



MSPT

MID-STATES POKER TOUR

**NATION'S #1
POKER TOUR**

NOVEMBER 2016



Brett Blackwood

WINS LARGEST POKER TOURNAMENT IN MICHIGAN HISTORY

**MARK JOHNSON
WINS YEAR-LONG
"NO SHAVE" BET**

**POTAWATOMI
MILWAUKEE, WI
PREVIEW**

**SEASON 7
TO CONCLUDE
AT CANTERBURY**

**INDUSTRY INSIDERS:
MESKWAKI GM
DAN STROMER**

**Industry's Best LIVE
Reporting for every MSPT
Main Event**



MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

UPCOMING EVENTS



Meskwaki Casino
Tama, IA
Oct. 29 - Nov. 6, 2016
*18 or older event

**\$300,000
GUARANTEED!**



\$360 & \$1,100 Events!
Golden Gates Casino
Black Hawk, CO
November 3-13, 2016

**\$200,000
GUARANTEED!**



Potawatomi Casino
Milwaukee, WI
November 12-20, 2016
*21 or older event

**\$200,000
GUARANTEED!**



Canterbury Park
Shakopee, MN
December 2-11, 2016
*18 or older event

**\$200,000
GUARANTEED!**

**Final Table for most MSPT main events will be broadcast LIVE
with hole cards on MSPTPOKER.com**

** For full schedule of qualifiers, satellites, and Main Event, visit:*

WWW.MSPTPOKER.COM

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

Letter from the Editor

POKER IN THE MIDWEST IS AS STRONG AS EVER

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

Some critics like to argue that poker is dying. They often cite closing poker rooms, lackluster traffic in states where online poker is legalized, and poker TV shows disappearing from the airwaves as evidence of poker's decline. Those things are certainly cause for concern, but aren't indicative of the overall state of poker, at least not in the Midwest.

On the contrary, poker has never been stronger in the Great Lake States, just look at the second weekend in October. That is when the Mid-States Poker Tour hosted its largest ever event outside of Las Vegas. The 2016 Michigan State Poker Championship, which took place at FireKeepers Casino and is highlighted later in this issue, drew 884 entries, which made it the largest poker tournament in state history (we broke our own record of 820 entries from the Spring).

We were shocked at the record-breaking turnout, especially given both the Fall Poker Classic Main Event at Canterbury Park and World Series of Poker Horseshoe Hammond Opening Event were taking place the same weekend. The former, a \$1,100 buy-in event, attracted 389 runners, while the latter, which was a \$365 no-limit hold'em re-entry tournament, drew 2,121 entries.

That means in one weekend, 3,394 entrants participated in major poker tournaments across the Midwest. That's impressive and a sign that poker is alive and well in states like Michigan, Minnesota and Illinois, just to name a few.

When it comes to poker, there's more to the Midwest than meets the eye. Come to any of our upcoming MSPT stops and you'll see for yourself!

Bryan Mileski
MSPT Founder

Chad Holloway
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Vol. 1/No. 7

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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.

Mid-States Poker Tour

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MID STATES POKER TOUR

December 2 - 11, 2016

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February/March 2017

MID STATES POKER TOUR

April 2017

RACEBOOK OPEN DAILY

Event Preview

MID-STATES POKER TOUR SEASON 7 FINALE DECEMBER 2-11 AT CANTERBURY PARK

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

Season 7 of the Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) has been one for the record books, from our biggest events and prize pools to date, to memorable winners including Thomas Boivin, Aaron Massey, and Jeremy Dresch. From December 2-11, we will wrap up the season with the traditional finale at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, Minnesota.

The venue, which only requires players be 18 years old to participate, played host to the first-ever MSPT event way back in 2010, and this December it will hold a series of qualifiers and bonus events leading up to the \$200,000 guaranteed,

\$1,100 buy-in Main Event.

Last December in the Season 6 finale, 470 entrants took to the felt and created a \$470,000 prize pool. Carl Carodenuto emerged victorious in that event and walked away with a \$116,103 first-place prize. Amazingly, Carodenuto returned in April and defended his title against a field of 376 entries to win \$90,805. It marked the first time in tour history a player successfully defended his title (a rare feat in the poker world indeed).

