

# ANTE UP

FLORIDA'S POKER MAGAZINE™

OCTOBER 2008 | anteupmagazine.com

**ROAD TRIP**  
NAPLES-FT. MYERS  
AND IMMOKALEE

**LOCAL PROS**  
LIFE ISN'T AS  
GLAMOROUS  
AS IT IS ON TV

**JENNICIDE**  
TALKS  
POKER,  
PLAYBOY  
AND  
POLITICS



Some play for pride,  
others play for prizes.  
One thing is for sure:  
Florida's free-league  
contingent is growing,  
and it takes the game  
very seriously.

**FT. PIERCE OPENS  
A NEW CARD ROOM**

**PALM BEACH  
POKER CLASSIC**

**HIGH HEELS DIGS  
IN AT THE ISLE**

**POKER WITH  
TWO FLOPS?**

**PLUS**

STATE NEWS, INCLUDING TOURNAMENTS,  
EVENTS AND RESULTS FROM YOUR ROOM

DANIEL NEGREANU'S NEW BOOK,  
*POKER HOLD'EM STRATEGY*, IS OUT

COLUMNS FROM PRO LEE CHILDS  
AND EX-FBI AGENT JOE NAVARRO



**DANIEL NEGREANU**  
World Champion & PokerStars Player

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learn to make the right  
move at the right time.**

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## WE'RE YOUR FLORIDA POKER HUB

One of the things we're striving for at *Ante Up* is to be your one-stop source for Florida poker content, and we hope to accomplish most of that task within these pages. But *Ante Up* doesn't end with this magazine. We also have [anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com). Our Web site is the true hub of Florida poker news and infotainment.

Take our news blog. This is our way of getting the most up-to-date information out to you. Last-minute promotions from your area card rooms? Or nuggets of information that came to us after deadline? This is where you'll find it. And don't be shy. If you have an announcement or event coming up, please send it along and we'll post it. You can view our blog directly at [anteupmagazine.com/blog](http://anteupmagazine.com/blog). And, for your convenience, you can download our blog's widget and post it on your Web site so you'll never be without it.

How else are we the most complete Florida poker news source? Check out our Florida Poker Rooms pages, here and on the Web. In this magazine you'll find a database of every room in the state, complete with Web sites, phone numbers, tournament schedules and promotions.

But on [anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com), by clicking on our Florida Poker Rooms tab you'll be transported to a map of our state that highlights each poker facility. If you click on a particular card room of interest, all of the room's information pops up, including the games spread, poker room manager, hours of operation and an option for driving directions.

One of the more unique ways for our readers to learn about Florida poker (and to learn from each other) is our forum. Here you can chat with other poker players about anything. It's a place where you can get

advice about a particular hand you played or discuss events going on in your room. We've set up the forum according to geography so you can easily find your favorite room (or rooms) and start chatting. For instance, if you play at Gulfstream Park, then you might want to post under our Miami/Fort Lauderdale Poker topic. But the forum isn't limited just talking about poker in your area. We have many other topics, including one about our magazine and one on our award-winning Internet poker show.

Oh, didn't I mention that? Yes, we have a poker podcast that airs every Friday on [anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com).

What's a podcast? It's just like a radio show only you can listen to us whenever you want to, unlike a radio show, which tells you when to listen. We have thousands of listeners in more than 30 countries and in every state of the union.

It's the perfect way to pass an hour while you're at work or jogging along A1A. Or maybe you like to listen to music while at the poker table. Download our show into your MP3 player and give us a try instead. We're always there and we're always good for a laugh. You also can find us on iTunes and subscribe for free.

And finally, you can find back issues of *Ante Up* on our home page. This way, if you missed last month's issue you can still read it there or download it to your desktop and print it out at your leisure.

We hope this helps you understand just how passionate we are about Florida poker and its players. If you have any suggestions we'd like to hear from you. Send us an email at [editor@anteupmagazine.com](mailto:editor@anteupmagazine.com).

We'll see you at the tables!

— Christopher Cosenza and Scott Long  
Publishers

[anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com)



# ANTE UP

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## COVER STORY



Treasure Chest Poker

### Pub poker

Whether they're intimidated by card rooms or just looking to play poker without risking money, players are thriving in free poker leagues that span the state from Pensacola to Key West. **28-32**

## ROAD TRIP



### Southwest flavor

We make the trek to the Naples-Fort Myers-Immokalee area and find two poker rooms with a lot of character, and a dedication to pleasing their players. **18-19**

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### Life as a Florida pro

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### Jerry Yang's year

The 2007 WSOP champ spent his year raising money for needy children, which is what brought him to a charity event in Palm Beach. **16-17**

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Competition and a sluggish economy slowed gaming revenue growth at Florida's Indian casinos last year. **10**

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### Not just another pretty face

Jennifer "Jennicide" Leigh may have posed for *Playboy*, but there's much more to this talented poker player. **44-46**

## STRATEGY

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That's right, two flops, two turns and two rivers ... and you get two cards. It's Double Flop Hold'em and the goal is to scoop both boards. **34**

### Columbo hits his set

Our favorite poker detective flops a set of nines on an all-spade board with multiple opponents. What should the shamus do now? **35**

### Make poker easier

Poker pro Lee Childs says the best thing you can do for your poker game is to make decisions easier. The best way? Play in position. **36-37**

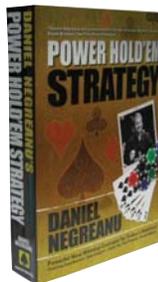
### Joe answers your Q's

Former FBI agent Joe Navarro, a Tampa native, takes some time to answer questions from readers about nonverbal tells at the table. **37**

## REVIEWS

### Negreanu's opus

The long-awaited Daniel Negreanu book, *Power Hold'em Strategy*, is released. His Small Ball chapter alone is worth the price. **42-43**



### Shana's curse

If it weren't for Shana Hiatt we might have poker hosts who know what they're talking about. **40-41**

## PERSPECTIVE



### Women in poker

With so few female poker players — especially in Florida — sometimes they have to try harder to get the chips. **39**

## Ft. Pierce Jai-Alai and Poker



## CRYSTAL CARD ROOM OPENS IN FT. PIERCE

Ft. Pierce Jai-Alai, a Treasure Coast entertainment destination for more than 34 years, can now add poker to its resume. In April 2008 the fronton underwent a multimillion dollar renovation that included adding the plush Crystal Card Room. The grand opening, held Aug. 9, featured Florida Gaming Corp. CEO and chairman W. Bennett Collett Sr. cutting a ribbon of currency, which was donated to the local Red Cross chapter.

"We are pleased to make our celebration even more meaningful by supporting this organization that does so much for our community in times of need," Collett said.

The Crystal Card Room, which has 37 tables plus 40

large-screen plasma TVs that surround the room, offers daily tournaments, no-limit hold'em, 7-card stud and Omaha/8 cash games. It also has a bad-beat jackpot, which recently surpassed \$100K.

The poker room, which has full-service bar and light snacks, is open noon-midnight Sunday through Thursday and 1 p.m.-1 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Ft. Pierce Jai-Alai also offers full-card simulcast, off-track betting and, of course, jai-alai from Miami. The fronton also has a live jai-alai season at the start of each year and admission is always free.



**Florida Gaming Corp. chairman and CEO W. Bennett Collett Sr. cuts a ribbon of currency, which was donated to the North Treasure Coast Chapter's American Red Cross, at the Crystal Card Room's grand opening.**

**3rd annual**

# PALM BEACH POKER CLASSIC

The Palm Beach Kennel Club's signature tournament series was a smashing success. Here are some photos from the week-long event.

**Kenny Nieves shows the bling, the cash and all the chips after taking down the \$10K Guaranteed No Limit Hold'em event that opened the Classic on Aug. 25.**



**John Phillip, with dealer Sal Zambito, gets ready to sign for his second-place cash in the \$10K Guaranteed No Limit Hold'em event on Aug. 25.**



**Jia Li shows off the bracelet he earned by winning Jerry Yang's Ronald McDonald House charity tournament Aug. 23-24.**



**Chip Parsen holds up his bracelet after winning the six-handed No Limit Hold'em tournament on Aug. 26.**

**Jeff Charlton wins the massive \$50K Guaranteed event on Aug. 30 to wrap up a successful week.**



**Bill Gould has all the black chips and the gold bracelet after winning the Limit Hold'em tournament on Aug. 28.**



## Gulfstream Park's room bigger, better

When Gulfstream Park Racing and Casino installed slots in November 2006, one of the casualties was its poker room's location, which had been very well-received by its players. To make more space for slots the room was moved to the second floor and into the Sport of Kings Poker and Racing Lounge, which looks more like a Rat Pack nightclub than a poker room. It's a beautiful location, but just not "poker room" material.

Well, much to the players' delight, the card room has returned to its original location on the first floor of the Finish Line Casino. An additional 230 slots are adjacent to the room, but rest assured they won't be intrusive on poker play as the volume will be turned down on the machines. The slots offer poker players' spouses and friends an opportunity to engage in a fun activity while still being close to the poker room action.

The move, which finished with a grand opening Sept. 5, allows for significant upgrades, including an extra poker table (21, up from 20) and many more plasma televisions (18).

"A good view from every seat in the house," director of poker operations Scott Poole said. "We have plenty of TVs for cross-over betting or sports. Again it's going back to pleasing our players; whatever they want up on the screens we put up for them, whether is sports, football, baseball, horse racing ... we've got plenty of TVs for them."

And the best upgrade of this new room is the Genesis Bravo Tracking System, which allows the house to track players and reward them.

"It will make running the room much, much smoother with seating," Poole said. "Players will be able to swipe their cards to sign themselves up for games and follow themselves on the players lists. (We'll have) a featured tournament clock to have a much more professional tournament. I'm excited about it; it's a heck of a program."

## Fort Lauderdale teacher nominated for PokerStars' EPT newcomer award

Jason Mercier, a Fort Lauderdale math teacher, was one of five finalists for the PokerStars.com European Poker Tour's "Newcomer of the Year" award.

Mercier won the EPT San Remo event in April, earning 869,000 euros after qualifying on PokerStars. It was the first big tournament cash for Mercier, who went on to cash three times in



this year's World Series of Poker for \$56,769 in winnings.

Mercier was on the ballot with Internet sensation Annette Obrestad, as well as Denes Kalo, Mike McDonald and Trond Erik Eidsvig, who ultimately won the newcomer award on Sept. 9.

## WPT Boot Camp returns to Florida

The WPT Boot Camp, based in Fort Lauderdale, is bringing its instruction back to the Sunshine State.

The Isle Casino at Pompano Park is the host casino for the Nov. 15-16 Cash Strategy camp.

"We've been so busy expanding our footprint around the country to meet consumer demand that we took our eye off of our own back yard," said Ron Rubens, founder of the WPT Boot Camp. "It has been over a year since our last Florida boot camp, but the good news is that not only will we be hosting this one boot camp here in Florida, but we are also actively planning on running two to three more Florida boot camps in 2009."

The Isle Casino's camp, which will feature instructors Clonie Gowen, **Kenna James**, Rick Fuller and Nick Brancato, will be WPT Boot Camp's first "split location."

"This is the first time we are hosting a boot camp at a casino property that does not have its own hotel accommodations," said Rebecca Joy, director of operations for the WPT Boot Camp. "However, since many of the attendees will be South Florida residents and the fact that there is a hotel just a few minutes away, we don't feel that this 'split location' is a detractor."

For more information call 1-866-978-2668 or visit [www.wptbootcamp.com](http://www.wptbootcamp.com).

## Dania Jai-Alai's poker room extends hours

Dania Jai-Alai's poker room will now be open from noon to 3 a.m. (and possibly later) on Friday and Saturday nights. Since Florida poker rooms are supposed to be open only 12 hours, how's this possible? Language from the state's 2007 ruling allows for parimutuels to have 12-hour poker rooms "per permit."

Just like its neighbor, Mardi Gras, Dania Jai-Alai (or more specifically Boyd Gaming) possesses two permits and has been granted permission to expand its poker room hours beyond the original state mandate of 12 hours per day. This is good news for its poker players, especially those playing in tournaments. If a tournament is going late on a Friday or Saturday, no longer will they have to close up shop and declare a winner. They'll now be able to play on until there's a victor.



The Labor Day final table.

## Isle Casino at Pompano Park

PT Seats Labor Day Special

Buy-in: \$550 Entries: 154

Name	Hometown	Payout
<b>Carlos Calviero</b>	Miami	\$13,629
Tristin Wade	Boynton Beach	\$11,853
John Andrews	Boca	\$11,852
Paul Senat	Lantana	\$10,000
Robert Cambell	Sedona, AZ	\$9,800
Lawrence Hawkins	Lake Worth	\$3,465
Raymond Millard	Davie	\$2,541
Uri Tenebolm	Coconut Creek	\$1,848
Michael Sexton	Coral Springs	\$1,771





Hana Johnson poses with her winning cards, the beautiful High Heels Poker Tour trophy and her \$3,370 prize.

**Johnson wins HHPT event at Isle**

Despite the uncertainty of Hurricane Ike's path, the High Heels Poker Tour saw a turnout of 40 ladies for the Sept. 7 event held at the Isle Casino at Pompano Park.

Hana Johnson's A♦K♦ held up and eliminated Dr. Janec in the end to win \$3,370. Janec pocketed \$1,723. Sue Molson finished third (\$1,049) and Corrine Hernandez was fourth (\$824).

The next featured event will be in October at the WSOP ladies circuit stop at the Horseshoe Casino in Hammond, Ind., followed by the WSOP ladies circuit event at Harrah's in New Orleans on Dec. 7 at noon (\$230 buy-in).

The New Orleans event will be preceded by a free seminar with Poker Hall of Famer Barbara Enright from 9 a.m. to noon on Dec. 6. The seminar will serve as a kickoff to HHPT founder Lauren Failla's Women's Ultimate Poker Academy, tentatively scheduled to be based at the Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood. Failla has lined up at least a dozen top pros to help run her academy, which is set to start at the beginning of next year.



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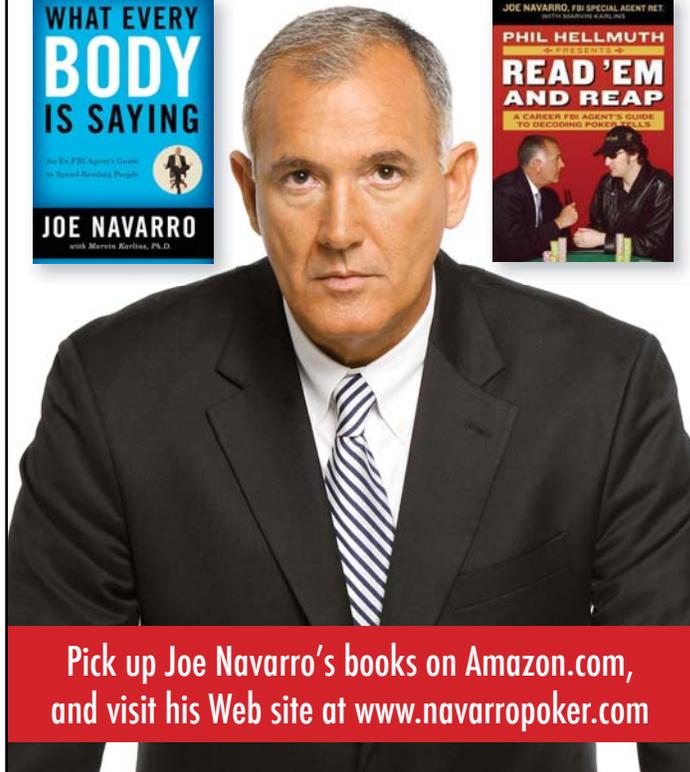
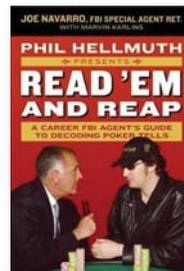
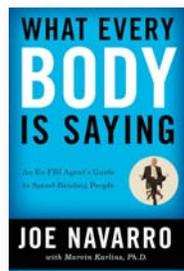


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- Individual Coaching

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**BEST BUCS COVERAGE**





The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino of Hollywood will host the Florida Gaming Summit on Oct. 6-7.

## COMPETITION EATS INTO TRIBES' REVENUE GROWTH

By Scott Long

Ante Up Staff Writer

Florida's Indian tribes saw gaming revenues increase 2.3 percent in 2007, as they contended with new competition and a slowing economy — two factors that remain this year as a debate over expanded gaming continues.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe Indians of Florida reported a combined \$1.6 billion in gaming revenue last year, according to the Casino City's Indian Gaming Industry Report, written annually by Alan Meister, an economist with Analysis Group. The 132-page report, released in August, is available at [www.casinocitypress.com](http://www.casinocitypress.com).

But that \$1.6 billion doesn't include any money from Las Vegas-style slot machines or blackjack, which were introduced to select Seminole Tribe casinos after Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed a compact with the Seminole Tribe in November 2007. What effect the new games will have is hard to predict, Meister says.

"Moving from Class II to Class III is a plus. Adding table games is a plus," Meister said. "But competition could improve. And that increased competi-

tion may come from new facilities, not necessarily the existing ones."

In January, Miami-Dade County voters approved slot machines at its parimutuel facilities. The state's racinos generated more than \$202 million in 2007, and while they are taxed heavily, new rules have relaxed some previous restrictions.

"Their situation is a little bit better than it was," Meister said.

But the big question remains what will happen to the compact, which the Florida Supreme Court ruled against this year. Seminole casinos continue to operate Class III, Las Vegas-style games pending appeals.

"If the tribe is forced to go to Class II, it would have an extreme effect," said Meister, who added, though, that because of the market, Florida's Class II video bingo machines outperformed some Class III machines in other states.

Nationwide, Indian gaming revenue increased 5 percent, to \$26.5 billion. Florida ranked fifth in the country, behind California, Connecticut, Oklahoma and Arizona, but was tops in Class II revenue, generating 42 percent of the nation's revenue in that class.

### Florida Gaming Summit to be held at Hard Rock Hollywood on Oct. 6-7

James F. Allen, CEO of Gaming Operations for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, will be the keynote speaker at the fourth annual Florida Gaming Summit on Oct. 6-7 at Seminole Hard Rock of Hollywood.



