

ANTE UP

FLORIDA'S POKER MAGAZINE™

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LOOK FOR IT ON BOTH COASTS

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DERBY LANE

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TURNS OUT, IGNORANCE ISN'T BLISS

"I consider myself a moral, spiritual person, but this has nothing to do with that. I have a responsibility to you the citizens." — **Escambia County Commissioner Gene Valentino, Pensacola News Journal**

With that quote, Commissioner Valentino did something few elected officials are brave enough to do: put personal beliefs aside to vote on the merits of an issue. The issue here was whether Pensacola Greyhound Track should be allowed to open a poker room.

It failed, 3-2.

Just days later, across the state in the town of DeBary, the developers who planned to build a quarter-horse track and poker room sought a rezoning decision before City Council.

It failed, 3-2.

Two proposals, each defeated by a single vote. Poker players know you need to win your coin flips to survive. In fewer than 72 hours, Florida's poker players lost two.

Commissioner Marie Young was one of the "no" votes in Pensacola. She said she was swayed by a constituent who says her house is in foreclosure because of her husband's gambling debts.

Never mind that thousands of Floridians are fretting over foreclosures born of gambles of people who don't share their house.

At the marathon DeBary meeting, opponents no doubt swayed the council by painting a picture full of prostitution. Of crime. Of endless other social ills.

Never mind that the state's poker rooms are full of working men and women, not "working girls."

This has to stop.

At a time when our country faces grave economic perils and an uncertain future, too many of the people

who govern our land fall easy prey to emotional scare tactics.

This has to stop. Now.

Had either of these votes been defeated on the basis of a rational discussion of reality, we would have been merely disappointed. But instead, the boogeyman in the closet spoke loudest, and we're stark raving mad.

But the best poker players know how to curtail their rage. They know they need to play that hand back, looking for clues on how to prevent it from happening again in the future.

And readers of *Ante Up*, that's what we need to do here. We need to convince the men and women who fill Congress, the state house and city and county chambers that poker is a game of skill. That properly regulated, it's a bountiful source of tax revenue and jobs. We need to remind them gambling is already here, and by expanding poker, we're not expanding gambling — we're just giving gamblers a better bet.

On our travels around the state, we've told poker room executives how much *Ante Up* wants to be a force in creating sensible poker legislation in Florida. With the annual legislative session upon us, we need the help of every *Ante Up* reader to do it.

Keep reading these pages, and sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at anteupmagazine.com. In the next couple of months, we plan to corral the collective power of the Ante Up Nation to persuade all of our elected officials to treat their votes like Commissioner Valentino did.

The facts. Not fiction.

We'll see you at the tables.

Christopher Cosenza and Scott Long
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Derby Lane opens new \$2.5M room

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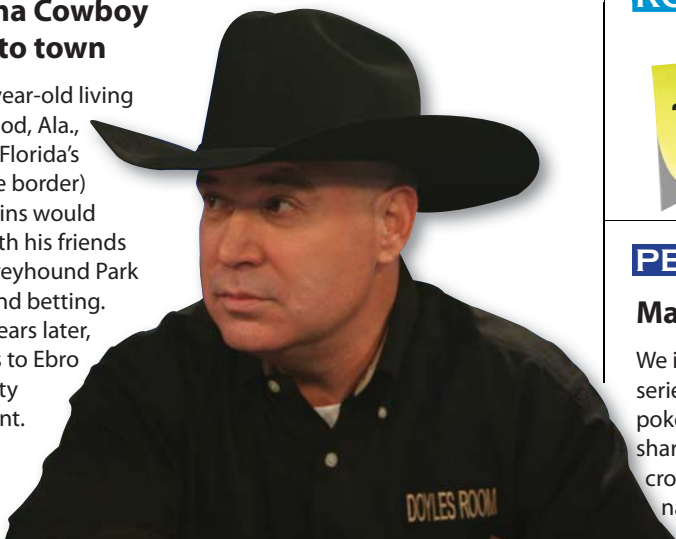
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WPT



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Who could ask for more?

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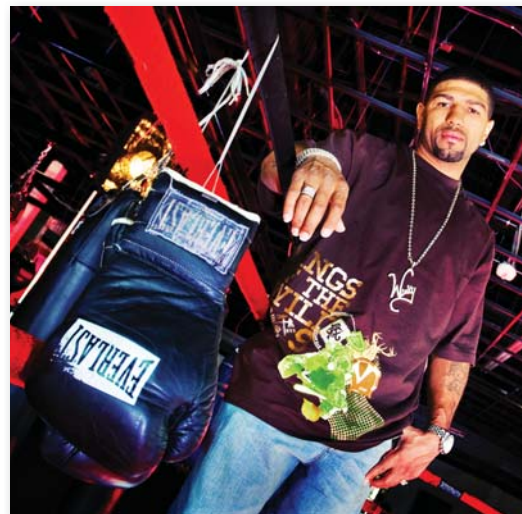
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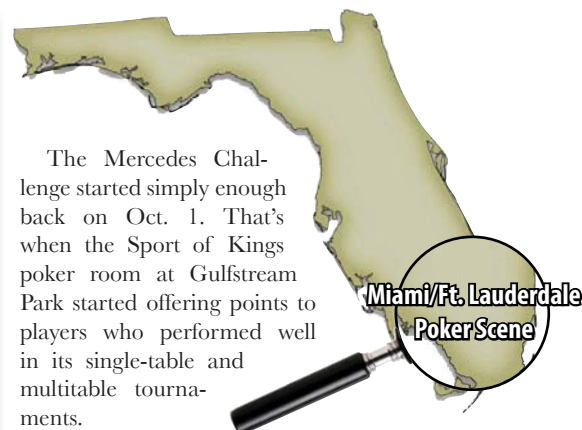
St. Pete's Winky Wright isn't just about the ring. The ex-world champion boxer also enjoys poker tournaments. Wait till you read who he beat out of \$70K playing cards. Also, he's co-hosting a troika of wild Super Bowl parties in Clearwater with Diddy and Deion Sanders. With the big game in town we take a look at some of the events. **26-27**



SEIGNARACK WINS GULFSTREAM'S MERCEDES CHALLENGE . . . SORT OF



Above: Khampetch Seignarack, left, receives congratulations from Gulfstream Park poker room manager Scott Poole after winning the Mercedes Challenge. At right, Peggy Penning ponders her next move in the 50-player freeroll. She was the last woman standing and finished eighth.



The Mercedes Challenge started simply enough back on Oct. 1. That's when the Sport of Kings poker room at Gulfstream Park started offering points to players who performed well in its single-table and multitable tournaments.

Players fortunate enough to be among the top 50 point-earners were eligible for the freeroll tournament held Dec. 7 and a chance at winning a 2008 Mercedes C-Class.

Alex Fusco accumulated the most points and received \$2,500 for the achievement. But the top honor came two days later.

Khampetch Seignarack outlasted Jose Diaz to win the title and the 2008 Mercedes C-Class. Seignarack decided to take the cash option of \$27,500, so he won the Mercedes Challenge, but in a way, he didn't.

Peggy Penning, one of four female qualifiers, finished eighth. Here's the tournament's top 10:

1. Khampetch Seignarack
2. Jose Diaz
3. Rolando Wong
4. Jorge Attme
5. Jack Bitton
6. Robert DiGiacomo
7. Leo Clavel
8. Peggy Penning
9. Anatoliy Ayzenshtat
10. Garth Nevers



Falcon



Naranjo

Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood

The Paradise Poker Room's monthly Main Event series continued in December at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood.

Rajesh Vohra of Lake Worth won the two-day 77-player Heavyweight Division title on Dec. 14, pocketing \$26,950 of the \$77K prize pool. The tournament had a \$1,000 buy-in.

Peter Falcon of Miami won the one-day Middleweight Division (\$6,930), which had 64 entries and a \$19,200 prize pool on Dec. 8.

Juan Naranjo of Miami came out on top in the one-day Cruiserweight Division on Dec. 10, taking home \$11,370 from an event that had 63 entrants and a \$31,500 prize pool.



Vohra

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LEBATARD WINS HIS OWN TOURNAMENT AT DANIA



From the start, it looked like it was going to be anything but ordinary at Dania Jai-Alai. After all, it was Dania's birthday party, celebrating 55 years of operation. The poker room was featuring another Dan LeBatard Celebrity Poker Tournament, guaranteeing a \$5,500 first prize.



Then, it happened. Twenty minutes before the start of the tournament, **Pablo Ugando** from Hollywood, playing in a no-limit hold'em game, hit a royal flush in hearts. The crowd roared when they realized the hearts jackpot was \$11,080.

"I was just killing some time before the start of the tournament," Ugando said. "This definitely covers my \$50 entry fee and now I'm going to try to win the LeBatard."

His luck ran out, however, and he was eliminated early. But LeBatard got great cards and with 13 players of the original 302 starters left, and LeBatard still the clear chip leader, they all agreed to "chop" the pot, each player collecting \$857. LeBatard won the trophy for his own tournament.

"What would you do?" he said, sheepishly. "I have always been against 'chopping' pots. I play to win. But, it is amazing that I got that far in my own tournament; it was the right thing to do," he said.



Media personality Dan LeBatard hoists the trophy after winning his own poker event at Dania Jai-Alai.

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Here's a look at some of our winners from around the state. Send your photo and pertinent information to editor@anteupmagazine.com



Larry Ziegler, above, won the All In Poker Series November monthly at Froggers on Dec. 13, pocketing a \$500 gift card and golf package. About 60 players were in the tournament and Yvonne Buxton finished second to win a \$100 gift card.

Tearsa Smith placed third.



At Ocala Poker and Jai-Alai, Gary won \$106,127 with a diamond royal flush. He bought a car and had a royal flush sticker put on the windshield. Other royal winners at Ocala included Dennis (\$11,733) and Chris Bolek (\$22,692).



Murat Akay beat a field of 125 players for a \$1,200 prize pool on Dec. 6 to win the first quarterly tourney for the Showdown Poker Tour in Lakeland.

SPT also gave out more than 45 gift certificates to the top 25 players and door prizes. For more information visit ShowdownPokerTour.net.

Final results

1. Murat Akay
2. Marc Allegretti
3. Glenn Fennell
4. Dan Spencer
5. Victor Shough
6. BJ Stigall
7. Chauncey Dunbar
8. Tony Colon
9. Pete Celina



While playing seven-card stud at Dania Jai-Alai, Marie Cofsky of Miami Beach made a mini royal flush and won the \$817 jackpot.



Rodelay Medina, above, won the Christmas \$10K guarantee at Miami's Crystal Card Room. Frank Lopez, at right, placed second.



Pleasure Island Poker had its largest field (92 players) for its monthly tournament on Dec. 8 at Cheers Pub in Shalimar.

At the end, shown here with his winning hand, Chris Freeman took first prize and was awarded a seat to a tournament at the casino of his choice in Biloxi, Miss.



**Derby Lane's
new \$2.5 million
poker room.**

DERBY LANE UNVEILS MASTERPIECE

The new poker room at Derby Lane may have moved down a floor, but it clearly has moved up to the penthouse of Florida card room facilities.

In August 2008 the Derby Lane board approved a \$2.5 million renovation that not only moved and joined the cash-game and tournament rooms on the first floor, but it also brought its operation into the 21st century. And early indications are the move was worth every penny.

From the moment you walk through the doors (via valet parking) into the players lounge, you're struck by the modern décor and bold design. The grandness of this facility can't be understated. A glass wall that runs the length of the room offers an unobstructed view of the historic dog track. Though there are 56 poker tables (including a handful of three-card poker tables, but more on that later) there's still plenty of room to move around, and with more than 50 flat-screen TVs you'll be able to track that bet you made with the walkabouts, plus keep tabs on your favorite teams.

"I think it's absolutely beautiful," director of card room operations Jeff Gamber said. "I think it sets the benchmark, not only for Tampa Bay rooms, but statewide. ... I think this one will rival all of them as far as aesthetics and overall appearance, from the dealers' uniforms to how the dealers will conduct themselves. I'm very proud of the room this company provided for its community of players, and I know the owners and executives here are very proud of it as well."

With this new room comes a new attitude. The poker player will come first, and that's important, because it wasn't always that way.

The former Derby Lane operation tended to be lax with regulars who were more interested in making puppy bets than acting on their hands. Gamber admits this attitude may have discouraged potential new clients from returning or migrating to Derby Lane. But he wants to be perfectly clear: Those days are over.

"The greatest amenity is modeling ourselves strictly as a poker room first and foremost," he said. "Your money and your play will be safeguarded here more than anywhere else." (For more on this please see a profile of Jeff Gamber on page 22.)

Of course tangible amenities are always welcome, too, and the new Derby Lane doesn't disappoint. A rewards program will recognize players who are loyal, and tableside massages will be offered. There are plenty of ways to tempt your palette, including an upscale delicatessen, fine dining on the second level, a sports bar and an in-house bar area. Plus sodas, juices and coffee remain complimentary.

But there's more to this player-first attitude than plush Vegas-style carpeting, new felts, tile floors and marble counters. For the most part games and limits (\$1-\$2, \$2-\$5, \$5-\$10 no-limit hold'em, straight \$2 hold'em, \$2-\$4 Omaha/8 and \$2 stud) will stay the same, but promotions will take a huge leap forward.

"From drink specials to longer blind levels and decent starting chips, we're trying to make it so everyone can come in and enjoy themselves, especially in these economic times," Gamber said. "We want to make it more of an attraction for people to come in and have fun, and I think that will be one of the biggest changes here."



Mazzatta wins Silks Player of the Year

It may have been a poker marathon in the race for player of the year at the Silks Poker Room at Tampa Bay Downs, but the outcome wasn't much of a surprise.

Mickey Mazzatta had a stranglehold on the top spot for most of the year, and that's where he stayed, grabbing the first-place prize of \$25,000. Players accumulated points throughout the year by playing in various tournaments.

If they failed to earn money in the top nine

POY spots, they still were allowed to play in the \$26,000 freeroll at year's end.

