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Michael Esquivel

BREAKS THROUGH TO WIN MSPT CANTERBURY PARK

**"JOHN" SUN
EARNS 2ND
MSPT TITLE**

**COVICH
2019 INDIANA
STATE CHAMP**

**ROCKOWITZ
WINS AT
GRAND FALLS**

**2019 WISCONSIN
STATE CHAMP
PREVIEW**

**\$300K GTD
AT MESKWAKI
NOV. 1-3**



CONGRATULATIONS

2019 SDSPC CHAMPION

Sergio Mireles

\$60,946
TOP PRIZE WINNER



2019 SOUTH DAKOTA STATE POKER CHAMPION



SILVERADO FRANKLIN

Letter From the Publisher

MSPT AIMS TO HIT \$100,000,000 AWARDED DURING 10TH SEASON

BY MSPT STAFF

It's hard to believe but we're on the home stretch of our 10th MSPT season, and over that span we've awarded \$96,948,022 in prize money (as of September 18, 2019) leaving us \$3,051,978 short of \$100,000,000! Pretty amazing.

Six Main Events and one Regional Event remain on the 2019 Season 10 schedule boasting \$2,700,000 in guarantees—The Venetian Las Vegas (\$250K), FireKeepers Casino (\$1M), Meskwaki Casino (\$300K), Golden Gates Regional (\$150K), Potawatomi Casino (\$300K), Golden Gates Main Event (\$200K), Canterbury Park (\$500K)—meaning we'll have to exceed the guarantee mark by \$351,978 over that span to eclipse the \$100,000,000 mark this year.

It seems promising that this feat will happen, if it does we plan to award the player who's cash puts us over the mark a \$1,100 MSPT Main Event seat to the event of their choice!

The first ever MSPT event in December of 2009 at Canterbury Park attracted 130 runners. This may come as a surprise but that event was the first 2-day structure ever offered in Minnesota. The tournament was one flight and this may also be surprising, it was a freezeout! Times have changed. Here's a look at MSPT payout totals over the years.

Season	Season Total	Season	Season Total
0	\$124,160	6	\$10,508,851
1	\$726,535	7	\$12,394,266
2	\$913,398	8	\$14,051,381
3	\$2,493,833	9	\$26,935,348
4	\$3,799,266	10	\$17,340,507
5	\$7,660,477		

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming MSPT stops as we near this historical mark, will you be the one to put us over the top? 🎰



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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.

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Event Recap

SUN RISES AGAIN: JOHN SUN WINS MSPT MAJESTIC STAR, SECOND TOUR TITLE

BY MSPT STAFF



Hao "John" Sun

John Sun started Day 2 with the chip lead and he put the ammo to good use as he ended the day with all of the chips at Mid-States Poker Tour Majestic Star in Indiana. Sun topped a field of 324 to win \$71,945.

The win is Sun's second MSPT title after he previously took down MSPT Meskwaki for \$104,627 in July 2016, still his biggest cash. The chipper Milwaukee native now has just under \$500,000 in total tournament winnings.

The 324 entries in the event allowed it to comfortably surpass the \$200,000 guarantee. Some players among the 36 cashing included HPT Tournament Director Jeremy Smith, reigning MSPT Player of the Year Aaron Johnson, and Nick Pupillo.

Mike Shin, who won this event in January and just took down HPT St. Louis, also made a deep run in an attempt to go back-to-back. He'd wind up busting in 12th place, padding his lead in the tour's POY standings.

Sun Turns a Slide Around

According to the live updates, Sun had started the day with north of 500,000 in chips but actually went net negative en route to the final table as he took in only 480,000, good for 24 big blinds. That left him as one of the shortest stacks, while Anthony Kastelic led the way at 1.5 million.

Luckily for Sun, he won a big flip right away when his ace-king triumphed against two tens held by Justin Scovil, rendering the Chicago-area regular to a 10th-place finish.

Majestic Star Casino

With six players left, Sun would have another big windfall in a preflop all in. This time, he woke up with kings in the small blind after Kastelic opened. Sun put in a three-bet and MSPT reg DJ Buckley, at his seventh final table on the tour, stuffed it in with A♦ Q♦. Sun's hand would hold to give him the pot.