Allen

The summit brings together leading gaming, legal, financial and tribal experts to analyze Florida's quickly growing gaming market.

"The pending launch of gaming in Miami-Dade County, the uncertain future of Class III gaming in the Seminole casinos, ongoing discussions on the subject of slot machines at all parimutuel facilities and the continuing challenge for parimutuel

operators in Broward County make Florida the most compelling gaming market in the country at this time," said Charles Anderer of BNP Media, co-producer of the conference along with Spectrum Gaming Group.

Other confirmed speakers include W. Bennett Collett Sr., chairman of Florida Gaming Corp.; state Sen. Steven Geller; Izzy Havenick, director of public affairs at Flagler Dog Track and Jim Shore, general counsel for the Seminole Tribe.

Go to [www.floridagamingssummit.com](http://www.floridagamingssummit.com) for more information.

# PAR AND POKER CELEBRITY EVENT COMING TO TAMPA

The second annual Par and Poker Celebrity Challenge for Charity has been announced for Jan. 29, 2009 in Tampa during Super Bowl week.

Baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith is returning to play in the tournament, which is co-hosted by ex-NFL Super Bowl champion Seth Joyner and NCAA champion Andy Walker. The event consists of two parts: an 18-hole golf tournament and a no-limit hold'em poker tournament.

The Par and Poker Celebrity Challenge for Charity is one of the only Super Bowl events free and open to the public. The golf tournament will be held at the TPC Tampa Championship Golf Course, but the location of the hold'em tournament hasn't been announced.

Participants will compete for cash prizes and, like last year, the



top three finishers will be each awarded a seat to next year's WSOP.

For more information go to [parandpoker.com](http://parandpoker.com).

## Silks' Halloween tourney returns

The Silks Poker Room's Halloween tournament from last year was such a success that Tampa Bay Downs is bringing it back. This year it will be a \$300+\$30 NLHE event, with a 300-player max. Based on a full field, first prize will be \$30K and the tournament will pay 27 places.

The tournament will be the day after Halloween (Saturday, Nov. 1) at 2 p.m. Pre-registration is available. You get 5,000 chips and 30-minute blind levels.

## Mazzatta remains firmly in lead for Silks honor

Little changed in the standings since last month, as Mickey Mazzatta continues to hold the top spot of the Player of the Year race at the Silks Poker Room at Tampa Bay Downs in Tampa.

Mazzatta, with 1,226 points, increased his lead over second-place Vincent Griffo (1,112) and Steve Darr in third (954). At year's end, the player with the most points wins \$25K, while the remaining top 10 players split \$25K. Points are earned through tournaments.

### POY leaders as of 9/8/08

1.	Mickey Mazzatta	1,226
2.	Vincent Griffo	1,112
3.	Steve Darr	954
4.	Henry Symulevich	786
5.	Gil Tai	694
6.	Jim Larsen	688
7.	Rich O'Hearn	670
8.	Muriel Yantiss	624
9.	Andrea Bauer	591
10.	Andy Palumbo	558



## Racks are attacked!

Darrel McKenney, left, and Jack Martin compete blindfolded in a Rack Attack recently at One-Eyed Jacks in Sarasota. McKenney won the race and was given the \$240 in chips he stacked into his racks. Martin managed to get \$133 into his racks and was allowed to keep \$67. Players receive a raffle ticket to qualify for the Rack Attacks if they make a winning flush at the tables.

## Florida called 'most foolish' in gambling expansion

Jeff Simpson, executive editor of *In Business Las Vegas*, says Florida has been the "most foolish" of states in how it has grown its gambling market.

"If ever there was a state that could compete with Las Vegas as a casino resort destination, Florida is it," wrote Simpson, who lived in Sarasota for 11 years in the '80s and '90s.

Simpson said the state should have passed on the short-term benefits of its now-disputed compact with the Seminole Tribe in favor of allowing casinos to be built in populous counties, as long as local residents approved them and they were required to include resort amenities such as hotels and dining.

"With a moderate tax rate of, say, 15 percent to 20 percent, Florida's tax coffers would stand to make much more," Simpson said.

You can find the entire article at [www.inbusinesslasvegas.com](http://www.inbusinesslasvegas.com).



Ryder Cup captain Paul Azinger takes time out from planning his strategy to beat the Europeans on the links to play a little no-limit hold'em at One-Eyed Jacks in Sarasota.



Kevin Herring of Fort Myers shows off his certificate and the two jacks he won his WSOP seat with on Sept. 7 in the World Poker Store/Bar Poker League's tournament.



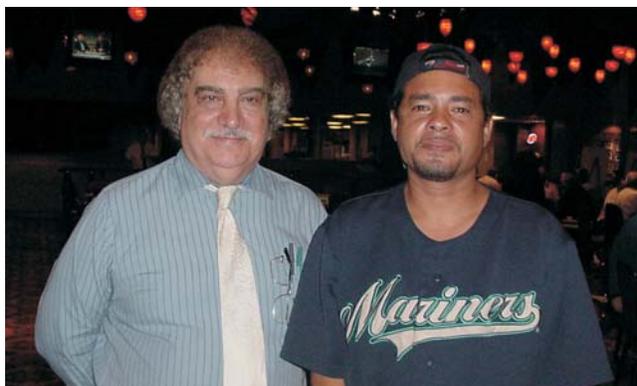
John Mack poses with dealer Melanie Foley after taking down the Winner Take All tournament at Flagler Greyhound. Poker room manager Ileana Zamora says the successful tournament series will continue.



Charlie M. of Jupiter recently won more than \$51K in a bad beat at the Isle.



Louis Lippman can hardly contain himself after winning \$3,630 for his royal flush at Dania Jai-Alai's poker room.



Andres Mercado, right, poses with poker room manager Frank Risi after winning the \$2,591 jackpot for a royal flush at Dania Jai-Alai.



Top row, from left: Gus Nasta, Ernest Patterson, Pearl Eady, Charlie Gergal (with his arms around dealer Paul Cox), Joaceme Monpreimer, Bill Machnicz and Joe McGinnis. Bottom row: Jim Brennan and Fred Clancy. Clancy's quad 10s beat Gergal's quad sevens on Aug. 14 at Seminole Casino Immokalee. The jackpot was worth \$167,000.



# HOLD'EM EVENT RAISES \$14.5K FOR CHARITY

The *Orlando Sentinel* reports the Central Florida chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties raised \$14,500 at its annual No Limit Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament and Casino Night to benefit the Jim Heistand/NAIOP Endowed Eminent Scholar Chair in the University of Central Florida's new Dr. P. Phillips School of Real Estate.

## Hamilton offers freerolls

Hamilton Jai-Alai & Poker in Jasper has started running freeroll tournaments every other Sunday. Its first one was held Sept. 7. No qualification to enter these freerolls is necessary; just be one of the first 50 players to sign up. The prize pool may be up to \$1,000.

### Around the country

Floridians continue to tear it up on the national poker circuit, including a lot of professionals leading the way.

- Hollywood's Steven Frankel placed second in the sixth annual Borgata Open's \$500 NLHE event on Sept. 4-5 in New Jersey. James Kaplan of Boca Raton was 18th (\$2,118), followed by Tony Armand of Port Orange (48th, \$988) and Sheldon Gross of Hillsboro Beach (59th, \$918).

Also, Norman Contreras of Clearwater placed seventh in the Borgata's \$300 NLHE event on Sept. 4 for \$13,410, and William Burdick of Palmetto (20th, \$3,432) cashed in a \$1,500 NLHE event on Sept. 7.

- Pros Chad Batista (Coral Springs) and Fred Goldberg (Hollywood) made the final table of the Bellagio Cup's \$5K NLHE undercard event. Batista finished third for a whopping \$122,570 while Goldberg raked in \$27,855 for his seventh-place finish. Popular pro Clonie Gowen, who was born in Tampa, won the 235-player event, worth \$437,775.

- Hollywood's Jacobo Fernandez, who was *CardPlayer's* WSOP Player of the Year, continued his nice run with a sixth-place finish in a \$3K event at the Bellagio Cup, winning \$21,005.



- Results from the Venetian's Deep Stack Extravaganza continue to trickle in, and Tampa's Jared Okun grabbed fourth place and \$72,872 in the \$4,850 NLHE event that had 173 entrants.

- **David Rheem**, the WSOP Main Event finalist from Florida, is being listed by Bodog as a 19-to-2 underdog to win the whole thing on Nov. 9. Despite being the most experienced player at the final table, his "short stack" of 10.2 million chips likely is the reason for the long odds. Rheem, a member of Team PokerStars, may live in Los Angeles now, but the Cooper City native learned to play poker with his good friend and fellow pro Robert Mizrachi in the Miami area. Bodog says chipleader Dennis Phillips and second-place player Ivan Demidov are the favorites at 3-1 to win the \$9.2 million top prize.

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# GET REAL WITH POKER TRAINING

**R**yan Fisler has been a respected online pro for quite some time, though you might recognize his name from his appearance on the 2007 Aussie Millions broadcast. His latest call to fame has been as a principal owner of the online poker site RealPokerTraining.com, which offers hand-by-hand analysis of successful players. The company is based in Fort Lauderdale and Ontario, Canada. We spent some time with Fisler, a true online poker pioneer.

**What online name do you play under?** On PokerStars, “justgiveithere”, on Full Tilt and UB, “catchips.” I began playing online in 1999 on Paradise Poker. When I started playing online I did not want to use the same screen name on different sites because I wasn't looking for notoriety. After a while everyone knew my screen names anyway.

**A review of your stats showed a strong ending to 2007 and early 2008, including several days where you had multiple deep cashes. Do you feel online wins come in streaks?** Yeah, definitely the variance goes up and down. You go on streaks where you can't catch anything then you go on a heater where you are unstoppable. I don't think it is unique to online play; I think poker just goes on streaks like that. There is no way to predict anything, but over a period of time there will be statistical deviations.

**Your site was an early player in the world of online training. Please tell us about the beginnings.** We were actually the first site, opening about a year before CardRunners and Poker XFactor. At the start in February 2005, no other site was doing online training. We invented the format. The business is a partnership between Ryan Hache, Todd Arnold, a contracted online pro from Fort Lauderdale, and me.

**In late last year you brought on Chad Batista, a leading Florida online player, and David Williams, runner-up in the 2004 WSOP Main Event. Was that profitable for you?** Yes, at first it was great, but there was a misunderstanding between Chad and us regarding what was expected vs. what was paid. Things broke down and the relationship lasted about three months. David Williams signed in March and that has been going very well. David has done several very popular videos for us.

**Do you find you have learned more about human nature from the poker business or the poker table?** That's a hard question actually. I guess I



David Williams

learned more about it in the poker business.

**Are the best instructors for poker training sites online pros or brick-and-mortar established players?** I don't know if anyone is better, but they both have their own points of view. It's important to see how everyone plays and take different parts and incorporate it into your games. Online pros do good videos because they have experience in that format and the speed of the levels. The brick-and-mortar players' way of playing hands is definitely transferable, so you can learn from either one. Some online players may be veterans, too.

**What is the future of RealPokerTraining.com?** In the future we are considering incorporating a top cash-game instructor, submitting hand histories for review, which we have done in the past. We may make it a player feature where members can submit one hand per month for analysis. Another option is a fee service where whole games are analyzed.

**Do you think there are too many online training sites?** The market is oversaturated right now. When we first started we grew well and were

able to sustain ourselves. A little competition is good, but there are so many coming out, right now there are 10-15 sites. It's a pretty small niche training market. There are only a small number of players who would consider paying for training. It is not sustainable for long term. The small players will either be acquired or go out of business.

**Do certain players seek out sites based on the type of game they play?** A lot of players want a site that's tuned to their specific area. We're mostly a multitable tournament site. Most of our content is in that area. We're getting more sit-n-go and cash-game content. We do have some but are adding more. ... We would like to be an all-around site.

**What do you think of Florida players?** There are really good players from that area. Todd Arnold has been great for years. Stu Paterson, Jeremy Rasmussen, Chad Batista are all good. The area I am from, Kitchner and Waterloo, Ontario, has eight strong online players. There is a small hot bed of poker talent that concentrated in this area for some reason.

# Poker Stars

## PokerStars

PokerStars has officially released its Mac client software. The system had been running a beta version for some time.

Also, the World Championship of Online Poker (WCOOP) culminates with the \$10 million guaranteed main event, Sept. 21. Last year first place for the main event paid \$1,378,330. You can buy in to any WCOOP event or win your seat via satellites.



## Doyle's Room

Doyle's Room is running a series of qualifying tournaments through mid November, leading up to prize packages for the WPT Boot Camp's Battle for the Season Pass III Dec. 1-7 in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

You'll interact with pro players in learning labs and get a seat into three tournaments with a prize pool of 18 main-event seats and other prizes totaling more than \$225,000. The events span six days, though there will be plenty of time to enjoy Punta Cana.

Each winning package is worth \$8,500 and includes a boot camp entry, seven nights all-inclusive accommodations for participant and guest, \$2,400 for travel and spending money.



## Cake

Get a free piece of Cake with its Freeroll Into Millions satellite series. This promotion will run through New Year's Day, giving you the opportunity to parlay freeroll victories into thousands of dollars while playing for more than \$1 million in guaranteed prize pools.

teed prize pools.



## Full Tilt

Full Tilt is adding some excitement to its IronMan series in October. You compete in a series of freeroll tournaments and the winners then play in a four-person sit-n-go. The winner will play three Full Tilt Poker pros in consecutive heads-up matches.

Beat one pro and they'll give you \$5,000 on top of your previous winnings. Beat two pros, \$10,000; beat all three and they will give you \$50,000.

So, if you're the winner of the IronMan Freeroll and scoop all three matches, you'll get an extra \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000. The freerolls will be held Oct. 11, followed by four-player SNGs on Oct. 12. Heads-up matches will take place Oct. 18.



## UltimateBet

Win your way to paradise for the Aruba Poker Classic, Sept. 27-Oct. 4. With 750 players expected to descend on the island of Aruba for the tournament, you have a chance at a \$4 million prize pool, and a guaranteed first-place prize of \$1 million. UltimateBet is running a series of freerolls and paid tournaments toward an Aruba prize package that includes airfare, accommodations and your seat in the main event.

## Bodog

The Bodog Poker Open II is holding qualifying now. The first Bodog Open in March saw "phatcat" win \$76,280. That event attracted 596 players as the top 54 finishers won their share of the \$305,120 prize pool, to which Bodog added \$25,000. The winner walked away with the cash and an engraved Omega Speed Master watch valued at \$4,400.

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# The Year of the Yang

By Christopher Cosenza

**For this world champion,  
helping needy children  
has been Priority One.**



**W**hat makes a world champion of poker “worthy” in your mind? Would he need the ability to play all of poker’s disciplines at a world-class level? Is that enough? Maybe it’s a gregarious personality, or maybe a philanthropic attitude. Perhaps it’s a combination of these things.

As the 2007 World Series of Poker Main Event winner took a moment to compose himself during his emotional speech, one thing became instantly clear: Jerry Yang is certainly a worthy world champion of poker.

Yang, on-hand to play in a Ronald McDonald House charity poker event at the Palm Beach Kennel Club, was addressing the 60-plus poker fans who attended his instructional seminar when his emotions got the best of him.

During his yearlong reign as WSOP champion Yang met a young boy with cancer who loved to watch poker on television and was thrilled to meet Yang. The recollection proved too strong to merely talk his way through the moment, and Yang broke down.

Before winning his world title and more than \$8 million, Yang was a social worker, which explains his love for children and his unending desire to help as many as he can.

“With my involvement, I think we’ve raised about \$300,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in Arizona,” Yang said after his seminar. “Overall I’d say we raised between \$550,000-\$650,000, give or take, between Ronald McDonald House, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis and some other local charities.”

And that estimate doesn’t include the million dollars he donated from his WSOP victory, plus the \$5,000 the PBKC charity event raised and the \$5,000 the kennel club donated in his honor.

Upon arrival at PBKC, Yang very graciously went table to table and shook hands with every player and staff member during a busy Friday night at the state’s largest poker facility. And all of this happened after Yang had endured a monumental delay at the Dallas airport, plus he still had to put on a poker seminar for three-plus hours that evening. That’s how he’s spending his year, and his millions, as a world champion.

But what about Jerry Yang the person? How has his life changed?

He wanted to give two weeks’ notice after he won the title, but his boss wouldn’t let him, insisting he enjoy his accomplishment and making him quit immediately. That wasn’t Yang’s way, but he didn’t argue. Now, with all of that money and free time on his hands, Yang surely must be living the high life, right?

“I get up about 5 a.m., try to get my kids (six of them, ranging from ages 5 to 13) up at 6 a.m. and get them ready for school,” he said. “The bus comes right by my house to pick up the kids. So I spend some time with them in the morning. ... After (they) come home from school I spend some time with them, doing homework. I take them to piano lessons, which I was never able to do before. I try to stay as involved as much as possible with my children and my wife.”

But does he miss his old life?

“When I was a social worker I dealt more with the judge and sometimes had to testify against the natural parents,” he said. “It was heart-breaking at times, but it was rewarding at times, especially when we were able to find a good family for a boy or a girl to go to, or a set of siblings. In that sense I miss that part of it. (But) the 9-to-5 day, the rush home trying to get there so my wife can go to work, I don’t miss that part of it.”

Anyone who watched Yang’s improbable march to stardom got a glimpse into his faith, watching him pray at the table during critical

hands. And critical is the best way to describe the backlash that ensued. Yang was taken to task on air and in the card rooms for his actions. You might think the criticism wouldn’t affect him given that he could build a fortress of solitude with bricks of money just to shut out the whiners, but it bothered him. And it changed his approach.

“I don’t take it personally,” he said. “Some people might get offended when I pray at the table, so now I just pray in my heart. I don’t verbally or loudly pray anymore. Because No. 1 I want to at least have the respect for them. If I offend anybody I’m sorry, but you know, more importantly, I have faith in my god, and that’s most important to me.”

Yang has found one casualty of his celebrity: the time he used to dedicate to being a devout man.