MSPT MID-STATES POKER TOUR		CANTERBURY PARK		Event Schedule	
Canterbury Park - Shakopee, MN			December 2-11, 2016		
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.					
Main Event will include LIVE Final Table Broadcast with Hole Cards					
The +10 is an optional dealer appreciation add-on — 2,000 chips in Qualifiers, 5,000 chips in Main Event					
SINGLE TABLE SATELLITES (SIT-N-GO) OFFERED DAILY ON DEMAND					
\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite					
\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite					
\$250 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into MSPT Main Event					
Day	Event	Location	Rounds	Time	
Thursday, Nov 3	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:30 PM	
Thursday, Nov 17	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:30 PM	
Thursday, Dec 1	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:30 PM	
Friday, Dec 2	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	4:30 PM	
Saturday, Dec 3	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	10:30 AM	
Sunday, Dec 4	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	2:30 PM	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$100 NLHE	Poker Room		8:30 PM	
Monday, Dec 5	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$100 NLHE Green Chip Bounty	Poker Room		8:30 PM	
Tuesday, Dec 6	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE Bounty	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:30 PM	
Wednesday, Dec 7	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	6:30 PM	
Thursday, Dec 8	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	Canterbury Park Weekly Event - \$50 NLHE	Poker Room		10:30 AM	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	12:30 PM	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	6:30 PM	
Friday, Dec 9	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am	
	\$250 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into MSPT \$200,000 GTD Main Event	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 8:00am	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	10:30 AM	
	\$1,800+\$100 MSPT Main Event Day 1A (\$200,000 Guaranteed)*	Mezzanine	40 Minute	4:30 PM	
	<i>Main Event Structure Designed by Alan Kessler - "Chairman Approved"</i>				
Saturday, Dec 10	\$80 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 10:00am	
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 10:00am	
	\$250 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into MSPT \$200,000 GTD Main Event	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 3:00pm	
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	10:30 AM	
	\$1,800+\$100 MSPT Main Event Day 1B (\$200,000 Guaranteed)*	Mezzanine	40 Minute	4:30 PM	
	<i>Main Event Structure Designed by Alan Kessler - "Chairman Approved"</i>				
Sunday, Dec 11	MSPT Main Event - Day 2*	Mezzanine	40 Minute	11:30 AM	
	MSPT Main Event - Final Table**	Mezzanine		Approx. 7:00PM	

**Worldwide Broadcast of Final Table using RFID Technology on www.msptoker.com (if sufficient bandwidth)

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MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Standings as of October 31, 2016



Hao "John" Sun - Milwaukee, WI

♣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	Hao "John" Sun	3,300
2	Aaron Massey	2,900
3	Thupten Thondup	2,400
4	Richard Alsup	2,300
5	Jeremy Dresch	2,200
6	Travis Lauson	2,117
7	Thomas Boivin	2,000
8	Rodger Johnson	1,950
9	Richard Bai	1,900
10	Mukul Pahuja	1,800
	Brett Blackwood	1,800
12	Keith Heine	1,750
13	Ryan Phan	1,700
14	Matt Alexander	1,684
15	Ron Kruk	1,650
16	Mark Sandness	1,600
	Adam Thomas	1,600
	Michael Rudolph	1,600
	Cy Church	1,600
20	Blake Whittington	1,567
21	Jason Smith	1,550
	Griff Woodman	1,550
23	TJ Ryan	1,500
	Andrew Rubinberg	1,500
	Rory Lucero	1,500
	Arthur Andrade	1,500
	Josh Crain	1,500
	Nevada Saad	1,500
	Taylor Wilson	1,500
30	Earl Potter	1,467
31	Abraham Montenegro	1,450
32	Kou Vang	1,400
	Aalok Arora	1,400
	Shawn Roberts	1,400
	Carl Carodenuto	1,400
	Brandon Byrne	1,400
	Jim Casement	1,400
	Vinh Ho	1,400
39	Scott Johnson	1,367
40	Jason Vanstrom	1,350
	Jimmy Ray	1,350
42	Muneer Ahmed	1,333
43	Chris Blik	1,300
	Kraig Komrosky	1,300
	David Mitchell	1,300
	Will Mietz	1,300
	Cory McCarthy	1,300

