

POKER FACE

Saturday, June 25, 2011

THE IRISH RACING POST

...exclusively for the Irish poker player

The latest updates from the WSOP

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John O'Shea reports back from his Vegas voyage

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KITT HAPPENS

Singer-songwriter turned poker phenomenon Tom Kitt reveals all in an intriguing interview

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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."

Tom Dwan

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POKER NEWS



Deals at business end in Dundalk and Carlow

By Ken Powell

JUNE'S two biggest domestic tournaments followed the lead of May's JP Poker Masters main event, with multi-way deals in the latter stages.

Aidan McAllister was deemed the winner of last weekend's Irish Eyes Northern Open at the Fairways Hotel in Dundalk following an equity split requested by the last six remaining players.

McAllister was presented with €9,300 and the trophy, while Alex Scullion, JP White, Stephen Neeson, Connie O'Sullivan and Jeff Jones carved up a further €30,000.

The €260+40 event attracted 200 runners, contributing to a prizepool

of €52,000.

It was a similar story at the 136-runner Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final earlier this month, with a three-way chop settling matters at the Dolmen Hotel in Carlow.

Tom Kitt was presented with €19,200 and the title, while Tommy Walsh and Dimitri Pembroke took home €15,200 and €14,700 respectively.

Other notable final-tablists at the €600+75 event included evergreen Northerner Mick McCloskey and popular Dublin potter Colette Murphy.

Veteran side-event specialist Nicky Power prevailed in the 51-runner €200 tourney in Carlow, while Elaine Moloney took down the 35-runner €150 game.



Aidan McAllister

IRISH EYES NORTHERN OPEN

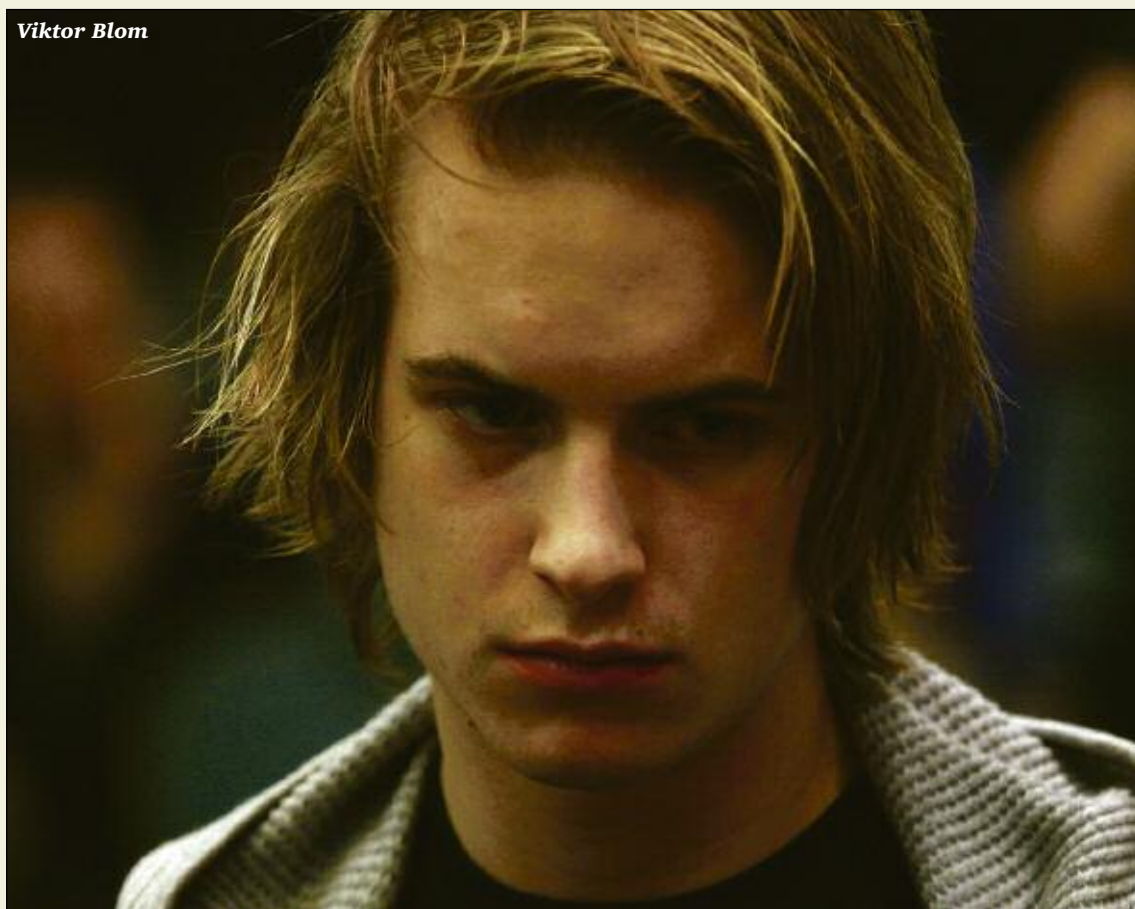
1. Aidan McAllister €9,300
2. Alex Scullion €7,100
3. JP White €6,475
4. Stephen Neeson €5,830
5. Connie O'Sullivan €5,520
6. Jeff Jones €4,925

CELTIC POKER TOUR GRAND FINAL

1. Tom Kitt €19,200
2. Tommy Walsh €15,200
3. Dimitri Pembroke €14,700
4. Noel O'Brien €7,000
5. Alan McIntyre €5,000
6. Niall Rogers €4,000
7. Mick McCloskey €3,000
8. Collettee Murphy €2,000
9. Caroline Murphy €1,700

Season 8 EPT schedule unveiled

Viktor Blom



By Ken Powell

THE EUROPEAN Poker Tour has released the first half of its Season Eight schedule. The first seven events on the schedule will take players to locations as diverse as Tallinn, Estonia, for the first event in early August and the Bahamas in January.

