They check to you, you bet, and they call you.

You know on this board they most likely would have raised with two pair and sets, because there's so many flush draws and straight draws out there. They would want to simultaneously protect their hand and get value from it.

You can make a safe assumption on this board that your opponent's range is capped at one pair. It's most likely a nine or a six, because there are less combinations of pocket pairs to begin with and they'd likely have three-bet most of them preflop. You can fire on the turn and river if it's bad for a nine or a six.

Try three triple barrel bluffs to get

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 World Series of Poker Paradise
\$25,000 GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship



Samuel Mullur
76,300,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 70%
After Flop: 86%
After Turn: 95%



Daniel Smiljkovic
23,500,000

Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 29%
After Flop: 13%
After Turn: 5%



PREFLOP

With three players remaining and blinds of 700,000-1,300,000 and a big blind ante of 1,300,000, Samuel Mullur raised to 3,200,000 from the small blind. Daniel Smiljkovic called from the big blind.

FLOP



Mullur bet 1,800,000, and Smiljkovic called.

TURN



Both players checked.

RIVER



Mullur bet 3,700,000, and Smiljkovic called.

COMMENTARY:

The \$25,000 buy-in GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship at the WSOP Paradise series featured a gigantic \$10 million guarantee. Not only was that lofty target met, it was well surpassed, with 533 total entries resulting in a final prize pool of more than \$13.3 million. This hand took place with just three players remaining, with those still in contention having all locked up at least \$1,192,300 for their efforts. Of course, there was still so much to play for, with a \$492,200 jump from third to second and a \$1,041,800 difference between winning and finishing as the runner-up. The battle of the blinds began with a raise of nearly 2.5x from the small blind from Samuel Mullur, who was playing at his first live final table. German poker pro Daniel Smiljkovic defended with a suited K-8 and then called the paired flop, likely figuring that king high could be ahead against a variety of unimproved non-pairs that Mullur would raise preflop and then c-bet with. The turn brought a third spade, giving Mullur the nut flush draw and a gutshot straight draw to go with his nut high cards. He checked and Smiljkovic checked behind. Any hopes he had of a free showdown vanished when Mullur fired third pot on the river, which had doubled-paired the board. Mullur's line to this point could indicate a range with plenty of one-card flush draws that he didn't want to get blown off of on the turn. Smiljkovic made the call with king high, but Mullur revealed his winning ace high to take down the healthy pot and extend his chip lead. Smiljkovic went on to finish third just moments later, earning his second career seven-figure payday for his efforts.

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outside of your game. Budget for them. They're high variance, but you need to be capable of a big bluff if you want to move up in the game.

3. Three-bet The Loose Player Every Single Time. Aggravate Someone.

If there's someone at your table who is opening constantly, then it's time for you to get in their face.

Three-bet them every single time they open. Do it with the J-5 suited. Do it with the 8-4 suited. Do it with anything remotely playable.

Most people are too afraid of being criticized at the table. I get it. It doesn't feel good to have an entire table pissed at you. Most people in life don't want that kind of attention.

However, we have to get over this if we want to play attacking poker. If someone is opening too many hands, then you want to corner them every time they are going to be out of position.

You don't need much of a hand versus them. It's similar to when you raise on the button and the big blind flats you. You don't need much of a hand versus the big blind because they're calling you with such a garbage wide range. You can exploit that range easily because it flops so many mediocre pairs that can't stand huge bets.

You should take it personally when someone keeps opening when you're to their left on the button, cutoff, or hijack. Why do they think they can steal your steal position from you? Why do they open garbage like you won't do anything about it? Do they really think you're that much of a pushover?

Let's see what they have. For one session, let's play in position and play hard versus this clown. Let's see if they actually have the tools to defend all their terrible opens.

4. Don't Hero Call For Two Weeks

Most of your opponents don't bluff enough. I've done thousands of private lessons over the last decade. I've worked with people from 60 different countries. I've worked with people of all ages and backgrounds. I can tell you the hardest thing to teach anyone is how to bluff.