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

Industry Insider

GM DAN STROMER TALKS POKER, DARVIN MOON & ALL THINGS MESKWAKI

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

Three times a year, a little town in the middle of Iowa becomes one of the country's hottest spots for poker. Since 2012, Meskwaki Casino in Tama has played host to the Mid-States Poker Tour, and in that time it has established itself as one of the tour's premiere stops with a trio of \$1,100 buy-in, \$300,000 guaranteed Main Events throughout the year.

In addition to poker, Meskwaki Casino—located between Des Moines and Cedar Rapids on Highway 30—features a huge bingo hall, table games, active craps tables, good blackjack games, horse book, indoor pool, exercise room, spa, and 404 hotel rooms. The man behind it all is 25-year casino veteran Dan Stromer, who has worked at properties in Colorado, Nevada, Kansas and Iowa.

MSPT Magazine recently caught up with Stromer, the General Manager as Meskwaki Casino, to learn a little more about this industry insider.

MSPT: *How did you come to work in the casino business?*

Stromer: I graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and worked in the insurance and finance industry for 10 years. However my future had been predetermined several years before. While growing up in Nebraska, at about 15 years old, I and several of my friends began having weekly poker games on Saturday nights.

One of the prerequisites was you had to have a nickname, so the lineup was Doc and Worm (brothers and long before *Rounders*) Bugs, Klaus Dibiasi, D.W. Hazel, Groad, Gook, Moose and Mona. One of the highlights was about halfway through we had the cheapest store bought pizza and RC Cola because it came in the big 16oz bottle. Although it was penny/nickel stakes, we played like it was the Main Event and it is amazing to this day how much of the knowledge is still used.

How did you come to work at Meskwaki Casino?

Stromer: In 2004, I was referred by a head-hunting firm used by Meskwaki to see if I was interested in coming to work for them. At the time they were interested in doing a new expansion which I had never been a part of. So I looked at the challenge and thought it would be great experience. In late 2004, we were in the process developing plans from top to bottom for not only new facilities but also completely renovating the rest of the property. We broke ground in early



Dan Stromer

2005 and opened phase one in July of 2006 and the remainder of the project in August of 2007. It was great experience and took the entire team to make it happen and they did a great job that gives us the facility that we have today.

What sort of duties does your job entail?

Stromer: Walking around and shaking hands, at least that's what I tell our staff, that's all a GM does. Really you're involved in every phase. Staffing, HR, Marketing, Slots and Table Games, there really is not a piece that you are not involved in. Understanding the criticalness of how all the pieces fit together is essential. At the end of the day you better understand how or if you are making any money because most times that is how you are judged. By the way walking around and shaking hands is still my favorite.

What sort of amenities does Meskwaki offer that sets it apart from the competition?

Stromer: I still feel like we are one of the best keep secrets

Meskwaki Casino

in the Casino Business. Outside of Las Vegas we offer more things under one roof than most places. For Gaming we have all the Tables Games including poker and also Class 3 slot machines the same that you can find in Vegas. We offer live Keno and Simulcast racing which most properties do not, along with High Stakes Bingo. So outside of Sports Wagering we can offer it all.

What sort of promotions does Meskwaki offer poker players?

Stromer: I feel that we offer more than any casino throughout the Midwest. If you ask players what is important to them you're probably going to hear more often than not the rake. We have continued to stay with a \$4 dollar rake where most are \$5 and some as high as \$6. We give \$1 per hour comp rate where most are \$.50 and one was as low as \$.10. In addition, based on your play status our tier ratings can get you as much as 50% off your food purchases. Also, we have weekly gas card promotions in addition to football square pools in the fall.

