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POKER TOUR
DECEMBER 2016

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PLUS:

TIGHT POY RACE
COMING DOWN
TO THE WIRE

'MONEY' MIKE
WINS GOLDEN GATES
REGIONAL

MSPT
CHAMPION
Golden Gate Casino
Black Hawk, CO
November 10-13, 2016



AND:

STRATEGY BY
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INDUSTRY INSIDERS:
GRAND FALLS'
RENEE THOMAS

Carl Carodenuto

MAKES MSPT HISTORY WINNING 3RD TITLE

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MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

UPCOMING EVENTS



SEASON 7 FINALE

Canterbury Park
Shakopee, MN
December 2-11, 2016

**\$200,000
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\$350 REGIONAL

Potawatomi Casino
Milwaukee, WI
Dec. 31 - Jan. 8, 2017

**\$100,000
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bestbet
Jacksonville, FL
January 19-29, 2017

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GUARANTEED!**



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The Venetian
Las Vegas, NV
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**\$300,000
GUARANTEED!**

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**Management reserves the right to alter or cancel promotion/tournament at any time*

Letter from the Editor

SEASON 8 OF THE MSPT SET TO BE THE BIGGEST AND BEST YET

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

In 2009, the Minnesota State Poker Tour debuted. A year and a half later, when the tour spilled over the state border, it was rebranded the Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT). Here we are eight years later about to kick off our eighth season.

In the first two seasons of the MSPT, just half a dozen stops were held throughout Minnesota. In Season 3, the tour expanded to stops in Iowa, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and the South Dakota market. Since then, we've added stops in locales such as Michigan, Colorado, and Las Vegas, just to name a few.

We recently released our schedule for 2017 on msptpoker.com, and you can rest assured we'll be adding to that schedule as Season 8 progresses. Among the highlights are a January return to bestbet Jacksonville for both a 350 buy-in, \$100K GTD Regional and \$1,100 buy-in, \$200K GTD Main Event, our first-ever \$350 Regional Event at Grand Falls Casino just outside Sioux Falls in May, and not one, but two stops at the Venetian in Las Vegas.

For the past three years, the summer stop in Sin City has set the record for largest tournament in MSPT history (the most recent installment attracted 2,887 entries), and we're excited to compliment that with another \$1,100 Main Event over Super Bowl Weekend (don't worry, the tournament will conclude on Saturday so everyone has the chance to watch the big game).

Season 8 is shaping up to be special, and we hope to see you on the tour!

Bryan Mileski
MSPT Founder

Chad Holloway
MSPT Magazine Editor-In-Chief



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President and Publisher

Bryan Mileski
Bryan@msptpoker.com

Editor-in-Chief

Chad Holloway
Chad@msptpoker.com

Event Manager

Eric Anderson

Art Director

Carolyn Borgen
Carolyn@msptpoker.com

Advertising Information

Chad@msptpoker.com

Story Ideas

Chad@msptpoker.com

Our Mission

MSPT Magazine is a monthly magazine dedicated to serving poker players and gaming facilities through MSPT news, results, tournament schedules, player profiles and professional tips. Coupled with our website, msptpoker.com, we are the Nation's #1 Poker Tour.

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Event Recap

“MONEY” MIKE MARUNA WINS MSPT GOLDEN GATES REGIONAL FOR \$50,997 AFTER HEADS-UP CHOP!

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

The Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) held its ninth and final Regional Event of Season 7 at Golden Gates Casino in Black Hawk, Colorado November 3-6. The 838-entry field (242 Day 1a; 267 Day 1b; 329 Day 1c) surpassed April’s field by three players and made it the largest MSPT event ever held at the property.

After four days of intense play, Mike Maruna captured the title and a \$50,997 first-place prize after striking a heads-up deal with Tom Bouziden. It was a little redemption for Maruna, who made the final table of the April event, ultimately finishing in eighth place for \$10,910.

The win was far and away the largest score of Maruna’s career, which includes a 228th-place finish in the 2016 World Series of Poker Event #12: 565 Pot-Limit Omaha for \$1,072 and \$7,792 for finishing 30th in the 2013 ISPT London Main Event.

The latest MSPT Golden Gates Regional, the fourth held at the venue, was the 13th Regional Event since their inception at the beginning of 2015. The Regional Events were designed to offer players the opportunity to play MSPT’s lauded “Chainsaw-Approved” \$1,100 Main Event structure at an affordable price. At Golden Gates, that buy-in is \$360.

