



UK Poker

GUKPT Grand Final 2008

Scene



1 CHRIS MOORMAN
The UK's top ranked online tournament player went out when his Sixes lost a race to A-K, but success in the live arena should only be a matter of time.



2 EIRIK SVANES
Norwegian Eirik Svanes played a stellar tournament, dominating as chip-leader for two days before imploding in fourth place for a juicy £60,000 pay day.



3 GUY STEEL
The Vic regular enjoyed his deepest run in a big buy-in tourney yet, finishing in third when his King-Jack fell foul of eventual winner Paul Foltyn's Ace-Five.



4 LIAM FLOOD
A member of the Irish old guard, the 'Gentleman' may be a familiar face from *Late Night Poker* but failed to make the money this time around.



5 JEFF DUVALL
Another Vic vet, this cash game specialist showed his tournament skills in earning himself £100,000. He came second after an epic three-hour heads-up battle.

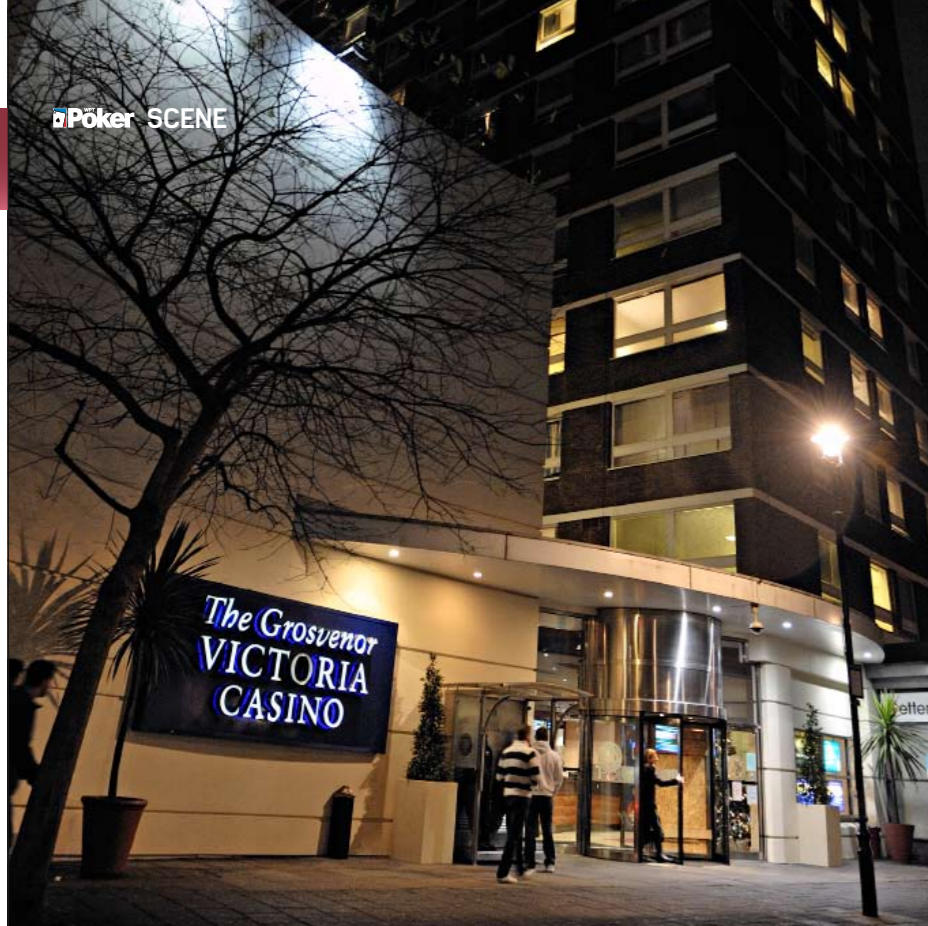
TOURNAMENT BOSS



Jonathan Raab
GUKPT Tour
Manager

"This year we've got 184 players in the main event, last year we had 198. Although the numbers are down slightly it's kind of consistent with the fact that all of our fields for the main events have been down by 5-10%.