The problem with bluffing is it is a freeroll to looking like a dumbass. If you bet big on the river, one of two things is going to happen. One, you win a medium-sized pot, and if you muck no one sees your badass bluff. Two, you lose a huge pot, and everyone sees your mistake.

Most people don't want to get caught bluffing at the table. It makes them feel uncomfortable.

I get it. I get caught bluffing all the time. It's always annoying how people snicker and stare afterward.

They were having a friendly game before the bluffer showed up. They don't take kindly to the person bluffing.

Since most people don't bluff enough, you shouldn't go looking for it. Obviously, you're going to need to learn how to hero call at some point, but if you're lost in a hand and don't commit more money, that's not the worst habit. Most recreational players lose their asses off because they call down when the pro confuses them.

For two weeks, try to fold every

single time you're on the fence. See what it does for your results. I bet you'll like it. See if anyone shows you a bluff. I doubt they will.

5. Play Only A-Q offsuit+ and 10-10+ For One Session

This is a hardcore challenge, but it changes your perspective forever.

Play one cash game for six or so hours. Play only A-Q offsuit and pocket tens or better.

You will be astounded how nobody picks up on how tight you're playing.

Even if they do comment about how tight you're playing, they won't adjust. Your opens will still get multiple callers. No one will fold to your three-bets.

Don't be surprised if you make money during this session.

Most people are looking down at their cards and then looking at the board. They're not paying attention to you.

You can play much tighter than you realize. They'll still pay you off. ♠



Alexander Fitzgerald is a professional poker player and bestselling author who currently lives in Denver, Colorado. He is a WPT and EPT final tablist.

He has WCOOP and SCOOP wins online. His most recent win was the \$250,000 Guaranteed on America's Cardroom. He currently enjoys blasting bums away in Ignition tournaments while he listens to death metal. Free training packages of his are provided to new newsletter subscribers who sign up for free at www.pokerheadrush.com

QUICK TOURNAMENT TIPS TO MAKE YOU BETTER TODAY!

By Ryan Laplante

I often do in-depth articles focused on a specific topic and try my best to have it be aimed at more advanced level players. For this article I wanted a more broad-spectrum approach and something that everyone could quickly and easily learn something from to immediately help them in their game.

1. Play To Have Fun

Vast majority of the time when you enter a tournament, or even sit down at a cash game, the end result will be a loss. Because of this if you approach it from purely a "I want to do well" point of view, and not a "I want to have fun and play well" point of view, you will often leave upset.

On top of that, playing when you don't really want to be there can make it very difficult to play your best. So if your goals are to enjoy yourself and to play well, then you will often play much closer to your A-game and leave in a better mood as well.

2. Game Selection

Game selection is incredibly important for all players. It is important to make sure you are playing in games that you can easily afford to lose in, that you enjoy playing in, and if your goal is to make money, that you also have a large edge in.

Playing in bigger and tougher games to "test yourself," is a quick and easy way to go broke. Sticking to games that you can easily afford, as well as enjoy playing, will much more likely lead to you being successful in that session as well as overall.

3. Study!

Studying is one of the most important things any player can do, whether they are recreational or a professional. Thankfully there are many different ways to study: Coaching Sites, Books, Forums, GTO Study Tools, friends, Streamers, YouTube, etc.

Find a method that you enjoy, and do so as regularly as

you can. The better your game is built fundamentally, the more likely it will be you will have a good session/be profitable. And it is much easier to leave a table happy while you are winning!

4. Don't Open Limp

This rule is applicable for tournaments and cash games for 20+ big blinds effective. When you mix preflop between open limping and raising, you create an easy way for your opponents to be successful against you.

Most of the time when people limp they do so with weak hands, which telegraph information to your opponents. On top of that if they do protect those limps with some strong hands, then they will miss out on value from them. Theoretically speaking, open limping is not done at all when over 25 big blinds deep.

It is also much easier to play every hand as an open raise. You give yourself an opportunity to steal the blinds with your weaker opens, and to build pots with your stronger opens. You are also more likely to be seeing a flop heads-up.

5. Use The Same Sizes Preflop Based On Hand Strength

A similar rule to "Don't Open Limp." If you change your preflop sizes based on your hand strength only, you will telegraph to your opponents what type of hand you might have.

