

# POKER FACE

Saturday, May 28, 2011

THE IRISH RACING POST

...exclusively for the Irish poker player



Young online wizard Jono Crute speaks about his short but distinguished career to date

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John O'Shea reveals his monster bets in this month's unmissable diary

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## BRACELET HUNTERS

Poker Face profiles the Irish superstars leading the goldrush to Vegas

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"LOTS OF HANDS, LOTS OF ACTION."

Gus Hansen

"THE GREATEST INNOVATION SINCE POKER STARTED ON THE INTERNET."

Chris Ferguson

"IT'S NON-STOP ACTION, AND I CAN'T STOP PLAYING."

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POKER NEWS



# Seiver and Seidel scoop top Bellagio honours

By Ken Powell

OHIO poker phenomenon Scott Seiver took down the prestigious \$25,000 World Poker Tour Championship in the Bellagio, Las Vegas, last weekend, winning \$1.6 million.

Seiver, 26, came into the final table in a near tie for the chip lead and was never really in danger of being eliminated.

Once three-handed play began, he steamrolled his competition, eventually knocking out Player of the Year frontrunner Galen Hall in third place. By the time heads-up play began, Seiver had jumped out to a 3-1 chip lead which he never relinquished.

After making a straight on the river, Seiver got Farzad Bonyadi to commit

the rest of his stack with two pair and sealed his victory. For the win, Seiver banked a total of \$1,618,344, bringing his career earnings to \$4.5 million.

Bonyadi fought for nearly two hours during heads up play, but he ultimately couldn't overcome Seiver's advantage.

Bonyadi was put to the test holding two pair and eventually called all in for his tournament life, only to see Seiver turn over a rivered straight. The two-time WSOP bracelet winner banked his first ever seven-figure score, earning \$1,061,900 for 2nd place. He now has \$3.7 million in career earnings.

Eight-time WSOP bracelet winner Eric Seidel claimed the \$100,000 Super High Roller title at the Bellagio, beating Erick Lindgren into second place.

On the final hand Seidel, 51, limped

from the small blind, and Erick Lindgren, 34, checked his option in the big blind. The flop fell Ac4c2c, and Lindgren checked. Seidel bet 125,000, and Lindgren shoved for about a million. Seidel called with Ah5h for a pair of aces, and was ahead of the flush and straight draw of his opponent with the Jc3h. The turn and river bricked for Lindgren, and Seidel scooped the pot for the win.

Seidel earned \$1,092,000 for the victory, while Lindgren took home \$700,500 for his runner-up finish. The win was Seidel's fourth of the year, and ninth final table. In 2011 alone he has won \$5.4 million. His career tournament earnings stand at nearly \$16 million.



Scott Seiver

FINAL TABLE PAYOUTS

WPT Championship Main Event

- 1. Scott Seiver \$1,618,344
- 2. Farzad Bonyadi \$1,061,900
- 3. Galen Hall \$589,355
- 4. Roger Teska \$371,665
- 5. Tony Gargano \$278,749
- 6. Justin Young \$225,654

\$100k Super High Roller

- 1. Erik Seidel \$1,092,780
- 2. Erick Lindgren \$700,500
- 3. Daniel Negreanu \$448,320
- 4. Vivek Rajkumar \$336,240
- 5. Justin Bonomo \$224,160



Erik Seidel

# PokerView introduces webcam cash games

By Ken Powell

ONLINE poker players can finally see who they're raising and stare down rivals who go all-in.

By introducing webcam tables earlier this month, PokerView.com is bidding to remove the drawback of not being able to look at your opponents.

On PokerView, players face off on tables where they are represented by webcams. All tables are monitored to ensure players remain visible throughout games.

For players who don't have access to a web camera, PokerView offers one for free, along with a 100 per cent matching bonus of up to \$600 to all

depositing players.

For players who don't yet feel up to playing face-to-face with their opponents, standard avatar tables are also available.

PokerView has been developing its webcam technology in the hope of satisfying a growing population of online poker enthusiasts who are seeking a more stimulating and social gaming experience.

PokerView.com marketing chief Michael Dunsberg said: "Players are knocking on our doors eager to experience the ability to play live poker online. Beating the game is just so much more exciting when you have faces to go with the players."

# South American scoops at EPT Grand Final

By Ken Powell

VENEZUELAN pro Ivan Freitez became the first South American EPT champion when he took down the Grand Final main event in Madrid earlier this month. He took home €1.5 million, while German heads-up cash game specialist Torsten Brinkmann had to settle for the €900,000 runner-up prize.

When Hungary's Tamas Lendvai busted in third place, Freitez held a commanding 16million to 4.5million chip lead over Brinkmann and the two soon went to war.

The final hand came when the South American opened from the button with 10d-9d and called after Brinkman moved all-in with AdKc.

The board came 9s5h2s6d8c, giving Freitez top pair and the EPT Grand Final title.

The Venezuelan commented: "After some poor results, at last I've made it and won a big tournament. I met a lot of aggressive players along the way but I adapted my game and stayed calm and it paid off."

FINAL TABLE PAYOUTS

- 1. Ivan Freitez (Venezuela) €1,500,000
- 2. Torsten Brinkmann (Germany) €900,000
- 3. Tamas Lendvai (Hungary) €550,000
- 4. Andrey Danilyuk (Russia) €400,000
- 5. Juan Maceiras (Spain) €315,000
- 6. Eugene Yanayt (United States) €250,000
- 7. Alex Gomes (Brazil) €185,000
- 8. Andrew Li (United States) €130,000

# Kings of Leon rock the Emporium before Slane

ROCK legends Kings of Leon warmed up for Slane Castle by playing POKER in Dublin's Sporting Emporium casino early yesterday morning.

A source said: "There were two of them, the singer Caleb and some other long-haired dude.

"They arrived in around 11pm on Thursday night and bought in for €500 each. They drank a few pints and played for a few hours.

"They were basically clueless about

poker. One guy knew the rules, the other one didn't.

"The were nice lads and seemed to enjoy the banter with the locals.

"They were very polite and left quietly after one of the regulars cleaned them out."

Another Sporting Emporium member added: "Caleb was quiet but seemed to enjoy splashing the chips around. The other guy was much more talkative and up for the craic.