Steve Darr, who finished fourth in the POY race, won the freeroll. All nine players at the final table agreed to chop the prize pool, and Darr and second-place finisher Andy Smith had the most chips so they each received \$3,500. Stan Tavanese, Jerry Manuel, John Monaco, Ted Small, Thom Wilkey, Angela Praitano and Michael Nikitas each earned \$2,628 for third through ninth.

Silks' POY final standings

1. Mickey Mazzatta	\$25,000
2. Vincent Griffo	\$12,500
3. Jim Larsen	\$5,000
4. Steve Darr	\$2,500
5. Andre Papangelou	\$1,000
6. Henry Symulevich	\$1,000
7. Muriel Yantiss	\$1,000
8. Tom Huynh	\$1,000
9. Andrea Bauer	\$1,000

Ante Up's Scott Long cashes in



Chuck Bozurich, a dealer at the Silks Poker Room at Tampa Bay Downs, dealt *Ante Up* co-publisher Scott Long a queen-high straight flush in Omaha/8 on Christmas Eve, good enough for a \$599 bonus, two \$10 food vouchers and a nice pot. The poker room gave away \$599 to the highest hand every half-hour all day. Long shared his treasure with *Ante Up* readers at his table.

Treasure Chest Poker



Dawn Fletcher, pictured above with tournament director Jeff Carroll, defeated a field of 110 players at Stokers Tampa en route to winning Treasure Chest Poker's November monthly title.

Fletcher, who won a monthly tournament earlier in the year, will combine the two trips she earned and have a nice long stay in Las Vegas.

Final results

1. Dawn Fletcher
2. Sophie Keil
3. Shawn Dizkmu
4. Skinny Mike
5. Jefferson Simmons
6. Marc Lowe
7. Katy Griffin
8. Rick Danford

Continued from previous page

Derby Lane is doing away with the bad-beat jackpot. Gamber feels it's not a competitive option anymore, but that doesn't mean a really good bad beat won't go unrewarded.

"We know there are some people who still enjoy it," Gamber said. "So we have a promotion called 'We'll Pay for Your Bad Beat Story.' Any time someone gets jacks full or better beat on (Friday and Saturday nights) they can try to rack \$500 in chips without a blindfold. There's a time limit and whatever they don't rack (from the \$500 in chips) goes to the person who beat them. So you'll want to make sure you get at least half, and you better get your fingers ready."

Spearheading the new line of promotions is something called 364s, which is derived from the fact Derby Lane is open 364 days a year (closed on Christmas). This means you'll always find some sort of promotion in the room, such as Diamonds Are Forever. Any player who holds a diamond straight flush using both hole cards (Sun.-Thurs.) will get a share of a \$2,500 prize pool. Also, Derby Lane will pay a jackpot for every royal flush in hold'em (\$500 for

spades, \$250 for all other suits). Tournament promotions include bubble and "dubble-bubble" events. When a tournament reaches 60 players Derby Lane will pay the bubble out of its pocket. If the field reaches 100 players Derby Lane will pay two bubble spots. And don't forget Ladies Night on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Any woman who knocks out a player in a multitable tournament will earn \$25 (limit one per person). There are more promotions, but there are only so many trees we can sacrifice for *Ante Up*. Go to its new Web site at derbylanepoker.com for a full list of specials.

One final amenity: Derby Lane, like a few fellow Florida card rooms, is preparing to spread a version of three-card poker. It will be six-handed and will have jackpots. (See story on next page.)

"It's a game where players can sit and socialize," Gamber said. "I can't tell you how many times players have come to our old room and said they'd like to bring their girlfriends but they just couldn't because of the way the room looked and because there was nothing for them to do. Now there's an action game just for them."

And now there's finally a Derby Lane just for you.

THREE CARD POKER LANDS ON BOTH COASTS

By Scott Long

Easy strategy and big payoffs have made Three Card Poker a hit in Vegas-style casinos, but because it's a house-banked game, Florida parimutuel poker rooms haven't been permitted to deal it.

Until now.

Creative minds around the state have been at work devising versions that conform to state law.

Palm Beach Kennel Club has been approved to deal its version, said Alexis Antonacci, spokeswoman for the Florida Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering, and Tampa Bay Downs has requested permission to deal the same version.

Derby Lane, whose new room has tables specifically designed for a different version called Queens Up!, has submitted its proposal, but at press time, Antonacci said the state is awaiting additional information before approving it. Antonacci said at least two other rooms made unofficial inquiries about Three Card Poker before Dec. 31.

In the Vegas-style version, created by Shuffle Master Inc., two bets can be made: one where the player faces off against the casino, and one where players just hope to be dealt a pair or better. Florida rooms have used elements of both bets in creating their versions, but instead of bettors playing against the casino, they play against a player who's designated the dealer. And by using state jackpot rules, the rooms can offer a game that has similar payouts to the Vegas-style version.

In Palm Beach Kennel Club's version, according to the paperwork supplied to the state, players ante \$5, which goes into a jackpot fund, plus a 50-cent house fee. Each player is dealt three cards down. Players can fold or make an additional \$1 bet. The player who has the best

Coming next month

Look for strategies for these versions of Three Card Poker in Scott Long's Holdout column in the March issue of *Ante Up*.

hand wins all of the \$1 bets, but any player who has a pair or better is paid a "jackpot." The six hand-rank jackpots start at \$10 for a pair and go to \$595 for a mini royal flush.

In Derby Lane's proposed version, according to paperwork supplied to the state, players ante \$5 plus a \$1 house fee. One player acts as the dealer (the option goes clockwise around the table, and players may decline to be the dealer) and will play each player heads-up. The dealer must call all of the antes before the cards are dealt. Each player is dealt three cards down, but the dealer's last card is dealt face up. Players can fold, surrendering their ante to the dealer, or bet \$5, which the dealer must call. The cards are turned over, and the dealer compares his hand to each of the bettors individually, with the best hand winning the individual pot. (However, if the dealer's hand isn't at least queen high, the additional \$5 bets are returned to the players and the dealer and players just fight over the antes).

Also, players have the option before the hand of posting a separate \$5 jackpot bet, which pays them a jackpot for six hands of a pair or better. Pairs win \$10, up to \$1,005 for a mini royal flush.

Derby Lane also has requested to deal a \$2 version of Queens Up!, which plays the same way as the \$5 version, except players ante \$2, pay a house fee of 50 cents and may make an additional bet of \$2. Jackpots run from \$4 for a pair to \$402 for a mini royal flush.



Tom Swartzbaugh won with pocket queens.

All-In Free Poker

After two days and three sessions of play, Tom Swartzbaugh of Ft. Lauderdale won the All-In Free Poker's final at Isle Casino at Pompano Park.

Swartzbaugh chopped first- and second-place money with runner-up Bill Scott, with each player pocketing \$1,250.

Ben Vassallo came in third and won a \$799 cruise pack for one, as did Janice Dippel, who finished fourth.

Rounding out the top 10 were Bobby Weissleder (fifth); Scott Kistenmacher (sixth); Steve Shepherd (seventh); Larry Fitzpatrick (eighth); Skip Vashon (ninth); and Ziggy Schafer (10th).

The top 50 players won an entry into the league's May 24 tournament at the Isle for at least one \$2,000 World Series of Poker seat and \$500

for travel costs.

On a special note, Wendy Middleman received a special card face down to start the tournament. When instructed by the dealer to flip it over, the note, written on the queen of hearts, read: "Wendy, will you marry me?"

That's when Mark stepped in with an engagement ring and Wendy said "YES!"

The newly engaged couple both finished in the top 50, so maybe there will be wedding bells in Vegas come May.

Fantasy Poker League

At the Fantasy Poker season finale, JoAnn Z. from Parkland and Alan S. from Deerfield Beach chopped \$400 in Visa cards.

Samantha from Boca came in third and won a \$50 Visa card.

620 WDAE
THE SPORTS
ANIMAL



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STATE REPORT

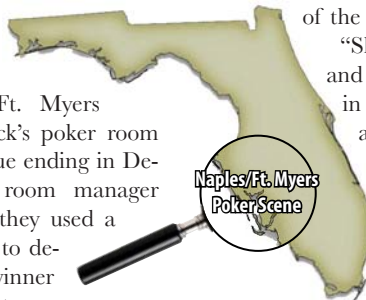


Busy month for Naples-Ft. Myers poker room

After a couple of months, the car giveaway at the Naples-Ft. Myers Greyhound Track's poker room had a very unique ending in December. Poker room manager Cindy Fra said they used a reverse drawing to determine the winner from the 28 tickets.

"A member of our security department pulled out one entry at a time," she said. "The names were read out loud so everyone knew their entry had indeed been in the barrel, but they did not want their name to be called!"

The last envelope in the barrel belonged to Toni Safford, who chose \$25,000 instead



of the Toyota.

"She is a regular and valued player in our card room and we're very happy for her," Fra said.

An interesting twist occurred at the end of

the drawing. The final two envelopes in the barrel both belonged to Safford. "The crowd went wild!" Fra said.

Also, the poker room held a World Series of Poker Main Event qualifier and it was Jose Vasquez took the grand prize, which includes the \$10K WSOP seat, airfare and hotel accommodations.



Seminole Immokalee plans Super promotion

If you're playing poker at Seminole Immokalee on Super Bowl Sunday (Feb. 1) consider yourself lucky! The poker room will be hosting Super Bowl Splash Pots during the game.

For every score during the Super Bowl, a table will be selected at random to receive additional chips added to the pot. If a safety or field goal is scored \$50 in chips will be added to the pot of the selected table(s), and \$100 will be added for each touchdown. The number of live poker games at the time of the drawing determine how many tables are selected. If there are five or fewer tables at the time of the drawing, one table will be drawn for each score. If there are six or more tables at the time of the drawing, two tables will be drawn for each score.

There is no limit to the number of times a table may receive a splash pot. You must be 21 to participate.

Temple Beth El will hold charity event Jan. 31

The Temple Beth El in Ft. Myers will hold a charity poker tournament Jan. 31 at 4 p.m. at the Reserve Cigar & Wine Bar.

Buy-in is \$350, and the winner gets a \$10,000 WSOP main event seat. You can register online at templebethel.com.

Dave Irvine, of the famed MIT blackjack count team, will provide a demonstration of blackjack skills.

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According to Hoyt

Hoyt Corkins returns to his old stomping grounds at Ebro Greyhound Park and reflects on his career.

By Christopher Cosenza

Hoyt Corkins always will have a special place in his heart for Ebro Greyhound Park.

"It was a big thrill coming here," the two-time World Series of Poker bracelet-winner said in his unmistakable southern drawl. He grew up in Glenwood, Ala. (pop. 191), a little more than a stone's throw from Ebro. "You couldn't come (to Ebro) till you was like 18 years old. Back then the drinking age in Alabama was 19 and in Florida it was 18. We'd come to the dog track here and bet a little bit on these dogs. It was a fun deal."

But a lot has changed since then — in Hoyt's life and at Ebro Greyhound Park.

"It's really improved," said Corkins, now 49. Sporting his trademark black cowboy hat he sat on a stool near the bar and looked out the window at the grandstands. "Ya know, back then, it was all just benches, weren't no cover, no indoors to it."

And now that Ebro has an "indoors to it," one of its best amenities is its poker room, which lured Corkins back for the Ebro Greyhound Park Charity Poker Challenge on Dec. 9. The event benefited the American Cancer Society, a very important cause for Corkins.

"My father died of cancer," he said. "I do a couple of these a year. This one is really the first one I've done for the (American) Cancer Society outside of Vegas."

Corkins' dad, Bricken, who died in 1996, would let the teenaged Hoyt (his only son) watch his home game and occasionally sit in. It was his dad's approach to poker that shaped Corkins' style at the felt ... and in life.

"He was sort of a country gentleman gambler," said Corkins, who still maintains a home in Alabama (as well as one just outside the Las Vegas strip). "He really didn't want to beat a game too bad; he just wanted to enjoy the game, sort of like a club. It was the '60s and '70s;

he wanted to make \$15,000 a year. If he got to making more than that he'd lose some of it back. He lived a real simple-style life, a real enjoyable life. He wanted a good used pickup and a good used boat, to play poker two days a week and fish two days a week."

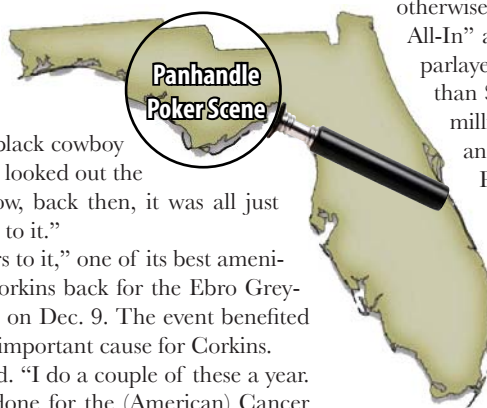
And on those fishing trips, when the young Corkins tagged along, they discussed hands from the night before. He admits those talks and his father's tight-but-fearless play are the biggest components of his success. "I really believe to be a professional you gotta have a conservative foundation."

That's not to say Corkins doesn't stray from that conservative style, otherwise he'd never have earned nicknames such as "Mr. Move All-In" and "Nightmare" from fellow poker pros. Corkins has parlayed his intimidating nicknames (and presence) into more than \$4 million in career tournament winnings, including a million-dollar World Poker Tour title at Foxwoods in 2003 and a sixth-place finish at the WPT's Five Diamond World Poker Classic just days after Ebro's charity event.

But it hasn't always been this lucrative and rosy for Corkins, a father of three. In 1993, less than a year after winning his first WSOP bracelet, he left poker to deal with the struggles of divorce, often drinking heavily and losing his money on craps. A decade later, however, Corkins had straightened out his life and was ready to return, just as the poker boom was, well, booming.

"When I first came back people sort of played the way they used to when I left," he said, still a bit tired after his flight from the Dominican Republic where he was an instructor for a WPT Boot Camp. "Now people are playing faster and it sort of makes you play trap poker, more conservative, because you don't feel like you can just run over a game like you used to seven or eight years ago."

The influx of millions of players, mostly young Internet up-starts, certainly posed an interesting dilemma for Corkins and his fellow old-school rounders. On one hand there was a lot of dead money to be



L.A. bound: There's no denying Kidd on this night

By Christopher Cosenza

No matter how hard you try to thwart it, destiny will not be denied.