The first seven events feature two festivals of poker – in London in late September and early October and at the PCA in early January.

The other stops in the first half of the tour are Barcelona in Spain, Deauville

in France, Prague in the Czech Republic, and San Remo in Italy.

The largest change to the schedule can be found with the dates of the EPT San Remo main event, which will take place from October 21-27. The popular tournament on the Italian Riviera has usually taken place in April in years past, but it will now hope to attract players who are participating in the World Series of Poker Europe in Cannes, France, earlier in October.

EPT Chairman John Duthie said: "We're delighted to announce the dates for the first half of EPT Season 8. We're

expecting another incredible year, with a whole host of new champions crowned and maybe even the first ever two-time EPT main event winner!"

Swedish online poker phenom Viktor Blom aka Isildur1 said he can't wait for the new season to begin. He added: "I'm really looking forward to the coming EPT season. My live game is something I want to work hard on improving, and I would love to have some deep runs this year. I plan to play in most of the events, including Barcelona, the PCA and London. Those stops will be big events for me."

Slog on the Tyne pays for Foley

By Ken Powell

IRISH grinder Barry Foley took home over £18,100 last week for his fourth-place finish at UKIPT Newcastle.

Scottish pumper Richard Sinclair, who has cashed in the WSOP main event for the past two years, defeated Englishman Raj Verma heads-up to land the title and £67,000.

Foley, from Portlawn in Co Waterford, was always shortstacked on the final table and laddered his way to fourth following an impressive slog on the Tyne.

Tadhg Ryan, from Cork, also made it to the final table, sporting a plaster cast on his right hand due to a hurling injury.

Any pain he was suffering didn't diminish his fear, however, as he got caught shoving 5h-4h blind-on-blind to exit in seventh place for £8,580.

UKIPT Newcastle attracted 554 entrants to the £500 main event, contributing to a £277,000 prizepool, with 72 spots paid.

Other Irish players to cash were Ciaran Boyle (13th), Andrew Dwyer (17th), Richie Lawlor (28th), Gerard Connolly (38th), Mark Coyne (46th), Ken Corkery (54th) and Nik Kamal (57th).

In the £300 side event, Sligo pro Fergal Nealon was unlucky to finish fourth, having had half the chips in play seven-handed, but he still took home £4,000 for his efforts.

Mizzi's honour as poker players help charity

By Ken Powell

CANADIAN pro Sorel Mizzi has kick-started a new charity program with an initial \$10,000 donation for Poker Players Against Poverty (PPAP).

It's part of A Good Idea, a non-profit program that connects people in need with those who want to help alleviate hardship and homelessness.

PPAP now hopes to recruit other like-minded poker players who will commit service days and percentages of their tournament winnings in the fight against poverty.

In addition to Mizzi's first donation of \$10,000, he has pledged five per cent of all tournament winnings through the lifetime of his poker-playing career.

The 25-year-old, from Toronto, will also participate in four service days annually working directly with the homeless in 2011, with plans to work with the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth in the US.

Speaking about his new philanthropic endeavours, Mizzi said: "I am very excited for 2011 and beyond. I will be placing equal priority

on progressing as a poker player and giving back to my community. As a young poker player with a talent that brings me financial abundance, I feel it's my responsibility to give back to people in need who are hurting financially."

Mizzi, nicknamed Imper1um, finished third at the 2010 Aussie Millions for \$599,319 and followed that up with a ninth place in this year's renewal Down Under for \$108,967.

More recently, he won Full Tilt Poker's FTOPS XX Leaderboard challenge in May and cashed in two World Series of Poker bracelet events earlier this month.



Sorel Mizzi

SEASON 8 SCHEDULE

EPT Tallinn, Estonia	Aug 2-7, 2011	€4,000+250
EPT Barcelona, Spain	Aug 27-Sep 1, 2011	€5,000+300
EPT London, England	Sep 30-Oct 5, 2011	£5,000+250
EPT San Remo, Italy	Oct 21-27, 2011	€4,600+300
EPT Prague, Czech Rep	Dec 5-10, 2011	€5,000+300
2012 PCA Bahamas	Jan 5-15, 2012	\$10,000+300
EPT Deauville, France	Jan 31-Feb 6, 2012	€5,000+300

TWEET OF THE MONTH

"Irish bracelet winner considered as likely as Maggie Thatcher moon landing? Is the double too much to hope for?"

Padraig Parkinson (@padraig888) tweeting from the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas





POKER NEWS

There's so much to read in your super

POKER FACE SUPPLEMENT

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All the low-down on a cracking couple of weeks the WSOP in Vegas

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ANDREW GRIMASON answers our unique questionnaire

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An unmissable interview with Dublin poker star TOM KITT

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The EMOP jets into Dublin

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Pulsating punter JOHN O'SHEA reports back from Vegas in his monthly diary

Edited by Jonathan Mullin and David Jennings

Congressmen move to legalise online poker in United States

By Ken Powell

BIG MOVES to legalise online poker were afoot in the United States this week, with Texas Republican Representative Joe Barton set to introduce legislation to make online poker lawful and set up a new federal agency to regulate it.

April 15 2011 came to be known as Black Friday in the online poker world when the FBI shut down PokerStars, Full Tilt Poker and Absolute Poker, three of the largest poker websites.

