



UK Poker

GCBPT Liverpool

Scene



1 RAKESH GUPTA
The Scottish/Indian GCBPT regular started Day Two with 56,000 but failed to make much headway, busting with K-10 to eventual winner Zachary Ford's full house.



2 GEORGE GEARY
The Iceman played a patient game, finally exiting in 21st for £550 when his Pocket Fives were out-flopped by the mighty King-Ten of Niko Hanninen.



3 RUPINDER BEDI
The GCBPT Nottingham champion lasted late into Day 1B, busting when his Pocket Twos ran into A-K and the J-J-8-3-8 board counterfeited his hand.



4 MEL LOFTHOUSE
The PokerNews editor lasted deep into Day Two but failed to cash when her Pocket Fours ran into the K-J of internet qualifier Pav Heer on a K-K-8 flop.



5 NEIL BLATCHLY
The Bristol GCBPT champion couldn't really get anything going and was eliminated mid-way through Day 1B when his Ace-Queen lost a race to Pocket Sevens.

TOURNAMENT BOSS



John Baker
GCBPT tournament director

"The turnout has been really good. It's a small card room so we put in another table to accommodate all the alternates and managed to seat everyone so we didn't disappoint. We even managed to get the guy that flew in from the Czech Republic on the off chance straight in. We're ticking all the boxes that we wanted ticked and it's going really well. The cash action has been quite lively, but the side events are limited compared to what we're used to - so it's matching the cash games to the market in the local area. If people want something different we'll certainly try and accommodate them."



Bubble Bartering

In spite of the danger of going home empty handed competition for the money spots was fierce as the bubble approached and in a generous gesture the remaining players struck a deal that ensured the bubble boy would get their money back to ease the pain of elimination. George 'The Iceman' Geary was the deal's beneficiary when his shove with Pocket Fives was called in two spots. The Iceman was cold-decked out of the tournament when Niko Hanninen paired his Ten to freeze George out of the hand. Still £550 as a consolation prize chilled him out slightly.



BAD BEATS FOR BRISTOLIAN

SUPER SATELLITER BRIAN Donovan endured a rollercoaster ride of a tournament after qualifying for £20 at his local Gala casino in Bristol. After eliminating the Hendon Mob's Joe Beevers just two hours into the tournament, Brian took a massive chip-lead, and for a while everything seemed to go his way as he went on a heater until three hideous beats decimated his stack, seeing him out in 11th place. Not bad for a tournament rookie. "I didn't even realise when I entered the satellite in Bristol that it was for the

Gala tour, I thought it was just a £20 re-buy. I wasn't actually all that keen on coming down and playing, if they'd have said to me you can take £550 cash or the ticket I would have taken the money." He can still say he put his money in good though – his all-in shove with Pocket Aces was called by Zachary Ford who had woken up with Pocket Queens, but a Queen on the river spelt the end for Donovan. "That was it, game over, three bad beats in 20 minutes. It's emotional and it's really savage, I would have liked to have got to the final table."



Cold sweat for the godfather

JAMES BROWN WAS left without the money for a brand new bag following a hand with seasoned Gala Tour regular, Bristolian Rod Buckman. After raising in middle position with Ace-Ten and finding a caller in the shape of Mr Buckman the funkster led out with a pot-sized bet with his top pair on the Eight-Six-Ace board. James Brown was left 'Bewildered' when Rod made it funky and pushed all-in, and went into the think-tank before making the call and finding out he was in 'Super Bad' shape to Buckman's set of Eights. Blanks on the turn and river left Mr Brown 'Talkin' Loud and Sayin' Nothing' as he headed for the rail and before long he was 'Out of Sight', while a delighted Mr Buckman doubled up through to 22,000.

THE MERSEYBEAT GOES ON

THE LONG AND winding road takes the 'People's Poker Tour' to Liverpool this month for more tournament action on this magical mystery tour. Reigning GCBPT champions Rupinder Bedi and Neil Blatchly and the Hendon Mob's Joe Beevers were among 230 players who assembled for a hard day's night at the poker tables of Gala's Leo Casino to battle it out for a share of the £120,000 prize pool. Aspiring cardsharps can qualify live at participating Gala casinos for the remaining events, visit gcbpokertour.com for details. Online qualifiers are being run at Coralpoker.co.uk and Eurobetpoker.com from as little as \$4. Although Scotsman and live poker virgin Grant McGinn went one better this time around – he qualified for absolutely nothing via a freeroll on Galapoker.co.uk.