So many times it seemed Debbie Kidd was headed home empty-handed from Ebro Greyhound Park's Charity Poker Challenge on Dec. 9. But, as it turns out, destiny had another plan for Panama City Beach's part-time resident.

Kidd, who had just settled into her six-month Florida home that afternoon via Milledgeville, Ga., had her tournament life on the line on several occasions during the charity event that benefited the American Cancer Society. About midway through the tournament she had pocket 10s and called the all-ins of two players with KK and 77. The flop brought a 7, but destiny smiled on her, granting a two-out wish on the turn. That hand propelled her to a huge stack and ultimately allowed her to squeak into the final table with three chips.

Destiny sat on Kidd's shoulder throughout the final table as she survived numerous all-ins, including hitting a third eight on the river to beat two callers. In the end she found herself heads-up with Tom Frey for the right to play in the World Poker Tour's Celebrity Invitational at the Commerce Casino in L.A. on Feb. 28.

On the final hand, Kidd's AQ went up against Frey's A6. The flop brought a 6 and it seemed destiny had forgotten about Kidd, but it was just playing with the crowd as a queen came on the turn to give Kidd the title.

"I had just three chips," an elated Kidd said amid screams of "Ladies Night!" from her friends. "I can't believe it! I'm going to California!"

Kidd is a regular at Ebro and is no stranger to success there. She won the Ladies Event at Ebro's Emerald Coast Poker Championship in September, besting 37 players and pocketing \$1,520.



Champion Debbie Kidd exults after a crucial hand in her heads-up battle with Tom Frey.

But the star of the evening, before Kidd stole the show, was Hoyt Corkins, the legendary professional poker player from Alabama who agreed to play in the event. Corkins, a WPT and World Series champ, met his fate about halfway through when he went up against Laura Hull of Panama City Beach. Hull, who would make the final table and finish sixth, had K♠10♠ and found herself in a pot with the aggressive Corkins. The flop came 10-high and when the short-stacked Corkins shoved, she had no choice but to call. He turned over K♦3♦ and was all but drawing dead. The gracious Corkins, whose father taught him how to play poker before succumbing to cancer, gave Hull a congratulatory hug. He hung around

until the end of the night, playing cash games and posing for dozens of photos.

Dave Rauschkolb finished third, followed by Mark Weathers (fourth) and Norman Barfield (fifth). Nearly 70 players paid the \$275 donation to participate in the WPT Events-run tournament, and altogether Ebro Greyhound Park donated \$3,500 to the American Cancer Society. It's a tournament Ebro president Mark Hess says will be around for a while.

"World Poker Tour (Events) has committed to an annual event," said Hess, who sits on the ACS board. "It's exciting for Ebro and it's also exciting for (the ACS) because I see this thing growing and being something big. That's what it's really all about."



Continued from previous page

won, but on the other hand more players meant more pitfalls to sidestep.

"Occasionally you run into a really good one," he said of the next generation of poker players. "You run into kids all the time and it's hard to tell the good ones from the bad ones, and most times you can't tell the real good ones until after they bust ya."

During his hiatus from professional play, Corkins came upon a situation similar to what Floridian poker players face every day: state-enforced small-stakes poker.

"I went to Montana in 1996, just traveling the country, and they had a \$300 maximum on their pots there," he said. "I was playing in Billings, and it makes it so you won't make a whole lot of money."

The limits didn't change his style, however; it just kept him from winning enough to really make a difference. And it's days like the ones spent in Billings that made it impossible for Corkins to envision the kind of popularity poker now enjoys ... the kind of popularity that's produced a Hoyt Corkins bobblehead doll.



"Yeah, I got one," he said, sheepishly. And, of course, the doll wears a black cowboy hat and sunglasses, which is essential in capturing the persona of the "Alabama Cowboy." But is the all-black outfit now a crutch for the real Corkins?

"No, I don't think so. In the '90s I wore a golf hat or just a cap," he said. "I don't see where it's a crutch. It's just the look, with the media the way it is today. I'm with Doyle's Room and Doyle likes the cowboy hat."

Ah, Doyle Brunson. The Big Papa of Poker. Corkins has been associated with Brunson's online poker site for nearly four years, and it's no surprise why.

"I've always had a big admiration for Doyle," he said. "You know, growing up it's always been Doyle and Chip Reese, the two best players in the world since '78, when I first started playing poker. I've been hearing their names all my life. Doyle's got a very good reputation, extremely honest, man of his word. It's just a pleasure to be a part of it."

And though he may have been talking about playing for Doyle's Room, you get the impression Corkins also feels that way about poker in general: "It's just a pleasure to be a part of it."

NOTHIN' BUT 'NET

JOHN LANIER • A look at Florida's online players and beyond



FLORIDA'S ONLINE CONTINGENT ROCKED 2008

Online play was great for Floridians in 2008. Most of these players would go unrecognized if they sat next to you in a tournament, so we feel it's appropriate to give them their due.

Steven Burkholder: The 22-year-old student from Gainesville plays as UFman2 on Full Tilt. On Sept. 7 he took down the Full Tilt \$750K Guarantee for \$135,900. Just 12 days later he won the PokerStars \$500 rebuy six-max WCOOP event for more than \$211,000. He also had a win in the PokerStars \$100 rebuy for \$31,600 and a runner-up performance in the Full Tilt Sunday Mulligan for another \$29K. He continued his success in high stakes online tournaments in December by winning the Full Tilt \$150 Sunday rebuy for another \$61,400. His terrific run culminated in the wee hours of Dec. 22 when Burkholder won Full Tilt's \$1 Million Guarantee monthly flagship event for nearly \$202,000. His total winnings for the year amounted to \$779,631, putting him in the top 20 for Online Player of the Year.

Corey Burbick: The 21-year-old student from Tallahassee caught fire in August with a victory in the Full Tilt \$65K Guarantee and two wins in the PokerStars \$40K Guarantee \$50 rebuy. He also took down the Full Tilt \$50 rebuy for another \$5,300.

Ryan Fair: Playing under a number of online names (last-meal on UB, percs on AP, Toetagu on other sites) Fair, 26, has been one of the most consistent online tournament players over the past few years. The Ft. Lauderdale resident won the PokerStars Sun-

day 500 for \$97,400 in November. He had a second-place finish in the PokerStars \$100 rebuy for \$42K and a victory in the Full Tilt \$65K Guarantee for \$22,500. His win in the Stars Daily Fifty Grand in July was worth \$20,500. Fair also cashed in two WPT events in 2008.

Thayer Rasmussen: THAY3R on most sites and UCF_THAYER on UB, Rasmussen, 24, made several final tables and had a win in the Full Tilt \$200 H.O.R.S.E. tournament. Rasmussen, from St. Petersburg, won the UltimateBet \$75K Guarantee, the PokerStars \$25K Guarantee and the PokerStars \$100 Turbo for more than \$48,000 combined. In August he earned nearly \$40,000 for his final-table appearance in the Stars \$250K Guarantee. Rasmussen also had considerable live success in WPT tournaments, cashing eight times, including one final table. He also won more than \$30K at the World Series.

Brian Hawkins: The 20-year-old from Ft. Myers plays under War- rickDunn28 on UB and SNo0oWMAN on Stars. He's best known for winning the PokerStars Monthly Sunday Million (\$530 buy-in) for a whopping \$278,500 in January 2008. **Hawkins** then won the PokerStars \$100 rebuy in March and placed 13th in the WPT North American Poker Championship for more than \$56K. You may see him at Sarasota's One-Eyed Jacks poker room from time to time when there's a larger buy-in event, such as the Gavin Smith Invitational.

— Some statistics used in this column come courtesy of pocketfives.com and officialpokerrankings.com.



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Every multi & single table tournament player earns points as they play throughout the year ... Here's what happens at the end of the year!



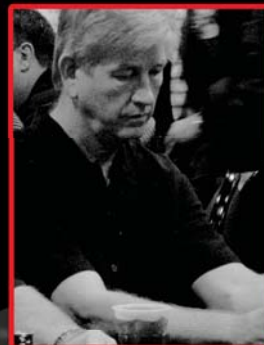
The top 9 point earning players competed for their portion of \$50,000. \$2,000 a month added to Player of the Month Tournaments (\$24,000), and top 100 point earners for the year qualified for a \$26,000 free roll tournament. That's \$100,000 given away by the Silks Poker Room.



#1 Player:
Mickey Mazzatta
\$25,000



#2 Player:
Vincent Griffo
\$12,500



#3 Player:
Jim Larsen
\$5,000



#4
Steve Darr
\$2,500



#5
Andre
Papangelou
\$1,000



#6
Henry
Symulevich
\$1,000



#7
Muriel Yantiss
\$1,000



Picture
Not
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Tom Huynh
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#9
Andrea Bauer
\$1,000



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Tampa Bay Downs

It's easy to compare Tampa Bay Downs' Silks Poker Room to the fictional bar Cheers, and not just because Patrick Murphy, director of poker operations, is a Boston native.

"We have a lot of pride in our room, and don't have a corporate feel," Murphy said. "I know it's easy for a Boston kid to say this, but we really do try to be like Cheers where everybody knows everyone's name, from the players to the staff. We want to be known as the upscale local poker room."

The card room moved from a crowded second floor during its early days into a spacious, 8,000-square-foot elegant setting on the third level. As far as aesthetics, it's hard to beat the Silks. A glass wall runs the length of the room and overlooks the beautiful horse track so you can watch your favorite pony while you play (Tampa Bay Downs is in the heart of its racing season). The other walls are just as eye-catching as 50 plasma televisions and a plethora of oversized images of thoroughbreds ring the room.

Behind the brush there's a grill/bar that conveniently has tables inside the poker room and serves reasonably priced, interesting

food. Look for new menu items all the time, including macaroni & cheese bites. A recent trip on a Sunday saw draft beer priced at \$1, hot dogs \$2 and hamburgers \$4.

When it comes to promotions, the Silks can hold its own against any room. And because there's no bad-beat jackpot, Murphy is free to offer lots of other things, such as the twice-a-year \$599 high hand every half hour. And the room does a heavy charity-tournament business, including the Par & Poker Celebrity Challenge on Jan. 29.

Other promotions include progressive royal flush jackpots for tournament and cash games, plus Omaha has a set jackpot for its royal flushes (\$599 in spades, \$200 for all others). And they just wrapped up their Player of the Year race in which they gave away \$100,000, including \$25K to the winner and a \$26K freeroll tournament for the top 100 players.

Thirty tables offer daily tournaments (MTTs and SNGs are anywhere from \$20 to \$535) plus the standard cash games (hold'em, stud and Omaha variations). But there's one unusual gem: the \$.50-\$1 no-limit hold'em

game. In a time when players are looking to make bigger bets and play for higher stakes, this game is gaining a lot of popularity in the Tampa area. Why? The minimum buy-in is \$20 and the max is \$60, which means you get 60 big blinds, as opposed to the 50 big blinds you'd see for the \$1-\$2, \$100-max buy-in. It's the perfect game for someone with a small bankroll or for the casual player who doesn't want to risk too much to have a great time.

"That game is directed at those who can't afford to play anymore," Murphy said. "They can get in for as little as \$20. We even lowered some of our multitable tournaments, too. You can get in for \$20 and turn it into \$1,000. With the economy the way it is, I don't want to be the one who's breaking anyone. It just opens up the field a little bit."

The Silks, with a staff of about 100, also was the first poker room in the bay area to offer tableside massages, plus there are plenty of bet-runners to make sure you don't miss a hand while placing a wager. The dealers are very friendly, patient and efficient (one of them writes an occasional dealer column for *Ante Up*) and the room opens every day at 12:30 p.m.

And if you suffer a bad beat and want to take a swing at something, why not head out to the Downs Golf Practice Facility? It features 22 acres dedicated to golf, including a full range and short-game area for all you duffers.



Where: Oldsmar/Tampa
Phone: (866) 823-6967
www.tampabaydowns.com



Sarasota Kennel Club

When Florida passed the law allowing parimutuels to operate poker rooms in 1997, most facilities — dated and not really equipped to properly run a poker room — scrambled to find enough space on their premises to get up and running with little thought to aesthetics.

But Sarasota Kennel Club, conservative by nature, took its time. The idea of opening a poker room wasn't really broached until 2004, and was shot down by county commissioners. But the growing fear of losing money to area tracks that spread poker was stronger than the commissioners' fear of excess gambling, and poker finally arrived in 2006. The club wanted an experienced, savvy manager to set up and run its One-Eyed Jacks poker room and sought out **Sam Minutello**, then the Silks' poker room manager at Tampa Bay Downs.



Minutello, who was doing a bang-up job running the Silks, made the move, and Sarasota Kennel Club never has been the same. Minutello had his hand in everything, from the design of the room to the selection of staff. One-Eyed Jacks set the standard for poker rooms in Tampa Bay, and in the state. While other rooms are now catching up, One-Eyed Jacks continues to be a leader in unique and inspiring direction.

The rich burgundy, brown and gold color scheme gives the room a modern Las Vegas feel. On the second floor of the mezzanine, the poker room is long and open, with plenty of tables (32), but not too many, which is by design. Minutello says he could easily squeeze in more tables, but it's about comfort, and that's also reflected in the games being spread.

One-Eyed Jacks is all about the player, from Rack Attacks and high-hand jackpots, to a full range of tournaments — SNGs (\$40-\$300); MTTs (\$30-\$800) and cash games with buy-ins to fit every rounder's bankroll. The games



Where: Sarasota
Phone: (941) 355-7744
www.skcpoker.com

are diverse (numerous variations of no-limit hold'em, limit hold'em, \$2 straight hold'em, Omaha, Omaha/8, stud and stud/8) and if there's enough interest One-Eyed Jacks will spread anything within reason.

The dealers are top-notch because they're hand-selected and trained by Minutello, who you may have seen on ESPN running final tables at the World Series of Poker. And what has been very successful for Minutello has been his Pros vs. Joes tournament series, which has seen such pros and celebrities as Dewey Tomko, Chip and Karina Jett, Gavin Smith, Theo Tran, John Racener, Evelyn Ng, Hollywood's Michael "The Grinder" Mizrachi, Paul Azinger and ESPN's Lon McEachern.