“I have to admit I don’t get to go to church very often because I’m always on the road,” he said, “but I truly believe my relationship with my god is very strong. And I think it’s a matter with sitting down, of kneeling down, to communicate with God one-to-one and that’s important to me.”

And to hear Yang tell his story of how he won his 2007 WSOP seat, one might be led to believe it was divine intervention.

“There were two tournaments that day,” he said, looking up as if almost being told the story. “One was at Lake Elsinore Hotel and Casino for \$110, and I was hoping to win that one. But I got busted about 30 minutes after the tournament started. I had a tough decision whether or not to go home or to go to the other casino, Pechanga. And so I made a split decision on the way home. If I turn right I go straight to the casino; if I turn left it would take me home.”

At this moment Yang smiled. “I decided to go to the casino to play in the \$225, which I was like stressed because I didn’t want to spend another \$225. But thank God I did. And I beat 187 players that day and won the seat.”

But the tough decisions were far from over for the former psychologist.

“Before I decided to take the seat they brought me \$10,000,” he said, and here Yang practically breaks into his best Cuba Gooding, Jr. imitation. “They

showed me the money! And they said you either take the money or you let us buy you a seat and you go and play. And when you have six children and a mortgage to pay, car payments, that \$10,000 looks very, very good. It’s a lot of money there. But again, I made another huge decision to take the seat. I went with the intention to have fun and meet some of the world-class players. Some of my poker idols like Johnny Chan, Chris “Jesus” Ferguson, Daniel Negreanu and Jennifer Harman. And I met them, and I would have gone home happy. But to win the whole thing was really a blessing.”

Yang’s not done following his poker idols, however, as he continues to enter large buy-in events, such as the World Poker Tour and the WSOP, on a part-time basis. As for what’s next for poker’s finest philanthropist since Barry Greenstein ...

“I’m putting together a project with Feed the Children right now to go to Laos (where he was born); Thailand first, but eventually try to get into Laos, assuming the government is cooperating with us. We’re gonna try to de-worm some of the kids over there, so probably in 2009 maybe 2010.”

He also is writing his autobiography, *From Tragedy to Triumph*, which he says should be completed via ghostwriter in October. And what about dealing with the demands of being a celebrity?

“I’m just going to take it one day at a time. It’s more than just being a celebrity. It’s about being a champion, a deserved champion. At the very least, what a world champion should do is smile, shake hands ... and just be kind to people. I enjoy it; trust me. I receive tenfold in return. I’m a happy man.”



## Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track

As you take the ride up the escalator to the second floor of the Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track, you'll hear the ambient clicks and shuffles of chips and cards. It may be an early offseason Friday afternoon (the room's open noon till midnight daily), but there are plenty of players among the 24 tables that stretch end to end of this long poker room.

There's no line and no large dry-erase board with a long list of names. ... just a lot of personal attention. And that's the mantra here, instilled by poker room manager Cindy Fra, who has been running things smoothly for five years. Everyone's name is written down at the brush's podium and tended to diligently, which Fra said helps give her room a "hometown feel."

A pass through the card room picks up a jovial atmosphere. Dealers are heard joking with customers as laughter ensues. It's a friendly, well-run room, one in which a player can feel comfortable sitting down and playing. There are plenty of televisions for your viewing pleasure and, of course, parimutuel runners as well.

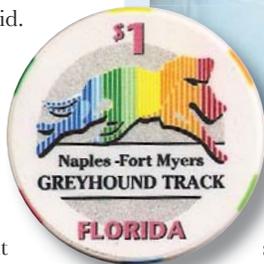
"I have a great staff," Fra said. "They're always willing to help."

Indeed. The poker chip you see here accompanying the story perfectly exemplifies Fra's sentiments. We approached the cage and asked to buy the chip for display in *Ante Up*. The woman could have given us any chip, but she made sure to go in the back to get a new chip for us. That's the service you get at Naples-Fort Myers.

The room is very clean and the tables are in great shape. Games include: \$1-\$2 and \$2-\$5 no-limit hold'em, \$2-\$4 limit hold'em,

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\$5 straight hold'em, \$1-\$5 spread 7-card stud and \$5 straight Omaha/8.

No-limit hold'em tournaments run just about every day, including Sundays at 2 (\$125); Mondays at 7 (\$65); a Wednesday bounty at 7 (\$125); Thursdays at noon (\$65) and Saturdays at 2 (\$230). On Tuesdays the poker room hosts 30-player

tournaments from 5-10 p.m. (\$65).

Also, don't forget to get a quick bite to eat at the new Hold'Em Grill, conveniently located next to the poker room.

If you're going to the card room and plan on staying in the area for a while, Fra recommends checking out the Sugden Theatre, home of the Naples Players, which will be doing *The Goodbye Girl* in October.

### Meet Cindy Fra: Poker Room Manager, Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track

You can tell a lot about the type of person Cindy Fra is — and how she runs her poker room — by just standing next to the podium at Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track.

On this day she needed to fill in for the brush. There would be no delegation or passing of the buck. If a job needs to be done, Cindy will do it. Players still flowed into her room with little hesitation, and usually with a smile, which comes courtesy of friendly banter with Cindy. But one gentleman walked up to the podium with an impatient way about him.

"I need to get into a game," he said, rocking back and forth.

But Cindy knew he was already there and would be playing today.

"You're all set," she said. "I have a seat waiting for you." He relaxed, smiled and walked into the poker room, guided by one of Cindy's 70-plus staff members.

She started as the brush when her husband, Juan set up the poker room about 10 years ago. After about four years at the podium,

she moved to the floor for a while before taking over as poker room manager for the past five years.

"I knew nothing," she said of her foray into poker. "At the time I was just coming back to work because I had been home with my son. But I like people, so (Juan) started me here."

Cindy pauses for a moment as another customer walks up. She writes his name down on the list and then has to help with some official business at the cage. That's the way the day went for Cindy: taking care of players at the podium while still handling her other responsibilities despite the semi-frantic pace. It certainly wasn't what she had intended on doing when she arrived at the track that morning, but that's what sets Cindy, and her room, apart from some others.

"I think it has a real hometown feel," she said of her room. "We know a lot of the customers personally. It's not like a big Vegas room where everything is automatic. We still write people's names down, they don't sign themselves in. So we get to know them a little bit better. And I think that makes a difference to them."



# Southwest Flavor

We're not talking about poker in Mexico or some Tex-Mex night, but there are two poker rooms on the southwestern corner of Florida worth checking out.

## Seminole Casino Immokalee

The real gem at the poker room inside Seminole Casino Immokalee room isn't the 16 tables or the hot dog and beer special. No, it's poker room manager Rick O'Connell. His customer motto is "treat everyone with respect and show them a good time."

O'Connell, 57, is a renaissance man of sorts, serving as a former sports broadcaster and a theatrical company owner before almost accidentally getting into the casino business.

"I saw an ad for a job fair at Harrah's Phoenix Ak-Chin, which was Harrah's first native American casino," he said. "I'd always loved playing poker, so I applied for a job as a poker dealer and got it," eventually becoming the poker room manager.



It was later as director of poker and table games of the Cherokee Nation's then three Oklahoma casinos – Roland, West Siloam, and Tulsa – that O'Connell really became immersed in the poker world.

He tells of how he helped to develop the three new casinos' major poker championship tournaments: the Scotty Nguyen Poker Challenge, the Oklahoma State Poker Championships and the Cherokee Poker Classic. And in doing so, he says he formed a close friendship with Nguyen, the World Series of Poker Main Event winner in 1998 and most recently the WSOP's \$50K

HORSE champ in 2008.

The Cherokee Nation sponsored Nguyen back in those days. "Most people aren't aware that he still sends about 20 percent of his earnings back home to his family in South Vietnam every year," said O'Connell, who has rubbed elbows with many of the poker greats, from Amarillo Slim to Berry Johnston.

So how did O'Connell wind up at the Seminole Casino Immokalee in the heart of Southwest Florida? "It actually was my dream to complete my poker career in Florida, where we could enjoy the beach lifestyle," he said. So he and his wife, Linda, moved to nearby Fort Myers in January to take the poker room manager position.

"I see a great future here," he said. "Immokalee is between two huge urban centers – Miami and Naples – and only 35 minutes from Fort Myers. I'm very happy to be back doing what I love, which is interacting with the customers and making sure they have a good time."

The poker room never closes and features 7-card stud, hold'em and Omaha/8 with \$5 betting.

"The players here in Immokalee are like family," he said. "We run chips for them, treat them all like VIPs. It's a real homey, fun atmosphere and that's what I like most about it."



**Where:** Immokalee  
**Phone:** (866) 222-7466  
**Web site:** [www.theseminolecasino.com](http://www.theseminolecasino.com)





### Dania Jai-Alai

**Phone:** (954) 927-2841

[www.dania-jai-alai.com](http://www.dania-jai-alai.com)

**Tournaments:** Sunday 5 p.m.; Monday 6:30; Tuesday 3; Wednesday 6:30; Thursday 6:30; Friday 3; Saturday 1:30. The 10-Star \$10 are M-F at 12:30 p.m.

**High hands:** In the first three hours each day, high hand wins \$200; separate royal flush jackpots for each suit.

### Daytona Beach Kennel Club

**Phone:** (386) 252-6484

[www.daytonagreyhound.com/pokerroom](http://www.daytonagreyhound.com/pokerroom)

**Tournaments:** Daily, including Wednesday Ladies Only at 1 p.m. (\$25); Friday, 50-player max; and Saturday, Pot-Limit Omaha/8.

**SNGs:** \$40-\$220.

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

**Bad beat:** Aces full of kings.

### Derby Lane

**Phone:** (727) 812-3339 ext. 7

[www.derbylane.com](http://www.derbylane.com)

**Tournaments:** Daily, including Knockout Deep Stack (\$65, 4K units); Knockout Double Deep Stack (\$110, 8K units); Monday KO Madness, 4 p.m. (\$70); and Midnight Madness (\$60).

**Promotions:** Race for the Big Screen Oct. 19 and Aces Cracked wins \$50.

**High hands:** Separate royal flush jackpots for each suit in hold'em and stud.

**Bad beat:** Aces full of jacks.

### Ebro Greyhound Park

**Phone:** (850) 535-4048

[www.ebrogreyhoundpark.com](http://www.ebrogreyhoundpark.com)

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

**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

### Flagler Greyhound Track

**Phone:** (305) 649-3000

[www.flaglerdogs.com](http://www.flaglerdogs.com)

**Tournaments:** Sunday 1 p.m. (\$20) and Monday at 7 (\$75).

**SNGs:** \$65-\$800.

**High hands:** From opening to 3 p.m. high hand wins \$100, all other players at the table win \$25; non-heart royal flushes win \$500.

**Other:** VIP card raffles at 3, 6 and 9 p.m. Sundays.

### Ft. Pierce Jai-Alai

**Phone:** (772) 464-7500

[www.jaialai.net/poker.htm](http://www.jaialai.net/poker.htm)

**Tournaments:** Monday 6:30 p.m. (\$75); Tuesday 12:30 (\$55); Wednesday bounty 6:30 (\$150).

**SNGs:** Thursday-Saturday (\$65-\$110)

**High hands:** Every two hours on Mondays and Tuesdays.

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

**Other:** Happy Hour drink specials from 4-7 p.m. daily; free coffee and doughnuts from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

\* Please call the poker room to confirm, and ask for details, rules and limitations.

### Gulfstream Park

**Phone:** (954) 457-6336

[www.casinoatgulfstream.com](http://www.casinoatgulfstream.com)

**Tournaments:** Daily at 6:30 p.m., including \$50+\$5 bounties M-W-F and \$85 rake-free (w/rebuy) T-Th; Saturday Special, \$100, 10K units.

**SNGs:** \$100-\$500. **Promotions:** Call for offers.

### Hamilton Jai-Alai and Poker

**Phone:** (800) 941-4841

[www.hamiltontownsjaialai.com](http://www.hamiltontownsjaialai.com)

**Tournaments:** Thursday 7, Sunday 3, \$65; Friday 7 (w/rebuys), \$65; Saturday, bounty event, \$100. Freerolls on every other Sunday. No qualification necessary, just be one of the first 50 to sign up. Prize pool will be up to \$1,000.

**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.

### Isle Casino at Pompano Park

**Phone:** (954) 972-2000 x5123 or x5124

[theislepompanopark.com/casino-poker.aspx](http://theislepompanopark.com/casino-poker.aspx)

**Tournaments:** \$60-\$550.

**SNGs:** Include heads-up and bounties (\$60-\$840).

**Special event:** The Isle Open \$150K Deep Stack, Oct. 3-6 (\$900).

**High hand:** Every two hours a no-limit and a limit winner get to spin the wheel for a prize; royal flushes win \$100. **Bad beat:** Call for details.

### Jefferson County Kennel Club

**Phone:** (850) 997-2561

[www.jckcpokerroom.com](http://www.jckcpokerroom.com)

**Tournaments:** Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m. (\$50).

**High hand:** Royal flushes win jackpot.

### Mardi Gras Gaming

**Phone:** (877) 557-5687 x3167

[www.playmardigras.com](http://www.playmardigras.com)

**Tournaments:** M-W-F bounty events at 7 p.m. (buy-ins vary). **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) 259-9800

[www.melbournegreyhoundpark.com](http://www.melbournegreyhoundpark.com)

**Tournaments:** \$65-\$120, include shootout, ladies, heads-up and bounty events.

**SNGs and promotions:** Call for details.

### Miami Jai-Alai

**Phone:** (305) 633-6400

[www fla-gaming.com/miami/poker.htm](http://www fla-gaming.com/miami/poker.htm)

**Tournaments:** Monday, 6:30 p.m. 7-card stud, (\$40); Wednesday, 6:30 NLHE Rebuy, \$25; Friday, 6:30 Ladies Only Rebuy (\$5).

**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

### Miccosukee Resort

**Phone:** (877) 242-6464

[www.miccosukee.com/entertainment\\_poker.htm](http://www.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.

Tell your poker room managers to email us at [editor@anteupmagazine.com](mailto:editor@anteupmagazine.com)

## Naples-Fort Myers Greyhound Track

**Phone:** (239) 992-2411  
[www.naplesfortmyersdogs.com](http://www.naplesfortmyersdogs.com)  
**Tournaments:** Sunday 2 p.m. (\$125); Monday 7 (\$65); Wednesday bounty, 7 (\$125); Thursday noon (\$65) and Saturday 2 (\$230).  
**High hands:** From noon to 2 p.m., high hand wins \$300; diamond royal flushes win progressive jackpot.

## Ocala Poker and Jai-Alai

**Phone:** (352) 591-2345  
[www.ocalapoker.com](http://www.ocalapoker.com)  
**Tournaments:** Wednesday 6:30 p.m. (\$65-\$240)  
**SNGs:** Call for details.  
**High hands:** Noon to 5:45 and 6-11:45 p.m.; diamond royal flush wins jackpot.  
**Other:** Monday is Crazy Pineapple Day, Tuesday is Stud Day and Thursday is Omaha Day. Games start at 3 p.m. Manager's specials noon to 3 and 9-11 p.m.

## Orange Park Kennel Club

**Phone:** (904) 646-0001  
[www.jaxpokerroom.com](http://www.jaxpokerroom.com)  
**Tournaments:** Daily (except Tuesday), 30-player max, 8 p.m. (\$65-\$100).  
**High hand:** \$100 every three hours, royals paid \$200. Winners entered into Race for the Rolex tournament Oct. 8 (\$225 value, non-transferable).  
**Bad beat:** Call for details.

## Palm Beach Kennel Club

**Phone:** (561) 683-2222  
[www.pbkennelclub.com](http://www.pbkennelclub.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$65-\$200; bounty tourneys on Tuesdays at noon (\$90); Wednesdays at 6:30 (\$90).  
**SNGs, bad beats and promotions:** Call for current offers.

## Palm Beach Princess

**Phone:** (561) 818-5771  
[www.palmbeachprincess.com](http://www.palmbeachprincess.com)  
**Tournaments:** Oct. 25, 80-player max WPT Foxwoods satellite (\$340).  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers and WPT package details.

## Sarasota Kennel Club

**Phone:** (941) 355-7744 ext. 1054  
[www.skcpoker.com](http://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 Coconut Creek

**Phone:** (866) 222-7466  
[www.seminolecoconutcreekcasino.com](http://www.seminolecoconutcreekcasino.com)  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

## Seminole Casino Brighton

**Phone:** (866) 222-7466  
[www.seminolecasinobrighton.com](http://www.seminolecasinobrighton.com)  
**Tournaments:** Monday 7 (NLHE, \$100); Tuesday 7 (7-card stud, \$80); Wednesday 7 (NLHE \$20 w/rebuys); Thursday 7:30 (Omaha, \$130); Friday 7 (NLHE \$100) and Saturday 2 (NLHE \$65) and 7 (NLHE \$200).  
**SNGs:** \$42-\$250.  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

## Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood

**Phone:** (866) 502-7529  
[www.seminolehardrockhollywood.com](http://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](http://www.seminolehardrocktampa.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$125-\$1,075  
**SNGs:** \$125-\$1,075.  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

## Seminole Hollywood Classic

**Phone:** (866) 222-7466  
[www.seminolehollywoodcasino.com](http://www.seminolehollywoodcasino.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$30-\$150.  
**High hands:** Mondays, every two hours winner gets \$200 from noon-8 p.m. Monday-Wednesday from 8 p.m.-midnight, every hour a winner gets a \$70 seat into the Monday tournament.  
**Other:** First 25 hold'em players (Tues. & Thurs) with aces cracked win \$100.

## Seminole Casino Immokalee

**Phone:** (866) 222-7466  
[www.theseminolecasino.com](http://www.theseminolecasino.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); On Sundays, Deep Stack Tournament, \$115, 10K chips, 20-minute levels.  
**Special event:** \$50K Bad Beat Freeroll Tournament Nov. 9-13. Win entry by winning a weekly tournament or hitting a qualifying bad beat.  
**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. Monday-Thursday.  
**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) 646-0001  
[www.jaxpokerroom.com](http://www.jaxpokerroom.com)  
**Tournaments:** 30-player max, 1 p.m. and 6:30 (\$45-\$100). Other events include shootouts, deep stacks, ladies only and old school.  
**High hand:** \$100 every three hours, royals paid \$200. Winners entered into Race for the Rolex tournament Oct. 8 (\$225 value, non-transferable)  
**Bad beat:** Call for details.