My Story: Joe Beevers

Joe 'The Elegance' Beevers is the reigning GCBPT champion having taken the tour by storm back in 2007. Here he tells WPT how his tournament went...

"I had Kings a couple of times and lost one of those and actually went down to about 5,500 – but it was a relatively passive table and people were playing relatively straightforward – they bet or raised if they had a hand and if they didn't they'd throw it away. "Once the antes got a little bit higher I was able to take advantage of that a little bit and without actually having to show a hand I built my 5,500 up to 11,000. "Then came a particular hand where I got knocked out. There were two dead stacks at my table and two players had been knocked out so the two dead stacks were on the Small and Big Blind so I've only got five players behind me. It looked like an easy steal of these two undefended

blinds so I made a raise with the Jack-Two of diamonds, I've got called in one spot and it comes a Jack-high flop. "I made a continuation bet and get called, and now I'm thinking that my opponent has Kings or Queens – once he's called me before the flop and now he's called me on the flop... it's a Jack, nothing, nothing flop so the actual hand I put him on is Queens. On the turn it's come a Deuce so it's like J-8-5-2 rainbow, so I fancy if he's got Queens I want to get a big double through to 25,000, so I moved all-in, which was a slightly oversized bet. He called me instantly with three Jacks... Yeah... So I'm drawing dead. But he [Brian Donovan] played the hand very well and he trapped me and got my chips so..."



A BAD BEAT AND A CATCHPRASE...

UNLIKE THE LYNX adverts, the cry of 'bom-chicka-wow-wow!' does not herald the appearance of several scantily clad women dancing around the card room of the Leo. It does however signify a particularly nasty beat and an early exit for Andy Spyros at the hands of local player Peter Ioannou. Holding Pocket Twos Andy craftily checked bottom set on the 9-2-6 rainbow flop, as did Peter behind him. A Five on the turn prompted a flurry of betting from both players and all the money went in with Peter's bottom two pair (Fives and Twos) in bad shape. "You know the Fives coming don't you?" Peter warns Andy prophetically. "Bom-chicka-wow-wow!" shouts a triumphant Peter as the dealer turns over the Five of diamonds for the river card. "That's disgusting! Fucking disgusting!" mutters a distinctly unimpressed Andy as he storms off towards the door, leaving local lad Peter to stack his newly won chips. Peter's nostradamus like powers abandoned him later on and he eventually finished in 10th place for £2,200.

▼ Billy Ngo is a familiar face on the UK scene. When he's not playing poker works as an IT specialist



STOP NGO

 THE STOP AND go is a canny tournament play seasoned veteran Billy Ngo tried to use to his advantage in a hand against Lynne Beaumont late into Day Two. Unfortunately for Billy things didn't quite go according to plan...

After Lynne raised to 12,000 from late position Billy contemplated his best move and promptly re-raised to 27,000. Lynne made the call and the 6♣ 7♠ 4♦ board saw Billy shove for the remainder of his stack. Beaumont doesn't think long before calling and Billy was pleasantly surprised to see his Pocket Queens well in front of Lynne's ambitious 8♠ 9♠.

The Jack of clubs on the turn is not the straight card Lynne is looking for but runner-runner is always good – the 5♣ on the river brings her a backdoor club flush and sees Billy bust before the bubble. Stop, do not pass go...



I'm your biggest fan

George Geary has no problems keeping his cool at the poker table. Nicknamed the Iceman because of his level headed demeanour, George is often accompanied by his only fan – a battery powered device to keep him cool while playing.

However, it was Harry Zammit who was 'cooled' in this particular hand; after raising to 10,000 with A-Q he was priced into calling Geary's short-stacked push of 16,600 for just 6,600 more, only to find out he was well behind George's A♦ K♦. The board brought no help and the chips went the Iceman's way.

Harry never recovered, exiting at the hands of Gerald 'Skullman' David when he found himself out-kicked once again – his

A-10 no match for Skullman's A-J.

The Iceman fared better, bursting the bubble for his money back

(this bubble burst to the tune of £550 due to a player deal).