"The fact that on a regular basis you never know who's going to be in our room makes us stand out," Minutello said.

If you're hungry there's always the Hungry Jacks Café, which is adjacent to the poker room through the French doors, plus there's a full-service bar next to the brush at the room's entrance. And, of course, there are plenty of flat-screen televisions that circle the room so you won't miss any of the action as you place bets with the walkabout tellers.

The room is open from 1 p.m. till 1 a.m. Monday through Saturday (Yes, it's closed on Sundays).





Seminole Hard Rock Tampa

There's nothing small about the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tampa, and that goes for its poker room. Just off the Orient Road exit on Interstate-4, the Hard Rock is the place to be if you want to experience the Vegas scene without the cross-country flight. OK, it's not *exactly* like Vegas, but given Florida's conservative nature, if you're in the bay area then the Hard Rock is as close as you're going to get.

Tampa's poker room, which is spacious and well-lit, has 50 tables and offers the usual games: \$1-\$5 spread stud, \$2-\$4 Omaha/8 (with a kill pot) and limit hold'em (each with \$20 minimum buy-ins) and, of course, no-limit hold'em (\$1-2, \$2-\$5 and \$5-\$10, all with a \$100 max buy-in).

Tournaments at the Hard Rock include multitablets ranging from \$100 events twice a day to the \$400 and \$500 deep-stack events on most weekends. Poker room manager Henry Funke throws in the occasional ladies tournament and Omaha/8 event. Single-table tournaments (\$125-\$1,075) are run daily, and prepare to be asked to chop once you make the money as players tend to want to play a lot of SNGs at the Hard Rock. Also, you may have heard Hard Rock employed a few of those electronic poker tables, but they're all gone now.

There's a bad-beat jackpot (recently hit by local pro John Racener) offered for all three games and there's a royal flush payout (\$500 for spades, \$100 for others) in stud and hold'em. The January promotion was called Quads Will Get You All-In, where the first 25 players with four-of-a-kind daily (starting at 10 a.m.) will earn a voucher to play in

a multitable tournament that week.

On a recent Friday afternoon the poker room was about halfway filled with a daily no-limit hold'em tournament wrapping up as the rest of the players sat in cash games. But the room jumps in the evening, usually packed, especially on the weekends. The woman running the brush (at the entrance across from the cashier), was friendly, chatty and willing to answer any question. Most of the clientele at Hard Rock is made up of larger-than-life characters making a living as SNG specialists or youngsters aspiring to be pros. But you can still find a soft table.

It's a non-smoking poker room, but that doesn't mean it's smoke-free. As with so many large casinos, other places on the premises allow smoking, so you're bound to still catch a hint of smoke as you play. Also, if you're into parimutuel wagering while you ply your craft this isn't your card room. There is no outside betting.

Next to the poker room is a fine food court with reasonable prices. But if that's not your cup of tea there are plenty of high-end dining options, including Council Oak Steak and Seafood. As with all casinos there are other ways to spend your money (table games, slots, shops, bars and nightclubs), and

don't forget the 250-room hotel and multilevel parking garages, which is a nice amenity if the skies open up or the hot Florida sun is merciless.

So, if you like combining exciting nightlife and the Vegas experience with your poker playing then check out the Hard Rock Tampa.



Where: Tampa
Phone: (866) 502-7529
seminolehardrocktampa.com

Tampa Greyhound Track

It's often said timing's everything, especially in poker. *Ante Up*'s timing couldn't have been any worse regarding Lucky's Card Room at Tampa Greyhound Track. With the Super Bowl in town this month we felt it appropriate to review the Tampa Bay poker rooms to give the influx of visitors a well-informed report on their playing options. Little did we know Lucky's would experience a management transition literally as we drove across the Howard Frankland Bridge en route for our official visit.

Lucky's is a very clean, vibrant room with an extremely friendly and efficient staff. But you may be wondering who's running the show now. Derby Lane and Tampa Greyhound have had a longstanding relationship for years, so it made sense for Lucky's to turn to its Tampa Bay neighbor for guidance.

"We have entered into a consulting agreement for the entire property, not just the card room," Derby Lane director of card room operations Jeff Gamber said. "We're there to basically lend any assistance we can to help improve operations. ... They have a great player base, friendly people, and a friendly staff. We're just there to offer whatever input we can as far as the state side of the business."

As of press time, no announcement had been made regarding a new manager, but *Ante Up* will be sure to report the news as soon as it's released. With the caveat that what we report here may change, let's move ahead.

Lucky's says its the friendliest card room in town, which is hard to argue with as players and dealers get along like home-game buddies.

With 25 tables and a cozy players lounge area, Lucky's is open seven days a week (noon till midnight) and spreads pretty much just hold'em (though we're sure a good Omaha/8 or stud game breaks out when there's enough interest). Betting limits are in line with most card rooms (\$1-2, \$2-\$4 and \$2-\$5) and \$2 straight poker still survives.



If tournaments are your thing, Lucky's has daily events at 1 and 6:30, plus a \$60 mega-deep-stack event with 10K starting chips at 1 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Lucky's has become famous around the state for its no-juice tournaments. What that means is there's no house fee on certain tournaments, so every dime goes into the players' pockets, and there's no better value than that. Be sure to contact the room to see if those specials still are being offered, and if they are, get there early because these tourneys usually sell out at 150 players.

But one place where you can find juice at Lucky's is on its menu, which has a long list of beverages, sandwiches, desserts and alcohol for its players (though there's no eating at

the table). The food is top-notch and priced very reasonably. Oh, and the chicken fingers are legendary.

Want to have a poker party? Or maybe you'd like to bring your home game out for a real card room experience. Lucky's will reserve a table just for you and your pals and will provide a free training class. If you enjoy placing a bet while you play, Lucky's has bet-runners or walkabouts to take your money and there's a wall of old-school televisions to keep you abreast of the action. Smoking is, of course, banned, but there's a designated smoking area in case you need a drag during play.

Lucky's is a fine poker room with plenty of choices and friendly faces.



Where: Tampa
Phone: (813) 932-4313
www.luckyscards.com



Meet Jeff Gamber, Derby Lane's director of card room operations

Ante Up had the privilege of touring the new poker room at Derby Lane before it was unveiled to the public. During that tour we had a chance to interview **Jeff Gamber**, 28, who has been with Derby Lane in some capacity since 1997. Gamber, originally from Maryland but now a Florida resident for about 16 years, worked tirelessly for most of 2008 trying to get his new room ready for the new year, so we took advantage of getting a few moments alone with him.

What was the path that led you to your current position? During my schooling at USF I came here for an interview back in the 25-50-cent limit days and it's a path I've stayed on since. I was a dealer in 1997-98 and then went to part-time dealer, part-time floor. This was back when Derby Lane and Tampa Greyhound used to transfer the card room every six months. So I worked at both facilities for quite a while. I actually was running Tampa Greyhound when the \$2 (betting limit) was first implemented.

Do you play poker? I do. If I play anywhere I usually play at Hard Rock. I like their business model there and I like the way they run their room.

Do you have a favorite game? Since the limit change I enjoy the \$2-\$5 and \$5-\$10 no-limit hold'em game. I'm an action player (laughs). ... Any loose, juicy game is where you'll find me.

What can players expect from a room run by you? For the longest time I've made decisions to help protect the integrity of the room and help grow the players as well as the industry. We catered toward the old business model of greyhound tracks with poker rooms. With this new room you're actually going to see a new Jeff Gamber and new card-room management team. We're going to treat it strictly as a poker room. We're going to follow all of the TDA rules, and strictly Robert's Rules of Poker. With those implemented we'll have to make some tweaks to conform to Florida laws and statutes. But when you come in you'll see a very fair room, a very corporate-driven room, friendly to the players, but also now invoking a very strict level of play as far as our rule-making and things of that nature.

How big is your staff? With the new facility I think we'll fluctuate anywhere between 150-200 for this room.



How daunting was it for you to be in charge of putting together a room like this basically from scratch? Sometimes I even forgot we had poker operations going on upstairs. This has been a huge time crunch ... especially around the holidays. Our players didn't really see too much of a difference; I think they were more excited about what was being built down here as they were able to walk through and see the room. They kinda gave us the golden pass on that. The reward of seeing this room full and hearing the excitement will be worth it.

What are you hoping for when it comes to Florida poker and the upcoming session? Maybe a higher limit stake, maybe up to \$10 max. Obviously it would be great to not have that \$100 cap, not that even it would benefit some of the rooms to take it off, but to have the flexibility, that's important. The limits we have now are very manageable and our players are very comfortable, but to have that flexibility is important. ... Image is everything. Tournament buy-ins are a great limitation we have. Our tournament structure is great for our everyday players, but we have no flexibility. It would be great to have that additional dimension.

Speaking of bigger buy-ins, your 500 @ \$500 tournament last year was a great success. Tell me about 600 @ \$600, which is on the horizon and will have a \$660 buy-in. Well, without letting the cat out of the bag, we're going to spread out the usual top-heavy payout. There's going to be a six-figure payout for first place and it will be a three-day tournament. I can make this guarantee ... I guarantee it will be the best value tournament and best structured tournament that you'll find in Florida.



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Twift.Com

When you make your next poker purchase, use direct-to-customer purchasing, so your chips, tables and accessories come straight from the factory door to your door — with no price-padding middleman in between. “The innovative and dynamic combination of savings vehicles is unmatched in the online shopping arena,” said Lyndon Turner, Twift’s general manager. “And to shoppers hunting for bargains amidst a weak economy, buying direct from the manufacturer is a prized catch.” And don’t forget the “Twift Countdown,” which lets buyers willing to wait for group shipping to avoid all shipping costs. Order today at Twift.Com.



Ante Up Store

Join the dark side — the dark side of Ante Up gear, that is. Black hoodies, black sweat-shirts and black T-shirts from the Ante Up Store will put fear into your opponents. Want to be less threatening? The same items are available in white for players who like to trap their opponents. Choose from the magazine, podcast or Ante Up Nation logos, or pick up one of our great “got razz?” shirts. Get all your gear at AnteUpMagazine.com/Shop today.



Pokersides

“Simple, yet perfect,” “Great design,” “These have saved my poker table,” “Pokersides made the game so much better!” These are just a few things being said about Pokersides by Suited. We offer a variety of side drink tables, including collapsible ones, in a variety of colors. The triangle shape fits perfectly between players. Pokersides are stackable and store away easily. You can also use it in your home theater as an end table. The uses are endless. Furniture quality, solid wood, great design. Contact us for commercial pricing and bulk orders. Because poker tables are made for poker. www.pokersidetables.com

**Dania Jai-Alai****Phone:** (954) 927-2841www.dania-jai-alai.com

Tournaments: \$25 with \$5 bounty daily at 12:30; M-F at 3 (Fridays are \$50); M&W at 6:30 and Sat. (12:30, 4, 7:30 & 11); \$50 w/high hand award Tue. at 6:30; \$50 with \$10 bounty Thurs. at 6:30 & Sun. at 5; \$100 w/7K chips & 30-minute blinds Fri. at 6:30; \$55 every Sun. at 8. Re-entry is allowed into all tournaments for one hour.

High hands: Noon-3 p.m. wins \$200; separate royal flush jackpots for each suit.

Promotions: Play Your Way to Cash (see ad); every Wednesday night a hot dog & fries, wings (3), 20-ounce soft drinks, 16-ounce drafts, frozen drinks or regular soft serve cone are each just 99 cents.

Daytona Beach Kennel Club**Phone:** (386) 252-6484www.daytonagreyhound.com/pokerroom

Tournaments: Daily, including Wednesday Ladies Only at 1 (\$25); Saturday, Pot-Limit Omaha/8 (\$65) and deep-stack hold'em at 2 p.m. (\$225).

SNGs: \$40-\$220.

High hands: M-T paid every hour, W-Su every two hours; high hands win \$50-\$100; royal flushes in tournaments win \$1K, cash games \$250-\$500.

Bad beat: Aces full of kings.**Derby Lane****Phone:** (727) 812-3339 ext. 7www.derbylanepoker.com

Tournaments: Daily, (1, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Su-Th and 2, 6 and 8 p.m. F-Sa), and pays the bubble with 60-plus players and two bubbles with 100-plus players.

High hands: Royals in hold'em and stud.
Promotions: **Diamonds are Forever** — Players getting a diamond straight flush Su-Th win a share of \$2,500; **Monte Carlo Days** — Every day between 4-7:30 p.m., quads or better wins \$50-\$500, depending on the cards.

Ebro Greyhound Park**Phone:** (850) 535-4048www.ebrogreyhoundpark.com

Tournaments: Big Stack Sundays, (\$150, 2 p.m.); Monday (\$40, 7) and Thursday bounty (\$75, 7)

High hands: Royal flush jackpots and two high hands per day.

Bad beat: Quad deuces.**Flagler Greyhound Track****Phone:** (305) 649-3000www.flaglerdogs.com

Tournaments: Sunday 2 p.m. Winner Take All, 50-player limit (\$25); Monday, 7 (\$75).

SNGs: \$65-\$800.

High hands: From opening till 3 p.m. wins \$100, others at table each win \$25; Happy Hour from 5-7 pays \$250; non-heart royal flushes win \$1K.

Other: VIP card raffles at 3, 6 and 9 p.m. Sundays.**Ft. Pierce Jai-Alai and Poker****Phone:** (772) 464-7500www.jaialai.net/poker.php

Tournaments: Monday 7 p.m. (\$75); Tuesday 12:30 (\$55); Wednesday bounty 6:30 (\$85).

SNGs: Thursday-Saturday (\$65-\$110)**High hands:** Every two hours Monday and Tuesday.

Bad beat: Aces full of queens (hold'em), quads (stud) and quad jacks (Omaha).

Other: Happy Hour drink specials from 4-7 p.m.; free coffee and doughnuts 11:30-1 p.m. M-Th.