“Time and again Black Hawk, Colorado shows it’s a hotspot for poker,” said MSPT President Bryan Mileski, who was on hand all weekend long to interact with players. “Not only do our Main Events continue to draw record fields, but the Regionals also keep growing and growing. The latest is



Mike Maruna



Golden Gates Casino
Buy-in: \$360 ♣ 838 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Mike Maruna	Coldwater, OH	\$50,997
2	Tom Bouziden	Colorado Springs, CO	\$38,000
3	Kelly De Jaynes	Lakewood, CO	\$21,922
4	Dan Howell	Denver, CO	\$15,185
5	Alice Woolworth	Arvada, CO	\$11,062
6	Chris Fulton	Highlands Ranch, CO	\$8,497
7	Matt Walter	Brighton, CO	\$7,014
8	Vlad Kandinov	Brooklyn, NY	\$5,858
9	Travis Northrope	Broomfield, CO	\$4,701
10	Barry Faecher	Lakewood, CO	\$3,595

evidence that players love affordable tournaments offering solid structures. The MSPT Regionals certainly fit the bill.”

Among those to cash in the event were Shane Faulk (81st - \$654), Mike Monetti (67th - \$704), Phanora Prom (50th - \$930), Darren Hicks (24th - \$1,584), Nathan Hoh (16th - \$2,011), and final table bubble boy Frank Yakubson (11th - \$3,595). ♣



Final Table

\$695,000

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MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Standings as of November 19, 2016



Carl Carodenuto - Minneapolis, MN

♣All players who cash in an MSPT event are ranked for Player of the Year points. At the end of the calendar year, the top-ranked player will receive POY recognition, \$250 toward a satellite or Main Event at every Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) event the following season (max \$5,000), as well as a \$1,100 Main Event seat with \$400 travel to Venetian Mid-Season Championship

♣MSPT Player of the Year points are awarded based on the total prizepool of the tournament.

♣For more POY information, including how points are awarded, and to follow the race in 2016, visit www.msptpoker.com/pages/poy

Rank	Player Name	Points
1	Carl Carodenuto	3,800
2	Richard Alsup	3,600
3	Hao "John" Sun	3,300
4	Aaron Massey	3,100
5	Thupten Thondup	2,400
6	Josh Reichard	2,250
7	Jeremy Dresch	2,200
8	Travis Lauson	2,117
9	Matt Alexander	2,084
10	Rodger Johnson	2,050
11	Thomas Boivin	2,000
12	Richard Bai	1,900
13	Mukul Pahuja	1,800
	Brett Blackwood	1,800
15	Keith Heine	1,750
16	Ryan Phan	1,700
17	Ron Kruk	1,650
	Cy Church	1,650
19	Mark Sandness	1,600
	Kou Vang	1,600
	Adam Thomas	1,600
	Michael Rudolph	1,600
23	Jim Boone	1,567
	Blake Whittington	1,567
25	Jason Smith	1,550
	Griff Woodman	1,550
27	TJ Ryan	1,500
	Jason Bender	1,500
	Andrew Rubinberg	1,500
	Ken Komberec	1,500
	Rory Lucero	1,500
	Arthur Andrade	1,500
	Josh Crain	1,500
	Nevada Saad	1,500
	Taylor Wilson	1,500
36	Earl Potter	1,467
37	Jason Vanstrom	1,450
	Abraham Montenegro	1,450
39	Nathan Hoh	1,433
40	Aalok Arora	1,400
	Shawn Roberts	1,400
	Brandon Byrne	1,400
	Jim Casement	1,400
	Vinh Ho	1,400
45	Scott Johnson	1,367
46	Anthony Knepper	1,350
	Jimmy Ray	1,350
48	Muneer Ahmed	1,333

In addition to other POY prizes, Kondler & Associates, CPAs will provide the MSPT Season 7 Player of the Year with free tax services for the 2016 tax year. This includes preparation of all tax forms (1040, 1099, etc.) as well as year-long tax planning and guidance. The firm has specialized in gambling taxation for over 10 years and has developed a concentration in the gaming industry. Kondler & Associates, CPAs has offices in Las Vegas, Atlantic City and San Diego and prepares tax returns for clients across the country.