Majestic Star Casino

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 324 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Hao "John" Sun	Milwaukee, WI	\$71,945
2	Kenneth Baime	Glenview, IL	\$44,415
3	Greg Geller	Denver, CO	\$32,216
4	Anthony Kastelic	Schererville, IN	\$23,771
5	Cheryl Choon	Chicago, IL	\$17,828
6	DJ Buckley	Eden Prairie, MN	\$13,762
7	Robert Noe	Buffalo Grove, IL	\$10,635
8	Andrew Campbell	Oswego, IL	\$8,445
9	Ting Luo	Ann Arbor, MI	\$6,537
10	Justin Scovil	Tinley Park, IL	\$5,286

Three-Outer Ends Things

Meanwhile, another former champ of the event was on fire. Ken Baime, who won it in 2014, scored several eliminations at the final table and grabbed the lead short-handed.

However, Sun would pull even with him when he used another big pair, this time aces, to bust Greg Geller in third. Each player had about 3.2 million at 25,000/50,000/5,000, so the even-stacked duel commenced.

They'd play for about an hour, with Sun taking a sizable lead early on. Baime got down to 12 big blinds and had an opportunity to get back in it when he raised and flopped top pair with A♣K♣ on A♦10♥2♦. He snapped off Sun's check-raise all in, and Sun needed a lot of help with A♠4♥. However, the dealer heeded Sun's calls for a four on the river when the 4♠ arrived, ending the tournament in his favor.

"Oh my God!" he yelled. "Holy s***."

It seemed Sun could scarcely believe it himself, but the three-outer gave him a second MSPT crown. 🏆



Final Table



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Event Preview

MSPT RETURNS TO MESKWAKI CASINO FOR \$300K GTD MAIN EVENT NOV. 1-3

BY MSPT STAFF



Taylor Howard

For the third and final time in Season 10, the MSPT is headed to Meskwaki Casino in Tama, Iowa. A series of satellites kicking off September 25th will feed into the 24th MSPT Main Event ever held at the venue.

The \$1,100 buy-in, \$300,000 guaranteed Main Event will run the weekend of November 1-3.

Back in March, the first MSPT Meskwaki of Season 10 drew 409 entries and saw Steve Federspiel walk away with an \$86,949 first-place prize. Then, in July, Des Moines, Iowa's Josh Meyer bested a 401-entry field to win the 2019 MSPT Iowa State Poker Championship. In this same event last year, Taylor Howard prevailed over 423 entrants to win the tournament for \$89,939.

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The MSPT Meskwaki Main Event, which requires players be just 18 years old to play, will begin with Day 1A on Friday, November 1 at 3:00 PM. Day 1B will then take place on Saturday, November 2, also at 3:00 PM. Players who advance from each flight will combine on Sunday, November 3 at 11:00 a.m. and play until a champion is crowned. The complete event schedule can be found at msptpoker.com. The final table will be broadcast LIVE (15-minute delay) worldwide on msptpoker.com using RFID technology allowing all viewers to see the hole cards. In addition, the entire Main Event will be live reported.

Located in Tama, Iowa—between Des Moines and Cedar Rapids on Highway 30—Meskwaki Casino, which was constructed in 1992, features a huge bingo hall, nine different types of table games, off-track betting, active craps tables, more than 1,350 slots, good blackjack games, horse book, indoor pool, exercise room, spa, and 404 hotel rooms.

The property also features Lucky's Grill & Taproom, which serves hearty breakfast entrees in the morning and their famous Shredded Chicken Nachos Grande (and more) in the evening. Other favorites include the 100% Iowa Angus Beef Lucky's Steak Burger, handmade buttermilk dipped onion rings, Signature Pizzas, hot subs, and Fried Oreos. You can also enjoy a variety of 20 beers on tap (with 10 craft beers that are brewed in Iowa) all while watching your favorite team on one of 13 HDTVs. 🍷



Event Recap

FRANK COVICH WINS 2019 INDIANA STATE POKER CHAMPIONSHIP

BY MSPT STAFF

Tropicana Evansville Casino near the southern tip of Indiana played host to the latest stop on the MSPT and when the last card hit the table it was Frank Covich who found himself posing for winner photos after capturing his first MSPT Main Event title, scoring \$62,487 and earning bragging rights as the 2019 Indiana State Poker Champion.

After a wild first day of action, Joseph Lamkin was able to rise above the pack to claim the chip lead on Day 1A with 329,500 chips, besting the 120-entrant field. Ian Richardson finished close behind with 296,000. Eventual runner-up Donnie Phan rounded out the top 3 with 260,000. 14 players would survive to Day 2.

Day 1B attracted another 146-runners and it was Ray Litteken with 318,000 chips who bagged the lead, placing him second overall behind Lamkin heading to Day 2. Brian Jennings also put away a healthy stack with 312,000. Kent Brenneman amassed the third largest stack during 1B with 274,000. 21 of the 146 advanced.

