

# EU Poker

*Irish Masters, Dublin*

# Scene



**1 ADAM FALLON**  
The young Irishman enjoyed a good run, until he led out with 8-9 on a J-7-7 flop and pushed for 51k when an Eight hit the turn, only to be called by Pocket Nines.



**2 NEIL CHANNING**  
The Irish Open champion lasted until Day Two, busting out at the hands of Sylvester Geoghan, whose Pocket Kings were well in front of Neil's Pocket Eights.



**3 JAMES AKENHEAD**  
The Hit Squad member's stack yo-yoed before he busted when his re-raise with Pocket Nines found Warren Woodall waiting with Pocket Jacks.



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**4 KARL MARENHOLTZ**  
Karl made the money, busting in 32nd when his shove with K-9 went against the Big Blind's Ace-Jack and found no help from the board.



**5 ANDY BLACK**  
The Full Tilt pro dominated much of the tournament with a monster stack, but he fell afoul of eventual winner Fiachra Meere's Pocket Aces.

## TOURNAMENT BOSS



David O'Neill  
Independent  
tournament director

"This year there's a large amount of players – much larger than usual because we have the Paddy Power sponsorship now. It's a very good turnout, anything over 400 is always a good turnout in any event. The prize fund is very good. It's in excess of €600,000, and with a payout of over €150,000 for first prize, anybody would be happy with that. There's a good spread of cash games, which suits most poker players with all the games they've got. We've got a €100 sit-down up to a €500 sit-down at the moment, and the really big games haven't started yet..."



## CELTIC CARNAGE IN DUBLIN

**IT'S OVER TO** Dublin's Citywest Hotel this month for Celtic carnage at the Paddy Power Irish Winter Festival, where 423 players assembled from all over Europe and the US to compete for a share of the €634,000 prize pool and the Irish Masters title.

Three of Ireland's WSOP bracelet winners, Noel Furlong, Ciaran O'Leary and Marty Smyth, were just a few of the seasoned poker pros in attendance. However, to secure victory here they would have to fight through the ranks of 180 internet qualifiers and 48 super-satellite qualifiers, as well as the Irish old guard in the form of Liam Flood, George McKeever and Pdraig Parkinson.

For those interested in sampling the craic that only an Irish poker tournament can offer, PaddyPowerPoker.com are running qualifiers for the 2009 Irish Open and are also offering a €100,000 bonus to the qualifier that lasts the longest in the main event.

### A surgeon's touch

**WHEN TWO BIG** hands collide at the tables, it can make for car crash poker, and as Leo Murphy discovered, there's nothing worse than going broke against the same hand.

After Leo made it 8,000 to go, the Mohawked Shirley Surgeoner promptly moved all-in behind him for around 25,000. Murphy duly made the call and both players tabled Ace-King – Murphy with the A♥K♥, Surgeoner the A♦K♦.

With both players all-in and evenly stacked it looked to be a standard chop scenario until Shirley promptly flopped the nut flush, leaving Leo to collect his coat.



## My Story: Rory Liffey

This BoylePoker.com sponsored pro has got EPT and Irish Open final tables to his name and has been playing poker for over a decade. Here's how he got on...

"I always really like coming to these Irish tournaments. There's a good atmosphere here and the action is really good. The tournaments in Ireland are a bit wilder and there aren't many venues like this in the UK. The Citywest is a really unique place, as everyone's all together.

"Most of the British tournaments are all in casinos and everyone is staying in different hotels, so you don't really get the same atmosphere. You don't get 24-hour games, and you don't have all the drinking going on as well.

"I was very happy with the way that I played. I was a slightly low stack coming back on Day Two, about two-thirds of the average, and I wasn't really involved that much. I played a fairly solid game –

there are plenty of lunatics around. I was just kind of ticking along slightly below average and I ended up all-in with Ace-Queen against a pair of Twos. It was a blind-against-blind spot that couldn't be avoided, really, though I did think that he could throw away Pocket Twos.