The companies were charged with illegal online gambling, bank fraud and money laundering.

However, Barton insists online poker is not illegal in itself, though he admits some processing payments used by online poker sites are unlawful.

According to various discussions on the proposed law, online poker sites will be registered and regulated in a state where gambling is legal, much like brick and mortar casinos.

Barton, a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and an avid poker player, will propose a bill that will allow payments for online poker games in states where such gambling is legal.

Texas Rep Joe Barton



Barton's spokesman Sean Brown said the Representative has been besieged by complaints from angry poker-playing constituents since Black Friday and added: "He is very serious about getting something done."

A group known as Poker Players Alliance has been working with Barton to draft a bill that would bring online

poker back to the comfort of Americans' home computers and laptops.

And Barton isn't the only lawmaker pushing the issue on the federal level.

Washington Democratic Rep Jim McDermott will reintroduce legislation to tax licensed internet gaming in the US. His measure is a companion to

legislation introduced by Massachusetts Democratic Rep Barney Frank that would legalise and regulate online gambling.

McDermott, who first introduced his legislation in 2009, said: "Legalising, regulating and taxing internet gambling just makes sense."

"Right now, the US loses billion of dollars to off-shore gambling and illegal gambling rings because of an unrealistic and virtually unenforceable policy."

"The current prohibition of online gambling has failed and made countless American vulnerable to fraud, identity theft and money laundering."

His revised bill's provisions include an incentive for states and tribes to participate in the form of a six per cent tax on gambling deposits; two new revenue set-asides designating 25 per cent of the funds for foster kids; and 0.5 per cent reserved for historic preservation and the arts.

Tax incentives would be used to encourage illegal sites to operate within the law, while internet gambling would not be part of the current tax exemptions given to the horse and dog racing industries.

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WORLD SERIES OF POKER



Las Vegas is
buzzing for
the WSOP

Black Friday fails to darken WSOP



By David Jennings

SO MUCH for Black Friday sending dark clouds over the Rio. The 2011 World Series of Poker has already smashed several records with attendance figures soaring from last year.

Through the first 30 events, player participation was up 11.7%, with prize pools increasing by a total of 8.6% over their 2010 levels.

At the halfway point of the Series, nearly \$56 million in prize money had been awarded.

Before a hand was dealt at the WSOP, concerns were mounting over the game's grandest spectacle after Black

Friday brought the game into disrepute.

Many online poker players were unable to retrieve their bankrolls and those who would normally have attempted to satellite their way into a WSOP event or two at an online poker site, no longer had the opportunity to do so.

While tournament organizers said all the right things in public, most observers expected a noticeable drop in attendance at the World Series but that hasn't transpired.

"We are humbled once again by the incredible turnout from players all over the world," WSOP Executive Director Ty Stewart said. "It has been a record-

setting summer thus far in 2011 and we are confident it will continue through the duration of the Series."

Several tournaments have been record-breaking, either in terms of attendance or prizes. The Heads-Up Championship featured over \$3 million in prizes, the largest prize pool ever for a heads-up tournament.

This year's Series has also seen the largest (in terms of entries) tournaments in history for Omaha High/Low, Pot-Limit Omaha, Eight-Game Mix, and Seniors events.

The Seniors Tournament also broke the record for the largest live \$1,000 No-Limit Hold'em tournament ever with a single start day, as 3,752 players

all begin the competition simultaneously.

Perhaps the biggest growth, however, has come around the tournaments rather than in them. Side action, including cash games, daily tournaments and satellite tournaments, is reportedly up 45% year-over-year. The Rio has spread 96 tables of cash games that have mostly been filled to capacity, and over 150 satellite tournaments are planned.

In most minds, the real test will come when the Main Event starts on July 7. Last year's main event attracted 7,319 players, and most observers had expected this number to come down somewhat due to Black Friday.



WSOP
Executive
Director
Ty Stewart

Back-to-back omaha crowns for Dundalk native Spillane

By David Jennings

FORMER Boylepoker.com chief Paul Spillane showed Ireland's WSOP raiders the way forward in Las Vegas last week, taking down two big-field pot-limit omaha competitions in consecutive days.

The popular Dundalk-based potter finished first out of 260 entrants in the \$120 PLO tourney in Caesars Palace on Wednesday, trousering \$5,000.

He fancied a bigger spin-up, however, so he postponed any celebrations, telling friends: "Might let my greying hair down after the \$500 rebuy PLO at the Venetian."

Everything went according to plan

on Thursday, so much so that Spillane, 44, let his hair down well before the final table.

Indeed as he got heads-up with cocky US pro David Williams, the WSOP bracelet-holder and former WPT champion told his Twitter followers: "Heads up! Even chips vs the drunk guy."

Almost an hour later, Williams tweeted: "He's getting drunker and his chips shorter. 3.9M to his 2.4M."

Coors Lite-fuelled Spillane ultimately prevailed, however, and pocketed another \$47,000 for the day's work.

He later revealed the structure of the event had affected his thirst, explaining: "Well it was \$500 plus \$60

juice to enter, but then when I took a re-buy I was shocked there was another \$60 on top of the second \$500 too.

"So obviously my view was I'll get back the \$120 in 'free' beers. That was my strategic edge!"

And he added: "It's not often people win back-to-back omaha titles so I'm very proud of that."

Runner-up Williams, for his part, wasn't too disappointed ultimately to lose to 'the drunk guy'.

He later told his followers: "Reflecting on the ride home, and although I didn't win, it still feels pretty good to get 2nd in a 420 person field."