Check out complete MSPT stats page at msptpoker.com

Event Recap

KEN KOMBEREC FOLLOWS IN FOOTSTEPS OF CHILDHOOD FRIEND JOHN SUN, WINS MSPT MESKWAKI FOR \$93,922

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

The Mid-States Poker Tour Meskwaki Main Event began with 405 entries (195 Day 1a; 210 Day 1b)—which surpassed the \$300K advertised guarantee by creating a \$405,000 total prize pool—but after three days it was Wisconsin's Ken Komberec who finished as the last player standing to capture a \$93,922 first-place prize.

Interestingly, Komberec's win comes just four months after his best friend, Iowa State Poker Champ and John Sun, won his MSPT title at Meskwaki. Komberec, a 40-year-old poker player and proprietor of midwestsportsinvestors.net, was on the rail for that one, so it was only fitting his buddy was there for him.

"Feels good. I don't play in a lot of these, so it feels great," Komberec said after the win. "John won here in July. Hopefully you'll keep having us back. We'll be playing some more tournaments in the next six months for sure."

"I just knew he was going to do it today, I just knew it," added Sun, who moved to the United States from Korea at the age of 13 and has been best friends with Komberec ever since. Appropriately, Sun had 3% of his friend, their customary swap when playing in the same tournament.

"I think [my wife, son, and I] will be moving in the next year, so house money," Komberec said when asked about his plans for the prize money.

Day 2 saw 69 players return to action, but with only 45 slated to get paid, 24 players are destined to leave empty handed. Among them were MSPT Season 6 Meskwaki champ Rich Alsup, NFL free agent running back Fred Jackson, and Omaha poker pro Ryan Phan.

After Charles Anderson fell as the bubble boy in 46th place, players began to make their way to the payout desk including MSPT Pro Blake Bohn (43rd - \$1,957), former MSPT champs Jason Seitz (37th - \$1,957), Rodger Johnson (32nd - \$2,348), and Kou Vang (26th - \$2,935); MSPT Pro Matt Alexander (17th - \$3,796), and World Series of Poker bracelet winner John Reading (14th - \$5,088).

The final table kicked off with a bang as two players—John Whitacre (10th - \$6,653) and Keith Neuzil (9th - \$8,766) – hit the rail at the hands of Josh Reichard. From there,



Ken Komberec



Meskwaki Casino

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 405 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Ken Komberec	Grafton, WI	\$93,922
2	Drew Woodke	Omaha, NE	\$56,746
3	Tom Hammers	Burnsville, MN	\$36,983
4	Josh Reichard	Janesville, WI	\$25,633
5	DJ Buckley	St. Paul, MN	\$19,568
6	Carl Carodenuto	Bloomington, MN	\$15,067
7	Ron McMillen	Cambridge, IA	\$12,523
8	Anthony Knepper	Asbury, IA	\$10,371
9	Keith Neuzil	Oxford, IA	\$8,766
10	John Whitacre	Newton, IA	\$6,653

Meskwaki Casino

Anthony Knepper and Ron McMillen, the last two players from Iowa, exited in eighth and seventh respectively, and then one player's shot at MSPT history came to a halt.

Carl Carodenuto, who won the MSPT Canterbury Park last December and then successfully defended his title in April, fell in sixth place after losing a big race. Of course Carodenuto was back at it a week later when he won the MSPT Golden Gates for his record third title. That event was recapped earlier in this issue.

After DJ Buckley bowed out in fifth place at what was his fifth MSPT final table, the last tour champ in the field followed him out the door in fourth place for \$25,633. Reichard, who ran pocket deuces into jacks, bested his father's sixth-place finish in the same event back in July while notching the third-largest score of his career.

Tom Hammers was the next to go after his pocket aces were cracked by the jacks of Komberec, who then took a more than 2-1 chip lead into heads-up play against Omaha's Drew Woodke. The two jostled for a bit, but eventually Komberec sealed the deal when his pocket aces held against Woodke's open-ended straight draw.

The win marked just the second tournament cash of Komberec's career, the other being \$3,528 for an 18th-place finish in the MSPT Potawatomi last season. 🍀



Ken Komberec and John Sun



Final Table

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Event Preview

SEASON 8 OF MSPT KICKS OFF WITH \$100K GTD REGIONAL EVENT AT POTAWATOMI IN MILWAUKEE

BY MSPT POKER STAFF



Season 8 of the Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) is fast approaching, and we're excited to announce the first stop of 2017! The new season will kick off with a \$350 buy-in, \$100,000 guaranteed MSPT Regional Event at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from Jan. 5-8, 2017.