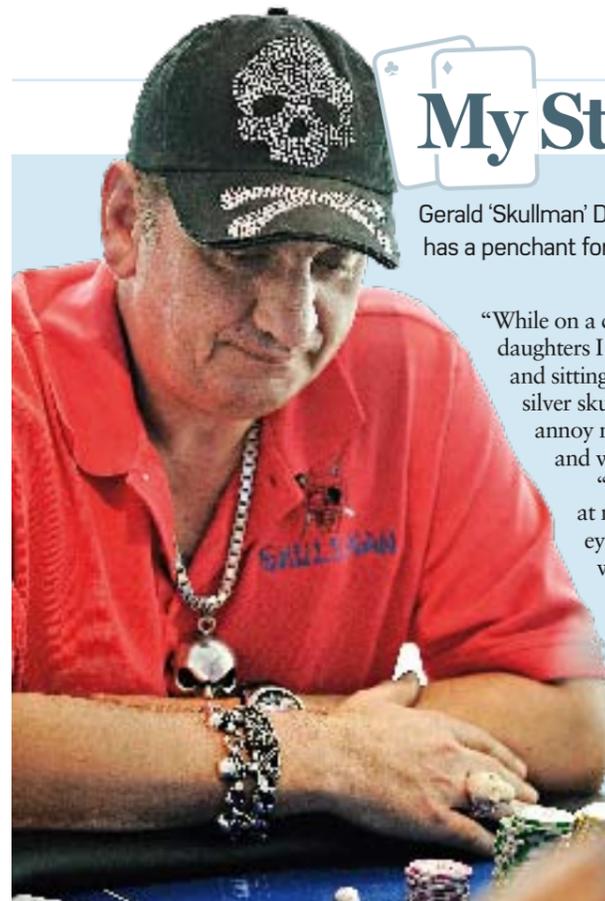
THE COMEBACK KID

 TEASSIDER CARL EGLINTINE looked to be in trouble early on in Day Two when he called Lynne Beaumont's all-in push of 21,300. Carl found himself crippled and in dire need of more than one double up after his Pocket Jacks fell afoul of Lynne's Big Slick on a K♦ K♣ 10♦ flop. The 8♦ and 3♠ on the turn and river respectively were no help and Carl found himself left with just 4,500 chips, which went all-in on the next hand.

"So I'm down to around 4,500 and push all-in next hand and get an instant call off the Big Blind, double up, push in again – take the blinds, push in again – take the blinds, then I waited a little bit and got paid off again with trip Aces, next thing I know I'm back up to 30,000 and made a few moves and then

trapped Tony Slater with Eight-Nine when I flopped two pair, got paid off and got back up to about 60,000 and then got involved in another big pot, took that and before I knew it I've got 120,000 chips... It's hard work but fun..." chuckles Carl.

Unfortunately for Carl, his luck finally deserted him late into Day Two when he shoved with Pocket Nines and found Wass Shahid waiting with Ace-Queen, cue the Ace for the first card on the flop and Mr Eglintine is eliminated in 16th, taking home £1,200 for his troubles – an impressive achievement and a massive return on his initial investment of \$20 on Galapoker.co.uk



My Story: Skullman

Gerald 'Skullman' David performed well and finished third for £17,000. The Manchester native has a penchant for baroque jewellery and is not someone you can miss at the tables...

"While on a cruise with my three daughters I went into a jewellery shop, and sitting in the window was a large silver skull. I thought that just to annoy my daughters I would buy it and wear it.

"I could see people looking at me out of the corner of their eye and the odd comment would be made by an adult, but what was really amusing was when there were children, they'd look at it and turn around to one of their parents and say 'look at the skullman over there.' So now I wear it while playing in tournaments and call myself the Skullman

whilst playing because I think the way to go forward in poker is by giving yourself a name.

"Two hands stand out for me in particular; one against Harry Zammit on the final day where I had Ace-Jack and Harry had put a fairly big raise in and had then bet on the flop. Whilst I knew he obviously had the Ace I had to read him. I decided to call him and was very happy when I saw he had Ace-Ten against my Ace-Jack so my kicker card won.

"I think my most adventurous hand and the one that probably left me the most vulnerable throughout the whole competition was when I went for the flush against Zachary Ford. I thought that my number was up until the croupier turned over the river card; I think that it was the first time that I had ever seen the suit before the actual number on the card and all I could see was a spade, and it was the Ace so I jumped up and shouted, 'be there for the man!' and was overjoyed with the result."

Invisible man outlasts Mobster



Everybody wants superpowers at the poker tables – X-ray vision to peek at your opponent's hole cards or laser heat vision to blast the donkey that just sucked out on you...

However, superhero move of the day has to go to Jim Tierney who

failed to show up for the tournament yet still managed to win a three-way pot!

Due to Gala tournament rules dead stacks are blinded away until they are all-in, when they must go to showdown.