Darvin Moon doesn't play much poker these days, but he also seems to make the trip to Meskwaki. How did that relationship come about?

Stromer: In 2009, when we were running HPT events, we had scheduled Scotty Nguyen to make an appearance that Fall. At the very last minute he cancelled leaving a void. Greg Lang and Todd Anderson, the co-founders of the Heartland Poker Tour, had met Darvin earlier that year and made a last second call. That was just following Darvin's runner-up finish in the WSOP main event and he graciously accepted.

The thing that made it a good connection was Darvin immediately fit with our players. The everyday person as he has been portrayed is exactly who he is, genuine and

down to earth and the players like that. As the tournament progressed I actually spoke with Darvin's wife, Wendy, more as we were both on the rail. In between breaks or going out to Rube's Steakhouse with the crew for dinner, Darvin and Wendy became our great friends. They now enjoy coming back here not only for the poker but the people. Darvin still comes back in the fall to go hunting with others that he had met at Meskwaki.

What inspired you to bring the MSPT to Meskwaki Casino?

Stromer: I wish I could take credit for that, but that was at a time when I had left to attend to some family health issues. I think the timing was just right. Bryan Mileski had started to build a really strong loyal following not only from Minnesota but throughout the Midwest. I think the buy-in along with the qualifiers were right on target for what people were looking to spend and could afford. The structure changes appeal to a lot of players and it just feels like the right event for our property and that is why we have it scheduled through 2018.

What's the best keep secret poker players should know when playing at Meskwaki.

Stromer: I don't know if it is that much of a secret anymore, but the value that we emphasis not only in our poker room but everything that we do. We really try not to gouge our players based on prices, rates, fees and every other excuse that casinos find a way to charge for. It just seems like casinos have forgotten about what business they're in. I have always believed that if you give the players a fair shake and treat them well they will probably come back. So far that has worked pretty well and I don't see that changing anytime soon. Not much of a secret. 🍀



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Event Preview

MSPT HEADS TO POTAWATOMI IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN NOVEMBER 12-20

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

The penultimate stop on the Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) Season 7 schedule will take place at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from November 12-20.

“Potawatomi is always one of the biggest events on the MSPT schedule, and we can think of no better place for the second-to-last stop of Season 7,” said MSPT President Bryan Mileski. “We’re confident this will not only be one of the largest events of the season, but also one of the greatest in tour history. We hope to see you all there.”

The last time the MSPT visited Potawatomi for a Main Event was back in April when Travis Lauson topped a field of 556 entries to win a \$129,077 first-place prize. Before that, in September 2015, Dan Goepel topped a field of 462 entries to win a \$114,117 first-place prize. Amazingly, Lauson had finished runner-up in that event!

“I’m looking forward to returning to MSPT Potawatomi not only to defend my title, but to catch John Sun in the close MSPT Season 7 Player of the Year race,” says Lauson, who as of this writing sits in sixth place with 2,117 points. 🍀

Tuesday, Nov 1	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Wednesday, Nov 2	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Thursday, Nov 3	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Saturday, Nov 5	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	11:00 AM
Sunday, Nov 6	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	3:00 PM
Tuesday, Nov 8	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Wednesday, Nov 9	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Thursday, Nov 10	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
Saturday, Nov 12	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	11:00 AM
Sunday, Nov 13	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	3:00 PM
Monday, Nov 14	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	30 Minute	11:00 AM
Tuesday, Nov 15	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	30 Minute	11:00 AM
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	20 Minute	6:00 PM
	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
Wednesday, Nov 16	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$65 - Multi-Table SUPER Satellite - 20% advance to \$250 Satellite	Poker Room	20 Minute	1:00 PM
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	6:30 PM
Thursday, Nov 17	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 9:00am
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	12:00 PM
Friday, Nov 18	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	6:30 PM
	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 8:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 8:00am
Saturday, Nov 19	\$250 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into MSPT Main Event	Poker Room	Seat by List	Starting at 8:00am
	\$220+30+10 Satellite - 20% advance to \$200,000 GTD	Poker Room	30 Minute	10:30 AM
	\$1,000+\$100+\$10 MSPT Main Event Day 1A (\$200,000 Guaranteed)*	Expo Center	40 Minute	4:00 PM
Main Event Structure Designed By Allen Keseler - "Chainsaw Approved"				
Sunday, Nov 20	\$60 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 10:00am
	\$90 - three players advance Single Table Satellites into \$250 Qualifier	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 10:00am
	\$250 - two players advance Single Table Satellites into MSPT Main Event	Poker Room	Seat by List	8:00am - 3:00pm
MSPT Main Event - Day 1B (\$200,000 Guaranteed)*				
MSPT Main Event - Final Table**				
**Worldwide Broadcast of Final Table using RFID Technology on www.msptpoker.com (if sufficient bandwidth)				