The Regional Event will be held over four days beginning Thursday with Day 1A at 5 p.m. Day 1A will play 16 levels. Friday's and Saturday's Day 1B and 1C will start at 5 p.m. and 2 p.m. respectively and also play 16 levels. Players who advance to Day 2 from a previous flight are not eligible to play in a subsequent flight. The remaining players from each flight

will combine on Sunday morning at 11 a.m. and play until a champion is crowned.

The MSPT has hosted two previous Regional Events at Potawatomi. The first was back in January 2016 when Oscar Arndt topped a field of 904 entries to win a \$58,964 first-place prize. Six months later, it was Vinh Tran who conquered a record field of 1,169 entries to win \$49,944 after striking a heads-up deal with Ryan Gatrel.

Satellites for January's MSPT Potawatomi Regional event have already begun. Here's a look at the full schedule:

 		Event Schedule	
Potawatomi Casino - Milwaukee, WI		Dec. 31 - Jan. 8, 2017	
MSPT REGIONAL - \$100,000 GUARANTEED			
<small>Registration is first come first served. Please be registered 30 minutes prior to event start. Players must have a players club card and valid ID to register and play.</small>			
SINGLE TABLE SATELLITES (SIT-N-GO) OFFERED DAILY ON DEMAND			
\$85 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$350 Main Event			
\$120 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$350 Main Event			
Day	Event	Location	Time
Sunday, November 27	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	3:00 PM
Sunday, December 4	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	3:00 PM
Sunday, December 11	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	3:00 PM
Sunday, December 18	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	3:00 PM
Saturday, December 31	\$50 Satellite - 10% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	11:00 AM
	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	4:30 PM
Sunday, January 1	\$50 Satellite - 10% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	11:00 AM
	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	4:30 PM
Monday, January 2	\$50 Satellite - 10% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	6:30 PM
Tuesday, January 3	\$50 Satellite - 10% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	6:30 PM
Wednesday, January 4	\$50 Satellite - 10% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	12:00 PM
	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	6:30 PM
Thursday, January 5	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight A or B	Poker Room	12:00 PM
	\$350 MSPT Main Event Day 1A (\$100,000 Guaranteed)* <small>Main Event Structure Designed By Allen Kessler - "Chainsaw Approved"</small>	Event Center	5:00 PM
Friday, January 6	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight B or C	Poker Room	12:00 PM
	\$350 MSPT Main Event Day 1B (\$100,000 Guaranteed)* <small>Main Event Structure Designed By Allen Kessler - "Chainsaw Approved"</small>	Event Center	5:00 PM
Saturday, January 7	\$90 Satellite - 20% advance to \$100,000 GTD Flight C	Poker Room	9:00 AM
	\$350 MSPT Main Event Day 1C (\$100,000 Guaranteed)* <small>Main Event Structure Designed By Allen Kessler - "Chainsaw Approved"</small>	Event Center	2:00 PM
Sunday, January 8	MSPT Main Event - Day 2*	Event Center	11:00 AM

Players are allowed to re-enter a Satellite if they are eliminated before the end of late registration.
Players are allowed a MAX of one (1) re-entry per Main Event Flight during standard registration process
Re-entries will receive a full starting stack
There will be no dead-stacks in play for the Satellites or the Main Event
Players are eligible to play at first opportunity, they do not have to post or wait for the blinds.
Re-entries will be assigned seat based on random draw or to balance tables at TD's discretion

Event Recap

MAKING HISTORY: CARL CARODENUTO WINS MSPT GOLDEN GATES FOR \$114,072; WINS THIRD MSPT TITLE IN 11 MONTHS

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

History was made at the tour's second stop of the season at Golden Gates in Black Hawk, Colorado as Carl Carodenuto won an unprecedented third Mid-States Poker Tour title, not to mention a \$114,072 first-place prize.

Carodenuto, who won the MSPT Canterbury Park in December and then successfully defended his title in April (in fields of 470 and 376 entries), wasn't even going to attend the stop until his friend Rich Alsop called him up. Seeing as the two were tied in fourth on the MSPT Season 7 Player of the Year leaderboard with 2,300 points each, they decided to catch an early Saturday morning flight from Minnesota.

A day and a half later, they finished as champion and runner-up and together vaulted to the top of the POY leaderboard.