The last year we had TV cameras, and that created a lot of prestige and the tour entered with a boom. I'm very happy that the numbers have held up, especially as everyone is telling us we're going into a recession. Next year we want to crack on and make the Grand Final a larger field, but I'm pleased with the way it's turned out



GUKPT GRAND FINAL GLORY

AFTER NINE LEGS the GUKPT returned to the Victoria casino to play out its finale. A grand total of 184 runners ponied up the hefty £3,000+£150 buy-in, and the line-up was a who's who of British poker, including Vic regulars Neil Channing, Stuart Nash and Jeff Duvall in addition to previous winners Ketul Nathwani, Tony Cascarino and Sam Trickett. Tour stalwarts and railbirds can look forward to the New Year when the GUKPT returns for its third season, with tour organisers planning a few extras for the coming months. "We always look to be a bit more innovative, and next year we've scheduled two heads-up tournaments that are both going to be High Roller events," stated tour manager Jonathan Raab. "Our goals going forward are to maintain the high standard of tournaments that we put on, to continue to get good numbers and to build on our existing success"

My Story: Padraig Parkinson

With numerous WSOP cashes under his belt, including a third place finish in the main event in 1999, the BoylePoker sponsored pro tells WPT how he got on here

"I kind of got knocked out by a guy that wasn't there. It's never happened to me before. Some guy's chips got moved to our table and the guy never showed up, so for half an hour this guy is being blinded away. I was one of the chip-leaders at the time, close to 60,000. "So on this guy's Big Blind I've raised around the back and this geezer beside me – who's been re-raising me a good bit because my raising frequency is pretty high, and he was playing pretty well – he's re-raised me. I've got A-K suited, he's got a pair of Nines and obviously he thinks his Nines are probably good, especially because the Big Blind isn't there. So now I've gone and put in a chunky re-raise, and I'd assume that this would

normally tell a guy I have a hand this time, but maybe he thought that I knew, that he knew... "I think that it was all a function of the fact that the Big Blind wasn't there, so we ended up racing for a 120,000 pot with an hour of the day to go. Neither of us wanted to play, it just happened. I'm sure once the cards were on their backs we'd have been quite happy to pay a penalty and take our cards back. But these things happen. I could just have easily have won. Everybody thought 'he's at it because the guy isn't there', and the next thing is that the whole lot's in the middle and we're both going 'Oh Fuck!' I think he had a couple of thousand more than me and that was it.



Counterfeit cruelty

Whereas in the real world counterfeiting is illegal, in poker it's just downright unlucky. Bubble time is always unpleasant for someone, and this time around it was Irishman Fran Egan who found himself clean out of every poker player's favourite commodity – a little bit of luck.

After shoving with Ace-Nine, Fran found Maz Nawab waiting with a mighty Big Slick. Down to just three outs, he must have thought the poker gods were smiling on him when the dealer obligingly dealt a flop of Nine-Ten-Ten. Unfortunately fate has a sick sense of humour and, as all poker players know, the game can be a cruel one – an Ace on the river counterfeited Fran's hand and saw him burst the bubble.



THE DEADMAN'S BLUFF

NOTHING BEATS THE thrill of a big bluff. The heady rush of adrenaline, as you take a pot down with absolutely nothing, is exhilarating. A well-timed bluff is also an essential part of tournament poker, as it prevents your stack from being consumed by the rapidly rising blinds and antes while you wait until you manage to pick up a 'real' hand. Unfortunately sometimes it can all go horribly wrong...

A monster pot developed between GUKPT Leg Three winner Ketul Nathwani and Vic regular Jeff Duvall during the very first hand back after the dinner break. With 60,000 in the middle on an 8♦ J♦ 5♣ A♦ 6♠ board, an

out of position Jeff checks to Ketul, who has a little dwell before deciding the right amount to bet is 44,000.

"I call," sighs Jeff. Ketul sheepishly flips over Q♥ 10♦ for absolutely nothing, which, unsurprisingly, is behind to Mr Duvall's two pair – Aces and Eights. While Jeff's 'dead man's hand' doesn't kill Ketul, it results in him looking decidedly unhappy, and unhealthy – had leaves him with a stack of just 25,000 as the massive 144,000 pot is shipped over to Jeff.

However, despite this minor setback, the online professional still managed to make the money, finishing in 18th for £5,500.



A real Sterling effort

Due to the current economic climate, the value of the pound has been fluctuating somewhat as of late. For Paradise Poker-sponsored player Graham Pound, it looked like things were on the rise. The trading started at 14,000 and an aggressive all-in investment with Pocket Kings saw his stock double in value courtesy of the bank of Will Martin, which saw a slight drop in the share prices.

Tragically, currency trading can be a risky business. Despite Pound's stock reaching a record GUKPT Grand Final high it quickly dropped off to nothing due to fluctuations in the foreign market and the rising value of Norwegian Eirik Svanes. The price of Pound's Ace-Queen fell from 17,000 to nothing, bankrupting the company when the Eight-Nine of Svanes hit the flop hard, well pair of Eights hard at any rate, and a deflated Pound was out before the bubble.