It is completely okay to change your open raise size preflop based on stack depth, your position, any previous limpers, stage of the tournament, types of players left to act, and your position. But don't base it on your hand strength.

This is true whether we are open raising preflop or three-betting.

6. Analyze Preflop Ranges

So much of being successful in poker comes down to



keeping in mind your opponent's range. Easiest to do so starting with preflop. So, once I see a player act, I immediately visualize what their range might look like. Then as the hand progresses, I can easily adjust that range in my mind as they make decisions.

Then when we are on the river, I don't need to waste a lot of time trying to remember action and trying to think about what they have, instead I already have a pretty good idea and can make my decision based around that. Or, if I need to, can recreate the action and make sure I have thought about it all correctly.

7. Think Ahead

This is true for all streets, but especially important for flop/turn decisions.

Let's say you have a strong value hand and want to try to get stacks in by the river, what size you bet on the flop can easily dictate how much of your stack you can get in by the

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 World Series of Poker Paradise
\$25,000 GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship



Frank Brannan
47,500,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 22%
After Flop: 11%
After Turn: 7%



Samuel Mullur
85,700,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 68%
After Flop: 80%
After Turn: 80%

PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 700,000-1,300,000 and a big blind ante of 1,300,000, Frank Brannan raised to 2,600,000 on the button. Samuel Mullur called from the big blind.



Both players checked.



Mullur checked, and Brannan bet 2,000,000. Mullur check-raised to 5,700,000. Brannan called.



Mullur bet 5,700,000, and Brannan called.

COMMENTARY:

Frank Brannan entered heads-up play in this event at just better than a 2:1 chip deficit to his opponent, Samuel Mullur. The bracelet winner from New York had earned his first piece of *WSOP* hardware just a couple of months earlier, taking down a \$600 buy-in event during the *WSOP Online* festival for \$69,654. Brannan was down just a bit from his heads-up starting point when this tough spot arose. He min-raised from the button with K-9 and Mullur defended a dominating K-10 suited. Mullur flopped some backdoor flush and straight possibilities and opted to check from out of position. Brannan checked behind with king high and no immediate draws. The turn was a king, giving both players top pair. Mullur checked again, perhaps with the design of enticing some bluffs and thin value bets from his opponent. As it was, Brannan had a more straightforward value bet with his pair of kings. It was met with a check-raise from Mullur. Brannan came along and the river brought a six. Mullur led right out now, betting just a bit shy of third pot with top pair, third kicker. Brannan likely considered himself too high up in his range to consider folding. Raising his top pair with a middling kicker would probably be an overplay in this spot. After just a few seconds he flicked in a chip to indicate a call and Mullur showed him that he was pipped. Mullur dragged the chunky pot to expand his advantage to roughly 3:1. Brannan still had over 25 big blinds to work with despite the hit to his stack.

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river.

As an example, if on the flop the pot size is five big blinds, and you bet 100% pot on the flop, turn, and river, the total amount of big blinds you'd be betting = $5+15+45 = 65$ big blinds in total.

While if you bet 25% on flop, 50% on turn and 100% on river then you'd be betting $1.25+3.75+15 = 20$ big blinds in total.

8. Be Patient

It is hard to get good hands in poker. If you want hands as strong as pocket fives or better, suited aces, K-10 suited+, A-10 offsuit+, and similar, this is only about 15% of hands.

So on average you'll get these only about 1x per orbit. On top of this you'll likely get a good blind defense situation maybe one of every four blinds as well.

Thus while playing live, it is extremely easy to spend 15 minutes to an hour where you either don't get to play a single hand, or the few you do get to play you lose.

I try to stay patient myself by talking at the table, listening to music, or watching streams/etc on my phone. Sometimes

the worst villain you must overcome is yourself!

9. Poker Is Very Hard!

My last advice for this simple article is that this game is incredibly difficult. It is unbelievably complex and has an absurd amount of variance built in as well. This makes it extremely tough to know how well you play, and how good of decisions you are making in the moment.