"We found a last minute ticket," said Carodenuto, who a week prior finished sixth in the MSPT Meskwaki. "It's a quick 48-hour turnaround. Holy shit. Richie and I will for sure compete for POY, I just hope he doesn't take the lead from me"

Not only did Carodenuto win a record third title—all of which have come in an 11-month period -- he also took the POY lead with two stops to go, vaulted to second on the tour's all-time money list, and notched his fourth MSPT cash, all of which have been final tables!

The MSPT's second stop of Season 7 at Golden Gates Casino in Black Hawk, Colorado was a big one. The \$1,100 Main Event attracted 490 entrants over three starting flights (98 on Day 1a, 183 on 1b, and 209 on 1c), of which 92 players returned for Day 2 action on Sunday.

With 45 players slated to get paid, more than half the field would leave empty handed. Among those to fall short of a cash were former MSPT champs Mark Sandness and Rodger Johnson, 2015 World Series of Poker Milly Maker champ Adrian Buckley, and Jim Rice, a contestant on the hit TV show *Survivor: South Pacific* (Season 23).

After David Hampel fell on the money bubble, the in-the-money eliminations came quick including WSOP Colossus II champ Ben Keeline (39th - \$2,377), MSPT Pro Matt Alexander



Carl Carodenuto

Golden Gates Casino

(35th - \$2,852), April's MSPT Golden Gates runner-up Jason Vanstrom (32nd - \$2,852), Day 1a chip leader Scott Stewart (25th - \$3,565), Season 6 champ Kane Lai (22nd - \$3,565), and final table bubble boy Aaron Thomas (11th - \$8,080).

Carodenuto, who was at his second MSPT final table in a week, kicked things off in style by eliminating Kai Wang on just the third hand. However, on the fourth hand he was the victim of a cooler running queens into the pocket aces of five-time World Series of Poker Circuit ring winner Josh Turner.

From there, Jackson McAllister and Alex Greenblatt, the Day 1b and 1c chip leaders respectively, took their leave, and not long after Bobby Garcia hit the rail. After Brian Gallegos fell in sixth, a huge pot occurred between Carodenuto and chip leader Adam Wilbur. The former shoved after rivering kings and eights only to find out his opponent had flopped kings and queens.

Wilbur lost a flip to bust a short time later, and one hand after Alsup took care of Norman Straughn in fourth. During three-handed play, Carodenuto once again flopped kings and queens, and it led to the demise of Turner, who had flopped kings and tens.

Heads-up play was an interesting one. Carodenuto began with 6.5 million to Alsup's 2.5 million, but no matter where they finished they were going to be No. 1 and 2 on the MSPT



Golden Gates Casino

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 490 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Carl Carodenuto	Minneapolis, MN	\$114,072
2	Rich Alsup	Minneapolis, MN	\$68,919
3	Joshua Turner	St. Louis, MO	\$44,916
4	Norman Straughn IV	Westminster, CO	\$31,132
5	Adam Wilbur	Erie, CO	\$23,765
6	Brian Gallegos	Denver, CO	\$18,291
7	Bobby Garcia	Denver, CO	\$15,210
8	Alexander Greenblatt	San Francisco, CA	\$12,595
9	Jackson McAllister	Denver, CO	\$10,647
10	Kai Wang	Denver, CO	\$8,080

Season 7 POY leaderboard. In the final hand, Alsup made a move with six-four, and despite flopping a pair, lost when Carodenuto rivered an ace with ace-ten.

With that, Carodenuto made history and removed any doubt that he is one of the biggest poker breakouts of the year. Congrats to Carl Carodenuto on winning his third MSPT title! 🏆



Final Table

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Strategy presented by Jonathan Little

JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE A DRAW DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD APPLY AGGRESSION

BY JONATHAN LITTLE

An interesting hand took place on Day 2 of November's MSPT Meskwaki Main Event. On the fifth hand of the final table, which was in Level 25 with the blinds at 15,000/30,000/4,000, Josh Reichard, who had won the MSPT Ho-Chunk Gaming Wisconsin Dells back in Season 4, opened for 65,000 from middle position. Ron McMillen called from the cutoff, Keith Neuzil came along from the big blind, and three players saw a flop of $J\heartsuit A\clubsuit 9\heartsuit$.