"They had a driver or minder-type dude in the background as well, but he didn't get involved in the action on the baize."

The rockers told players at the table their wives were jetting in to Dublin for tonight's show at Slane Castle.

Kings of Leon headline the extravaganza at the Co Meath venue, supported by Elbow, Thin Lizzy, White Lies, Mona and The Whigs.

# Mercier crowned inaugural Champion of Champions

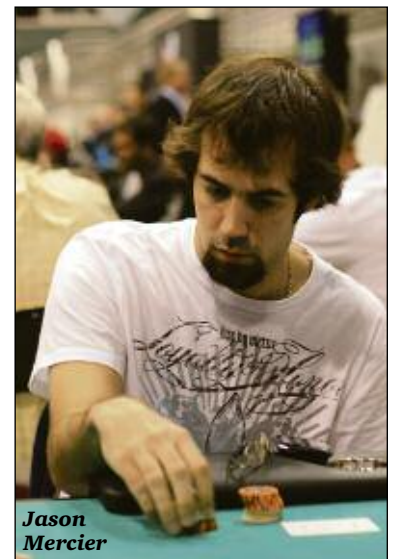
By Ken Powell

AMERICAN pro Jason Mercier pummelled a stacked field to claim the first ever Champion of Champions tournament title at the EPT Grand Final. The tournament featured every winner in the history of the tour, and took place at the Gran Casino in Madrid.

Fifty EPT champs took part in the event, a freeroll which offered a €100,000 prize fund. Prizes were awarded in EPT buy-ins for the upcoming tournament season.

Mercier, from Florida, took down the title by surviving a late-night heads up battle with fellow US pro Galen Hall. For first place, Mercier received €50,000 in buy-ins for EPT Season 8. Hall took €25,000 in entries for second place. Four players in total made the money, with Max Lykov, from Russia, taking €15,000 in buy-ins for 3rd place, and English pro Vicky Coren winning €10,000 worth of EPT entries.

Mercier admitted: "I'm extremely



Jason Mercier

happy. It was a tough tournament. Really good players came out and, when we got deep, I did think at one point that I was going to bubble it."

## TWEETS OF THE MONTH

May 14: WPT 25k starts in a few hours. Feeling great and stars seemed aligned for a victory

May 21: Won the WPT for 1.6 million! Thank you so much everyone for the support. I love you!



Scott Seiver

# POKER NEWS



## IT'S OFFICIAL: Ireland has the best poker pros in Europe

By Ken Powell

IRELAND'S professional poker players are officially the best in Europe. Dublin potter John O'Shea collecting the Country of the Year trophy at the glitzy European Poker Tour Awards bash in the world-famous Pacha nightclub in Madrid earlier this month.

The prestigious gongs, presented by English hotshot Liv Boeree and Aussie former WSOP champ Joe Hachem, were based on points accrued from all 13 EPT Season 7 main events and all side events with \$1,000-plus buy-ins.

Irish players cashed in 23% of tournaments they entered (16 cashes from 70 entrants), ahead of Spain and Israel, both on 19%.

Galway grinder Tom Finneran led the way for Ireland, with a hat-trick of payouts – in Barcelona, Deauville and the Bahamas.

Wily Cork veteran Bobby Willis scored on the double, bringing home loot from EPTs in London and Vilamoura.

Another 11 Irishmen scored one cash each in Season 7 ranking tournaments – John O'Shea, Alan McIntyre, Fintan Gavin, Marty Smyth, Femi Fakinle, Jude Ainsworth, Dermot Blain, Jim Fennell, Rory Rees-Brennan and Denis Murphy.

They'll all be invited to compete in a



Tom Finneran

special 13-runner €10,000 FREEROLL tourney later in the year, most likely during EPT London.

Portuguese businessman Fernando Brito received the EPT Player of the Year award for his consistent performances throughout Season 7.

And John O'Shea was just pipped at the post by Dario Alioto of Italy for the EPT Omaha Player of the Year award.

O'Shea finished second in that category, while also taking a creditable fourth place in the EPT Mixed Games listings.

## Boylepoker.com unveils revamped IPO 2011

By Ken Powell

BOYLEPOKER.COM yesterday announced the return of Europe's biggest live no-limit Texas Hold'em poker tournament, the 2011 International Poker Open.

The €200+€25 buy-in main event will take place at Dublin's Regency Hotel from October 21-23, with a revamped structure.

Players can choose to start the main event on either the Friday or Saturday (Day 1A or 1B) with each player starting with 15,000 chips.

The clock will run at 40-minute levels on Day 1s, while on Sunday's Day 2, the levels will change every hour.

This year, just like the WSOP main event, when play reaches the final table, the clock will stop and the remaining competitors will return five weeks later on November 26 to play it out. The final table will be streamed exclusively on Boylepoker.com

The Co Louth-based firm will also add €20,000 to the prize pool for players who take part in its 'Extra Cash' promotion this summer. Players who earn a total of 350 VIP points at Boylepoker.com in two single months between June to September can earn an extra €1,000 at the IPO.

Boylepoker boss Ciaran Corbett said: "As usual this year, the Boylepoker.com IPO will be bigger

and better than ever. We have increased the starting stack to 15,000 and adjusted the clock to ensure there is more play at the business end of the event. Also, the delayed final table will add a new and exciting twist to the event."

Television's 'Voice of Poker' Jesse May believes the IPO is what poker is all about.

He said: "You get to be a part of the main event for the price of a satellite. Last year I had so much fun, I booked my ticket for next year well before Level 2!"

"It's such a great weekend, the only thing as much fun as still being in the tournament, is being at the bar the day after you get knocked out! A great weekend, full of great poker, great people, and plenty of stories at the bar."

To celebrate the launch of this year's IPO, Boylepoker.com is hosting a €5+ €0.50 buy-in freezeout next Thursday at 8pm with two tickets to the IPO 2011 added to the prize pool.



Jesse May, left, at last year's IPO

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# Razavi silences home crowd in Cork

By David Jennings

BRITISH-based poker professional Sam Razavi spoiled the home party at the UKIPT in Cork as he overturned a heads-up deficit against Dubliner David O'Connor in a pulsating duel to claim the €71,000 winner's purse.