DOUBLE-UP HELPS GALVANISE STEEL

VIC REGULAR GUY Steel proved his tournament mettle on Day Two. Returning with just under 30,000, he first increased his stack by putting Nathan Lee to the sword. After re-raising all-in for 15,000 over the top of Guy's opening 6,000 raise, the unfortunate Mr Lee found himself insta-called by Mr Steel.

Lee's Pocket Tens were no match for the might of Steel's Cowboys, and despite picking up a gutshot draw on the King-Queen-Ace flop, blanks on the turn and river saw him out in 40th place.

Michael Tureniec was next to experience a taste of cold Steel when his Pocket Sixes were crushed by Guy's Ace-Queen after both players got it all in the middle pre-flop with the final board reading A-J-7-J-4 to give Guy top pair and double him up. The London jeweller then went on to the final table, taking down third place and cashing for an impressive £80,000 – now that will buy a lot of jewellery.



Photography: Phil Sowels

▼ Tala Shakerchi found himself between a rock and a hard place



REDUCING THE CROWD

TWO'S COMPANY, THREE'S a crowd as Tala Shakerchi found to his cost during a hand with Full Tilt-sponsored pro Richard 'Chuffy' Ashby and Wolverhampton-based professional Surinder Sunar.

After an Ashby raise, both Talal and Surinder make the call to see a three-way flop of 10♦ 10♠ J♣. Cue the fireworks...

Following a 6,000 bet from Talal and an Ashby call, Surinder pulled the trigger for his last 30,000 only to see Mr Ashby shove and get called in turn by Mr Shakerchi for his remaining 30,000.

Surprisingly no one had the third Ten, but it was bad news for Talal, whose Pocket Queens were dominated by Ashby's Pocket Rockets. Surinder on the other hand was still very live, holding K♠ Q♠ for the open-ended straight flush draw.

The 9♥ on the turn completed Surinder's straight, which held as a meaningless 9♣ on the river awarded him the 100,000 pot. A less-than-chuffed 'Chuffy' took the side pot and Shakerchi hit the rail.



We four kings

Traditionally it's three Kings that come bearing gifts in the festive season, but Stuart Nash decided to have an early Christmas this year in a hand against David McConnon.

Mr Nash effectively brought the house down when, after a little pre-flop action, all the money ended up in the middle after a Queen hit the turn on a King-King-Eight board. David flipped over Pocket Queens for a turned full house and Stuart was drawing to one out – which promptly arrived on the river to give him quad Kings. Ouch! That put paid to Mr McConnon's dreams of tournament glory and gave Mr Nash the boost he needed to make the final table. Unfortunately a wave of frozen cards saw him exit in seventh place for £22,000 when his Button-raise with King-Ten found Stuart Rutter waking up with Pocket Jacks in the Big Blind.

My Story: Richard Ashby

A high-stakes cash game player recently elevated to the status of 'Red Pro' on Full Tilt, 'Chuffy' can often be found playing on the Pot Limit Omaha tables with the likes of Benyamine and Antonius. Here's how he fared on his second GUKPT final table...

"Towards the later stages it was quite tough and there was quite an interesting mix between the younger internet players and the more old school cash players who have been playing for years, like Jeff [Duvall] and Stuart Nash, and then I'm somewhere in the middle. I play a lot of live cash and I also play a lot online so... Yeah it was quite an interesting final table, and it was quite a tough standard – and I just couldn't get going, really.

"On the final table I had one hand that I could have played early and I was looking to get my chips in quickly. The only playable hand I had was Pocket Sevens, but Cascarino raised in first position. He's quite a solid,

tight player, so I knew he had a hand and that I was racing – and as I wanted to try and get my chips in first, I passed.

"I didn't see any other hands right until my Big Blind, where I had A♥ S♥ and Paul Foltyn raised on the Button, so he could have a wide range of hands there. I had 10,000 of my remaining 60,000 in there, so I couldn't pass really," said Richard.

Unfortunately, Paul was raising with a genuine hand, and his Pocket Rockets had Richard dominated, and despite hitting a Five on the flop the valiant 'Chuffy' was eliminated in ninth place.

"I genuinely do like the way that Blue Square run the tournaments. I've played one before and made a final table [GUKPT Manchester November 2007], the leg that Dave Colclough won, so obviously I was hoping to go a bit further this time. But it wasn't to be."



▼ Gary Clarke turned the tables on 'The Worm'



A REAL BOON FOR THE YOUNG SCANDIE STAR

NORWEGIAN PLAYER EIRIK Svanes enjoyed his GUKPT debut, dominating the tournament as chip-leader on several occasions, one of which was aided by a gift from the aptly named Robert Boon. Young poker professional Dan Carter led into the three-way pot on a 10-J-5 flop for 6,300 only to be re-popped by Eirik for 21,000 total. Boon shoved for the remainder of his stack to find Eirik's two pair (Jacks and Tens) a big favourite over his open-ended straight draw.