Because of these factors I believe it is important to make sure you are consistently studying and doing your best to have fun while playing. It can make this crazy game much easier to deal with and more enjoyable overall. ♠



Ryan Laplante is the co-founder of LearnProPoker and the RangeTrainerPro GTO study tool. The 14-year veteran of the game has more than \$8 million in career tournament earnings. The Minnesota native has wins at the Poker Masters and WSOP Circuit to go along with 14 World Series of Poker final tables and a bracelet. You can find him on Instagram @RealPotential, Twitter/X @PotentialMN, or send him an email to pokerpotential@gmail.com.

GETTING RERAISED IN STUD WITH AN ACE UP

By Kevin Honey

In Seven Card Stud, having an ace showing is a great card to attack the antes with since it's quite rare that your opponents can beat the hand you are representing. Aggressive players realize this and will seek to slow you down with a variety of holdings including lower pairs, flush draws, connecting cards, or possibly just having an ace blocker in the hole.

How to best proceed is an interesting topic since the majority of the time you will not have a pair of aces. Many players advocate flatting their entire continue range, while others attempt to incorporate a mixed strategy.

Flatting Your Entire Continue Range

When you do have aces (or other strong hands), just calling the raise misses value on third street and fails to punish your opponent when he's taking a shot at you. However, it does serve the purpose of protecting your entire range, and sometimes we will get to recoup the value lost on third street by getting a raise in on a big bet street.

But getting this raise in on a future street as a big favorite may prove difficult since we are often going to be first to act; unless our opponent improves on board in which case we are often behind.

With position your opponent can take free cards when he wants them, but bet when he has improved. He may be aware that you are protecting your range by potentially sandbagging aces, and this may induce him to check a little more often on future streets.

Your plan to check-raise fifth street can be thwarted by your opponent knuckling back with his weaker holdings, and when he does choose to bet your overall equity advantage may not be as good as hoped. In addition, your opponent's board may develop somewhat scary with flush and straight potential where you feel it's in your best interest to abort the check-raise plan altogether.

Finally, when flatting your entire range you are often reducing the probability of winning when you don't have aces. An effective mixed strategy can keep your opponent guessing and potentially increase fold equity on future streets.

Mixed Responses

So what does a well-balanced strategy look like? An efficient response would fulfill the following objectives:

1. You don't reraise every time you have aces
2. You don't always have aces when you reraise
3. The times you choose to re-raise your average equity position is greater than the times you don't
4. Selection of reraises can make better hands fold at some point in the hand
5. You do not fold on third street at too high of a frequency to be exploited

When having aces, we should be reraising most of the time. Certainly you should do so when all of your cards are live and/or you have a live two flush to go along with your hand. A hand such as (A♠ 5♠) A♣ with live cards is definitely a hand you want to come over the top with since it can possibly make deceptively big hands such as a flush or a wheel.

Conversely, a good candidate to flat is a holding such as (A♣ 7♥) A♦ with an ace and/or seven out. These examples demonstrate the tenet of choosing to reraise when your equity position is greater, and just calling with more limited potential. And having some aces in our flatting range is important because it prevents our opponent from indiscriminately barreling future streets when we just call.

When we don't have aces, but instead have a buried pair higher than the up card of our opponent, we should also do a good amount of reraising. Of course, we should be more apt to put the extra money in the pot with a pair of kings or queens in the hole (especially with a two/flush) than with nines or tens.

We should mostly be flatting the times we have a wired pair that is smaller than your opponent's up card, although there are exceptions. For example, when having a suited wheel card holding such as (5♥ 5♣) A♣ we can put in the extra action and see if our opponent can take the heat with a pair of sevens.

Having more possibilities is important because it's easier to keep firing on future streets when picking up an additional draw. Our opponent has to consider laying down an unim-

proved pair of sevens on fifth street. But if he does tend to get obstinate, he will often be paying off too much against bigger pairs which constitute a large portion of our three-betting range.

We can also reraise with a three flush when all of our flush and pair cards are quite live, and just call when that is not the case. Once again, we are putting in more money when the odds are more in our favor. In addition, by playing in this manner you can show up with flushes no matter how you played third street.