Gulfstream Park**Phone:** (954) 457-6336www.casinoatgulfstream.com

Tournaments: Daily at 6:30 p.m., plus \$50+\$5 bounties M-W-F and Saturday Special, (\$100, 10K).
SNGs: \$100-\$500.

Promotions: Now until March 8 play in the nightly 6:30 qualifiers and earn points. Top 50 point earners will play for a Rolex and \$10K cash on March 8.

Hamilton Jai-Alai and Poker**Phone:** (800) 941-4841www.hamiltontownsjaijai.com

Tournaments: Thurs. 7 (\$35, final table gets pot splashed with \$50 every 15 minutes), Super Bounty Sunday (every other Sunday) 1, \$35, high hand of tournament gets \$100; Fri. 7 (w/rebuys), \$65; Sat. bounty, \$100. Freerolls every other Sunday.

High hands: Each Friday, Saturday and Sunday wins \$500; quad jacks win \$50 on Thursdays; jackpot for royal flushes.

Bad beat: Aces full of kings.

Promotions: **Splash the Pot (Mondays):** Every hour, a table is picked at random and \$50 is added to the pot. **10s or Better (Tuesdays & Thursdays):** Win with quad 10s or better and you win \$50 extra. Only one card needed in your hand. **Double Win (Wednesdays):** The highest hand by 5 p.m. wins \$200, and then the same from 5-10 p.m.

Isle Casino at Pompano Park**Phone:** (954) 972-2000 x5123 or x5124www.theislepompanopark.com**Tournaments:** \$60-\$550.

SNGs: Including winner-take-all and bounty events (\$60-\$225).

Special event: Feb. 16, 12:30 p.m., \$30K Guarantee, \$440 buy-in w/re-buy

High hand: All royal flushes win \$599.**Bad beat:** Call for details.**Jefferson County Kennel Club****Phone:** (850) 997-2561www.jckcpokerroom.com**Tournaments:** Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m. (\$50).**High hand:** Royal flushes win jackpot.**Mardi Gras Gaming****Phone:** (877) 557-5687 x3167www.playmardigras.com**Tournaments:** M-T-W-S (buy-ins vary, \$65-\$150).**SNGs:** \$55-\$110.**High hands:** Royal flushes win \$599.

Bad beat: Aces full of jacks (HE), quad jacks (O/8) and aces full of kings (stud).

Melbourne Greyhound Park**Phone:** (321) 259-9800www.melbournegreyhoundpark.com

Tournaments: \$65-\$880, includes shootout, ladies, heads-up and bounty events.

SNGs, bad beats and promotions: Call for details.**Miami Jai-Alai****Phone:** (305) 633-6400www.miamijaijai.net

Tournaments: Saturday Freeroll, 3 p.m., Sunday \$1,500 guarantee, 1 p.m. (\$30, 50 players max).

Special event: Jan. 25, \$30K guaranteed, 1 p.m., (\$330) 7,500 units, 30-minute levels.

Promotions: Call for current offers.**Miccosukee Resort****Phone:** (877) 242-6464www.miccosukee.com/entertainment_poker.htm**Tournaments:** Super Hold'em Saturday, 7 p.m.**SNGs:** NLHE, 7-card stud and Omaha/8.**Promotions:** Call for current offers.**Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track****Phone:** (239) 992-2411www.naplesfortmyersdogs.com

Tournaments: Sun. bounty 2 p.m. (\$125); Mon. 7 (\$65); Tue. 7 (\$45); Wed. bounty, 7 (\$125); Thurs. noon and 7 (\$65), and Sat. 2 (\$125).

SNGs: Six-player tournament (\$125-\$550)

Special event: Jan. 24, \$25K guarantee, (\$550) 10K units (1K add-on for \$10), 40-minute levels.

High hands: From noon to 2 p.m. wins \$300, plus Fri. & Sat. from 7- 11:30 p.m. win \$1K; any royal flush pays \$2,500.

* Please call the poker room to confirm, and ask for hours of operation, games spread, details, rules and limitations.

DON'T SEE YOUR EVENT?*

Tell your poker room managers to email us at editor@anteupmagazine.com

Ocala Poker and Jai-Alai

Phone: (352) 591-2345

www.ocalapoker.com

Tournaments: Daily (\$65-\$240).

SNGs: (\$45-\$80).

High hands: Noon to 5:45 and 6-11:45 p.m.; diamond royal flush wins jackpot.

Other: Limited tableside food menu offered.

Orange Park Kennel Club

Phone: (904) 646-0002

www.jaxpokerroom.com

Tournaments: Daily, except Tuesday (\$30-\$65).

High hand: \$100 every four hours; royals \$200.

Bad beat: Call for details.

Palm Beach Kennel Club

Phone: (561) 683-2222

www.pbkennelclub.com

Tournaments: \$65-\$200; bounty tourneys on Tuesdays at noon (\$65+\$25).

SNGs and bad beats: Call for offers.

High hands: Early bird is back! First quads and straight flush of the day gets paid every day.

Palm Beach Princess

Phone: (561) 818-5771

www.palmbeachprincess.com

Special event: Feb. 7, WPT Foxwoods satellite (\$340 buy-in).

Promotions: Call for offers and WPT details.

Sarasota Kennel Club

Phone: (941) 355-7744 ext. 1054

www.skcpoker.com

Tournaments: \$40-\$100, plus Saturday \$330 at 3:30 p.m.

SNGs: \$40-\$300.

High hands: Quads (hold'em), quad 10s (stud) and straight flushes (Omaha) or better.

Seminole Casino Brighton

Phone: (866) 222-7466

www.seminolecasinobrighton.com

Tournaments: Monday 7 (\$100); Tuesday 7 (7-card stud, \$80); Wednesday 7 (\$20 w/rebuys); Thursday 7:30 (Omaha, \$130); Friday 7 (\$100) and Saturday 2 (\$65) and 7 (\$200).

SNGs: \$42-\$250.

Promotions: Call for current offers.

Seminole Casino Coconut Creek

Phone: (866) 222-7466

www.seminolecoconutcreekcasino.com

SNGs: \$55, \$85, \$135.

Bad beat: Aces over jacks.

Promotions: Call for current offers.

Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood

Phone: (866) 502-7529

www.seminolehardrockhollywood.com

Tournaments: \$100-\$1,100.

SNGs: \$140-\$1,050

High hands: Prizes range from \$100 to tournament entry fees. Call for details.

Seminole Hard Rock Tampa

Phone: (866) 502-7529

www.seminolehardrocktampa.com

Tournaments: \$100-\$550.

SNGs: \$125-\$1,075.

Promotions: Call for current offers.

Seminole Hollywood Classic

Phone: (866) 222-7466

www.seminolehollywoodcasino.com

Tournaments: \$30-\$150.

High hands: Mondays, every hour winner gets \$200 (hold'em) or \$100 (Omaha) from noon-8 p.m.; Saturdays-Sundays, every hour top-two get \$100.

Other: First 20 hold'em players (Tue. & Thurs.) with aces cracked win \$100; first 20 players (starting at noon on Wed.) with quads wins \$100; every Friday, from 2-11:30 p.m. every 30 minutes hour a table will be picked at random and its next pot will be splashed with \$100.

Seminole Casino Immokalee

Phone: (866) 222-7466

www.theseiminolecasino.com

Tournaments: Wednesday, 7 p.m. (\$15+\$5+\$5 dealer toke, with \$10 rebuy); Thursday, 7, (\$30+\$5+\$5 dealer toke, with \$10 rebuy); Friday, 7 (\$50+\$5+\$5 dealer toke); Saturday, 1, Knockout (\$30+\$5+\$5 dealer toke, with \$10 rebuy), 4 Big Stack (\$225, start with 15K chips; \$40 satellites available Mon. and Tue.); On Sundays, Deep Stack, \$115, 10K chips, 20-minute levels.

High hands: Quad aces (hold'em) wins \$50, straight flush (hold'em) wins \$100, royal flush (hold'em and stud) wins \$500. Payouts doubled between 12:01-6 a.m. and 11 a.m.-3 p.m. M-Th.

Bad beat: Aces full of jacks (hold'em), Aces full of kings (stud).

Other promotions: Hot dog and a beer for \$2 from 7-midnight Fridays and Sundays and 1-5 p.m. Saturdays.

St. Johns Greyhound Park

Phone: (904) 646-0002

www.jaxpokerroom.com

Tournaments: \$30-\$200, including shootouts, bounties and deep stacks.

High hands, bad beats and other promotions: Call for details.

SunCruz — Port Canaveral

Phone: (321) 799-3511

www.suncruzcasino.com

Tournaments: \$115.

SNGs: \$40-\$60.

Special event: World Offshore Poker Championships, Jan. 23-25 (buy-ins range, \$115-\$550)

Promotions: Call for details.

Tampa Bay Downs

Phone: (866) 823-6967

www.tampabaydowns.com

Tournaments: \$20-\$120.

SNGs: \$65-\$535.

Special event: Par & Poker Celebrity Challenge, Jan. 29, 7 p.m.

High hands: Royal flushes win jackpots in hold'em cash games and tournaments; royals in Omaha win \$200-\$599, straight flushes in hold'em win \$200; quads and straight flushes in Omaha win a hat, T-shirt and \$10 food voucher.

Promotions: All day Sunday and 8 p.m. to close Mondays, draft beer is \$1, hot dogs are \$2 and hamburgers are \$4. Prizes, including jerseys and cash, will be given away.

Tampa Greyhound Track

Phone: (813) 932-4313

www.luckyscards.com

Tournaments: \$45-\$200, and bounty event on Fridays; \$45 no-house-fee tournament on Saturday nights; \$80 no-juice tournament Sundays at 3; a Mega Deep Stack Friday and Saturday at 1 and Sundays at 6:30 (\$60 buy-in with 10K chips, 20-minute levels, no antes.)

SNGs: \$65-\$500.

High hands: Quads (\$75), straight flushes (\$200) and royal flushes (\$599). Plus high hand wins \$100 on Sundays from noon-3 and 8-11 p.m.

Other: Aces cracked wins \$100 from noon to 2 p.m.



* Schedules and events are subject to change; SNG = single-table tournaments; all tournaments are no-limit hold'em unless noted.

LIVING THE GOOD LIFE

*St. Pete's Winky Wright
knocks people out in the
ring and on the felt.*

By Christopher Cosenza

If someone told you they were a world champion, had friends named Phil Ivey and Erick Lindgren, won \$70,000 off them playing cards and wore a Full Tilt Poker logo in front of millions, you'd say that person *must* be a professional poker player, right?

Wrong.

Winky Wright will be the first to tell you he's not the best poker player out there — hell, he's not even the best poker playing boxer out there — and he admits he only started playing because of Ivey, whom he met five years ago shooting craps in Las Vegas.

"Then we started golfing together," Wright said. "He was like 'Hey man, come on over to the poker tournament with me.' And I was like, 'Man, that junk is boring!' But when we'd go golfing, I'd meet all the big-time poker players, only I didn't know they were big-time poker players because I didn't really pay attention to them."

His relationship with Ivey and Lindgren explains why he once stepped into the ring with a Full Tilt logo stitched into his robe.

"I'm down with all the Full Tilt Poker people. I almost got involved with it. Wish I woulda," he said with a chuckle. "They did a sponsorship with me to help bring their name out at that time."

These days, if you ever see Wright at a poker table he likely will be playing in a tournament. He hasn't played many cash games.

"I'm more of a craps player," said the undisputed light middleweight world champion who's called St. Pete home since 1986.

CHAMPIONS OF THE GOODLIFE

WHEN: Jan. 29-31 (three parties, three days)

WHERE: The Venue, Clearwater

EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Winky Wright, Deion Sanders, Diddy (aka P. Diddy, aka Puff Daddy, aka Puffy, aka Sean John, aka Sean Combs) and many more.

TICKETS/DETAILS: goodlifeexperience.com

POKER CONNECTIONS: Winky is a gambler and enjoys a good game of poker. He's very good friends with Phil Ivey and Erick Lindgren, so he might put in a good word for you. Diddy has hosted a charity poker tournament or two, but he'll stick to music and clothes, and Deion once adorned a collectible **poker chip**, which we're sure you can get on eBay.



"But I like poker. It's fun to do and a great way to make money."

But if he hasn't played cash games before, how did he take \$70K off Ivey and Lindgren playing cards?

"(We) flew from Vegas to Sacramento to go to a Kings game," Wright said, "and they wanted to play poker and I was like 'Are you crazy? I ain't playing no poker with you! What about Tonk?' So they were like OK, and by the time we flew to Sacramento and back, man I beat them outta \$70,000!"

Speaking of beating opponents, it's been a while since Wright, 37, has been in the ring. He recently injured his wrist, which delayed

a comeback, but he assures *Ante Up* he'll be back in the square circle in 2009.

"I'm gonna be back, and it's looking like April. Looks like they're trying to get (welterweight champ) Paul Williams in Vegas."

But before that, Wright has some business here in Florida to take care of. He's co-hosting the three-day event Champions of the Goodlife at the Venue in Clearwater with Diddy and Deion Sanders.

"The last time Tampa had the Super Bowl I didn't do anything, but this time I wanted to do something. We put together a super team to go out and make this party an event. So we got Diddy and Deion. ... This party's gonna be THE party of the Super Bowl. Everybody wants to come. It's not a big venue so it will be real exclusive. Everybody who's anybody will want to be at this party. But we know there's a recession on, so each night we have different prices and we held some tickets for the general public."

Three nights, three crazy celebrity bashes. ... that's a lot of partying.

"Man, when I finally go to sleep, I'm gonna sleep for three days!"

And what about when he hangs up the gloves for good? Will he focus more on his music label, Pound 4 Pound Records, or will he continue with gambling?

"Gambling," he said. "Phil told me if you want to be a real gambler you need to win more than you lose. ... I enjoy it and try to do it in moderation where it won't hurt me. If I do it in the right way, be smart about it, I can make money and have fun."

SUPER BOWL BASHES

DOUG WILLIAMS CELEBRITY GOLF EVENT/MAX STARKS VIP PARTY

WHEN: Jan. 28-30

WHERE: Bayou Club, Largo (sponsors' party and golf tournament) and Innisbrook Resort & Golf Club, Palm Harbor (VIP party).

EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Doug Williams, Tony Dorsett, Everson Walls, Max Starks, Crawford Ker, Ed "Too Tall" Jones, Mark Clayton, J.T. Smith, Toby Hall, Dan Wheeler and Mike Alstott. Some current football players are expected to attend as well, provided their teams are not in the Super Bowl.

TICKETS/DETAILS: www.professionalgolfevents.net

POKER CONNECTIONS: Well, there will be a one-table celebrity poker tournament for charity during the event, but only one seat is available to the public, and it's being auctioned off that night. The winner of the tournament will get \$500 to donate to his charity of choice. As for poker players, Too Tall played in a charity tournament recently with Todd Brunson, so beware.

UNDER THE VEIL/NELLY-ANTONIO TARVER CELEBRITY SUPER BOWL PARTIES

WHEN: Jan. 30-31 (two parties)

WHERE: Museum of Science and Industry, Tampa.



Tarver

EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Nelly, Antonio Tarver, Common, DL Hughley, Jermaine Dupri, Janet Jackson, Ken Griffey Jr., Laila Ali and Charlie Murphy.

TICKETS/DETAILS: www.undertheveilparty.com

POKER CONNECTIONS: Tarver, a Florida native, has splashed the pot a few times, including playing in the 2007 World Series of Poker Main Event. Nelly owns

the Charlotte Bobcats so he knows what it's like to gamble, and DL Hughley once played on Celebrity Blackjack, though the closest you'll find him to a poker room is likely when he's walking past it on his way to the theatre for his standup routine. *Ante Up's* sources say Phil Ivey might show up for Tarver's party, so don't say we didn't warn you.

JIM McMAHON SWAG A SUPER BOWL BASH

WHEN: Jan. 29-30



WHERE: Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club, just outside Sarasota

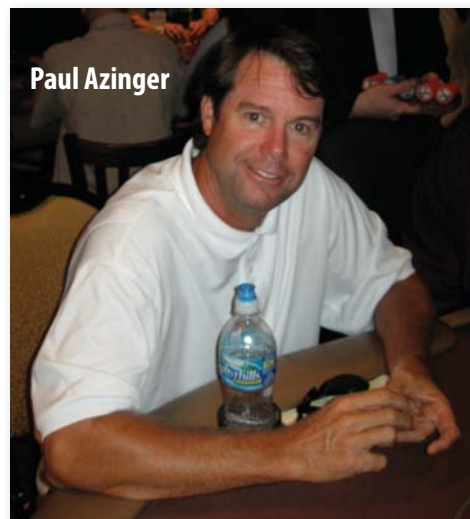
EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Jim McMahon, Floyd Mayweather.

TICKETS/DETAILS: www.swangcharities.com

POKER CONNECTIONS: McMahon recently played in a charity tournament, and you just know he was wearing shades.



McMahon



Paul Azinger

PAR & POKER CELEBRITY CHALLENGE

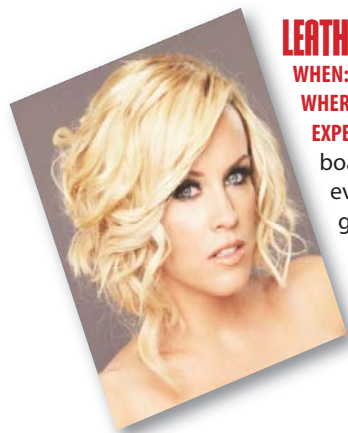
WHEN: Jan. 29

WHERE: TPC Tampa Bay (golf) and Tampa Bay Downs (poker)

EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Gavin Smith, Seth Joyner, Andy Walker, Julius Erving, Ozzie Smith, Lawrence Taylor, Eric Dickerson, Paul Azinger, Marcus Allen, Clyde Drexler, Bret Saberhagen, Alfonso Ribeiro and Lon McEachern.

TICKETS/DETAILS: www.parandpoker.com

POKER CONNECTIONS: Most of these athletes and celebrities have played in a charity tournament and you can probably find poker chips with their likenesses, too. But the names that stand out here are Smith, Azinger and McEachern. Azinger, captain of the victorious 2008 Ryder Cup team, often can be seen at One-Eyed Jacks in Sarasota playing poker, and McEachern is, of course, ESPN's poker play-by-play man. Obviously from a poker standpoint Smith is the biggest attraction here. He's no stranger to the bay area poker scene, having hosted an invitational at One-Eyed Jacks. Rumors are he may emcee this poker event.



LEATHER AND LACES PARTY/AGES 4 AUTISM BLACKJACK TOURNAMENT

WHEN: Jan. 30-31 (though these events are still not confirmed)

WHERE: Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Tampa

EXPECTED CELEBRITIES: Jenny McCarthy and maybe Jim Carrey (who is McCarthy's boyfriend and sits on the board of McCarthy's autism charity, Generation Rescue). ... Football legend Mike Ditka is hosting a few events at the Hard Rock as well, with many football legends expected to attend. For more information go to www.gridirongreats.org.

DETAILS: www.seminolehardrocktampa.com.

POKER CONNECTIONS: McCarthy, whose son has autism, co-hosted a poker fundraiser called Ante Up for Autism with Lance Armstrong, so she knows the game. Over the summer she hosted a blackjack tournament in the Bahamas and once dealt blackjack during a tournament at the Playboy Club in Las Vegas.

DR. FRANK TOSCANO • A look at how to stay healthy at the poker table.

DON'T RESORT TO ILLEGAL DRUGS TO STAY ALERT

With AK in early position, I raised four times the big blind and got only one caller. The J-7-2 flop didn't worry me so I cut a pot-sized continuation bet out of my stack. It was at that moment it happened.

You didn't have to be Joe Navarro to notice the tell. The player two seats to my left had assembled all of his remaining chips into one medium-sized tower and clearly was planning to slide it across the betting line as soon as the action got to him.

I missed it, though. Before I could stop, my continuation bet fell out of my fingers and across the line. He, of course, pushed and I realized my hand was way behind. I folded. He showed AJ and collected the pot.

I noticed his tell but wasn't quick enough to avoid wasting some chips. I had been playing for some hours so maybe I was a little fatigued or bored or inattentive. This hand made me wonder if there was something I could do to improve my concentration at the table, something a little more effective than stale coffee or an energy drink. What about the pros? How do they stay focused for such long periods? Do they take something? It turns

out some certainly do.

At first glance, speed and cocaine seem to be obvious candidates for performance enhancers. They make you feel more awake and alert, but at great risk to your health. These drugs increase blood pressure and heart rate at the same time as they shrink the blood vessels that supply oxygen to the heart. Heart attacks with permanent damage are amazingly common in young otherwise healthy people who use these drugs. Plus they're highly addictive, expensive and illegal. So unless you fancy having constant chest pain and being locked in a cage with a tattooed giant named Sugarlips, it's best to seek performance enhancement by other means.

What about drugs such as Ritalin and Adderall? Attention Deficit Disorder and its hyperactive cousin, Attention Deficit Hyperactiv-

ity Disorder, are real diseases most common in school-age children. Ritalin and Adderall allow children to filter out multiple competing and confusing stimuli and concentrate on one task. They become more calm and focused. Once they hit adolescence, the calming effect becomes somewhat diminished and jittery side effects become more common. The improved focus effect seems to remain for all age groups.

Sounds great, right? Improved focus but a little jittery ... sounds like it might work just fine at the tables. Let me be absolutely clear about these drugs. They are speed; nothing more or less than pharmaceutical-grade amphetamines. All the side effects of speed, the increased blood pressure, the rapid heart rate, the heart-attack risk, the addiction potential, are the same for crystal meth brewed by skinny guys with bad teeth.

For those adults who truly have debilitating ADD or ADHD, these drugs are indeed effective and may be worth the risks. But that decision is complicated and serious and should be made in conjunction with a physician or psychiatrist.

In his blog, poker pro Paul Phillips credits Adderall with taming his ADHD and allowing him to win \$2.3 million one year. Here's an entry from his blog:

"With Adderall in my system, I am like an information sponge, able to process data from several players at once while considering my next action. It also improved my patience. I can't count how many chips I used to squander playing hands out of boredom. Now, I have no problem folding as many (or as few) as the game conditions require."

So what can the average player do? What if you don't have ADHD? What if you don't want to risk a heart attack, and jumpsuits don't flatter your figure? Is there something else? The unqualified answer is "Maybe." Next month I will give you the detailed scoop about the drug that has been called "steroids for the brain."

— An avid poker player, Frank Toscano, M.D. is a board-certified emergency physician with more than 28 years of front-line experience. He's medical director for Red Bamboo Medi Spa in Clearwater. Email your poker-health questions to ftoscano@redbamboomedispa.com



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DECEPTION + CURIOSITY = VALUE

Most of the time I stick to a standard betting system, such as raising three times the big blind and betting two-thirds or three-quarters of the pot on the flop. When I'm the preflop aggressor, I lead with sets, trips, monster made hands and monster draws. I like to keep the aggression whether or not I hit the flop so my opponents can't figure out when I've hit and when I've missed. Let's say I raise with A♥K♣ and the flop comes A♣A♦2♠. I almost always bet right out, especially if I'm playing



an inexperienced opponent who would think it's best to be sneaky and check to disguise when they flop monster hands. "What would my opponent do if I had this hand?" If I can answer that question, I can do the opposite for deception. If you come out firing into them, the first thing a lot of players think is "Well, if he had an ace, why would he bet? It's a rainbow board!" Many opponents will call you with middle and even bottom pairs or potentially even float you on the flop to try to steal on the turn. Yes, inexperienced players will still float to try to steal on the turn because they may

have just read about floating in a recent book or article. At the same time, if you're playing against a savvy opponent who knows you bet your monsters strong, or your opponent has seen you take this line with big hands, you can check to vary your play and create deception.

A similar use of varying your betting to create deception takes place on the turn or even better, the river. Let's say you're on the button and called a standard raise from an early position player with 6♥7♥. The

flop brings 4♣8♥3♥, giving you a flush draw and a gutshot straight draw. The original raiser makes a continuation bet and you call. On the turn, you hit your gin card, the 5♦. Note that this is the best card for you since from your opponent's perspective, it's unlikely that you called a raise preflop and then a flop bet with A2 or 67. Your opponent may correctly put you on a flush draw based on the flop action, so he fires again to protect his presumably big hand. Now you simply call with the stone-cold nuts.

The river brings a complete blank, the 10♣. Your opponent checks. At this point, I would seriously consider making a very large overbet — at least the size of the pot or even double the pot. Depending on your chip stack at the time, this may be a good spot to move all-in. Why? Because a smaller bet looks like you want a call and a large overbet looks like a bluff and your opponent is much more likely to pay you off with any overpair, set or two pair. You have a much-disguised nut hand and your overbet or shove in this spot looks like you missed. Your opponent thinks "Why would he bet so much?" Then says, "I think you missed your flush." Without too much deliberation (and tons of curiosity), he "picks off your bluff" with A♥A♣.

Knowing your opponents, your table image and what hands you have shown will play a key role in the success of these plays. Situations like these don't happen all the time, but they surface much more frequently than you might imagine — so be on the lookout. Next time you're at the table, look for situations to deceive or instill curiosity in your opponents to maximize the value of your strong hands.

Decide to win!

— Lee Childs is founder and lead instructor of Acumen Poker. He also is an instructor with the WPT Boot Camp. Check out his site at www.acumenpoker.net.

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SCOTT LONG

Stud/8 plays exactly like stud but two pots are awarded — one to the highest hand, and one to the lowest qualifying hand. Players are dealt two cards down, one card up. Lowest up-card acts first in the first round; highest hand acts first on every other round. After five rounds of betting, turn the cards over and award the pots. (For a longer description of stud, check out last month's Holdout column in the *Ante Up* archives at anteupmagazine.com).

OK, let's start padding your bank account:

Qualify, qualify, qualify: While stud hi/lo can be played without a

Where to play

Virtually every Florida poker room will spread stud/8 on request, but it's harder to find than stud, which is hard to find itself.

qualifier, it rarely is anymore. If you're playing stud/8, then a low hand must have five unpaired cards 8 or lower to qualify. If no one has a qualifying low hand, then the entire pot goes to the high hand. And if you're an Omaha/8 player, here's one very important tip: A-2 isn't anywhere near as powerful as it is in Omaha. Because of the community board in that game, you're guaranteed to have the lowest hand on a board with three unpaired cards 8 or lower. Not so in stud/8, where everyone has their own hand. Count from the highest card down, or you'll lose plenty of cash.

Scoop, scoop, scoop: If you remember no other tip, remember this one: In all split-pot games, the monumental goal is to scoop. If your hand can't scoop, look for a reason (or several) to get out.

Low, low, low: When you're starting out, you'll be wise to look for low hands that can develop into high hands. Many a low hand has backed into a flush or a straight to scoop, but not any old three low cards to start can do this. And remember, you won't have a qualifying low until at least fifth street, so you're going to have to put some bets in on faith early on. Keeping the faith is easier to do when you have a shot at the high, too.

Deceive, deceive, deceive: Just like in Omaha/8, aces are high and low, so a wheel is a powerful two-way hand. When you have an ace as your upcard, you have a green light to confuse your opponents. It might take them a round or two to figure out if you're going low, or if you're going high. And by the time they do, you just might be going both ways.

Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze: No-limit hold'em players know how powerful a "squeeze" play can be. In hold'em, you raise after there's been a raise and call in front of you. The theory is the initial raiser, afraid of what the caller will do, will fold, and the caller likely doesn't have a strong enough hand to call either, so you pick up the pot. You can do a squeeze of sorts in stud/8, too. Consider raising (or reraising) on the come to drive out weak made hands. Particularly on the early streets, this is a cheap way to get heads-up or to get into a freeroll situation, where you have the only low possible and are drawing to a scoop.