Six-hundred and one players from 28 different countries entered the stalls for the prestigious event but just 11 remained in contention entering the final day of action, with Razavi in pole position by holding a significant chip lead.

With Chris Dowling bowing out in seventh and talented youngster Jamie Flynn exiting in third place, it was left to O'Connor to fly the flag for Ireland and by all accounts he was pretty fortunate to reach that stage.

Just before the heads-up play commenced, with a five-million pot on the line and German student Martin Mulsow slightly covering O'Connor, Mulsow tabled pocket aces while O'Connor revealed A-K.

The board fell a safe J-9-6 for the German raider, but a King on the turn meant he had to dodge two outs. One of duly arrived on the river with



another King crippling the German.

O'Connor finished Mulsow off soon after when the German moved all in with a dominated ace.

O'Connor made it to the heads-up out in front against his British leprechaun hat-wearing nemesis. Razavi soon turned things around however and a classic battle then catapulted him into the lead with J-9 against O'Connor's 10-8 on a 9-5-2-J board.

The river was of no use to O'Connor as a King arrived.

The ultimately decisive hand was not

far off and came with Razavi holding A-7 versus O'Connor's K-6.

In what was a remarkable performance from O'Connor given that it was his first live event, he left with €41,200 for finishing runner-up while Razavi walked away with the trophy, the title, and €71,000 in his back pocket.

Razavi afterwards paid tribute to his opponents who pushed him all the way. He said: "It was a really tough table. I was glad a couple of people got badly collared as they were causing me real problems."

Dubliner Dowling performed with credit throughout the tournament and netted a tidy €8,900 for finishing seventh but was left reeling in the 'what might have been'.

He said: "I guess I was happy enough to finish seventh as it was a huge field but I went into the final day fourth in chips and I looked around at who was left and thought to myself that it was a pretty soft field with the exception of the winner."

"I got lucky on day one with a few hands but I actually played really well on the second day and managed to build-up a fairly big stack. I was

confident that I'd get into the final three but things just didn't go my way on the final day".

Three big hands went against Dowling at the business end of the tournament. The second of those saw him run into pocket rockets with his pair of queens and it was Razavi who sent him packing after that.

Dowling was delighted to sneak a peek at a pair of tens but when the British poker pro revealed two Jacks, his race had been ran.

Vegas could be next on Dowling's agenda, although he is not a certain starter yet. "I might head over for the Main Event but I'm not sure yet. I have young kids so it might not be possible but maybe I might make it over for the big one."

"The WSOP is the one event where you could finish maybe 25th and clear your mortgage but it's not the be all and end all either as there are plenty of tournaments on these shores too. I think someone said to me that there are 40 poker festivals in Ireland this year so I might just play in a few of those instead."

"Whether I travel or not, there'll be a strong Irish team in Vegas."

## UKIPT CORK PAYOUTS

1: Sam Razavi	€71,000
2: David O'Connor	€41,200
3: Martin Mulsow	€25,200
4: Jamie Flynn	€18,500
5: Allen McCauley	€14,800
6: Adam Jaguscik	€11,300
7: Chris Dowling	€8,900
8: Peter Burnett	€6,900
9: Vincent O'Connor	€4,915
10: Phil Baker	€3,550
11: Marc Gaudlitz	€3,550
12: Christopher Knights	€2,900
13: Andrew Sweeney	€2,900
14: Sam MacDonald	€2,350
15: Artis Gritans	€2,350
16: Amby Travers	€1,850
17: Daniel Whelan	€1,850
18: John Power	€1,850
19: Dara Fitzgerald	€1,850
20: Ali Duncan	€1,850

# Rafter takes lions share in four-way JP Masters chop

By Ken Powell

SLIGO gambler Tony Rafter was crowned JP Poker Masters champion at Bewley's Hotel in Ballsbridge, Dublin, earlier this month after a four-way deal.

Shortly before the last four at the final table agreed business, the Yeats County man had 2.1 million of the 5.3 million chips in play.

But Rafter, known as 'The Pirate', settled for just €14,875 and the title, even though first prize originally would have paid €19,398.

Dublin restaurateur Eoin Olin got the best of the chop, taking €13,330 for his 1.5 million chips, while John Gallagher and Con Collins took €11,400 and €11,000 respectively.

Most of those present felt Louie's Bistro owner Olin would have gone on to win it if they'd played it out.

Sixth-place finisher Jason Tompkins said: "I was a little surprised that a deal was done, but to be fair it was three very long days."

"I really thought Eoin would go on to finish the boys off."



Irish Eyes pro Dara O'Kearney, who finished seventh, agreed. He commented: "Had it been played out, my money would have been on Eoin Olin to win."

The main event attracted 173 runners and Ireland's top players were full of praise for organiser JP McCann, saying it was the best-run tourney they had played all year, with the best structure.

Cork pumper Anthony O'Brien was crowned JP Poker Masters omaha champion, while Simon Keating, Karl Griffin, Shane Sils, Mark Connolly and Dara O'Kearney took down the other side events.

## €560 JP Poker Masters, 173 Players

1: Tony Rafter	€19,398
2: Eoin Olin	€13,494
3: John Gallagher	€10,121
4: Con Collins	€7,590
5: Alan McIntyre	€5,060
6: Jason Tompkins	€4,006
7: Dara O'Kearney	€3,163
8: James Waldron	€2,530
9: Stephen Belleli	€1,898
10: Dimitri Pembroke	€1,729
11: Marc McDonnell	€1,729
12: Ciaran McGivern	€1,729
13: Noel Clarke	€1,518
14: Richard Hinds	€1,518
15: Daniel Diviney	€1,518
16: Albert Kenny	€1,265
17: Cathal Shine	€1,265
18: Dave Coyle	€1,265
19: Hazel Henone	€886
20: John McClaran	€886

## RESULTS TABLE

### €150 6-Max, 96 Players

1: Simon Keating	€3,243
2: Steve Wilson	€2,182
3: Sam Baneham	€1,651
4: Michael Mason	€1,120
5: Gareth Daily	€826
6: Terry Kavanagh	€649
7: Tommy Nathan	€413
8: Vivion Hayden	€413
9: Ross Johnson	€413
10: Brian Warren	€295
11: Adam Bolger	€295
12: Steve Fynes	€295