We should also sometimes three-bet other hands such as (K♥ 10♣)A♣ when getting reraised by a medium card such as an eight. A holding such as this has much potential to improve one way or another where we can confidently continue our aggression and put pressure on medium pairs.

With our weaker holdings and mainly pure steals we are allowed to fold, especially in tighter games against straight-forward opponents. Some live players will not reraise an ace up card unless they actually have aces in the hole (they will slow-play rollups), or when they are really going after it they may have a holding such as (A♥ J♠)J♣.

When folding they will often show you the ace and say, "I knew you didn't have it." Don't put money in bad trying to play sheriff against tight players.

Assuming we are playing against a more aggressive player we must defend a little more often or else we risk getting exploited. Any three over cards to a particular up card is a clear continue, as are many hands with two over cards accompanied with some flush and/or straight potential.

When you have a holding such as (9♥ 8♥) A♣ against a queen showing, your situation is quite marginal. A fold is

not obscene; however, if your cards are live you may just have enough to continue. Any pair on fourth street will generally give you a through ticket to chase all of the way and failing that any heart, seven, or ten will provide you with some additional equity as well. We might even get some free cards along the way since our opponent has to be somewhat concerned that we may have aces.

These principles also apply when you have the biggest card on board that is not an ace, for example, when we complete with a jack showing and get reraised by an eight. The difference, however, is that our three-betting frequency should be lower with both split pairs of jacks and other holdings.

The main reason for this is that our opponent has a higher probability of having the best hand, and has more potential outs to beat us when he doesn't. That said, a mixed strategy still seems optimal. We often do have the best hand and it's usually best to just take the immediate value and force our opponent to put more money in when he is weak.

The struggle for the antes is a key battle to win in Seven Card Stud, and thus beneficial to make our opponents realize that trying to keep us in line will often end up becoming a costly proposition. ♠



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

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 World Series of Poker Paradise
\$25,000 GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship



Frank Brannan
64,400,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 28%
After Flop: 4%
After Turn: 0%



Samuel Mullur
68,800,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 69%
After Flop: 96%
After Turn: 100%

PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 700,000-1,300,000 and a big blind ante of 1,300,000, Frank Brannan raised to 2,600,000 on the button. Samuel Mullur called from the big blind.

FLOP



Mullur checked, and Brannan bet 1,900,000. Mullur called.

TURN



Mullur checked, and Brannan bet 4,500,000. Mullur called.

RIVER



Mullur checked again, and Brannan bet 15,000,000. Mullur called.

COMMENTARY:

This was arguably the call of the day for Samuel Mullur, who was at the biggest final table so far in his young career. Mullur defended his big blind to a min-raise with K-8 suited and flopped top pair. He opted to go the check-call route to start, likely with the hope of allowing his opponent the chance to continue firing with his bluffs. Frank Brannan indeed had no pair and no draw to speak of with his 8-7 offsuit, but the A♥ on the turn gave him an opportunity to back up his preflop and flop aggression with another barrel. He was likely hoping to represent A-X or having made a continuation bet after missing the flop, only to improve to top pair on the turn. It would also make sense for him to have Q-J in this spot. Brannan might have been aiming to fold out some of Mullur's 10-X combos with his bet of 4,500,000 into 10,300,000. Mullur was not yet ready to give up, though, and he made the call. The river paired the bottom card from the flop and Mullur checked a third time. Brannan, having arrived at the river with one of the very worst hands he could have, decided to keep his foot on the gas. He bet just over three-quarters pot on the end, looking to put maximum pressure on Mullur. After about two and a half minutes of deep examination, Mullur made the huge call for more than a quarter of his remaining stack. Brannan was forced to reveal his eight high and Mullur showed his pair of kings to win the pot. He chipped up to 92,800,000 after the hand, while Brannan slid to 40,400,000. The two competitors were still nearly two and a half hours away from the conclusion of their match, though.