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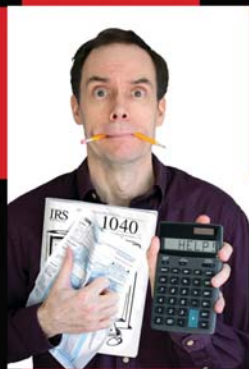
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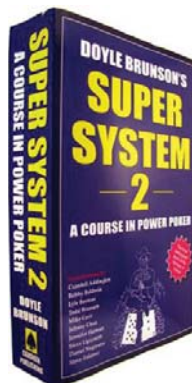
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Learn More

Trust us on this one: If you want to learn how to play stud/8 really well, invest in Doyle Brunson's *Super System 2*. The stud/8 chapter, written by Doyle's son Todd, is worth the price of the book, and very well could be the best chapter on a poker game ever written.

WHAT EVERY "BODY" IS SAYING

JOE NAVARRO • Ex-FBI guy shares his nonverbal secrets.

PROVOKE A TELL? ASK TO SEE HIS THUMBS

Readers are invited to send Joe their questions regarding nonverbal tells to editor@anteupmagazine.com and we'll print the best letters.

Are there any questions you can ask a player to provoke a tell? One question I ask players when trying to make a decision is, "Smile if you have a monster." If they give a fake smile I know they are bluffing. If their eyes light up then they usually have a very good hand. Thanks.



— Mike in Minneapolis

Mike that's a great one, I wish I had thought of it. Here are a few I like:

- "Are you bluffing?"
- "What have you got?"
- "Want me to call you?"
- "Would you lie to me?"
- "You trying to hurt me?"
- "You're weak aren't you?"

Or say this: "Let me see your thumbs." In all of these, any kind of tension, nervousness or lack of confidence is a sign of weakness.

Over the past few months I have noticed an increase with players showing their hands heads-up when considering calling to gain information. In *Super System*, Doyle Brunson talks about showing pocket aces to gain information. Back when dinosaurs were used as dealers Doyle doesn't give any advice but makes an interesting statement saying "It would take a strong man not to show some kind of emotion." Unless you're playing in a home

game with the same regulars showing your hand to a particular opponent usually is a one-time occurrence. After reading your book and watching your videos there are many ways a person can react to seeing exposed cards. There is an element of surprise showing hands that may catch your opponent off guard. I would like to hear your thoughts on this subject.

— Joe Giertuga, via email

Joe, obviously you have given this a lot of thought and thank you for reading my book. My philosophy is this: Never expose your cards; never reveal anything, especially in tournament play. You don't want to be up against someone who is an expert at reading nonverbals and will use your information against you. Joe, showing your cards for effect may not elicit the right information you want. It exposes you too much, and there is one thing to consider, you have not been reading your own tells while playing. So, for these reasons I say don't do it. **Daniel Negreanu**, who I just saw last recently in Barcelona, spoke with me about this. He said he likes to do it every once in a while, to get information. To which I would say, I am no Daniel Negreanu.

— Ex-FBI counterintelligence officer Joe Navarro of Tampa specialized in behavioral analysis for 25 years. He's star lecturer with the WSOP Academy and has penned *Read 'Em and Reap*, which you can find on Amazon.com. Email Joe at editor@anteupmagazine.com and he'll answer your questions.



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As told to *Ante Up* publisher Christopher Cosenza

BAXTER GETS THE LAST LAUGH VS. THE KID

Editor's note: The following is the first in a series of recollections by SunCruz Port Canaveral director of poker operations Dan Malka, who has rubbed elbows with just about every big name in poker history. In this story where Dan was the dealer, if you didn't know any better, you'd think it was taken directly from The Cincinnati Kid.



DAN MALKA

The year was 1980 and I was dealing poker at the Silverbird Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. It was my last down of the day and I was sent to the heads-up no-limit deuce-to-seven lowball draw game between Stuey "The Kid" Ungar (who would become the three-time World Series of Poker Main Event champ) and **Billy Baxter** (the greatest lowball player in the world with seven WSOP bracelets in lowball games). They had been playing less than an hour and yet

The Kid was crushing Baxter.

I began to deal.

Danny Robinson, a poker partner and friend to Chip Reese, approached the table and noticed Ungar's stack.

"Stuey, how did you get all that money?" he said.

Ungar slid an open hand to his face as if to prevent Baxter from hearing, and then said loudly, "We've only been playing 40 minutes!" He started to laugh, offered a shallow apology to Baxter, and then laughed even louder.

"Billy, I thought you were supposed to be good at this game," Robinson said with a laugh. "How about lending me some money so I can



play you, too?"

Baxter was in no mood and snapped back: "Why is it you boys never have money of your own to play with?"

"Hey, Billy, how about doubling the stakes?" Ungar said, still needing Baxter with Robinson.

"Why is it you only want to double the stakes when you're ahead?" Baxter said as Robinson walked away.

After that, Baxter won a nice-size pot and Ungar took down a small one. That pattern held for most of the down as Baxter mounted a comeback. But it was the last hand of my workday that proved most memorable. The pot was large before the draw and each player took just one card. Ungar then bet enough to cover Baxter, who called. Ungar, with a smile on his face and holding back a laugh, tabled a 7-6-4-3-2, or as some like to say, a No. 2. But Baxter showed 7-5-4-3-2, a wheel!

The huge six-figure pot got Baxter back to even. Ungar looked at me, slammed his hand on the table and screamed at Baxter, "Don't think you've got me fooled with this guy with the construction worker's fingers! I know you brought him into this town!"

Baxter was friends with my brother-in-law and talked Reese into giving me my first dealing job. Billy looked at me and realized what Stuey was implying and said, "Dan, seeing how much Stuey likes your dealing, take this with you (a \$25 chip) and see if the floor man can freeze you in on this table."

At that moment Stuey gave me the death stare. As I left the table, I heard Baxter say, "Now, boy, what were you saying about doubling the stakes?"

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DEAL WITH IT!

An occasional column from a Florida card room dealer

A day in the life of a dealer

By Michael Zumpano

Ever wonder what a dealer goes through during a shift at your local card room? Why does he count the money and chips in his tray every time he sits down? And what about those cards they're always signing? Today I'm going to give you all the answers and more.

My shift begins with a meeting where a supervisor goes over promotions, changes in procedure and dealer rotation, which is where we begin our shifts (whether it be at a live-action table, multitable tournament or sometimes we start on a break). Since we deal in 30-minute intervals, a dealer

typically will go through about half the room on any given shift, unless he's taken out of rotation to deal a single-table tournament. At the Silks we run quite a few SNGs so I can expect to deal one about every third shift.

When a dealer starts in a multitable tournament he's responsible for setting up player chip stacks and making sure players are given

the correct seat card. And whenever we sit down at a new table during a tournament we sign a card that card keeps track of how many multitable tournaments we've dealt, what time we dealt them and on which day.

Finally we get to cash-game dealing. This is where a dealer truly makes his living. There are a lot more things we have to pay attention to, but this is our bread and butter. These downs, like multitable tournaments, also are 30 minutes long, so a dealer will try to get out a few extra hands (if you haven't noticed). The first thing I do when I get to a live-action table is count down my well to make sure the chips and cash total what is set for that game. On our limit games at the Silks the well has to have \$360. In no-limit games it's \$700. Then I count down the deck, making sure all 52 cards are there. I was trained to count four stacks of 13, which makes it easier. Once in a while a wise guy will try to throw me off. But these procedures are standard and take only about a minute or two.

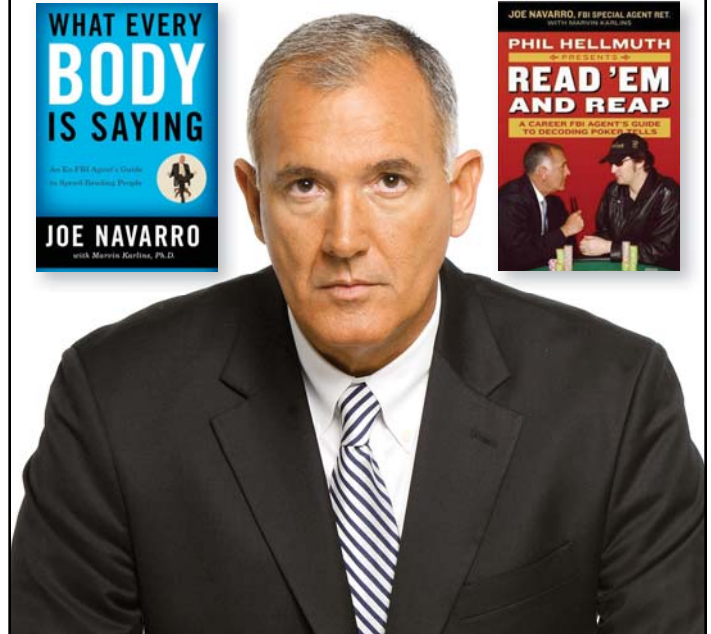
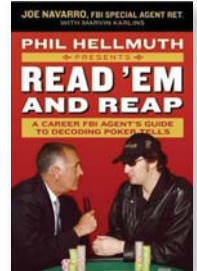
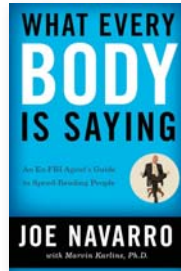
Once I start pitching cards I keep track of how many players are in the hand. I do this for a number of reasons. In hold'em, a dealer is supposed to announce how many players are in the hand after each street. This helps players know how many people have to act before and after them. But it also helps dealers keep track of the rake, which is the house's take. The rake is 10 percent of the pot up to \$5, plus a dollar for jackpots if the pot reaches \$10. This can be a little tricky because I want to keep the action going, especially if a player is betting the horses or dogs and not paying attention.

In my next column I'll discuss the four types of players I come across while dealing, and maybe you'll see where you fit in. If you have questions or comments you can feel free to reach me at mzumpano2006@yahoo.com

— Michael Zumpano is a dealer at the Silks Poker Room in Tampa. If you're a dealer and would like to submit a column send it to editor@anteupmagazine.com.



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'60 MINUTES' REALLY DROPPED THE BALL

It's a common occurrence for a poker player: You're watching a sitcom or movie, minding your own business, kicking back with a brew. ... and then it happens: A poker scene weasels its way onto the screen and you're overcome by a wave of bittersweet feelings. You love poker so much that you cherish seeing it on the tube, yet at the same time you prepare for that inevitable "Hollywood Cringe." What's the Hollywood Cringe? It's when your face twists as the actor ...



CHRIS COSENZA

- Calls a bet and *then* raises. "I see your \$5 and raise you \$100!"
- Raises a \$50 bet by just \$10.
- Wins a hand automatically because he bet more than everyone else has on the table.
- Makes a straight flush as opponents make quads and boats.
- Notices a flamboyant "tell" that leads to him winning every key hand.

People in Hollywood don't want to be bothered with the particulars of following poker rules or filming scenarios rooted in reality. Directors and producers tell stories for entertainment, not accuracy. And I accept that with a grain of salt.

But when this kind of ignorance accompanies news programs, I refuse to accept inaccuracies and gross negligence, especially when it comes from a show as well-respected as *60 Minutes*. For months we had been hearing about the segment CBS (in a joint investigation with the *Washington Post*) was planning to air on the Absolute Poker and UltimateBet online cheating scandals. We wondered what incredible facts the crew would uncover, whether online poker would benefit or crumble, and who would fall as a result.

It didn't take long for the Hollywood Cringe to wrinkle my face.

After some obligatory footage of Chris MoneyMaker's improbable run in 2003, we're unfairly greeted by *60 Minutes* reporter **Steve Kroft** as he patrols the tournament floor of the Rio's Amazon Room during the World Series of Poker. Why unfairly? Because using the Harrah's property and the WSOP as the backdrop for the piece indicates there might be a connection between the WSOP, Harrah's and online cheating, which there isn't.

But that's not the largest offense of this report. Just two minutes in the voiceover says:

"We should tell you that this \$18 billion industry is illegal in the U.S., but the ban is almost impossible to enforce since the Internet sites and the computers that randomly deal the cards and keep track of the

bets are located offshore."

Really? Illegal? Show me where it says that in the Big Book of Laws. It's this kind of misleading sensationalism and preying on ignorance that gives television programs its ratings while throwing a wonderful game such as poker under the bus. Yes, hosting online poker sites *inside* the United States is illegal, but these companies are performing perfectly legal business practices in the countries where they operate. The quote inferred it was illegal to *play* poker online, and that's categorically untrue.

The producers at *60 Minutes* should've known better than to allow this statement to go unchecked, just like it should've known better than to let a bitter Todd Witteles ramble on at the very end of the segment. Witteles, known in online poker circles as Dan Druff, was interviewed for the report and spewed this very damaging and unfounded statement.

"The people who did this were very greedy and very blatant. But the scary thing is, there may be other accounts out there like this, maybe even on other sites, that are not being done with the same sense of recklessness, and maybe this has been going on at more than just Absolute Poker and UltimateBet. Maybe it's going on at several other places and maybe it's still going on at these sites."

This is unacceptable. Imagine how the brass at DoylesRoom, PokerStars and Full Tilt Poker felt when they heard that irresponsible diatribe. Sites such as these (and even UB and AP) are working diligently with state-of-the-art security to ensure a safe, enjoyable playing environment for you, and yet one guy is allowed to shake the very foundations of the industry by lumping all poker sites together with a few ruthless crooks.

Yes, what happened at UltimateBet and Absolute Poker was unfortunate, and I'm not sugar-coating the indiscretions. But to be so lax in your reporting and editing that you let these kinds of statements get through is beyond reprehensible. And, for the record, this combined report from two of our country's leading news organizations did very little in advancing the story. Everything in the television report (and the longer print version that appeared in the *Post* the next day) had been reported for months in newspapers, poker periodicals and forums. What was the point of this story if they couldn't expound on what was already available? Was it to just scare the hell out of anyone who was thinking about playing poker online? Were they just looking for ratings? Are they so arrogant as to think a story hasn't been truly reported until they report it?

My Hollywood Cringe just got upgraded to the Hollywood Grimace.

HSP roster, air date announced: The list of players for Season 5 of *High Stakes Poker* on GSN has been released, and it looks very promising.



New WSOP champ Peter Eastgate will make his debut as the show moves back to the Golden Nugget for the first time since Season 1, with a new \$200,000 buy-in. Joining Eastgate will be the man he beat for the title, Russia's Ivan Demidov, along with the usual cast of characters, including Antonio Esfandiari, Daniel Negreanu, Doyle Brunson, Barry Greenstein, Eli Elezra, Phil Laak, Patrik Antonius and Phil Hellmuth.