With 35 of 266 returning Day 2 saw more non-stop thrills, several standouts who fell short of the final table but found a cash included 2018 Indiana State Poker Champion Tim Burdern (19th - \$2,822), Terrence Esparza (14th - \$3,828) and Day 1B chip leader Ray Litteken (11th - \$4,617).

When we reached the final table of 10, the action took many shocking twists. Donnie Phan had a dominant stack as play began, nearly double that of three-time WSOP bracelet winner and recent MSPT Main Event champ Adam Friedman. Unfortunately for Phan, he would double up James Gidden which kicked off one of the slowest pace of eliminations in the history of the tour at a final table.

Eventually, Quentin Davis managed to pull off the first elimination of the final table taking out the Day 1 overall



Frank Covich

chip leader Joseph Lamkin with aces against his A-Q putting Lamkin out in 10th place (\$4,617). Then Phan missed two more chances at eliminations against Ian Richardson and another versus Gidden tightening up the field. Adam Friedman could just not find any traction after being continually chipped down, finally running out of steam to be eliminated by Kent Brenneman in 9th place (\$5,643). Friedman was just 21 days off his MSPT Cleveland title where he pocketed \$121,405. This was his 13th MSPT Main Event cash and 7th final table. In total, Friedman has \$343,780 in MSPT earnings.

Play dragged out eight-handed for nearly an hour before Ryan Johnson ran his A♠4♠ into the A♣K♦ of Brian Jennings to see his tournament end in 8th place (\$7,183). Then came the seven-handed war which lasted nearly two hours, at one point six of the players being within 100,000 chips of each other. Eventually, Frank Covich and Donnie Phan began to

Tropicana Evansville

inch away from the field and Brian Jennings finally broke the seven-way stalemate taking out Kent Brenneman in 7th place (\$8,978).

Once the ice broke on seven-handed action, the pace of play began to improve. Quentin Davis was dropped by Covich in 6th place (\$11,800) followed by Ian Richardson springing to life. Richardson managed to reach the two-million chip mark and proceeded to take out Brian Jennings in 5th place (\$15,391) to claim nearly half the chips in play with four remaining.

Donnie Phan wasn't done. He managed to crack the A-J of James Gidden with A-2 hitting a 2 on the river to eliminate Gidden in 4th place (\$20,522) and then Phan turned a flush to edge out Richardson eliminating him in 3rd place (\$27,961). This gave Phan a commanding 4,270,000 to 1,050,000 chip lead into heads-up play versus Covich.

Just two hands into heads-up play, Phan was all-in holding J♥T♥ against the A♥Q♠ of Covich. Phan nailed the 9♣T♠8♥ flop to take the lead and made it through the 2♣ turn leaving him one card from the championship. But Covich caught the J♠ for a straight to double up and deny Phan the title. Not long after, Phan caught a flush on the river but Covich had already turned a full house flipping the advantage Phan had enjoyed to start heads-up play.

Finally, the end came when Phan went all-in with A♣J♥ against the Q♦T♣ of Covich. This time Covich out-flopped Phan when the board came out T♠9♠2♠. The cards ran out



Tropicana Evansville

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 266 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Frank Covich	Murfreesboro, TN	\$62,847
2	Donnie Phan	Nashville, TN	\$38,862
3	Ian Richardson	Centerville, OH	\$27,961
4	James Gidden	Irondale, MO	\$20,522
5	Brian Jennings	Bowling Green, KY	\$15,391
6	Quentin Davis	Evansville, IN	\$11,800
7	Kent Brenneman	Newburgh, IN	\$8,978
8	Ryan Johnson (IN)	Indianapolis, IN	\$7,183
9	Adam Friedman	Gahanna, OH	\$5,643
10	Joseph Lamkin	Evansville, IN	\$4,617

Q♣7♣ and in spectacular fashion, Frank Covich had claimed the 2019 MSPT Indiana State Poker Championship.

After the victory, Covich revealed a cool demeanor and a simple strategy to solving the puzzle of a unique final table. "It was a long tough final table. I just let other people knock each other out and tried to catch cards. Heads up I was just trying not bluff my stack off and catch good hands. All I can say is I'm feeling good!" 🙌



Final Table



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Event Preview

POTAWATOMI TO HOST 2019 WISCONSIN STATE POKER CHAMPIONSHIP

BY MSPT STAFF

From November 11-17, the MSPT will be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the penultimate stop of Season 10. It's there that the 2019 MSPT Wisconsin State Poker Championship will play out. The \$1,100 buy-in, \$300K GTD Main Event will offer three starting flights beginning with Day 1A on Thursday, November 14.