Despite the fact that Jim was not present nobody could beat his Ace-high for a triple up at the 300/600 level, although he was eventually blinded away three orbits later.

Obviously there's a lot to be said for playing tight... he outlasted Joe Beevers and Neil Blatchly who actually turned up...



▲ Having had a special qualifier tournament in their honour at their local Gala in Leicester, it was no surprise to see some members of 'The Best Home Game in the East Midlands' at this event. See page 48 for a full interview.

IT'S NO BIG DEAL

 NO BIG DEAL for Anthony Holden (no not that one...) at the Liverpool leg of the GCBPT. Despite sharing his name with poker writer and author of 'Big Deal' and 'Bigger Deal' Anthony was unable to clinch his deal at the tables, running into trouble early on at the hands of Bradley Varnam. After moving all-in on an A-9-4 board Holden was in bad shape; Bradley's A-K dominated his A-10. Twos on the turn and river were no help and Mr Holden was left with just 6,000. Some cold decking later and the end was nigh – holding K-9 on a K-Q-9 flop Holden made the push only to find Mark James waiting with K-Q for a higher two pair. The third Queen on the river sealed the deal and saw Anthony out of the tournament.

RUB DOWN GARRENTIED

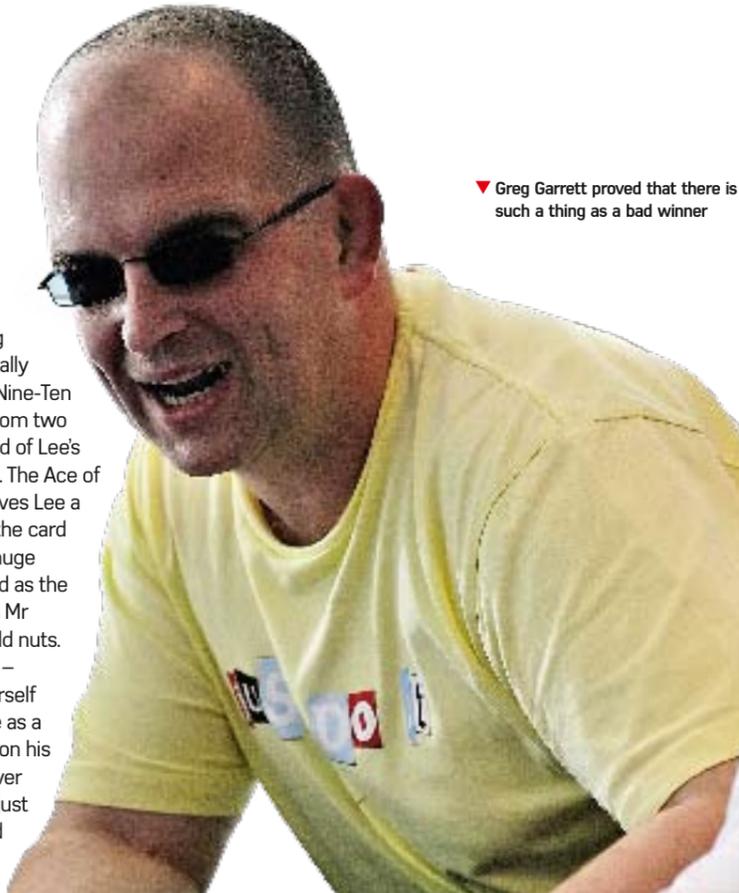
AFTER PICKING OFF a huge bluff for his tournament life with Ace-Jack for top pair, beating Zacharay Ford's optimistic King-high vocal local Lee Birchall became involved in another massive pot with Greg Garrett on the very next hand. The fuse was lit in a four-way limped pot against Luke Abolins and Mustafa Sepanji following a 9♠ Q♠ 10♥ flop. After Luke made it 7,000 to go and Mustafa made the call Greg re-raised to 32,000 only to see Lee move all-in.

Greg tanked over the decision that would eventually cost him his tournament life as Lee still has 80,000 behind.

"You don't have to take a 50/50 here lad, think about it,"

urges Lee while Greg dwells up. He eventually makes the call with Nine-Ten of diamonds for bottom two pair, which was ahead of Lee's Ace-Three of spades. The Ace of hearts on the turn gives Lee a few more outs, and the card room erupts with a huge cheer for the local lad as the 4♣ on the river gives Mr Birchall the stone cold nuts.

Cue the rub down – "You're a fool for yourself lad!" admonished Lee as a dejected Grant puts on his coat, "you should never have done it, you've just lost a grand pal, I told you where you were."