As for Spillane and his pals, a source told Poker Face: "They cruised off to

Spearmint Rhino with the profits."

There were couple more Irish cashes early yesterday in the World Series, with Peter Murphy and Jude Ainsworth making the money in Event 36, the \$2,500 NLH.

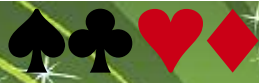
Armagh potter Murphy, known as 'The Multiplier', finished 68th out of 1,734 runners for \$9,500, while Galwayman Ainsworth took \$5,200 for 156th.

Singer-songwriter Tom 'Danutpeddler' Kitt made an impressive Las Vegas debut in Event 38, a \$1,500 NLH competition which attracted 2,192 runners. The tuneful Dubliner battled his way to 123rd place, for which he collected \$3,700.



Paul Spillane (right) celebrates with pals Julian Gardner and Padraig Parkinson





WORLD SERIES OF POKER

Callaghan flies Irish flag in Vegas

By Ken Powell

DUBLIN pot-limit omaha kingpin Dave Callaghan produced Ireland's best performance of the World Series so far, busting just before the final table of the \$5,000 6-handed bracelet event in the Rio on Thursday morning.

Callaghan, who previously finished fourth in the WSOP Europe £10,000 PLO event in 2007, was knocked out in eighth place by eventual winner Jason Mercier, trousering \$53,200 for his efforts.

The last three tables comprised a who's-who of PLO sharks, with luminaries including Tom 'Durrurr' Dwan, Erick Lindgren, Vanessa Selbst, Dave 'Devilfish' Ulliot, Chris Moorman, Peter Jetten, Mike 'Timex' McDonald and David Chiu all in the mix.

Indeed the 507-strong field was described by Pokernews.com as "the greatest ever assembled in modern WSOP history" – but it was no surprise to see Mercier claim the \$619,575 first prize.

The Florida betting machine won the EPT San Remo in 2008 for €869,000 and he also has a previous WSOP bracelet, from the \$1,500 PLO event in 2009, for which he received \$237,400.

Mercier defeated fellow Nicaraguan Hans Winzeler in the heads-up on Thursday morning, the pair eventually getting it in on a 9d4s3d flop after heavy betting pre.

Winzeler's AcKcKdJs stayed ahead against Mercier's Qc6c5d3s on the 10c turn, but the 7h river brought Mercier a winning straight, sparking wild



Dave Callaghan in action at Vegas

celebrations from his raucous supporters as they jumped the rail to embrace their hero.

Callaghan, for his part, was left to rue what might have been, telling Poker Face: "Mercier runs unnaturally good. I guess I'll just have to win the \$10,000 PLO event now."

The Dubliner has been Ireland's most successful online pot-limit omaha cashgame player for the last six or seven years, having tackled even the likes of Phil Ivey, Patrik Antonius, Gus Hansen, Ilari 'Ziigmund' Sahamies and David Benyamine in the nosebleed

games on Full Tilt Poker.

This year, however, he has concentrated more of his efforts on tournaments, with predictably superb results.

He took first place in the Southern Poker Championship in Biloxi, Mississippi, for \$31,600 in January, famously handing the trophy to his vanquished heads-up foe because he couldn't be bothered finding room for it in his suitcase.

He followed that up with second place in the Los Angeles Poker Classic for \$34,400 in February.



The Rio



Darren Woods

Brits blaze a trail at the Rio

By Ken Powell

THREE new British champions have already been crowned at this year's World Series, with Darren Woods last week joining countrymen Jake Cody and Matt Perrins on the 2011 roll of honour.

Woods took down Event 19, the \$2,500 six-handed limit holdem, defeating a field of 354 players to win \$213,431 and his first WSOP bracelet.

The 26-year-old, from Grimsby in England, was previously an accountant before discovering online poker five years ago.

To win his first major title, he eliminated Kim Nguyen in second-place. Nguyen entered heads-up play with the chip lead, but the San Diego native fell short and would earn \$131,900 for second place.

There hasn't been a female champion in the past 180 open WSOP events, although in this year's WSOP, Nguyen and Maria Ho have finished second.

Woods was on the rail as his Canadian buddy Tyler Bonkowski won his first WSOP event just days beforehand, and now the roles were reversed with Woods having his day. Both the pals won their bracelets in limit events.

And the Grimsby grinder admitted afterwards: "I feel like I have a bigger chance in the limit tournaments. I have played a lot of no-limit as well, but if you lose one coin flip in no-limit or just one bad beat or one bad call, that's it, you're out.

"In limit poker, there's a lot more play involved and you don't have to be 100 per cent accurate. If you get a bad beat then there's still more hands as long as you play sensibly. You're never going to lose all your chips on one bad beat, should you have a decent stack."

Earlier this month, Jake Cody, from Rochdale, completed poker's holy trinity, adding a WSOP title – and another \$851,192 – to his EPT and WPT accomplishments.

The 22-year-old pro rose to prominence after winning EPT Deauville in January 2010, solidified his prowess with a victory at WPT London last August, and now he has completed the trifecta by winning the WSOP \$25,000 buy-in Heads-Up

Championship. Even Cody has a hard time believing his phenomenal run is real.

He admitted: "It didn't seem real until I got down to the last two. Then I thought, 'Oh my God, I am one match away from winning poker's Triple Crown.' I didn't let it get to me, I just tried to do my best."

And Cody was soon joined in the winners' enclosure by pal and fellow Rochdale pro Matt Perrins after he collected the \$1,500 buy-in draw NL 2-7 Lowball title in the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino last night.