## SunCruz - Jacksonville

**Phone:** (800) 474-3423  
[www.suncruzcasino.com](http://www.suncruzcasino.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$125 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday)  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

## SunCruz - Port Canaveral

**Phone:** (321) 799-3511  
[www.suncruzcasino.com](http://www.suncruzcasino.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$20-\$100.  
**Promotions:** Call for current offers.

## Tampa Bay Downs

**Phone:** (866) 823-6967  
[www.tampabaydowns.com/PokerTheSilks.aspx](http://www.tampabaydowns.com/PokerTheSilks.aspx)  
**Tournaments:** \$45-\$120.  
**SNGs:** \$65-\$535. Monday is No Rake SNG night from 8 p.m. till close.  
**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.

## Tampa Greyhound Track

**Phone:** (813) 932-4313  
[www.luckyscards.com](http://www.luckyscards.com)  
**Tournaments:** \$45-\$200, including a few rake-free. Call for details.  
**SNGs:** \$65-\$500.  
**High hands:** Quads (\$75), straight flushes (\$200) and royal flushes (\$599).  
**Other:** Aces cracked wins \$100 from noon to 2 p.m. daily.

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

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# LIVING THE GRIND

*The life of a Florida pro isn't as colorful as it's portrayed on TV.*

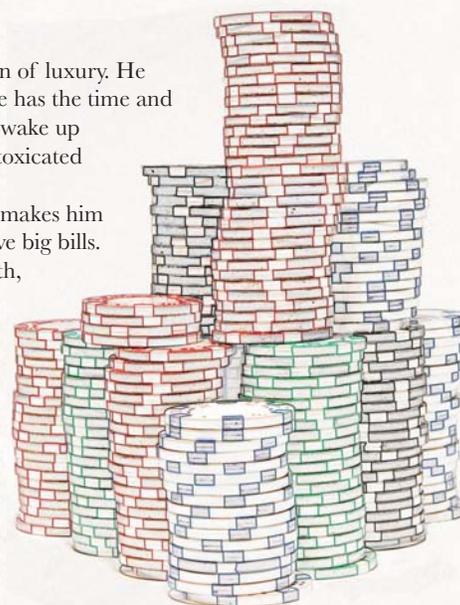
**By Michael J. Mooney**  
The Miami New Times

**A**t a poker table, perhaps nothing's more disturbing than a well-tanned man. This is a man of luxury. He has the time in his schedule to lie beneath the sun so that it may color him. Or worse, he has the time and money to lie in a tanning booth. He never wants for food or shelter. He doesn't have to wake up to an alarm clock or show up late to meetings, unshaven and smelling of last night's intoxicated adventures.

Nor does he care about a stack of chips worth a few hundred dollars. And this fact makes him dangerous in a poker game filled with men who really can't afford to go home light five big bills.

That was the trouble with Norman, the bronzed gent in his 30s with sparkling teeth, coifed hair, and a Ralph Lauren pullover, as he sat at a no-limit hold'em table in the back of the card room at Isle Casino at Pompano Park on a recent Sunday evening. Any time anyone else at the table bet, Norman raised an ungodly amount, calling out the bet in what seemed like an intentionally ambiguous foreign accent. A few other players knew he played here almost every day, and more than once that evening, a brave soul had doubted Norman and called his huge bets only to see the tan one turn over an unbeatable hand. He sent player after player away from the table looking down into an empty wallet.

When he dragged a tall stack of red chips from his sizable pile and planted them deliberately in the middle of the table in front of me, I quickly shucked the pair of kings in my hand. Like everyone else, I didn't think he had a better hand every time, but I could never be so sure that I'd stake every dime I'd brought to the table.



Norman had more than \$600 in chips in front of him when Harold Persaud arrived at the other end of the table. The 53-year-old Caribbean man, who always seems to be in a good mood, is a familiar face around here. This night, he had his long, braided ponytail under a red ball cap and wore a gold earring shaped like a musical note.

Persaud makes his living at these tables. He pulled a crisp \$100 bill from a roll in his pocket, greeted the dealer in his island brogue, and sat down. Norman immediately recognized Persaud. "This guy will give me action," Norman said to me under his breath. He sneered as he thought of separating this smiling man from his money.

Over the next half-hour, Persaud was calm, even jovial at times. He casually tossed his chips into the middle; twice he engaged in conversation with someone at another table and didn't miss a beat in the game, throwing his chips in for a call without even turning around.

Soon enough, the two men got into a hand together. Persaud bet. Norman raised; his bright tan was essentially winking at Persaud, begging for a call. Persaud obliged. When the first round of community cards came out, Persaud bet again, pushing the pot past \$50.

Persaud knew Norman, too, and he'd watched him play. Though this was a lower-stakes \$1-\$2 table, they had played at the \$5-\$10 tables, where pots often surpass \$1,000. So when Norman raised again — this time \$50 — Persaud sat back and thought. He looked at the bet. Then he counted the money in the pot. He looked at the cards on the table. If Norman had a deuce or a three or another pair in his hand, Persaud knew his pair of fours wouldn't hold up.

He folded, pushing his cards to the dealer — sending all the money he'd put in the pot to this tanned nemesis. Norman, looking smug, turned over a king and an eight. He had nothing. Persaud nodded. A scruffy-looking retiree called to Persaud: "He got you to drop, too, huh? I knew he didn't have it."

Persaud calmly leaned forward. "Listen," he told the old man, "you play by your rules and I'll play by my rules." His voice was as soft as the green felt on the table. "We'll see who comes out better."

He was confident that if he stuck to his system, he'd prevail.

A self-described "pro," Persaud plays cards to supplement his income as a cruise-ship musician. As Harold Caribbean, he has recorded eight albums over the past 20 years, but now he's what you might call an amateur professional poker player. He is one of dozens of men — and a few women — who go to the legal poker rooms

across South Florida every day, hoping to grind out the money to pay the bills. They go to places such as the Isle, Mardi Gras and Micosukee Resort & Gaming, to card rooms full of businessmen who cut out of the office early, young men wearing hooded sweatshirts and listening to iPods, foul-smelling degenerate addicts, and more retirees than a Sunday buffet.

These amateur pros feast on tourists with bloated pockets and yentas who can't quite see all the cards — and guys like Norman, who have the money and know-how but not the drive or desperation.

They show up from open to close as if the poker room were an office. They take their meals at their desk — the poker tables. Their friends are their co-workers: the other regulars, dealers, and floor supervisors. And the massage girls — the attractive young women who, for \$10, will rub your back and laugh at your stupid jokes as you play.

The goal is somewhere between carving out a semblance of a normal existence while playing a game for a living and making it big as a poker icon such as Daniel Negreanu or Phil Hellmuth.

The struggle between the patient Persaud and the tanned Norman continued for hours. The other players at the table could only watch as they went back and forth, each trying to study and trap the other.

By 11 p.m., Persaud was collecting the last of Norman's chips.

After seeing his fortune melt away, Norman quietly stood up with the empty gaze of a punch-drunk boxer. He went home, possibly to tan.

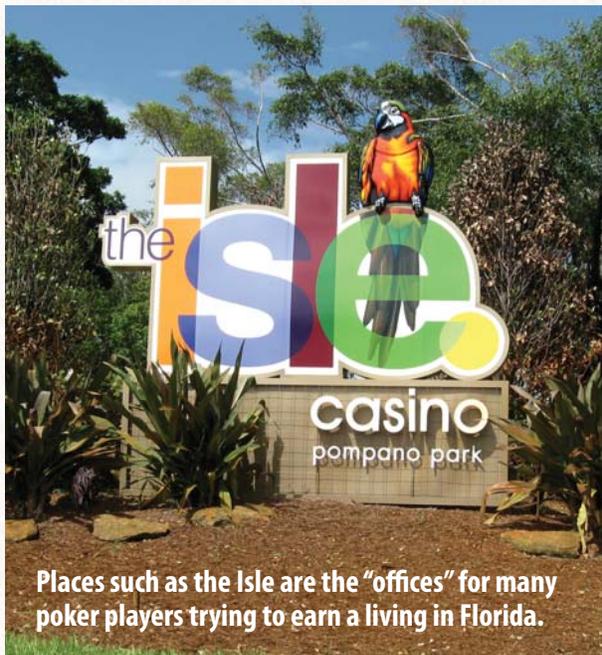
To his heckler, Persaud was curt. "You think I'm going to risk all that on a little pair of fours?" he said, referring to the hand he had lost earlier. "He can have all the small pots

he wants. I'll get him in the big ones. And look" — he pointed to the \$600 of chips in front of him — "here's all his money." He grinned. "This is what I do."

Everyone in the industry can chalk up at least some part of America's poker fever to the work of Chris MoneyMaker. And seriously, who could ask for a better name? The Tennessee accountant who began playing dollar games online and ended up winning the World Series of Poker Main Event in 2003 was a story too good to resist. This was the first live tournament he'd ever played. His small frame, soft build and Southern drawl told millions of Americans they, too, could bluff out a Vegas pro and win a few million dollars.

Then came the constant replays of that event. And the rise of online poker. And the barrage of poker commercials and poker books. Poker movies. Scripted poker TV shows. Poker cruises. Poker videogames.

Poker players became celebrities, drinking champagne with movie stars, appearing on television and receiving large winner's checks. And then thousands of poker enthusiasts across the nation debated "going pro" — as if they were Heisman Trophy candidates forced to choose between friends on the team and the



Places such as the Isle are the "offices" for many poker players trying to earn a living in Florida.

money in the NFL. Except, of course, with poker, turning pro doesn't mean you're signing a contract with a franchise. A thin sliver of players in Las Vegas and Los Angeles receives sponsorships from poker Web sites, but the only real requirement to turn pro is the willingness to gamble — and lose — large sums of money.

An industry centered on corporate-owned casinos such as Isle of Capri Casinos and Hard Rock International benefits from these individuals spending more time at the casino, where they eat, drink, get rubs, and tip, tip, tip.

Persaud learned the game when he was a lounge performer 10 years ago in Las Vegas. But only in the past year and a half has he decided he could play full-time. He goes to Pompano or the Hard Rock most weekdays and at least one weekend day — to cash in on the weekend tourists looking to get a few hours away from the family. He

told me he averages \$1,000 a week from cash games, tournament wins, and the lessons he offers in his Boca Raton home. He also told me he's never read a poker book, but that as long as he brings positive energy and sticks with his rules, he likes his chances against anyone in the world.

## The BrooklynBman

Brian G. was ahead of the poker boom. Now 33 years old, the Brooklyn native first played for cash at age 14. He told me he doesn't like to call himself a pro, but he spends 80 hours a week playing in live cash games, playing online (as "BrooklynBman"), or dealing at the Palm Beach Kennel Club in West Palm Beach, where he lives. His arms are tattooed, his head shaved, his face thoughtful.

I sat down next to him at a table in the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, where he plays about 25 hours a week. It was past 1 a.m. A poker room in the middle of the night is a symphony of coughing, clacking chips and loud sports television played over a sea of sunken eyes and crooked backs. Behind all the interaction is the mutual understanding that nobody in the room will be doing anything productive for society the next morning.

While we played, Brian took several smoke breaks, and each time he returned, he made his way around the room to see how his friends were doing. His mother taught him to play Uno and Yahtzee as a child, he says. Then gin rummy. Then a handful of poker games he can list off in his Brooklynese: "Omaha, acey-deucey, follow the queen." His father trained — and bet on — horses. By age 18, he had a fake ID so he could play poker and blackjack in Atlantic City. By 23, he had spent every dime of his bar mitzvah money and pawned every bit of jewelry he owned just to keep gambling.



**Brian G., or BrooklynBman, started playing poker in Atlantic City at the age of 18. He had a fake ID.**

One night he broke into his roommate's safe and stole \$1,500. When he came back from the three-day binge — where he lost it all — his stuff was gone and his key didn't work.

He says he's finished with betting on sports and playing blackjack. But not poker. Here he has some control of the outcome. And there isn't much in the world that feels like a good run of cards. He has seen people turn \$100 into \$20,000 in hours. Brian says he doesn't keep very good records, but he places his annual poker income at \$50,000 to \$70,000 before taxes.

While we spoke, a bearded old man at the table told us how close he was to the bad beat

earlier that day. "I was an ace away," the old man said. "I've been at the table when we hit once. We couldn't believe it. We split more than \$100,000. Dealer, let's get a bad beat."

The dealer had just told the table about her new baby grandson. She had pictures. When any of the men around the table folded his cards to her, she'd say, as if talking to the toddler, "Bye-bye now!"

Brian got into a hand with an older man. He was disappointed the guy had stayed in — and won — with a jack and a seven.

"What kind of asshole calls two raises with jack-seven?" he said to the other end of the table, showing he had a pair of aces.

"The winner, that's who," the winner said, stacking Brian's chips.

Brian unfolded another \$100 bill and slid it to the dealer. "Jackasses who stay with jack-seven ..." he trailed off.

When I asked him about the hand an hour later, he was still bitter. "You should call your story 'Fishes of the sea,'" he said. "Donkeys like that, they don't know the right way to play. I guess in the long run, you want guys like that, but then sometimes they get lucky and get you." He pursed his lips. "That's poker."

For most players, the compulsive nature of the game keeps them coming back to places like the Isle at Pompano Park, where the new poker room, with its wood paneling and high-tech tables that allow for faster play (and



more rakes), is the center of a \$140 million renovation project that includes a steak house, a New York-style deli, and a top-shelf bar.

In the early afternoon, players begin to arrive, a ceaseless stream of poker zombies traversing the vast, sweltering casino parking lots, called to the cool air inside. Once in the door, they grip their wallets inside their pockets and march past the slots and over to the escalator going to the second floor. From the first floor, they can already hear stacks of chips shuffling and clacking together in a rhythmic, soothing cadence.

The regulars, however, require more stimulation. Sitting in these cold, anonymous rooms for hours on end, they need something to root for. So after a pizza or a smoke break or a series of unlucky hands, a player might pat the table gently and call for the elusive bad beat. Most players have actually never seen one. It's the dream — the prayer — that gets the weary through a disappointing stretch.

On a recent Wednesday back in Pompano, Persaud had suffered a string of bad beats at the higher-stakes \$5-\$10 table, though none qualified as so bad it was good. After losing \$500 ("That's the most I'll buy in to a table for," he told me. "If it's not your night, it's just not your night."), he saw me at a \$1-\$2 table.

Across the table, a man sat next to his wife. He wore a poker T-shirt, an open button-down shirt with cards on it over the T-shirt, a poker-themed hat, and poker sunglasses. His gold wedding band had aces carved into it. As they played, the man criticized his wife's play.

"No way you should have called that," he said.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I don't know what I was thinking."

Persaud sat next to me, across from Mr. Poker.

"How's it going, Harold?" the dealer said.

"Not so good," Persaud said. "Not so good."

Most dealers also play, though they can't play where they deal. But on their days off,

they go to other card rooms — and tip the dealers especially well — so many of them seem like a happy little community. Except when they're losing.

A woman with a round belly walked by. "Hi, Gina" the dealers called out as she passed. Gina, the wife of one of the dealers, made eye contact with a dealer friend of her husband's and sat at the table. She was eight months pregnant.

"I'm just trying to get it out of my system," she joked to another dealer who'd come by to rub her belly and pay his respects.

"You mean the poker or the baby?" he said.

"If I hit the bad beat, it'll be both," she said.

"Awww, we'll have a great little poker player, won't we?" he said as he rubbed her stomach a few seconds more.

### You can call him T

Playing at a table nearby was Trevor Nesbit, a Jamaican-born man in his 20s with an underbite. He told me he plays to pay the bills, painting a picture of himself as the stoic grinder who can gut out the emotional roller coaster that poker provides. His family owns a coin-operated laundromat where he sometimes works when he isn't playing cards. He doesn't go to the laundromat much.

Trevor, or T as he's known in most card rooms, told me I should write about him. "I'm the best player in Florida," he said with an accent. "You follow me around and write about me and get me a sponsor." He said he could take anyone in the world one on one, that he can play all day, every day, and that he never makes a bad move. "Just when you think you might have me, I got you," he said, closing his hand quickly. "I was born with a straight flush in my hand."

He left Pompano around 10 p.m. He said he was off to Coconut Creek, where day and night cease to exist. He vowed he wouldn't leave that casino until he had \$2,000, enough to pay his bills for two months. "Come watch me get rich the easy way," he said as he left.

Back at my table, Persaud's bad luck continued. He went through half of his \$100 buy-in in just a few hands, losing once to Mr. Poker's wife. His sorrow was interrupted by the shrieks of a woman a few tables away. A swarm of players from other tables stood up and walked over to see about the commotion. The woman was throwing white chips — each worth a dollar — into the air, laughing. "We got it!" she announced in a shrill voice.

Indeed the cards were still on the table as the dealer waited for a floor supervisor. The woman had four queens and had just lost the hand to another player who showed four kings. As the woman danced around, though, Scott, the dealer, sat calmly and quietly. Something was wrong.

When the floor supervisor arrived, he confirmed the hand did not, in fact, qualify as a bad beat. "The eight didn't play," he told the gathering crowd. The woman collapsed into her chair, despondent.

The crowd dispersed. As close to the bad beat as most will ever get.

For some people, life as an amateur pro player is like one big bad beat without the six-figure payoff. In theory, all luck evens out and the players with more skill profit in the long run. But the numbers game is hard. The poker commercials that promise "yesterday's Average Joe might be tomorrow's millionaire" don't explain how difficult it is to beat the rake. For a player to be successful, he not only has to skim excess money from the whales rolling up with fat stacks of cash, but also pull in enough to cover the \$5-a-pot cut that goes to the house, the dollar to fund the bad-beat jackpots, the dollar or two tip to the dealer for each win, and the cost of food, which can range from disgusting fries to a gourmet spread at your table, such as is available at Isle of Capri.