▼ Greg Garrett proved that there is such a thing as a bad winner



Scots virgin freeroll

Glaswegian Grant McGinn certainly got value for money on the GCBPT. The finance manager was playing in his first ever live event after qualifying via a freeroll on Coralpoker.co.uk

"Some of the players have been immense and I've learnt a lot from them because it's my first live tournament," confirmed the modest Scot.

"It's completely different to playing online you know? A lot of the guys – once they know that you've got a short-stack – just bully you, they know how to bet and put pressure on you," confided Grant. "It was good, I've learnt a lot from it, although whether I can now translate back to online and do better I don't know."

Grant's exit hand was an interesting one; after flopping an open-ended straight flush draw on a K♥ J♥ 10♥ board holding Q-J Grant was in trouble against Mark James who had flopped the nut straight with A-Q. Blanks on the turn and river saw Grant eliminated.



COME IN NUMBER 23

FOLLOWING A BRADLEY Varnam raise and a Mark James re-raise Greg Garrett wisely folded his Two-Three off-suit, accidentally exposing his cards to the table. "Watch the flop come Three-Three-Two now," he joked.

The dealer obligingly deals a flop of Three-Three-Two to the sound of 'Ooohhs!' and 'Ahhhs!' from the rest of the table.

"Arghhh!" groans a despondent Greg, "I just knew that would happen..."

After both checking the flop, Mark fired out a bet on the turn and was promptly re-raised by Bradley who seemed slightly taken aback when Mark re-raised again to 4,600 total. After a visit to the think tank Bradley duly makes the call checking the innocuous looking 9♣ on the river and looking slightly perturbed when Mark moved all-in. After making the call and turning over Kings he finds out the bad news – Mark has Aces for the double up and Bradley is on the rail.

"That's such a sick hand," grumbled a despondent Greg, "I would have busted you both..."

BANKER IS ON THE MONEY

The economy may be in meltdown but banker Zachary Ford's stock is on the rise. Capitalising on a great run of form that has seen him finish third in the Manchester GUKPT for £37,850 and win a DTD side event, the 34-year-old Mancunian took down the Liverpool leg of the GCBPT after a hard day's night...

"I play mainly online but I only play once or twice a week, but live I have only played five or six times this year, although in the last six live tournaments I've been in now I've won two of them and come third in another.

"What helped me a lot was when the final table started; because I'd been in a similar situation at the GUKPT in Manchester, I was fairly relaxed about it all, and because I had the cushion of winning that money previously I wasn't overly concerned if I'd busted out early and been the first off the final table.

"I was happy to take a bit more of a gamble with the money; it certainly has helped my confidence, definitely. The first couple of times you play live you do look around and think 'what should I do here?' you know?"

"When the final table started I had the largest stack and everybody was playing fairly tight. I think I was probably the most

aggressive player at the final table, but I could have been more aggressive really – I could have taken advantage of it more than I did.

"But obviously the key hand that got me the big stack where I was really dominating the others was when Alistair [Fox] who was sitting to my right raised it up to 70,000 to go when blinds were 10,000/20,000 with a 1,000 running ante. I had Ace-Queen and was happy to take Alistair on with that as I had about 800,000 chips at that point.

"So I raised up to 200,000 and the lad from Leicester, Ben Chisholm pushed all-in for 250,000. So it went round and Alistair folded and it came around to me and I knew I was behind but it was only another 50,000 chips to put into a pot that was already 570,000 so I had to call. Ben had Ace-King and the flop came down with an Eight and a Jack, turn Ten and river Nine making me a straight, so that was unfortunate for Ben. Winning that pot gave me more than double anybody else's chips at that time.

"I was slightly reluctant to take the deal because I had quite a big stack but the problem was I had to be in work three hours later! I took the deal at that point and got the win, I wanted to get the win under my belt



▲ Zacharay Ford hope he can continue his winning ways over the coming months

really, and get the trophy and get the entry into the Grand Final in Bristol.

Deal making is not unusual at a final table, in fact the ability to barter a good deal is a useful skill as silver-tongued devil Wass Shahid proved. Short-stacked Wass convinced the remaining four players to broker a five-way (yes five!) deal.

"It was the short-stacks who suggested the deal," confirms winner Zach Ford, "Wass got a great deal out of it [chuckles], at first I wasn't keen, but ultimately I decided, well, if on the Friday morning someone had said to me you can take £26,000, plus the package to Bristol, plus the trophy – well I'd have been more than happy so..."