While Robert missed his draw, Svanes hosed up when another Jack hit the

river and it was time for Mr Boon to hit the rail.

Another player to fall victim to the aggressive Scandinavian was Ariel Adda, whose Pocket Nines were outdrawn by Eirik's nut flush draw. Just to make sure everyone knew he meant business, Eirik put an end to previous chip-leader Robin Keston's tournament, crunching the London-based cash game specialist's Pocket Queens under the boot heels of his Pocket Kings.

His first GUKPT appearance saw him reach the final table and take home a very tasty £60,000 for his troubles. This is probably not the last we'll be hearing from this impressive, aggressive young player.

Six-Three cracked by Jacks

Despite playing a strong tournament, a short-stacked Will Martin was unlucky not to make the money this time round after an ill-timed move with Six-Three. After Will shoved for his last 20,000 he found WSOPE finalist Robin Keston waiting with Pocket Jacks. There was a glimmer of hope in the form of bottom pair on the Nine-Three-Seven board, but a Ten on the turn and a Seven on the river meant his main event was over.

Still, the London-based limousine company owner has been enjoying a recent run of form that makes up for having his monster hand cracked. He has cashed in the last two GUKPT main events, took fifth in the Vic's £1,000 side event earlier in the week, has recently cashed in the Irish Winter Festival and made the money in the WSOPE £1,500 event. Nice work if you can get it...

THE WORM TURNED

RUNNING POCKET KINGS into Pocket Aces is an occupational hazard in poker. In tournament poker especially, premium hands are a rare and valuable commodity, and when they collide they can cause confrontations that result in at least one early exit.

There is of course a flip side to every coin, as Mickey 'The Worm' Wernick can tell you. After Mickey and Irishman Gary Clarke got it all in pre-flop with Aces and Kings respectively, a King reared its ugly head to see the Birmingham-based professional hit the rail after being cruelly outflopped.

"I don't mind losing, but Kings against Aces fucking hurts, you know what I mean?" muttered a despondent Mr Wernick.

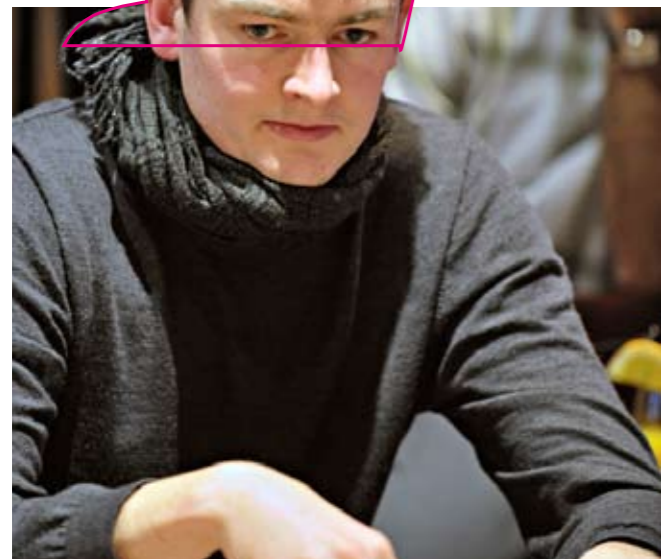




BIG SCORE FOR EX-FOOTBALLER

DESPITE SURFING A short stack for much of the later stages, Bolton champion Tony Cascarino bobbed and weaved his way through his second GUKPT final table. After running his stack down to just 57,000 towards the end of Day Two, Tony managed to find a second wind when he woke up with Pocket Kings under the gun. With just seven Big Blinds left, Tony doubled up through Guy Steel's Ace-Ten to take him back up to the giddy heights of the six-figure chip mark. After a brief foray back into the world of the short-stack after leading out for over half

his stack and folding to Maz Nawab's all-in, Tony double-doubled his micro-stack to over 100,000 when his auto-called shove with A♥Q♣ held up against the K♠4♥ of Mr Nawab. Hitting the case Queen to make a set against the Ace-Queen of Tim Flanders brought him back into contention, finishing the job off and eliminating Tim in 12th place for good measure just a few hands later with A♠10♠, which was well in front of Tim's 9♠3♦. Tragically it was an early bath for the former Ireland international footballer, who couldn't repeat chance and take down his second GUKPT final table – however £27,600 for his sixth place finish is a good result, whichever way you slice it.