### €300 Side Event, 73 Players

1: Karl Griffin	€4,933
2: Mark Kenny	€3,232
3: Reg Rowan	€2,467
4: Kevin Fitzpatrick	€1,659
5: Sarah Smith	€1,233
6: Mick McCloskey	€936
7: Pdraig O'Neill	€765
8: Michelle Gavigan	€680
9: Bobby Murphy	€595
10: Willie O'Hora	€510

### €80 Turbo, 20 Players

1: Shane Sils	€696
2: Steven O'Neil	€398
3: Colm Higgins	€232

### €250 PLO, 15 Players

1: Anthony O'Brien	€1,876
2: Kevin Fitzpatrick	€939

### €150 NLH, 53 Players

1: Mark Connolly	€2,129
2: Murtagh Ward	€1,365
3: Rory Brown	€927
4: Richie Woodhouse	€651
5: Stephen Doyle	€488
6: Mark Grey	€358
7: P.J. Breen	€293

### €80 Turbo, 17 Players

1: Dara O'Kearney	€744
2: Breffny Earley	€383

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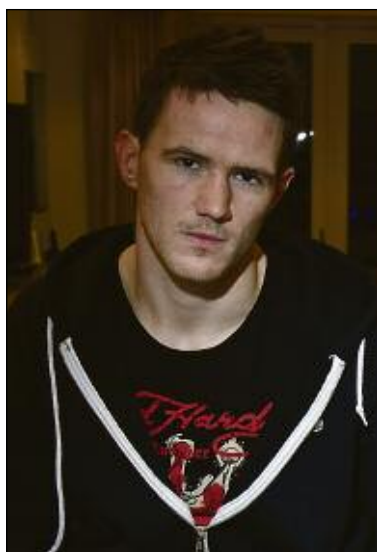
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BET IN THE KNOW

# Irish intruders hoping to bust Vegas



THE WORLD SERIES OF POKER, the game grandest spectacle kicks off at the Rio in Las Vegas next Tuesday and there are plenty of Irish invaders jetting into Sin City hoping to follow in the footsteps of Donnacha O'Dea, Noel Furlong, Ciaran O'Leary and Marty Smyth by getting their hands on a WSOP bracelet. **David Jennings** picks out five home-grown talents who have the potential to add their names to that elite list this summer



## RORY REES BRENNAN

REES BRENNAN caught the bug from his close friend Eoghan O'Dea a few years back and has rapidly become one of Ireland's most feared international competitors.

The Killiney native has taken little time to become a top professional and despite having a Masters in Business Studies from UCD, his main income is earned on the green felt and online.

It was back in 2009 when Rees Brennan first shot to prominence as he scooped the €160,000 first prize for winning the Irish Poker Championships. His preferred game is PLO at stakes of \$10-20 but he usually includes a tournament in his schedule about once a week.

He has made a good start to 2011 and could have pocketed a chunky cheque in France earlier in the year had luck not deserted him.

"I travelled to Deauville for their EPT and came 55th. To be honest I was unlucky not to do a lot better as I got knocked out on a hand that if I won, it would have left me fifth in chips," he said.

But his eyes are firmly fixed on Vegas and he has his schedule worked out too.

"I'm going to go to Vegas for a month and I'm going to play in all the Omaha tournaments I can and the Main Event and maybe three other hold 'em events so I'll be playing plenty."

It would be no surprise to see Rees Brennan arrived back from Vegas with a chunkier suitcase than he arrived with.



## MARC McDONNELL

**IN HIS SHORT but distinguished card career to date, McDonnell has proven himself to be a quality player, so much so that top pro Rob Taylor put his name forward as 'the one to watch' for the rest of 2011.**

**All eyes will be on the Dublin potter at the Rio as he attempts to translate his excellent home form onto the world stage. A seventh-place finish at the European Deepstack Championships back in 2008 was the first indication of McDonnell's talent and he has continued his progression with eye-catching performances at the Mini WSOP, the Fitzwilliam Poker Festival and the Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final in the interim.**

**Earlier this month, McDonnell looked in superb form at the JP Masters, finishing 11th in the Main Event and jets off for Vegas with a soaring reputation.**

**Marc is also on a nice \$50,000 upswing playing online MTTs over the last couple of months, so he can't wait to take his game to Vegas now.**

**He told Poker Face: "I'm going to play at least six tournaments over there. A few of us will be sharing a nice rented house, so we'll chill out in between competitions and enjoy ourselves anyway."**



## NICK HEATHER

WHEN HEATHER tiptoed into The Rio 12 months ago, very few of his esteemed counterparts would have known who he was. They probably presumed he was just another Irish whippersnapper over for a holiday of some craic. But they soon got to realise his potential and a fourth-place finish in a \$1,000 event, for which he won \$150,000 had everyone talking. Who was this Irish kid stealing all their dough?

This year the surprise factor is gone with Heather but he still arrives in Vegas as one of the main Irish challengers following a fantastic 2010 and a promising beginning to the current calendar year.

Regarded by his home colleagues as a player of immense ability, Heather has the temperament to do real damage on the big stage.

"I've been lucky enough to play at the last two WSOP's. The first year was a bit of a disaster and I made no real impression but this year went really well and I finished fourth in a \$1,000 event."

"That was my first really big live tournament win and it was a brilliant experience. That helped me gain sponsorship from Paddy Power which is a huge help.

"We rented a house in Las Vegas. There was myself and seven other Irish players. It was a fantastic experience. They were really quality poker players and I learned a lot from them.

"The WSOP is what every poker player strives towards."



## JASON TOMPKINS

**ATHY NATIVE Tompkins has proven to be a prolific winner since 2007 and arrived in Vegas as a man in form after superb showing in the JP Masters and Irish Open on home soil.**

**His sixth place finish in the JP Masters showed that he is just coming to the boil at the right time. The signs were there at the Burlington when he was a little unlucky to bow out in 64th place after looking like he was going to land a serious blow at one stage.**

**Those looking for Tompkins' best line of form in recent years don't have to glance back too far as 12 months ago he was embroiled in a fascinating heads-up duel with Sean Prendiville at the Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final. On that occasion he had to settle for second spot but a cheque for over €33,000 helped console him.**

**Other notable performances from Tompkins include finishing runner-up in the European Deep-Stack Championship in 2008, worth €64,713 to him and a third-placed finish in Waterford earlier that year.**

**Tompkins, one of Ireland's most consistent tournament contenders, arrives in Vegas next week brimming with confidence and should make a big impression.**



## SEAN PRENDIVILLE

PRENDIVILLE has emerged as one of the hottest poker properties on these shores with a scintillating 2010 season that has seen his reputation soar.