Keith Neuzil

Neuzil led out for 100,000, Reichard raised to 235,000, and McMillen folded. Neuzil just called and the $10\heartsuit$ appeared on the turn. Neuzil bet another 100,000 and Reichard shoved for 560,000. Neuzil thought for a minute or so and then called, leaving himself just 88,000 behind.

Reichard revealed the $A\heartsuit 10\clubsuit$ for two pair, which was ahead of Neuzil's $K\heartsuit 8\clubsuit$ straight and flush draw. The dealer burned one last time and put out the $J\clubsuit$ on the river. Neuzil missed and would be eliminated a short time later in ninth place for \$8,766.

It's not a bad result to finish ninth out of 405 entrants, but when you consider Neuzil began the final table fourth in chips, it had to be disappointing not to finish higher. With significant pay jumps and \$93,922 up top, I couldn't help but question Neuzil's decision to gamble.

"I would have check-called the flop," poker pro Jonathan Little said when asked to analyze the hand. "By leading, he allows his opponents to easily call with all top and middle

pair hands, which they should have quite often, given the preflop middle position raise and the cutoff call. When the board contains two Broadway cards, leading or check-raising with draws is often a bad strategy because it is too likely that your opponents have decent made hands that they will not fold."

Little was also suspect of Reichard's raise on the flop.

"In a generic example with no reads, you cannot narrow your opponent's range so quickly," he explained. "If you assume the lead is with either a premium made hand (like two-pair), a marginal made hand (like middle pair) or a draw, then strong but non-nut made hands like A-10 should call because if they raise, they will only get action from premium made hands and strong draws."

As for Neuzil's turn lead, Little wasn't a fan (though he concedes it's alright if Neuzil never expects to get raised). Instead, Little believes that by betting so small, Neuzil was giving himself an excellent price compared to if he checked and faced a 200,000 bet. As it was, he led out and was faced with a tough decision when Reichard piled.

"Neuzil is in a tough spot because he will win versus strong made hands about 31% of the time and based on the pot odds, he needs to win about 31% of the time," said Little. "Due to the payout implications in a tournament, he should fold because there is a decent amount of merit in just surviving and letting other players bust out. If Neuzil thinks he is the worst player at the table, perhaps calling has some merit because he may not be able to find a better spot in the future. In general, though, at final tables, you should actively look to avoid calling off in break-even situations."

For more on Little, follow him on Twitter @JonathanLittle.

PokerCoaching.com is an interactive poker learning experience from two-time WPT Champion Jonathan Little. Try it for free at PokerCoaching.com/mspt.



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To honor the new year, Grand Casino is changing for the better! Upgrades include new restaurants and improvements to the gaming floor. At Grand Casino Hinckley we're welcoming Stories Diner, which will be the perfect spot to get your friends together. And the Brand Burger Bar is now open at Grand Casino Mille Lacs!

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MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

MSPT EARNINGS

Leaders as of November 19, 2016



Thomas Boivin - Las Vegas, NV



Carl Carodenuto - Minneapolis, MN

Rank	Player Name	Amount
1	Thomas Boivin	\$352,153
2	Carl Carodenuto	\$336,047
3	Peixin Liu	\$304,545
4	Richard Alsop	\$303,549
5	Mukul Pahuja	\$300,000
6	Blake Bohn	\$281,885
7	Jason Zarlenga	\$272,194
8	Jeremy Dresch	\$255,303
9	Angelina Rich	\$234,829
10	Kou Vang	\$230,107
11	Travis Lauson	\$216,934
12	John Hayes	\$206,648
13	Aaron Massey	\$203,987
14	Keven Stammen	\$199,635
15	Thupten Thondup	\$198,015
16	Hao "John" Sun	\$193,587
17	Brett Blackwood	\$188,314
18	David Gonia	\$180,874
19	Mark Sandness	\$176,364
20	Andrew Rubinberg	\$175,921
21	Matt Kirby	\$173,499
22	Nick Jivkov	\$173,155
23	Dan Sun	\$170,588
24	David Mowery	\$169,837
25	Bill Rogers	\$165,234
26	Drake Bronk	\$163,870
27	David Lee	\$160,407
28	Ryan Hartmann	\$157,058
29	Rodger Johnson	\$156,805
30	Dan Hendrickson	\$155,192
31	Daniel Goepel	\$152,705
32	Jason Mirza	\$152,443
33	Michael Rudolph	\$147,122
34	Harry Tisdale	\$142,637
35	Josh Reichard	\$139,549
36	Matt Alexander	\$137,222
37	Michael Ferrarotti	\$136,868
38	Phanora Prom	\$134,786
39	TJ Ryan	\$133,576
40	Mark Hodge	\$132,434
41	Nicholas Pupillo	\$130,807
42	Leon Morford	\$130,300
43	Ervin Bjerga	\$129,069
44	Ryan Dykhouse	\$129,043
45	Muneer Ahmed	\$128,622
46	Michael Lang	\$128,158
47	Adam Lamphere	\$126,808
48	Jason Sell	\$123,201
49	James Gibson	\$123,061
50	Joe Matheson	\$122,931