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SCHEDULES

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JANUARY	Jan. 3-21	WSOP Circuit Choctaw	Choctaw Casino Resort ■ Durant, OK
	Jan. 4-13	Grand Poker Series Winter Classic	Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 8-21	Signature Series	Wynn ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 8-28	DeepStack Showdown	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 11-16	PGT Kickoff	Aria PokerGO Ctudio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 11-22	WSOP Circuit Thunder Valley	Thunder Valley Casino Resort ■ Lincoln, CA
	Jan. 18-29	Winter Open	bestbet ■ Jacksonville, FL
	Jan. 18-29	WSOP Circuit Mississippi	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel ■ Robinsonville, MS
	Jan. 25-Feb. 3	PokerGO Cup	Aria PokerGO Ctudio ■ Las Vegas, NV
	Jan. 29-Feb. 18	Card Player Poker Tour	Venetian Hotel & Casino ■ Las Vegas, NV
FEBRUARY	Feb. 1-12	WSOP Circuit Pompano Beach	Harrah's ■ Pompano Beach, FL
	Feb. 15-26	WSOP Circuit North Carolina	Harrah's ■ Cherokee, NC
	Feb. 29-March 11	WSOP Circuit Chicago	Horseshoe Casino ■ Hammond, IN
MARCH	March 7-26	WPT Rolling Thunder	Thunder Valley Casino & Resort ■ Lincoln, CA
	March 7-18	WSOP Circuit Tulsa	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino ■ Catoosa, OK
	March 14-25	WSOP Circuit New York	Turning Stone Casino & Resort ■ Verona, NY
	March 14-24	RGPS Jacksonville	bestbet ■ Jacksonville, FL

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MONDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$135
TUESDAY
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$135
WEDNESDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$135
THURSDAY
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$25
FRIDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$200 KO \$25
SUNDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$250 KO \$100

OCEAN'S ELEVEN - OCEANSIDE

MONDAY-THURSDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
FRIDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$95 AO \$5
SATURDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$190 AO \$10
SUNDAY
10:00 a.m. NLH, \$140 AO \$10

BESTBET - JACKSONVILLE

MONDAY
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
WEDNESDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$100
FRIDAY
12:00 p.m. NLH, \$200

SUNDAY

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

BESTBET - ORANGE PARK

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

FLORIDA

COUSHATTA - KINDER

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

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SUNDAY

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MONDAY-THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$200 (\$10K Guarantee)
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 (\$10K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$240 RB \$200 AO \$100 (\$40K Guarantee)
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 (\$10K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$300 (\$30K Guarantee)
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 (\$10K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$240 RB \$200 AO \$100 (\$40K Guarantee)
5:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 (\$10K Guarantee)

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

TEXAS

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MONDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 \$20 RB \$20 AO (\$1K Guarantee)
8:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)

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12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
6:00 p.m. NLH, \$160 AO \$100 (\$15K Guarantee)
8:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$3K Guarantee)

WEDNESDAY

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8:30 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$50 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1.5K Guarantee)
8:30 p.m. PLO, \$50 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)

FRIDAY

12:00 p.m. NLH, \$25, RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)
7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$10K Guarantee)
9:30 p.m. CP, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$1K Guarantee)

SATURDAY

7:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 \$20 RB \$20 AO (\$3K Guarantee)

SUNDAY

4:00 p.m. NLH, \$25 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$3K Guarantee)
7:00 p.m. PLO, \$50 RB \$20 AO \$20 (\$2K Guarantee)

NORTH CAROLINA

HARRAH'S - CHEROKEE

MONDAY-THURSDAY

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

FRIDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

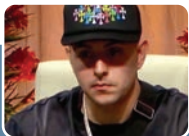
OREGON

WILDHORSE - PENDLETON

TUESDAY

TOURNAMENT HAND MATCHUP

2023 World Series of Poker Paradise
\$25,000 GGMillion\$ High Rollers Championship



Frank Brannan
38,900,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 69%
After Flop: 71%
After Turn: 82%



Samuel Mullur
94,300,000



Winning Percentage
Before Flop: 21%
After Flop: 12%
After Turn: 7%

PREFLOP

With two players remaining and blinds of 1,000,000-1,500,000 and a big blind ante of 1,500,000, Frank Brannan limped in from the button. Samuel Mullur raised to 6,800,000 from the big blind. Brannan called.