Perrins' victory was particularly impressive as he had never played this poker variant live until the event started. He trousered \$102,105 to go with his shiny new bracelet.



Matt Perrins



The scariest adversary is the one with all the chips.



The scariest adversary is the one with nothing to lose.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

We ask Dublin professional poker star

ANDREW GRIMASON

the questions that everybody wants to know the answers to!

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

A fairly uneventful intro for me into poker, I started playing with my mates when we were about 16 and then watching it on TV increased the addiction. I guess the semi interesting part was that the main friend I was playing with was John O'Shea who lives down the road from me. There are probably only about 50 pros in Ireland and two of us came from a cul de sac of 15 houses!

2 What was your first big breakthrough win?

My breakthrough win would have been my cash in the WSOP Main Event 2007! I probably had less than \$10,000 to my name, so scooping \$30k was a nice boost to the bankroll! Pretty funny story how I won that ticket actually, I was playing in my gaff with a mate and I popped out to the shop for a minute so I left him at the wheel. He wasn't paying attention and then the screen popped up with the aces! He panicked and ended up timing out! The two other lads got it all in pre-flop and pocket queens binked a queen on the flop! So it could have been a very different summer for me!

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

I generally prefer playing online, it's so much faster and you can play more than one game at once. I like playing live tournaments though, it's great fun playing live when you have a big stack! Although that hasn't happened in a while!

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

There are so many good guys around these days. I guess the latest sick puppy from Sweden would be a nightmare, Viktor Blom aka Isildur1. He's crushed some of the best in heads-up battles, it would be good craic tackling him in PLO though.

5 What was your most memorable hand?

I guess this is just asking for a bad beat story! Probably my sickest was in the EPT Dublin a few years ago, I think it was 2007. Once again I was playing an event where the buy-in was about the same size as my bankroll! It was about 20 off the bubble and I got all the loot in with AA vs KK. Flop came down Ace-high but he backdoored clubs to knock me out!



Heartbreaking but it kind of gave me confidence too. It was a seriously tough field and I held my own pretty well.

6 What has been your biggest payday to date?

I came third in an ECCPT in Barcelona last year for 65k euro! That was a great tourney, the buy-in was 2,500 and the bubble was 12,000 or something crazy!

7 Where is your favourite poker destination and why?

Vegas is a lot of fun, but my wallet isn't a big fan! The PCA in the Bahamas was probably the nicest place I've been.

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

It's so much tougher these days, you really have to work your ass off to get good now. Talk to people about hands, never just accept a situation, keep questioning everything. Ask why is a certain thing right, read forums, watch training videos, there's so much info out there compared to when I was starting, take advantage of it!

9 What player do you think is one to keep an eye on in 2011 to take the poker world by storm?

My roommate Nick Heather kills it online but hasn't had a result live in a

while, he's due a big one for sure!

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

I guess I'd be in some office job. I don't even know what people do in offices! Mind-boggling how so many people go to work in offices, but I'd guess I'd have one of them. I have a masters in Business Analytics so I'd put that to use somewhere.

11 Any WSOP bracelet bets planned?

Well I'm 38 tournaments in Vegas without a cash so think I'll lay off the side-bets for now.

12 Who do you admire most in poker?

Guys like Blom, Phil Ivey, Sam Trickett, Tom Dwan – fellas who have beaten the top top games have to be respected. Although I don't admire their lives, it seems that at the very top you have to be a complete degen.

13 What upcoming events do you plan to play in?

I'm over in Vegas, the next event is the \$2,500 hold'em/omaha.

14 What are your main poker goals for 2011?

To try to make some monies!

POKER NEWS

FITZWILLIAM CASINO AND CARD CLUB

€800 Poker Festival Ticket Freeroll

THE Fitzwilliam Poker Festival 2011 will run from Wednesday, November 23 to Tuesday, November 19 inclusive. The Festival Main Event runs over two days from Saturday and has a €700 Buy-in + €60 Scalp + €40 registration 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 position bet. For full details on the Fitzwilliam Poker Festival, go to www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com.

The Fitzwilliam is running a special freeroll on Sunday, July 10 at 5pm 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, phone 01 6114677 or drop into the Club and sign up at Reception. The deadline for entries is Saturday, July 9.

New €25 Saturday night Freezeout

THE best value tournaments are in the Fitzwilliam this summer. Saturday, July 2 sees the introduction of a brand new weekly freezeout with a buy in of just €20 plus €5 registration. To launch this tournament, an extra €500 will be added to the prize pool. This €25 freezeout offers a cheap introduction to live poker in the club, ideal for online players who are looking to gain experience of playing live events for the first time. With a starting stack of 5000 and 20 minute blinds, the action gets underway at 9.00pm and you can register for a seat online on www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com.

€500 added to tournaments in July

AS WELL as the new €25 freezeout on Saturday, July 2, the Fitz is adding



€500 to the Mid-month €160 Freezeout on Sunday, July 17 and also to the Saturday €125 Freezeouts on the 23 and 30 July. Book online www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com.

End of Month Freezeout – Thursday, July 28

IRELAND'S premier monthly poker tournament takes place on Thursday 28th July – the Fitzwilliam End of Month €250 + €20 Freezeout. The main action will get underway at 8:30pm, with 1- table sit and go satellites from 5:30pm in the Club. Online booking for the End of Month is available on www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com (Credit Card or Moneybookers account). May's tournament saw 141 players battling it out for a prize pool of €35,500 – bragging rights went to David Costello who finished top of the pile and took home the €10k first prize.