Catherine, a Pompano dealer, estimates about one in 20 players in her card room tell themselves they're playing poker for a living. "Kids see this on TV and it doesn't look like gambling," she said. Poker fans are inundated with commercials that promote a luxury





lifestyle and programming built around the suspense of turning over cards with millions at stake. "Parents are telling their kids to go play poker over at a friend's house to keep them off the streets. What's really happening is an entire generation of boys is going broke very young."

She also thinks television teaches people to play the wrong way. ESPN takes four full days of poker and boils it down to 45 minutes of action, so viewers don't see that most of the time, professional poker is a tedious, unending sequence of receiving cards, deciding they're not good enough and folding. "I love the game as much as anyone," Catherine said. "It's fun. It's the reason there are hundreds of people here tonight. But some of these kids bring in all their money, trying to build up a bankroll. And who takes care of them when they have \$40,000 worth of credit-card debt?"

When I last saw him in Pompano, T told me he wouldn't leave Coconut Creek until he had enough to cover his expenses for two months. And sure enough, more than 24 hours later, T was at a \$5-\$10 table in the small, crowded card room on the second floor of the Seminole casino. He was wearing the same Aston Villa soccer jersey I'd last seen him in. Every ESPN channel played from one of the plasma screens on each wall. Some showed highlights from the Home Run Derby. Others showed poker.

I was at a table with Brian. He was telling me about the hand in which he lost \$40,000. "Losses are a part of this game, like everything else," he said, taking on a slightly wistful tone as he ruminated about the game. "If you love poker, you have to love losing. You have to love winning. You have to love donkeys. People bitch after a bad hand, but you can't complain when you agree to sit down and play with those other people at the table. And deep down, people know that. If poker players didn't love losing, they'd choose to get up and walk away."

When I looked up from our conversation,

T, who'd accumulated a hill of expensive chips when last I looked, was gone. Someone else was in his seat, surely still feeling the body heat he'd generated sitting there for more than a day.

It was nearly 4 a.m. when I headed out to the west parking lot. I spotted a white truck off by itself near the edge of the lot. It looked just like the one I'd seen T driving when he left Pompano a few nights earlier.

As I got closer, there was a glimmer in the window. Moisture, it seemed, had built up along the inside of the windshield and was reflecting the tall, yellow lights of the parking lot.

I was next to the driver's-side window of the GMC pickup before I could see inside. There, resting against the door handle, were two large, black Nike sneakers. They connected to jeans that bent around the steering wheel. Beyond that was an Aston Villa jersey twisted around the thin Jamaican man sleeping with his hands next to his cheek. In the quiet of the night, under the glow of the casino lights, he looked like a child taking a nap at daycare.

Now, at any given time outside a 24-hour casino, you might find a handful of people sleeping in their cars. Generally, they're too drunk to drive or so desperate to get back to the slots that they can't bear to drive away. Once in a while, a security guard told me, you'll find couples having sex right there in the open.

I walked around to the passenger side, where T's head was resting gently. As I looked down at his sleeping face, I thought about this life as a wannabe poker pro. Like so many Americans, part of me is envious that some people get to play a game for a living. They feel the everyday buzz of hitting an open-ended straight draw or bluffing an opponent off a big pot. But there aren't too many jobs where an employee can walk into the office, do everything exactly as the manuals recommend, and still walk away a few thousand dollars poorer. And as an adult,

there aren't many respectable occupations that lead to spending the night in a truck parked at the edge of a casino parking lot.

As these thoughts bounced around in my head, I saw movement. T's eyes opened. He looked up at me. I looked back, notebook in hand.

It was weird.

He opened the passenger door and swung his legs around, still groggy. "What are you doing, man?" he said.

"How often do you sleep out here?" I said, still jotting down notes.

"Man, don't go telling people I sleep in my car," he said.

"It's part of the price you pay as a local pro, right?"

"C'mon, man. Don't tell people I sleep in my car. How are people gonna respect me if they think I sleep in my car?"

A week or so after finding him in his truck, I saw T back at Pompano. He was at the \$2-\$5 table, popular among serious players because you don't have as many "idiots" as the cheaper table or as many ridiculous gamblers as the highest-stakes tables.

Two seats to his right was another regular, a man the dealers call Wild Bill. T and Bill got into a hand together. T bet big. Bill raised him. T pushed all of his chips into the center and stood up, daring the older man to call. Bill lifted his cards to get a better look. He sized up T's stack and then his own. He tossed his cards into the muck. T turned over his cards, revealing a complete bluff. He scooped the chips into his chest with both arms, grinning brightly.

The thing about poker is, no matter how bad the beat, a few seconds later, you get another hand. A new chance to get rich. A new chance to go broke. And it takes only one win to forget about all the losing.

Still beaming, T tossed the dealer a \$5 chip as a tip. Then he turned to the woman sitting next to him. "This guy over here," he said, pointing at Bill, who was within earshot, "this guy is a chump."



# Low Risk, High Reward

Some people want to play poker but are afraid to lose their shirt. That's where free poker leagues come in, and they are sprouting up all over the Sunshine State.

By Christopher Cosenza



Isn't it funny how things come full circle?

Sure, poker may have gotten its start in America on riverboats, but there's one image that personifies the history of the game: saloon poker. Old West tough guys with sand-encrusted faces tucked beneath cowboy hats staring down each other around a wobbly wooden table, one hand holding cards, the other squeezing a loaded six-shooter. It's as American as apple pie and botched elections.

Well, this may not be Deadwood or Tombstone, but Florida has been upholding the poker traditions of Wild Bill Hickok and Doc Holliday for years, albeit in a much more civilized manner.

Despite more than 30 legal poker rooms within driving distance from just about anywhere in Florida, bar poker leagues dot the Sunshine State from Pensacola to Key West. And these leagues are thriving.

So what's the allure?

"It's a chance to work on your game in a non-threatening environment while not putting your bankroll at risk," said Bryan Oulton, president and founder of All In Free Poker, which covers North Miami-Dade and all of Broward and Palm Beach counties. "It's also a great social outlet, as you get to meet and know people that have something in common with you."

That seems to be the sentiment with all of these bar-league owners and operators.

"It's the best way to learn how to read other players, when to bluff and basically how to become a better player without risking the potential loss of money," Jacksonville Poker Association owner Roger Miller said. Since 1991 Miller has owned an entertainment company that runs karaoke, music and trivia contests at bars and restaurants. But the JPA was the result of the "poker boom" and an article he read in the local paper about a league in Kansas. "It's also a great way to socialize and meet new friends. Since money isn't involved people are more relaxed."

Here's how it works: Find a league (see chart that accompanies this story), go to a host establishment on a night when it's running a tournament and sign up to play. The operators (or tournament directors) will explain the rules (such as you aren't allowed to have money on the table) and then they'll pass out chips and cards. All you are responsible for is dealing when it's your turn, and sometimes the leagues have dealers or when it gets down to a couple of tables the directors might deal for you. That's it.

But are these people really showing up every night basically playing for pride? There has to be more than just heading to a saloon and playing poker and making pals, right?

"We offer all kinds of prizes," said Shawn Dean, owner of Clea-water's Treasure Chest Poker. "(We give away) gift certificates to the bars, hats, T-shirts, DVD players, TVs, chip sets, tables, even a trip for two to Las Vegas every month, with hotel and airfare





Gary Rich recently won the JPA's \$10K WSOP seat.



All In Free Poker has special events such as playing at a Marlins game.



<<< Contestants watch as a player is all-in during a WPTAPL tournament in Orlando.

included.”

Treasure Chest Poker, which stretches from Spring Hill to Sarasota, gives away at least one World Series of Poker seat a year as well (see story page 32). And that seems to be the brass ring for most of these leagues, including one unique situation in the Panhandle.

“We’re the only bar in Florida that directly gets a seat to the World Series,” said Rick Perez, owner of Attitude’s Food and Spirits in Fort Walton Beach. Perez is a host for the Free Poker Network and he couldn’t be happier with free poker in his establishment.

“This next promotion I’m really excited about,” he said “I might even play if I can work it out.”

It’s an all-expenses-paid seven-day Caribbean cruise in April. But there’s also a \$10K High Roller package, which includes a trip to Las Vegas, spending money and \$5K in tournament entries (WSOP, Venetian Deep Stack Extravaganza, etc.) Not too bad considering all these leagues ask for in return is to support the host establishment by having a few drinks or a bite to eat that night, though it’s certainly not required.

Plus these leagues offer other special events, such as Jacksonville’s Ladies Only tournament for a chance to win a seat into the Ladies WSOP event. All In Free Poker gives players a chance to play in a real card room five times a year.

“Each of our finals is held at the Isle Casino in Pompano, with 300 players in the event,” Oulton said. “We hold a big registration party the Friday night before the multi-day final. We’ve even held a poker night at a Florida Marlins game.”

You may have heard of the Free Poker Network, which is based in Fargo, N.D. According to its administrator, Pete Bushey, FPN is the largest free poker league in the country with 275 locations (130 in Minnesota), but just the one location in Florida. With so many established leagues here, why would

FPN make the jump here?

“Well, we didn’t target Florida but we feel our product is competitively priced and we give away the most prizes by far,” Bushey said. “In the past year we’ve given away more than \$150,000 in prizes and sent 21 people to the World Series. Florida is a hot scene and some of the owners there may be getting burned out. We know the market is saturated, but we were looking to expand and we hope with what we’re giving away that we might pick up some more locations.”

Burned out? Not likely. These leagues are picking up host establishments daily. And to give you an idea of how many people are playing, the Orlando Chapter of the World Poker Tour/Amateur Poker League has more than 17,000 registered players. WPTAPL, which is a national organization that recently held its national championships in Orlando, also has chapters in the Tampa Bay area and South Florida. All of these leagues have members reaching into the thousands, including Jacksonville with more than 6,000, Treasure Chest (8,000) and All In Free Poker (6,100). And these are just the more established leagues. Dozens of other startups likely blanket the state as well.

So what’s it take to be a host? Different leagues have different arrangements.

“I bought all of my own stuff (from FPN),” Perez said, “and I have a woman who runs the tournaments. They charge \$65 a night for the paperwork.”

Most leagues supply the equipment for free, however, and charge on a per-table basis while others establish a flat rate per night. For bar owners it’s a minimal investment that

gives their patrons something more to do besides dancing or karaoke, plus it increases return business. Players have a reason to come back because, after all, these are leagues.

“We pride ourselves on keeping our results accurate and timely,” said Oulton of All In Free Poker, which has an affiliation with the Isle at Pompano Park. “On our Web page (allinfreepoker.com), there is a points page that’s updated daily.”

And these free poker leagues aren’t just about the players and making money for the bars.

“We donate a percentage of revenues to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southern Florida,” Oulton said, “and have raised \$15,000 to date, while granting three children’s wishes. We also have an American Cancer Society Relay for Life team in East Boca Raton, and raised \$8,800 for them last year.”

Treasure Chest Poker also gives back to the community.

“We run a number of charity tournaments for organizations such as Toys for Tots, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, police organizations and many other local charities,” said Dean, who bought TCP in October 2005.

But there has to be some negatives to free poker leagues, no? Alcohol is flowing liberally at these establishments, and, well, a lot of the players are just learning the game, which is why they’re there in the first place. That’s a lethal combination ... you remember all the trouble Wild Bill got into, don’t you?

“Very, very rarely are there ever any physical altercations,” Dean said. “Usually our hosts will step in and intervene before it comes to that. It’s a very controlled environment.”

The JPA’s Miller says his leagues have maybe one fight every six months, and Oulton’s had one incident in more than three years of tournaments at All In Free Poker.

“With more than 5,200 total nights of poker and more than 20,000 total tournaments, that’s not too bad,” Oulton said. “We don’t put

up with rude and bad behavior. If a player gets out of line with other players, dealers or the bar's staff, we ask them to not come back. Over our three years, we've had to ban a small handful of players (seven) and that helps to keep others in line. The undesirables realize we run our events like a casino, in that we enforce the rules, while having a relaxing and fun atmosphere, so they choose to play elsewhere."

Oulton says free poker leagues have to deal with those stereotypes all of the time.

"Some people, mainly those who haven't participated in it or have with a fly-by-night group, think free poker is nothing but a bunch of drunken players who push all-in with no one trying to play position or with any thought. Those same people think that all of the players will chase any two cards or any draw."



Elite Poker Challenge players show their loyalty to Florida's Poker Magazine.

And that's not the case. In most of these leagues about half of their players also play for real money in legal card rooms.

Take Max Reele of Fort Walton Beach, for instance. His testimony on BarPoker.com's home page says it all:

"BarPoker awarded me a World Series of Poker Main Event entry for winning a 2005-06 BarPoker tournament. During the 2006 WSOP

### Free poker leagues

Know of others? Email us at [editor@anteupmagazine.com](mailto:editor@anteupmagazine.com).

**Ace In The Hole Poker:** South Florida ([aceintheholepoker.net](http://aceintheholepoker.net))

**All In Free Poker:** South Florida ([allinfreepoker.com](http://allinfreepoker.com))

**All In Poker Series:** Orlando ([allinpokerseries.com](http://allinpokerseries.com))

**BarPoker.com:** Fort Walton Beach, Pensacola

**Bar Poker Pros:** South Florida ([barpokerpros.com](http://barpokerpros.com))

**Big Slick Hold'em Poker:** Central Florida ([bigslickholdempoker.com](http://bigslickholdempoker.com))

**Dynamite Poker Tour:** South Florida ([dynamitepokertour.com](http://dynamitepokertour.com))

**Elite Poker Challenge:** Tampa Bay/Orlando ([elitepokerchallenge.net](http://elitepokerchallenge.net))

**Fifth Street Poker Tour:** Central, North Florida ([fifthstreettour.com](http://fifthstreettour.com))

**Final Table Tour:** Statewide ([finaltabletour.com](http://finaltabletour.com))

**First Coast Poker:** Jacksonville ([firstcoastpoker.com](http://firstcoastpoker.com))

**Free Poker 4 Real:** South Florida ([freepoker4real.com](http://freepoker4real.com))

**Free Poker Network:** Fort Walton Beach ([freepokernetwork.com](http://freepokernetwork.com))

**Jacksonville Poker Association:** Jacksonville ([pokerjax.com](http://pokerjax.com))

**No Limit Pub Poker Tour:** Southeast Florida ([npptpoker.com](http://npptpoker.com))

**Pleasure Island Poker:** Northwest Florida ([pleasureislandpoker.com](http://pleasureislandpoker.com))

**Sports Bar Poker Tour:** South Florida ([sportsbarpokertour.com](http://sportsbarpokertour.com))

**Southeast Hold'em:** Jacksonville, Orlando ([southeastholdem.com](http://southeastholdem.com))

**Treasure Chest Poker:** Tampa Bay area ([treasurechestpoker.com](http://treasurechestpoker.com))

**World Poker Store/Bar Poker League:** Naples/Fort Myers area

**WPTAPL:** Orlando, Tampa Bay, S. Florida ([amateuropokerleague.com](http://amateuropokerleague.com))

Main Event I finished 59th in a field of more than 8,700 players. I took home almost \$125,000 in prize money."

Reele later parlayed that run into another cash at a \$5K NLHE event at the WSOP in 2007 and two more cashes at WSOP circuit events this year. Reele is proof some players just need a chance to play, and that's what's at the heart of free poker, a chance to play.

## Correct the single biggest mistake made by Texas Hold'em players

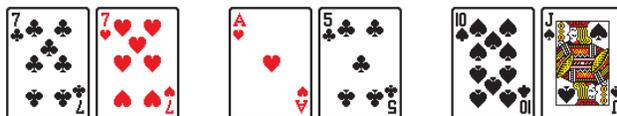


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# How I turned nothing into \$3,124 ... and a poker dream come true

By Rick Danford

Special to Ante Up

For me, free poker just turned lucrative. Winners of Treasure Chest Poker's annual championship always get sent to the World Series of Poker. This year the top three spots earned seats in an undercard WSOP event, and I was one of the fortunate ones. TCP, which stretches from Spring Hill to Palmetto, has allowed me to make a lot of great friends and its league has exposed various styles of play that helped me grow as a player.

The championship was held at Bilmar Station in Tampa with 120 of the best TCP players competing. The prize packages included airfare, accommodations and the \$1,500 buy-in. So I didn't have to win; I just had to finish in the top three. It all happened so fast: I won the trip on a Saturday and had to fly out the next week, eager to test my skills against a field of poker pros and some of the best amateurs in the world.

I flew into Las Vegas on June 29 and hightailed it over to the Rio to see if I'd have any issues registering for my event, which started at noon the next day. Though it was midnight, things were still wild at the Rio. It was like a poker player's Disney World. Poker signs and memorabilia were everywhere, as were stands for various poker-related products. ESPN was there and all of those larger-than-life poker pros I'm used to seeing on the TV were milling around the halls like regular people. I nearly bumped into Phil Hellmuth, one of the most accomplished poker players in the world. Just down the hall was Joe Hachem, the 2005 world champ. I was awestruck. Here were the people I had watched for years on television, even reading their books to get better as a player, and now I was about to play alongside them.

My No. 1 goal, of course, was to win the bracelet for Event 52, a \$1,500 no-limit hold'em tournament. But realistically I felt if I could just cash and walk away a winner my first time out, I'd be extremely happy. You see, once you cash at the WSOP you are a part of history. You get listed on its Web site and people can see your accomplishment. That was as important to me as any money I could win for my efforts.

I was expecting to have to battle through a field of 1,000, but to my surprise the event capped out at 2,700, with only the top 10 percent getting paid. Did I mention Antonio Esfandiari, Phil "The Unabomber" Laak, Chris Moneymaker, Florida's own Vanessa Rousso and Chris "Jesus" Ferguson would be competing along side me? Yeah, this wasn't going to be easy.

When I walked into the ballroom that first day, I was shocked to see nothing but poker tables and dealers as far as the eye could see. It was an amazing and horrifying feeling all at once. I was about to play against a class of players better than anyone I've played with at any stage of my poker life. But I tried not to focus on that; I decided to just focus on my opponents.