Michigan State Championship

BRETT BLACKWOOD WINS LARGEST TOURNAMENT IN MICHIGAN HISTORY FOR \$188,314

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

The 2016 Mid-States Poker Tour (MSPT) Michigan State Poker Championship at FireKeepers Casino was once again a record-breaking affair. At the final table, all eyes were on poker pro Aaron Massey, who was looking to go back-to-back in MSPT FireKeepers Main Events (the two largest tournaments in state history). However, at the end of a long day it was 27-year-old Brett Blackwood who captured the title and a \$188,314 first-place prize

“It feels fake right now, right now it just feels like a dream,” Blackwell said after the win. “I was all in 14 or 15 times, often behind, and just ran spectacular. Heads-up I hit the river twice to stay alive. It feels great. I like the trophy. I’ll put the money in the bank. The PLO bankroll was alright, but it just got a whole lot healthier, you know what I’m saying.”

Blackwood, who was playing in just his eighth tournament ever, is a painter by trade but spends much of his free time playing \$5/\$10 pot-limit Omaha in Detroit. He decided to play three \$250 satellites for the Michigan State Poker Championship and managed to win a seat. From there, the story was survival as time and again Blackwell was on the ropes, but nary an opponent could finish him off.

The \$1,100 buy-in Main Event, which began on Thursday, attracted 884 entrants (195 on Day 1a; 338 Day 1b; and 351 Day 1c), which not only made it the largest tournament in Michigan history—it surpassed the 820 runners from May’s event—but also became the largest event the MSPT has ever held in the Midwest. The \$300,000 advertised guarantee was shattered as an \$884,000 total prize pool was generated, and on Sunday 179 survivors returned looking to claim their share.

However, with only 81 spots paid, 98 of them would leave empty handed. Among those to fall were MSPT Season 5 Player of the Year Mike Deis, MSPT Meskwaki champ Keith Heine, and the man who finished runner-up to Massey back in May, Ron Kruk.

Once the money bubble burst with the elimination of Leonard Gojcaj, the in-the-money eliminations came fast and furious. Among those to fall were defending Michigan State Poker champ Michael Ferrarotti (80th - \$2,226), inaugural



Brett Blackwood

Michigan State Poker champ Ryan Dykhouse (78th - \$2,226), MSPT Season 4 Player of the Year Pat Steele (34th - \$4,365), Day 1b chip leader Parris Collins (18th - \$6,848), Day 1a chip leader Casey Carroll (15th - \$9,330), and Bill Rogers (14th - \$9,330), who finished runner-up in the same tournament one year prior.

The final table was comprised of all Michigan players with the exception of Jimmy Ray and Massey, who hailed from

FireKeepers Casino

Indiana and Chicago respectively. Nevada Saad, who began the day as chip leader, was the first to fall after running his pocket sixes into the nines of Ray, and then Josh Marvin ran king-queen into aces to fall in ninth.

After a short-stacked Satish Thakur failed to win a race for his tournament life, Massey's run at history ended in seventh place. In his final hand, Massey shoved a queen-high flop holding pocket jacks only to be snapped off by Lars Cole's two pair. Cole followed him out the door in sixth place after his pocket sixes failed to hold up in a race against Blackwood.