"Still, I was happy with the way that I played. It's a well-structured tournament as well – at one stage I was half average, but still felt that I could chase the tournament, you know? If I'd won with the A-Q it would put me well above average, so I would have been very happy with that."



## GAELS VERSUS THE GAULS

**WHILE THE IRISH** are famed for their Gaelic hospitality, the French are more often commented on for their Gallic hostility. WSOP bracelet winner Ciaran O'Leary may well have felt the same way during a hand played against Poker770-sponsored French player Stephan Gerin.

At the 500/1000 level, both players saw the K♣8♣8♥ flop, at which point the *merde* hit the proverbial *ventilateur*.

With around 8,000 in the middle and both players sitting on stacks of around 50,000 Stephan led out for a pot-sized bet and was swiftly re-raised all-in by the Paddy Power-sponsored Irish pro, who had flopped trips holding Eight-Two. The Frenchman didn't think long before making the call with the massive K♥4♥ and it was in

the hands of the poker gods, who obviously had nothing better to do...

An innocuous looking 5♦ on the turn meant O'Leary was looking good to hold a massive chip-lead, but the K♠ on the river gave Stephan the higher full house.

Cue lots of dancing and shouting in French across the card room, so as well as finding himself on the wrong side of a nasty outdraw, Ciaran also found himself the recipient of an overenthusiastic victory celebration and a short-stack of just 6,000. Looks like someone forgot to eat their lucky charms. O'Leary was out a few hands later when his all-in with Pocket Fours was called by his Gallic chum holding A♣J♣; an Ace on the river sent him to the rail.



### Does not compute...

Queen-Seven, known as 'the computer hand', because of its popularity online, is also good live, it seems. But not for North Londoner Alistair Voyvodech, who was left blowing bubbles after a particularly nasty runner-runner outdraw against Irish poker professional Nicky Power that saw him bust out just off the money.

After Alistair re-raised all-in from the cut-off, Nicky was forced to crunch the numbers before deciding he was getting the odds to call. Nicky's Queen-Seven looked to be in big trouble against Alistair's Aces, especially when the dealer obligingly provided an Ace at Mr Power's request to "throw an Ace up on the flop..." to give Mr Voyvodech top set. It was all downhill from there though; with the board reading Ace-Three-Five, a Four hit the turn and before you could say 'bad beat', a Six on the river sealed the Cockney's fate.



## CASE OF THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

**ANOTHER BLIND V BLIND**, another vicious outdraw. Short-stacked Brits David Lloyd and Paul Cohen saw the Q♦7♦J♥ flop. With 5,000 in blinds and antes waiting to be picked up, David led out for 5,500 only to see Paul quickly re-raise to 12,000 total.

"Flush draw?" queried David, "How much have you got left?" After a quick count Paul announced "About 12,000." With only 15,000 left David hit the think tank hard before making the push.

"I have to be behind," mutters Paul, "but I don't think I can fold. I'm pot committed now," he mumbled as he made the call, wincing as he found his Q-9 in bad shape against David's flopped two pair – Jacks and Sevens.

"Still I've got the Nine of diamonds for runner-runner..." Paul confirmed optimistically. Prophetically, a Nine hit the turn prompting a groan from David and a guilty shrug from Paul, which deepened as another Queen hit the river to give Cohen a full house.

"Just call me lucky bastard if it makes you feel better," an apologetic Paul sheepishly muttered as David headed for the door.





▼ Andy Black went out in dramatic fashion at this year's Irish Masters

## A BLACK DAY FOR ANDY

**IRISH** FULL TILT-SPONSORED Irish superstar Andy 'The Mad Monk' Black attracted a great deal of attention, with crowds of railbirds surrounding his tables as he built a massive chip stack and destroyed all who dared to cross his path.

When the end came, though, it was quick. Andy was playing in the aggressive style that has taken him deep in so many tournaments when disaster struck in two consecutive hands against eventual winner, Fiachra Meere.