Check out complete MSPT stats page at msptpoker.com

Industry Insider

INDUSTRY INSIDERS: GRAND FALLS POKER ROOM MANAGER RENEE THOMAS

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

Earlier this season, the Mid-States Poker Tour visited Grand Falls Casino in Larchwood, Iowa, which is right outside Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The \$1,100 Main Event surpassed the \$150K guarantee by attracting 187 entries, and in the end it was 2010 Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame inductee Ted Takasaki who walked away with a \$52,360 first-place prize.

The stop marked the fifth time the MSPT had visited the property. The first took place back in 2012 when Dan Sun topped a field of 215 entrants to win \$60,486 and become the MSPT's first back-to-back champion. Other winners of the MSPT Grand Falls Casino include Josh Smith, who topped a field of 218 to win \$59,221 in August 2013; MSPT Pro Blake Bohn, who outlasted 200 other entrants to win in August 2014 for \$54,607; and 2015 champ Alan Curl, who topped a field of 238 entrants to win \$64,655.

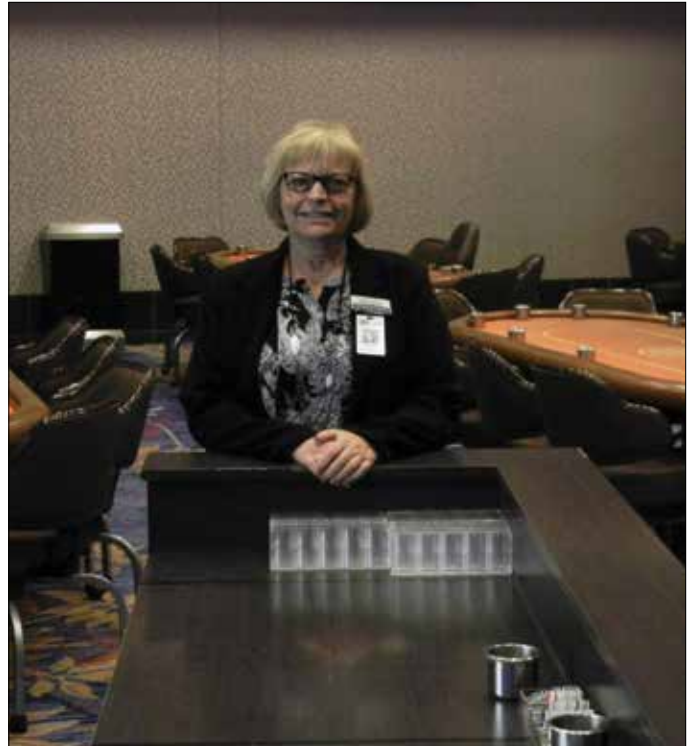
Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort was granted an operator's license for a casino in May of 2010, which followed the passage of a referendum approving a gaming structure by the citizens of Lyon County, Iowa in September of 2008. Since then, the property has won a number of awards including *Midwest Gaming and Destination Magazine* 2016 Readers' Choice Awards for "Best Amenities," "Best Golf Course," and "Best Casino Personnel."

It also ranked as the second-best overall property in Iowa, second-best for amenities in the entire Midwest, and having the best golf course in the entire Midwest!

As far as poker at Grand Falls is concerned, Renee Thomas, a mother of three and grandmother of two (not to mention her 3 lbs. Chihuahua that she claims runs the show at her house), is the woman spearheading the team that makes the action happen.

"I've been in the casino industry for 26 years in three states," Thomas tells *MSPT Magazine*. "I started out dealing blackjack in South Dakota for a year before transferring to poker as a dealer. I became a supervisor there and then managed the room for three and a half years. After 10 years, I moved to Colorado and followed the same path of dealing, supervising and then managing the Lady Luck poker room for six years."