Last year he was in unstoppable form with four tournament victories to his name as well as deep runs in several other high-profile events.

Indeed, he almost made a significant impact on the biggest stage of all.

"I was flying in the WSOP Main Event last year at one stage," he reveals. "It was day three and I had a serious stack of chips after running good on the opening two days. I was chip leader at my table by a fair bit when I was dealt ace-jack. Someone raised before me and I called but then I was three-bet. I called but the other lad folded.

"The flop came J-J-9 so I had three jacks. An eight came out on the turn and he checked so I bet and he re-raised me. At this stage I had most of my chips in anyway so I went all-in. He had a pair of 9s in his hand so he already had a house.

"I would probably have been chip leader in the whole thing had I won that hand but it just wasn't to be."

However, a 20th place finish in a \$1,500 event and finishing 15th in a \$1,000 one proved ample consolation and sent Prendiville home from Vegas with almost \$45,000 in his arse-pocket.

Last April he was crowned Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final champion which earned him €35,000 and a fortnight later the JP Masters title was his, adding €33,000 to his prize-fund for the year.



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know  
what  
we're  
walking  
into.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

ROB  
TAYLOR

We ask the Irish professional poker star  
Rob the questions that everybody  
wants to know the answers to!

**1 How did you start playing poker and what age were you?**

I used to play softball with a friend of mine that started to get involved with poker. I started to take an interest myself then on Betfair and to be honest for the first six months I hadn't a clue what I was at. I did a bit of sports betting alright but then when I went away on a Betfair trip to London and met the people that were involved with poker; I began to take it a little more seriously.

**2 What was your first big breakthrough win?**

It was back in February 2006. I was only playing for about nine months and won a \$100 Paddy Power Satellite which was worth \$12K and included a package to Vegas. I cashed there too. I got \$47K for finishing 129th.

**3 Do you prefer playing live or playing online? Why?**

Nowadays I prefer playing live because there is more craic and it feels like more of an occasion. Playing online can often be monotonous.

**4 Who would be the toughest possible player to face in a heads-up battle?**

Michael Turenac. He's a Swedish pro

that won the EPT in Copenhagen. He's definitely the most intimidating player I've ever played against.

**5 What was your most memorable hand?**

It was online in the PokerStars million dollar guaranteed and there was \$254K for winner. I was in the lead with 12 left. There was this Crazy Italian guy in third and he went all-in but I had a pair of kings so had to call him. He just had K-J. But a jack appeared on the flop and the river so I ended up bowing out 12th for \$6K instead of winning at least a six-figure sum.

**6 What has been your biggest payday to date?**

It was actually at Irish Open last month. I finished seventh and won €63K.

**7 Where is your favourite poker destination and why?**

Definitely Vegas. I love the summers there.

**8 What would be the best piece of advice you could give someone starting off?**

Talk to some of the better players and listen to what they have to say.

**9 What player do you**

**think is one to keep an eye on in 2011 to take the poker world by storm?**

Mark McDonnell. I've seen him go deep without winning any live events but I think he'll win one soon.

**10 If you weren't a professional poker player, what would you do to make a living?**

I'm a qualified accountant so that.

**11 Any WSOP bracelet bets planned?**

No. I don't think they are very good value. It's getting harder and harder to predict these things with so many young players coming through.

**12 Who do you admire most in poker?**

Dara O'Kearney. He's a friend of mine and is extremely dedicated.

**13 What upcoming events do you plan to play in?**

The Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final is next on my agenda.

**14 What are your main poker goals for 2011?**

I've kind of achieved my goal by cashing in the Irish Open and that's a big weight off my shoulders.

## POKER NEWS

## FITZWILLIAM CASINO AND CARD CLUB

**Fitzwilliam Poker Festival**

The Fitzwilliam Poker Festival, one of the mainstays on the Irish poker calendar, will kick-off on Wednesday, November 23 and is set to attract some of the world's best poker players. The tournament will kick-off with a €55 Re-buy satellite for the €800 Main Event.

The Main Event runs over two days from Saturday, November 26 and has a €700 Buy-in + €60 Scalp + €40 Reg with a starting stack of 20,000. Plenty of action is guaranteed with an extra €1000 up for grabs for ten nominated bounty players and an optional €50 last-longest proposition bet.

On Thursday, November 24 the Fitzwilliam End of Month €270 Freeze-out, now firmly established as the biggest monthly tournament in Ireland, will be held. Fans of scalp tourneys will look forward to the Festival Scalp Tournament on Friday, November 25 with a €75 buy-in + €20 scalp + €5 Reg. One re-buy and one add-on to this game with a starting stack of 4000.

For the Omaha players, a €220 Triple Chance tournament will run on Sunday, November 27 with a starting stack of 5000. A new and exciting event this year will be the two-day Festival Freezeout Team Event, from Monday, November 28. On Sunday, June 5 at 5pm, the Fitzwilliam is running a special freeroll with one guaranteed ticket for the €800 Main Event up for grabs. To register for this tournament, email your name and mobile number to [info@fitzwilliamcardclub.com](mailto:info@fitzwilliamcardclub.com), phone 01 6114677 or drop into the Club and sign up at Reception. The deadline for entries is 5pm on Saturday, June 4.

**End of Month Freezeout**

Ireland's premier monthly poker tournament takes place on Thursday, June 30 – the Fitzwilliam End of Month €250 + €20 Freezeout. The main action will get underway at 8.30pm, with one-table sit and go satellites from 5.30pm in the Club. Online booking for June's End of Month is available on [www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com](http://www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com).

**Mid-Month €160 Freezeout**

Save the date for our Mid-Month Freezeout Tournament which takes place on Sunday, June 12, 4.30pm. Buy-in €150 + €10 and seats are available online at [www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com](http://www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com).