FLOP



Mullur bet 4,800,000, and Brannan called.

TURN



Mullur checked, and Brannan moved all-in for 27,300,000. Mullur folded.

COMMENTARY:

This hand began with Frank Brannan limping from the button with an eminently playable Q-10 suited. Samuel Mullur decided against checking back with his less-than-enticing Q-2 offsuit, and instead went for a sizable pre flop raise of just more than 4.5x the big blind. Brannan was content to come along with position in his favor and the pair saw an A-J-3 rainbow flop. Mullur led right out with his queen high and no draw, likely hoping to take down the pot then and there. Brannan, who had a gutshot straight draw and backdoor flush outs, made the call and hit one of the best cards he could hope for on the turn: the 9♦. This improved him to a full-fledged flush draw and an open-ended straight draw. Mullur seemingly waved the white flag with a check. Brannan moved all-in for 27,300,000 into the pot of 24,700,000. Muller had an easy fold and Brannan took down the pot without showdown. Brannan managed to take the lead later on in the match, but Mullur eventually regained control and then closed out the win to earn his first bracelet and the massive top prize of more than \$2.7 million. Brannan hit the rail with \$1,684,500 for his strong showing in this event, blowing away his previous top cash of \$175,540 that he earned with a third-place finish in a \$600 buy-in event at the 2022 WPT Lucky Hearts Poker Open festival in Florida.

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You are eight-handed in a \$3,500 buy-in main event with 75,000 chips with the blinds at 150-300 with a 300 big blind ante. A tight player limps UTG+1 and it folds to you in the hijack with **Q♠ Q♥**.

Question 1: Should you call, raise to 900, or raise to 1,500?

Answer: You must raise with your pair of queens, but you have to do so in a way that forces your opponent to make mistakes. If you only raise to 900, you are giving your opponent amazing odds to see a flop that could potentially beat you. By making a standard 4.5x raise against limpers, you force them to fold only their junky hands (which should presumably not be much of their range).

You raise to 1,500 and only the tight limper calls. The flop comes 10♠ 10♣ 2♣ and your opponent checks.

Question 2: Should you check, bet 1,200, bet 2,400, or bet 3,600?

Answer: If your opponent has a tendency to limp hands containing a 10, you should be somewhat cautious. Tight players often limp with hands like A-10, K-10, and Q-10. That said, this is still a flop you should bet frequently for a small size because your range includes some tens and all the overpairs that want to go for value.

You bet 1,200 and your opponent raises you to 3,000.

Question 3: Should you fold, call, re-raise to 7,500, or go all-in?

Answer: This is a nasty spot because it is very likely your tight opponent has a 10. But while you may be behind, your opponent has given you excellent pot odds with their small raise. Considering your implied odds, even if your opponent has a 10, if you get lucky and spike a queen on the turn, you will stack them almost every time. With the odds presented, calling and defending is the best move. Re-raising would be quite bad because when your opponent has a 10, you get stacked every time while forcing them to fold all their bluffs.

You call. The turn is the 4♣ and your opponent checks.

Question 4: Should you check, bet 1,800, bet 5,800, or bet 8,800?

Answer: This is an interesting spot because your opponent's check suggests they may not have a 10 or are scared of the possible flush. While they may be concerned about a flush, they may also have some low pocket pairs containing clubs that have a decent amount of equity.

Checking is an option, but not the best because it allows your opponent to realize their equity with weaker hands, which will often have a flush draw. With your strong, but non-premium hand, a small bet is usually the best play.

You bet 1,800 and your opponent calls. The river is the 8♥ and your opponent checks.

Question 5: Should you check, bet 3,400, bet 6,400, or bet 12,400?

Answer: Your opponent's range is likely a 10, which you lose to, a weak pair, which will fold to any bet, or a busted draw, which will fold to any bet. Given a 10 (or a flush) will never fold and the weaker hands will fold, checking is the best option unless your opponent is an extreme calling station.

You check and your opponent reveals K♥ 10♥. While you may have lost the pot, you navigated the spot well and limited your losses. ♠

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