Mid-Month €160 Freezeout

SAVE the date for our Mid-Month Freezeout Tournament which takes place on Sunday, June 12 at 4:30pm. Buy-in €150 + €10, an extra €500 is being added to the prize pool, and seats are available online at www.fitzwilliamcardclub.com.

EMOP Dublin Satellites in the Fitzwilliam

THE EMOP comes to town from the 28 to 31 July and you can win a seat to the €1100 Main Event in the Fitzwilliam. Taking place on all Thursdays in July at 8:30pm, the satellite buy-in will be €100 with €50 unlimited re-buys for first 3 levels.

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 €1100 UKIPT Main Event in Galway and \$1500 credit on FullTiltPoker.com. Points are earned by buying into and finishing in the top 9 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.

€500 added to Saturday Freezeouts

THE Fitzwilliam is adding an extra €500 to the Saturday night €120 + €5 Freezeouts on July 23 and 30 at 8:30pm. Book your seat online now to secure a seat.

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 Tom Kitt



Ground control to major Tom

Singer-songwriter Tom Kitt stops to chat with David Jennings before jetting off to Vegas to join the Irish invaders at the World Series of Poker

TOM KITT is packing his suitcase for Vegas. Ugg boots? Check. “They’re perfect for poker,” he explains. “Originally it was made as a man’s shoe and they are lovely to wear – very comfortable and your feet don’t stink. It’s like walking on kittens.”

Guitar? Check. “That’s a no-brainer. I wrote half my last album in a hotel room when I was travelling. It’s business first though. I’ll get the first bracelet out of the way and maybe then we’ll have a party.”

That could prove a very popular party. Singer-songwriter Tom is the brother of Irish singing sensation David and an acclaimed musician himself. His debut album ‘Kitt Happens’ earned rave reviews from the critics and his gigs regularly pack out Whelan’s on Wexford Street. So a free rendition within the confines of a hotel room in Vegas could prove the perfect release from the hard grinding at the Rio.

“Music is my first love. I put an awful lot of work into my first album and released that independently. But the thing most people don’t know is that the music business is a non-profit organisation. People think you’re doing well because you’re on the radio but if you even just do the simple maths in your head, you’ll realise that it’s impossible to make money. By the time you pay for your equipment and band and cover all the costs, you’re basically making a loss.”

It’s lucky poker has been kind to Kitt recently. His tournament cashes have been covering his music costs, and then some. “When I started winning a few quid through poker, I went back recording and buying gear. I’ve wasted a lot more money on music than I have on poker over the last few years, that’s for sure.”

It’s Kitt’s maiden voyage to Vegas but he couldn’t be going over in much better form. Earlier this month, the Rathfarnham rhymer captured the prestigious Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final title in Carlow, defeating 135 opponents in the process.

That field was whittled down to 17 when Sunday arrived and once it became three-handed, Kitt brokered a deal with Tommy Walsh and Demitri Pembroke which saw him take the title and a cheque for €19,200.

“It was the first big title I’ve won so I was happy to finish it off. That’s the funny thing about poker, you’re never, ever happy unless you win. I finished third in the UKIPT last September and I was disgusted. The Celtic Poker final has been known as a soft tournament in the past but then obviously good players are copping on to that and playing in it so it’s becoming more competitive.

“I couldn’t do anything right the first day but I just didn’t do anything stupid and hung in there. Then the second day I lost a big pot with A-K against pocket aces and my stack went right down. Then when I got going, I really went nuts and just kept going. Once you can get a hold of your table, you have to really make it pay. That’s what I’d be good at – I’d be relentless and just wouldn’t stop. I didn’t give them a second.”

Ironically, Kitt is staying with Sean Prendiville – his predecessor as Celtic Poker Tour Grand Final champ – when he arrives in Vegas and their friendship has been a big part of Kitt’s development in the poker jungle over the last few years.

“I started asking the best players as many questions as I could. The likes of Sean, Seamus Cahill, Rory Brown, Andrew Grimason and Peter Murphy. All those lads were winning and I learnt a lot from the way they

were playing.

“The key for me was looking around at certain players that weren’t improving despite playing a lot, because their ego was the problem. I never thought I was better than I was. I knew who was good and I wanted to get as much information as possible from the way they played.”

Kitt took time to learn his trade though. Several near misses at the business end of tournaments proved costly and left him reeling in the ‘what might have been’. But he has learned from those mistakes and benefited in Carlow from past failures. Now the challenge is to maintain the winning habit.

“I started about four years ago and won a few quid in the local cash games, then I went on to play in some of the bigger tournaments around Ireland. To begin with, I wasn’t getting past day one, then I might scrape into the day twos of tournaments but then as I began to learn more I managed to get to a few final tables.

“I finally started to click and was going well in Waterford but I did a Rory McIlroy (US Masters version!) and made an absolutely hash of it. I know there are no real physical attributes to the game but it was the first time I had played three days in a row and it obviously got to me.

“I had another big chance in Killarney. I was much more focused there but just made one big massive mistake that cost me. Things like that leave you in your bed for the week thinking back over them and it even starts to effect your time machine. Then when you get your chance again, you have to take it. When you get to the endgame in a poker tournament, you can look around and see the guys that are left. You can use that to your advantage and remind

yourself to keep your composure.”

Tom is the son of the Fianna Fail politician with the same name who served as a TD for the Dublin South constituency from 1987 to 2011 and was also Government Chief Whip from 2004 to 2008. While he dabbled with the idea of following the path of his father, other avenues became more attractive and he graduated from Trinity College with a degree in Computer Science.