At noon the cards were in the air and five hands into a three-day event I faced my first major decision. I held pocket aces and the player to my left came over the top of my big raise postflop and shoved all-in. What do I do? Pocket aces are a great hand but I've lost more often than I've won with them, believe it or not. And I'm only minutes into a 12-hour day and hopefully a three-day tournament. Should I lay them down? I almost did. But after a few minutes of agony I made the call. He held pocket kings and didn't improve. Just like that I doubled-up and sent him to the rail. After he left everyone asked me if I knew who he was. I didn't. They said he was Chris Bjorin, a two-time WSOP bracelet-winner with more than \$3 million in WSOP earnings, including five cashes this year alone. I had to walk away from the table and gather myself after that one.

For the rest of the day I just tried to play premium cards, choosing my spots. As the end of Day 1 approached I found myself stealing a glance at the leaderboard to see how close I was to getting into the money. Once the 700-player mark was met I started to tighten up my play. I was laying down cards I would normally raise with, but people were dropping like flies and my goal was in sight.

When we got to 272 left it was announced we'd be playing "hand for hand" until the magical 270-person field was reached. That meant each table would play out one hand and then stop until all tables were finished with that hand.

It took 45 minutes but the inevitable happened. The 271st person was all-in and a huge contingent gathered around the table. When that person was eliminated it was euphoria. Everyone was cheering, high-fiving and calling loved ones. I made it! I was short-stacked, but I made it into the money. I'd be winning at

least my entry fee. In less than 10 minutes we were down to 235. Most of the short stacks tried to double up, which in hindsight is what I should've done, but I wanted to reach Day 2, which I did.

I arrived the next day early to see if I could find more of my poker heroes wandering the halls. I took pictures with Johnny Chan, Mike Caro, Dutch Boyd and Doyle Brunson, plus I chatted with Ferguson. We began playing at 2 p.m. and I knew I had to do something quick. My plan: Shove with the first two good cards I saw and hopefully double- or even triple-up.

It took five hands and half my chips to find ace-queen. A short-stacked player before me shoved and I followed suit. Then the big stack at the table came over the top. Not a great sign. The short stack had pocket fours and the big stack had ace-king suited. Ouch! The fours held up and the dealer called out, "Winner, Table 15!" I was escorted to the payout table and received my slip for 197th place.

I took my stub to the cashier and picked up a lovely check for \$3,124. Mission accomplished. I came, I saw, I was in awe and I cashed! I lived the dream. It didn't have the perfect ending (first place paid \$650,000) but it certainly was good enough for my first visit. Now I'm as eager as ever to get back next year to improve on my finish. Las Vegas better get ready.



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# ANTE UP Store

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A look at non-Texas Hold'em games — This month: DOUBLE FLOP HOLD'EM

# TWO BOARDS, ONE GOAL: SCOOP

Venture with me, if you dare, back to those dark, dark days before July 2007.

Those were the days when Florida poker players had just two choices for their parimutuel poker dollars — \$2 limit cash games and high-juice \$45 tournaments. That's a choice akin to deciding whether your poker mentor will be Ralph Furley or Radar.

But I found a beacon of light in those trying times. And that beacon's name was Double Flop Hold'em.

Double Flop plays just like limit hold'em, except there are two flops, two turns and two rivers. You can't mix the



SCOTT LONG

cards between boards to make your hand, but you can win on one board or both using any combination of cards from your hand and the individual boards. And back in those no-fold'em hold'em days, Double Flop was a reliable action game.

Double Flop, like many non-hold'em games, was crushed into oblivion with last year's law change, but if you find a game going at your local card room, here are a few nuggets to noodle over:

**SCOOP IT:** Like John Pinette in the buffet line, you want to scoop and

move. If your cards can't win on both boards, you need to be darn sure they'll win on one. I love suited connectors in this game, preferably Broadway cards. Even suited one-gappers. And I'll take them over pocket pairs — highly overrated since they'll struggle to take the whole pot.

**BET IT:** Like Vin Diesel on the streets of L.A., you want to be fast and furious. With two flops, your opponents will be giddy over their prospects to win something, anything. Bet, reraise, jam when you have a lock on one board and a strong draw on the other. Let everyone else figure out what board you're going for, because you know you're going for both.

**WATCH IT:** Like Robert DeNiro when you're meeting the parents, you want to keep your eyes open. Be mindful of how you opponents' cards match up on both boards. Your bottom-board

trips might look good if there's nothing but rags. But if those rags include 2-3-4-5, and there was action on the top board's ace, you're dead.

**TRUST IT:** Like George Michael in the '80s, you gotta have faith. Just as in most limit games, if you have anything at all, it's worth calling on the end. Never fold to a single bet, and think hard before folding to two bets (you'll likely have insane pot odds). While trusting a read is much less important on earlier streets, it can be powerfully profitable on the river.

## Where to play Double Flop

Derby Lane

Dania Jai-Alai

A look at a possible hand in Double Flop Hold'em. It's perfect for action in a home game, or ask your card room to spread it.



## OUR CARDS

We made the nuts on the top board and the second nuts on the bottom board. With the Broadway draw on top and the flush and straight draws on the bottom after the flops, we knew we were taking this hand to the end. By getting the flush on the bottom board on the turn we were able to pump the pot up with little fear and then the gutshot on the top board got there on the river to scoop a massive pot.

### FLOP #1



### TURN #1



### RIVER #1



### FLOP #2



### TURN #2



### RIVER #2



Solve the mystery.

# BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Welcome back mystery lovers. It's time once again to play along with a crucial hand and see what you would have done. In this month's column, we are in a large-field NLHE knockout tournament. If you've never played in a knockout format, it's the same as a normal NLHE tournament, only you get a small (10-20 percent of the buy-in) instant payout when you knock another player out of the tournament.



As we join our game, we are eight-handed and in the second hour of the tournament.

**Seat 1:** JoSpez (1,830)

**Seat 2:** mikehaze (4,495)

**Seat 3:** wiggler333 (4,980)

**Seat 4:** Mitaijangaphobe (9,110)

**Seat 5:** OnePointSixOne8 (840)

**Seat 7:** columbo (9,085)

**Seat 8:** EnrichFun (2,840)

**Seat 9:** 77ihatepoker77 (3,115)

We are in the small blind. After the first couple of folds, the MP

player limps. The cutoff limps and then the button gets cute and min-raises. You look down at red nines. ... dangerous like a woman dressed in red on a hot city night. Since we know we may be behind, we opt to play it for set value and maybe send some players home on the early train. We call the 120. The other players do the same and we see a five-handed flop. The pot is 600.

The flop: 9♠ Q♠ 5♠.

We flopped a set on an all-spade board. Could be more trouble than a visit from an old friend who's down on his luck.

I check, as does the big blind. I expect the MP and cutoff to check and the original raiser to shove. But things are never what they seem at the tables. The MP player shoves his 4,500 into the pot of 600. The cutoff folds, but the button is short-stacked and calls off his last grand. Now it's my turn. Is this a good place to get my money in or is it too hot out?

If it's too hot for your taste, walk away to page 38.

If you like your chances, try page 39.

— **Columbo has a weekly mystery on the Ante Up Poker Podcast at anteup magazine.com.**

# VOTE NOW!

## Ante Up Polls

Let your voice be heard. Go to anteupmagazine.com/forum and vote in these polls. Poker room managers will take notice.

### Which type of promotion should Florida rooms favor?

- Give me a bad beat
- I'm happy with just a high hand
- Nothing wrong with offering both
- Let me keep my dollar

### What is your opinion on tableside dining?

- Let them eat!
- Not at my table!

### Florida poker rooms are ...

- Too hot
- Too cold
- Just right

Check-raised at Club 52? Victim of a brutal suckout at Lucky's? We have the forum for you! Here's your chance to tell a bad-beat story or rave about your favorite poker room.

[anteupmagazine.com/forum](http://anteupmagazine.com/forum)

# YOUR GOAL? MAKE POKER EASIER

No Limit Texas Hold 'Em: "It takes a minute to learn and a lifetime to master." Mike Sexton used to tell us that at the beginning of each World Poker Tour episode as he explained the basics of the game that was new to many of us at the time. I'm one of those people who learned how to play in that first minute and am now on my lifetime journey to master it.



LEE CHILDS

Something I've learned about the game over the past several years is that with all of the complexities of the game, there are a lot of things that you can do to make the game easier for yourself and harder for your opponents.

In this column, I'll focus on a few things that should help beginning and intermediate players make the game a little easier so you make better decisions each time you sit at the felt.

## Put yourself in good situations

A lot of players don't constantly strive to put themselves in good situations. They actually get into difficult situations and in effect make things easier on opponents. Your preflop decision is so critical and is often made without really taking the time to think, "What am I about to get myself into here? Am I about to get involved in a hand with the right cards at the right time?" So many factors determine the correct answer, but it all begins with the action in front of you. Say you're in a tournament and you know nothing about the players. The under-the-gun player raises and it folds to you on the button with A♠J♠. What's your plan? What's the flop you're looking for if you call? What happens if the flop comes A-10-2 and you're getting a lot of resistance from your opponent? Are you going to feel comfortable playing a big pot in that spot? I know I wouldn't be, so I just try to avoid that situation.

The player raised in early position, representing a big hand. I know nothing else about the player, so I just have to treat him as a logical player and assign a range to him: medium-to-big pair or big ace. Of course he could have a wider range here, but knowing nothing else about him, I will just give him credit for a big hand and not get involved with a hand like A♠J♠ when it's likely going to put me in a spot to win a small pot or lose a really big one. I would much rather call with a small pair or suited connectors where I'm setting myself up to either hit the flop strong and be ready to let some chips fly, or I will miss and easily get away from it.

## Have a plan for your hand

Each time you decide to enter a pot, you must have a plan. If you have a big pair, you'll want to raise for value and limit the number of opponents. If you have a small pair or suited connectors, you want to see a flop in position against a player that you think has a big hand (so

you can bust him if you flop big) or in a large multiway pot. Whatever your plan for a hand is preflop, make sure you follow through with it postflop and recognize if the situation changes to your disadvantage.

A key factor is how many players are already in the hand. If there are more than two players, I don't want to be in there with big cards that often will make one-pair hands that might be hard for me to fold. If there are three or more players, I want to be in there with small pairs and suited connectors — those hands that either flop big or miss. And when I play these hands, I'm looking for two pair or better if I'm going to play a big pot.

You have to ask yourself each time you're about to enter a pot, "Does this hand play well in this position against this many opponents?" Sometimes your original plan for a hand changes as well. For example: You're second to act and after the UTG player folds, you look down at A♦K♦ and make a 3x-big-blind raise. The remaining eight players at the table call. What now? Well, you may be saying, "I don't know yet, what's the flop?" But if this is what you're thinking, you're missing a key component of how your poker mind needs to be working. Let's look at the situation each step of the way.

You have A♦K♦, a.k.a. Big Slick, in early position.

This is certainly a raising situation. You want to build a pot for value as you have a strong hand and you also want to limit the number of opponents you're playing against because it's not going to play well against multiple opponents. Big Slick is the type of hand that often will win with just a pair as you will have top pair, top kicker when you hit. Sure, you'll hit the improbable flush or straight flops every once in a while, but most of the time it's just going to be one pair if you hit it at all. The more players in the hand, the more likely it is that someone else is going to get a piece of the board, so you need to limit the number of players that see the flop.

We made our standard raise and eight players called. You should immediately recognize this is not a good situation anymore. You're out of position against most of the table and you're now in a huge multiway pot with a hand that does not play well against many opponents. Your plan for this hand must change because

your situation changed. You should already know you have to nail this flop hard to put any significant amount of chips in the pot.

## Play according to opponents' range

When opponents raise in middle or late position, you know the range of hands they'll open with is much wider and you can act accordingly. Let's say you're in the cutoff position (one seat right of the button) with 10♠10♣ and your opponent sitting two to your right raises. You and your opponent each have about 60 big blinds. What do you need to do to make this hand easier for yourself? As always, you have three options: fold, call or raise. Folding is pretty weak as you certainly may have the best hand and you have position on your opponent; so

Continued on next page



Good starting hand? Depends.

## WHAT EVERY "BODY" IS SAYING

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

## GENERALLY, MEN AND WOMEN HAVE SAME TELLS

*Editor's note: This is the first installment of Joe Navarro's letters column. Readers are invited to send him questions regarding nonverbal tells at the poker table at [editor@anteupmagazine.com](mailto:editor@anteupmagazine.com).*

**Do you find there are differences between male and female tells? Who is more likely to put off false tells? — dukegal24**

I don't think anyone knows who will put out more false tells, but consider this: Women universally read men better and we read our own ethnic group better than people of other cultures. I often hear players at the table saying they have trouble reading someone who's from Vietnam or that they have problems reading women. Each culture masks their behaviors differently and, of course, the more time we spend with people different than us the greater the chance we can read them.

As to the other question, men and women have some different behaviors, based on their bodies and testosterone. For instance, at the table men tend to be more territorial, boastful, aggressive, argumentative and engage in challenging eye gaze behavior. This is all testosterone driven. Men also tend to do behaviors that are more robust such as slapping themselves or grabbing at their necks really heavily. Women tend to be more demure. For example, when women are under stress or are not very confident (weak hand) they will touch the dimple at the bottom of their necks (suprasternal notch) or they will lightly touch



JOE NAVARRO

their necks. Men will grab at their neck and massage it more vigorously, when they feel weak or insecure. So there are differences, but actually not that many.

**I've read your books and listened to you on Ante Up (over and over). But I still believe my observational skills are weak. Are there tips someone can use to become a better observer at the tables so they're more readily able to pick up and process tells? — Dave M.**

Keep at it and don't give up. Reading people is a perishable skill; the more you do the better you'll become. I have one suggestion: Even if you can't read others at least make it so that they cannot read you. Conceal, don't reveal. Notice how Phil Hellmuth has adopted this philosophy, making himself more difficult to read by hiding his face behind his hands. This prevents others from seeing your mouth and your fingers making you difficult to read. This alone can save your bankroll.

**How do you know when someone is giving a false tell? — Dead Money**

True tells occur in an immediate response to some activity or cue. When someone looks at their hole cards and immediately (less than a fraction of a second) steeple their hands, chances are they have a good hand. The longer time between an activity (flop) and a behavior or tell, the less accurate it will be. Bluff behaviors tend to take longer as players decide on what behaviors they want to falsely display.

**— Former FBI counterintelligence officer Joe Navarro specialized in behavioral analysis for 25 years. He is a star lecturer with the WSOP Academy and has penned *Read 'Em and Reap*, which you can find on Amazon.com.**

## ACUMEN POKER

LEE CHILDS • Learn to play the Acumen Poker way.

let's rule that out right away. Calling is an option for a lot of players as you have a strong hand and you're likely to take a flop in position. Calling may induce the button and blinds to come along building a bigger pot for you in the event that you hit your set.

However, we know we're about 8.5 to 1 or 12 percent to hit our set and it's extremely likely overcards are going to come on the flop. If we don't take the lead in the hand, we're going to put ourselves in a guessing situation on the flop if we don't hit our set. I prefer a raise in this spot for a few reasons.

Since our opponent's range is pretty wide and our hand is certainly stronger than many of the hands he would raise with, I'd like to raise and force him to play a larger pot out of position against me. Second, the raise will limit the number of players that see the flop, also making it easier for me to make correct decisions. Third, by taking the lead in the hand, it's more likely that my opponent is going to check the flop to me (which he will miss about 70 percent of the time) and I'll be able to take down the pot on the flop with a bet even if I miss my set.

Lastly, this gives me more information about my opponent's hand. If he were to four-bet me preflop, I can be pretty confident he has a monster hand and I'm racing with him at best. This would allow me to get away from the hand rather cheaply preflop.

Keep in mind that a lot of pros will want to just call preflop and play small ball with a hand like two 10s here. This is a fine play as well, but we're focusing on how to make the game easier for beginning and intermediate players.

I really think the benefits of raising in a spot like this will help less-experienced players overcome the edge you'll lose once you see a flop without the lead in the hand.

## Playing in position

If you simply focus on playing more pots in position and fewer pots out of position, you'll quickly see more positive results. When you play out of position, you just don't have enough information to play profitably. Most of the time no one hits a flop and the player out of position will check to the player in position who bets and wins the pot. It happens over and over and over.

Playing poker out of position puts you at a disadvantage you can't overcome. You should be extremely selective of the hands you play out of the blinds and if you do choose to play them, you should be more apt to raise preflop so you can take the lead in the hand postflop against fewer opponents. If you like to just call to see flops from the blinds then I guarantee you're more often than not just bleeding away those chips. Focus on playing smaller pots or no pots when you're out of position and play your larger pots when you're in position and you'll see the impact it has on your results.

## Conclusion

Playing poker is fun and even more fun when you win. By proactively taking steps to put yourself in good situations to make decisions easier for yourself, you will increase your chances for success. Take the time to think about the situations you're getting involved in and recognize when situations change in your favor or against you. Have a plan for every hand you play and use some of these tips to make the game easier for yourself and more difficult for your opponents.

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](http://www.acumenpoker.net).**



Ante Up, the longest running poker show on the Internet, is still cranking out the best podcast on the planet. Tune in Fridays at [anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com) or subscribe on iTunes for free. And just in case you haven't heard our latest shows (how dare you!) here are some recent highlights.

**AUG. 22: WSOP DEALER OF THE YEAR JENA PHILLIPS**

"Men The Master, I had an incident in the main event with him. I apparently was dealing too fast, which I guess I'm not supposed to do. So I got told by him I needed to slow down. And the way he said it I took it as an insult because he said a few other things with it. At that time I decided to spar back and said 'Well, I'm not going to make a mistake, Sir' and he said 'Oh, you're so perfect!'"

— Jena Phillips, explaining Men "The Master" Nguyen's sparkling personality.



**SEPT. 5: HAND OF THE WEEK**



**Scott:** "People still send Hoyle (who's been dead since 1769) letters, asking for help. ... And of course he's not responding because he's ... dead."

**Chris:** "I sent him an email."

**Scott:** "I tried to become his friend on MySpace, too. ..."

**Chris:** "He wouldn't accept you, right? He thinks you're a porn ad. ... 'cause your name is Scott Long."

**AUG. 29: POKER MARKETED FOR WOMEN**

**Scott:** "Casinos now are starting to market poker to women. Apparently they've always marketed toward women, particularly roulette and slots and things like that. But now they're finding it's smart to market to women, not just to get women to play, but because it attracts ... men to play when there's more women at the table."