After snap-calling a Meere raise with A-9, The Monk found himself praying for a miracle when Meere flipped over A-Q – but, it was not to be and Meere doubled up. The next hand the action folded around to Andy in the Small Blind who quickly raised.

"Well, how did I know that was coming?" quipped Fiachra coyly as he just smooth-called. A flop of 9-4-2 saw The Monk fire a 30,000 bet into Fiachra, who promptly re-raised to 90,000. The instant Meere's chips crossed the line, Andy shoved, eliciting an insta-call from Fiachra, whose slow-played Pocket Aces were well in front of Black's 2-Q. Blanks on the turn and river saw Andy as good as out.



## I have the Power!

Many secrets were revealed to Adam, prince of Eternia (alter-ego of He-Man) the day he held aloft his magic sword.

But the blond-mulleted one can't hold a candle to Irish poker pro Nicky Power, who seems to know something no one else does when it comes to sucking out in style.

After pushing all-in over the top of chip-leader David Poole's raise, Nicky was nonplussed to see David's Ace-Ten well in front of his A♦8♦. The board provided a cruel twist, as running diamonds hit the turn and river to a chorus of ooohhs and aaahhs from the watching crowd completing Nicky's backdoor flush, doubling him up to 90,000 and taking a substantial bite out of David's chip lead.

## FROM HERO TO ZERO

**IRISH** DAY ONE CHIP-LEADER Elliot Blackburne ran into a spot of trouble on Day Two, and it was all downhill from there.

The beginning of the end was an ambitious open raise with Q♣9♣ from early position that ran into the Big Blind's A♠K♠. Several hands later Elliot became involved in a massive 70,000 pot with Pat Griffin on a Jack-Five-Four rainbow board, with Elliot shoving for 26,000.

Griffin called with King-Jack for top pair, which was well in front of Elliot's Six-Five, leaving the Scouser sitting on a short-stack of just 11,000.

Despite managing to run his stack back up to 30,000, the end was in sight, though it was not the happy ending the young Mr Blackburne was looking for.

His all-in with King-Nine went up against the Pocket Queens of Ger Hodson. A Nine on the flop gave Elliot some hope, but running Sixes on the turn and river saw the Liverpuddlian eliminated.

He didn't seem too fazed, however, and he wandered off to play a €5,000 heads-up match with one of Norway's highest-earning online professionals, Trond Eidsvig, drawing a bigger crowd than even Andy Black managed.

The successful young player certainly has a fearless attitude that could see him go far and win big, if the cards fall his way...



## My Story: Neil Channing

This cash game player has been enjoying a good run of tournament form recently. Here's how the defending Irish Open champion fared on his return to Ireland...

"I like coming to Ireland," confirmed the Poker Verdict-sponsored pro, "I've never played the Irish Winter Festival before, and obviously after the Irish Open I was very keen to come here."

"I went into Day Two thinking that I was going to play lots of hands and be very aggressive. People over here are quite nervous of me for some reason. The Irish Open is a big thing, obviously, and I've been on TV quite a lot recently, so my way of compensating for that is to play more hands and raise a lot more."

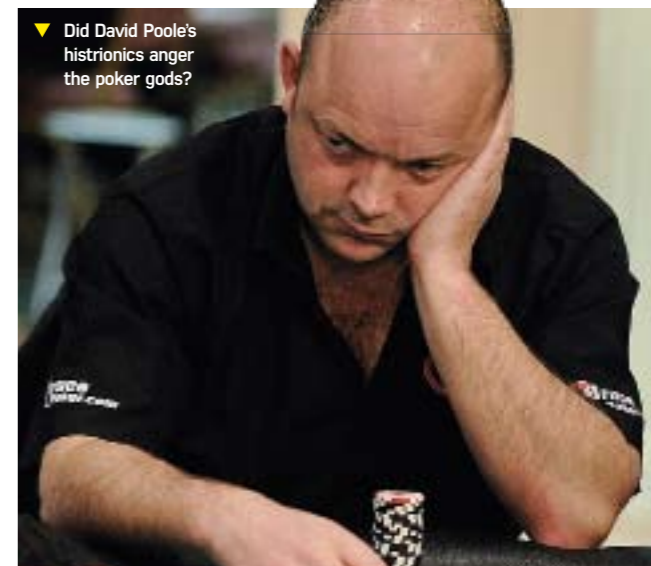
"Today it didn't really work, though – I was at a table where a few people had played me before, and they probably weren't going to stand for too much nonsense from me, and I ran into a couple of bad situations – I had Tens on the Button and somebody found Aces..."