The elimination of Ray in fifth place ensured the title would stay on home soil as the final four was comprised of all Michigan natives. Of them, Vinh Ho was the first to go after running into Church's pocket aces, and two hands later Blackwell dispatched Griff Woodman in third place.

Church began heads-up play with a slight chip lead and the two battled back and forth until Blackwell got it in with ace-jack against ace-king. Church was one card away from winning the tournament, but Blackwell found a jack on the river to take a commanding lead. Amazingly, Church battled back and a few doubles later was back in the lead. Blackwell then got it in again, this time with ace-nine, and was up against Church's pocket sevens. Church survived the flop



FireKeepers Casino

Buy-in: \$1,000 + \$100 ♣ 884 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Brett Blackwood	Ypsilanti, MI	\$188,314
2	Cy Church	East Lansing, MI	\$114,701
3	Griff Woodman	Portland, MI	\$74,641
4	Vinh Ho	Midland, MI	\$51,701
5	James Ray	Churubusco, IN	\$37,663
6	Lars Cole	Ada, MI	\$28,932
7	Aaron Massey	Chicago, IL	\$23,882
8	Satish-Singh Thakur	Lansing, MI	\$19,944
9	Joshua Marvin	Sterling Heights, MI	\$16,007
10	Nevada Saad	Dearborn Height, MI	\$12,241

and turn, but Blackwell once again hit the river when a nine spiked. Church was eliminated in second place for \$114,314 on the very next hand.

"I'll put the trophy next to my alarm clock so I'll see it first thing in the morning," Blackwell said with a laugh. 🏆



Final Table

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WHEN DONKEY MOVES WORK BRILLIANTLY – MAKING THE WRONG MOVE AT THE RIGHT TIME

BY DOUGLAS BERGMAN

Can a stupid mistake ever win big? Yes! Even the iconic poker movie *Cincinnati Kid* agrees when Steve McQueen (“The Kid”) comes to crush the champ Edward G. Robinson (“The Man”).

“Sometimes it’s about making the wrong move at the right time.”

In just about every poker circle, a type of play exists called a “donkey move.” Generally, a donkey play is just wrong. Shoving all in when you are on tilt, betting big after a bad beat, or chasing deuces to the river are all donkey moves!

After a good number of final tables and a high win of \$16,500, I am here to tell you that I am the Donkinator! I earned that nickname with a stupid move that helped me build a healthy stack. I had entered a \$250 at the MSPT Grand Falls Casino, which has a beautiful golf course and hotel in Larchwood, Iowa. For hours, I was card dead and barely able to hold 9,000 in chips from a starting stack of 12,000. Then a heater hit and I built my stack up to around 50,000. I could do no wrong. Folks refused to play with me I was running so hot.

It was time for the Donkinator hand. I was dealt a suited queen-eight. The table chip leader and another big stack were both to my left. They played like pros. As a 67-year-old veteran turned writer/painter, who is also a lover of poker, I am an instinctual preflop player. With my rush at that time, I felt I couldn’t be beat!

The hand started with strong betting via the two big stacks to my left. My response with my queen-eight was to move all in. I set my cards down in front of me, but I made a big mistake.

“Doug, your cards are face up,” said a friend on the rail. “Cover them!” It was too late. My cards were opposed and my opponents saw.

They both yelled “Call! Call” and no surprise their cards were bigger than mine. To the best of my panicked recollection, one had a Queen with a paint kicker and the other had a king-jack. The flop came a queen with two rags. One hand had the dominant kicker and the other might still whip me with an

over card and straight/flush options.

Fortunately, the “Poker Gods” took mercy on my donkey move as the river was an eight! My amateur mistake eliminated one player with an equal stack and the table leader was left with just 600 in chips. I was now the Stack Daddy! With all the laughter and foul language, I embraced my new poker nickname – The Donkinator!



Douglas Bergman

I want to make a special mention of the former table captain. He rebuilt his stack and managed to win a Main Event seat. What a comeback! No matter how good or bad you are, sometimes it’s just a matter of making the wrong move at the right time!