But Kitt has been struck down with the poker bug in recent years and even when he’s not playing, he’s still involved. At the Irish Open in Dublin’s Burlington Hotel in April, he fronted Paddy Power’s live stream TV coverage alongside Jesse May and Tatiana Pasalic and proved an instant hit with viewers.

“Liam Flood rang me and asked me was I interested in being part of the Irish Open coverage on TV. I was planning on playing in the event so I had to give it a lot of thought and it was a tough decision. I’d be an extrovert though so it was definitely something I knew I’d like so I said I’d give it shot.

“I’ve always been pretty

comfortable on stage or with a microphone in my hand and it’s definitely something I’d love to get into more. The Irish Open was an unbelievable experience. It was really hard work as I had a camera in my face for 12 to 14 hours a day but I loved every minute of it and got on really well with Jesse May. He’s a top guy. He’s works so hard and is a total professional.”

So be it presenting or playing, poker is very much part of Kitt’s plans for the foreseeable future.

“I would like to pursue the presenting thing but I still love playing poker and get a great kick out of it. I hope to stick at it but the game changes and people get better. With a lot of help from friends and mentors I seem to have got a good hold of the game.

“I don’t really like the day-to-day grind online and I much prefer to interact with people in live events. I’m very chatty at the table and I use that to my advantage.

“While poker is still value, I’ll definitely keep playing. I’ll only stop if I’m getting beaten up by a load of young guys.”



Kitt chats to Sofia Lovgren at the Irish Open

POKER NEWS



European Masters for Battle of Clontarf

By David Jennings

THE VEGAS recuperation process will be hasty for Ireland's top poker players, most of whom will descend on Clontarf Castle for the European Masters of Poker on July 28.

While all eyes are firmly fixed on the WSOP at the Rio right now, it won't be long before attentions will switch to the EMOP which visits Ireland for the very first time this month.

With the prizepool set to soar over the €350,000, a stellar line-up will enter the stalls for the Dublin leg and John O'Shea, Dara O'Kearney, Nicky Power and Paul Lucey are just some of the household names expected to lead the home challenge.

DUBLINER Stephen Sammon has already cashed at an EMOP stop this year. He finished sixth behind Norwegian pumper Stefan Hansen at Gran Canaria and netted a tasty €8,300 in the process. Sammon will be hoping to feature at the business end again on his home track and brings some solid form into the event.

Connie O'Sullivan, popular proprietor of the Cue Club in Killarney, is promoter of the EMOP Dublin and he

has issued an upbeat bulletin ahead of the four-day extravaganza.

O'Sullivan told Poker Face: "It should be a cracking couple of days and the EMOP events are always very popular. It's the first time it will stop in Dublin and we are expecting over 350 participants. There are 200 from Europe coming over and we'll have Scandinavians and some from Spain and Italy and the rest then will be Irish and English."

Clontarf Castle, a deluxe four-star hotel, would not be renowned for hosting poker tournaments but O'Sullivan was keen to stress the historical Northside venue should prove extremely alluring for foreign visitors.

He explained: "We picked Clontarf Castle for the people coming from abroad really. Tourists are fascinating by castles and you won't find a much nicer castle in Ireland than Clontarf. It's a very picturesque setting and the friends and families of the players in the EMOP will have plenty of fun distractions."

The structure of the €1,000+100 tournament will be the same as the other EMOPs with each entrant getting a starting stack of 20,000 chips and there will be one-hour levels. There will be 150 to 200 playing Day 1a on the Thursday and then another 150 or so playing Day 1b on the Friday, with the survivors fighting it out for the main prize over the weekend.

O'Sullivan, who took home €5,500 from the Northern Open in Dundalk last weekend, has established a serious reputation as a shrewd poker player. However, he'll be unable to compete in Clontarf as he'll have his work cut out ensuring the event runs smoothly.

He admitted: "I have to try and

promote the event and supply staff and equipment. Unfortunately I won't be able to play in it this year because I'll be organising it. It's different to a casino as everything is already set in stone in a casino but when you have an event in a hotel, you have to set things up from scratch."

John 'Dagunman' O'Shea will be among the favourites for top honours and he hopes to run deep in a tournament he holds in high regard.

"The EMOPs are always great tournaments," he said. "I always like to play in as many as I can and the structure of them is great. It would be super to go well in Dublin and hopefully if my Vegas exertions don't take too much out of me I will be able to have a right good crack at it."

"From talking to some of the lads, there will probably be a good field heading to Clontarf Castle and the prize pool will be tasty so I'm certainly looking forward to it."

There have already been three stops on the EMOP tour. Abdul Atila Seiar outlasted a 276-runner field at the Crystal Crown Casino in the Bulgarian resort of Golden Sands early last month.



Paul Lucey

The Romanian went into heads-up play with Finland's Riku Molander with a four-to-one chip lead and needed just 15 hands to claim the title, sealing the €65,000 windfall after his pocket threes outraced Molander's A-5.

The Lisbon leg was won by Finnish poker pro Jukka Koskela who bested a 309-runner field to get his hands on the €72,615 jackpot.

A number of elite poker pros from across Europe travelled to the Casino Estoril in Portugal for the €1,100 main event and Koskela eventually defeated Denmark's Asger Boye in heads-up play to cap a memorable performance.

Norwegian Hansen lifted the first EMOP season III title in Gran Canaria back in January. He took down €34,160 for his victory in the €1,100 buy-in event at the Casino Las Palmas in the Canary Islands after a four-handed deal.

Hansen beat Yohas Avidani from Israel heads-up after pushing all-in with 6-6 and getting called by 3-3. The

board fell K-9-2-A-K, enabling Hansen to follow last year's winner Maciej Lipny of Poland as Gran Canaria champion.