**Fitzwilliam Card Club Player of the Year 2011, sponsored by Poker Face**

Up for grabs with this coveted title is a special trophy along with an entry

ticket to the €1,100 UKIPT Main Event in Galway and \$1,500 credit on FullTiltPoker.com. Points are earned by buying into and finishing in the top nine places in all poker tournaments in the Fitzwilliam Card Club between January and November this year. The bigger the tournament, the more points on offer. In the beginning of December, the top 20 players will sit down and play off for the title, with the stack sizes corresponding to the points that have been won.

**€2,000 added to Saturday Freeze-outs**

The best value poker tournaments take place in the Fitzwilliam this June and an extra €500 is being added to every Saturday night €120 + €5 Freezeout. The dates in question are Saturdays 4, 11, 18 and 25 with the action getting underway at 8.30pm. Book your seat online now to secure a seat.

**Player Of The Year League Table**

1. Stewart Samuels	3275
2. Michael Murray	2375
3. Brian Napier	2260
4. Damian Bracken	2200
5. Frank Murphy	1860
6. Shane Barrett	1770
7. Paddy Hicks	1665
8. Declan O'Connell	1495
9. Joe Giblin	1370
10. Rachel Samuels	1360
11. Alex Pavlov	1225
12. Peter Burnett	1210
13. James Waldron	1195
14. Samantha	1195
15. Barry Donovan	1125
16. Kevin Holland	1115
17. Anthonny McConnell	1095
18. Vivion	1085
19. Amo	945
20. Jude McCarthy	930



## FITZWILLIAM FESTIVAL 2011 SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, November 23:**

€50 + €5, Super Re-buy Satellite for Festival Main Event

**Thursday, November 24:**

€250 + €20, Fitzwilliam End of Month Freezeout

**Friday, November 25:**

€75 + €20, Scalp + €5 Festival Scalp Tournament

**Saturday, November 26:**

€700 + €60 Scalp + €40, Festival Main Event Freezeout, Day 1. €1000 added for 10 Bounty Players. Opt. €50 last-longest bet.

**Sunday, November 27:**

Festival Main Event Freezeout, Day 2, €200 + €20, Festival Omaha Triple Chance

**Monday, November 28:**

€500 + €40, Festival Freezeout Team Event, Day 1. Free Reg for Charity, Teams of 4.

**Tuesday, November 29:**

Festival Freezeout Team Event, Day 2, €100 + €10, Festival No Limit Hold'em Double Chance.



HEADS UP

...interview with Jono Crute

# A Crute above the rest

*David Jennings talks to internet whizz-kid Jono Crute who at the age of 20 has already broken through the \$250K profit barrier.*



IT'S a bit like Jenson Button not being tall enough to play on the bumping cars. Next week the WSOP kicks off in Las Vegas, but Jono Crute won't be there.

Funds low? Otherwise engaged? Maybe he doesn't like flying?

No, Ireland's hottest online property wasn't even on the guest list. Crute is only 20 and it's illegal for him to strut his stuff across the Atlantic until October. So while the rest of his buddies jet off for Sin City, he has to plough on at what he does best – crushing online.

He's not overly put out. There'll be plenty of Vegas voyages in the years to come, although it's hardly surprising that he is slightly envious of those making the trip this week.

"I'm a little bit gutted I can't go alright," Crute admits. "I was thinking about heading over with all the lads and just not playing poker but sure then I realised I couldn't drink or go out or do anything basically, so I said to myself that there was no point."

It's a pity. Crute's online record would make him a feared force at the Rio. A staggering bankroll of \$260,000 built up in just over two years on the virtual felt has seen 'GAWA9' parachute to third in the current rankings of Irish online tournament players on respecting tracking site pocketfives.com.

Living in Belfast, Crute received second level education in Bath but it was only when he returned from a holiday in Japan that poker became an income option.

"I went off for a few weeks to Japan and spent an absolutely fortune. I went a bit mad and came back with £400. That was all I had to my name so it was then when I turned to poker to try and make some money."

It wasn't the usual path of an 18-year-old that had just finished school and telling his family certainly wasn't the most appetising prospect.

"I knew I was fairly decent at poker but I didn't really know how decent. When I was in school it was great because I would earn drinking money through poker and it always got me by. But it was a bit more serious because I knew I had to make a living out of it."

"To turn professional and not have another job was a big move as it

leaves a big gap on your CV so to make that worthwhile I knew I had to do well. The plan originally was to make \$35K. That was my minimum target."

It didn't take Crute long to reach that goal though. Indeed he did so in a few months and quickly set his sights on more attractive sums which helped soften the blow of his family questioning his career path.

"It wasn't the easiest thing to do telling my family and friends that I was going to play poker full-time. It wasn't common for someone my age to go down that route but I suppose I was lucky in that I built up my

bankroll fairly quickly and was making money.

"I then won an Ogame series which was worth \$22K and another online tourney that netted me \$21K so things really took off for me online."

While his online antics have generated rave reviews, Crute has yet to transfer that ability onto the live stage and admits that his performances away from the computer screen has left a lot to be desired. So much so that he regarded reaching the second day of the Irish Open at the Burlington as a major achievement.

"It's a bit of a running joke between my friends," he laughs. "My live record is spectacularly poor. I haven't cashed at a live tournament since 2009 which is a terrible record to have."

"I was delighted to make Day 2 of the Irish Open last month. I really wanted to do well there and I have to admit I did play well to get that far. I really enjoyed the experience actually and there was a fantastic atmosphere there. I'd usually turn up at a live event and be completely overwhelmed by the whole thing but I got a great buzz from the Irish Open and really wanted to do well in it."

So what does he put his poor live record down to? "I've made some terrible mistakes," he admits. "I have been very dismissive of players. If someone at my table made a mistake and played a pot, I'd automatically think that they were a bad player but they ended up being good at other aspects of the game and I really shouldn't have judged them so quickly."

"Hopefully the more I play the more I'll learn. I play about 50 hours a week online so maybe if I put as much effort into live tournaments I might do a little better."

Crute would love to make an impact on the live stage. The poker lifestyle is something that is right up his street and he has his sights set on all the €1K events in the coming months.

"There is probably no other profession in the world where the rewards are bigger than the effort you put in. Perhaps soccer players maybe but poker is certainly one of the only things where the rewards are absolutely huge if you do well."