Douglas R. Berman is a published writer/painter. His lauded literary memoir “Names I Can’t Remember” is a Charles Shelton Award winner. His plays have been produced off-off B’way and his features/investigative pieces have appeared in national magazines. He is a sought after speaker by schools, veteran’s groups and at the Wall in Washington on veteran issues including substance abuse and P.T.S.D. He can be reached at writerdrb@aol.com.

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MSPT
MID-STATES POKER TOUR

MSPT EARNINGS

Leaders as of October 31, 2016



Thomas Boivin - Las Vegas, NV



Peixin Liu - Blaine, MN

Rank	Player Name	Amount
1	Thomas Boivin	\$352,153
2	Peixin Liu	\$304,545
3	Mukul Pahuja	\$300,000
4	Blake Bohn	\$279,928
5	Jason Zarlenga	\$272,194
6	Jeremy Dresch	\$255,303
7	Angelina Rich	\$234,829
8	Richard Alsup	\$234,630
9	Kou Vang	\$227,172
10	Travis Lauson	\$216,934
11	Carl Carodenuto	\$206,908
12	John Hayes	\$206,648
13	Aaron Massey	\$201,052
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	Dan Hendrickson	\$155,192
30	Rodger Johnson	\$154,457
31	Daniel Goepel	\$152,705
32	Jason Mirza	\$152,443
33	Michael Rudolph	\$147,122
34	Harry Tisdale	\$142,637
35	Michael Ferrarotti	\$136,868
36	Phanora Prom	\$133,856
37	TJ Ryan	\$133,576
38	Mark Hodge	\$132,434
39	Nicholas Pupillo	\$130,807
40	Matt Alexander	\$130,574
41	Leon Morford	\$130,300
42	Ervin Bjerga	\$129,069
43	Ryan Dykhouse	\$129,043
44	Muneer Ahmed	\$128,622
45	Michael Lang	\$128,158
46	Adam Lamphere	\$126,808
47	Jason Sell	\$123,201
48	James Gibson	\$123,061
49	Joe Matheson	\$122,931
50	Reza Yazdi	\$120,765

Check out complete MSPT stats page at msptpoker.com



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MANDATORY LISTENING & POLITICS

BY JACOB "JAYMIND" WESTLIN AND BRYAN MILESKI

I wish I were deaf. Okay, that isn't true at all. Being deaf must be a terribly difficult burden. But being at the poker table oftentimes makes me feel that it'd be nice if I didn't have to listen to all the circulated bullshit that people discuss. It really is a depressingly accurate cross-section of the ignorance this country often exhibits. The problem is that, despite the fact that I am not required to participate in aforementioned conversation, I have no choice but to listen to its typically stupid progression.

Politics is the most difficult thing for me to be forced to listen to. I try not to discuss politics publicly for two reasons. One, I don't think anybody ever listens to anybody else. It's simply a matter of passionately waiting for your turn to talk. People have an incredible ability to form a point of view, and then cement that point of view in their mind, holding onto it with their dying breath despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Secondly, and as an extension of my first point, I do not discuss politics because it stresses me out immensely. There's never any winning or losing, and at the end I feel exhausted and disillusioned with the ignorance of my fellow voters.

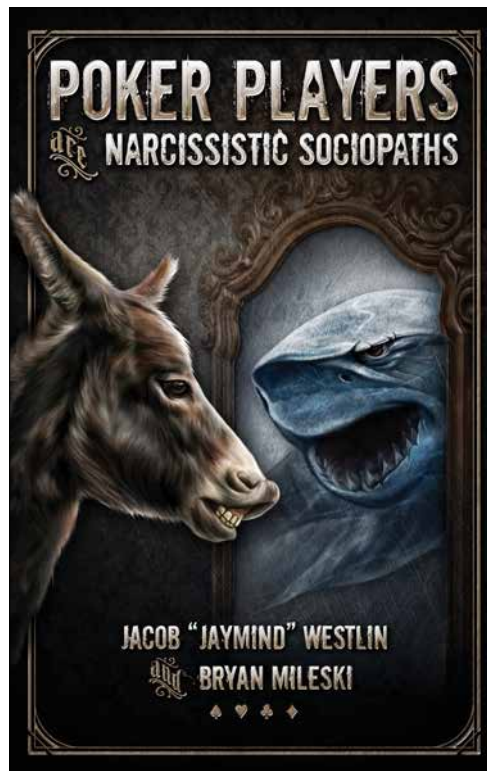
Okay, let's get off the high horse. I'm not saying I'm a political genius who knows everything. That certainly isn't true. And, as