After Lady Luck, a sister property to Golden Gates Poker



Renee Thomas

Parlour (another MSPT stop) just down the street, Thomas set her sights on returning to the Midwest.

"As much as I loved Colorado, I knew that I would eventually want to move back closer to my family," Thomas explains. "A friend had told me about a casino possibly being built in Larchwood, Iowa so I started paying attention when the state was doing impact studies. When Grand Falls was hiring I came on board before the casino opened as a supervisor and assisted the poker manager in training poker dealers. I was promoted to poker room manager three and a half years ago."

Once in the driver's seat, Thomas helped bring one of the country's premiere poker tours to the property.

"Our players look forward to the \$1,100 MSPT every year," she says excitedly. "It's a great way for our local players to have the opportunity to satellite into a large tournament without having to travel. Because of our location we bring in players from multiple states and because of our amenities,

Grand Falls Casino

many of them treat it like a mini vacation with their spouse.”

Of course there's a lot of poker action to be had even when the MSPT isn't in town.

“Along with running the MSPT every August, our poker room runs three different tournament events each year as well as low limit weekly tournaments,” says Thomas. “We have the Fall Poker Series in November, our Poker Championship in March and our Summer Poker Challenge in June. I know every manager says that their poker room is friendly but ours truly is! We have such a great staff of supervisors, dealers and dealers here at Grand Falls and we do our very best to take care of our player's needs from getting you a Resort Club card to calling the Big Drop to order your dinner.”

While a strong player base from nearby Sioux Falls and an experienced staff help make poker at Grand Falls a success, Thomas is also quick to credit the resort itself.

“Grand Falls Casino and Golf Resort has so much to offer our guests and it's a great destination for a mini vacation,” she says. “You can relax at the spa or pool, play golf, shop in our boutique and then have dinner at Ruthie's, Robert's Buffet or the Big Drop.”

For more information on the property, visit grandfallscasinoresort.com. 🍷





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Mile High Comics

MILE HIGH COMICS GIVES BACK WITH CHARITY POKER TOURNAMENTS

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

Founded by Chuck Rozanski in 1969 from his parents' basement in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Mile High Comics (MHC) has become one of the world's largest comic book retailers. Not only do they have numerous locations in Denver, including the Jason Street Super Store (which is literally a warehouse full of comics), MHC has become one of the comic world's premiere online retailers.

On the Mid-States Poker Tour's (MSPT) most recent visit to Black Hawk, Colorado, which is about an hour outside Denver, we learned that about once a month MHC gets into the poker business. Started at the beginning of 2015 in conjunction with Royal Poker Club, MHC has been hosting charity Texas hold'em tournaments.

The tournaments cost just \$25 to enter with all proceeds going to charity. Players compete for \$2,000 in gift certificates to the store, and it's made all the sweeter because it's essentially a freeroll. That's because Rozanski gives each player a \$25 gift certificate just for playing.

"It costs you to \$25 to enter, but you get a \$25 gift certificate," said Bobb Ringer, who has run the Royal Poker Club for 16 years. "Comic book people are really interesting people, and I mean that in a good way. I have never run into someone I didn't like. Those players run the gamut in age, sex, and race. They're all great people. Chuck's tournament is something I enjoy giving my time to because it does help"

In addition to overseeing the tournament and providing volunteer dealers, the Royal Poker Club, which started as a bar league and has morphed into an invite-only club operating above MHC, also provides publicity. With 45-50 weekly members in their games, players are able to spread the word in the Denver poker community.

In their November event, the charity poker tournament attracted 54 players and raised more than \$1,000 for Snow Ball Charity Fund benefiting Urban Peak and Rainbow Alley. Interestingly, Chuck's daughter, Tanith Rozanski, cashed in the tournament, but in the end it was Jordan Lamunyun (pictured right) who captured the top prize, which was a \$1,000 gift certificate. Runner-up (pictured left) was awarded a \$500 gift certificate.

1st - Jordan Lamunyun... \$1,000 MHC Gift Certificate

2nd - Erin Sparks... \$500 MHC Gift Certificate



3rd - Neil Baesel... \$200 MHC Gift Certificate

4th - Ashley Kohlrus... \$100 MHC Gift Certificate

5th - Pat Delance... \$100 MHC Gift Certificate

6th - Tanith Rozanski... \$100 MHC Gift Certificate

For more information on MHC and their future charity poker events, visit milehighcomics.com.



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