The 1B and 1C flights will be held on Friday, November 15 and Saturday, November 16 respectively. The surviving players from all flights will return at 11 a.m. on Sunday, November 17 and play down to a winner.

The Main Event final table will be broadcast LIVE (15-minute delay) worldwide on msptpoker.com using RFID technology allowing all viewers to see the hole cards. In addition, the entirety of the Main Event will be live reported in the MSPT's live blog.

In November 2018, the MSPT Wisconsin State Poker Championship attracted 748 entries to Potawatomi Hotel & Casino. That surpassed the 701 entries from the 2017 MSPT Wisconsin State Poker Championship to become the largest major poker tournament (\$1K+ buy-in) in state history.

It was 27-year-old Brett Halan, a logistics account manager from Naperville, Illinois, who finished as the last player standing for \$144,812. It marked the third year in a row a player from Illinois walked away with the MSPT Wisconsin State Poker Championship title.

The 2017 MSPT Wisconsin State Poker Championship—which drew 701 entries—was won by Rich Bai, who had previously made three MSPT Potawatomi final tables. He finally broke through with a win for a career-high \$139,086.

Potawatomi Poker Room will host several additional cash tournaments the days leading into Main Event weekend including \$360 NLHE, Tag Team Switch, Seniors, \$240 Super Stack, NLHE 8-Max, PLO 8-Max and a \$580 Last Chance tournament.

Players can find the complete schedule for this event as well as lodging options at msptpoker.com.

Potawatomi Hotel & Casino features six award-winning restaurants, the intimate 500-seat Northern Lights Theater and more than 60,000 sq. feet of event space. A 381-room, 19-story hotel opened in August 2014. 🏨



Brett Halan



Event Recap

JESSE ROCKOWITZ CLAIMS HIS FIRST MSPT TITLE AT GRAND FALLS CASINO

BY MSPT STAFF

Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort—just outside Sioux Falls, SD—played host to MSPT 156 and it was Jesse Rockowitz of Fairmont, MN who walked away the newest MSPT champion.

Last December, Rockowitz fell just short of earning his first MSPT title when he finished 4th of 977 runners at Canterbury Park where he pocketed \$61,502. He was able to seal the deal this time besting a 175-entrant field to earn another \$45,425, bringing his MSPT lifetime earnings to \$109,077.

Local Terence Reid of Sioux Falls bagged the largest stack on Day 1A

with 256,000, almost a 100K lead over the second large bag of Josh Skogen, also of Sioux Falls, who secured 161,500. Season 7 runner-up Mark Fink rounded out the top 3 on 1A with 157,500. 11 of the original 73 entrants would move on to Day 2.

Day 1B would see John Dennehey of Savage, MN emerge as the overwhelming chip leader after amassing 443,000. Past MSPT runner-up Cy Church who hails from East Lansing, MI would bag the second largest stack on 1B with 293,000 followed by Gary Germann with 204,500. 12 of the 104 from 1B advanced to Sunday.

With 23 players coming back on Day 2, just 18 would get paid. As we hit the money bubble, Steve Belland of Bagley, MN picked off MSPT Hall of Famer Aaron Johnson and Michael Campbell. Johnson was the shortest stack so fell just shy of his record 35th MSPT Main Event cash. Campbell, of Rapid City, SD, would earn his 7th MSPT Main Event cash as the 18th place finisher for \$2,356 – giving him \$82,827 on the



Jesse Rockowitz

MSPT.

Other notables falling short of the final table included Cy Church (16th - \$2,356) - for Church this was his 8th MSPT Main Event cash for \$134,947 MSPT lifetime earnings. Luke Blindert (15th - \$2,692), this was Blindert's 7th MSPT Main Event cash and Mark Fink (11th - \$3,197), this was Fink's 5th MSPT Main Event cash giving him \$63,733 lifetime MSPT earnings.

As the final table kicked off, it was Steve Belland (731,000) and John Dennehey (541,000) who lead the way but it was Mitchell, SD's Jared Mohnen who got the ball rolling. Mohnen took out Day 1A chip leader Terence Reid. Reid's KJ initially caught up to the AQ of Mohnen when a jack hit the flop, but Mohnen hit an ace on the river eliminating Reid in 10th place for \$3,197.

From there, Dennehey began his push toward the chip lead when he ousted Justin Saathoff in 9th place for \$4,038. This was Saathoff's 2nd MSPT Main Event cash, he finished 11th in the same event one year prior.

Grand Falls Casino

Dennehey followed that up by eliminating Dustin Harter. This was also Harter's 2nd MSPT Main Event cash. Belland unfortunately drifted in the opposite direction after losing a race to Shanda Myers and another hand shortly after to Mohnen thus was gone in 7th (\$6,562). For Belland, this was his 11th MSPT Main Event cash and 3rd MSPT final table. In total, Belland now has \$81,797 MSPT lifetime earnings.