**Chris:** "All I'm hoping is there's no Thunder From Down Under showing up at any of these rooms I'm in, because I can't handle that."

Columbo Turns the Page, continued from Page 35

Columbo folds. You watch mesmerized as the BB shoves his stack, creating a three-way traffic jam. You find yourself staring at  $K\heartsuit Q\heartsuit$ ,  $KK$ , and  $A\spadesuit 3\spadesuit$ . You were ahead of the big pair and two spade draws. You wait with morbid curiosity to see if the board pairs. When it doesn't, you watch as the  $A\spadesuit 3\spadesuit$  hits an ace on the river and rakes a pot that could have been yours. But just because you folded the winning hand doesn't mean you should have sat on the frying pan.

## LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

## Being a female player in a male-dominated game.

I'll be honest. I started taking poker seriously because of a guy. He played constantly and rather than just watch him, I took a seat at the table. Like all beginners, I wasn't very good. It was pretty obvious to everyone at the table when I made my hand, and I used very little strategy, sticking just to my cards when I played. A table full of testosterone was quite intimidating for a woman, but it served as motivation to get better. The more I played, the more I loved the game and the more seriously I started to take it. I read everything I could, joined online training sites and scoured the large poker forums. These days, I love sitting at the table, often as the only woman at the table, and sometimes even in the entire tournament.

I got my first taste of Florida poker back before the limits changed. I was home from North Carolina visiting my family for Christmas and found my way to Club 52 at the Melbourne Greyhound Park for one of its nightly tournaments. I kept to myself at first, but quickly opened up and became more social, some might say even flirty, at the table. Something definitely was working that night as I took second for my first-ever live cash in a tournament. Years have passed since then, and I now call Sarasota my home, but I can be found regularly playing at the rooms in Tampa. The limits have changed, but some things remain the same. There are still very few women playing in Florida. Why is this?

Historically, poker rooms were often for men only. They were a place for men to seek respite from family life; a place where they could kick back with the guys, smoke a cigar, drink some beer, and play some cards. It's no wonder it can be intimidating for a woman, especially sitting in for the first time.

But why have so few women been successful? Some argue it's simply a matter of men being the more aggressive sex. They're raised to be competitive and tough, while women are taught to be docile. Others point to the correlation between math skills and poker success. Traditionally, men score better on math tests, while women are better on verbal tests. As such, in a game governed by aggression and mathematics, women must obtain traits not normally associated with their gender. In essence, they must be less feminine. But I'd argue women can minimize the importance of these masculine traits and use their femininity to their advantage.

Let's be honest: Many men at the table act differently when an at-

tractive woman sits at the table. They tend to become friendlier, some even flirting with the woman. Ladies, it's our responsibility to use this behavioral change to our favor. Capitalize on their friendliness. Men acting this way are easily distracted and more likely to make a mistake or be susceptible to a bluff. Not all men will fall for this. The key, I've found, is to figure out right away what kind of players you're up against, which is true about any poker situation. Reading your table and how the players view you will be the key to winning their chips.

As a woman you'll find yourself up against three types of men:

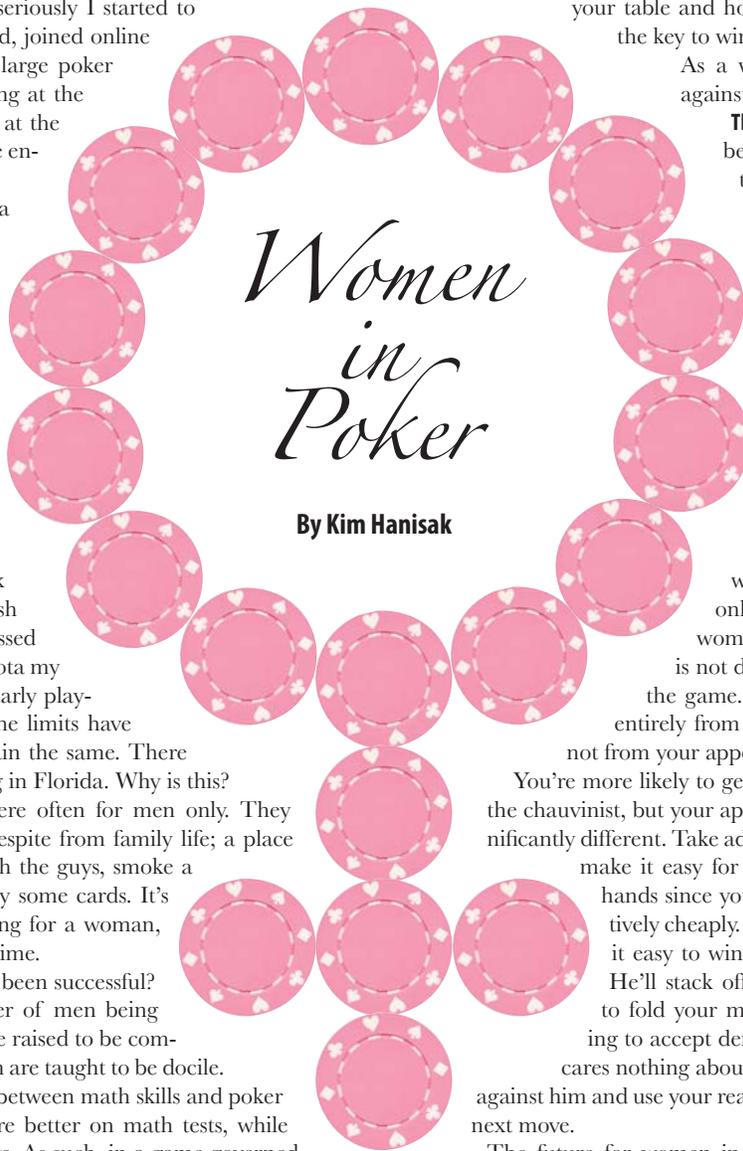
**The gentleman:** These men try to befriend you. They don't want to take your chips, unless absolutely necessary. They'll often check the hand down to keep things friendly.

**The chauvinist:** These men will try to beat you at all costs because they can't stand the thought of losing to a woman. They'll often play weaker hands against you and try to get you to fold by continually applying pressure and scare tactics.

**The rock:** Your feminine whiles will not work on him. He sees you only as a poker player and not as a woman. He focuses on his game and is not distracted by the social aspect of the game. His acquires your table image entirely from your actions in each hand and not from your appearance.

You're more likely to get chips from the gentleman and the chauvinist, but your approach with each should be significantly different. Take advantage of the gentleman. He'll make it easy for you to play less-than-premium hands since you'll get to see all five cards relatively cheaply. The chauvinist, however, makes it easy to win chips when you have the nuts. He'll stack off against you trying to get you to fold your monster hand, never once wanting to accept defeat. Steer clear of the rock. He cares nothing about you being a woman. Play solid against him and use your reads of his play to determine your next move.

The future for women in poker looks bright. More and more are playing recreationally. This past year saw women take down some of the biggest tournaments on the circuit. It's only a matter of time before a woman makes it back to the final table of the main event at the WSOP. I can't wait to see that day. I hope it comes sooner than most men think.



## Women in Poker

By Kim Hanisak

Colombo Turns the Page, continued from Page 35

You shove your chips into the pot almost hoping the BB does the same. He does. It may be a four-way collision, but it's you against three mugs that don't know what's what, see? They show  $K\heartsuit Q\heartsuit$ ,  $KK$ , and  $A\heartsuit 3\heartsuit$ . You're currently ahead of the big pair

and two spade draws. But it's a lead like the ledge of a skyscraper. Nothing to do but hold on and see if the board pairs. An ace and an eight come, both non-spades. With a smirk, you rake in 7K chips, and odds you just could not resist.

# Shana's Curse

**C**an we please find hosts for poker shows who understand the game and not hosts who have been in a Hooters calendar? I want them to know poker, not what shade of lipstick goes best with red patent leather pumps. The most painful moments of a poker television show should be watching your favorite player lose to a one-outer on the river, not the stilted interview that follows.

So, how did we get here? It all started when Shana Hiatt left *World Poker Tour* in 2005. She certainly was no Larry King when it came to one-on-one interviews, and she obviously was hired initially because she was eye candy for the predominantly male audience. But at the end of the day her genuine personality was the reason she stuck around for three seasons. Name one ensuing host who has lasted more than one season on the WPT or *Poker After Dark*. You can't. Hell, now the hosts can't even make it through one season. Layla Kayleigh was off the WPT more than she was on and now she's gone. They brought in Kimberly Lansing for "sideline" reporting (which, roughly translated, means Layla can't interview so we need to save face and bring someone who can) and rumor has it she might replace Layla next year on FSN.

Why are these women dropping like flies? Each of them was hired because of their looks first and interviewing skills second, and their physical appearances haven't changed. Maybe there's some behind-the-scenes reason we're not privy to, such as Steven Lipscomb and Mori Eskandani don't want viewers getting too attached to them. Or maybe the guys want to keep it fresh.

What's my theory? At this stage of the "poker boom" fans want to learn from the players. They want to know more about their thoughts and feelings at the table. Initially we watched televised poker because it was something different and we were amazed at what was going on at the table. Yet producers had to be concerned if they didn't put something pretty up on the screen that men might get bored and change the channel. Enter Shana.

But you know what? The poker audience has evolved, and it wants more out of its hosts. That's the real reason no one has lasted beyond one season. It's the Curse of Shana Hiatt. The executives keep trying to find that "Shana spark," almost like an unhappily married couple going on a second honeymoon. But it will never happen. And this curse is far-reaching, following Shana to another network. She was successful on *PAD* for two seasons, but then she became pregnant. Her replacement, Mariana Pereyra, couldn't make it past

Season 3. Up next on the *Poker After Dark* clock: Leeann Tweeden. Tick ... tick ... tick.

When Courtney Friel was hired to replace Shana on the WPT, we interviewed her on our Internet poker show. She thumbed her nose at Shana, saying she was only good for asking one question and then bobbing her head. Funny thing is Courtney, the supposed journalist, did the same thing. She wouldn't know a follow-up question if one jumped up and bit her on the butt. Why? Because she didn't understand poker! It was impossible for her to follow-up on what they were telling her because she didn't know what the answers meant. And neither has anyone who has followed her. Sabina Gadecki? She was just a kid and everyone got bored of her. Layla? Please. Looks and personality only take you so far if you don't comprehend the material.

How did producers try to combat this? By making sure hosts had long enough hair to cover the earpiece into which backstage experts feed them questions. But this plan continues to fail. Take a question Tweeden once asked Chris "Jesus" Ferguson, for instance. The former Hooters Girl, who now hosts NBC's *PAD* and *National Heads-Up Championship*, was interviewing Ferguson and said "Do you use the semibluff often?" I just had to laugh while she nodded as if she understood Ferguson's answer. Here's a woman who has no idea what a pip is much less what David Sklansky once coined as a semibluff. I appreciate these "models" trying to ask poignant questions (even if they're being provided for them), but wouldn't it just be easier to get someone who actually knows what to ask without being prompted?

Friel told us Clonie Gowen and Isabelle Mercier had interviewed for the WPT job in 2005, but obviously they weren't hired. Maybe these poker shows should reconsider hiring a poker player after all, or at the very least hire someone who is qualified to talk poker. Guys may not drool over them, but at least they'd be right for the job.

**Around the tube:** Bingo, bango Bollywood? Well, not quite. But the WPT is now airing on Zee Sports, India's first private sports channel. Zee Sports will broadcast 19 two-hour WPT Season IV episodes. ... The Golden Nugget in Las Vegas will host Season 5 of *PAD*, which will be taped Oct. 26-Nov. 5 and start airing Dec. 29 on NBC. ... The 2008 World Series of Poker Europe, which ends Oct. 2, will broadcast on ESPN for the first time, though a schedule has yet to be released.

ESPN plans to air eight hours of coverage. "Harrah's has obviously put effort into making a lot of improvements to the event," 11-time WSOP champion Phil Hellmuth said. "I would like to make history by being the first American to win a bracelet in Europe." Stay tuned.

— Email me at [chris@anteupmagazine.com](mailto:chris@anteupmagazine.com) and tell me if you believe in the Curse of Shana Hiatt.



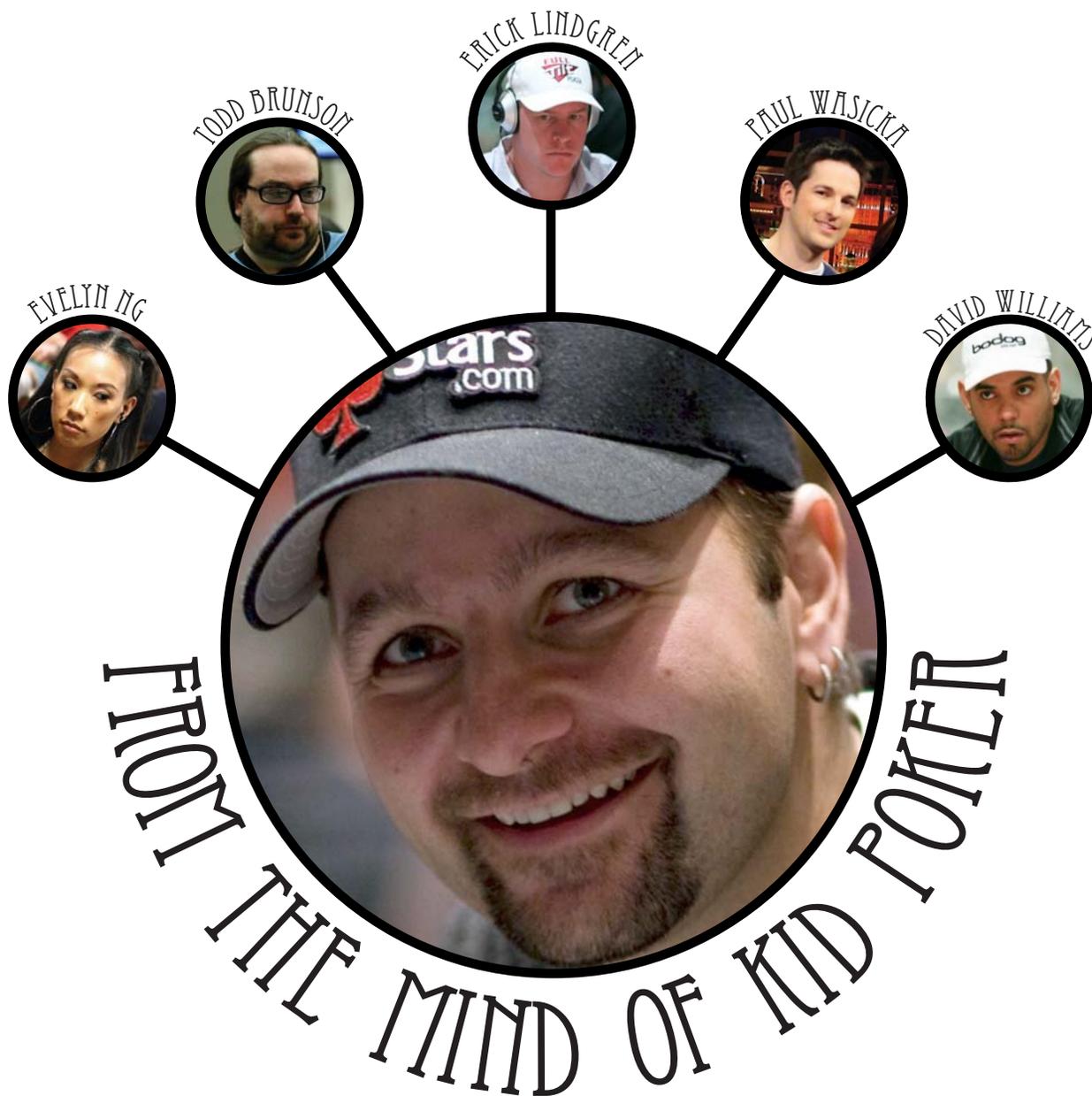
CHRIS COSENZA



Give Isabelle Mercier a shot at hosting one of these shows. *Poker Stars*

WPT photo





Daniel Negreanu's much-anticipated *Power Hold'em Strategy* gets by with a little help from his friends.

**By Christopher Cosenza**  
Ante Up Staff Writer

If you judged a book by its cover then you'd swear Daniel Negreanu's long-awaited contribution to poker education should be titled *SuperSystem 3*. It's published by the same company as the *SuperSystem* series (Cardoza Publishing), the binding and back cover use the same familiar yellow font, and the book's format is very similar in that a handful of well-known pros contribute chapters on their "specialty."

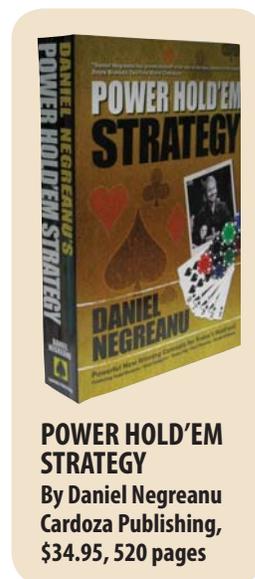
But this is not *SuperSystem 3*; it's *Power Hold'em Strategy*. Negreanu chose close friends Evelyn Ng, Todd Brunson, Erick Lindgren, Paul Wasicka and David Williams to help him cover the "undercard" topics, similarly how Doyle Brunson chose such greats as Mike Caro, Chip Reese and Bobby Baldwin to help him write the original *SuperSystem*. When the elder Brunson updated his series with *SuperSystem 2*, he enlisted his son, Todd, and Negreanu to write chapters on Stud/8 and Deuce-to-7 Triple Draw, respectively.

It was the sheer brilliance of those two chapters that had the poker world eagerly anticipating Negreanu's release.

But first, Ng, a very popular pro who grew up with Negreanu in Toronto and was his poker student, was given the task of writing the introduction to tournament poker chapter titled "Big Bet No Limit Hold'em." She simply describes the system Negreanu had taught her when she first broke into poker many years ago. It's a very basic strategy for combating pro players and minimizing difficult decisions, a method ironically reflected later in Negreanu's advanced "small ball" chapter.