The world's most-feared player, Phil Ivey, is back. He's played in just one season of *HSP* (Season 3 at South Point), and that appearance was short and not very fruitful. Other notables on the list: Hedge-fund manager and *HSP* alum Mike Baxter, French pro David Benyamine, film director Nick Cassavetes, online pro Tom "Durr" Dwan, "the Professor" Howard Lederer, WSOP bracelet-winner Dario Minieri, Finnish pot-limit Omaha star Ilari Sahamies, broker and *HSP* alum Bob Safai and *Simpsons* creator Sam Simon.

Taping of the show took place Dec. 19-21 and will debut Sunday, March 1 at 9 p.m. ET.

PAD is back! *Poker After Dark's* fourth season began airing in late December, and the themed weeks continued.

The season kicked off with Close but No Cigar Week, which featured players who finished oh so close in the WSOP Main Event, including Florida's Dewey Tomko, the latest member of the Poker Hall of Fame. Other weeks include Speak Your Mind, Brilliant Minds, WPT Multiple winners, Nets vs. Vets, International III and Hellmuth Bash Cash Game I and II.

Finally, look for Celebrities and Mentors Week (June 22) when Barry Greenstein, Phil Gor-

don and the People's Champ Gavin Smith take on Jason Alexander, Orel Hershiser and Don Cheadle.

WSOPE ON ESPN: Beginning Feb. 1, ESPN will devote eight original hours of coverage to the World Series of Poker Europe Main Event from the Casino at the Empire in downtown London's theater district. And, yes, that's opposite the Super Bowl.

This tournament attracted an extremely formidable field of 362 top players from Europe, the United States, and around the world. Play took place over a six-day period, with the initial field divided into two starting days, and culminated in a final table which took more than 19 hours to complete. At stake was the first-place prize of more than \$1.5 million and the highly coveted WSOPE Main Event bracelet.

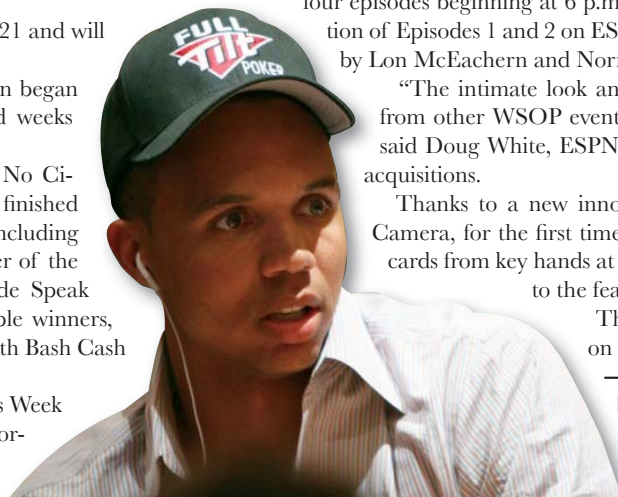
ESPN's coverage of the European WSOP will begin with the first four episodes beginning at 6 p.m. ET, followed by an encore presentation of Episodes 1 and 2 on ESPN2 at 10. The episodes are co-hosted by Lon McEachern and Norman Chad.

"The intimate look and feel of this tournament is different from other WSOP events we produced in the United States," said Doug White, ESPN senior director of programming and acquisitions.

Thanks to a new innovation called the Mobile Hole Card Camera, for the first time, ESPN will be able to show the hole cards from key hands at many of these outer tables in addition to the feature table.

The remaining shows will air on ESPN2 on Feb. 8, 15 and March 1.

— Email chris@anteupmagazine.com if you'd like to see a retraction from *60 Minutes*.



WPT

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CRASH

Martha Frankel, author of *Hats & Eyeglasses*, was a guest on the Ante Up Poker Podcast when her memoir was released. Now, the captivating and very candid book about her online-poker addiction will be released in paperback Feb. 19. Here are some highlights from that interview.

Can you explain to our readers what the title *Hats & Eyeglasses* means?

Well, when I was a kid one of my uncles said that when he was playing poker. He said, "I have hats and eyeglasses" and all the other men like murmured and sighed. ... He told me that it meant that when a ship goes down all that floats to the surface is hats and eyeglasses, that he had crap. So it became code in our family for when we were doing badly, but especially when you were doing badly in gambling.

You grew up in a household in New York where there were a lot of games going on, poker, mahjong ...

Yeah, everything, pinochle, knock rummy. My parents and their friends and we kids played cards all the time, for money.

You learned a lot from your father and some of his friends, right?

I did; I loved watching the men. I loved watching the way they were with each other when they played.

So you were no stranger to poker, but at some point you went off and had a career as a journalist.

Yeah, I left poker and had a life for a long time. (laughs) That was unusual. I was a celebrity journalist. I wrote for big magazines, *Cosmo*, *Redbook* ... and went around the world and interviewed everyone from Robert De Niro and Anne Rice to Anthony Hopkins and Sean Penn. I sort of stayed away from gambling for a long, long time.

You mentioned celebrity interviews. One of our favorite parts in the book is when you go to Hollywood to interview Jennifer Beals from *Flashdance* and you get her to go to Hollywood Park with you and you interview her while playing stud.

Yeah, while I'm playing poker she's just sitting behind me holding the tape recorder, 'cause she's such a great girl. I was just so interested

in the poker, and I thought we'd just have a good time, and we did. It was a lot of fun. ... I said do you want to do it out at Hollywood Park and she said, "Yeah, I'd love to see what it's like." So we went out there and did it together.

You got back into poker as a result of an assignment. Can you explain how that happened?

Yeah, I met this guy named Randy Finch who's a producer who lives in Sarasota. He wanted to write a screenplay about the circus.

So I came to Sarasota and we did tons of research because that's the winter home of Ringling. ... We had it optioned and decided to write another screenplay. And this one was about two women who pull a scam and fall in love with one of the victims. And we thought the scam should have to do with poker. So I went off to do the research because I'm the research girl.

And the research got very extensive.

I had a cousin who was a professional player who lives in Florida. I went down and he taught me the basics. But if you want to play poker you really need to play it. So I asked my best friend to take me to his game and the minute I walked into that room I just sort of fell in love with the players and the whole idea of it; it felt like coming home. The cigarette smell, and men just being abrupt with each other, I just loved it. So I wanted

to teach myself how to play, so I did what I do. I'm a little obsessive. I thought the best way for me to learn poker was to deal out endless amounts of hands, and so that's what I did for about a year. And I started doing really, really good at my local game. I started playing in the casinos and doing really well. ... I had a lot going on.

Most poker players these days get their start playing online and then transition into live play. You're the exact opposite.



BOOK REVIEW (CONT.)

Hats & Eyeglasses by Martha Frankel

I know, and I got unhinged very quickly. ... Immediately I didn't do well. Like, if I took up skiing, and the first night down I broke my arm. I probably wouldn't go to the top of the lift again. But online poker was not like that for me. I broke my arm the first night and then I went down the next night and broke another arm, and just kept saying I'm sure there's other limbs I can find somewhere.

It sounds like this was bad from Day 1.

It *was* bad from Day 1 and it didn't get better, and I kept doing it for 18 months.

And then you made a common mistake and played higher to try to get even.

Right. I think I say in the book "I go to \$10-\$20 hold'em; it makes perfect sense," because, of course, it didn't make any sense. But I was so far gone. When I gambled I never hid it from anyone. ... I was not one of those gamblers ... I never lied about it. The minute I lost online I lied about it. And that was a big tip-off to me that things were not good.

Do you think it was the convenience factor?

No, I think it was the opposite. I think it was because I wasn't playing against real people and so I had no idea what was going on. And I was angry and on tilt all the time.

Well there's one particular hand you talk about in the book when you're trying to get your losses back. You had pocket kings in a hold'em game and you flopped a set of kings with one diamond on the board. ...

And then runner-runner diamond and I get beat by a guy who's got like 5♦6♦. And I went nuts. I went nuts! But if that happened to me in real life, if that happened to me in a casino, you would absolutely never know that I thought the guy was a schmuck and that I was upset. I have a great poker face and that's not the way I operate.

You're very candid in this book.

You know I live in a little town and I can barely leave my house

anymore (laughs). ... There's a lot of sex in the beginning of the book ... there was a point that I thought I really don't need to tell this, but I did, because it comes to who I am, and who I was. There were a lot of things in my life I could've gotten addicted to. I dabbled in drugs, and I don't lie about that in the book. But nothing ever did that to me until I started playing online.

There's a scene in the book where you're talking with some G.A. people and you mention that you still play in your Wednesday night game, though you've given up online poker. And one of them gets very angry and says you can't do that. Do you feel the one-size-fits-all-G.A. approach is really valuable for people who maybe have a problem with certain parts of gambling but at the same time they can still control and enjoy it?

Here's the most interesting thing: (Within three weeks of the book being released I was) booked to speak at three conferences about problem gambling, because they're starting to realize that this one-size-fits-all thing of all or nothing is not working. If they're saying they're having a 15 percent success rate, what about the other 85 percent of us?

Things are going to have to change. ... I'm hearing from addiction specialists who are saying what I'm saying makes perfect sense. You can play recreationally and have fun, but you can't play online. ... I'm so over it now.

Was it therapeutic to write this?

No, I had stopped gambling online a long time ago but I never told anyone. No one. And I lost tens of thousands of dollars. And then I sold the book and I had a year to write it, and I didn't write it. Because I was too afraid because I didn't know how I was going to tell my husband and my family and my friends. ... then my agent told me they were going to drop me. So I wrote it in six months and still didn't tell anyone. The way I told them was to give them the manuscript.



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Q&A

WITH "THE MAD GENIUS OF POKER"

Respected poker author and legend Mike Caro discussed so many topics on the Ante Up Poker Podcast it needed to be a two-part show. Here are some excerpts, and if you'd like to hear the interview (and trust us, there's a ton more) in its entirety, go to anteupmagazine.com and click on his episodes.



How did you become known as the Mad Genius of Poker?

You know getting my name there's a story that goes with it, and I can lay it at Doyle Brunson's doorstep. In about 1977 he decided to do *Super System* and he decided I was one of the five people who were the best in the world at their specific games, mine was draw poker, and also statistics, I did the statistics section. ... When it got to him doing the bio of me in that book he decided that I was Crazy Mike, and I hated the term Crazy Mike. At this one game I was playing, draw poker in the Gardena at the time, a few people had said "he's a mad genius," so the next time I was interviewed by the press they asked if I had any nicknames and I said "Sure, I'm called the Mad Genius of Poker!" It got in print and I was able to reference it from then on. Everybody just picked it up. It's just amazing what you can do if you can get something in print just once. It becomes gospel.

Has poker going mainstream hurt the anonymity for you and the tactics that you'd use because a lot of people will recognize you now?

I think it has in some regard because people are expecting this act. And yet, it's like a show, and you kinda suspend disbelief. ... and it has a little bit of that element. I found that in spite of the fact that they seem to know it's an act, they are expecting it, and a segment of my opponents seem to get caught up in it. ... There's nothing more terrifying than somebody comes into your game and burns a hundred-dollar bill at the table, because now you gotta think twice. You just can't get it out of your head. Here you're up against an opponent who's burning a hundred-dollar bill. In the (stakes) I play, a hundred dollars in those games is not much. People who say you can advertise and to do it creatively. They're planning tactics at the table on single plays that might cost them \$400-\$800. I can get more benefit out of burning a hundred-dollar bill.

How do you not have a WSOP bracelet?

In a nutshell here's the deal with me and tournaments: When you have a proportional-payoff tournament where first place gets a certain percentage of the money, second place gets a lesser percentage of the prize pool and so on down the line, a phenomenal mathematical thing happens: There's a penalty. Who gets penalized? One person gets penalized and that's the winner of the tournament. ... because he has to win all of the chips and then give most of them away to players he's already conquered. That's a penalty. ... So, what's the object now? This will blow your mind, but if I were to define these

proportional-payout tournaments, the object is to avoid taking first place. Now what kind of tournament is that? ... If you want to play for the profit then you play not to win first place, and hope to stumble into it. If you want to play for the glory, which is the only reason I would ever enter a tournament, by the way, then you want to play to win first place. As long as they have these proportional-payoff tournaments, I don't like them, so I won't play very many. ... So to answer your question, I just don't play them.

Because of TV and endorsements that come with tournaments, is there not something to be said for the people who play these tournaments for more than just how the math works out?

Yeah, there's a benefit of publicity and it translates into real money. ... but right now, I'm fishing. (laughs)

Are there any plans to update your *Book of Poker Tells*?

Yes, it will be updated, probably this year sometime. ... I'm doing a professional poker play-by-play series, it'll have hold'em, and it will actually go through play by play, and other forms of poker. The series also has one I'm planning called *Tells, Psychology and Manipulation* and it covers the entire psychological gamut of poker. That'll probably be coming out (in 2009).

Do you ever get tired of writing, and where do you come up with these topics that no one else is coming up with?

When I passed a thousand columns I covered everything I have to do ... so most of the ideas I want to talk about have already been covered. So I needed a tactic that would handle that. The way to do that is to cover the same topics, kinda dress it up with some kind of leading paragraph that says "It just occurred to me today that ..." I figured out that six years after saying that, or 16 years, or 26 years, you can come back and get excited about it all over again and it will be new.

What is the "Final Winning Affirmation" and what's the story behind it?

As I end every seminar, of course I'm not a superstitious guy and I teach my students not to be superstitious because that's counterproductive. ... and I'm not a real fan of affirmations either. ... We end with an affirmation that sounds a lit bit new-agey and I say it once and the whole audience says it three times together, loudly hopefully, and it is "I am a lucky player. A powerful winning force surrounds me." ... What's the powerful winning force? It's the power of probability, it's working on your side because you have the scientific answers. So that's our final affirmation. Of course there was one seminar where a person left and came back and said "There was a powerful winning force that surrounds me, it was on my right and on my left." (laughs) So it doesn't always go the way you want.



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