After a lull in the action, the rise of Rockowitz began. He would flop a straight to crack Mohnen's aces sending Mohnen to the rail in 6th place (6,562), putting Rockowitz over the one million chip mark. This was Mohnen's 4th MSPT Main Event cash and 2nd MSPT final table.

Rockowitz would then take out local Shanda Myers—making her first MSPT Main Event cash—in 5th place (\$10,936) and never look back. Rockowitz continued his charge by eliminating Rapid City's Harold Brenden in 4th place (\$14,301) to collect 2.7M of the 3.5M in play. Brenden earned his 3rd MSPT Main Event cash, all final table appearances.

Rockowitz flopped another straight against John Dennehey to oust the Day 1 chip leader in 3rd place (\$20,190) leaving him heads-up with Gary Germann for the title holding a 2,700,000 to 800,000 chip advantage. This was Dennehey's 3rd MSPT Main Event cash and 1st final table.

Heads-up play was short and sweet. Germann did manage



Grand Falls Casino

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 175 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Jesse Rockowitz	Fairmont, MN	\$45,425
2	Gary Germann	Gillette, WY	\$28,434
3	John Dennehey	Savage, MN	\$20,190
4	Harold Brenden	Rapid City, SD	\$14,301
5	Shanda Myers	Sioux Falls, SD	\$10,936
6	Jared Mohnen	Mitchell, SD	\$8,581
7	Steve Belland	Bagley, MN	\$6,562
8	Dustin Harter	Baltic, SD	\$5,038
9	Justin Saathoff	Brookings, SD	\$4,038
10	Terence Reid	Sioux Falls, SD	\$3,197

one double-up to close the gap but on the final hand Germann was all-in holding Q♥9♠ against the A♠K♥ of Rockowitz. The board ran out 4♣8♦5♦2♥7♣ ending the tournament and giving Rockowitz the title. For Germann, this was his 4th MSPT Main Event cash and 1st final table, his 2nd place finish here scored him \$28,434. 🏆



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Strategy presented by Jonathan Little

JONATHAN LITTLE ON WHY SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO PAY

BY MSPT STAFF

The 2019 MSPT Indiana State Poker Championship \$1,100 Main Event attracted 266 runners to Tropicana Evansville. The title came down to Frank Covich and Donnie Phan, and as the two battled it out in heads-up play a big hand developed.

It took place in Level 29 (50,000/100,000/10,000) when Phan raised the small blind to 200,000 holding the 10♣8♣ and Covich opted to defend with the 7♦3♦ to see an A♣3♣3♠ flop.

Covich checked his trips and just called when Phan, who flopped a flush draw, continued for 200,000. The 7♥ turn gave Covich a full house and he checked to Phan, who checked behind.

The 4♣ river gave Phan the flush and he bet 450,000 after Covich had checked for the third time. Covich then check-raised all in for 1.64 million and Phan opted to call. With that, Covich doubled into a big chip lead and closed out the tournament shortly thereafter.

What do you make of Covich's defense with seven-three? Does the fact that it was not a big blind ante have any impact?

Little: If Covich decides to call the min-raise, he has to put in 1 big blind to win a total of 5 big blinds, meaning he needs to realize 20% equity to justify calling. While you will always have a difficult time realizing equity from out of position, he will almost certainly realize more than 20% equity unless he plays overly weak and passive postflop.

Do you like Covich just check-calling the flop or would you prefer a check-raise?

Little: I think both options are acceptable, depending on your opponent's continuation betting strategy. If your opponent's range contains mostly weak holdings (as will often be the case on A-3-3), you should just call to force your opponent to stay in the pot with his entire range. If you know your opponent only bets the flop with strong made hands and draws, then raising makes more sense. While I usually do not do much slow playing, this is a reasonable spot to do it.

On the river, Covich checked for the third time. Fan of the play or would you rather see him lead out?

Little: Like on the flop, you can go either way. If you think Phan will bet with the majority of his unpaired hands on

the river as a bluff, then it certainly makes sense to check. If you think he will check behind with many of his one-pair hands worse than an ace, betting makes a lot of sense. You have to figure out what your opponent is likely to do with each part of their range and then act accordingly. That said, checking with the effective nuts from time to time is a powerful strategy because your opponent has to be much more cautious when value betting.

Given the way the hand played out, do you think Phan could've gotten away from the check-jam on the river?