"Finally I got knocked out. I had Pocket Eights in the blinds and Sylvester Geoghan – who I played with in the World Series of Poker main event this year and who's always had the better of me in tournaments. Whenever we play, he always seems to have a big hand, I don't know why I bother re-raising him..."

"Anyway, he raised one off the Button and I was in the Small Blind with Pocket Eights. He made it 5,500, the blinds were 800/1,600 I went all-in for 44,000 and he called me with two Kings and somehow I managed to not hit an Eight so, disaster..."



▼ Did David Poole's histrionics anger the poker gods?



## 'Bad Beat' gets badly beaten

Reigning Irish Open champion Neil 'Bad Beat' Channing lasted deep into Day Two with a healthy stack before some cold-decking saw him take a hit in a Button versus Small Blind confrontation. Channing raised from the Button with Pocket Tens only to see a short-stacked Maurice Caplice shove from the Small Blind. Priced in for the call, his Tens were in trouble against Maurice's Pocket Rockets, and despite flopping a gutshot on the King-Nine-Jack board Maurice's Aces held for the double-up.

Neil's exit hand came courtesy of Sylvester Geoghan who raised to 5,500 in the cut-off. Channing shoved for 44,000 total with Pocket Eights only to see Sylvester insta-call with Pocket Kings. With no Eight on the turn or river it was Bad Beat's time to be beaten, and he busted before the bubble burst.

## CALL THE GARDAI...

**IRISH** IT WAS DAVID Poole who felt like he'd been robbed after getting involved in yet another pot with river rat Nicky Power. After Power pushed from under the gun with Pocket Nines for 90,000, David seemed to be contemplating a tough decision and asked for a chip count, eventually making the call with... Pocket Aces.

Whether the poker gods were punishing David for his Hollywood style antics or Nicky had made a deal with a higher power is unclear, but the Irish pro was down to just two outs after the Ten-Six-Six flop.

A Five on the turn changed nothing, but a third Nine on the river put a crimp on Mr Poole's day – his two pair was no match for the might of Power's Nines full as he doubled up to 180,000.



## WINNING SOMETHING FROM NEXT TO NOTHING

**AFTER WINNING** A super-satellite freeroll at his local casino, the Fitzpatrick Sporting Emporium, Limerick man Fiachra Meere walked away as the 2008 Irish Masters champion. Runner-up Chris Woods also qualified via a freeroll, and went home with €106,000 for his weekend's work.

After Meere's Pocket Queens eliminated John Raftery holding King-Queen, play was heads-up. Both players limped in the next hand to see a Jack-Seven-Three flop that Chris duly checked to Fiachra in the Big Blind.

"I remember thinking that was unusual because he was a very strong player, so I thought that the check was a strong check," stated Fiachra.

"Being as I only had Ten-Eight, I checked, and the turn came

and he checked into me again, so now I know he has a monster, because Chris knew that I am an aggressive player and he's checking into me.

"A Nine on the river gave me the nut straight and then Chris led out for 200,000. I made it 600,000 and he called instantly, turning over Jack-Seven for two pair. So I was spot on."

"That gave me a six-to-one chip lead, and then on the very next hand I looked down to see Ace-Six on the Small Blind.

"Chris pushed with Pocket Jacks, so he had a great hand and I was quite happy to double him up there as I'd still have a monster chip-lead on him – but somehow I made a straight and it was all over," said the ecstatic Irishman.