such, I do not vehemently spout my opinion to every other unconcerned person at my poker table. I'm not saying that the perspective of others offends me. What I am saying is that if you need to energetically deride Obama because he's a Muslim Socialist without a birth certificate, have some idea of what you're talking about.

Ok, sometimes I break my rule. I just sorta' discuss politics. Ultimately, you can't stop people from having an opinion. And I don't want to. Everybody is allowed his or her own ideology. But the poker table is an interestingly intimate environment. I just found myself at the table recently, hearing a terribly stupid conversation take place around me, and asking myself, "Where am I?" You don't know any of these people, they have no expertise on the subject, and you didn't come here for a lecture; yet, all you can do is sit quietly, assuming you wish to stay in the game. Unless, of course, you choose to engage in discussion, making your opinion heard. And if you're one of those people, good luck to you, and I salute you. I, on the other hand, would rather cowardly write an article complaining about it.

To read more Jacob "Jaymind" Westlin diatribes, purchase the book *"Poker Players are Narcissistic*

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MARK JOHNSON JR. COMPLETES YEAR OF NO SHAVING, QUITTING TOBACCO & LOSING 52 LBS.

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

Michigan's Mark Johnson Jr. is \$5,000 richer! In 2015 during the World Series of Poker Circuit stop at Horseshoe Southern Indiana, Johnson and his friend, inaugural MSPT Michigan State Poker champ Ryan Dykhouse, made a bet—that Johnson, who at the time came in a 6'2" and 280 lbs., would lose 52 lbs. in a year while also quitting chewing tobacco and allowing his facial hair to grow out.

It wasn't so much a bet as Johnson had nothing to lose. That's because Dykhouse offered him a \$5,000 freeroll.

"I said I wanted to get in shape and needed some more motivation," said Johnson. "It was discussed on the way to Louisville actually. Then on the way back I decided I wanted to do it and we finalized it."

Johnson wasn't allowed to shave or trim other than his mustache to prevent it from growing past his upper lip. The first month with no tobacco proved the toughest part of the bet, but a year later he's done it. To lose the weight, Johnson focused on drinking lots of water, weight training, and varying the types of cardio he did.

"It worked wonders and allowed me to maintain most of my strength and a good chunk of muscle I already had," he said. "Now that I've gotten rid of some of the fat covering it, I actually look like I have more muscle when in fact I don't. It's just much more noticeable."

He also got into a calorie deficit, ate clean, and used the popular MyFitnessPal app.

"Right now I'm extremely motivated to keep pursuing a more fit lifestyle," said Johnson. "I truly enjoy the gym, playing basketball, and I will continue to do so now. I'm not exactly sure what I'm training for, but when I know, I'll be ready."

Johnson continued: "Being in shape has a huge impact on how I think. Training and eating healthy is definitely helping my poker game. I've been more motivated to study poker away from the table as well."

On the final day of October's 2016 MSPT Michigan State Poker Championship, Dykhouse brought a scale to the MSPT FireKeepers for an official weigh-in. Johnson's goal weight was 228 lbs., and he crushed it by coming in eight pounds lighter!

"I wasn't a lock a couple months ago, and from the outside it may have looked like I was cutting it close since I could



Mark Johnson Before & After



Mark Johnson Post Shave

have finished much earlier," explained Johnson. "I definitely procrastinated a little bit. But I knew I could get it done last minute if needed."

Making things even sweeter for Johnson was that he went on to finish 38th in the 2016 MSPT Michigan State Poker Championship for \$3,595. Follow Johnson on Twitter @FLOPtheJohnson. 🍀



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