"I hope to start playing in a lot more live events. It's a fantastic lifestyle as you get to travel around the world and see different locations and play a game that you love. You can't ask for more than that really."

Given that poker is relatively new into Crute's life, there must have been other career paths that he had mapped out for himself. So what did he want to be before he was struck down with the poker bug?

"I didn't really have any firm plans in place for after school really. The only other ambition I had besides poker was to own my own bar. That's something I'd love to do and something I might think about after poker."

Crute is a realist. He knows that poker is not the most bullet-proof profession. But for now while the iron continues to be hot, he'll keep striking.

"I guess a lot depends on legislation. That could change at any time. It's not exactly the safest job given the way legislation changes in different places and so much of poker depends on the prize-money involved. As I said already there aren't too many professionals where the rewards are as big as they are in poker so I may as well keep at it while I can."

"Life is pretty good for me right now. There is so much freedom that comes with poker. You can play when you want and where you want. I still live in a student house and I don't own a car so I don't have too many expenses."

He may not be visiting Vegas but Crute still has a jam-packed poker diary in the months ahead. He has set himself a goal too.

"I definitely hope to improve my live record and try cash in more tournaments. The aim is to play in every €1K-or-over event in Ireland and I'll also take in the Irish Winter Festival, the European Masters of Poker and the Short-handed Championship in Ballsbridge. That was actually the event that I enjoyed the most last year so I'll look forward to playing in that again."

POKER NEWS



2011 WSOPE schedule unveiled

THE WORLD Series of Poker Europe schedule for 2011 has been announced, with the Casino Barrière de Cannes Croisette in southern France hosting seven bracelet events from October 7-20 next.



2007 WSOPE champ Annette Obrestad

WSOP vice-president Ty Stewart said: "Our new venue in Cannes, along with our new partnership with Barrière Poker, will offer the best player experience we have ever had for WSOP Europe. Players will find non-stop action throughout the two-week event, plus plenty of fun distractions in Cannes to make this the perfect poker vacation."

The unique €10,000+€400 four-day split-format event will feature nine-handed play the first day, six-handed on the second and Heads-Up on Day 3 through to the final table. Organisers are calling this the All-round No-Limit Hold'em Championship.

Previously the WSOPE was held in London, England. The current champion is UK pro James Bord, who showed some form earlier this month when he cashed for €15,000 in the EPT Grand Final in Madrid.

# Irish Eyes smile on Doke



Dara 'Doke' O'Kearney

By Ken Powell

IRISH Eyes Poker last week announced the appointment of Dublin card shark Dara 'Doke' O'Kearney as the new captain of their growing poker team.

Since winning the European Deepstack Championship in 2008, Doke has established himself as one of Ireland's top tournament players and one of the more consistent Irish performers on the European circuit.

Despite learning the game less than four years ago, and never depositing a cent online, he has already notched up more than \$1million in lifetime tournament cashes on the internet, and more than \$300,000 live.

O'Kearney, 45, is a former international elite distance athlete – he won the prestigious 60-kilometre New York Road Runners ultra marathon in 2007 – and he now hopes to run good representing Irish Eyes Poker.

The father-of-three commented: "I look forward to meeting all Team Irish Eyes Poker representatives at the European Masters of Poker event in Dublin in July.

"I'll be there to help our crew with coaching and advice in the run-up to the EMOP, so as to give local players the best possible chance to get a good result."

Doke will also be personally emailing all Irish Eyes Poker players

with updates, news and strategy tips. Irish Eyes Poker chief Steven Merrick welcomed O'Kearney to the team.

Merrick said: "We're delighted to have Dara on board, we've been monitoring his performances online for some time and we feel certain he's the best man to captain our crew.

"His online results are nothing short of phenomenal and he's also hugely respected on the live baize all around Europe."

O'Kearney has already racked up eight live cashes this year, while also cleaning up in online tournaments as usual.

In February, he cashed in a UKIPT side event in Nottingham and did the same the following month at Manchester UKIPT.

Last month, he took home a total of €17,000 from trips to Malaga and Berlin, while also cashing in an Irish Open side event.

Closer to home, Doke cashed on the double at the JP Poker Masters earlier this month.

He's heading to Carlow next weekend for the Celtic Poker Tour Grand final and after that he'll jet off to Las Vegas for the World Series of Poker.

Players can keep up to date on Team Irish Eyes Poker promotions and EMOP events by reading Doke's blog at <http://dokearney.blogspot.com/>.

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**JOHN O'SHEA**

The diary of a professional poker player

# Leinster's Heineken heroics pocket me €30K but now it's time to focus on Vegas

**N**OW I know how Mick McCarthy felt trying to keep Wolves in the Premier League. I was on the scariest rollercoaster you can imagine in May. Poker took a bit of a back seat on that ride and sports betting once again sat in the front. It been the common theme in recent months but I'm beginning to wonder whether I might just be better off sticking to poker as my main form of income.

I did play in a couple of PLO tournaments this month between the EPT Grand Final in Madrid and the Scoop.

I travelled to Madrid with an outside chance of capturing the 'EPT Player of the Year' award and the 'EPT Mixed Games Player of the Year' as I was fourth and third respectively in those leaderboards.

However the one award I did have my sights set on winning was the 'EPT PLO Player of the Year' title as I sat in second, just 50 points behind Dario Alioto when jetting off for Madrid.

If he failed to cash and I did so in either of the €2K or €5K PLO events, the crown would be nestling on my head.

The €2K event was up first. I blasted from the traps and looked to be in a perfect position to cash when having the third biggest chip-stack of the 11 players that remained. Eight of the 11 would get paid and there were a few very short stacks hanging on for dear life at the table.

I did have the option of folding my way into the money in which case I'd have an 80% chance of being crowned 'EPT PLO Player of the year'. The equity I'd give up in the tournament would be offset by the €8K package I would receive along with the award so it made common sense to do just that. Right?

Wrong! I didn't get where I am today by folding so it doesn't make any sense to start now. Everyone has a price at which they will throw on a dress and change their name to Shirley and so do I. But mine is a little higher than an 'EPT PLO Player of the Year' award so I kicked on at what I do best.

My pre-flop raise with A-J-10-8 was eventually called by A-K-Q-9 and my 45% chance couldn't land so I was down to two big blinds. Two hands later I was sent packing in 11th.