Little: I don't think so, unless Covich is known to be generally straightforward. The problem with folding a flush is it is one of the best hands in Phan's range. Sometimes you just have to pay!

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



Donnie Phan



Frank Covich

Event Recap

MICHAEL ESQUIVEL OUTDUELS 3-TIME CHAMPION MATT KIRBY HEADS UP TO WIN AT CANTERBURY PARK

BY MSPT STAFF

No place has hosted more MSPT events than Canterbury Park in Shakopee, MN and after an exciting weekend of play, the addition of a new member to the MSPT Hall of Fame and an incredibly memorable Day 2, an emotional Michael Esquivel was the last player standing to take home the title along with \$98,113 top prize!

Day 1A kicked off noon on Thursday, September 12 and attracted 109 entrants, just 13 would advance. Sam Chase of St. Paul finished strong to put away 355,000 chips for the top total of the first flight. Kanat Ozturk stood tall in second bagging 214,500 and Zeph Baer rounded off the top three with 195,000. Other notables who got through 1A included Brian Clark (184,500), Tony Moses (176,500), Gerald Cunniff (164,500), Ian Matakis (159,000) and Jason Seitz (86,500).

It was a day of wild play, massive showdowns and stunning eliminations but when all was said and done Michael Esquivel of Clarendon, IL won a huge pot at the end of the night to emerge as the top stack in Day 1B. Esquivel bagged 388,000 chips to lead, Andy Tran of Eau Claire, WI (251,000) and 2015 MSPT Player of the Year Mark Hodge (214,500) sat second and third respectively followed by 3-time MSPT Champion Blake Bohn (213,500) and past MSPT Champion Joe Matheson (187,000). Other notables getting through the flight included Dan Favreau (170,000) and current Season 10 Player of the Year points leader Mike Shin (91,500). Flight 1B drew 164 runners, 25 would move on to Day 2.

The final flight of the MSPT Main Event 157 at Canterbury Park saw 199 entrants hit the felt creating a total of 472. Trenton Wilt of Winchester, VA accumulated 364,500 chips to edge out 3-time MSPT Champion Matt Kirby who bagged a healthy 359,500. Xong Lee trailed the two 1C leaders with 269,000 and Jeff Petronack put away 246,000. Among others who found their way to Day 2 included past MSPT Champion Rodger Johnson (205,000), MSPT Hall of Famers Rich Alsip (126,500) and Aaron Johnson (69,000) as well as Luke Blindert (164,500) and Gennady Shimelfarb (157,000). 25 from 1C would move on meaning 63 total players would come back on Day 2 to battle for the title, 54 slated to get paid.

After the bubble burst and the room settled, we saw many familiar faces earn a cash including past MSPT Champion our of Canada, James Gibson (53rd - \$2,054), past MSPT Champion Jason Seitz (48th - \$2,054), Rich Alsip (46th - \$2,054), Adam Tolander (45th - \$2,236), Current Season 10 POY leader Mike



Michael Esquivel

Shin (41st - \$2,236), Dan Favreau (34th - \$2,464), Kanat Ozturk (31st - \$2,464), Aaron Johnson (26th - \$3,047), Luke Blindert (24th - \$3,514), Mark Hodge (23rd - \$3,514), Rodger Johnson (15th - \$5,476), Gerald Cunniff (13th - \$5,476) and Blake Bohn (11th - \$6,845).

For Hodge, this was his 25th career MSPT Main Event cash to go along with his 2015 MSPT Player of the Year title meaning he became just the fourth player in tour history to accomplish Hall of Fame status. The only others to earn this feat are Kou Vang, Rich Alsip and Aaron Johnson. To go along with his 25 MSPT Main Event cashes and POY title, Hodge has 5 MSPT Main Event final tables, 1 Regional Event final table, \$159,832 in earnings and he has cashed in every season back to Season 5.

Another star with inevitable MSPT HOF status (already Minnesota Poker Hall of Fame) is Minnesota's all-time earnings leader Blake Bohn. Bohn's 11th place finish here is

Canterbury Park

his 23rd MSPT cash. He also has 3 MSPT titles, 9 final tables and \$492,243 MSPT career earnings.

Final Table Action

The final table got off to a blazing start, on the opening hand Sam Chase rivered a straight to take out Joe Matheson in 10th place (\$6,845). An hour later Xong Lee would send Brian Clark to the rail in 9th place (\$8,670) when Lee's 6♠6♦ held over Clark's A♠2♠ after getting it all-in pre-flop.