An Irish success hasn't looked likely in any of the EMOP events to date, but with a strong home contingent eager to be crowned Dublin champion, there might just be a Brian Boru-inspired crowd-pleaser winning the Battle of Clontarf on July 31.

EMOP Bulgaria

1. Abdula Atila Seiar€65,100
2. Riku Molander€39,060
3. Luka Vovk€25,480
4. Kiril Donovski€15,510
5. Mikko Taskinen€12,190
6. Andre Moreira€9,420
7. Ciorabai Ferdi€8,310
8. Ofir Pinhasov€7,200
9. Ionescu Alexandru€6,090

EMOP Lisbon

1. Jukka Koskela€72,615
2. Asger Boye€43,569
3. Robert Svedin€28,428
4. Patric Mattson€17,304
5. Nikola Prijovic€13,596
6. Philip Jacobsen€10,506
7. Kristian Alfredsson€9,270
8. Niko Alatupa€8,034
9. Diogo Cardoso€6,798

EMOP Gran Canaria

1. Stefan Hansen€34,160
2. Yohas Avidani€34,580
3. Andrei Demchenko€24,940
4. Pim van Wieringen€28,130
5. Johan Berg€10,220
6. Stephen Sammon€8,300
7. Øystein Sannes€7,240
8. Matti Kontinen€6,170
9. Ran Sahanes€5,110



JOHN O'SHEA

The diary of a professional poker player

Time to cool off on sports betting and concentrate on Vegas challenge

FOLLOWING my May madness on the sports betting front, I decided to take my foot off the gas a little with my gambling away from poker. Not that I was losing much, but I was punting way beyond my bank roll which is never clever.

The day of the Magners and Champions League finals, I had just under \$50K on both Leinster and Barcelona to lift the trophies. Then when Drico and Co didn't produce the goods against arch rivals Munster, I was fairly sweating let me tell you.

I said to myself before tip-off that if Barca got chinned I would have done 25% of my bankroll in just a few hours, which equates to disgraceful bankroll management.

If you constantly punt outside your bankroll with sports betting, you will go bust. Make no mistake about it. When playing poker I always press hard and wager large portions of my bankroll. Then if I lose I just moved down to softer games and was able to rebuild again quickly.

In sports betting there is no moving down levels. You just have to reduce your bets sizes which impacts upon your profitability. Sports betting, like poker, started as a bit of fun for me but then found out I was pretty damn good at it, and I began to realise it was something I could make good money from.

As a consequence, my attitude towards poker was slightly reckless at the start but when I start viewing it as my main form of income, I adopted a more structured approach towards it.

I have made more money from betting on sports than

from playing poker in 2011 (that's not as impressive as it sounds as I am in the red on the poker front this year) so I need to be a bit more professional about it.

With the rugby season over and the WSOP now in full flow, I need to concentrate hard on poker and forget about everything else.

IARRIVED in Vegas a little later than usual last Wednesday week. A lot of the lads came out earlier in the month but I had planned to do a triathlon in Kerry on

June 11 with a few friends.

I chose to do this for several reasons. Number one was because I play better poker when I am physically fit. Number two was that it would get me in good shape for my second weigh-in for my weight-loss bet with Nick Heather.

And three because I came to the WSOP for seven weeks last year and found it too long and very draining.

The triathlon was on in Cahirsiveen, which was my grandfather's hinterland. It was a 750-metre swim, a 20-kilometre cycle and a 5-kilometre run up a cliff face.

I had only trained in a 15-metre pool for the swimming and the

My big collection on Barca winning the Champions League was badly needed!



problem with this was exposed about 15 metres into the swim when I realised that I didn't have a wall to push off.

Somehow I managed to finish the swim. The cycle and run were pretty straightforward afterwards and I completed it in a time of one hour and 35 minutes, which isn't great, but not too bad either.

I have been in Vegas about a week so far and everything has been great. Well everything bar poker. I haven't been overly motivated to play and have only played in the \$3K and \$5K PLO events so far.

Both were very similar tournaments for me. I got short by not running well but also by leaking chips in spots where I usually won't.

Then, once short-stacked, I got it in ahead to get back to starting stack and got dogged. It's early doors though so hopefully I can turn things around along with the rest of the Irish.

IT HAS BEEN an absolutely horrific performance by the Irish so far over here at the WSOP. Bar a few minor cashes there is absolutely nothing of note to report back.

Apart from my brief spells at the

table for the two tournaments mentioned above, I have spent most of my time trying to concentrate on my two prop bets.

I have a \$3K golf bet with Paul Spillane that was supposed to be played last summer but is going ahead next Monday. I am a serious dog for this one given that Paul quit his job and dedicated the last year of his life to winning this bet.

My odds did improve last week after Paul won back-to-back PLO tournaments for \$5K and \$50K. He's been celebrating ever since so there's a small chance I might catch him on the hop and with a hangover.

The other one is that weight loss bet I have with Nick Heather. The weigh-in is before day 1 of the Main Event. I have to get to single figure body fat (9.9% ships the chicken). It's going to be pretty close but I have been gyming pretty hard so fingers crossed I can collect \$3K off Nick to pay Paul.

However, I would quite happily lose both for a run in the \$10K PLO or the \$10K NHL Main Event.

I have heard rumours that Vegas is lovely in November but I certainly wouldn't mind finding out for myself. Although the way I'm playing at the minute, I'll be sampling the colder climates of Dublin when November arrives.



Hopefully I'll wipe that smile off Nick's face

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