Next up was the €5K event. This was my last chance to get my hands on an award and just like the €2K event I got off to a



For the third week in-row Leinster netted me €30K

super start but was unable to sustain it. My hopes of winning an EPT award were shattered. Oh well.

I did collect an award though and had some part to play in it too. Mags from PokerStars gave me a buzz to tell me that Ireland had won 'EPT Country of the Year'

award and wondered would I come up and collect it. So despite missing out on a number of individual awards, I managed to find myself up on the stage and entering the winner's enclosure.

Well done to everyone from Ireland who cashed in an EPT in Series 7 and helped bring home the bacon, with special mentions for Tom Finneran and Bob Willis who managed multiple cashes.

**D**ETERMINED to cash in a PLO tournament after the frustration of Madrid, I tried a few of the Scoops. At last I managed to progress to a final table in the \$1K Turbo PLO which had one re-buy and one add-on so it was effectively a \$3K tournament.

By the time we got to the final table the average stack was about five big blinds deep. I was sitting pretty with 10 BBs in third place and looking good. I was having a horrible poker month to this point – down about \$50K in cash and \$15K in

tournaments – so anything from the \$80K up to the \$35K for fourth would have been acceptable.

But instead I limped off in seventh for \$15K. I guess the way the month had gone pokerwise, I was happy enough to get anything back into the bank.

I did manage to cover some of those losses through some heavy gambling on the sports-betting front. I have Munster and Leinster both backed pretty heavily each-way for the Magners League with it weighing slightly more heavily on Leinster.

With both of them in the final a big day is already booked. Today's action will tell just how big. I will be going for a hat-trick of €30K winning weeks on Leinster in a row. In the game against Ulster I backed the unders and Leinster and a few other bets on various markets in the game that returned me €30K.

Then last weekend they won me €30K by winning the Heineken Cup. I was at the Millennium Stadium for the game and what a game it was.

I think I was the only Leinster supporter who kept the faith; in fact I went into back them again at half-time but I couldn't get internet access in the stadium so I texted one of the lads. He was just submitting the bet as Sexton went over for his first try. Was raging then that I didn't win €36K but I managed to console myself with €30K. It certainly hasn't been all my own way on the sports betting front though.

**A**NY OF YOU that are on Chicago Bulls with me have watched the price boomerang back out form 4-5 to 15-4. I had Miami backed to

return €20K and Chicago backed to return €30K.

Now those familiar with basketball will know the play-offs are over seven games. With the first game in Chicago I decided to try and get Chicago 1-0 up and then look to lay off and bank a profit. Everything went to plan when Chicago won the first game.

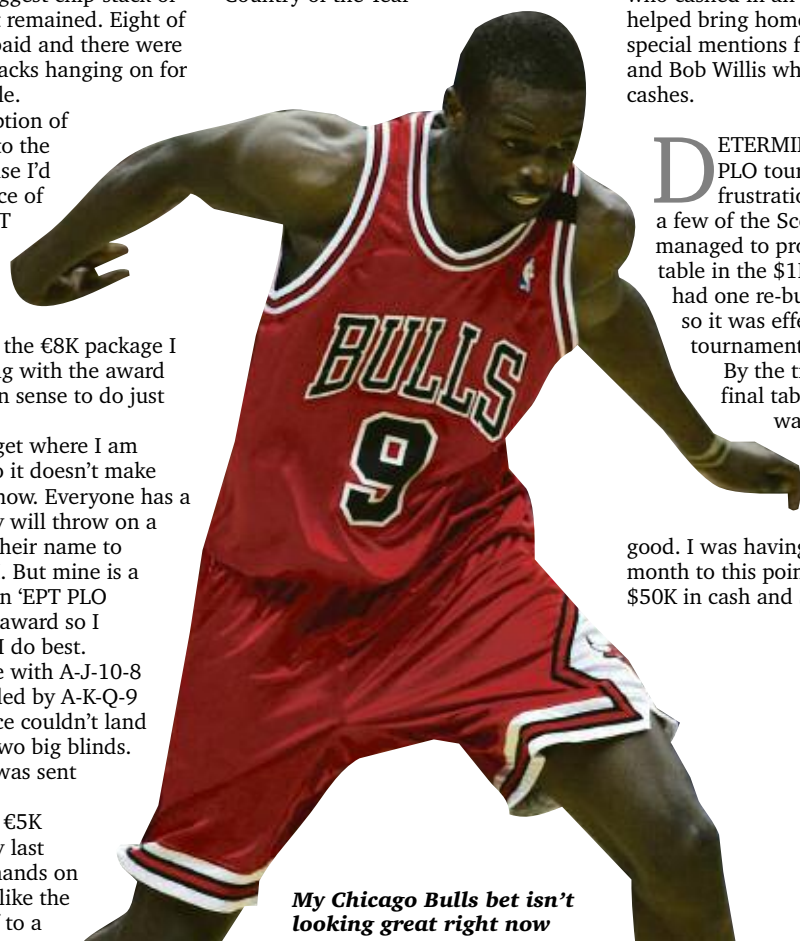
I was looking at the prices and realised one of the firms was massively out with the line and that I could back Chicago at 1.93 and also back Miami at 2.2 which was widely available.

I lashed €30K on it. Then instead of getting out I decided to try get lucky again and try get Chicago 2-0 up before laying out. I had a little laugh to myself as I tried to lay out and bank €5K profit but instead ended up putting another €30K on the side I was trying to get off.

There's no laughing no though let me tell you! The plan has backfired spectacularly and Chicago now trail 2-1 and I am staring a €30K loss in the face. Not to worry, I'm only giving the bookies a loan of their cash back.

Chicago still have a chance to turn it around so all hope is not lost. Even if they do lose, I am sure Barca will oblige in helping me get my money back. Have them in 90 minutes for chunks at prices between 2 and 2.1. I was once told there are no atheists in fox holes and it's true. I have started saying my prayers for a Leinster/Chicago/Barca treble.

Sure it might be a good thing if they all lose. At least then I can go back to making an honest living playing poker. I am off to Vegas on June 15 to try and get myself a bracelet. The prize-money for one of those should cover my May expenses!!



My Chicago Bulls bet isn't looking great right now



Dario Alioto beat me to the 'EPT PLO Player of the Year' title

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