A heartbreaking hand ended the night for Ian Matakis in 8th place (\$11,409). Matakis moved all-in for his remaining 630,000 chips and was called by Michael Esquivel. Matakis flipped over A♥3♥ which trailed the A♠J♦ of Esquivel. Matakis would quickly take the lead on the 3♠K♦6 flop. But that lead was short-lived as Esquivel would see the J♥ hit the turn to re-take control of the hand. The 4♦ came on the river and Matakis went from elation to heartbreak as he headed to the payout window.

Andy Tran was also incredibly active early trying to build up his short stack and he did just that taking out Jean-Luc Bardu in 7th place (\$14,603).

Joe Maas then broke through to stabilize his position at the final table. After surviving a hand against Sam Chase to pull off a chop and save his tournament, he then came from behind again to eliminate Xong Lee in 6th place (\$18,710) taking the final table down to five players.

Michael Esquivel A♦J♣ re-asserted himself sending Andy Tran A♠6♣ to the rail in 5th place (\$24,652) giving Tran his second MSPT fifth place finish at Canterbury Park this year. After Sam Chase had just pulled off a miracle flush to stay alive, Esquivel managed to catch a river card of his own to oust Chase in 4th place (\$32,586) giving Esquivel well over half the chips in play with three players remaining.

Matt Kirby never goes down without a fight. He managed to win a race with A♦Q♠ against Joe Maas 5♥5♣ to eliminate Maas in 3rd place (\$43,444) and set up the heads-up showdown with Esquivel. Esquivel would lead the way holding 5,415,000 chips to the 3-time MSPT Main Event Champion's 3,995,000.

In heads-up play, Esquivel cleared the seven-million chip mark but Kirby managed to close the gap back 5,000,000 to 4,440,000. It was as close as Kirby would get. Esquivel quickly dwindled Kirby's stack and on the final hand, Esquivel put Kirby all-in holding A♠2♠ against Kirby's K♠T♠. It looked like Kirby was going to extend the heads-up battle after the flop came out 8♥T♦5♣ to take the lead. But fate was on the side of Esquivel this time as the A♣ came on the turn for him to re-take the lead in the decisive hand. The 2♥ came on the river and Esquivel burst into tears with his face buried in his hands after being overcome with emotion from the victory.

After the tournament, Esquivel gave some insights into



Canterbury Park

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 472 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Michael Esquivel	Clarendon Hills, IL	\$98,113
2	Matt Kirby	Bemidji, MN	\$60,283
3	Joe Maas	Corcoran, MN	\$43,444
4	Sam Chase	St. Paul, MN	\$32,856
5	Andy Tran	Eau Claire, WI	\$24,642
6	Xong Lee	Monticello, MN	\$18,710
7	Jean-Luc Bardu	Lakeville, MN	\$14,603
8	Ian Matakis	Faribault, MN	\$11,409
9	Brian Clark	St. Paul, MN	\$8,670
10	Joe Matheson	Andover, MN	\$6,845

how he played the final table and an interesting conversation he had with Kirby.

“He (Kirby) was short and playing a conservative style and I was just putting the pressure on him. I was once heads-up in a mid-major before and I came in second. And it’s funny because before the final table we were in a break and I was talking to him and asked him ‘How does it feel like to come in first three times?’ And I knew it was going to go down to him and I and I accepted the challenge. I just adapt to how people would play against me and how they would perceive me.”

The emotions came pouring out of Esquivel and he explained how he was feeling after the victory.

“Ecstatic. I’m just happy. My life is already good. I have two beautiful children. Ready to go swim with the family. And I’m gonna travel to some more MSPT tournaments.”

Without a doubt, the Mid-States Poker Tour just found another very worthy champion. Congratulations to our winner – Michael Esquivel! 🏆