NORWEGIAN TAKES ON LOCAL NUTTER

POKER WRITER STUART 'The Nutter' Rutter was another player to make his second GUKPT final table. The Birmingham native and PokerNews reporter was in contention for much of the tournament before a hand against Jeff Duvall saw him jockeying for position back down with the rest of the pack when his Ace-Queen was outflopped by Jeff's King-Jack.

The end came shortly afterwards at the hands of Norwegian Eirik Svanes. After cold-calling a raise with King-Queen, Stuart check-raised all-in on the King-high flop only to see Eirik insta-call with Ace-King. Unable to hit one of the three remaining Queens, it looked like the valiant Brummie might be left with just a chip and a chair, but alas, a mild chip shortage meant he was out in fifth, cashing out for a bankroll-boosting £35,900.



The Long way round

Some car crash poker saw Long Zhang reap the benefits after this action-packed hand. Short-stacked Irishman Frank Cruesscalaghan moved all-in for his last 10,000 only to be min-re-raised by prolific online tournament specialist Chris Moorman, who was then raised in turn by GUKPT tour stalwart Nik Persuad for his last 22,000. Just to make things more interesting, Long, who had everyone but Chris covered, moved all-in on the Button.

After Chris passed Pocket Threes face-up, it was three players to the flop, with Frank's Queen-Jack well behind to Nik's Ace-King, which was in turn dominated by Zhang's Pocket Kings.

Ironically the 2♣2♠3♣8♦7♥ board helped no one but Mr Moorman, who looked on dejectedly after realising he would have busted everyone. However it was Mr Long who scooped the 80,000 pot, eliminating both Nik and Frank in the process. Kerching!



▼ The epic heads-up between Paul and Jeff took three hours



▲ Paul Foltyn, aka BadPab2, is 'pretty ecstatic with the win'

ONLINE POKER PRO BADPAB RUNS GOOD

Young Doncaster-based online professional Paul Foltyn has usurped Michael Ellis as the GUKPT Grand Final Champion. Paul, aka 'Badpab2' and 'Pab', is currently ranked fifth in the PocketFives Leaderboard rankings and has transferred his cyberspace success into a bricks-and-mortar result with his GUKPT victory. He won a tasty £138,000 after a final table deal was decided between the remaining four players. Here's how he did it...

"I'm pretty ecstatic with the win. It's taken a while to sink in to be honest; it's been a bit of a weird week, like. I've been down in Luton and Bristol and lots of people have been coming up and congratulating me and stuff, so it's like nothing else I've ever experienced before. So overall I'm very pleased, yeah.

"This is my biggest live cash to date by some margin as well. The biggest before was a sixth place finish in the World Series – one of the side events for \$87,000, so it's nearly triple that, I think. That was in 2006. It was the \$5,000 buy-in short-handed event. I came 15th again this year and I've played with Sam [Trickett who finished fifth in that event in the

2008 series] for a long time. It was the one where Jeff Madsen won his second bracelet, I think."

"The final was a good mix of all the poker styles, I thought. There was me, Eirik [Svanes] and Stuart [Rutter], who are more of the younger internet players. Stuart plays a bit unconventionally anyway – he doesn't play like a lot of the internet players. Then obviously there was people like Jeff [Duvall], Guy Steel, and Surinder, who well were completely old school. There was a nice balance there. It mixed it up a little bit."

"The hand against Ali Mallu early on Day Two was when I really thought that I could have a good chance at making the final table. I came back to Day Two and I think that I was third in chips overall – I had 100,000 and Ali Mallu had just busted Richard Greco, and he'd gone up to about a 100,000 as well, and I moved to his left. I've played with Ali before and had decided that I'm, like, just going to stay out of his way and see how the table develops.

"But on the very first orbit he raises the Button to 3,200 I think. We were playing 600/1,200 blinds and I three-bet him from the

Small Blind to 10,000 with Ace King. The Big Blind passes and Ali instantly moves all-in and I was a bit taken aback. I knew I was calling, but it was still pretty early on in the day and the first hand that I'd played against Ali, so I stopped to think about it for a couple of seconds and then I called, and he had Ace Nine off-suit and I hold to go up to like 220,000 at the start of the day – and people made the final with less than that.

"The three-hour heads-up with Jeff Duvall was really crazy, because we had so many chips compared to the blinds. It was 10,000/20,000 when we got heads-up and there was 2.7 million in play. I had about 1.6 and Jeff had like 1.1, so it was over 60 Big Blinds each, and on the first hand he just check-raised me all-in on the flop...

"I knew we were going to be there for hours. I had him all in a couple of times and he kept escaping. So I just had to take my time, and then I eventually got him."