If you missed our interview with Evy go to [anteupmagazine.com](http://anteupmagazine.com) and download last month's *Ante Up* for free. She discusses what it was like writing for *Power Hold'em Strategy* and how influential Negreanu has been.

I have to admit, Todd Brunson's Stud/8 chapter in *SS2* changed my poker life, turning me from a no-limit



**POWER HOLD'EM STRATEGY**  
By Daniel Negreanu  
Cardoza Publishing,  
\$34.95, 520 pages

hold'em specialist into someone who calls Stud/8 every chance he gets in the home game. But his contribution to *Power Hold'em* fell far short, and it's likely not his fault. Brunson, a brilliant player, makes reference to the publisher limiting his space, handcuffing his ability to really expound upon his concepts for winning at high-limit cash games. But then the publisher wastes 10 pages in this chapter with trap-hand card illustrations depicting what had been done succinctly with a tight one-page chart.

Brunson also says he was asked to write a little about the famed "Big Game" where the world's top players gather at the Bellagio in Las Vegas to play for enormous stakes. But we learn nothing from it and any fan of poker already knows about that game. I would've much rather had those combined 12 pages given to Brunson so he could share more of his knowledge. There were content problems as well. The title of the chapter is "Winning at High Limit Cash Games" but then he writes edicts such as "Don't bluff calling stations," and "Never bluff an idiot!" If you're playing in high-stakes cash games and picking up this book for tips and education, these certainly aren't things you'd need to learn.

My favorite line from this chapter: "If you play full time (2,000 hours a year) you will only face set under set once or twice a year, so don't even worry about it." Clearly this is meant for live play, and coincidentally is how Negreanu was knocked out of this year's World Series of Poker Main Event very early on his Day 1.

But Brunson's chapter easily could apply to all limits, and the most valuable lesson you could extract might come from his thoughts on buy-ins and table image. One final note on Brunson: He now considers A-Q to be a premium hand, which essentially contradicts his father's *SuperSystem*. It's a testament to the "evolution" of today's poker game vs. the game of the '70s.

Lindgren, who started as an Internet pro before making a name for himself on the live pro circuit, naturally contributes the "Playing No Limit Hold'em Online" chapter. His best writing comes in his "Short Stack Buy-In Theories and Strategies" section. The hit-and-run strategy (where basically you buy in light, wait for a raise and caller and then shove with a decent starting hand) is touted as a solid strategy. But he breaks down different ways to make the short stack work (plus how to combat it) and it's enlightening.

One of the problems with having different people contribute chapters for one book is having them step on each other's toes. Such is the case here with Wasicka's chapter on playing short-handed cash games online. A good editor would pick up on this and remove the repetition, which actually occurs sometimes in *three* chapters. But then again, repetition is good for learning so perhaps these weren't oversights after all.

Wasicka's note-taking portion is most helpful. His method involves witnessing an action made by a player and then making a note that uses questions marks, such as "Likes to squeeze?" Only after he sees this player make this same move will he remove the question marks to confirm this is a clear pattern worth exploiting.

He also describes the different personas at a short-stacked table (the bludgeoner, the crafty one and the meta-gamer) but he really isn't allowed to get into great detail on how to emulate these styles, which again may be a victim of space. But with a 520-page opus you'd like to think he'd be given more room to expound on such important aspects. As a poker society we have progressed beyond the need to have Texas Hold'em rules explained to us on TV; maybe publishers can learn from their TV colleagues and remove the very basic 30-page glossary of terms from this manual (and every other poker book), which would then give writers plenty of room to teach.

One final helpful tidbit from Wasicka: When choosing a seat online, if two adjacent seats are open always choose the left one. Since you won't know how the player who fills the other seat will play you'd like him on your right so you act last, and accordingly.

Williams, the young aggressive pro who finished second in the 2004 WSOP Main Event, pens the "Mixing It Up" chapter. He uses quite a few "real life" examples to get his point across of how mixing up your tactics can pay off, but his best advice comes in "Check-Raise Bluffs."

He says check-raising with nothing and winning may give you an unrivaled high, but he advocates a different strategy: leading out with a big bet postflop into a predictable player. This method gets you the same information as a check-raise for less money. "That's one of the reasons I don't like check-raising a player on the flop," he writes. "You risk double your chips – your opponent's bet plus your raised amount – to find out if he's serious about playing with you. If you get reraised or if he moves in on you, you've lost a lot of chips."

But obviously the jewel of this book is Negreanu's chapter, which explains his theory of "small ball" poker. What is meant by small ball? Think of it as small-bet poker with minimal risk. This chapter, and most of the book for that matter, is very conversational and easy to read. It's not bogged down with math, pot odds, starting hand requirements or charts like other poker "bibles."

At the core of his "theory" are two very easy-to-grasp concepts: smallish bets and position. He advocates always raising 2.5 times the big blind when entering the pot, and nearly always doing it on the button or in late position. His chapter is dominated with tournament talk, but the concepts could translate to cash games if applied correctly. Very little time is spent on playing out of position, borne from the idea he wants you to make very few difficult decisions.

If you follow Negreanu's philosophy (calling them theories makes it sound complicated and that would defeat the purpose of his conversational writing) you will be in position most of the time while risking minimal chips.

One caveat: Negreanu admits you will lose a lot more pots this way to aggressive players, but your involvement in so many more pots will more than make up for the ones you lose. Also, he advises you to really know how your opponents play and he puts a lot of stock in your ability to assign hands to a particular action.

Negreanu, who is a member of the PokerStars roster, best sums up whether this style of play is for you: "It's important to understand that by playing small ball, you will take more lumps and lose more pots than you will when you are playing big-bet poker. That's the bad news. The good news is that if you are emotionally stable enough to handle some rough patches, playing this way will allow you to stick around long in the tournaments, as well as ensure that your entire stack will not be at risk very often."

There are a few other golden nuggets as well, including "Position is power. When we have position we need to use it. But when we don't have it, we need to respect it." You may think it's obvious, but in the context of what he's selling, it becomes quite clear this is an axiom you need to remember at all times.

Negreanu recognizes some of his plays may seem weak to the casual poker player, but they're so rooted in advanced play that their subtlety, which escapes the average rounder, will save you a lot of chips. And his examples cement his ideas quite perfectly.

His chapter alone, which is nearly half the book, is worth the \$35 price tag. Now, if we could only convince Cardoza to give Todd Brunson more space ...

"Position is power. When we have position we need to use it. But when we don't have it, we need to respect it."

— Daniel Negreanu, from his book *Power Hold'em Strategy*

## Q&amp;A

## WITH JENNICIDE

Take a good look at Jennifer "Jennicide" Leigh. Go ahead, we'll wait. Now admit it: The first thing that popped into your head was "She's such a nerd." OK, so that wasn't the *first* thing, but if you *had* thought that you'd be correct. She



recently celebrated her 25th birthday in style by signing with IronDuke.com. She chatted with *Ante Up's* Chris Cosenza about her new deal, *World of Warcraft*, her spread in *Playboy*, her fondness for Will Ferrell, and H.O.R.S.E., of course.

**I** read somewhere you actually came up with the nickname Jennicide at the age of 12 because it sounded dark and mysterious. Why did a 12-year-old girl from Delaware feel the need to be dark and mysterious?

Well I used to be involved in a lot of things in the computer industry. ... Back then when IRC (an old-school chat network) was really hot I started getting into the computer-hacking scene a little bit. You know, back then it wasn't even malicious, I was just learning about different infrastructures. ... It just came up, the name Jennicide. Everybody had different aliases.

**Do you still consider yourself a gamer nerd?**

Oh my gosh! (laughs) I still have times where I still play *World of Warcraft*. I will be competing most likely in another type of tournament, which is the MLG, which is the major leagues of pro gaming, for *World of Warcraft* (laughs). ... I'm such a nerd; it's really funny.

**Speaking of being a nerd, last month I interviewed Evelyn Ng, a fellow gamer nerd and good friend of yours. We chatted about how you had mentioned she'd be perfect for posing for Playboy. She said although she wouldn't dismiss the idea, it's not something she ever dreamed of. Was posing for Playboy a dream of yours and did the FHM photo shoot influence that?**

No, actually none of that really influenced it. It wasn't something I even had considered before. I think the *FHM* shoot was totally like the worst thing I'd have ever dreamed of in my entire life. It was an open shoot so therefore basically it was in the middle of the casino with people around. They didn't enclose it and it wasn't very pro-

fessional. I just was not happy with the situation at all. But the *Playboy* shoot was very, very professional. It was closed; it was done over like three or four days. I actually had been speaking with Evelyn about it after the pictures came out in *Playboy* and she said, "I think I'd do it (just to have the pictures)." I think she'd be perfect for it. ... We used to travel a bit together a few years ago and she's just a very down-to-earth person, too, and also very nerdy. (laughs)

**Were you at all nervous during the Playboy shoot and is it something you'd do again in the future?**

I wasn't really that nervous 'cause it's so comfortable. I even had my mother on the shoot with me. You know, I'd probably do it again. I wouldn't do *Hustler*, *Penthouse* or anything like that but definitely a *Playboy*-style type thing.

**Is it still true your favorite movie is *A Night at the Roxbury*?**

Yes! (laughs)  
**Is it because you're such a bad dancer?**

No, well, I am a bad dancer but, I still do it anyway; it doesn't matter. But I absolutely just love Will Ferrell. Any Will Ferrell movie I'm kinda all about. I love movies in general. But a good comedy like that usually gets my heart right away.

**OK, let's talk poker. You recently signed with IronDuke.com, a poker site that welcomes U.S. players. What's IronDuke.com like?**

IronDuke is one of the better sites on the Merge Network. Basically you can have deposits and transactions with U.S. players. On top of that they have so many games available. ... (laughs) even badugi. There's not many sites that actually have badugi. It's a site

that's still growing; it's not a site that has any controversies. They are very, very strict about users and accounts and structures. They have such a great management team ... and really, really good software, I really enjoy playing there, too.

**What will you be doing for the site aside from just playing? Will there be special tournaments?**

There are special tournaments. Once a week they have a bounty tournament. Last week I lasted maybe five minutes. (laughs) You get a special ticket on my head for an entry fee into a tournament (every Thursday night). ... Plus we're going to be implementing a chat room where ... I'll be able to answer questions (a few hours a week) for people who want to chat about a few things and if they want to flirt that's fine, too. I'm into that.

**Will you be exclusive to IronDuke or will you still play at the other sites?**

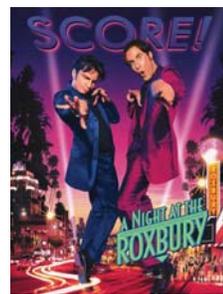
IronDuke is certainly my home.

**On your MySpace page you say you're an ex-law school wannabe.**

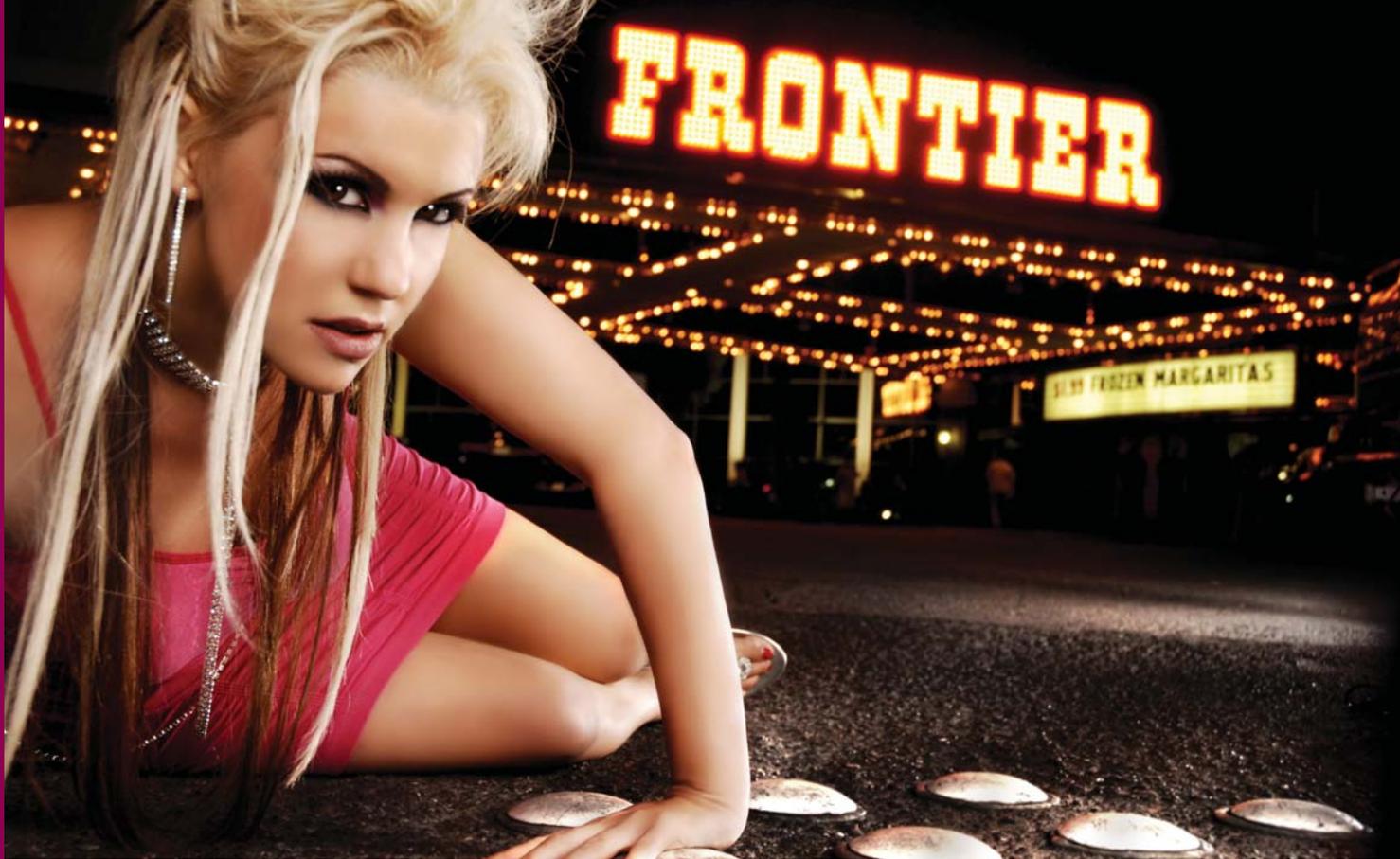
Yep! (laughs)

**So, given your new relationship with an online poker site and the Unlawful Internet Enforcement Gambling Act, I'd like to know what you think of the act, and where you think the American online poker stands now?**

(The act) has been a stick in poker players' sides. It hasn't really deterred them from playing online as you can see that. It's just one of those things where it just makes it a little more difficult to get money on and to withdrawal money as well. I think (Congress is) going to see that it's really nothing that has prevented people from playing online ... hopefully it will get overturned ... we'll see.







I'm just very hopeful about the situation. It was like a nightmare when I first heard about it. I was like "Oh my gosh!" Back in 2006 I was just sweating. I'm really hoping that the legislation, if anything, turns around and at least writes new legislation that accepts that poker is a game of skill and people are still going to play whether or not there is legislation against it.

**You were one of the players on *Poker Royale: Battle of the Ages* on GSN a few years ago. How did you get invited to that and what did you learn from the experience?**

At that point they wanted to validate that I was a female. (laughs) Hearing about an online female poker player was very rare back then. ... So I had to go on a video conference. Once they confirmed I was a female they sent me out to San Diego and we filmed. The funniest thing is all of the under-28s (from the show) are now in their 30s and I'm still under 28. (laughs). I did better than all of the younger players. I ended with Miami John Cernuto heads-up and I ended up beating him. And then Dan Harrington as well. So it was a pretty good show. It was fun.

**You mentioned your popularity online led to you being on this show, and you've had some very respectable cashes live (two WPT cashes) as well. So given that a lot of your experience is online, how do you explain being so popular worldwide?**

I think that it's just the female thing. It could also just be the youth and the female thing. And plus the fact that I always make

myself available to the fans. ... I always email them.

**What's your aversion to split pot games?**

Actually I'm starting to get a little bit better. (laughs) That was when I was first started playing really. I just hated getting quartered and getting scooped. I was always going for highs. I was never looking at the lows. So now I'm actually able to implement it. I've been playing a little bit of H.O.R.S.E. H.O.R.S.E. is, of course, eight-or-better. It's not so much of a deterrent for me. It's good now.

**Is there (a non-hold'em game) you prefer?**

I actually love razz. People laugh at me but I like razz.

**Do you have any poker advice?**

A lot of people expect to be able to win. You need to actually have a bankroll to win. Because a lot of people really don't manage themselves right. I've gotten that way myself. You need to look at your bankroll as a pool to play poker. ... don't treat it like gambling. If you are going to treat it like gambling then you're probably not going to win in the long run. You have to take your time and pace yourself, just like anything in life actually.

**OK, let's play word association. I'll mention someone famous and you tell me what first comes to mind:**

**Jennifer Harman:** Charitable.

**Hugh Hefner:** A Player (laughs)

**Johnny Depp:** Wow! That's just a "wow" right there.

**Phil Ivey:** Intimidating.

**Dutch Boyd:** He's goofy I guess.

**Will Ferrell:** Hysterical.

**Doyle Brunson:** Legendary.

**Angelina Jolie:** Gorgeous.

**Is she still your favorite female celebrity?**

Yes.

**Is it because of her humanitarian efforts?**

You can say that I guess. No, actually it's just she's always been so beautiful. ... she is one of the most beautiful women in the world I think.

**Do you consider yourself a role model for young girls?**

I get a lot of that actually. I get a lot of younger girls saying they look up to me for my efforts. I mean, I don't know how a card player can be role model for younger girls, but I guess if they're interested in the gambling industry then I could be, but I don't look at it like that. If anything it's more flattering when somebody says they look up to me. So it's really nice.

**What are your goals as a poker player and as a person?**

My goals eventually one day are to have a successful career and then settling down and having a family, which is the weirdest thing to say, but I guess I'm getting older, I'm 25 now. ... That's something I always said I'd never have, like a husband and children and that stuff, but now I'm getting a little bit more sentimental about it.



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