## Hasta la vista baby...

Arnold Schwarzenegger's fellow Austrian Andreas Schippani ensured he would be returning for Day Three with back-to-back hands that saw him terminate two players.

The first to fall to Andreas was Irish player Sylvester Geoghan, whose Pocket Kings failed to improve against Schippani's Pocket Aces, giving the Austrian the tournament chip-lead.

Next in the firing line was the Irish professional Michael Muldoon, whose Ace-Queen was blown away by our action hero's Pocket Kings, taking Andreas' stack up to the heady heights of the 500,000 mark. Mr Schippani eventually finished in 7th for €24,000. Now that will buy an awful lot of cigars...



## WASS UP IN DUBLIN

**HOT ON THE** heels of his GCBPT final table in Liverpool, Manchester-based poker player Wass Shahid battled his way from a short-stack of just 5,100 to reach the final table sixth in chips with 310,000.

After running his paltry 5,500 up to 58,000 Wass became embroiled in a hand with Italian player Paolo Giovanetti after raising to 14,000 under the gun. After Paolo shoved for 80,000 with Pocket Jacks he found out the bad news as Wass tabled Pocket Kings, which retained their lead on the Ace-Ten-Eight flop. A Queen on the turn made things a great deal more interesting. Now if either player hit a set, the other would win with a straight.

With bated breath, both players watched the board blank off on the river to award Wass the 170,000 pot and a big enough stack to battle his way through to the final, where his Ace-Five lost to Fiachra Meere's Pocket Jacks to see him finish in ninth place for €10,500.



## GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR PRIZE MONEY...

**A**irline worker Fiachra Meere has catapulted himself to the giddy heights of Irish Masters champion. Cruising at an altitude of €150,000 after his win, the Aer Lingus ground worker endured a turbulent tournament where he went from chip-leader to short-stack with just six players remaining. Here's how he clawed it all back...

"I went through hell and back at the final table. I lost over a million in chips in the space of two pots. Thankfully I had such a big chip-lead that I still had my seat, although I'd gone from chip-leader to the short-stack.

"I couldn't believe it. The blood was rushing around my head and I didn't know whether I wanted to be sick or whether I wanted to cry, but I knew what I didn't want to do – I did not want to give up!"

"Then I was brave enough to push with a Nine-Four, because I had to and I still had the respect of the players. I was called when I didn't even know what I had, it didn't matter, I said if I get two folds into me then I'm pushing. I got called by Peter Murphy on the Small Blind with Pocket Eights and the first

card out was a Nine – a three-outer, only the second time in three days that I needed a three-outer, and I got it... at the final table of the PaddyPower Irish Masters..."

"Three words popped through my mind when that Nine came out, and they were 'dare to dream!' It just came into my head. I don't know where it came from, as it's not usually a catchphrase of mine. I thought 'OK!' I didn't even celebrate. I just lifted my hand in apology and sat down, still low stacked, but just smiled, stacked my chips in one column and pushed it in at the table again and again.

"Then I got Pocket Nines and was snapped by the Ace-Ten of Peter Murphy, and my Nines held.

"All of a sudden we were down to three-handed. I took out John Raftery with Pocket Queens against his King-Queen because I'd re-raised him twice in a row and he snapped the second time. Next thing I know I'm heads-up against Chris Woods, and the tournament director said that there was five minutes left of the current blind level and then we were on break."



▲ Fiachra Meere

However, the next tournament break would be a permanent one – the likeable Limerick man managed to beat Brit Chris Woods in just two hands heads-up.

"Before I know it I have a trophy and they're putting a huge cardboard cheque into my hands. There's flash photography everywhere and a friend of mine shouted: 'Will you smile for God sake!' which made me realise that I wasn't even smiling – I was too numb and incredulous..."

"Winning the Irish Masters means everything to me. It is the biggest tournament cash of my poker career to date, I've been working towards this for the last four years."