Final Table

FALL POKER CLASSIC

OCTOBER 4 - 20, 2019

The Midwest's Premier Poker
Tournament Series

DAYTIME EVENTS

Date	Time	Buy-In	Game
Sat, Oct 5	11 AM	\$365	Event #2 Monster Stack NLH ^{2-Day*}
Sun, Oct 6	11 AM	\$250	Event #3 NLH
Mon, Oct 7	11 AM	\$250	Event #4 Seniors NLH (50+)
Tue, Oct 8	12 PM	\$550	Event #5 NLH
Wed, Oct 9	12 PM	\$250	Event #6 Limit Omaha-8
	4 PM	\$250	Event #7 6-Max NLH
Thu, Oct 10	12 PM	\$550	Event #8 Canterbury Mix Dealers Choice 6-Max ^{2-Day*}
	4 PM	\$250	Event #9 Pot-Limit Omaha (8-Max)
Fri, Oct 11	12 PM	\$340	Event #10 Black Chip Bounty Double Stack NLH
Sat, Oct 12	11 AM	\$365	Event #11 Monster Stack NLH ^{2-Day*}
Sun, Oct 13	11 AM	\$250	Event #12 NLH
	4 PM	\$125	Event #13 Ladies NLH
Mon, Oct 14	11 AM	\$340	Event #14 Double Stack NLH
Tue, Oct 15	12 PM	\$550	Event #15 NLH
	4 PM	\$250	Event #16 Limit Hold'em
Wed, Oct 16	12 PM	\$340	Event #17 6-Max NLH
Wed, Oct 16	4 PM	\$285	High Roller 10% Satellite
Thu, Oct 17	12 PM	\$250	Event #18 NLH
Thu, Oct 17	1 PM	\$2,500	Event #19 High Roller NLH ^{2-Day*}
Championship Main Event No-Limit Hold'em \$300,000 Guaranteed			
Fri, Oct 18	12 PM	\$1,100	Event #20 Main Event Day 1A
Sat, Oct 19	12 PM	\$1,100	Event #20 Main Event Day 1B
<i>Day-2 Plays Sunday, 10/20 @ 12:30PM</i>			
Sun, Oct 20	11 AM	\$180	Event #21 Last Chance NLH

*Day-2 plays the following day at 12:30 PM

PLAYER OF THE SERIES AWARDS

A 2019 Main Event entry will be awarded to the player earning the most points in our "Top Player of the Series" in each category:

Top Player of the Daytime Events
Top Player of the Bonus Events

FALL POKER CLASSIC KICK-OFF PARTY

Friday, Oct. 4, 6 PM

Event #1 \$250 Tag Team NLH

6 PM BONUS EVENTS

Date	Buy-In	Game
Sat, Oct 5	\$150	Double Stack NLH
Sun, Oct 6	\$125	NLH
Mon, Oct 7	\$150	Double Stack NLH
Tue, Oct 8	\$125	NLH
Wed, Oct 9	\$125	NLH
Thu, Oct 10	\$125	NLH
Fri, Oct 11	\$125	NL Crazy Pineapple
Sat, Oct 12	\$125	NLH
Sat, Oct 12	\$285	High Roller 10% Satellite 8 PM start time
Sun, Oct 13	\$125	Mix Limit H/Big-O8/Stud-8/ 2-7 Triple Draw (6-max)
Mon, Oct 14	\$150	Double Stack NLH
Tue, Oct 15	\$255	Main Event 20% Satellite
Wed, Oct 16	\$255	Main Event 20% Satellite
Thu, Oct 17	\$255	Main Event 20% Satellite
Fri, Oct 18	\$255	Main Event 20% Satellite
Sat, Oct 19	\$125	NLH
Sun, Oct 20	\$125	NLH

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PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Season 10 Standings as of September 30

Rank	Player Name	Points
1	Mike Shin	4,550
2	Adam Friedman	3,500
3	Brian Wilson	3,250
4	Matt Kirby	3,125
5	Brian Hou	2,600
6	DJ Buckley	2,417
7	Daniel Bekavac	2,300
8	Rudy Sawa	2,200
9	Jeremy Brown	2,100
	Andy Tran	2,100
11	Hao "John" Sun	2,050
	Chris Moon	2,050
13	Mazen Abdallah	2,000
	Linglin Zeng	2,000
15	Jon Hanner	1,900
16	Sheddy Siddiqui	1,850
17	Scott Vetter	1,800
	Sean Munjal	1,800
	Alessio Sabatini	1,800
	Sean Davidson	1,800
21	Kou Vang	1,700
	Jeffrey Hill	1,700
	Edward Mogilnicki	1,700
	Pedro Mendes	1,700
	Michael Shelton	1,700
26	Tom Stambaugh	1,633



Aaron Johnson - 2018 Season 9 POY

♣All players who cash in a MSPT event are ranked for Player of the Year points. At the end of the calendar year 2019, the top-ranked player will receive POY recognition and a \$10,000 WSOP Main Event buy-in for 2020.

♣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 2019, visit <https://msptpoker.com/statistics/MSPTSeasonPoints.aspx>



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7:00PM

\$50 Buy-In
No Limit Hold'Em

THURSDAYS

7:00PM

\$80 Buy-In
No Limit Hold'Em

SATURDAYS

11:00AM

\$75 plus \$25 Bounty
No Limit Hold'Em Bounty

SUNDAYS

1:00PM

\$50 Buy-In

No Limit Hold'Em Tournament

(*Will not be held the 2nd Sunday of the month)

*2ND SUNDAY

12:00PM

\$240 plus \$100 Bounty
No Limit Hold'Em Bounty



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